

Your *Country Neighbor*

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May 2009



The Last Winter Sky

Voices from your Valley

| | |
|------------------------------|---------------|
| Country Scenes | 3 |
| Merri's Diary | 4 |
| Devon's Poetry | 5 |
| Early in the Morning | 6 |
| More Pages with Color | 7 - 10 |
| Window on Fifth Street | 10 |
| Joe Smith | 11 |
| Hunting & Fishing with Josh | 12 |
| Rescue Mission | 13 |
| "The Face of Drought" | 14 |
| Bowling with 'WII' | 15 |
| Coupon for Valentino's Pizza | 16 |



Arbor Lodge in Nebraska City -- the peonies will be blooming soon.



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Writers this month

Devon Adams
Dorothy Barrett
Larry Christy
Merri Johnson
Vicki O'Neal
Karen Ott
Joe Smith
Josh Whisler

Thank You

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Your Country Neighbor

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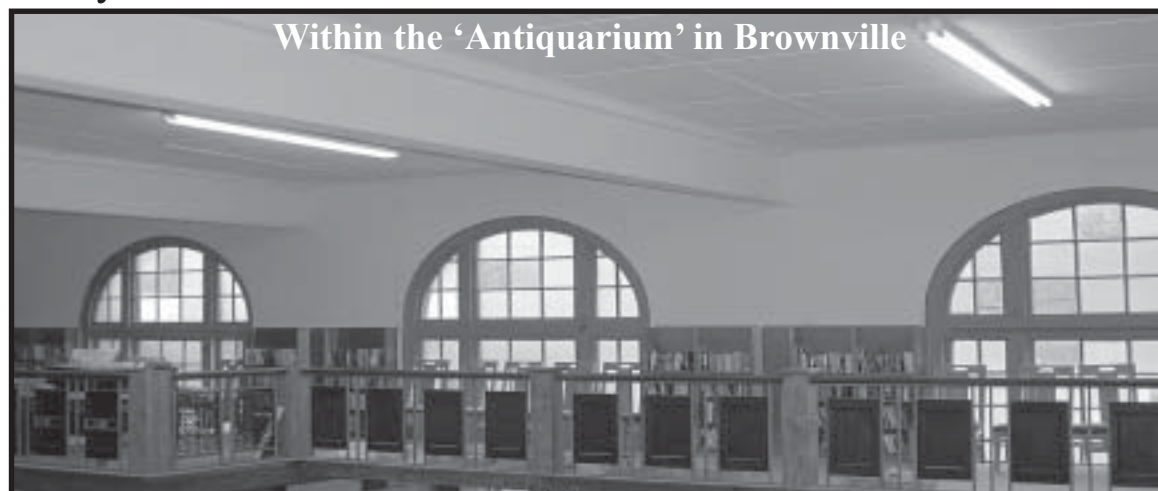
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Country Scenes



Brownville Village Theatre



Within the 'Antiquarium' in Brownville



Remnants of a dock or pier on the Missouri River



Spring planting was a common sight in April



On Cemetery Hill, Peru

PEGGY KUSER

Certified Public Accountant

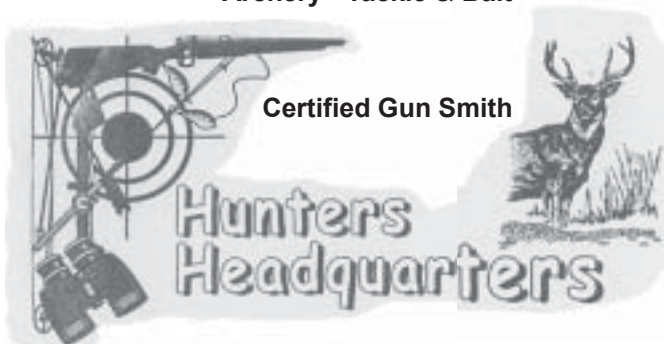
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Your Country Neighbor

Diary of a Part-time Housewife

Merri Johnson

This month's domestic drama will serve as a cautionary tale for all you readers who tend to be a little absent-minded. I won't say which member of my household fits that description, but you'll figure it out soon enough.

One Saturday back in mid-March, when it was *barely* warm enough to be outside, my husband and a buddy decided to hit the golf course at Nebraska City. Even though he wasn't driving, my husband automatically slipped his keys into his pants pocket when he left home. The next morning, he couldn't find them. We didn't have time to look for them then, so he took mine from my purse to drive to church.

Later that day, we began searching in earnest. My husband was absolutely certain that he had those keys in his hand when he loaded his clubs back into his buddy's truck at the end of their golf round. Could he have dropped them in the parking lot? A call to the golf course yielded nothing. Could he have lost them at the gas station or the store where they stopped on their way home? More phone calls. More nothing. Could they be in his buddy's truck? They looked. No keys.

O.K., then. The keys must be somewhere around the house. Pants and jacket pockets were checked and re-checked. The laundry basket was searched. His golf bag was emptied and tipped upside down and shaken. Nothing. We even looked inside his golf shoes. We re-traced his steps. The clubs had been unloaded in our driveway, so we looked in the grass and the flower bed out front. We looked in the freezer and the storage cabinet where my husband had put away the purchases he'd made on the way home from his golf game. Nada.

We called the store and gas station again to see if anyone had turned them in. My husband even made a special trip back to the golf course to check the parking lot himself. He drove at a crawl for several miles near the course, scanning the roadside for shiny objects, no doubt oblivious to the strange looks and irritated gestures of passing motorists. It's a wonder he wasn't rear-ended.

Having no success in his search, he began to grasp at straws. He went so far as to suggest that perhaps I had picked up his keys and put them in my purse, and that it was really *my* keys that were misplaced. *I* was known for such things, he told me. (The guilty always resort to blame-shifting until the proof becomes undeniable.) Of course I could prove ownership of my own keys because I have a distinctive fob attached to my key chain.

We finally had to separate my keys so that each of us had a key to a vehicle we could drive. At this point, we had only one key for each vehicle. If another key got lost, one of us would be without transportation. We would simply have to have new keys made.

Not so fast, amigo. Having a vehicle key made isn't quite as simple as having a house key made. Today's vehicle keys have a computer chip in them, for security of course. Not everyone knows this. Not even everyone who makes keys knows this. I took my car key into a local store where the clerk ground me a new one. It slipped right into the ignition and turned smoothly, but nothing happened. Without that computer chip, I learned, the engine won't start.

I soon discovered that replacement vehicle keys were going to cost us nearly \$100.00. One hundred dollars?! I was stunned. And a little peeved with you-know-who. I had no idea those keys were so expensive. No wonder dealers don't hand out complimentary spares when you buy a car these days.

This development cast the whole incident in a new light. It isn't just inconvenient to lose one's keys; it can be a real budget-buster. We decided to hold off on ordering new (\$100!!!) keys, hoping somehow that the wayward set would turn up. Like keys have legs, right? Days went by, and we kept our eyes peeled. Every conversation turned into a litany of that day's search.

Then, suddenly, Mother Nature came to our rescue.

Remember that snowfall the last weekend of March? When my husband finished clearing the driveway, he entered the garage through the side door to put the scoop away. And what do you suppose was dangling from the *outside* door knob? You guessed it.

Here's the cautionary part of this story – *he had completely forgotten that he had used his house key to get in that door* the day of the fateful golf game. He had intended to retrieve his keys after emptying his hands of his golf bag and purchases. But you know how it is: it doesn't take much of a distraction to throw us old people off track. Memory is a tricky thing. My husband was sure he had re-traced every step, until he realized he hadn't. We rarely use that side garage door. Plus, it faces our north side yard where we practically never walk, especially this time of year

It's ironic that the keys which hung on the outside of our house for over a week, available to any ne'er-do-well to take advantage of, come with a computer chip designed to prevent vehicle theft. They *should* come with a homing device so you can find them when they're misplaced. We absent-minded types could make good use of that.

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Poetry by Devon Adams

BEYOND DIMENSION

Tonight, the dome of the sky
 rolled back the clouds
 and turned on the lights
 of the planetarium, except
 that we're not in a theatre,
 and the stars are real.
 If we could see with telescopic eyes,
 we'd know that light goes on forever,
 with no edges or boundaries.
 Galaxies are racing to find
 the speed that carries them
 beyond dimension, into a world
 that's structured without time,
 a place where tomorrow meets
 yesterday, and the past is the future.

HEARTWORK

Like a mighty engine
 pulling through the darkness
 of the long night,
 the muscle of the heart
 beats on, a constant force.
 We trudge through days
 of hours that pass slowly,
 sometimes without sunshine,
 drenched in fogs and freezes,
 melting into intractable mud.
 But the pages turn,
 and we continue reading
 the book of tomorrow,
 until another chapter opens,
 and we find that we are
 in another place, looking back.
 Today is better than yesterday,
 and we proceed
 into the light of hope.

WALK ON THE BEACH

Pieces of coral wash out of the dirt
 and roll down a steep hill.
 They have no color
 other than stone.
 I pick them up
 and hold in my hand
 dreams of an ancient sea.

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VEIL OF ILLUSION

Today is reflected
 off the far hill
 in pale rose contours,
 hiding behind thin fog,
 like a bride's translucent
 veil, concealing the reality
 of a stripped down soul.
 Soon the day will burn
 through our illusions, and
 we will make decisions that
 change the design of tomorrow.

Five O'clock in the Morning

by Larry Christy

Five o'clock in the morning; the end of that soft quiet green time that begins somewhere between 3:15 and 3:45 a.m., or from that same confusion of space that makes sense of the relationship between black licorice whips and jack knives.

It comes from between the bottomless black sky of stars and cool fan-blown summer dreams that float and prance above your sleeping mind. From between the cold soft blue sheets that lay over your warm tanned skin.

A time as real as the long forgotten whispers from between your lips to your friend, speaking into being with the voice of a child, the elaborate strawberry secret with all of its intricate booby traps, rituals, passwords, superstitions and lies.

Uncurling down dirt paths on hand drawn maps that lead through the great gigantic caves of maple tree shade.... behind old wood piles turned dusty and soft from termites and mold... through a yellow-green veil of weeping willow branches dragging the ground, then climbing up through the black sticky low slung limbs of the peach tree.... walking under the weighted branches of the apple tree, across its battlefield of rotting red, green and yellow apples, skins turning to brown juice, turning the air to applesauce in your nose while the black carpenter ants scramble over the earth from one feast to another.

Through dandelions... tall green weeds and Johnson grass. Past yellow and black garden spiders hanging in the center of their white webs like the X of death. Past the abandoned '54 GMC dumptruck, the

cab no longer a color, but a fine powder of red-brown rust. The driver's door... froze open in the summer heat from the cycles of rain, warm days, morning dews, fog, wind, snow, ice and thaw that have worked their fate on its hinges. The tall black gearshift rising up from the floorboard patched with tar and flattened 8 o'clock coffee cans, strewn with dry leaves and yellow newspapers, the stiff skeleton bone brake pedals, the seat dry and ripped, riddled with the tunnels and shreadings of field mice, the round wheel black and cracked, the green glass of the windshield smashed into a mosaic by some forgotten unknowable accident.....

On past its bumper to the twin sets of tail fins of the '57 Chevy sisters that old man Frisbee would never sell, one turquoise blue, the other flat pastel pink, sinking in the soil, fading away like the yellow Nash Rambler station wagon with its headstone of expired plates from '61.Past the young walnut trees, over the stack of creosote black railroad ties and the scribbled twists of Black Eyed Susans. Down rabbit trails, through cockle burrs, thorn bushes, thistles and milkweed vines, through holes bent just wide enough in rusty wire fences... creeping along the barbed wire past piles of fresh horse manure, slipping between feed sheds on planks lying flat on the ground... that you can flip over and find fat black crickets beneath and enormous black garter snakes coiled under.

..... Across thick green grass to that hiding place of cob webs and wasp nests, feed troughs of musty corn, the tin roof leaking sunshine,

the dirt floor covered with clean yellow straw.

.....And you are so near and so safe but at the same time so far away.... completely in your own world.... still within the faint shrill sound of your mothers calling voice... still absolutely lost and unfindable.

And as she yells your name once.... again and again....you look into your friends eyes, smile and raise one magic finger, sticky with peach amber, to your lips and say... Shhhhhh!.....

The entire world, everything that you know, everything that you can imagine in this universe, all the unexpected joys that have come, all the grand plans that will turn tragic, lie right there in that small distance between your lips and your friend's ear. Your Best Friend's ear. Your Best Friend in this whole world..... in your whole life.

And that is what it is like this early in the morning. Still, yet vibrating with a thousand insect songs. The air is wet....so wet you feel you can drink it and yet you breathe and it is only clean....so clean you feel you are breathing cold crystal clear water.

The dirt, black and loamy below you, the smell of its age, the oldest substance in all of existence.... ten hundred thousand billion years old and still alive, holding the promise of germinating the youngest life into existence before you finish your next breath.

There is no such tool as time that can be used here....it is all Feel.

Dogwood Blossoms



Apple? blossoms 'on the square' in Auburn

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WINDOW ON FIFTH STREET

by Stephen Hassler

(Reprinted from May, 2002)

Dear Mom,

This past winter I watched the snow blowing by my window on Fifth Street. I watched with a coffee mug in my hand and a warm blaze in the fireplace. No cows to milk anymore nor calves to feed. I live in town now and I can walk to the grocery store.

Not that I don't miss the farm! Someday I'll have a place in the country big enough for a garden with sweet corn and cantaloupe, plus a few acres for alfalfa. I really miss the fragrance of alfalfa blooming in June, and I miss our walks through the fields on summer days.

A lot has happened since we last talked. I raised some children, like you did, and I married above myself, like Dad did. And not too long ago I returned home to Nebraska. You lived here most of your life, but I wanted to try different things. I lived in Colorado, Arizona, Texas, New Jersey, and of course, Iowa and Nebraska. And now I'm back. Can you believe that I missed Nebraska blizzards? It took me a long time to realize that I love them.

And guess what? I published a magazine! I'm very excited about it and I know you would be proud. I am fortunate that I know so many talented people who help and support me. They help make my publication possible, and they make it special.

Happy Mother's Day, Mom. I wish we could talk again.

Love, your son.

p.s. to all my country neighbors:

When we were small children, we followed our parents everywhere. When we were teenagers we tried to get away from them. As young adults we were too busy for them. As we become older we want to know them better and be closer to them. Don't be concerned as to how to go about it. Just take your parent to lunch or coffee or go camping or shopping, and let the magic happen.

Give your Mom a rose, and don't wait for Mother's Day.

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Our Life Mates

by Joe Smith

Beings we all get a little older as times goes on, I wondered if we or any of us really appreciate what the other one has done for us. I look back on all the times my wife has patched me up over the years, and a few times I was there for her when she needed me. I remember when we were going to college together and decided to get married, to the dismay of our parents. But we were in love and really thought we needed each other. Chances are there were a lot of hormones in there too.

It seems like the Lord knew what he was doing when he made man and woman different. I think he did that on purpose, don't you? There is something that draws certain people together, sometimes you wonder why that guy married that woman, or the other side, why did she marry a guy like that? I guess that is for them to know and us to guess.

Anyway or anyhow they did get together and some are still together. I know when we went to a high school reunion you had to be careful what you said, not too many were still married to the same person as originally. When my wife and I got married not many people gave us much of a chance to stay married. As I jokingly tell my wife it ain't over yet. We still have some living to do, and intend on doing it. Some times we get a wild hair and take off somewhere or to see somebody, but most of the time she kinda plans it. Maybe she thinks I plan it. It really doesn't matter. As long as we both enjoy it. That is not always the case. We might decide to go alone or with a friend, which is good for a couple, not being stuck in a rut. Get a new interest in life as long as it is not another companion. My wife says she doesn't want to break in a new one. When you think about it, who would want either one of us, we are no prize. I think the feeling is mutual. I'm sure we all have fleeting thoughts of what if. But at our age they are few and far between. After 58 years we think we know what we have in our partners, you noticed I said think.

We have had some hard times, but on a whole life has been good to us. You might as well take it as it comes, rather than fight it. I think it would be a near impossibility to find a better soul mate than the one I have right now, and I'm not looking for another one. We have our spats like every one else but we get over it. Kiss and make up so to speak. I don't think I have been the easiest fellow to live with, but she has stuck by me through thick and thin. We have been down to having to go back to a job we just did in order to get paid so we would have grocery money. But even that just makes you closer. We raised four kids and still have one left, plus a bunch of grand kids and great-grandkids. So now all we have to do is sit back and see what happens.



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Looking Ahead

By Dorothy Barrett

"Spring has come," the calendar says.
I look around and say, "Where?"
The snow yet lies upon the ground –
A robin sings on a bare tree branch
He wonders if his trip north began too soon.
His bunch of worms are still buried deep –
A crocus peeking above the snow
Gives us hope the cold won't last.

The snow melts away
Leaving a touch of Spring in green
As grass spears stretch upward.
A red bird sings, "Cheer up, cheer up".
The warm weather is moving in –
And we can trust anew
That Spring is making its appearance.

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Whisler's Hunting & Fishing Report



by Josh Whisler
(Photo provided by Author)

Fishing:

The Missouri River has risen and looks to have stabilized for now until Spring rain run-off starts fluctuating river levels. More and more boats are out on it, but I still haven't heard anyone catching a lot of fish. They are biting but nothing of any size, mostly small channel cats along with the drum, surgeon, and carp hitting pretty steady. The winds have dried out the banks and they seem to be pretty stable for getting to the river's edge. But it's always a good idea to watch your step when approaching the river's edge. The water is still only 53 degrees and depending on the day that you got wet, you're not going to warm up any time soon if you fall in. "What are they hitting on," you ask? Crawlers, crawlers, and need I say it again, "crawlers". It's time to get out if you want some good Spring fishing action. They aren't big fish but they are hungry and hit often. There's still action on shad strips and dough baits but for the most action "crawlers". They still aren't hitting the live baits yet but we'll have to wait for the water to warm up for that.

Hunting:

Spring Turkey Seasons are opening and you can buy you permit RIGHT NOW at the Game & Parks web page <http://www.ngpc.state.ne.us/hunting/hunting.asp>.

The Spring Turkey Archery Season started March 25 with the other seasons to follow soon. This year a hunter can have up to three permits for this Spring season.

2009 Spring Turkey Seasons:

Shotgun Statewide — April 18 - May 31

Archery Statewide — March 25 - May 31

Youth Archery — March 25 - May 31


Youth Shotgun — April 11 - May 31


Spring Turkey Permits are available and there are plenty of birds this year. Fishing has finally opened up. You can pick a couple of things to do outdoors right now. And Morel Mushroom weather is just around the corner. So when you're out and about, keep your eyes open. You might find more than you bargained for. 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."



This month's picture is of Turkeys – Toms strutting and hens feeding.

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I have no grand-kids. My own babies are grown up...And they live 2000 miles away from me.

I'm stuck halfway between Menopause and Grandma-hood. It's a phase where a woman's maternal instincts run amok. The *Mama-Hormones* just don't know what to do with themselves.

At this stage, adoption is the only option...

Adopt the neighbors' kids. The paperboy. Dogs. Kittens. Dying geraniums. Rescue anything that whimpers or looks sad.

Lately, I've been rescuing green orphans. Seedlings and plants of all kinds. At a local K-mart, I find myself in the Garden Center, drowning wilted plants with a water hose.

Swoosh...!

When the clerks return from lunch break, they find their Garden Center in drippy disarray. They see wet shoeprints leading out the door, but they never catch me.

They are persnickety people. Exactamoniou. And not at all compassionate.

One day, I said to the hardened clerks in the Garden Center: "Look at these wilted veggies! If you'll give me a good discount, I'll take them all home to live in my garden."

But no...Oh no. They wouldn't hear of it! No discounts for *Wanna-be-Moms* with over-active hormones...No sir, ma'am!

The poor babies. They appealed to me from their parched racks. Little zucchinis and crooknecks and cucumber plants...So weak and thirsty they could hardly lift their heads.

It was more than I could bear. I went home and told my husband about the wilted plants. Michael has a green thumb, and his garden dirt is a special concoction—the richest in the county—maybe even the state.

"The veggies need a good home," I said. "Little herbs and zukes and crooknecks and cukes..."

"Okay. We'll check them out," Michael said. "...Next time we're in town."

Well. By the time we got to town, the babies weren't even there. They had all disappeared.

"We've waited too long!" I said. "They've killed them!"

But my husband didn't bat an eye. He drove around to the back of the store, and there they were. All those wilted orphans sitting by the dumpster, waiting for the garbage truck.

Needless to say, they were glad to see us.

We hustled them into our car...Dozens and dozens of them. Then we got out of there, quick. It was the biggest veggie heist in Humboldt County. My husband called it a *Rescue Mission. Special OP's...*

The orphans drank our good well-water and sank their roots into our rich mulchy soil. They began to grow. And grow and grow. Suddenly, our little zukes and cukes and crooknecks had become monsters.

Oh—but that's not half the story. Speaking of monsters...let me tell you about the *other* orphan babies in our nursery. The flower bulbs.

This spring, I began finding bulbs everywhere. By the roadside and in abandoned lots. The biggest ones were dumped near the river-bar. Big hunkin' bulbs that someone had abandoned. Purposely.

I don't know what kind of flower bulbs they were, but it broke my heart to see the orphans struggling to survive on the rocky river-bar. They tried so hard to be brave...poking their green arms up through the debris that someone had piled on top of them.

I couldn't deny them.

I scooped them up by the hundreds and took them home, hidden away in the trunk of my car. My husband knew nothing of the orphans tucked away in the trunk...He only saw the flower bulbs that I'd left sitting on my front seat.

"They're big!" he said. "Big as onions. They must be aggressive rascals, or they wouldn't be dumped by the river. Are there any more Onion-heads there?"

"You bet!" I said. "Hundreds!"

"Let's go get a few of them," Michael said.

That's what I was hoping he'd say. Happily, I climbed aboard his big truck. We bounced and jolted our way to the rocky river-bar where the piles of Onion-heads lay.

"See!" I said. "We've got to rescue them!"

And rescue them we did. There must've been almost a thousand of them huddled there on the river-bar. We began heaping them into the truck bed. Higher and higher.

"I'm sure we have enough," Michael said.

"Oh, but there's another pile over there. Poor babies. Look at them."

He sighed, and scooped up another hundred or so. The truck fairly sagged. "That's enough!" my husband said with finality. I knew better than to argue.

We took them home to join the hundreds of other orphan bulbs...the ones hidden away in my car trunk. Michael never knew about those other stow-aways.

That night he had a terrible dream. A nightmare really...one of those dreadful things that never end.

In the morning he awakened, disgruntled. "All night long, we loaded these Onion-heads into trailers," he said. "We drove down the road, and the bulbs fell out all over the place. People laughed at us, and it was horrible. The dream went on and on..."

I comforted him as best I could.

I never did tell him about the Onion-heads hiding in my trunk. It would've been overwhelming. Somehow, I managed to smuggle those orphans in with all the others. There were already so many kids in our orphanage, a few hundred more made little difference.

We spent several weeks planting bulbs—digging hundreds of holes and dropping bulbs into the dirt—gently at first, then with more vigor as time went by. Hour after hour. Day after day. We've run out of places to put them.

And we're still not done. I work on them while my husband's gone. At night, he'll come home and say: "Did you get all the kids tucked into bed?"

I shake my head, too tired to speak.

Sorry to say, folks...it's still not over. There are piles of Onion-heads sprouting everywhere. They don't even wait to be tucked in the flower bed. They grow wherever they've landed. Our orphanage is beyond absurd. It's a monstrosity. We're weary of the children...but they won't go away.

They just won't.

I will spend my Mother's Day working, I'm sure. Digging holes...warily watching our children grow.

They're getting tall and lanky and worrisome. We're not sure what kind they are. Like puppies with big feet, they're going to grow huge. Soon, the Onion-heads will take over the yard...the driveway...the veggie garden. I don't know what to do...but I'll try to think of something.

Hmmm.

No, I just couldn't. Not the river-bar, folks.

We never mention the river-bar...not around here.



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The Face of Drought

by Karen Ott



Nowadays they're identified by the English phrase 'Winter Counts', but the Lakota Sioux called their pictorial calendars by the more exotic sounding waniyetu wowapi. Waniyetu meaning year...measured from first snowfall to first snowfall...and Wowapi meaning anything that is marked on a flat surface and can be read or counted, such as a book, letter or a drawing.

For generations the plains Indians documented their experiences by naming each year for an event and painting a picture referring to the year on a carefully tanned hide. A designated Count-Keeper, who doubled as historian and storyteller, was responsible for adding the yearly image.....although the event chosen for representation was selected not by him, but in consultation with a council of elders. Consultations which were, I imagine, lively affairs as strong willed men, each with differing ideas about what was important, narrowed a wide range of options down to a single choice.

The events used to name the years weren't necessarily the most important things that happened, but ones which were uniquely memorable, and widely known, within the community, such as encounters with other tribes, the death of a leader, meteor showers, outbreaks of disease, or unusual weather. My personal favorite is the image of tipi with brush piled around it as a windbreak....the symbol for the winter of 1818/19, "The Sand-blowing year". I can relate to that.

I like the idea of counting a life by winters, of distilling an entire year into a single visual memory. Referring to birthdates by "I was born in the year many horses were stolen from the Flatheads" or "She arrived in the year the star passed by with a loud noise," makes the miracle of each new life seem even more special, and marking a loved

one's death by the unforgettable "He died the year the stars fell from the sky," is certainly preferable to the unremarkably dull month-day-year we chisel into our stone-cold granite tombstones.

Measuring the passage of time in pictures instead of by numbers seems more human somehow; it's not as exact as the linear accrual approach, but the soul doesn't need 'precise' to be satisfied.....it needs something more personal.

I've never heard of a contemporary version of the winter-count, but in some ways Dale and I have been creating one since the day we met. Conversing in what I call Couple-Code we often speak of 'the year the river bridge collapsed....the year the beets froze in...The year the tornado took the barn.....the year it didn't rain. To those standing outside the circle of our shared

memories the phrases mean little, but to us they chronicle the life of an ordinary farm family....a life built around weather, crops, kids, and each other.

It's far too soon to tell which 2009 event will out-shadow, or outshine, others to win a place on our personal Winter-Count; until last Friday's announcement of a possible Influenza pandemic I would have bet this year would have gone down in history as 'The year of fiscal foolery.', but that may change. It's possible our winter-count will record '09' as 'the year the rains returned' or perhaps we'll choose "The year Devon learned to read," rather than some ill-defined threat from the greater world; only time knows.....and he's not talking.

I'm certain the Lakota elders would understand.

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WII BOWLING PROGRAM IS A HIT

by Roger Moerer *

Judy Hiedzig and the Valley View Apartments Board members purchased and installed a Wii game system on Christmas of 2008. It was installed in the activity room where we have a big screen TV, which in all honesty, was not used as much as it is being used now.

The programs on the basic disc of the game system are : BOWLING, BASEBALL, GOLF, TENNIS and BOXING. The games available for this system are designed for ages 8 to 108. More discs with additional games were purchased, but the game that took our small community by storm was BOWLING.

People who otherwise would stay in their apartments, started coming out, at first out of curiosity, and eventually leagues were formed; competition was in full swing. People who never dreamed of bowling have become experts. More than anything, everyone has fun. Anyone can see both the psychological and psychical benefits of this game system.

We have seen the great benefits of this system, that goes beyond just the plain fun of it- which children enjoy so much as we know it. It does a lot for small retirement communities, even nursing homes (as we read in the papers) because it brings people together to have fun, compete, talk, get to know each other, have mild psychical activity which are all so good for everyone, considering the alternative.

The residents feel that there is so much more to do when they come down to the activity room, other than conversation. Now they have so many options; they can have their coffee in the library, exercise in the activity room using a DVD program designed for senior citizens or people with disabilities, use the equipment in the exercise room, play cards in teams, bingo, stroll along the nicely kept grounds in the summer, with a brake in our beautiful gazebo area to watch the birds and squirrels, or read a book. However, the big hit is the bowling leagues that formed after acquiring the Wii System.

At first we had 3 teams (4 players each) with 3 winners who received gift certificates. In the following months the numbers increased; now we have 5 teams, and we even have substitutes on call just in case anyone gets sick. Nearly half of our residents are involved in this program. Some of them you might know: Joan Bouse, Carol Pasco, Jean Slagle, Berenice McCullough, Thelma Den, Louise Nelson, Betty Behrends, Midge Mason, Norma Apple, Marlene Dietrich, Darlene Quinn, Joyce Stewart, Nellie Grooms, Barb Edmonds, Lois Haworth, Gwen Tinney, David Bouse, Wayne Dietrich, Ron Garver and Roger Moerer.

We think it would be a great idea to compete with leagues from other retirement communities, churches, high school, assisted living or nursing homes.

Not to assume that every community has leagues or even the game system itself, but if there are people in any of these places that would like to have some fun, know how to play this game, and want to be part of the community, what a great way to get everyone together.

The other great thing about our community is that we can do all these fun things while our laundry is getting done; we don't have to sit in a chair and wait. We can read a book, put a puzzle together, or talk to out newest resident, a 20-year-old parrot named Captain that has his headquarters in the laundry area. He loves greeting anyone that walks by with a funny "Hello!"

As anyone can guess we are excited with all the fun things that we are provided with in our small community. We are also grateful, and want to thank our management and board members for providing a



'Bowling' at Valley View Apartments; Roger Moerer and friends

positive and engaging environment for us. The Wii Game System here at The Valley View Apartments is something we believe every retirement community should have because we have seen so many positive things result from it.

*THE OPINIONS EXPRESSED IN THIS ARTICLE ARE THOSE OF THE WRITER ONLY AND ARE NOT IN ANY WAY CONNECTED WITH THE MANAGEMENT, BOARD MEMBERS OR ANY OTHER PEOPLE INVOLVED WITH THE DECISIONS REGARDING VALLEY VIEW APARTMENTS.



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