

Your

Country

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March 2012



Neighbor

Cardinal During February Snowfall

More Pages

More Photos

More Color

Voices from the Valleys of the Nemaha

Publisher & Photographer, Stephen Hassler

Writers this month

Devon Adams
Merri Johnson
Vicki O'Neal
Shirley Neddenriep
Karen Ott
Josh Whisler
Marilyn Woerth

Thank You

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Your Country Neighbor

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Editor's note:

*Seven years of this publication
are online at:*

www.yourcountryneighbor.com

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COVER PHOTO

The Northern Cardinal, my favorite backyard vision, rivals our endearing American Robin, particularly since the cardinal is more visible in winter (many Robins migrate). The cardinal remains throughout the winter months because it can find food (especially seeds provided by generous suburbanites). The Robin, being more carnivorous, can't find meat (worms and insects) in the cold northern soil. Still, some Robins "stay over" by moving toward the wooded areas near the Missouri River where they survive on fruit (berries). This is why we often see that first robin in February; it may have been only a few miles away.

When you see the bright red cardinal male this time of year, his lady is somewhere nearby. While one visits the feeder, the other keeps a lookout for cats. The cardinal takes advantage of branches and vines for protection, since foliage is still months away.



The Lady Cardinal blends with the colors of branches and dried leaves.

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A Word From Your Editor/Publisher

StephenHassler

Your Country Neighbor is eager for Spring to arrive; Robins on the lawn, a Wren's early morning song (spring may not be for night owls), the bright yellow plumage of the Goldfinch, tulips and daffodils waving in the brisk morning breeze, the swishing sound of seeds in their bountiful looking packages.

However, we're not there yet. One of my snowy cardinal photos was taken on the first day of spring not too many years ago. Snow and cold are still possibilities, but we've been fortunate so far, why not keep the faith?

But warm or cold, look for *Your Country Neighbor* in stores and on-line for more pages of enjoyment; articles by your friends and recent photos taken in the area.

Your Country Neighbor is hand-delivered to grocery stores, pharmacies, hardware stores, restaurants, cafes, plus businesses that advertise in these pages, in the following cities and villages in **Kansas**; Hiawatha and Sabetha. In **Missouri**; Rock Port. In **Nebraska**; Auburn, Brownville, Cook, Falls City, Humboldt, Johnson, Nebraska City, Nemaha, Peru, Syracuse, and Tecumseh.

See seven years' past issues of *Your Country Neighbor*, on-line, as well as lots of photos at:

www.yourcountryneighbor.com

PLEASE SHARE YOUR RECENT PHOTOS

If you have a digital photo you would like to share with our rural readership, attach it to an e-mail containing a brief description.

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Include a statement granting permission to publish one time, allowing sizing, cropping, and other adjusting as may be necessary for newsprint. It must be your work! Include your name and city or county of residence. Your photo may be selected for publication on this page in the months to come. Please keep it recent (circa 2012), and consistent with the theme of "Rural America", and note that it will probably be reproduced in black and white. Thank you!

More Words from Your Editor/Publisher

StephenHassler

Winter hasn't been so bad, has it? And here it is, March! We've been waiting for winter to begin, and now, it's almost over. Still, spring is always a welcome time. And let's admit it; 2011 wasn't all we wanted it to be. When New Year's Day, 2012 arrived, we were ready with our resolutions that would make everything better. And here it is, almost spring. What has our nearly 25% investment in time (first quarter), done for us? Well, I don't want to kick anyone if they're down, but the year has started out fine for me. I know we have a long way to go, but so far, I am optimistic about 2012.

I hope you visited the Squaw Creek National Wildlife Refuge in February. The snow geese have probably left by now. But if you were fortunate, as I was, you had an amazing experience. The Sandhill Crane migration of 300,000 out by Kearney gets a lot of press, but I am more impressed with the one million+ Snow Geese each year at the refuge near Mound City, Missouri. I will have a few of my snow geese photos for sale at Auburn's Philly Grill; or for just to look at. I will try to put some more photos online at www.yourcountryneighbor.com

I have several pictures hanging in *Janie's Confections* on Central Avenue in Nebraska City (ad on back cover), and a nice one of the "Arbor Lodge" (peonies included), at *Snapdragon Florist*. I hope you can take a look sometime.

I hope you were at least lucky enough to have seen a Bald Eagle this season. I see two or three each time I pass through Brownville. The fishing must be good there this time of year. I keep trying to get a really good photo, but I haven't gotten close enough this season. There were some 'okay' ones in the last issue, and this one too... pages 5,10, and 14.

The Brownville Lyceum is open! See the press release and ad on page 7. And so is Brownville's newest business, Gypsy Jack's (ad page 8). Gallery 119 is expanding into a second unit, and Mary's Emporium has moved back to Main Street at 313 Main.

Be ready for Brownville's annual *Wine, Writers, and Song* festival in April. Until then, have a good month and share *Your Country Neighbor* with a friend!

Poetry by Devon Adams

CROSSWORDS

Like all good puzzles, every crossword has the right answers. Filling in the blanks can be fun and result in a satisfied sense of accomplishment. But, it is hard to leave blank spaces unfilled, to walk away without knowing the answers and solving the problems. However, this is good practice for life, which is mostly full of problems without answers, and blanks that are never filled. It is the ambiguity that ruffles our feathers and keeps us awake at night. Sometimes there is no clear delineation between right and wrong, no sharp edge that makes a choice easier. There are only shades of gray on a band from all good to all bad, and we have to decide on a course of action, or inaction. It would be so much easier to be able to complete the daily puzzle of our life, in the morning, while we drink our coffee.

DRIVING ON EMPTY

Sometimes the gas gage says there is nothing left in the tank. And that is when we have to believe we'll find a way to keep going because quitting isn't an option.

MIRROR IMAGES

One day you wake up and get out of bed and walk past the dresser. And you stop and stare at the image looking back at you from the mirror. It is the face of your father or your mother when they were old. You had never paid much attention to what they looked like. They were just always there. Well, now there they are again, only it isn't them, it is you, and you are old. How could that be when you still think of yourself as a twenty-something? Old was never a possibility because it only happened to your parents' generation, and your grandparents' crowd was well past old and into fossilization. The next thing you'll realize is that you are no different from your friends, who have all been looking a little more worn around the edges than you had thought you were. We never recover from this shock of recognition. The best we can do is to be grateful that walking and talking and thinking is still possible, and to hope that we can continue to function. We will try not to let any mirrors surprise us.

CROSSWORDS

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More of Devon's Poetry

Where Life Is Good

Marilyn Woerth

CROSS CURRENTS

Soon the free fields,
those without planted crops,
will be full of wild flowers.
The ribbons of scent from
their various blooms will
mingle and braid themselves
among the purple fumes of iris
and lilac, the exotic perfumes
of peonies, and the intoxicating
rivers of honeysuckle that ripple
on the prairie winds of spring.
There will be thousands of insects,
drunk with nectar, careening through
the carpets of petals and stems.
But hidden among the luscious
flavors of the flowers is another
class of particles that weaves into
the fabric of the invisible air. They
are the voices of the electric wind
that is generated from formidable
high towers of steel that stab into
the air like underworld daggers.
I wonder if they can be heard by
ears with hearing more acute than
those of humans. Do they make
unearthly sounds and send them
in lethal waves? Do they travel
for unknown miles like the rumbles
and wails of whales and elephants?
Is there a pollution solution?

SYMPHONY PRACTICE

At first there are only a few
random notes, floating in the fog,
echoing off the trees into the night.
Then the sounds start crashing
together, falling out of the sky
in a noisy practice session that
lacks harmony and rhythm.
Everyone is out of tune, playing
their instruments at different speeds,
arguing with the conductor about
which piece he is to be conducting.
The members of the orchestra are
all in a hurry to find the path to spring.
They are elated to be flying again,
with a far destination and purpose,
but it is a chaotic and frantic time
for them. Those of us who lack
the grace of feathers and the ability
to ride on the wind are thrilled to
listen to the travelers, no matter how
many notes they break, and we wish
them good luck and speed and safety.

Are you a “yes” person or a “no” person?
I have been both at different times in my
life. And sometimes I have been a, “but
my husband will”, person (sorry sweetie).
Mostly, I try to keep balance in my life,
or our lives.

There are of course, those times I have
regretted saying, yes. One hot 100 de-
gree day I said yes to backpacking with
the girl scouts at a state park. As soon, as
we went into the shaded woodland to
start our hike there were enough mosqui-
toes to carry us away (of course we ran
back onto the road, for spray). In the
clearings, the heat was so intense, we
found an Adirondack shelter and laid
around it all day, praying for a breeze.

I will always say no to baking a pie for
any potluck or a money raising event. I
don't do pie (except for eating it, of
course). But I make a mean carrot cake.
My carrot cake even has a fan club. I
bake one every year for my husband to
take to work on his birthday. Last year, a
co-worker asked him in January (three
months early) if they were getting an-
other carrot cake for his birthday. So you

will always find me baking a carrot cake
in the month of March.

Sometimes it takes me a long time to say
yes and a few times I have said yes or no
and had a change of heart. But, rest
assure there has always been a lot of
thought behind every decision. The neat
thing about my ability to say yes/no is
that it has created another layer of who I
am, another experience, another chal-
lenge to do the best I can.

This year I have said yes to two big
things in my life, one a new business
venture, another a chance for spiritual
growth. I feel good about this balance.
Unfortunately, I will also have to say no
to another part of my life that I had said
yes to for over a decade. But I have to
keep that balance. The need to grow
myself, my character, my fiber is strong.

With both arms out balancing myself, my
head held high, starring straight forward I
walk, always, into the good life with a
smile on my face and a giggle in my
heart.



Bald Eagles are seen frequently around Brownville during the winter months due to “good fishing” when the river is ice free. Eagles don't have to migrate, but they go where the food is.

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Diary of Part-time Housewife
Merri Johnson

If my memory is correct, this month marks the start of my eighth year as a contributor to this publication. I should be coming up with some sort of retrospective on all that, but our granddaughter is visiting, and spending time in the present with her has to take priority over re-reading my old Diaries! I hope you'll allow me to reprise an article from 2005.

June 2005

Everybody has their own activity "personality." Some are do-it-now-and-get-it-done types. Others aren't. I'm in the second category, what you might call a chronic putterer, especially when it comes to my yard. I've probably moved more plants from one place to another than I've actually planted in the first place. But I have good excuses - make that reasons - for my puttering penchant.

First of all, I inherited it from my grandfather. After retiring from farming and moving into town, he could still keep busy all day without resorting to hanging out at the coffee shop or pestering my grandmother. Never mind that he didn't accomplish much of anything you could actually name. The important thing is that he was keeping busy, which is a valuable skill to have. People who keep busy live longer and healthier. My grandfather lived to be 89 and he never lived in a nursing home!

But beyond personal style, there's also the practical matter of having flower beds of hostas, iris, and day lilies that multiply like rabbits and have to be divided every other year. You can't just let them take over. And then there's the occasional impulse purchase of something that I know in my heart I shouldn't buy. (I guess we're back to personality again.) But when it's on sale in July when I have all that Earl May Fun Money to spend, it's just too much to resist. And in a couple of years, transplanting it will provide an hour or two of totally free garden puttering!

I hate to admit this next reason, but sometimes I just plain put something where it looks all wrong later. The experts recommend a complete garden plan for your entire property. That might work if you actually implement the whole plan at once, or if you have extreme self-discipline. Because you know what happens if you don't: every January those nursery and seed catalogs arrive and you give in to the temptation to swap out the planned flowering crab for a new variety of forsythia, but that messes up your color scheme or your sun-to-shade ratio, or some other critical design element. Before you know it, you're digging up the tulip bulbs and putting in marigolds instead.

Perfect landscaping makes me nervous anyway. I've never been a fan of those developments where the character of the neighborhood is predictably uniform. I prefer a little more spontaneity, a little anticipation, a little mystery, with just a touch of confusion thrown in.

Besides, my yard puttering gives my husband something to do outdoors besides golf. He's always willing to help when muscle is required. He loves it when I tell him I enjoy watching him work. Earlier this spring, I asked him to help me move a six-foot corkscrew hazel that had been in the ground for eight years. Even though it wasn't a very tall tree, those roots were big and deep. Of course, my husband did most of the digging and prying. My job was to push and pull on the trunk in the appropriate direction at the right time.

That's where working with my husband tends to break down: that matter of anticipating his next move. It doesn't matter if we're maneuvering furniture in a stairwell, putting up the two-story extension ladder, or digging up a tree. We are just not on the same wavelength when it comes to synchronized movement. Even so, after about two hours, we had that tree all situated in its new location near the grape arbor. Of course, we aren't sure yet if it will survive. (Update: it didn't.)

But that's the joy of yard puttering. There's always another day, another project, another opportunity to rearrange the landscape. Most of the time it doesn't even cost anything, unless you're one of those time-is-money types. In that case, puttering probably isn't for you. But for me, it's the perfect outdoor pastime.

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THE SHOP DOORS

Shirley Neddenriep

The brakes failed on a 2-Ton wench truck smacking that lumbering pile of iron directly into the closed shop door. The imprint of the grill can still be seen when the sun is right. Green paint rubbed off the door and onto the truck and stands as undeniable evidence of the certain, though unintentional collision.

What mattered was the feeling of despair brought on by the incident. Ever try to stop a vehicle and have the brake pedal reach the floor boards with no effect? Less than a few months later another event trumped this one. Backing a combine with its free-wheeling rear end can be a complicated maneuver in open country. In the more confined space around shop doors it can be even more interesting.

Over-the-Road drivers describe pulling an empty container trailer in a high wind like 'steering a billboard on roller skates.' Its about like that with a combine only in slow motion, and accounted for the second major dent in the shop door.

Machines have a way of getting back

at their operators. Some guys even place bets on whose truck is stronger or bigger or tougher. Then they chain-up the rear ends and floor it to find out. Usually one of the trucks is salvageable.

Or maybe I have lived too long in male-dominated surroundings to know any other life. Their talk intrigues me, their fearless and daring life events are exciting to hear. Since I can't go there, I visit hardware stores. Old ones are the best that still smell of harness and oil. I rather go there than a dress shop any day.

It calls up memories of my dad throwing a harness over the back of our work horse George, and having all the leather straps and harness parts fall neatly into place. All dad had to do was hook up a few clasps and climb to the wagon seat. George knew the way to the corn field, he led the way with his team-mate, Bess.

No great cloud of black smoke to indicate power. Unseen was the strength of the beast and his master.

Continued on page 14 >>>>>>>>>>>>

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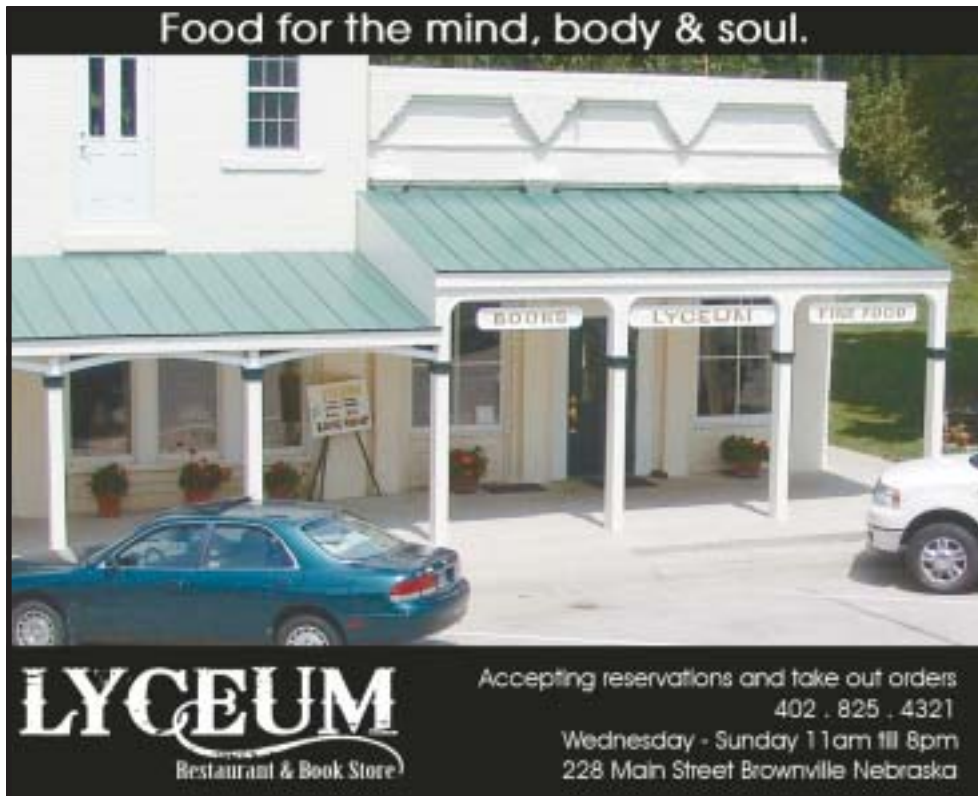
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Left to right, Front House Manager Stephen Cardwell, Managing Partner Belle Cardwell, Chef and Kitchen Manager Mark Cardwell, General Manager, Amanda Cardwell

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The Village of Brownville from a Different Point of View

<<<<<<<<< Continued from page 10

most determined treasure-hunter, although a short addendum warns, “The Midnight Gardener method of hiding gold and silver is not recommended for storing items you might need frequently or often.”

We don’t own much silver and gold. Other than our wedding rings, and some seldom used silverware, our household is more about intangible treasures.....things that make a happy home...but not a rich one.

And that’s OK with me.....because.... as the bible says: “For where your treasure is, there your heart is also.”

Still, the thought of (nearly) zero interest coupled with the enormity of our sovereign debt seems to shed a whole new light on the ‘mason-jar’ in the cucumber patch.

Now where did Dale hide those past-their-prime alternators?

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Of Thorns and Roses

By Vicki O'Neal



Rosy is my best “Fan Reader.” I know that the rest of you use my articles to line the bottom of your bird cages and cat litter-boxes...But not Rosy. She faithfully cuts out my columns and sends copies to her sister, Tressie, and her friends.

Rose cried happy tears, the other day, when I showed up on her doorstep. “Four years in California!” she said, “And look at you!” She hugged me like a long lost cousin. “You’re a Cali-girl, now, but you look just the same!”

“Yes. It’s the same ol’ me,” I said, “And by the way...Can I use your bathroom? I forgot to wear a slip, today, but I’ve got another skirt along with me to use as a slip.” Rose laughed at me. “Oh you!” she said, “Wearing two skirts at once! Really, Vic!” She hugged me again. “You haven’t changed a bit. Why—I remember when we used to work together. One time, you showed up at work after one of your adventures...You had twigs and seashells in your hair!”

Rose laughed at me some more, then hauled me down the street to her favorite eatery...A homey little place where everybody gossips a hundred miles-a-minute. The folks were hard at it when we walked in. They looked us over carefully. A gal from a few tables away soon got jealous because Rose was with me, instead of herself. Ridiculous woman. We ignored her and ordered lunch.

I sat there in my two-skirted attire, eating my Rueben sandwich with lots of ketchup—feeling absolutely wonderful—until Rose ruined it all.

“I want to tell you something.” Rosy dropped her voice. “You remember Lorena?...that gal we used to work with? Well. She doesn’t believe the stuff in your articles really happens!”

“What?!” I stopped chewing my Rueben,
12

feeling outraged. “Well, maybe the lovely Lorena won’t believe it when she sees her name in my newspaper column, either!”

Rose laughed. “Now, don’t get feisty. You’re dripping ketchup all over yourself.” She always calms me down. Eventually, I forgot about the Lorena-outrage. We forgot about the Jealous Ridiculous Woman, as well. Rose and I reminisced about the old days. We gossiped and giggled and I went on dripping ketchup everywhere. Just like the old times.

At last, Rose hugged me goodbye. “I’ve got to go, but I think you should try out that Thrift Store next door, like I was telling you about.”

“I know all about that Thrift,” I said. “Their coupon has been right next to my newspaper column for many years! Nice place! Yes—I’ll go there, Rosy, if it makes you happy.” Rose walked away, wiping her happy tears, and I walked away, wiping my ketchup stains.

I was feeling quite cheery and full of myself, thanks to Rosy. Everyone needs a Rosy Fan Club...to move us beyond the Lovely-Lorena’s and all the Jealous Ridiculous folks of the world!

Walking next door to the Thrift Store, I quickly found several items on the bargain rack that suited my fancy. I went toward the check-out stand, but then, on impulse, I took a detour by the back office. The workers there stopped talking and looked at me blankly. Waiting. I smiled. “I am Vicki O’Neal,” I said. “I write columns for the newspaper. And I was wondering if in exchange for free advertising you might give me a bit of a discount?”

They stared at me silently. Intently. They were probably looking at my ketchup stains.

“How about it?” I said. “I’ll write about you next month and you’ll get free advertising!”

The manager shook her head. “So sorry. Can’t do it!” I slumped. For the second time that day, I felt thoroughly insulted. It was a real thorn in my flesh. But my trial was hardly over...It was then that I saw a pile of newspapers in a nearby trash can. All of my newspaper articles were there. They were tossed in the trash, after the store coupon had been clipped out.

Well...! By now, I’d had enough thorns in the flesh to last a lifetime. I walked out of the store, taking my ketchup stains and the last shreds of my dignity with me.

Yep. It’s pretty bad, folks. The article that you are reading now, is already at the bottom of the trash can at the Thrift Store. Yessir. I’m in the can with the good stuff. Apple cores and soda cans and leftover pizza crusts.

So—go ahead, folks. You can do it, too. Stick me in the kitty litter-box or under the bird cage. Pile fish guts on top of me. Shred up my tortured words to put them in the gerbil cage. I can handle these things...All the trash-can garbage. All the Lovely-Lorena’s and the Ridiculous-Jealous folks of this world. I’m used to it. I don’t get no respect. No respect at all around here. Except with Rose. Good ol’ Rosy. I’ve still got my little Fan Club. And I’ll tell you what, folks. Regardless of what the rest of the world thinks. Today, at the Rosy Fan Club, I have scored big!

Well...Maybe. At least—’til the Lovely Lorena gets a hold of Rosy. And that Jealous Ridiculous Jealous gal, too.

Oh dear. Oh dear. There goes my Fan Club!

Whisler's Hunting & Fishing Report



by Josh Whisler
Photo Submitted by Author

Fishing

The Missouri River flow is still low and cold. The weather has fluctuated up and down several times with ice flows one day and clear as a bell the next. The days are getting longer and the river is looking pretty good when it's clear and smooth. The water is still a frosty 43 degrees and I imagine that the fish are pretty slow moving right now. But with the longer days that means the water will be warming up and the fish will soon be feeding more. I haven't heard of anyone that has been out trying to fish lately but you never know this time of year. One thing to keep in mind when fishing the river at this time of the year is that with the river this low, the banks are steep to the water's edge. That creates a problem after the sun hits it and the top layers of frost begin to thaw. This slipping hazard creates

a dangerous situation if not monitored could send you into 40 degree water in a wink of an eye. So always be cautious when approaching the water's edge. I often take a rope because in a matter of an hour sometimes the bank you came down that was frozen will turn into a slipper slide. If I were to go out and try it now, I would try some dough bait or the old reliable - night crawlers.

Hunting:

2012 Hunting Seasons have been set by the Nebraska Game and Parks and are out in the latest hunting guides.

Spring Turkey Seasons are set and the Spring Turkey Season Permits may be purchased beginning January 9th though the last day of the turkey seasons.

SPRING TURKEY SEASON DATES:


Youth Archery March 25 – May 31
Archery March 25 – May 31
Youth Shotgun April 7 – May 31
Shotgun April 14 – May 31

PERMIT LIMIT


Spring – three per person per calendar year

Hunting opportunities are opening up now with the Spring Turkey Permits available and the spring seasons are all set. And it's still a good time to re-string your fishing poles with the water warming up more each day. All I can tell you is get ready because another year of hunting and fishing is coming! 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."

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Wymore State Bank Wymore, NE 68466	



Photo for this month is of the Missouri River ice flowing by on a sunny day.

<<<<<< Continued from page 7

Manure furnished fertilizer for the next crop or for pasture grass. There was no pollution. It was a different age.

Remember how Kelly McGinnis struggled to close the big rolling barn doors in the movie *Witness*? In the story she attempted to hide Harrison Ford's borrowed, faulty car from police. Those doors rolled about as stubbornly as the busted up ones at our farm shop. When a storm came roaring in from the South in summer, the "Farmer" here had to work hard to pull, push, or wedge those shop doors closed before the rain and wind hit full force. Then he would have to wait out the storm confined to the closed in space.

Soon the shop doors will be repaired. Lumber for the work is now lying on the floor of the building. A carpenter will be onsite soon to measure and fit the wood. What a great sight that will be to see the huge doors snugly closed against the elements, just like new.

PLEASE SHARE YOUR RECENT PHOTOS

If you have a digital photo you would like to share with our readership, attach it to an e-mail with a brief description. E-mail to; **countryneighbor@windstream.net**

Include a statement granting permission to publish one time, allowing sizing, cropping, and other adjustments as may be necessary for newsprint. It must be your work! Include your name, and city or county of residence. Your photo may be selected for publication on this page in the months to come. Please keep it recent (this year), and consistent with the theme of "Rural America", and note that it will probably be reproduced in black and white. Thank you!



A snowy image along Highway 67 near Peru, NE .



"A Road Less Traveled".




A Bald Eagle waits patiently until its sharp eyes spot a fish near the surface of the Missouri River.


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Fenced yard. \$139,500

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1317 Central Avenue
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