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Volume Fifteen, Number Eleven

November, 2014



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Voices

From the Valleys of the Nemaha Publisher & Photographer, Stephen Hassler

> Writers This Month Devon Adams Mary Ann Holland Merri Johnson Lee Nyberg Vicki O'Brian Marilyn Woerth Thank You

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VISIT BROWNVILLE

Where Life Is Good Marilyn Woerth

There is a certain kind of genre that I love to read. Yes, I'm a geek, and yes we are trekies at my house, and yes the genre is science fiction/fantasy. My husband leans more towards the science fiction side and I lean more to the fantasy side.

My mother was an avid reader when I was growing up but she never read the kind of books my husband introduced to me. I was a little hesitant at first. Who and what are these strange beings and their strange world, I wondered after reading the first chapter of "The Hobbitt"? I had to actually read the book twice to understand everything. Then something happened. Call it an awakening, a conversion, whatever you want, but something happened to me, and I had found new friends.

I looked at the world differently, I found my creativity, my humor (sci fi humor is very subtle), my scientific side. I relished the parodies and metaphors that were used by the authors. I also learned how to think outside of the box a lot. My mind exploded with the possibilities. Life became four, maybe five dimensional.

I hungered for those novels, devouring them, begging for more. At the present I have four different series that I am reading. After reading the sixth book in one of the series, I was devastated to find out that the seventh book wouldn't be out for another year (Harry Potter fans know my agony). Armed with my kindle and my steady flow of fantasy/sci fi novels I now can look winter straight in the eye and laugh at the cold, dark, shadowy nights when television does not complete me and I know that I can get lost not in just another part of the world but in another world, and not just in another time but another dimension.



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SMOKE AND GOLD

The hills are smudged with the hues of autumn. Brilliant leaves are burnished by the slant of the falling sun, as they dance with the wind in a mad dervish before icy hands from the far north reach for them. Shiny crimsons, golds and oranges and yellows, and deep purples are accented by exclamation points of fancy sumac leaves, the point men for the army of colors. Drifting like lazy ribbons on the chilly breeze are tendrils of smoke from the fires burning fallen leaves and branches. The smile of the sun beams over the peaceful scene that is more perfect than a painting and more pungent than the vapors from a kitchen stove.

IN LINE

There are those among us who like to line things up, which is to say that it is not a preference, it is a compulsion. A slightly skewed spoon, nodding affectionately to her neighborly companions, the fork and the knife, is not allowed such indulgent proclivities, as that breaks the rules of perfect alignment. Objects in a house must be set exactly so, as any change in one thing creates a maniacal chaos of everything. Pictures hanging even one degree off straight will cause the ceiling to crack and fall. Counting chews and chomps of food, and steps between the sidewalk cracks, and pills in bottles, and the touches of each door before the keys go in the locks, are necessary. Not to mention soap and water, and hands that must be cleaned and cleaned again. Days are long and getting longer as the obsession grows, wasting precious time that cannot be replaced. The addict believes that he can stop if and when he wants to, but relax is not in his vocabulary, and the clock is counting out his time.

Poetry by Devon Adams

DREAM LIVES

We don't get to choose the lives we live in dreams. It would be grand to book a nice location, with the people of our choice, and enjoy a fabulous vacation from the daily grind of ordinary. But instead, the opposite is usually true. We are in pursuit of a train we cannot catch, or running from a bear who wants to catch us, or we forgot to study for the test that we will surely fail. Our car is sliding sideways on the ice, and we scream before we hit the bridge. Or, sometimes we are simply trapped in a room with Aunt Kate, who talks so fast she doesn't breathe, and when we try to walk away, our Uncle Wayne blocks the door, blowing cigar smoke in our face, as he recounts his recent visit with his urologist. On some days, it is a relief just to wake and find that we are awake.

FOCUS

He's in focus, in so many ways. The doe in front of him is wrapped in clouds of scent that drive him wild and crazy, to the point that his cautious self is being led by his reckless self out of cover and into the danger of the open field. He plunges through the brush, heedless of the sounds of distant guns. In fact, he doesn't hear the boom of death, as he drops in between one step and the next.

WAITING FOR WINTER

The tiny chickadee is talking to his friend about the last of today, as they find their sleeping perches. It was a gentle time this afternoon, with warm sun on their backs. But an early sunset, dropping wind and clear skies have set the stage for the temperature to drop well below the freezing mark. Overnight, the ornate tapestry of autumn will fall into the arms of winter, and tomorrow will be a new chapter in the book of seasons that goes on forever.

PENCIL PORTRAITS: PEOPLE & ANIMALS Done from your photographs.

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Bring along your Medicare card and a list of the prescription drugs you take.

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Nov. 5	Weeping Water	Cass Co. Extension	8400 144 th St., Ste. 100	9:00-4:30	402-267- 2205
Nov. 6	Nebraska City	Moser's U-Save	1821 S. 11 th Street	9:00-5:00	402-269- 2301
Nov. 11	Nebraska City	The Ambassador	1800 14 th Avenue	9:00-4:30	402-269- 2301
Nov. 12	Auburn	Auburn Library	1810 Courthouse Ave.	10:00-4:30	402-274- 4755
Nov. 13	Pawnee City	Pawnee Co. Extension	Courthouse	9:30-4:00	402-852- 2970
Nov. 18	Plattsmouth	Plattsmouth Library	400 Ave. A	9:00-4:30	402-267- 2205
Nov. 19	Tecumseh	Ridgeview Towers	1143 N. 3rd Street	9:00-4:30	402-335- 3669
Nov. 20	Weeping Water	Cass Co. Extension	8400 144th St., Ste. 100	9:00-4:30	402-267- 2205
Nov. 24	Nebraska City	The Ambassador	1800 14 th Avenue	9:00-4:30	402-269- 2301
Nov. 25	Palmyra	Palmyra Senior Ctr.	425 C Street	9:00-4:00	402-780- 5606
Dec. 2	Auburn	Auburn Library	1810 Courthouse Ave.	10:00-4:30	402-274- 4755
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Nemaha County Courthouse



November, 2014 Your Country Neighbor

Alzheimer's Affects Us All



Why Palliative Care Should Be Part Of Alzheimer's Care By Lee Nyberg

What's going to happen now? My Dad is no longer able to walk and he has had trouble eating and swallowing for a while now. Is there anything we can do to help him improve? He has no quality of life anymore. —Diane, daughter of a man with late stage Alzheimer's disease.

Chronic, degenerative diseases, like Alzheimer's, progress on a generally known path to the conclusion of the disease and the victim's life. With a diagnosis of Alzheimer's, it is important for the person with the disease to plan for end of life care while still able to do so. Acknowledging and planning for the disease's progression enables self-determination and relieves family members from having to make emergency room decisions as well as some challenging daily care choices.

If you're thinking I am advocating for an advanced medical directive (AMD), you're close. Everyone over the age of 18 should have an AMD so family and physicians understand future wishes for medical treatment and know who should represent the person if he is unable to make medical decisions for himself. However, in the case of chronic conditions, more is needed.

When a serious illness and frailty are present, as in the situation of a person in the end stages of Alzheimer's, medical personnel need guidance for day-in and day-out treatment (such as when and how to use antibiotics) and to understand what to do in emergencies (such as a broken bone from a fall or major organ failure). Direction must come from a set of medical orders created and signed by the patient's physician based on discussions with the patient, patient's family, and/or Healthcare Representative (HR). The discussion must include consideration of the patient's values and wishes and a clear awareness and understanding of various medical scenarios likely to arise in the normal course of Alzheimer's disease and treatment options. The resulting medical orders will detail the patient's preferences if he's capable of expressing them, or the HR's interpretation of them, if not. (In some states, these orders are called Physician's Orders for Life Sustaining Treatment, or POLST. Nebraska does not currently have a regulated POLST document.)

A palliative care approach for living with Alzheimer's compliments the creation of the doctor's orders. Palliative care means comfort and pain management instead of the provision of the type of care which would sustain life as long as humanly possible. A palliative care methodology would mean families:

- Include the person in social, family, and individual activities as much as possible
- Treat depression actively and with professional help
- Pursue preventative medicine, such as maintaining hygiene standards and taking immunizations
- Use medication to support quality of life
- Seek to manage and avoid pain
- Interact with their loved one respectfully, by treating them as adults and not regulating food, exercise, or safety in non-essential ways
- Avoid non-essential surgeries and treatment

This approach honors the person with Alzheimer's and supports the best quality of life possible for the duration of the disease.

Without prior planning, difficult decisions for the on going care of a loved one in late stage Alzheimer's fall to the HR and family. They must disregard their own desires and focus on the patient's values and wishes.

Lee Nyberg serves seniors through her company, Home Care Assistance. For more information, please visit our website: HomeCareAssistanceLincoln.com or call 402-763-9140 to talk to a Care Manager.



This woodpecker likes black oil sunflower seeds.

Diary of a Part-time Housewife

Merri Johnson

Things I'm thankful for:

The hope that by the time you read this, I will have my husband back. Like many other women in the communities around the Cooper Nuclear Power Plant, I've been an "outage widow" for the past several weeks.

The hand of my six-year-old granddaughter, as delicate as a little bird's wing, in my hand on grandparents' day at her school.

A collection of pressed leaves on my table, a small sample of God's masterpiece of autumn.

A life-long friend.

PBS TV programs on Sunday night!

My son, on whom I know I will come to rely more and more.

A turn of phrase that can make me see a simple thing in a whole new light. An excerpt from the novel, *Gilead*, by Marilynne Robinson:

"It's strange how you never quite get used to the world at night. I have seen moonlight strong enough to cast shadows any number of times. And the wind is the same wind, rustling the same leaves, night or day. When I was a young boy I used to get up before every dawn of the world to fetch water and firewood. It was a very different life then. I remember walking out into the dark and feeling as if the dark were a great, cool sea and the houses and the sheds and the woods were all adrift in it, just about to ease off their moorings."

A husband who doesn't care if there's a little dust on the furniture.

The nudge of the Spirit prompting me to stop postponing that visit to my neighbor, and actually doing it.

Opportunities to say "yes" to doing things that truly make a difference.

The readers of this column who tell me they enjoy it.

Happy times with family and friends to look forward to: the big events and the smaller, intimate gatherings.

Long talks with my daughter.

The knowledge that the election will soon have come and gone; but even more, the fact that we have the right to elect our own leaders.

A little grandson who follows his papa around like a puppy.

The love of my son-in-law and of my daughter-in-law.

At every stage of life, the one I'm in at that time feels like the best one.

Just enough regrets to keep me from becoming complacent with myself.

Happy Thanksgiving to all of you.

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Another favorite era I love to read about is King Arthur and Merlin, I must have over a dozen books about them written from every angle. Do you know that there are some people out there who don't know who King Arthur is? Now I am being a bit of a snob, but if I have piqued your interest, great! No matter what your favorite genre is, keep reading. If you have children, encourage them to read. If you're a geek like me, don't let others intimidate you. Remember most of the giants in the technology world are science fiction readers. Wear and read your geekdom with pride. For we are the geeks! Many of us live where life is good and our heroes, oddly, for the most part, have good old Midwestern values. (Oh if you want to know the difference between a geek and a nerd ask your smart phone.)



The Peru State College Band, November 1, 2014

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Of Boomers, Blizzards, and Birthdays

Old Home Place 390 Memory Lane Lost Coast

By Vicki O'Neal



I'm a Blizzard Baby-Boomer, and I'm right proud of it, too!

Now—you all know what a 'Blizzard-Baby' is. And you know what a 'Baby-Boomer' is. But how about a 'Blizzard Baby-Boomer'? Well, I'll tell you about 'em in a minute, folks.

First, I have to mention that I just celebrated my 53rd birthday—which sounds terribly old to most young folks today. But never mind that! I still feel 18 years young, deep down inside.... Full of fizz, pep and vinegar. Like many modern Baby-Boomers today, I'm doing what I never dreamed of doing at 18. I jog three miles without pausing to catch my breath. (When I was 18, I couldn't jog three blocks... let alone three miles.)

As a Boomer, I know I'm running out of time. And I've got to run like the dickens to keep up!

There are a lot of Baby-Boomers running loose in our society today. Our children are all raised and we can go adventuring... to the forest... to the river... to the beach. We do a lot of gardening, camping and beachcombing. A lot of vacations. Cruises. Traveling.

I do some wandering, myself—meandering here and there. I wander to the West Coast and back several times a year. I play in the sand and I dig up plants for my garden. I stretch out in the sun. I dance in the rain; I dance beneath the stars. I do it all alone... since nobody else wants to do exactly what I want to do. And that's OK....!

I chart my own course. I map my own destiny. I travel where I want without asking permission of anyone, but God. I am a Boomer.... and I must take full advantage of every moment. I breathe deeply. I live fully. I have to. I'm running out of time.

I've learned that you don't wait for someone to bring you flowers, because they probably won't. Instead—"you plant your own garden and decorate your own soul," as the little poem says. You can plan your own birthday parties, too, which is exactly what I did this year. My dear friend, Lizabeth and I had an oldfashioned Slumber Party. Chocolate cake, ice cream, and the works!... And I didn't even count the calories.

As Boomers, you've gotta do fun and crazy things, you know because you haven't much time left to do it. You enjoy life to the fullest without regret and remorse. You forgive and let go. You don't hide behind the white-picket fence of your shattered dreams. You get out there and live and learn and laugh and let 'er rip! You don't worry about what people think, because there's no time for such foolishness.

So on your next birthday, dear Baby Boomer.... have an especially sweet one. Make memories! Throw your own party. Eat lots of Chocolate Cake and don't count the calories.

We are Boomers, so let's go out with a Boom! Don't whimper or whine. And whatever you do, don't waste time. There isn't much time left... so get out there and make the most of it.

You'll be so glad you did...!

And now just one more thing, folks. At the beginning, I called myself a "Blizzard Baby-Boomer". And you may be wondering about the "Blizzard" part in this article.

Well...A true Blizzard-Boomer is much more special than a typical Boomer. We were born out of "sheer desperation," and it's no wonder we are such a hardy breed. For you see, during the blizzards of January—when the power went out—our parents did what most bored folks do when the lights go out. And the results were.... nine months later... Well. What do you know!? Millions of us Blizzard Baby- Boomers showed up!

And now you know why there are so many of us who have birthdays in the fall...! (I'm not kidding, either. It's the truth!)

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