Your Country Neighbor

July, 2016

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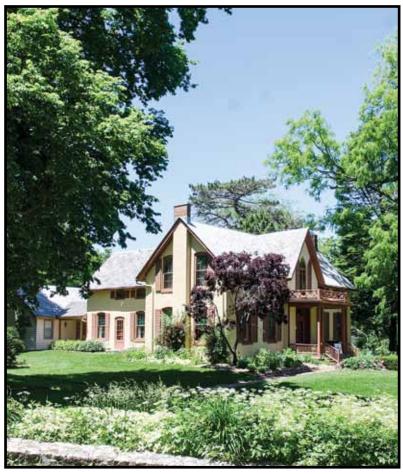
Wild Lilies - More Wildflowers on 10



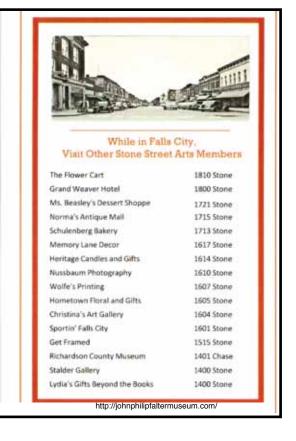
Windmill on Kansas Hwy-36 West of Hiawatha

1 PM - 4 PM

10 AM - 4 PM







Wildwood House, Nebraska City Volume Seventeen, Number Seven

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Readers, Notice!

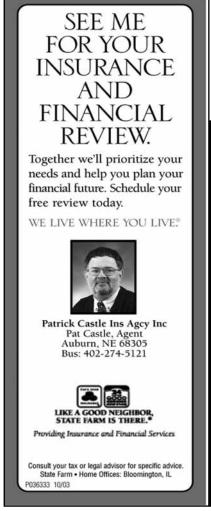
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Cover Photo(s)

I have photographed this windmill before, but the clouds make it interesting. June can be an interesting month for wild flowers. I think these are wild tiger lillies. The Wildwood House in Nebraska City is open.. Call for 'touring schedule'. The gallery is cool too.





Your Country Neighbor

Voices and Views From the Valleys of the Nemaha Publisher & Photographer, Stephen Hassler

Writers This Month

Devon Adams
Stephen Hassler
Merri Johnson
Lee Nyberg
Vicki O'Neal
Marilyn Woerth

Thank You!

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The Wind and the Senses

Stephen Hassler

It's another warm, Summer evening, with the stillness of no wind. A pleasant, uncertain, but temporary moment. And I'm thinking, how boring life might be if there were never any wind. Wind, moving air, big globs of hot or cold, wet or dry, driven by the rotation of the earth and the heat of the sun, stimulating the senses. On a warm day, wind feels good on one's face and scalp. It whispers through the trees, roars in a thunderstorm, and howls in a tornado. On a cold day it can make breathing difficult, especially while jogging, and it can freeze the skin. Wind can bring smells of gasoline and diesel exhaust from the street, dust from fields of alfalfa and grains, and odors from animal feeding operations. Moist winds mixing with cold often result in rain and sometimes flooding, or blizzards and drifting snow. Extreme variations can result in damage and loss by hurricane or tornado.

Wind brings weather, good and bad. But moving air can bring comfort to one's senses. I like the dusty smell that precedes a Summer rain, caused by the first drops splashed on dry earth and carried by the frontal winds. I love the apple blossom and lilac scents carried by the Spring breezes. The winds of Winter cause the sculpting of snow drifts. Spring gales, the lifting of kites. Summer, breezes on hot days. Autumn, the wispy sounds of fallen leaves scraping across the sidewalk.

Wind is part of the romance of life. The wind inspires. Consider the book titles; Gone With The Wind, The Wind In The Willows, and the song title, The Summer Wind.

And in those moments when the wind, the air, is not perceived to move, on a quiet morning or a still night, such moments invite contemplation, reflection, wishes, hopes, thoughts of dreams unrealized or memories not forgotten. And we appreciate some of these moments even more than the rustling breeze.

I once owned a house with three large trees between the house and the street. Two were maple, the third I don't remember, but it was the largest one. And one cold morning late in the Fall, with no air movement, I was sitting by the living room window, watching the large tree finally giving up its 'holding on' to its leaves. Some were falling on the street, forming a large crescent below the branches, like a shadow reaching out over the street. A perfect pattern that could not have formed if not for the absence of the wind. So sometimes an absence of wind is not boring at all, even profound with expression, and mysterious in its meaning.

Like this Summer evening.



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Bald Eagle guarding its Nest in Southeast Nebraska

July 2016

Your Country Neighbor

Where Life Is Good

Marilyn Woerth

I'm in a rut. I am not smiling enough. It's a bad rut. I promised you a happy, joyous article this month. But when there are so many sad things going on in our neck of the woods, well it almost seems to be a sin to smile or be happy.

So let's talk politics. What is with the hair and those raccoon eyes? And the untruths and name calling that keep slipping out of both of their mouths, are they for real? Actually, no they are not. Not to me anyway. Now I am on the election board in our small precinct, and for the primary we read, conversed, and took walks to stay awake, but even at that our percentage of voters is always better than the larger cities.

I figure in the fall we will be swamped, but who knows for sure. Now for myself I will probably vote mid-afternoon when it's the slowest. I will state my name and address, grab my ballot and pencil, and head for the table and partition. I will look my ballot over first, and then vote, first for those items I am sure on how I am going to vote. Next, chew the eraser until I decide on those I am unsure on. Then I will lay my pencil down and pound my head on the table twice (I may even whimper) then pick my pencil up and walk to my follow election board compatriots and hand one my ballot, walk through the door and around the block then come back in ready to work. It's going to be a loooooong day.

Since I am the one that returns the ballots to the courthouse after the polls close it becomes a longer day. Then I will go home take my shoes off, grab a teguila sunrise and corn chips and homemade salsa and continue on with my life. Just like every other person who has voted for the past 240 years has done. I think it is time I really get proactive about this process of choosing a leader. I will have to think about it. For instance I could bake cookies and set up a booth, then give out free cookies with bumper stickers that say, "Don't vote for an empress or emperor!" Or I could hold a leader talent contest, and ask questions. "If you have a dry shady spot what would you plant?" or "What side are you on; organic or chemical?" I mean those answers could say a lot about a person. More than the ones asked and dodged at the debates. And if they don't know the correct way to layer a compost pile, well, forget them.

Running a country can't be any different than managing a garden or a farm. After all in the beginning of our historic country most of our presidents started out as farmers. Maybe we need to get back to those roots. Several of our presidents have been both farmer and lawyer. Well rounded, I would say. They knew the land and the law.

Trying to keep it real and sane in this hot election year, where life is good.



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AFTER THE FOURTH

There are dead rockets scattered around the neighborhood, and black smudges on the sidewalk and in the street. The bursts of exploding stars are still sparkling in our memories, but they were only fleeting flashes on a black sky that is deeper than forever. Picnics and gatherings have been and gone, but were caught in camera lenses, holding on to the moments in splashes of colors and smiling faces. By next year, those people will be older, and some won't be there at all, but that's why we have memories to carry with us into tomorrow, like baskets full of food, to sustain our family connections.

TOAST

Out of your deep bed of dreams, rays of consciousness break the precious grip of sleep, and slowly the present moment becomes reality. Waving farewell to fleeting, fading wisps of images that recede from your memory, you think of how the aroma of coffee will soon fill your senses with soothing flavor and a jolt of energy. You picture the toast popping up, warm and golden brown, enveloped in a scent that takes you back to childhood, when there was always a new day, no matter how good or bad the previous day had been, and it started with the comfort of bread being transformed into something special, slathered in melted butter and served with love from your mother.

Poetry by Devon Adams

LIGHTNING TREES

Deep in the folds of Summer, the day time spasms of violent damage caused by contrasts of hot and cold air masses have dissipated. The cold air has retreated to the far north, and it won't be back until autumn comes, wearing it's robes of gold and red. Heat is the rule, usually paired with a cease fire of rain. The distance is wavy, and highways have wide pools of water illusions that form and reform as your vehicle proceeds on super-heated concrete. Long days of light drag us toward August, but at some point the air becomes charged, and as magic electric bugs lead us into evening, the horizon swells with silent flashes. Early in the dark of the morning, we are awakened by explosions of fire that connect cloud to ground with searing trees of lightning. The time of night storms has begun, when sleep is elusive and massive jolts of current strike at random, leaving smoking trails behind them.



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SHADE TREES

Some of us, if not most, were lucky enough to grow up on blocks with trees. Old trees, with arching branches that reached across the street and touched each other, nodding in the lazy breezes of summer, their leaves waxy and green, making shade patterns below, keeping the neighborhood cool. Yards were great places to play, with tents made from sheets and clotheslines, and tree houses if you were fortunate. Kids never thought that much about the heat, because nothing was better than being out of school and living inside your imagination for months. Houses were foreign territory, the domain of adults, who seemed to be occupied with boring things like house work or necessary chores. Farm kids lived very different lives from town kids, but they probably appreciated shade even more. A break from working in the blazing fields, or stifling barn or machinery shed, was better under the giant elms or maples or cottonwoods that towered over the houses and the out-buildings. But the crowning of the day came at evening, when a dip in the creek was a cool reward.

FINDING QUIET PLACES

The silence of the edge, beside the fields that are harsh with heat blaze, is a buffer from the loudness of machinery and highways, of mowers and the noise that people make in crowds and crowded neighborhoods. Out there under the towering cottonwoods beside the muddy creek, is a peace that comes from natural sounds. The soft gurgle of the water is a bass line running under the soprano trill of the wrens and the brilliant vibrato of an oriole. A splash from a jumping fish complements the rustle of wings carving feather trails through the trees. And not one single solitary sound intrudes from the so-called civilized world.





This turtle poses well; Squaw Creek Wildlife Refuge,

Old Home Place 390 Memory Lane Lost Coast

"Simply Mahvelous...!" By Vicki O'Neal



Camping in the backcountry sounded like fun! We were heading to a place so remote, our cell phones would be worthless! It would be Mahvelous!

My college kid, Mystia, helped me load the car. We took two or three of everything to make certain we wouldn't go without! The pile in the back seat was so high I couldn't see out the back window...But no worries! We had what we needed.

We headed east, driving the dangerous, winding road toward a distant campground called "Swimmer's Delight!" It took us forever to get there and it was late in the afternoon when we arrived.

We chose a campsite near the river—a snug spot hidden beneath tall trees. We were so far in the boonies, sunlight barely filtered through the branches. We built a campfire and got out our food. My city-slicker daughter decided to pre-wash the dusty pots and pans meticulously—but she used too much soap. We ended up with soapy baked beans and sudsy-tasting vittles. We were starving, so we ate them anyway.

The trouble deepened as we unloaded the trunk. "Where's the camera?" Mystia said. "And the bug spray? And where in the world is the TENT, Mother?"

I dug through the enormous pile of camping supplies only to turn up empty-handed.

Unbelievable! We had a half-dozen of everything, except the main essentials. Our camping trip was becoming a comedy of errors. To make matters worse, my daughter informed me that she was now enduring the curse of womanhood. It was that Time-of-the-Month and she was not a happy camper.

It did not bode well for me, her forgetful Mom. How could I possibly salvage this vacation?

I bluffed the best I could. "Necessity is the Mother-of-Invention!" I told Mystia firmly, and I proceeded to drape a nearby picnic table with a roll of screen material that I happened to have in my trunk. It would be our Makeshift Tent, I said.

Mystia was not impressed. "I won't sleep under a dirty picnic table with spiders falling on my freakin' face!" she said grumpily. Then she got out her expensive facial creams and coated her freakin' face with \$50 moisturizers and conditioners. The spiders would've drowned in all that goop.

By nightfall, Mystia had made herself a nest of blankets in the back seat of the car and she settled down to sleep.

Wearily, I joined her, crawling into my sleeping bag in the front seat. I was bone-tired and discouraged—too exhausted to move! With a groan, I leaned back in the darkness and closed my eyes.

Continued on page 8 >>>>>>>

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<><<< Continued from page 6

At sunrise, I arose with renewed determination for a fresh start, only to discover that our campsite had been raided by critters-of-the-night. They had dined scrumptiously. Trash, pop-tarts, and marshmallows lay scattered about the camp. I threw up my hands in despair and headed for the river, leaving Mystia sleeping in the car.

It was then that I heard it—a persistent sound that went on and on like the distant gnawing of a rat. After several minutes, I realized it was the gentle glug-glug of escaping fluid. A jug had tipped over and now my floorboard was awash in a half-inch of water.

I sighed and threw the empty jug out the window. Such a fitting conclusion to a disastrous day! Forgotten tents...bug spray...and cameras! Soapy baked beans....glugging water jugs. What else could go wrong?

I reached in the glove box for a couple of sleeping pills, then shut my eyes and prayed for sleep to come. Miraculously, I slept until morning.

"Lord, "I said, "Surely You can salvage this camping trip!" The Good Lord didn't say a word....not a word.

I stared along the water's edge. A gentle mist rose from the surface of the river. Ducks swam nearby and an early morning sun sprayed diamonds everywhere. Song birds greeted the dawn with joy, declaring that this was a great day, indeed.

Breathing deeply of the pine-scented breeze, I let the turmoil seep from my bones. I wandered further down the river-bar. Rounding a curve, I peered through the trees and caught my breath.

Before me was a small canyon that branched off from the river. It was deep and shadowy, like a scene from Jurassic Park. Lacy ferns and the greenest moss!...Waterfalls tumbling into glassy pools! It was a cool, mysterious place that took my breath away.

And there—right there before me was the most fantastic rock I'd ever seen. It was a Rock-hound's delight! The rock was full of swirls and rounded knobs—a water-carved stone that defied description. It was a treasure given to me by my Creator—my reward for enduring the trials of the past day!

I hugged the stone happily like an old friend, before continuing along the river-bar. Eventually, Mystia joined me there as the sun rose higher. Serenity settled over us...Things weren't so bad after all.

We soon donned our swimsuits and snorkel masks and began exploring the little underwater canyons. A beautiful world opened up before us. Crystal clear waters—the kind you'd find in the Caribbean...Colorful rocks sparkling on the river-bottom like gems—just begging to be gathered. Silvery fish slipped past us, disappearing into the depths....

We splashed and played the day away. We couldn't believe the Wonderland we'd discovered... "Swimmer's Delight", indeed!

We spent hours there and eventually stretched out exhausted but happy in the sunshine. Our disastrous camping trip had turned out wonderful after all...! This tired ol' Mom had been restored to good humor...and the city-slickin' college kid would return to school with tales of beauty and adventure—rather than grief!

The moral of the story is obvious, folks. Don't give up when things go south! You never know what treasures are hidden just out of view. Make the most of what you've got! Persevere until you triumph! Just do it! Make life's miserable moments memorable....

You'll find them to be Mahvelous, my friend....simply Mahvelous!

Diary of a Part-time Housewife

Merri Johnson

This article originally appeared in the Lincoln (NE) Journal Star on June 12, 2016. It is re-printed here with permission.

If I had to choose only one bird song to hear for the rest of my life, the coo of the Mourning Dove would be my choice. All three of my bird field guides describe the voice of the Mourning Dove as "mournful," hence the name. But to me, the dove's cooing is soothing and restful – and perhaps a little lonely – but not mournful. It also brings to mind the cooing of pigeons in the barn on the farm where I spent my childhood. So, while there's a bit of nostalgia involved, I don't find it mournful.

My husband and I have several resident Mourning Doves at our home in Auburn. We also sometimes have Eurasian Collared-Doves and a few months ago I saw what I believe was an African Collared-Dove, formerly known as the Ringed Turtle-Dove. The African species is nearly all white, and according to my Peterson Field Guide, is likely an escaped cage bird.

The Eurasian Collared-Doves are larger and have a raspier voice than the Mourning Dove, not at all soothing. They tend to chase smaller birds away from the bird feeder, so I'm not very positively disposed toward their presence. But on a warm, lazy, summer afternoon, it's pleasant to relax in my screened porch and let the cooing of the Mourning Doves lull me into a nap.

I was intrigued when my son called me in late April to ask my opinion about dealing with a pair of Mourning Doves who were building a nest in a hanging flower basket on his front porch. Should he throw the nest out of the basket? Would the nest squash the petunias in the basket? Could he move the basket?

His main concern was bird droppings staining his concrete porch floor. I suggested he hang the basket from the tree next to the porch in the hope that the doves would accept the new location. They did. Soon there were two eggs in the nest. My son emailed me a photo of the eggs surrounded by the blooming petunias. I'd never seen a Mourning Dove nest with eggs, so that was exciting for me.

Better yet, I was on hand when the first chick hatched on Mother's Day. We lifted up our two young grandchildren so they could see this wonder of a tiny complete bird just emerging from its shell. The second egg had a noticeable crack in it, which I assumed meant that the sibling chick would soon make an appearance. Alas, that chick died in the shell. The adult doves evicted that egg from the nest, but it remained among the petunias. Closer inspection of the egg photo revealed that the crack was present long before Mother's Day.



Photos of Mourning Dove Nest by Guy Johnson



Nest with chick.



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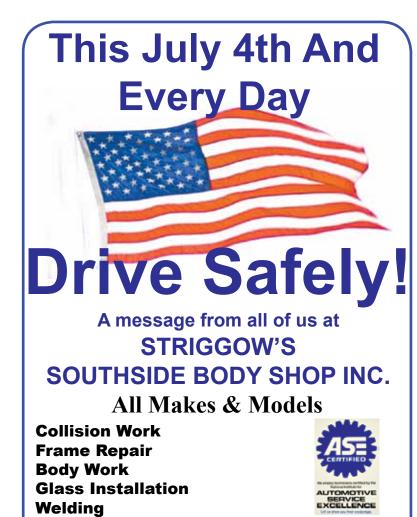
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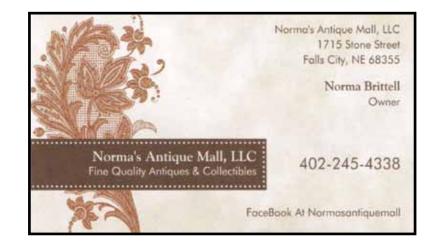
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Alzheimer's Affects Us All



Hospital Delirium Mimics Dementia

By Lee Nyberg

I'll never forget the terror in my grandma's voice when she told us about the man who had come into her hospital room in the middle of the night. Grandma's vivid hallucinations seemed real to her. Normally very sharp, she was confused and frightened. The nurse said confusion was common after surgery and was probably due to my grandmother's age (74 years).

Hospital delirium isn't dementia and it isn't normal. About 75% of intensive care unit (ICU) patients, regardless of age, experience it while in the hospital and have symptoms of Alzheimer's or traumatic brain injury a year later, according to researchers at Harvard and Vanderbilt Universities. It afflicts about 1/3 of patients 70 years and older who are not ICU patients.

Delirium is characterized by sudden and frequent changes in cognitive ability, delusions and hallucinations, shifting attention, and incoherence. People react differently, either becoming agitated and belligerent or sleepy and lethargic. Delirium's sudden and fluctuating symptoms distinguish it from dementia.

Ignoring the condition can result in falls during the hospital stay and lead to long-term mental and physical decline. Suffering with delirium is similar to post-traumatic stress disorder affecting combat veterans.

Dr. Sharon Inouye, Harvard Medical, believes 40% of hospital delirium is preventable. Since the use of large doses of anti-anxiety drugs (benzodiazepines) and sleep-disrupting hospital routines are thought to be key causes, forward-thinking medical facilities are working to reduce these, and increase patient movement as early as possible after procedures.

Families can help to reduce a loved one's confusion while in the hospital by focusing on orientation and companionship.

- Arrange shifts for 24-hour attendance with family or professional caregivers to help with calming assurances and to observe behavior changes which might indicate delirium, such as delusions. (Report concerns immediately to medical personnel)
 - Calmly reassure your loved one where he is and why
 - Keep information and instructions one task at-a-time
 - Help him get enough fluids and to eat (make sure he has his dentures)
- Keep senses engaged; bring glasses and hearing aids, give hand and foot massages, play favorite music at soft levels
- Support orientation further with a large clock with numbers and other recognizable personal items, such as familiar blankets, and family photos
- Open window curtains in the daytime and close them at night. Request doctor's orders for 5 hours of unbroken sleep at night
- Support exercise: Help him use the bathroom, rather than a bed-pan and walk down the hallway to meals, rather than eat in the room.

Research clearly shows the devastation delirium can cause and hospitals are responding. Large hospital systems, like Nebraska Medicine and Methodist in Omaha, are creating patient-centered medical teams to treat older adults and training medical personnel in recognizing and preventing delirium. Familiar caregivers will remain an important part of stopping delirium, since they are likely to recognize its symptoms first.

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