

Your

Country Neighbor

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May 2005



A Monthly Magazine



YOUR WINDOW WITH A COUNTRY VIEW

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“Taking Flight”
April 14, 2005
from the series
Wildlife Along Our Rivers
by Stephen Hassler

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May is about...
This month's issue is about memories and marshmallows, mushrooms, and mustangs. It's about country scenes, and country stories, pictures and poetry, wildlife and domestic life.

There is a request on page seven for you to advise how this publication could maintain its quality, or become even better.

Soon June will be busting out all over. So until the next issue, enjoy our new Spring, and don't forget to thank the people who support *Your Country Neighbor!*

Your

COUNTRY NEIGHBOR

Editor and Publisher: Stephen Hassler

The following people helped make this issue possible:

Devon Adams
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Thank you!

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Is one season better than another? Many would argue that they like Fall better than Winter or Summer or vice versa. Old age has it's drawbacks and it's opportunities. At Colonial Acres our staff is ready and able to help you meet some of these drawbacks and opportunities.

Moving out of the place we called home for a long time, has special challenges. New challenges are seldom easy, but the staff at Colonial Acres will help you meet the challenge of creating a new home. Being able to have our staff assist you with daily activities lets you focus on things of more importance, such as communicating with family, reading a good book, visiting with old friends and the list goes on.

In Nebraska, we're assured that the seasons will change. As they change, we change (the way we dress, the way we eat, etc.). Please consider letting the staff at Colonial Acres of Humboldt assist you in meeting the day-to-day challenges by letting them do many of the daily chores and allowing you to enjoy this season of your life.

Questions? Please call Doug Williams (Administrator)
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Window on Fifth Street

It interests me that my new window that views Fifth Street was installed about the same time that I got a new telephoto lens for my DSLR (digital camera). Many things are more clear to me now.

As my interests expand from writing and publishing to photography, the excitement of a new adventure makes it hard to focus on the view from my Window on Fifth Street. But the connection is still there, between my pictures and this tri-state region. Much is left to be discovered and shared.



This Bald Eagle took flight shortly after I took its picture. Two other photos in this publication were taken right after this one. The first is on the cover page, and the other is on page nine.



Here is a member of the Eagle family, best viewed in flight rather than when cleaning up road-kill on the shoulder of the highway. This is a lovely Turkey Vulture.



There are three categories of Hawks. Our familiar Red-tailed Hawk is in the largest. This Sparrow Hawk is in the smallest category, called falcons.



They say the Kingfisher is an uncommon site at Squaw Creek National Wildlife Refuge. I regularly see one on each side of the lake.



These are the only snow geese left at the refuge...that I could see at mid-April.

Some of my pictures are in color on the web at www.yourcountryneighbor.com

Do you recognize these locations from Your Country Neighborhood?

These locations will be revealed in the June issue.

Last month's locations are at the bottom of this page.



Banners and street lamps give charm to many of our towns, including this Iowa community.



A graceful mansion many will recognize.



Possibly more windmills per capita than any city anywhere.



A well preserved city hall.



It was apple blossom time in this community early in April.

Last month's 'answers' as to where the pictures on page five were taken.

First column: Top, Farmers Bank in Nebraska City, bottom, on the Courthouse Square in Falls City.

Second column: Top, the courthouse in Tecumseh, middle, bridge in Cook, bottom, courthouse in Red Oak.

Western Nebraska Farm Report

The Face of Drought

by Karen Ott
April, 2005



The northern edge of the big storm which hit Colorado last weekend brushed the panhandle dropping a fair amount of snow to the south of us, up to an inch of rain east of us, three tenths here on the home place and nothing at Torrington less than 20 miles west. For the most part it missed our watersheds.

We have become so accustomed to storms going around us a Discovery Channel futuristic movie special depicting a Yellowstone Park volcanic eruption didn't worry us a bit...after all, if the weather pattern holds, the cloud of volcanic ash and smoke will divide just west of Wyoming's Pathfinder reservoir, leaving us as the only area in the United States free and clear of ash-fall.

It's been a typical Great Plains Spring, blue skies, temps all over the place, and wind...and more wind...and even more wind. Eskimos have their dozen different words for snow but Nebraskans have fifty words for wind...none of them complimentary.

I love Nebraska but hate the wind. Not only does it fill the yard with tumbleweeds, corn husks, and other assorted debris, it limits my outdoor decorating options. In most areas a scarecrow is stuffed with straw and ends up light as a feather; but not here. My across-the-road-scarecrow probably weighs 150 lbs. If I hadn't wired the bottom edges of his new jeans closed last week and filled the legs with rocks his pants would be in the next county by now. The dogs have learned to steer clear of him during windstorms; otherwise they'd be knocked senseless by a pair of legs heavy enough to be considered lethal weapons.

I briefly considered turning 'him' into a 'her' this year, but couldn't come up with a surefire method of keeping her skirt down during our windy weather and discarded the idea in the name of modesty and good taste; he will remain a Mr.

I've been toying with the idea of hanging a sign around his neck with the words, 'Unemployed because of drought', scrawled across it in red paint. He stands next to a field, which, because of Mitchell Irrigation District's lack of storage water, will remain corn stubble throughout the growing season; without water for the field there will be no water for the pumpkin patch. You know times are tough when even the scarecrows are out of work.

Like the scarecrow, we are holding up as well as can be expected. While it's difficult to look across acres of corn stubble still standing in mid-April, I can't imagine how it is going to feel to see the land ripe with drought and looking like winter during the verdant and summer-green days of July and August.


Because our fields are physical symbols of who we are and what it means to be a farmer the droughted-out acres will chafe and irritate all summer long.

But it's only the middle of April and corn hasn't yet crossed the men's minds, they are all-consumed with planting and spraying beets. The first two fields went in Saturday, shortly before the rain, the third was planted Wednesday and the final field will go in Sunday or Monday. Stringing out planting dates is an old ploy aimed at cheating Mother Nature out of the pleasure of freezing all the beets off during a single night's cold snap. Sometimes the strategy works and sometimes it doesn't; but we're farmers...trying to outmaneuver nature is in our job description.

In the long run, the years we spend attempting to bend weather to our own will rather than adapting to its various vagrancies leaves us as tough and gnarled as a hundred-year-old cottonwood. Scarred by winter blizzards and summer thunderstorms, marked by flood and drought, we keep standing, roots sunk deep in the soil and heads held high in proud defiance.

We are heroes of our own story.....braving the odds is what we do best.

Karen



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Help maintain the fine quality of Your Country Neighbor, or even make it better. Your feedback would be highly appreciated. Anonymous responses are welcome.

It will take a few minutes of your precious time, and a postage stamp. And I am serious when I say "precious time". I know you value every free moment of time that you have, and this publisher of Your Country Neighbor wants to enrich some of those moments in your day with the best publication in the area.

With the help of this publication's writers, *Your Country Neighbor* has done a pretty good job of making the good life better. But change is a fact of life and if we don't change for the better, than it's for the other option. You may have noticed some changes this year on some of these pages recently. I think it's working, but what do you think?

Do you have a favorite writer? Do you like the pictures? And if you do, are you a fan of the barns or windmills or the birds or landscapes? I know how you felt about Leo and his travels. He was glad to share some of his experiences with both you and me while he had the time...precious time. Everyone in these pages

would like to hear your opinion(s); writers, advertisers, photographer, and publisher. Names and addresses are optional; I would like to know your gender and age for a demographic study, but it's your letter.

So, do you read about commodities or poetry? Joe or Devon? Josh or Karen? If you are like many people I talk to, you read *Your Country Neighbor* from cover-to-cover. That answer is welcome too. But I think you have more to say. Say it by mailing your reply to:

Your Country Neighbor
P.O. Box 126
Peru, NE 68421

If e-mail is an option for you, then e-mail to countryneighbor@alltel.net. Write "My answer" in the subject line.

Thank you from your editor & publisher.

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Watch Roger's Garden Grow!

And buy his fresh, homegrown produce at the Farmers Market in Auburn, beginning early June.

This year Roger Moerer's *NEMAHA GARDENS* will have an even wider variety of tomatoes, including black and white 'cherry' tomatoes. Early June options will be green beans, white and red beets, zucchini, green onion, cucumbers, radishes and 'heirloom' items.. In the meantime, you can watch Roger's garden grow online. Click on the "Country Stores" link at

www.yourcountryneighbor.com

Pictures will be posted three times a month beginning May 16th. Watch this space each month for what's ripe! And see Roger at the Farmers Market Saturdays in June for fresh produce.



In one month there will be cucumbers growing on this wire support, but you will see them first at yourcountryneighbor.com

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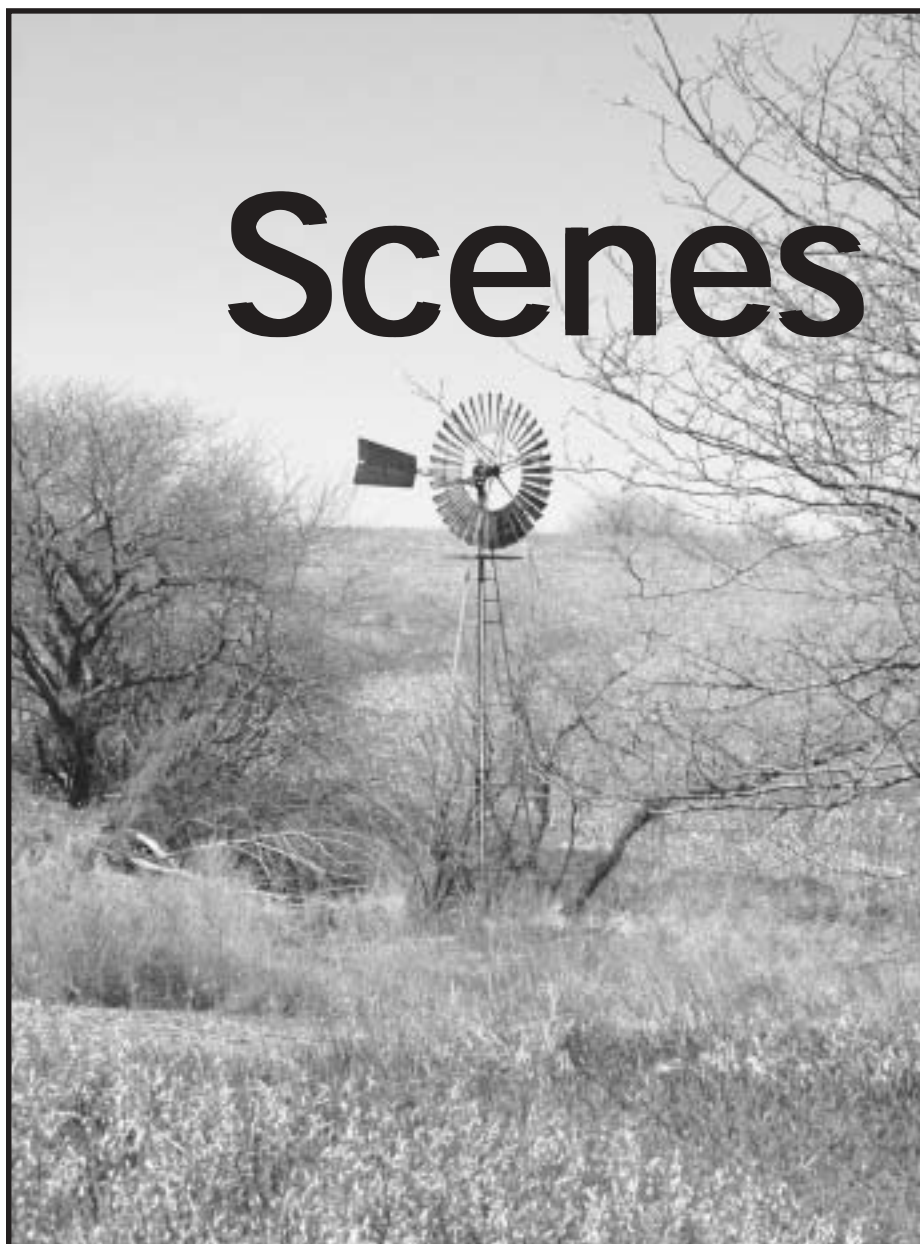
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Country



Scenes

A window to the past; some details are clear, others unseen.



Inviting, but I was going in another direction...maybe next time.



Fishing buddies.



Very nice. Reminds me of the house I lived in while in high school.



This little guy doesn't seem to be bothered that most ducks are in Canada by now.



Two barns west of Elk Creek.