

Your

# Country Neighbor

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October 2008



Curious Ones



The Missouri River Overlook at Indian Cave State Park  
Green Will Soon be Gold



Auto Show coming to Auburn October 4th



September Action in the PSC Oakbowl

## Voices from your Valley

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Your

## COUNTRY NEIGHBOR

### Voices from the Valley of the Nemaha

Publisher & Photographer, Stephen Hassler

#### Writers this month

Devon Adams  
 Frieda Burston  
 Vicki Harger  
 Boni Hathaway  
 Merri Johnson  
 Karen Ott  
 Bea Patterson  
 Joe Smith  
 Josh Whisler

Thank You

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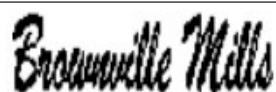
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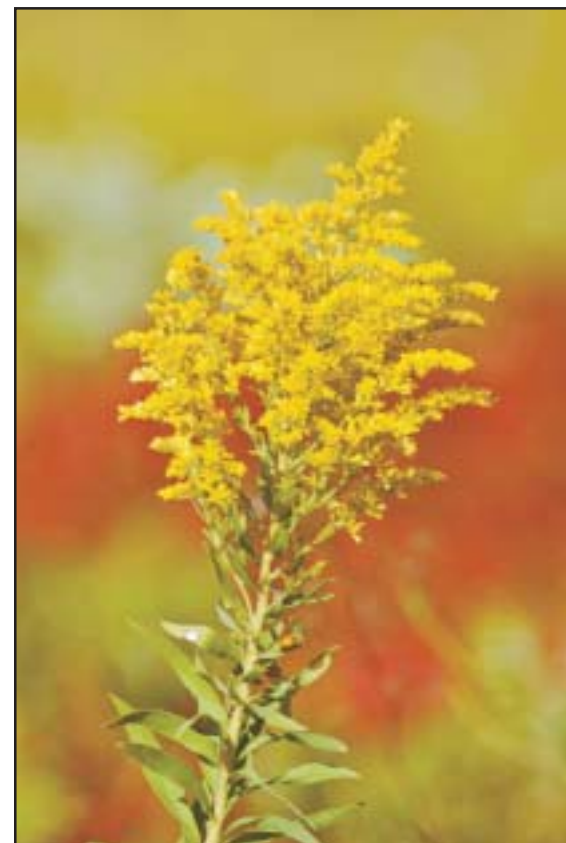
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Autumn is here; another picturesque season in Southeast Nebraska! September has been a colorful month with Autumn wildflowers, and the gold-to-rust shades of soybean fields.

One of the main things I wanted to do when I began this monthly publication in 2002 was to remind people of the scenic beauty around us that many take for granted. Within our cities, there is charming architecture. Along our scenic highways and country roads are wild gardens of flowers and ornamental grasses. Beyond a rustic fence may be a barn or windmill that has seen its time, but still stands as a testament to the pioneering spirit. And there are the rolling hills of corn, soybeans, wheat, and alfalfa. East/west Scenic Byway 136 is a decorative route through Southeast Nebraska, and Highway 67 from Dunbar, to Peru, and through Nemaha to the Indian Cave turn, is another route worth experiencing. Explore it this October!



# Country

# Scenes



Milkweed pods, dry, and emptying their seeds



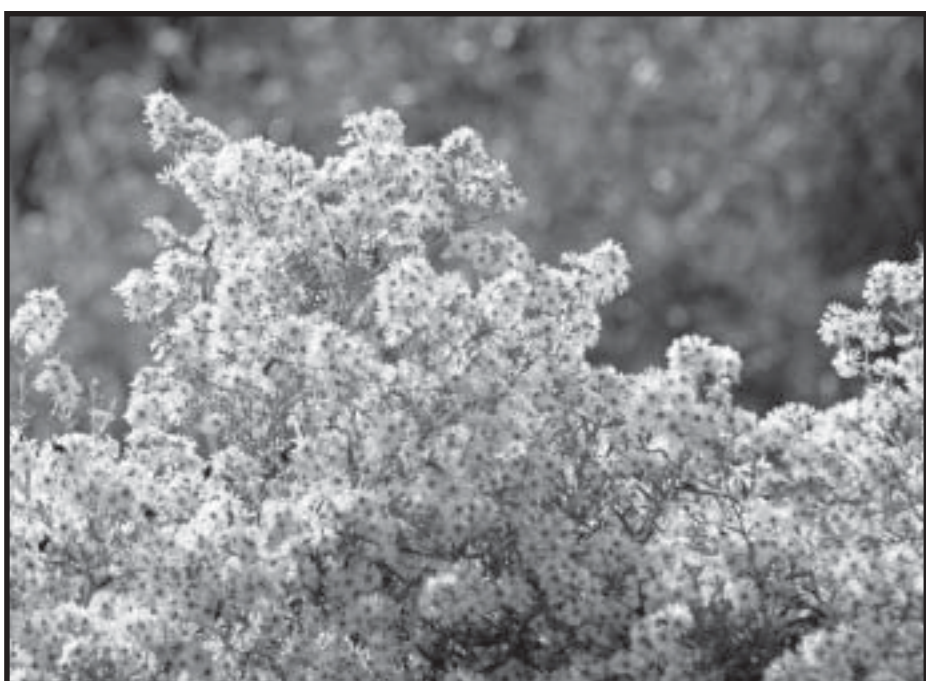
Final Cutting



Last year custom built motorcycles were part of the Auburn Auto Show. This year the show will be on October 4th.



See these in color along Highway 67



An uncommon, Daisy-like wildflower along Highway 67 west of Peru



A big event in Southeast Nebraska this year was the Applejack Parade with marching band competition

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Color versions of some of these photos will be posted at:

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Click on *Publication*

October 2008

*Your Country Neighbor*



## September, 2008, And Still Movin' On

by Frieda Burston

Life here was utterly boring, boring, boring. I was dying to get out, and go back to where I could live among all sorts of interesting people, but for a long time D-D couldn't find any houses near her that she thought I'd want. Too big, too old, too \$\$\$\$.

This one seems to be the right one. The sellers, divorcing, jumped at our offer. Now we wait for their bank to agree. Small yard, nice kitchen. It's half a mile away, a few minutes for D-D's car but too far for me to walk over and suffocate them with my attention. We should be able to stay on friendly terms. My mother used to use an old Yiddish saying, "Don't crawl into people's intestines," when she meant "Keep a comfortable social distance," and I think that applies for close relatives too.

I think my enthusiasm for this place here, died when the head administrator decided that hands-on gardening by the inmates (sorry, I find it hard to use the politically correct term "residents") wasn't safe for them. She told us we were only advisory and would report to a chairwoman who would report to her directly. She would then forward our thoughts to the company that came in to do the gardening.

As anybody with common sense would recognize, this is professional style administration. Hire somebody to do a job that was better done free. Oh well, I may regret going out on my own, but I expect that the first climbing rose planted by my front door will make me feel it was worth all the upheaval of moving again.

Living here was a great learning experience. I learned to keep my mouth shut a little more. I learned that the ladies I sat down to eat with, might be quiet little nobodies when the conversation was on global warming or earthquake warning systems, but if I said a word against Hilary the table could explode into angry defenses.

I learned that when a new couple arrived, the first thing everyone asked was, "Are they sleeping together?" (I wonder if anyone asked in the days before Viagra.)

And I learned that when we sent food back because it was too salty and they said, "We didn't put any salt in it," they were telling the truth—they hadn't cooked it, either—they had purchased it already cooked and ready to serve. No, they didn't salt it.....

Oh yeah, living here has been a great learning experience. But I'm ready to move on. With what I pay here, and a 5% raise every July, I can afford to hire a caregiver several days a week, and still come out ahead. If I can't make it that way, I'll go into a small boarding house affair where someone takes in a few old folks who eat together and sleep separately. I wouldn't like it much, but living in a big business situation like a banana on a stalk, well, that wasn't much fun either.


I'm all het up at the idea of looking out of my window and seeing all ages of folks going by, not just white-hairs limping behind their wheelies and their care-takers. Seeing neighborhood kids out mowing their lawns, not just a landscape company crew being disgorged from the company truck. Seeing family cars roll by instead of the fire truck and ambulances. Golly gee, what a lot I can look forward to!

Long way to go, long time to dream—dream up your future now..... regards, frieda


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# Diary of a Part-time Housewife

by Merri Johnson

I'm fortunate to have a husband who's pretty handy in the kitchen. He eats, therefore, he cooks. And if he's going to cook, he wants to have the right equipment. He bought a hand blender especially for ice cream shakes (never mind that making an ice cream shake isn't exactly "cooking.") We have a bread machine, which we used about every other day *before* he adopted the Adkins diet. Next came a dehydrator for home-made beef jerky while he was *on* the Adkins diet and all his snacks had to be meat. Oh, and one of those shrink-wrap sealer systems that keeps all your leftovers fresh indefinitely. He went a little crazy with that thing. I had to take it away when he started shrink-wrapping our lettuce.

But forget about the latest hi-tech kitchen gadget; right now he's on a low-tech search for the perfect spatula. He came home with another one the other day.

I asked why we needed another spatula. There are five in the drawer right now, I said. I was informed that this one has a thinner flipping surface, the better to slide under his breakfast eggs without breaking them.

Great. Another spatula to complement the latest frying pan. Remember the Adkins diet? Well, the rest of the diet is long gone, but the breakfast remains: eggs and sausage every day. Apparently one *can* eat eggs and sausage every day without clogging his arteries for at least five years. But, one apparently can't cook the eggs and sausage with just any spatula and pan.

My husband has tried no less than four styles of frying pans. Cast iron is too hard to clean. The sides of the pancake griddle are too low to contain the sausage grease. A ten-inch skillet was too small. (Mind you, he's cooking only two eggs and two small sausage patties.) He's currently using a twelve-inch non-stick sauté pan. But I'm sure he'll discover some defect in that, too, one of these days.

And it doesn't stop with the breakfast equipment.

Does a household of two need 12 steak knives? And three bread slicers? And two chopper-cleavers? Plus a fillet knife and half a dozen assorted paring and utility knives, and something that looks like a miniature scimitar? We owned a reasonable number of knives until my husband decided that he needed a set of Ginsu knives as seen on TV. The complete set of nine put our inventory over the top. It takes two wood-block knife holders to contain all that cutlery.

The worst thing is, we use them all! Just the other day I counted 13 knives, not including butter knives, as I was unloading the dishwasher. And to think, one Bowie knife used to serve a frontier family for everything from skinning a deer to peeling potatoes to cleaning their fingernails.

I wonder how many salt and pepper shakers they had. We have at least six sets. There are three sets next to the stove. Who needs three sets by the stove?! To be fair, my husband isn't responsible for all of them. One is a Tupperware picnic model that I've had for over 20 years (which is probably the last time I felt obligated to attend a Tupperware party.) That one's grandfathered in. There's a set of mills my husband bought when he realized, thanks to Martha Stewart, how much better his eggs would taste with freshly ground salt and pepper on them. Then there's the *second* mill he bought when he thought that the first set was worn out. Turned out it just needed to be cleaned. Of course, there's the wedding gift crystal set in the china hutch, a nice green Fiesta ware set on the dining room table, and an adorable set shaped like tiny light houses with cute little acorns painted on them. I bought that last one as a souvenir on a trip to Boston once.

Some people collect stamps or coins, some like the latest electronic communications gadgets, and some of us just can't get past ordinary kitchen utensils. They may not be worth much as collectables, but they never really become obsolete. And they will likely be more useful than iPods if society as we know it falls apart. But let's not think about that right now.

Eggs, anyone?

---

## SPIN

by Devon Adams

Like water draining out of a bathtub,  
the massive hurricane spiral twisted  
across the planet, eating everything  
in it's extended, fatal path.  
Most ordinary people haven't  
had enough experience  
of actually living through the  
force of these demonic twists  
of random, poison fate to  
recognize death on the wind.  
Weather channels blast out  
warnings to run away, but no one  
wants to leave everything behind.  
They want to believe that it  
couldn't possibly be a killer.  
Their own history is the only past  
they know, and all they know  
is that their community has always  
been there, safe and solid.  
Other places are destroyed,  
but it couldn't possibly happen here.  
And that is all it takes to tip the scales.  
No second guesses are available,  
no rescues or reprieves are for sale.  
Time is over and the past is drowned.

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## COUNTING BUSHELS

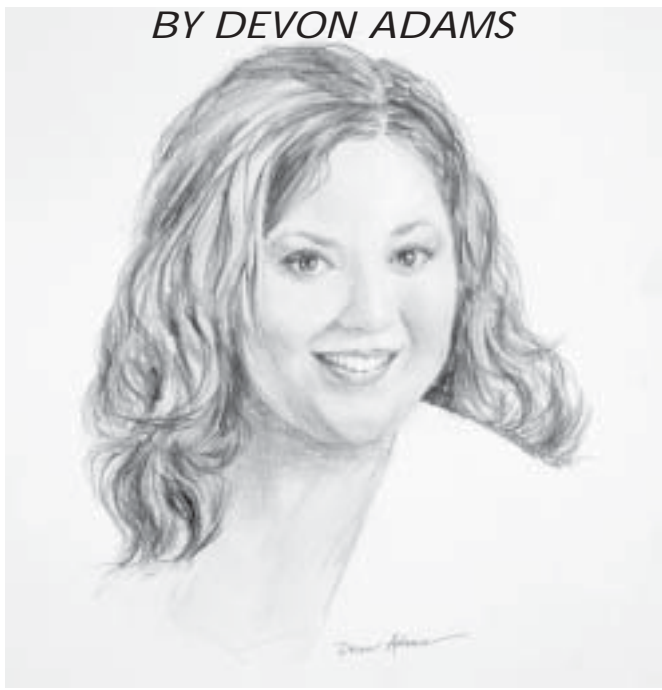
by Devon Adams

That spring was strange  
and warm and early.  
Buds had burst into blooms  
on all the trees and shrubs, but  
they were out of sequence in the  
usual order of the calendar,  
and then the freeze that was  
the definition of bad timing  
came out of sequence and  
killed the flowers of April.  
In autumn, during harvest time,  
the trees were standing high  
instead of their harvest posture,  
when they bent their backs  
and groaned from the weight  
of fruit waiting to be picked.  
They were empty-handed,  
wanting another chance to hang  
their juicy, crowded spheres  
in happy colors from deep red  
to pink to green to golden grimes.  
Eventually the earth turned  
and became another year.  
Rains were good, with temperatures  
just right and apples came to show  
their shiny faces by the thousands.  
It was a record year, with people  
driving past and gawking, counting  
bushels on the crowded branches.



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BY DEVON ADAMS



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## PAINT THE BONES

by Devon Adams

Soon the world will be on fire  
 from leaves burning with  
 colors from the bright side.  
 Like a plane going down,  
 there is a final flameout  
 before the show is over.  
 Through the many lights  
 of day that change with  
 angles from the sun  
 and moisture from the clouds,  
 the leaves will change from  
 hour to hour to hour,  
 fading fast from hot to warm  
 to cold to dead.  
 They'll lie in state,  
 beside their neighbors,  
 as winter comes and  
 scrapes the palette clean.  
 Then whites and neutrals will  
 spread beneath the brush and  
 paint the bones of hills in contrasts,  
 light against dark, dark against  
 light, writing lines and shapes  
 across the snow and sky.  
 Abstract images with edges hard  
 and sharp lock hands with ice  
 and wind to hammer land like  
 tempered metal, until it gleams  
 like sculpture, imitating life.

## COTTONWOODS

by Devon Adams

There is nothing more majestic  
 than a tree that's reaching high  
 from roots that dig for easy water  
 along the river bank.  
 They are precocious children,  
 these eager sprouts,  
 growing fast and strong,  
 playing with the wind,  
 hanging waxy leaves that glitter  
 in the sun long summer.  
 They are brave, and often  
 have the scars to prove  
 their battles with the  
 swords of lightning.  
 There is only one  
 tiny complaint about them.  
 Actually there are millions  
 and millions and millions of  
 little issues that compromise  
 the beauty and the grandeur.  
 It's those dinky bits of cotton,  
 floating everywhere, carrying  
 seeds in their fluffy parachutes,  
 sailing into space from way  
 up there by the sky.

## SHIFTING SANDS

by Devon Adams

Summer rains have changed  
 the stories that the river tells.  
 Shapes have shifted in the channels  
 and the bars of sand have moved.  
 Our lives are cut by circumstances,  
 like altered currents in a stream,  
 and when the water settles,  
 we are looking at brand new beaches.

*Editor's note:*

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# Art & Autumn



## COLLECTORS' ITEMS

By Devon Adams

Harvest dust turns the sun rose red as it drops behind the hill. The hot disk is distorted by the lens of the atmosphere, flattened, reluctant to leave the day. The air is Indian Summer warm until dusk is finally dark and the cold currents of air rise up from the valleys through cuts in the hills. Insects that survived the early frost are caught and held in mid-stride, their bodies needing warmth around them in order to move. By morning, there will be ground fog following rivers and creeks, with tree tops reaching above the soup to watch day break over the bluffs.

Pale gray dawn explodes with fire and ignites trees. They burn in cottonwood yellows, maple reds and oranges, and oak shades from apricot through purples and magentas. The colors change like a kaleidoscope as clouds and sun slant and rain and fog move in and out. Wind pulls leaves off their branches until the late green grass is covered with a blanket as deep and rich as oriental carpets woven for royalty. Every year is different and every year is the same. We have twelve months and four seasons, but there are never two years alike. They are collectors' items, but are impossible to keep. You love them and they leave you yearning for next year's display.

Hanging as a back-drop to the quilt of colors and textures on the hills is the purest blue that is possible. The sky is more intense and deep than anything mixed from a tube and painted with a brush. It, too, changes with the dial of the sun and expands into variations on a purple theme before black velvet holds the stars.

Quilt makers are inventors and dreamers and crafters and artists. If you could stitch a quilt with leaves, you'd have to be faster than the fading and the drying and the rotting. There would need to be some blue behind those children from the trees, and ordinary dye would be acceptable for cloth, in case your scissors couldn't cut the sky.

## ACRES OF QUILTS

by Devon Adams

There are lines that wander here and there, and lines that march straight ahead and then turn sharply at right angles. Edges are important, coming as they do between people and things. Smooth transitions, without crookedness, make situations stable and reliable. Cloth that's sewn together, piece by piece, won't hang right if the joints are wrong. Planning and design can happen inside your imagination, but when it's time to cut and sew you need to measure every inch. Or if you chicken out, I guess you can go fish or cut bait. We all know people who get nervous if they are in a room with tilted pictures. By stealth or by asking permission, these folks straighten out the lines. Quilt makers follow similar compulsions. They examine every seam, even counting stitches, to rank the finished product of weeks of work and yards of cloth. The art of crafting heirlooms is a science that has room for limitless invention, and artistic innovation carries forward the traditions and aspirations of generations of dedicated needle and thread engineers.

## Needlework & Quilt Show

At the Opera House in Brownville  
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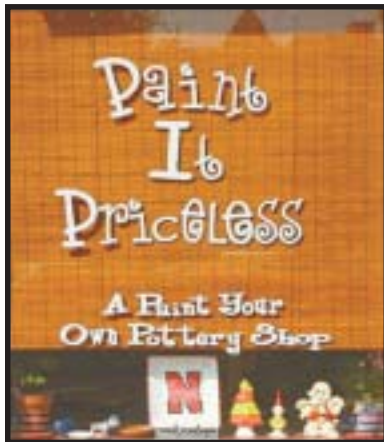


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This little quilt's original design is a "Gelatin Mono-Print" and will be on display at *The Fabric Fairie* in Auburn, 900 Central Avenue, from October 11 - October 18. Needle's I, also in Auburn, west on Highway 136, will have it's own design as well. See "Run for the Border" details on the facing page.

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## My Ten-Mile Commute

by Boni Hathaway

My ten-mile commute to work, to play, to see friends, eat lunch, enjoy a play or a concert, ride the *Spirit of Brownville*, find a good book, shop in the unique stores or go to museums and art galleries, take a nature walk on the lovely trail next to the arboretum, have a glass of wine or a cup of GOOD coffee. People ask me why I spend so much time in Brownville. I can't help but answer, "Why not; who could ask for anything more?"

No traffic jams, lots of free parking, no worry about rush hour (unless Freeman is cooking), and if a horn honks, it is usually someone saying hello. If you get lost...nah, you won't get lost!

The 10 or 15 minutes along Scenic Byway, Highway 136 from Auburn, is an ever-changing parade of nature's wonders. Each season, or really each day, and especially each week, brings changes to the landscape. Have you noticed that different wildflowers bloom at different times of the season? One day the yellows are more prevalent than other colors; the next the periwinkle blue chickory. Another morning the white, pink, or purple blooms are glistening on the roadside, providing a backdrop for the birds playing on the Nebraska breezes.

continued >>>>

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## Gallery 119 Brownville, Nebraska

The first time I spoke with the artist, Harry was applying gold leaf to the Hoagland Sideboard – an 1880 Revival dining room case from the Hoagland Mansion in Omaha, Nebraska. The restoration of the sideboard was commissioned by Jane Smith and is exhibited—on loan—to the Brownville Lyceum.

A most unusual talent of Harry W. Andersen (with an ‘e’), is his facility to work in many art mediums—often combining several mediums in one composition. His training in design and fine art lead him to working with materials such as precious metals and gemstones; exotic hardwoods; block, sheet and poured acrylics; polymer clay; watercolors, oil paints and acrylic paints. The journey involves coffee pots, high-end jewelry, designer shoes and writing pens, a hotel and the Brownville Lyceum. These days many of his finished pieces are combinations of materials and mediums. The completion of a single piece may involve a table saw; a knife, chisel or gouge;



*Pas de Deux*  
(Step of Two)  
A Ballet Lift

acrylic paint and a spindle, belt or disc sander. In trying new things, Harry does not jump from one medium to another without thought or deliberation, his work flows smoothly from his vision and mind’s eye view of the finished composition in order to push the limits of the frontiers of artistry. Even in a contemporary, abstract production, the energy often has humor as its partner. Every piece has a story to go with its creation, some almost as interesting as the finished artwork itself.

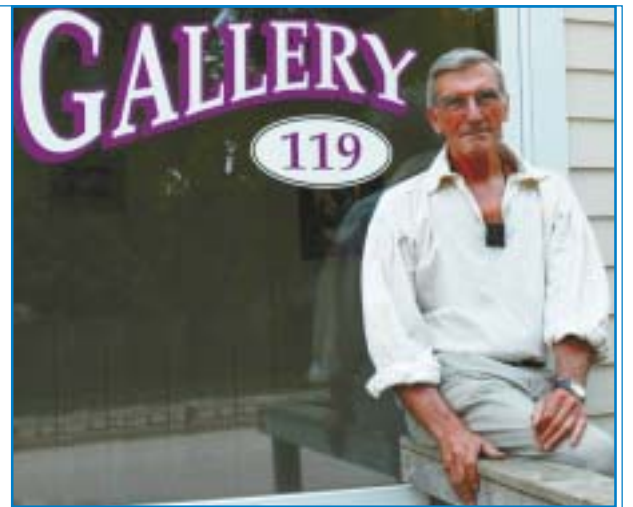
When I visit *Gallery 119* in Brownville, Nebraska, I see displays from several artists, each one being Harry Andersen. Jewelry, not in a box, but in a custom setting that may be displayed as art after it has been worn; paintings of corn sprouts worshipping the sun or the asymmetrical abstract sculpture of Sandhill Cranes escaping the bonds of gravity and majestically soaring (in the same piece). This last item is one of a series of 24 pieces scheduled to appear in an upcoming show in Philadelphia.

Harry has received a very warm welcome at *Gallery 119* since opening the studio in 2006 on Outfitters Row at 119 Main Street in Brownville, Nebraska. The gallery is open Tuesday through Sunday between 11:00 a.m. and 4:00 p.m. You can contact him for an off-hours appointment at (402) 825 3471 or gallery119@windstream.net.



*Quickening* is “seedlings struggling toward the light”

*The Granary*, an abstracted view of a Nebraska Grain Elevator



*The Granary*, an abstracted view of a Nebraska Grain Elevator

119 Main Street

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Brownville, Nebraska 68321

gallery119@windstream.net



Boni, in *The Village Bookstore*

<<<<< *continued*

Where else, but in Brownville, Nebraska, could you take your best friend to work with you, a faithful buddy who either takes up one or two soft seats in your store, or curls up on the floor by your feet? I know that sometimes people come into my bookstore just to say hello, and receive a greeting from Spencer. One lady asked if it would be okay if she stopped in before they left for home to tell him goodbye. He is always delighted by either greeting. A warning must be issued here; Spencer has never been told that he is not a lap dog, and if you sit down, he thinks it’s an invitation.

I’ve always known that the nicest people live in Nebraska, but I firmly believe that Southeast Nebraska has more than its share.

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Quilting on the Square, Holton, KS  
Sunflower Quilt Shop, Hiawatha, KS  
The Quilt Basket, Seneca, KS



# Art & Autumn

## Window Art Turning Vacant Store Fronts Into Art Galleries

by Mary Kruger

A few years ago I recognized that empty storefronts downtown were an unwanted distraction. Requests were made to the owners of the buildings to use their "window" frontage (at no cost) to display the works of Southeast Nebraska artists. The keys to the front doors were handed over and the project began.

I realized that even though the use of the windows was "free", other expenses were in the mix. I needed props, easels, lights, etc. and the City's promise of funding for "educational purposes" did not materialize. Still I thought it a worthwhile project to continue, and from the support I was getting, I believed it was worth looking for other funding. I received the generous support of local banks in Nemaha County, as well as that of the Nemaha County Development Alliance and their 501c3 status which made contributions tax deductible.

For the first exhibits, I received assistance from the Art Teachers in Southeast Nebraska schools, college art majors, and local artists who painted or did photography.

Last year I asked Nemaha County's State Fair winners to display their talents. The youth who put so much time and energy into their projects have them displayed for such a short time at the fairs, I believed that if they were willing, I would like to have them on display so that many more of the residents could see the talent and entrepreneurship involved.

The window projects are promoting more and more local observation, and even people who drive down the highways turn and look as I am working in the windows. Once slowed, maybe some have stopped to shop or eat!!!!!!!!!!!!

In order to display paintings and photography, the window areas must have protection from the sun. This limits the "fine art" that can be displayed, but other collections and special

*Mary's Article continues on the next page... >>>>*

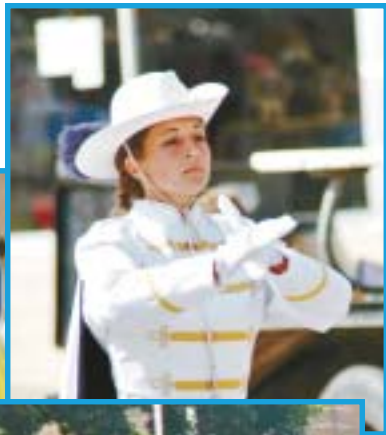


A Winner at the Fair...  
in one of Mary's Windows



A member of the Auburn City Council, Mary Kruger, filled empty windows with the work of Nemaha County artists.

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projects can be shown. I welcome ideas and assistance with the displays.

Along with the window project, my goal was to bring art workshops to Southeast Nebraska at a reasonable cost. The first workshop was Pottery, and with the assistance of the Auburn School District, Merri Johnson's applying for a grant from the Nebraska Art Council, and many, many hours of extra work from Terry Van Gundy, art teacher in the local school District, and Nancy Kite, an elementary teacher in the District, we were successful in bringing Sarah Fairbanks for a Pottery Workshop. We had full registration with both youth and adults. The final production was displayed in the downtown windows.

The next workshop was with Paul Fell, for a cartoon drawing workshop. Paul came in for two days and again the registration was full. That workshop was financed solely by the registration fee. NPPD allowed us the use of their building for the workshop.

This last summer (2008) we had an Intergenerational Art Workshop with local artist, Katy Haberman. This was a two-day workshop held at the Schoolhouse Art Gallery in Brownville. The focus of the first day was to use all natural elements that were found in the Furnas Arboretum. The many flowers, berries and grasses, gave an unending supply of color dyes. The second day was focused on drawing inanimate objects and the human form.

Local residents' interest generated by the workshops has caused plans to expand for 2009. Two more recreational and educational workshops are planned.

Local businesses are always ready to assist me with a "prop" at no cost. Many local residents are now coming to me with information about local talent, and believe me, there is a LOT of local talent in Southeast Nebraska!

This has been a very rewarding project, an economic development project, and no cost to the taxpayers. It is amazing what can be accomplished with a little "thinking outside the box".

**"My Life & Times as Harve Bodine"**

by Joe Smith

If you like the stories I write, you would love this story. Harve Bodine was in the Confederate Army, riding for the Quantrell Raiders. He didn't like anything that guy was doing so he and another fellow left before the end of the war and went out West. It seems he turned lawyer.



The story has a lot of human feeling in it, honest emotions, true love (sorry, no hot sex scenes). The story takes place in an area I am somewhat familiar with.

Other parts came from Harve himself. I had no idea where it was going. I just wrote it down like Harve told me to. Whether it actually happened or not is for you to decide. Joe Smith.

Joe will sign his book for you on Saturday, October 11th in Brownville from 1:30 to 2:30, at: *A Novel Idea Bookstore*, just across the street from the *Brownville Mills* health food store.



**Remember  
October 4th**

**The Graves**

(for the young folks and their parents)

by Joe Smith

The other day I had an urge to go to the cemetery where a lot of my family is buried. I stopped at the grave of my son, Kevin. He died the 15th of February, two years ago. I stood there for awhile and just asked the question, "Why"?

Kevin started on marijuana while in school. The drinking age was 18 at that time, and I'm sure he was drinking long before that. Kevin was hooked on drugs and alcohol. This all started while in school, a school no different than any small town, probably better than most. He carried this problem his whole life, until his life ran out on him before he was 52. He loved fast cars and rolled his first one while still in high school. The doughnut tire marks on the highway reminded me of that fact. They say that marijuana won't hurt you; it is just the first step in the process of addiction. So, that is one son that died way too young in life.

Then I went to my first son's grave and asked the same question. Kelly, I'm sure was on marijuana and drank beer while he was in school. He was a worse driver than Kevin and also wrecked a car before he was out of school. The two of them were a pair. It seems as parents we knew nothing of the smoking pot by our boys at the time they were doing it. Just like a lot of parents now. The kids are masters at hiding all of this. Kelly went to Vietnam for three years

in the Navy. He was smoking pot while in the Navy, as a lot of other men were. Six weeks after he returned home and was discharged, he lost his life in an accident. He and a friend went into town to get beer and rolled the little car before they got back to the house where he was living. He was in his low twenties when he was killed. He also died way too soon in life. He missed a lot. He will never see his grandchildren. Do you smoke pot?

Then I went over to my daughter's grave. Lisa was killed in a house fire, along with her two daughters. This bad case also had drugs involved. She died way too young and deprived her daughters of a life. Her husband escaped out a window. Lisa and the kids died in the house.

This story is all true. We have one son left who is a recovering alcoholic. He hasn't had a drink in about 18 years now. He told me about the marijuana smoking when he was going to school and he told me how they hid the fact from us. He went to a clinic in Beatrice for alcoholics and got out of there with the idea he could still smoke pot. He learned real fast that didn't work. Marijuana is just a stepping stone to more drugs. So if you are smoking pot just drive over to the Brock Cemetery and take a look at what it has cost my family.

This is not just a local problem. Fact is our schools are probably a lot better about it than urban schools. Now we have much worse drugs out there. Meth is a very non-

forgiving drug. Once on it you may well be hooked for life. Prescription drugs can be just as bad. Just because you have a prescription for it does not mean you can abuse it. But if you don't get started on them you might just grow up and have grandkids and great grandkids. Common sense will help you make it through these growing up years. Listen to your parents. Going to church might help also.

There have been several of your young killed in accidents and several close calls. It is possible the parents know about this or suspect it. Some better wake up before we have another grave to dig for a youngster.

Maybe some of the blame for all this is the schools and some the parents, but most of it belongs to the person himself or herself. Maybe it is just the times. Maybe the parents just don't give a damn? I've been there and it ain't fun. It can come back to haunt you. Life is too precious to waste.

Why am I telling you all of this? It is not because I want to, that is for sure. I'm not proud of any of it. But if I could change one person's mind, it would be worth it. The pain and suffering that they went through and the pain and suffering they put their loved ones through were all unnecessary. Alcohol is a drug also. Wait until you are of legal age. Bad decisions are made while under the influence of any drug or alcohol. So use this as a wake-up call.

Joe Smith



# Whisler's Hunting & Fishing Report



by Josh Whisler  
(Photos provided by Author)

## Fishing:

The Missouri River waters are cooling off into the 60's with the recent rains and cool nights. That means one thing to fishermen - that the fish are fed up for the Winter and it's time to get a pole in. One of the things that keep you coming back to the river is you never know what you're going to catch. This is the time of year that this really holds true. It's Big Bait - Big Fish all summer but now it's any one's guess what they will hit next - because they are hitting everything. The fish are also everywhere - not just in the holes keeping cool from the summer sun. So they are hitting grass hoppers to leopard frogs and everything in between. So get out there and give it a try.

## Hunting:

Morning Doves were plentiful early in the season but have tapered off in recent weeks with the cool rainy weather we have been experiencing. Morning Doves migrate and it doesn't take much cool weather to send them on south. So you got to get them while you can.

Speaking of migratory birds, the Early Teal Duck Season is on right now. I've been seeing a lot of the small ducks flying along the river while I'm fishing. And I've heard a lot of early morning shooting from the duck blinds north of town.

Don't forget you HIP Number.

All hunters planning to hunt migratory birds (ducks, geese, doves, woodcocks, snipes, coots, rails) in Nebraska during the current season are required to obtain a HIP number.

HIP Numbers are valid from 8/1/2008 to 4/30/2009.

Residents under 16 are not required to have a HIP number.

Even if you have a HIP number from another state you still have to get a Nebraska HIP number.

Fishing is as good as it's going to get right now, and now that the hunting seasons are coming back around it's time to get out and get something going on. I know you won't be sorry you did. 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 Fishing Pictures





David McConnaughey with a 39- pound Blue Cat taken near Peru on the Missouri River.



Mike Tynon with a 20-pound Flathead Cat taken using grass-hoppers for bait.

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## Memories...Moods...Rumors and More

by Vicki Harger



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Autumn.... it's a whimsical season.

In the fall, we linger over small things...pausing to watch an ant scurrying along with a crumb for his winter supply... An inch-worm working his way along a blade of grass.

We look to the heavens, seeing the haunting glow of a harvest moon. We behold the wonders of our universe rising before us...The galloping of Pegasus across the dark heavens...The swirling dust of galaxies lingering in the autumn sky.

Daydreams and fanciful notions waft through our minds—spiraling 'round and 'round like the leaves drifting down a country lane.

Colorful memories. Relics of summertime...Dirt between our toes, and the tickle of sunshine across the nose.

The sparkle of a dewy spring morn... The antics of squirrels and robins. A family of quail erupting from the brush, then settling nearby with fretful calls: "Where are we?" They cry, "Where are we?"

Remember the rising heat of a summer day....? The hot sun skimming like a stone across the surface of the pond, then settling into the shimmering warmth beyond a distant hill.

We dig in the garden for the last of the potatoes, unearthing old dreams hidden in the fertile soil of our imaginations. Perilous adventures. Riverside ramblings. Rural wanderings.

With each leaf that falls, we garner the memories. Like squirrels storing nuts, we hoard these treasures—stockpiling them for the long winter ahead.

Fondly, we peruse our memories as we shuck corn or draw water from the old well....as we gather up garden tools and store them in the shed. (Didn't someone once find an Indian while digging in their cupboard...?)

Imagination. Discovery. Adventure. This time of year, it can be found just about anywhere.

Fall...the season of whimsy and fantasy.

It's time to escape the here-and-now. Cool weather has brought a shiver to our bones and an ache to our joints, and we long to

flee to worlds unknown. We pack a mental suitcase—our thoughts zipping along without the price of airfare. Traveling to distant places will cost us nothing. We're borne on the breeze of imagination.

A chilly wind blows in from the west... and like Dorothy, we escape to the Land of Oz. Armchair adventures. Summertime escapades. Magical moments that we relive as the woodstove crackles its way toward the end of October. Then November....

Onward. Onward! To the Land of Oz....

Actually, I'm already in the Land of Awes, my friend—and you've apparently joined me. At this very moment, we're sitting on a warm porch-deck, daydreaming in the sunshine. Apple tree branches sway in the breeze. Shiny pears and plums wink at us from behind their foliage. Blackberries nod in the afternoon sun.

Are we really here, Dorothy, or are we still in Kansas?

We check our surroundings, again, to be certain. Hummingbirds dive-bomb the feeder. Butterflies flit through the garden. A Pacific wind stirs the nearby Redwoods, causing them to groan and sigh. A wind-chime tinkles in the California breeze.

Yes—we're truly here...and isn't it lovely? We have many adventures to share...so many memories to discuss as autumn gives way to winter.

Lovely memories... Beachcombing along the coast...The chirp of sea otters. The flapping of Harbor Seals, flipping one another playfully. The curious advances of an old gray Pelican.

Intriguing adventures....Meandering through Lassen Volcanic Park, past scalding streams...Bubbling mudpots...Spouting steam holes. Throaty rumbles come from deep inside the earth.

Our Volcanic Park adventure almost ended in tragedy when we nearly plunged down the—

But wait! We can't discuss that, now. The tale is too long....but it's all there in the great stash of memories, just waiting to be taken out and mulled over as the calendar pages flip by—slipping us deeper and deeper into the shadows of winter.

How long can we rehash such things?

Oh—'til springtime, of course!...when we're released into a brand new season of wonder and rebirth.

And now...I know what you're thinking. You're wondering if Vic has lost all her good sense during these whimsical days of autumn? Is she truly in California, again?

Perhaps the rumors are true. Maybe the country gal does have a new beau in California...? (A rather well-known country gentleman, a West Coast "hero" who has been on NPR and in documentaries and books....?)

Oh my! Can it possibly be true?

There are so many rumors, my friend....so many memories and adventures to share.

But I see that we've run out of space. The rumors will just have to wait—at least 'til we reach the frosty depths of winter. Then we can have a few armchair adventures, together.

...Until next time, my country neighbor...'til next time.

*Vicki Harger*  
www.VickiHarger.com



A Cool Sound; The Peru State College Jazz Band



# The

# Face of Drought



by Karen Ott

There's something elemental about living in harmony with nature and the changing moods of the seasons, of looking towards the sun instead of a wristwatch to tell the time of day, of eating supper only after the animals have had theirs. It's as honest a life as you can get, or it was before the information super hi-way began seducing us with tons of useless data.

Before the price of corn began moving in sympathy with the price of oil I paid little attention to the Energy Department's weekly supply reports; gasoline inventories, refinery output, and crude stocks seemed blessedly far removed from my world of green fields and fresh air. It was only after market gurus began attributing the up or down movement of corn futures to the shifting price of crude that I took interest in the dry rhetoric of subjects like export/import data and oil tanker numbers.

I'd plow through computer screen after computer screen of long term forecasts and short-term analysis like a tractor through the silty loam of a river-bottom field, regaling Dale with tales of increased Chinese consumption (2.3 million barrels a day in 1990.....15 million barrels a day projected by 2030) and Venezuelan hanky panky....i.e., oil for Chinese combat planes.

In the end I decided I liked life better when the internet was just a figment of someone's overworked imagination and the price of corn was influenced more by weather and hungry cattle than the whims of Wall Street and nighttime raids by Nigerian rebels.....the insulated life of rural America suited me just fine. Sometimes ignorance is bliss.

Two weeks ago Indian summer settled over the valley like a comfortable sweater. Unfortunately some

untimely thunderstorms tagged along. Last Sunday, just two hours before we were to begin combining, a driving rain pounded three fields of beans into the mud. Thursday afternoon Dale walked into the tire shop, wordlessly took my hand, and dropped ten or so discolored and swollen beans into my palm. Sick at heart I asked, "Is the entire field like this?"

"Pretty much."

A few days of warm weather should dry them enough to combine, but they'll more than likely grade poorly. And to think we were just two hours away from harvest.....two hours.

The rain, and a string of unforeseen repairs, also delayed silage cutting. Every time I look out the kitchen window one of my men-folk is lying beneath a piece of equipment, jeans-clad legs twisting this way and that, cowboy boots digging shallow trenches in the graveled yard.

Clutches, shafts, bearings, tires, and batteries have all been replaced or repaired...some more than once; half

a day of uninterrupted work would see the silage pit full, but the way things are going a month of Sundays wouldn't be enough.

On a more positive note, my fall canning campaign is proceeding nicely and the brooder house has a fresh coat of paint. I nearly scared my parents to death with the primer coat.....a sickly chartreuse green which glowed eerily in the light of a full moon. Always on the lookout for a bargain I had purchased two gallons of the ugly stuff for \$4.00 from a local lumber company happy to rid themselves of the mis-tinted paint.

As long as I can remember I've been something of a tightwad, a trait which should serve me well as the nation sinks deeper and deeper in the stinking morass of bankruptcies, bailouts, buyouts and bank failures brought on by pure and absolute unadulterated greed. How many zeros are there in a trillion?

Happy Harvest from our farm to yours.....and let's be careful out there. Karen

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