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# Country Neighbor

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June 2008



May Events in Your Country Neighborhood included Peru's Old Man River Days, Brownville's Flea Market, and Auburn's 1st Annual Blues, Bikes, & BBQ Festival!



Street Music at Old Man River Days in Peru



The 51st Annual Brownville Flea Market



Dogwood in May



Nemaha County Courthouse in May



Barn South of Nebraska City

## Voices from your Valley

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### A Note From Your Publisher

I hope to add more pages containing more color photos soon...maybe as soon as the next issue. There are more color photos online at [www.yourcountryneighbor.com](http://www.yourcountryneighbor.com) and two framed enlargements are hanging in Sue's "Flower Country & Gifts" in Auburn. Sue's ad is on the back page if you need her address.

Two items I received late that might be of interest to you are the sidewalk sale in Auburn on June 7th and the Nebraska Chautauqua event in Falls City on June 25th through the 29th. For more information, contact the Chamber of Commerce in Falls City at 402-245-4228

Don't forget to check out Brownville for Fourth-of-July festivities.

Your

## COUNTRY NEIGHBOR

### Voices from the Valley of the Nemaha

Publisher & Photographer, Stephen Hassler

#### Writers this month

Devon Adams  
Frieda Burston  
Vicki Harger  
Merri Johnson

Karen Ott  
Joe Smith  
Josh Whisler

Thank You

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#### WANTED: NOMINATIONS FOR NEBRASKA FAMILY PHYSICIAN OF THE YEAR

The Nebraska Academy of Family Physicians is seeking nominations for the Nebraska Family Physician of the Year.

This award is given annually to a Nebraska Family Physician who best demonstrates the qualities of comprehensive and continuing 'care with caring'.

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- A practicing Family Physician
- Member of the Nebraska Academy of Family Physicians
- Board Certification/Recertification
- Provides his/her community with compassionate, comprehensive, and caring medical service on a continuing basis
- Is directly and effectively involved in community affairs and activities that enhance the quality of life in his/her home area
- Provides a credible role model as a healer and human being to his/her community, and as a professional in the science and art of medicine to colleagues, other health professionals, and especially to young physicians in training and to medical students

Patients and friends are asked to mail nominations before June 12, 2008 to the:

Nebraska Academy of Family Physicians  
11920 Burt Street, Suite 170  
Omaha, Nebraska 68154-1598

Please direct questions to: Lynn Mosier

Membership Coordinator  
Nebraska Academy of Family Physicians  
(402) 505-9198  
(402) 505-9281 (fax)  
800-735-1237  
E-mail: [lmosier@nebrafp.org](mailto:lmosier@nebrafp.org)

## VISIT

### *Dramatic Expressions Photography*

on the 'web'

by *Your Country Neighbor* Photographer,  
Stephen Hassler

[www.yourcountryneighbor.com/photoblog.htm](http://www.yourcountryneighbor.com/photoblog.htm)



## Diary of a Part-time Housewife

Merri Johnson

These days my life is moving in about eighteen directions at once. The laid-back, unstructured days of this formerly unemployed housewife are over for the foreseeable future.

The first weekend of April, my husband and I finally moved into our new home. Actually, he did most of the moving while I was partying out of town at my youngest sister's 50<sup>th</sup> birthday celebration. The timing was definitely not great, but it's not like Rhonda "planned" to be born on April 8 so she could mess up our moving plans fifty years later. I was not about to miss that party. Luckily, I have an understanding husband. Besides, he owed me one. Twelve years ago I gave up attending my 25<sup>th</sup> high school class reunion so he could keep a promise to visit his mother. That's right: I sacrificed for my mother-in-law. Yep, automatic sainthood for me.

But, back to my hectic present.

On April 9, I rather unceremoniously ended my brief career as a commercial sewing machine operator in Nebraska City. I had planned to stay on through the month, but an impending shortage of supplies necessitated cutting hours for some of the employees. My hand shot up. *Pick me! Pick me!* The price of gas was really cutting into my paycheck, I despaired of ever reaching the desired daily production quota, and the job was never intended to be more than a temporary opportunity to earn some fun money for new home furnishings. So, bye-bye sewing machine.

Hello, new job. On April 15, I began a part-time, home office job. For the first time in my life, I work in the town where I live. No commuting! Heck, I don't even have to leave my house for most of my duties. I'm now one of those women you hear about in the work-from-home job ads who work in their pajamas. This is great. The flexibility is ideal and the job is rewarding. Plus, my husband is grateful for the contribution my salary makes toward the mortgage that came with our new house. He may be able to retire at 62 after all.

Now that we're moved in, I'm starting to work on landscaping. There's not much I enjoy more than putting around outside. Tomorrow it's off to Lincoln to pick up bricks for a decorative pillar at the front entry and shrubs to plant this weekend. Then we'll be scrambling to quickly get the basement guest bathroom ready for my husband's two older sisters, who are due for an overnight visit June 5.

Next week it will be time to help with Vacation Bible School decorating, followed by monthly job reports the week after.

To top it all off, we're expecting our first grandchild June 27! My daughter-in-law, bless her heart, has asked me to come for a few days after the delivery. I just may have enough energy left by then to rock my new granddaughter.

My life is busy and full and wonderful. It doesn't get much better than that.

## Country Scenes



Mr Robin, presenting breakfast to the family. I watched him find the earthworm on the lawn, peck at it until it was in three "bite-sized" pieces, then fly up to the nest.



The Meyer Earp Auto Center in Auburn helped sponsor Peru's *Old Man River Days*. Registrants had an chance to win a new car!

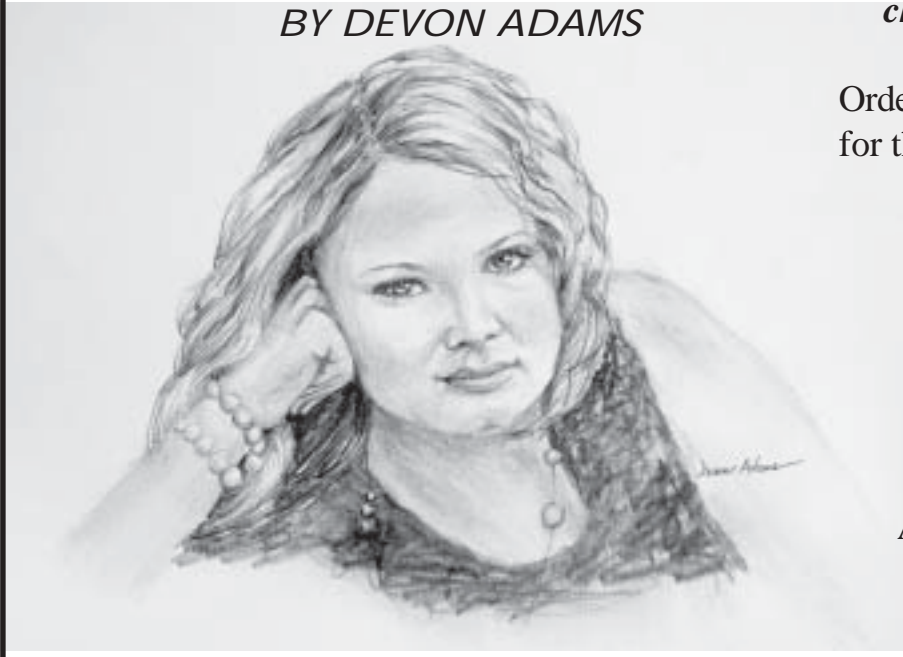


Historical Otoe County Court House, Nebraska City



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## MAKING LISTS

by Devon Adams

How long is your list?  
Do you make lists every day,  
and cross things off  
when they're done?  
What come first,  
the tasks you hate,  
or those you like?  
Do you procrastinate,  
hoping that scary items  
will disappear if you just  
ignore them long enough?  
Does that ever happen?  
If you do a frightening task,  
have you noticed the relief  
that floods your heart  
and gives you temporary peace?  
That relaxation sets the stage  
for your mind to ponder blessings  
that you can't see  
when you're blinded by worry.  
So, save your energy and time  
by being brave today,  
and learn to savor what you have  
before you ask for more.

*Editor's note:*

*You can find poetry previously published by Your Country Neighbor online. Just click on "publications" at:*

[www.yourcountryneighbor.com](http://www.yourcountryneighbor.com)

## TONIC

by Devon Adams

There is a natural plant  
that grows like weeds  
and is potent fresh or dried.  
It is winter hardy, staying green  
with even a small snow blanket  
to insulate against the cold.  
It begins to grow at the slightest hint  
of sunshine, even in January.  
Unfortunately, it fails the test  
to be included in the lists  
of illegal drugs that send  
humans to other planets  
without NASA's help.  
However, it does benefit  
a certain category of creature  
who shares this planet  
with less than perfect humans.  
The lives of cats are enhanced  
to a limitless degree if they  
have access to a substance  
known as catnip, a pretty plant  
with square stalks and ruffled leaves  
that smells like the essence  
of concentrated mint mouthwash.  
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can turn a sedate and haughty feline  
into a wild-eyed clown  
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## Pinch Me

by Frieda Burston

So my computer went haywire and two different experts worked at it a few minutes and said it was okay, and when I started to write letters, I discovered that my whole contact list was gone and half my groups have disappeared. Explain that to me. My helpers can't. One went to the hospital with a heart attack as he was out walking, and the other found a better job in LA. Leaves me with guessing who and how to send to.

But don't bother to worry about it— my computer's pretty picayune compared to what D-D met with when she went to the Social Security Office in Sacramento to see how she could get me onto Medicare—

Seems like I'm dead, and nobody thought to tell me, before.

I can't figure out how Washington thinks because the IRS took my tax money without checking my temperature all these years. They must have figured that if someone was paying the taxes, why ask questions? So now I have to go to the S.S. office here with a load of ID's, and breathe for them.

Washington has me dead, and Abe still alive. I wish he was. He would have enjoyed this. But D-D has to take in a copy of his death certificate which she had recorded in California at the time "just in case", and sure 'nuff, here's the in-case. Moral: If you think you may need to do something, do it. Don't take chances.

We discovered this because I took the notion of moving up to Sacramento, where D-D lives. I'm pretty tired of this place. It isn't healthy. You make friends, and they die. If not of sickness, just of old age. Pretty soon you don't want to make new friends. You realize that if THEY don't die, YOU will, and that takes the edge off your appetite. It's kind of hard to keep eating here anyhow because they pride themselves on being a great restaurant— but did you ever eat at the same great restaurant day after day for every meal? Turns yukky fast.

Lots of the folks up D-D's way sold their homes when prices shot up. The houses are being foreclosed— the guys who bought them couldn't afford to rent, but they couldn't afford to buy either. So lots of the houses were being torn apart by the new owners who thought they'd save money by doing their own repairs. Now if you buy a foreclosed house, you have to figure what it will cost you to have the repairs done by a builder.

Still, when the house next door to her came on the market, I got carried away and told D-D to make an offer. I could just imagine how happy I'd be if I were dying and could just open up my kitchen window and holler for D-D. It sure beats thinking about calling on Health Services down in the South Wing and having them call 911 to cart me off to die in the hospital. And thinking that my one mile trip to the hospital will cost my insurance \$1000 because I'll be lying strapped down to the floor instead of sitting up and joking with the crew.

So she made the offer, and it's too low and they may not even answer it, but it made me feel better. I dreamed up a Golden Labrador dog in the house, and a climbing rose by the front door, and that house by D-D is looking better all the time. This one is a dead duck, but that's OK, it had a swimming pool and what does an old lady need with a swimming pool? There may be one around the corner without a pool, and maybe I can send the dog over with a note tied around its neck if I'm dying and can't reach the phone. That's a mighty smart dog— it will know the way to D-D's house. I don't have to live next door.

Over here, our rent has had its annual raise— this time a little more than 5%. So I will pay over \$3000 a month come July, for three meals a day, rent for a small studio apartment, and bussing to the doctors. I figure that can buy a lot of Golden Labradors and even a swimming pool over a few years (the 5% raise is every year). And I'll get away from seeing so many people in various stages of disintegration. It will be great looking out on a street full of people of different ages, sizes, and shapes. If I want to see someone old, I can go to the circus and look at the House of Mirrors.

Oooops! I forgot— I have to prove that I'm still alive, first—

Editor's note: *You can read previous articles by Joe Smith online in Your Country Neighbor archives; just click on "publications" at:*  
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June 2008

## THE BIG DRY

by Joe Smith

Our family, Marta and the boys and Lisa, went to the area north of Silver city with Boyd Lare's family to look for Indian artifacts. We dug around the San Francisco river and found an Indian ruin and dug a wall or two out and did find some stuff, but it was a lot of work for what we got. The kids all had fun though. After lunch the women said they would take the kids and go back to our farm south of Deming.

Boyd and I took my car and went into the Gila to find this Big Dry that was supposed to be good trout fishing. You had to pack into the area, groceries and all. Boyd had pneumonia early in the year but thought he was over it. I think all the dust from digging out those ruins started it back up. We loaded up the packs and took our fishing stuff. The trail was supposed to be 2-3 miles in the high mountains. After we left the little valley and followed the trail up the mountain, Boyd keep getting farther behind. I would drop my stuff and go get his stuff and bring it up the trail. Boyd was just barely able to make it by himself. Way up on the mountain we did the Yogi Bera thing when we got to a fork in the trail we took one. The wrong one! We ended up at a forest rangers cabin that was locked. It was almost dark and we had no water or a place to bed down in bear country. We broke a screen in the one room cabin and went inside. There was a map in the cabin that showed us we took the wrong fork. We had no water because we thought we were going to the Big Dry. We found a 2-gallon canteen that had the lid bent from falling off a pack horse. It was full, thank God. There were some groceries in the cabins so we ate good and had a good night's sleep. There was a pack rat running around in the rafters and Boyd was trying to throw a hunting knife at him. The next morning we cleaned up the cabin and left a thank you note for the ranger. We went back down the trail and Boyd again lost his wind. I ended up doing double duty again. When we got to the Dry there were two old cabins there that were in fair shape. We had been warned about the bears before we went in there. We cleaned up the cabins. Someone had left potatoes and stuff. We threw it out the window in a dry creek that ran into the real Big Dry which was not dry. That night we made our beds by putting our bed rolls on some old rope cots that were in one of the cabins. After supper we were ready for bed. We put our food in the front cabin and shut the door good to keep the bears out. After we turned in there was a racket outside the cabin. Boyd stuck his head out the widow hole and said, "There is a bear out here." I told him I didn't care. Boyd jumped into bed and asked me what I would do if that bear started through the window hole. As there was just a hole right above my bed. We started laughing so much I think we scared the bear.

We had a lot of fun fishing and prowling around the old camp. Probably a gold miner's camp. There was evidence of mining activity up and down the canyon. We hollered every time we started around a bend in the river to scare any bears. Every night we would clean our trout and place them wrapped in foil under some big rocks in the middle of the stream. Every morning they would be gone. The day we were to leave we cleaned all the trout and looked at that trail we had to climb. This canyon was straight up and down almost sheer. We could see part of the trail way up there. I looked a Boyd and told him, "Why not leave them for those poor under-fed bears?" We decided to do just that. We left everything we could, even some canned food in the cabinet. So we left the camp clean and shut up all the cabins to keep out the animals.

We started up the mountain. Boyd was feeling much better now. About half way up I crossed a rock slide very carefully. As I reached the other side here came Boyd. As he picked his way across it started to slide down the mountain. I grinned and waved good-bye to him. I went up a little farther and he came up to me, "Dr. Livingston I presume?" I said yep that's me. We made it out in three hours. It took us over ten hours to go in there. We had a long talk about going into a place so remote with only two people. If one got hurt would you stay with him or go for help? We decided it would be better to have three people on such a trip.

There you have it. One darn good fishing trip. Boyd was raised right here in the Brock area. He was Roy Lare's son, Morris Lare's nephew. Joe

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### "My Life & Times as Harve Bodine"

by Joe Smith

If you like the stories I write, you would love this story. Harve Bodine was in the Confederate Army, riding for the Quantrell Raiders. He didn't like anything that guy was doing so he and another fellow left before the end of the war and went out West. It seems he turned law-man.

The story has a lot of human feeling in it, honest emotions, true love (sorry, no hot sex scenes). The story takes place in an area I am somewhat familiar with. Other parts came from Harve himself. I had no idea where it was going. I just wrote it down like Harve told me to. Whether it actually happened or not is for you to decide. Joe Smith.



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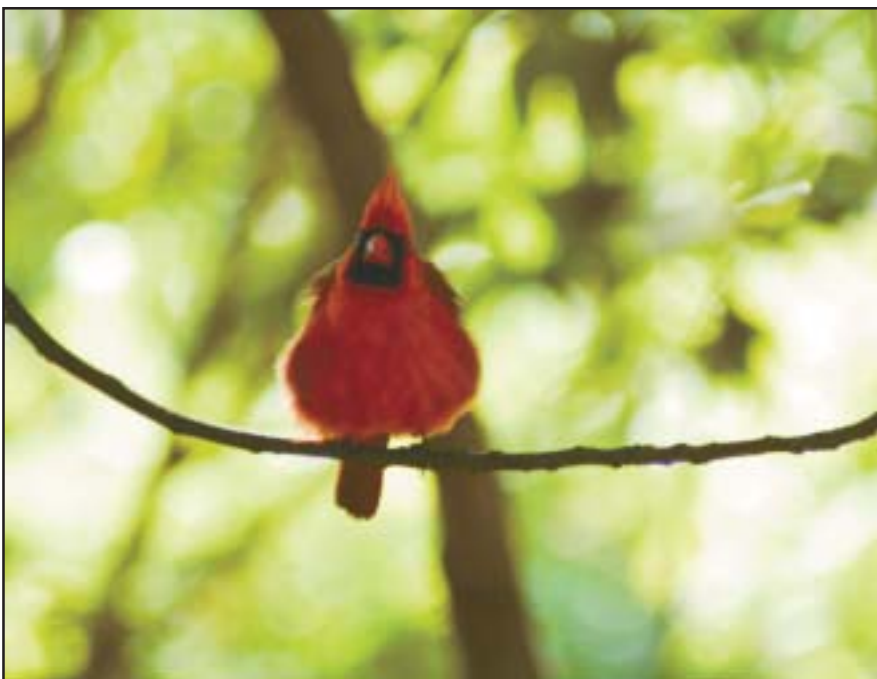
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**BLUE FLASH**

by Devon Adams

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fell to earth,  
like sapphires flashing,  
and touched the feathers  
of the indigo bunting.



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<p>63691 Hwy 67                  Great view from the deck of this newer ranch-style home on 4.4 +/- acres.</p>	<p>72251 Hwy 75                  Updated three bedroom with 10 acres along the Highway with Machine Shed.</p>	<p>733 I Street, Pawnee City                  Lots of storage is the hallmark of this 3+ bedroom beauty.</p>	<p>1922 O Street                  This property has many possibilities for a single family residence, bed and breakfast, or boarding house!</p>



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After a family meal, Mr. & Mrs. Robin pause, seemingly content for a moment... Maybe the kids are asleep.

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# Whisler's Hunting & Fishing Report



by Josh Whisler  
(Photos provided by Author)

## Fishing:

The Missouri River is running at a pretty high level from the recent thunderstorm rains. This is a typical spring river condition where the water is cloudy with the farm ground runoff rich with nutrients from the winter's compost. The fish that are biting are mostly small channel cats and some fair sized blue cats. But soon enough the water is going to warm up enough to engage the Flatheads, and then the summer fishing is on. What are they biting on? Night crawlers and dough baits are still what they are hitting, with live bait still coming on more and more frequently. You don't have to throw the whole tackle box at them right now because they 'are biting' just not very big ones. My suggestion is sharpen up your skills on the little ones so when the big ones come you're ready.

## Hunting or Hiking?

Every year there is a season like no other hunting season and you don't even need a permit. It's Mushroom Season! Morel Mushrooms that is! I say hunting or hiking because around here you earn your bounty of mushrooms by climbing The Hills of Peru. It was, however, a very good year for them – a little later than usual due to the cooler weather, but a very good year.

## Hunting:

2008 Spring Turkey Seasons are open and nearing their end. It seems like the toms are in full strut everywhere you look. And not just one - several toms at the same site are jousting for the breeding rights of the hens. This means the hens are available less and less because they are laying eggs and setting on the nests more and more. So the fewer hens you see the more toms you'll see jousting together. Now is the time to lure one to a decoy! Patience has prevailed and now it's time to harvest one of those unsuspecting toms.

DEER HUNTERS – The first fall deer permit application for the DRAW units has past. If you were unsuccessful on the draw, starting June 9<sup>th</sup> all deer permits left from the Draw Units and all other units will be open for application for Nebraska Residents. Contact the NGPC and get yours now.

The Turkey Seasons are closing and summer fishing is opening up. There are plenty of opportunities to get out and get involved in the outdoors. Camping doesn't sound half bad either. The idea is to get out and get your mind off work or the day-to-day hassles. Remember I'm not an expert but I have my share of luck. I wonder if the experts are having any luck today? So until next time "Happy Hunting & Fishing."





Joe Whisler from Peru with a "Wheel Barrow" of mushrooms.



Joe Whisler from Peru with a 22-pound tom sporting an 8-1/2 in beard. Look closer, there are also mushrooms on the tailgate.

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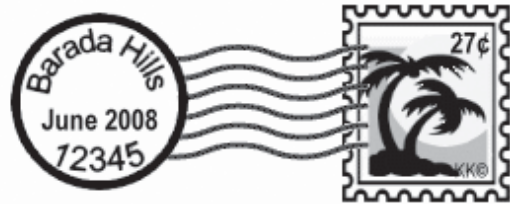
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## WESTWARD HO...!

Westward Ho...!

by Vicki Harger

Last month, I loaded up my little Saturn and headed west all by myself—like some lone pioneer woman.

Well, I wasn't exactly alone. I had the Angel of the Lord with me, and three stuffed monkeys.

I'm not sure where my Guardian Angel rode during that long trip, but the monkeys sat in the window along with a sign that read: "California or Bust!" (...Busted, indeed! Before I left home I'd managed to crack both "plastic" fenders on my Saturn—but I banded the fender-cracks with duct tape before setting out.)

I took off late in the day on April 8th, heading into the setting sun. I was going to see my California Man—the one who had proposed to me during that strange blizzard several months ago. I was leaving behind everyone dear to me, venturing into unknown territory on my wildest adventure, yet.

With so many miles to go, I drove like a mad woman—flying along mile after mile, getting only snatches of sleep along the way. I crossed salt-flats and mountain ranges and deserts. I encountered blizzards and crazy drivers. It took me only two days to go almost 2000 miles. I was flat moving!

The stuffed monkeys were looking rather glassy-eyed by the time we reached California... But I felt ecstatic. I stared at the palm trees and the lush green vineyards. The sun was warm. The breeze was salty. I shed my jacket and donned my shades and tried to look California Cool.

Poised. Fearless.

But it's hard to look Cool when you get yourself lost...And that's the first thing I did. I got lost, really lost. My California Coolness quickly melted in the hot sun.

I stopped at the only business I could find...a ritzy Chrysler dealership. My dusty, duct-taped Saturn was mortified as we pulled into the fine lot full of chrome and sparkle. Even the monkeys were embarrassed. They tipped over in the window and refused to sit upright.

I approached the dealership's front lobby...My hair flying, my weary clothes askew. I had to go to the restroom badly, so I must've walked funny.

"I know this isn't a gas station," I said to the fancy Chrysler execs. "But I need your help. I am sooo lost." I squinted down at the map in my hand. It looked strange and garbled. "I can't see where I am."

The Chrysler brethren took my upside-down map and turned it right-side-up. They showed me where I was and how to get out of there. They were even nice about it.

I didn't dare ask to use the restroom.

I headed out again. I found Highway 101...that lovely, twisted highway leading along the western edge of the state. It was

a learning experience to be sure. Golden State Basics 101.

California natives drive like the dickens. I realized if I were to survive, I'd have to learn to drive like that, too.... And I soon got the hang of it. With duct-tape flapping in the wind, I whipped in and out of traffic like I was born in an LA ambulance, rather than in Hicksville, USA.

Amid all the fine Mercedes and Beemers, my Saturn stuck out like shattercane in a soybean field...But at the moment, I didn't care. I gazed in awe at the scenery going by. For a gal who hasn't seen much but cornfields and combines, lately, I was feeling downright tipsy—just drunk on it all. The great swooping valleys, the endless orchards... the magnificent vineyards.

If I'd been stopped by a trooper, I would've had a hard time explaining the problem. "Sorry, officer...y'see I'm drunk on California."

I found myself teary-eyed over the Redwood Coast..."Nature's Cathedral" they call it....Those ancient groves dating back to the days of the Vikings and Columbus. They'd survived quakes, droughts and floods—escaping wildfires and the loggers' saws. From the Dark Ages to the Space Age, the redwoods had stood tall, unmoved by the march of time.

I drove through the Avenue of the Giants, feeling dwarfed and humbled.

All about me were rivers and shimmering lakes. Their crystal waters took my breath away...Deep turquoise pools as clear as the Caribbean, reflecting a cloudless sky. There were shadowy glens and mysterious canyons.....

Surely nymphs and fairies lived amongst those deep magical forests.

My car blundered to a stop many times and I got out to perch on the side of the busy highway, staring in awe at the sweeping panorama below. Traffic jostled past me, just inches away—but I could only stand and gape.

I was busy gawking when a tour bus lumbered to a halt beside me, and the driver threw open the door. Passengers stared at me and my duct-taped car full of monkeys.

The bus driver hollered. "Is that your hound dog back there in the road, young lady?"

I shut my gaping mouth. "Um no...No sir, it's not."

"Hmmmph...!" He obviously didn't believe me. "Hound dog's gonna get himself run over..." The door shut and the bus rumbled on. Embarrassed, I scrambled back into the car and resumed my journey, stopping only for gas and sodas after that.

My heart beat faster and my foot pressed harder on the accelerator. I was almost there. Eureka was just ahead.

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It was evening and the sun was starting to set. I'd been on the road for two days. And now I was just minutes away from my destination...my Darling...and perhaps my destiny. I called my California Man on the cell phone. He sounded amazed at how far I'd come, and how fast. He arranged to meet me.

It was a most romantic meeting, I assure you.

There we were in the salty spray of a Pacific sunset...waves crashing about us...the sun sinking lower and lower till it slid beneath the sea.

With arms wrapped around each other, we stood on the edge of the world—in a place where the land ends abruptly and the wild Pacific takes over...A twilight zone of shifting shadows. We were suspended somewhere between one life and the next...between day and night and darkness and light...In a dusky world full of wonder and promise.

It was hard to believe I was here. It all seemed surreal. Feeling overwhelmed and exhausted, I fumbled my way to a driftwood log and sat staring into the deep waters that stretched as far as the eye could see.

It was then that I cried.

My California man didn't say a word. He just held me and let my tears soak his shirt. It had been a grueling journey...but I had finally arrived—me and my Angel and the stuffed monkeys.

I'd made it, all right...But I had no way of knowing the strange things that awaited me in the days to come...

~~~~~To be continued~~~~~

[www.VickiHarger.com](http://www.VickiHarger.com)

Editor's note: You can read previous articles by Vicki online in Your Country Neighbor archives; just click on "publications" at:

[www.yourcountryneighbor.com](http://www.yourcountryneighbor.com)



# The Face

# of Drought

A Farm Report from  
Western Nebraska

by Karen Ott

No matter what you may think of the French in general ya gotta love their farmers. Unlike their American counterparts, whose patriot grumblings usually go no further than the local coffee shop or the sidewalk outside church on Sunday morning, the fiery French take to the streets in howling protest whenever they see something they dislike...be it GMO corn, or cheap Spanish wine.

This week, in union with French fisherman, they've taken to blocking oil terminals in protest of escalating fuel prices, especially diesel, which has risen over 300 percent in the last five years. I doubt their anger will accomplish much; the blustering of a few European farmers seems as futile as a fly battling a windowpane. But you've got to give them credit for trying.

After a nine day hiatus due to rainy weather my men are back in the fields.....yep, you heard me right...rain. It only amounted to an inch+, but it came in such dribs and drabs that field work was impossible. During those unproductive days the weather was March-cold, and Nebraska windy. The dogs curled up on the lawn to conserve heat, we donned winter coats, and the emerged corn shivered, turning a sickly yellow-green that asked, "Where's the sun?"

Here on the flatlands rain amounts were small, but it was a different story in the lower reaches of our Wyoming watersheds where 7 to 8 inches fell, washing out roads and causing minor flooding. Guernsey's reservoir filled brim-full after only a few days of runoff, the water pouring over the dam's flood gates. Memorial weekend the weather service issued a lowland flood warning all along the river, and Dale and I watched in amazement as the North Platte hesitantly crept out of its banks for the first time in ten years. Today the director for the Mitchell Irrigation District announced they had just been informed by the Bu-

reau of Reclamation Glendo reservoir was full..... and in flood stage.

Experts call the storm which filled our reservoirs a 'weather event'. We call it a miracle.

During the gloomy-grey, wet-field days the men took time to fix pasture fence and brand this year's calf crop. For the most part the branding was uneventful....except for an unfortunate tussle between Dale and a headstrong cow which had me careening towards Scottsbluff at 80 mph while Dale sat in the passenger seat holding a bloody towel to his face.

The last thing he remembered was the hired man shouting "Watch Out!!!" But the words came too late. When the agitated critter slammed into the small of Dale's back his face ricocheted off the corral fence. By the time the hired man got him to the tire shop (where I was working) Dale was shaky, and unsteady on his feet.

In the end his cheek, jaw, and the inside of his mouth, were left bruised and bleeding but not permanently damaged. His teeth are still in place and except for some swelling and

scabs he's pretty much back to normal. His single complaint concerning the entire ordeal was the fact he was required to get a tetanus booster....something farmers loath in the extreme.

When I think about that day I realize how different things might have been, how, instead of minor injuries, Dale could have been seriously hurt, or even killed. As a farm wife I live with the knowledge that danger follows my husband around like a silent thief. That the man I've loved for 37 years could become a farm-accident statistic between one heartbeat and the next; it's a burden I share with each and every farm wife the world over.

This time the story had a happy ending...but they'll always be a next time.....and a next.

Those are the ones I worry about.  
Karen

*Editor's note:*

You can read previous articles by Karen Ott online in Your Country Neighbor archives; just click on "publications" at: [www.yourcountryneighbor.com](http://www.yourcountryneighbor.com)

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3<sup>RD</sup> – 6<sup>TH</sup> GRADES**

**April, 2008**

**Judges**

**Jan Chism Wright  
Dr. David A. Wright**

**Third Grade**

**Poetry**

1<sup>st</sup> – Logan Bredemeier  
2<sup>nd</sup> – Angel Milke  
3<sup>rd</sup> – Tayten O'Brien

**Short Story**

1<sup>st</sup> – Tayten O'Brien  
2<sup>nd</sup> – Angel Milke

**Play**

1<sup>st</sup> – Logan Bredemeier

**Fourth Grade**

**Poetry**

1<sup>st</sup> – Téa Faulks  
2<sup>nd</sup> – Sheree Hickey  
3<sup>rd</sup> – Tessa Huey

**Short Story**

1<sup>st</sup> – Brett Stevenson  
2<sup>nd</sup> – Summer Valdez  
3<sup>rd</sup> – Braden Shiley

**Play**

1<sup>st</sup> – Téa Faulks

**Fifth Grade**

**Poetry**

1<sup>st</sup> – Taylor O'Brien  
2<sup>nd</sup> – Meagan Westling  
3<sup>rd</sup> – Ryan McMann

**Short Story**

1<sup>st</sup> – Taylor O'Brien  
2<sup>nd</sup> – Ryan McMann  
3<sup>rd</sup> – Meagan Westling

**Sixth Grade**

**Poetry**

1<sup>st</sup> – Libby Anderson  
2<sup>nd</sup> – Carmen Alexander  
3<sup>rd</sup> – Krynn Prater

**Short Story**

1<sup>st</sup> – Carmen Alexander  
2<sup>nd</sup> – Paige Shiley  
3<sup>rd</sup> – Rachel Herr

*Editor's Note:*

*All entries received are online at [www.yourcountryneighbor.com](http://www.yourcountryneighbor.com)  
Two entries are printed here, chosen to accommodate this space.*

**THE LOST CAP**

By Libbey Anderson

I'm a marker  
who lost his cap.  
You may think that  
I am all dried out  
but I am still full of Juice!  
Although I am not sure how.  
Mother and father are worried  
and furious  
at our neighbors, the Pencils.  
They did this to me!  
They have been  
doing this a lot.  
They are jealous  
because they are not being used.  
My cap could be anywhere  
in the Pencil's "box" house.  
It is probably in the Pencil's trash.  
Guess what?  
I found it.  
Finally!  
It was in their wood shavings pile,  
I have my cap. And now I  
have all of me  
back.

**Special Memories**

By Ryan McMann

I like my school  
Through thick and thin.  
Even though it's closing down  
I'll remember the good times.

Special Memory  
Kindergarten round-up  
At the light pole, I found  
A giant dandy lion  
As tall as me.

Special Memory  
I met my best friend forever,  
Tayler O'Brien.  
We have been together for six years.

Special Memory  
We got to name our own fish  
And release them in the school pond.  
My fish's name was Angel.  
I thought she looked like an Angel fish.

I like my school  
Through thick and thin.  
Even though it's closing down  
I'll remember the good times.

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