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Free

A Magazine for Small Towns and Rural America





PSC Basketball, February 2017

American Bald Eagle, East of Brownville, February 15, 2017

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Snow Geese during Migration in February shown here at Loess Bluffs Wildlife Refuge, formerly Squaw Creek Wildlife Refuge. March 2017

March Writers Devon Adams Merri Johnson Lee Nyberg Vicki O'Neal Marilyn Woerth Thank You!

Your Country Neighbor

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Old Home Place 390 Memory Lane Lost Coast

"Of Nieces, Nonsense, and Newspapers" by Vicki O'Neal



The day was dull, dreary, and oh-so-ordinary! I had a hundred errands to run...shopping to do...and articles to write—but my grandnieces were raring for Adventure! To them, even ordinary days should be 'Funtastic!'

"Auntie?" said little Katy as we headed into the Grocery Store together. "Can you be 'Mary Poppins' today?"

"Indeed!" I said, grabbing a shopping cart. "I'm guessing I'll have to be 'Auntie Poppins' to get through this shopping trip!"

Resolutely, I pushed the shopping cart past the bins of gum, pop and candy—hurrying the girls along. But then we passed a Newspaper rack, and I paused. My brain was thinking fast.

"Look here," I said to Katy and Avri as I handed them a Newspaper. "If you'll behave yourselves today, you might find yourself in the Newspaper, soon."

Their mouths dropped open. "How?" said the girls, looking intrigued and excited. "How will it happen?

The little Darlings had no idea that their 'Auntie Poppins' wrote a column for the local newspaper....And they didn't know that she was pushing a deadline. Auntie didn't enlighten them, either!

The girls spent the next half-hour chattering happily—pondering the mystery of the Newspaper in their hands. They scarcely noticed all the goodies on display throughout the store.

We made quick work of our shopping trip with a minimum of distractions. I was congratulating myself, when suddenly Katy tripped and fell down in the bakery aisle. Her smiles turned to tears, and she started to cry loudly.

Heads swiveled as other shoppers turned to stare.

I cringed. If ever there was a time for gum, pop, and candy it might be now! But then I reconsidered.

"Be brave, Katy!" I said. "You'll want to look like a hero in the Newspaper...Right?"

Her tears dried up immediately, and she gave me a wondering smile. "This will be in the Newspaper?" Katy said. "How I fell down in the Grocery Store?"

"Absolutely, my little Katydid!...because you are so brave!"

Katy beamed. She got up from the floor and dusted herself off.

"But how is this going to happen, Auntie?" Avri said. "I don't get it!"



Cardinal, snowy day, February 24, 2017



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A touch of gold... in February March 2017



A touch of snow... also in February. Your Country Neighbor 3

Where Life Is Good Marilyn Woerth

ADDICT: To devote or give (one self) habitually or compulsively to something. I am an addict. I am addicted to; babies, children, my family (especially the grandsons), my husband (yeah he's in there), my faith (always), food (especially pasta and salty), gardening, buying things for my garden (plants as well as hardscape), colors (playing with colors; gardening and sewing), reading (around five books a month), clothing (a new found love), sewing (Renaissance costumes),shopping for LuLa Roe on line (poor hubby), my husband (yeah him again), and my love for life and where I live. Where Life Is Good.

A few months ago, I had been well, out of sorts. After a trip to the doctor I found out that I was pre-diabetic and of course as always, over-weight. I was given a choice, lose ten pounds and lower that glucose number or go on medication. I was given two months. My next appointment was right after Thanksgiving. Really! Two months later, eleven pounds lighter, glucose number down I think it was down 14 points. (Deep bow taken.) Doc was happy but cautioned that even though I was no longer pre-diabetic the number was still high. New six month goal lose another twenty pounds and drop that glucose number even lower.

I hate making displays on weight loss attempts public,. #1, people watch what you put in your grocery cart. #2, they watch what you eat when eating out, #3, it's the first topic of conversation, #4, if you fall off the wagon... well let's not go there. But since I have been posting for the past several months on my Facebook page, well what the heck.

I have lost ten of those next twenty pounds with three months to go to lose the next ten. I have gotten through Christmas, our anniversary, and a weeklong cruise which I did put on



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five but have taken that back off. So the next question is how? Pure will power, no diet, better exercise routine, saying no, cutting out almost all sugar and soda, and being real with myself. I am going to be hungry.

Did you know that thirty-five years ago, when we lived in Idaho, I lost 50 pounds and was a diet center counselor for a company I haven't heard of in this area? So I know how it can work. But I lost those 50 pounds in three months. Even though I told everyone I felt great, I didn't. I felt stripped inside. So as soon as I came across a crisis in my life, loss of three loved ones in three years, the weight went back on slowly (30 years), but back on it went and thirty more pounds to boot. (Please youngsters, this is a cautionary tale.)

So I need to be real, I am going to go to bed

hungry some nights, and only some. I will never feel stuffed (bad for you). I will lose the weight slowly and forgive myself when I don't. Benefits, I have less heartburn, my glucose number is lower, and so far a twenty pound weight loss. My husband would say the backlash would be that I have found shopping for clothing fun again. And it is becoming more fun: WARNING, WARNING, LuLa Roe addiction.

Looking forward to the spring and thumbing through the seed and flower catalogs (Warning Addiction).

I live where my life is good; even though some of my addictions are still out of control. But I'm working on them. At least that's what I am telling my husband.

Poetry by Devon Adams

IN TANDEM

They travel together, like old friends riding on old trains. Their vehicle, though, is the wind, and their wings carry them from far down south up and over rolling plains braided with shining rivers running full of snow melt and spring rains. Landing like a squadron of military personnel, the troops dressed in uniforms of olive trimmed in black and yellow dive into a tree with the precision of a battle formation. Their allies, the robins, have already deployed along the creek and are seeking out the worms who have surfaced after a heavy downpour. Soon, the waxwings are hunting choice tidbits in the trees. They are acrobats who can dangle and dip and hang upside down to reach their lunch.

DANCING IN THE CLOVER

In the mist of a magic morning there is a brand new foal who is finding his feet. He wobbles and wanders until the rhythm finds the music and he is wild with the freedom to dance in the sun. All things are new to his eyes and ears, and he is eager to greet each one. At the end of his lovely first day, he sleeps under the sky and hears the symphony of the stars in his dreams.

MARCH IN FORMATION

There are certain rules that apply to keeping things in order. Records can show how events have happened in the same sequence for eons. But then along comes a roque spring that shoves winter out of the way before the calendar gives him the permission to get up and go. After that, it is a free-for-all when flowers and bushes and trees all bloom at once. and green things explode into life. But what seems glorious and wonderful can be blown away by the wrath of a late blizzard that blasts away the balmy days of a false spring. Then again, sometimes spring really does get away with it, and sneaks in and stays.

PLAN AHEAD

It's not so simple, if the future is scary and a person is inclined to burrow into the sand and hide. That is a short term plan, at best, because there is a lack of oxygen down there in the dark, and at some point breathing becomes a priority. So, with panic and fear, you come up for air and open your scratchy eyes. Good luck in your confrontation with reality!



THINKING OUT LOUD

It can be hazardous to

louder than a mumble.

Usually a habit, this

behavior is like a long

But if you happen to be

wandering the isles of a

the current issues about

politics for instance, and

another patron pauses

beside you as you both

contemplate the merits

a generic, your words

of a brand name versus

may light a fuse that leads

concerning your private

to an explosion of opposition

opinions. Such is the social

climate today, where civilized

debate has been replaced

with angry confrontation.

speak your thoughts much

conversation with yourself.

department store, debating

ALWAYS AND FOREVER

Now and then, two people find themselves in the same room, and like magic, they are attracted to each other. Even though they've never met, they feel a connection. Down the road, after dating and marriage and kids, they are still drawn together, even if their personalities have clashed to the point of a separation. There will always and forever be a bond between them that is beyond explanation. They are the halves of a whole heart.





At the Loess Bluffs National Wildlife Refuge, migrating Snow Geese explode from the water's surface as they take flight, February 2017.

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Diary of a Part-time Housewife

Merri Johnson Dateline: Southwest Kansas, February 2, 2017 After a wonderful 16-day tour of parts of Texas, Arizona and New Mexico, hubby and I rolled into a small town in southwest Kansas for our last night on the road. It was already dark and we were having trouble finding the B&B where hubby had made a reservation. The GPS system did not recognize the house number that we had been given, and due to darkness, house numbers were hard to see.

But we continued to drive and look until we were nearly outside city limits. At that point, hubby pulled over, barely containing his irritation, and called the B&B owner for navigation clarification. He explained where we were and asked if the location we sought was north or south of our present position. The owner was obviously flummoxed by his question. Perhaps she was one of those people who are directionally challenged. At any rate, hubby reversed direction and while we rolled slowly along, he continued trying to make sense of her directions and I continued to watch for the house number.

Before long I spotted the B&B sign in front of the house. It had been obscured by a parked vehicle when we drove past it originally from the opposite direction.

Hubby relayed the good news to the owner. She invited us to go on in and added that she would be over directly. I always thought B&B owners lived on-site, but apparently not in Kansas. The "house manager," who did live on-site, let us in and pointed up the stairs, with instructions that our room was on the left at the top. All well and good. She then ushered us into the kitchen and showed us where the toaster was with further instructions that there was bread and butter available if we "wanted to make toast" in the morning. Ditto for the coffee.

Hmmm. This was not the kind of hospitality we had experienced at other B&Bs over the years. Hubby asked if a more substantial breakfast could be served. Perhaps the owner, who took our reservation, had failed to communicate properly with the manager. The latter gave the distinct impression that our expectation of a cooked breakfast was news to her.

But to her credit, she hastily offered to prepare biscuits and gravy or bacon and eggs. What time did we want to eat? she asked. I replied that we wanted to get a fairly early start, though not at the crack of dawn. How about 8:00? I suggested. Turns out 8:00 a.m. is the crack of dawn in far southwest Kansas this time of year, an apparently unreasonable time to be up. I conceded that 8:30 would be fine. Hubby said that bacon and eggs would do and not to bother with the biscuits and gravy.

So, the next morning, hubby went downstairs to fetch coffee at about 7:15, expecting to make it himself. Based on our conversation of the previous evening, it seemed unlikely the manager would be up an hour before the crack of dawn. But to his surprise – and hers – he discovered her already up and about. He told her that we did not expect breakfast for another hour. In fact, he said, we would just hit the road and she could not bother with it at all. But she insisted that it would be ready soon.

Hubby reported back to me, so I picked up the pace a bit and we were in the dining room by 7:45. The bacon, eggs and toast reminded me of the campfire breakfasts that hubby cooks about once a year: certainly edible, but not up to B&B standards. The only beverage on the table was the lukewarm coffee in our half-empty cups that we had brought with us from our room. Hubby asked for juice, which the manager immediately ran to the kitchen to get, apologetically explaining that it was "from yesterday." She was even more flustered when we had to ask for salt and pepper. But she bustled back to the kitchen, from whence we heard her utter something indicating a minor crisis of some kind – bacon about to burn in the frying pan, perhaps?

Next thing we knew, she was bringing out biscuits and gravy. The gravy, she said, was day-old, but she could make fresh if we wanted. We felt bad about not eating any of it, be we had told her the night before that we only wanted bacon and eggs. Perhaps the other guests, who were either up and gone without breakfast, or were sleeping in to a more sensible hour, would be served the biscuits and gravy, which by that time would be cold, hard and congealed. I didn't have high hopes for her success at reheating any of it.

At any rate, we finished breakfast and were on the road before 8:30. Hubby commented that the breakfast menu was probably satisfactory to hunters, which he speculated was the mainstay of their clientele. That may be, but I had to wonder where they would stow their dirty outdoor gear. Every horizontal and vertical surface in the house, and on the patio, and on the privacy fence surrounding the side and back yards, was covered with décor of every imaginable description. My own decorating style is eclectic, but this place was eclectic to the power of infinity.

Now that I think about it, I believe the prime motivation for turning one's home into a B&B is to support one's "collecting" addiction. That said, I'm glad there are such people. B&Bs are generally competitively priced relative to hotels offering free, hot, self-serve breakfast.



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<<<<<<> Continued from page 2

"It's a mystery for you to solve!" I said. "Now, you stand right here and study the Newspaper while I go check on the fruit aisle."

Minutes later, I returned to find the dimpled Darlings smiling triumphantly. They were waving their copy of "Your Country Neighbor" in my face. "We found you in the Newspaper, Auntie!" Avri said. "You write articles!"

"Fancy that!" I said. "And now we need to get out of here! Time's a wasting!...We've got more adventures awaiting us outside!"

We headed for the Cashier, and were about to check out when we saw a boy sitting on the floor throwing a tantrum. He was giving his helpless Mom the 'What-For!' He wanted gum...pop...candy! He wanted everything!.

We paused, gazing at the spoiled child and his frustrated Mother. "Well," I said. "I hope this boy and his Mama will recognize themselves in the Newspaper next month!"

My nieces looked at me wide-eyed. "Auntie!" they said. "Do you mean ...?"

"Ah yes! This bit of nonsense will be in the Newspaper, too," I said. The girls giggled.

"If only he knew how silly he looks!" Avri said, brushing past the pouting child.

We paid for our groceries and sashayed out into the parking lot, leaving behind the pitiful pouter and his helpless Mama.

The sun had emerged and the day was glorious! We felt exuberant in the sunshine. We'd turned a dull shopping trip into an Adventure and we hadn't wasted a penny on foolishness, either! Little Katy and Avri would soon be 'famous' among their peers at school...And best of all, their 'Auntie Poppins' had a story for next month's column!

We'd conquered our little world and had accomplished a great deal! It was all in a day's work!

The girls smiled, laughed and twirled in the sunshine while their Auntie unloaded the shopping cart with unmitigated satisfaction. The day was no longer dull, dreary, or ohso-ordinary!

It had turned out to be a wonderful afternoon....A splendid day, indeed!

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Alzheimer's Affects Us All



Dementia Can Make Getting A Good Night's Rest Harder

By Lee Nyberg

Too little sleep saps energy and mental sharpness in everyone. In people with Alzheimer's, a form of dementia, lack of sleep causes a further reduction in cognitive abilities, pain is exaggerated, and small problems can lead to big upsets.

Around 35-70% of people with Alzheimer's suffer from sleep disorders. Common causes are a lack of exercise, daytime naps, damage to the brain's "internal clock," disturbing dreams, and screen viewing near bedtime.

Seeing a doctor about sleep problems is important, because they could be medication related or due to injury or illness. If possible, chart your loved one's sleep behaviors for a week before seeing the doctor. Your "research" could give the doctor a head start in determining and addressing the cause of the sleep problem. Here are the seven factors to track for seven days:

- Wake-up time and bedtime
- Number and length of daytime naps
- Trouble falling asleep
- Number of times up at night, reason, and if have trouble returning to sleep
- Snoring, gasping for air, stopping breathing or thrashing and kicking while sleeping
- Number and timing of caffeine and alcoholic drinks each day
- Amount of exercise each day

These are the most common issues, per our National Health Institutes site: https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/ PMC2748127/. If you'd like to track more areas, check the site for 12 additional factors.

Don't forget to ask the doctor if your loved one's medications could be causing the problem. It is possible medications could either be changed or taken at a different time. Perhaps a sleep-inducing prescription could be taken at bedtime.

You might be surprised if the doctor sends you home with a list of things to do, rather than a prescription for a sleep medication. Generally, non-medication options are better for sleep disturbances because some drugs commonly prescribed to dementia patients for sleep can reduce cognitive abilities further and increase the risk of falls. Worse, they don't always work. Talk with your loved one's doctor about concerns and issues with commonly problematic medications, such as Risperdal, quetiapine, lorazepam, zolpidem and over the counter sleep aids.

Sleep experts suggest the following non-medication options be tried for at least two weeks before any drug course is considered. Chart your progress to keep track of what works.

- Establish a daily routine for wake-up and sleep time, exercise, and activities
- Limit naps to 30 minutes total
- Get fresh air in the morning with a short walk; sunlight will reinforce day time and movement will help with waking up
- Keep a bedtime ritual which includes a snack with protein and mineral rich fruit (e.g. yogurt and cherries or dates), quiet reading or prayer, and soothing music; avoid screens within an hour of bedtime
- Exercise 30 or more minutes daily
- Avoid caffeine after mid-morning

If your loved one becomes a good sleeper and suddenly has trouble again, check for pain. An undiagnosed infection could cause sleeplessness.

Routines are occasionally upset. When this happens, expect to see disturbed sleep and a period of readjustment. A calming and healthy routine supports wellbeing (and sleep) in people with dementia.

Lee Nyberg serves older adults and their families with education on dementia and aging issues, and through her company, Home Care Assistance.

2017 SEASON

Bobcat Baseball Schedule

3-18	Graceland Univ.	Peru, NE	1 p.m.
3-19	Graceland Univ.	Peru, NE	1 p.m.
3-25	Central Methodist Univ.	Peru, NE	1 p.m.
3-28	Bethany College	Peru, NE	1 p.m.
4-14	William Penn Univ.	Peru, NE	1 p.m.
	(Senior Day)		
4-15	William Penn Univ.	Peru, NE	1 p.m.
4-18	Benedictine College	Peru, NE	1 p.m.
4-25	Tabor College	Peru, NE	2 p.m.
4-27	Grand View Univ.	Peru, NE	1 p.m.
4-28	Grand View Univ.	Peru, NE	1 p.m.



Bobcat Softball Schedule

-11	Culver-Stockton College	Peru, NE	1 p.m.
-24	Grand View Univ.	Peru, NE	2 p.m.
-26	Central Methodist Univ.	Peru, NE	1 p.m.
-29	Graceland Univ.	Peru, NE	2 p.m.
-8	MidAmerica Nazarene Univ.	Peru, NE	1 p.m.
-9	Avila Univ.	Peru, NE	1 p.m.
-19	William Penn Univ.	Peru, NE	2 p.m.
-29	Mount Mercy Univ.	Peru, NE	1 p.m.
	(Senior Day)		
-30	Clarke University	Peru, NE	1 p.m.





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