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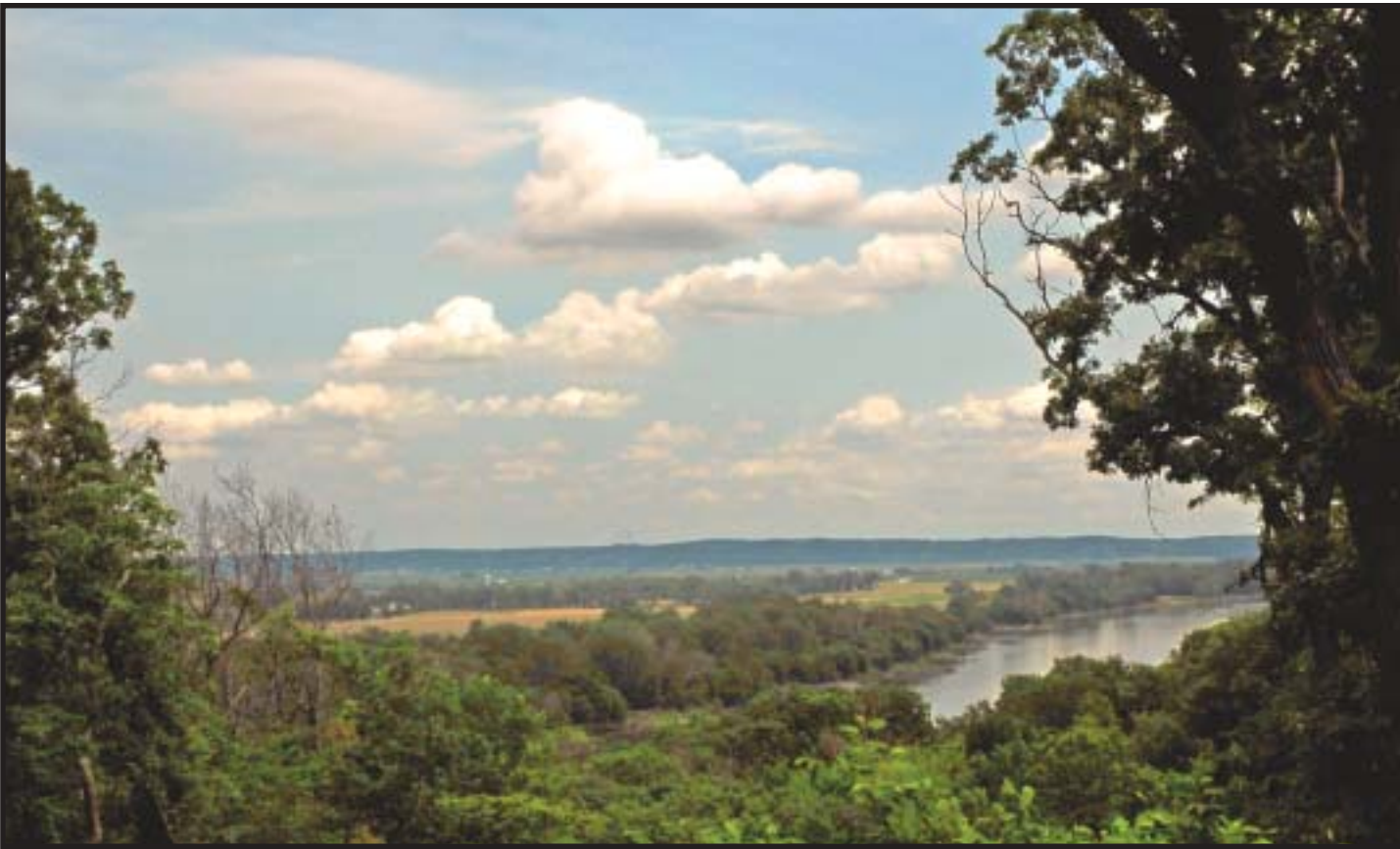
Country Neighbor

FREE!

July 2006

Your Nemaha Valley

Voice



This view of the Missouri River is a photo of a late Spring day. The line at the horizon is the bluff on the east end of the Missouri River Valley. The river bottom land is planted and the foliage along the river banks is painted in shades of summer green.

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View of Barn from Highway Southeast of Weeping Water

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Your

COUNTRY NEIGHBOR

the **Voice** of the Nemaha Valley

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Letter to Senator Ben Nelson

June 6, 2006
Senator Ben Nelson
U.S. Senate

Dear Senator Nelson,

I am writing to urge you to vote against the “Marriage Protection Amendment”. Part of my objection to the amendment is that it does not include a definition of who is a man and who is a woman.

I am retired from The University of Texas M.D. Anderson Cancer Center where, among other things, I taught a Graduate course in Developmental Biology. Since moving to Nebraska nine years ago I have taught a similar course at Peru State College.

One serious legal and ethical problem with the proposed federal (and the Nebraska) amendment is that they do not define who is to be considered a man and who is to be considered to be a woman. Several examples illustrate that the biological basis of sex determination is complicated.

A simplified version is that there two sex chromosomes X and Y; everyone must have an X because it is large and contains many genes necessary for viability. Usually females are XX and males XY.

The Y has a gene called SRY. In the embryo SRY activates other genes and causes the gonad to be a testis and blocks the formation of an ovary. The testis usually produces testosterone dihydrotestosterone and anti-Mulerian duct hormone. These individuals usually become males.

XX individual embryos lack SRY and an ovary forms along with the precursor of the uterus, the Mulerian ducts. The ovary produces estrogen that further causes differentiation of Mulerian ducts into uterus, oviducts and cervix. These individuals usually become females.

There is a condition called androgen insensitivity syndrome where the receptor for androgens such as testosterone is absent or defective and the cells are not responsive to the testosterone produced by the testis. XY individuals with this mutation have undescended testes and no Mulerian duct derivatives but have the genitalia and secondary sexual characteristics of a female. Such individuals appear as women identify as women, behave sexually as women, and have married. They of course are sterile but can adopt and raise children with their husbands. If the definition of a man is someone who is XY or someone who has a testis, a union of such an XY (physically appearing to be a woman) with an XY (physically appearing to be a man) would be illegal. If the amendment defines a man as one who looks like a man is a man and a woman as one who looks like a woman as a woman, then someone who is XY and lived as a man for years but gets a sex change operation can legally marry someone else who has the outward appearance of a man.

Equally perplexing with regard to the wording of the amendment is the case of XY individuals that have a deficiency in the enzyme 5 alpha ketosteroid reductase 2. Such persons as embryos and fetuses have a testis and make testosterone but cannot make the hormone dihydrotestosterone which is necessary in the formation of male external genitalia. Newborns have female external genitalia (with a large clitoris and blind vagina) and are raised as girls. At puberty the high levels of testosterone cause enlargement of the penis and male secondary sex characteristics. Some have sired children. Do these people enter puberty as females and emerge as males?

Things can go the other way with XX fetuses. If there is an overproduction of androgens in the ovary or adrenal gland those hormones can bind to the androgen receptor a person with an ovary can outwardly appear male.

The sex hormones also have effects in the developing brain causing some areas to be larger in one sex or the other and influencing behavior. These effects seem to occur before birth. In some unfortunate cases male babies are born with mangled or deformed genitalia and are surgically altered to be females (genital surgery and testes removed) and given female hormones as children and adolescents. They do not make very good girls, acting more like boys and have male sexual inclinations. In one case of identical twins where one was surgically altered “she” always wanted to do the things “her” brother did growing up and as an adult with chromosome testing discovered her true gender and had an operation restoring male sex. Are those that were surgically altered at birth to be females but do not want to have more surgery but who are attracted to “other” females not to be allowed to marry? And which sex can they marry?

There is evidence that the brains of homosexual people have the morphology intermediate to that of heterosexual men and women or even opposite that of their physical appearance. This is also true of tests of preference of homosexuals to pheromones in the perspiration of the same sex.

Most of the factual information discussed here can be found in the Medical or scientific literature. My specific source was: Scott F. Gilbert. *Developmental Biology* (seventh ed.) 2003. Sinauer Associates, Inc. Publishers, Sunderland MA. Pages 549-561. Chapter 17 has an extensive list of references.

Please contact me if you have any questions on this or other embryological or genetics topics.

Yours truly,

David A. Wright, Ph.D.
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Window on Fifth Street

For the last few years, I've watched "age 60" approach as my 50's got closer to 60. I've been thinking about it. I want to make the point that it does not make sense to think about 60 as anything more unusual than turning 40 or 50, but most people alive today think 60 is old. I used to be part of that group. Let me define "old"...it means "close to death" regardless of how healthy a person is. Well, I'm here now, and 60 isn't as old as I used to think it was going to be. Thank goodness.

Let's observe that when the social security retirement age of "65" was created in the 1930's, 65 was the age the average American died. That average is now closer to 80, but most people living today grew up being brainwashed that gray hair and wrinkles is old, 65 is "near death", and "retirement age" means life is over and done with. [Aside: I read recently about a lady in California who just renewed her drivers license at age 100. She drives friends who can't drive to shopping and appointments.]

Our culture considers age 60 as 'old', but my dad lived to be 86, as did his brother and sister. So I consider that it is not unreasonable to expect that I could live 30 more healthy years, and 30 equals half of my whole life. Thirty years ago I was 30, quite a long time ago. But 90 is just as far away for me. Realistically and desirably, I would like to work until I'm 75 or 80, then spend another ten or more years doing something leisurely, like traveling, visiting friends/relatives, taking in movies, books, classes, art degree, teaching photography, what else? But wait, does it make sense to define one's eighties or nineties, twenty or thirty years in advance? When I was "30 something", I wasn't concerned about 50 or 60.

I have friends who are active in their seventies and eighties. Stan is 80-ish, Sylvia is 73 or 74. At least twice a year they travel to foreign countries. They also travel the U.S. to visit their children and other relatives. Sylvia still sells and lists real estate. Stan is active in a folk dance organization. It's exercise, it's socializing (he and Sylvia met 15 years ago while dancing), and it's part of their traveling experiences. They learn folk dances in some of the countries they visit. He is a retired CPA, but I think he still helps some clients.

Was Leo or my dad 'old' when they were 60? They both lived to be 86. I am certainly older than I used to be, and I want to be a lot older...someday. I am not young; I am what I am, and maybe I'm old. If that's true, then 60 and 70 and 80 and 90 are all old, just as 10 and 20 and 30 are all young. The number is not important unless it gets in the way of living.

So I don't know if it's a 'boomer' thing or a 'retirement' thing, but 60 just ain't what it used to be. And I'm glad.

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9:00 Little Miss Germanfest Contest and Royalty announced

9:00 Men's Slow Pitch Softball Tournament—Contact Adam at 402-269-7398.

9:00-6:00 Craft Show and Flea Market—Register to Barb at 402-269-2030.

11:00 Parade

Noon-4:00 Open Class Car Show

1:00 Greg Blecha Trio

1:00-5:00 Kinder Fun

1:00-5:00 Wine tasting and microbrewery at Alte Haus B&B, 6th & Thorne.

2:00 Tapping of the Fest Keg

3:00 Little German Band

4:00 Southeast Nebraska Band

5:00 Color of 9 Band

5:00-7:00 Ribfest and Watermelon Feed

6:00 Hog Calling Contest

7:00-11:00 Street Dance—Assembly Required

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SUNDAY, JULY 23, 2006

10:30 Community Worship at the Kimmel Building

8:00-1:00 Brunch at the Fair Center

Events are continuously added!!!

For more information visit www.syracusene.com

Country Scenes at www.yourcountryneighbor.com

The archives include pictures taken from the early years of this publication, as well as pictures that show more recent seasonal changes. All pictures on the site are in color, and some are free to download.

Some regional advertisers help support the web site.



Children seemed intrigued with the 'olde' techniques demonstrated during Peru's *Old Man River Days*.



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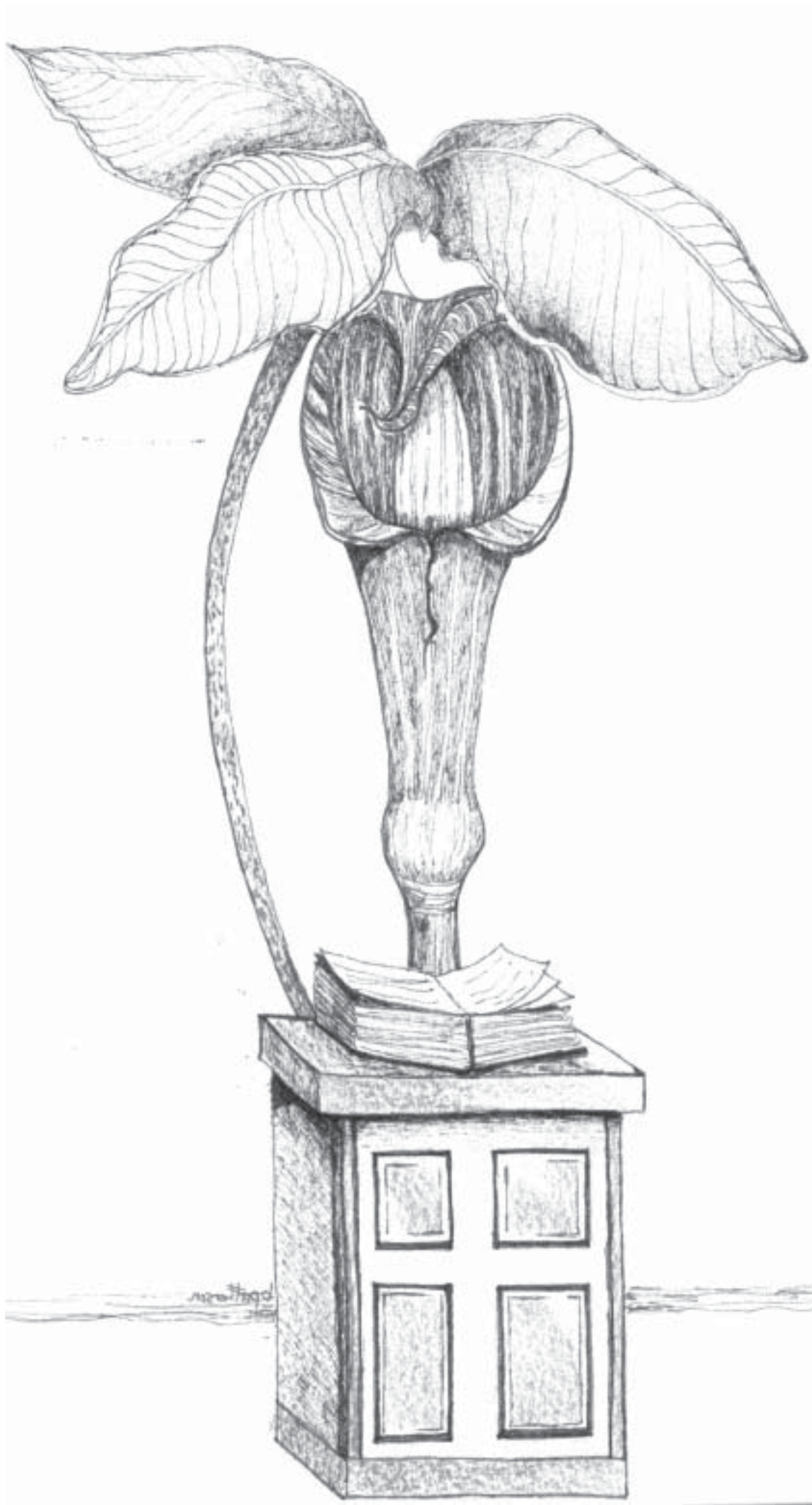
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“Jack-in-the-Pulpit”

by Bea Patterson

When gardeners have to move, fortunate are the ones who can smoothly transplant themselves as well as some of their favorite flowers. Fortunately for me, when I moved from Kansas to Nebraska, I eventually had a yard in which to move what I considered to be a piece of “home”, the Jack-in-the-Pulpit.

I had originally obtained the Jacks from the timbered area located on our family farm in Kansas. Much to my surprise, they took root and each year got bigger and better. The same thing happened when I moved a few to my Peru garden. They have not only grown, they have prospered. Each year, they shoot up in the middle of spring. Each year, I have more plants than before, and each year, when the older more established ones grow to full height, they often reach three feet tall or more and have leaves that span two feet.

Jack-in-the-Pulpits are native to wet woodlands and heavily foliated areas from Nova Scotia to Minnesota and southward to Florida and Texas, so Kansas and Nebraska do not have exclusive rights to this exotic looking group. The location at my home replicates these conditions around our Spruce tree on the east side of our house. The Jacks get full shade most of the day and grow in organic clay soil that stays fairly moist most of the time.

Now when I say they “shoot up,” I mean it. You can practically stand and watch them grow. Overnight, a stalk will gain 1” or more. The stem starts out as a pointy looking, slick brownish purple worm, bare of any leaves. As it grows, gradually two basal leaves (sometimes only one) develop and unwrap from the stalk; each leaf is divided into three almost equal large parts. Then follows the formation of the “flower,” which consists of a delicately colored green and purple striped spathe (the pulpit) surrounding and arching over a slightly greenish, slightly striped spadix (Jack).

All too soon, the Jack dies back down to the ground right after flowering, usually leaving a rather shriveled stalk bearing a berry bundle from what had been the Jack. The berries start out a bright dark green then turn intense red by fall.

By next spring, underground tubers or “corms” will have spread, yielding more plants. The seed bundle can also be used to propagate new plants, although it takes longer.


Jack-in-the-Pulpit (*Arisaema triphyllum*) carries other monikers: “Indian Turnip,” “Bog Onion,” “Brown Dragon,” and “Starchwort.” It is a North American wildflower of the arum family (*Araceae*) noted for their unusual shaped flowers. Early native Americans are said to have used the Jack for medicinal purposes. Although no part of the fresh plant should be taken internally (it causes extreme pain), when dried or cooked first, the root was used as a vegetable. A salve reportedly was used to treat sore eyes, skin infections, and swelling. From the corm, a preparation was said to have been used to treat stomach gas, asthma, and rheumatism.

Jack-in-the-Pulpits can now be purchased from commercial nurseries, so either from nature or from the nursery, I would recommend obtaining some starts to add to your plant collection. Jacks are fairly easy to get started (apparently), are so beautifully unusual and exotic looking, deer resistant, use spaces in a cultivated garden that other flowers snub their leaves at, and really require no more care than to keep them watered. You can understand why I personally am so fond of them - they remind me of my Kansas farm and the wooded hills I so enjoy, so similar to the Peru area.

Turning over another leaf: The greenhouse season has closed for partner Betsy Reed, my husband John, and myself, but we want to thank all of you who patronized our little shop in Peru and came to enjoy our garden flowers (blooms from which we shared with many a customer); our patrons have again helped us through another successful year.

How's your garden growing?

Bea Patterson
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Whisler's Hunting & Fishing Report

by Josh Whisler
Photos provided by Author



Fishing:

The Missouri River has been pretty stable in the past month. It's not high but it's not low either. We have had some dandy days with the temps exceeding 90 degrees. That's good for those of us that are awaiting the Flathead action. The temperature of the river today is 76 degrees and that's just the right temperature for the Flatheads to bite. Any time the water temperature is over 70 degrees it's good. Then it's out of the Blues and into the Flathead season on the Ol' Missouri River. What are they hitting on?? Well, the little ones are biting on night crawlers. The big ones are hitting chubs and gold fish with pretty good luck on cut bait. The big ones are hitting that blood hard and often. Remember Big Bait, Big Fish on the Missouri. The Nebraska limits on catfish are Blue - 1 bag / 1 possession, Flathead - 5 bag / 10 possession, Channel - 5 bag / 10 possession.

The Old Man River Days Fish Contest is held every year east of Peru at the Peru Missouri River Boat Ramp. This years contest drew 23 contestants despite the rainy conditions. The contest pays out cash prizes for the Biggest Catfish, The Biggest Carp, and most pound of fish (Carp and Cat). The biggest Catfish award was split between Joe Whisler of Peru and Bob Kite of Auburn. Both weighed in a pair of 5-pound Flatheads. The Biggest Carp award went to Patty Davis of Omaha with a 12-pound common carp. Patty also went home with the Most Pounds of fish award, weighing in a whopping - or should I say a flopping - 120 pounds.

Hunting:

It's time to start thinking about getting your Fall deer permit. Buck deer permit that is. In Nebraska if you want a buck permit, you have to put in for a draw unit or put in for a statewide buck permit. If you were unsuccessful during the draw application period from the April application period you may still get a permit for a buck from the permits left after the first draw. Starting June 12 - Residents Only may purchase FIRST permit -Residents and resident landowners may purchase a first permit in any unit subject to availability, including Statewide Archery, Statewide Muzzleloader and Statewide Youth. Then starting June 26 - Residents, nonresidents and nonresident landowners may purchase a permit(s), subject to availability and within permit limits.

Permits may be obtained by stopping at NGPC offices, online (<http://www.ngpc.state.ne.us/hunting/guides/biggame>), and/or by mail:

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Summer is here and fishing is in full swing. The days are going from mild to hot and the river is the only place to be when it's too hot to do anything else. So break free from the ballgames and the spring yard projects and give the river a try. 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."



Patty Davis shows off the catch that earned her the “Most Pounds” award.

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Parade @ 10 a.m.

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Band Concert @ 1:00 p.m.

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Get on the road!

HEAT HAZE

by Devon Adams

There is beauty in the haze that hangs between
the near and far of rolling prairie that is patched
with crops and trees and farms floating
like islands on the waves of wind that ripple
through the sea of summer green that
stretches from sunrise to sunset.

Surrounded by tall windbreaks, the clusters
of houses, barns and sheds fight against
a constant breeze that grates on nerves.

It blows through all the seasons across
the miles from Canada to Mexico,
where there are no barrier mountains.

But on some days a calm stills the rush of air
and moisture wraps thin blankets
around the earth that smother distance.

A hasty brush paints the landscape
without details or outstanding colors
as heat haze builds into humid acres
sweating in a ghostly sun.

Then the balance is tipped and
angry clouds swell and burst
into thunderstorms that throw water
down to corn and beans and pastures.

On a good day, the crops drink deeply
and are refreshed, but on a bad day
the violence of the storm destroys
the promise of a profit and
hopes are put on hold for another year.

In the space between the solstice and equinox,
the plains sweat and shower in a cycle that
has no regard for human plans or plants.

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Tractor Talk...Part I

by Jon Oliver

How the whole tractor-buying scheme got started for me was very simple. I was driven. Driven by the allure or maybe the dirty, greasy feeling I got with a loud banging hulk in front of me. Or maybe it was the feeling I got when I started my dad’s 1948 John Deere A up to move snow, blade the road or any other small task that needed to be done around the place. Buying one was completely out of the question until I looked in the Midwest Messenger one morning and saw a guy had a John Deere B for sale for \$900. I talked to Dad about it, and even took the money out of the bank to buy it. Later I was criticized:

“You don’t need a tractor!” “Why do you want one?”

It was not Dad, not my family, but everyone else I talked to before even considering buying an old bag of bolts and nuts that was painted one particular color or the other: green, red, prairie gold, orange, silver, yellow, etc.

I had a conversation with a good friend of mine about the possibility, just the possibility, of purchasing a tractor and he said:

“Well Jon, do what you want ... just make sure you know what you are getting.”

That thought and my dad’s good advice laid the foundation of my great tractor adventure. I never did buy that B. I have learned since bringing another tractor home, you do not buy a tractor, even though I have said that above. You PURCHASE a tractor. This one word can be broken down into joys and very small or large problems in a tractor sort-of-way. When you buy/purchase a tractor you give away a monetary value and you receive a tractor in whatever condition the said tractor is in. The most important purchase of all however is the joys and problems. You receive a part of agriculture history: joy. You purchase an unexpected leaky gas tank after you clean the gunk off the bottom of the tank: small problem. You purchase a stuck valve: bigger problem. You purchase a cracked block: really big problem. You catch my drift here. The joy that comes out of every agriculture piece you own is that no one is just the same as the next. The joy of fixing a tractor yourself almost always outweighs the problem. I said almost.

“I just hope it isn’t banged up too bad.” I said to my dad.

“Well...we’ll have to see.” He flicked his cigarette ashes out the window into the cool morning sunlight.

We were fifteen miles west of Lincoln, Nebraska, going to look at a different old John Deere I had seen in the paper. It was a 1952 Model 60. We were going to look it over, buy it possibly, and drive it, traveling the country roads north of Lincoln, all the way back to Weeping Water. Now... in my very limited experience in tractor driving and restoration, I have come across one defining truth; all tractors are slow due to the gears that drive them. Don’t get me wrong, they need to be to accomplish their job, but what I was about to embark on was nearly a seventy-five mile journey back to Weeping Water going not through Lincoln, not down “O” Street, (the Municipal Police probably wouldn’t appreciate traffic being backed up for the entire length of Lincoln), but around Lincoln.

If you have ever driven around a large city in a car or farm truck, you know it is going to take you a very long time. But drive around Lincoln or a large city on a tractor going 16.3 miles-per-hour and tell me you don’t get tired, frustrated, and start cussing yourself for being so dang dumb in the first place to drive a tractor fifteen miles to Lincoln, Nebraska, then around Lincoln and then hit Highway 34 East the rest of the way into Weeping Water.

Most of you are probably wondering at this point, why not a trailer? Why not trailer the dang thing home, right? This was last summer. Last summer gasoline rose to nearly \$2.80 a gallon or more. So I hunkered down inside my John Deere hat and thought through all the angles of bringing a John Deere 60 home from fifteen miles west of Lincoln. I could pay my friend to trailer my purchase home on his flatbed. But his Chevy truck drinks more gas than OPEC can produce and would cost my entire life savings. So I had two mathematical equations on my hands. Tractor + Trailer + Chevy truck = Energy crisis. Tractor + Jon + Little red gas can = One long ride home.

.....Jon’s ‘Tractor Trek’ will be continued in the next issue.....

Tanner keeps chicken tradition going

By Merri Johnson

If you grew up in rural America 50 years ago, it’s a pretty safe bet that you either raised chickens or knew someone who did. Farm-fresh eggs were common then, not a specialty one had to go looking for.

But try to find a source of farm-fresh eggs today. Combined with the fact that the number of farms in Nebraska has shrunk by over 5,000 just since 1987, the small number of people inclined to do daily chicken chores has practically eliminated farm-fresh eggs from most families’ diets.

My husband and I, however, are not among the fresh egg-deprived. We are among the few – three to be exact – regular customers of Diane Tanner, our “egg lady” of rural Auburn.

Diane says she contracted the “chicken bug” from her mother and grandparents. The condition apparently lay dormant for awhile, but she says she’s been raising chickens on and off now for about five years. “It’s no big money-maker,” she says, but she’s willing to tend the “ornery” things for the sake of fresh, wholesome eggs and fryers.

The laying hens are allowed to wander and scratch for insects during the day. They can “absolutely wreck a flower bed” scratching in the dirt with their sharp toes, Diane says, but she’s willing to make that trade-off. During the summer, she may leave the coop open overnight, trusting her two very big dogs to chase off marauding coyotes, raccoons, rats and owls.

The hens start laying in the morning, in response to daylight. Diane gathers the eggs around noon and, judging by the daily take, figures that most of the hens are laying about every other day. Both extreme heat and cold will affect their productivity, which lasts only about 18 months to start with. A three-year old hen is considered “old.” Talk about a culture of youth! Hollywood has nothin’ on chickens.

Currently, Diane’s stock consists of 36 young layers and 15 old hens. She acquired the younger hens last winter pretty much accidentally. On a shopping trip to Omaha, she saw a bulletin board flyer advertising a mixed flock. The owner was ready to get out of the business and was looking to give away free chickens to a good home. Diane snatched them up the way a soft-hearted cat lover adopts free kittens and brought them home that day in a box.

The names of the breeds have a way of drawing you in, of tickling your fancy. They seem almost too elegant for humble chickens. There’s Buff Orpington, a plump, light brown breed developed in England and suitable for cold weather; Rhode Island Reds are, naturally, dark red and desirable as good layers; Silver Laced Cochin are big and fluffy and make good foster mothers; Golden Comet, is a small breed with a quiet temperament that lays large eggs; and Araucanas from South America, whose dark body feathers are topped by a flowing, sunset-hued shawl, lay green eggs (without the ham). And then there’s Black Sex Links. Whoever assigned that name apparently had no illusions about the “romantic” side of raising chickens.

In addition to carrying on the tradition of tending laying hens, Diane also participates in the annual ritual of “chick days,” as the banner hanging outside the Orscheln Farm & Home Store announces each spring. But Diane doesn’t select her chicks from a local store; she mail orders them. One hundred day-old yellow fluffs arrive by Parcel Post. Six weeks later, they’re toast. Or rather, they’re fryers, ready for the freezer.

Butchering is a family affair. You won’t find a traveling chicken slaughter operation set up in her yard. I didn’t ask if she prefers wringing the necks or chopping off the heads. If that sounds too barbaric to your modern ears, just remember, that for their short lives, those chickens had it good at Diane’s. Way better than any “factory” chicken you’re buying at the grocery store.

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The Face of Drought

by Karen Ott

Mother Nature ushered in summer 2006 this week, but if I'd never heard the word solstice, or ever seen a calendar, I still would have known summer had arrived. How? I have ants in the house, sugar ants to be precise, the teeniest ant known to man, or at least to me. The hoard has made an annual appearance in the kitchen of this house since my parents moved here in 1952, and I imagine every woman who ever fried an egg or baked a batch of biscuits within these walls battled them. The darn things are as reliable as the sun, as constant as the moon.

Through the years I've tried various, and mostly unsuccessful, ant poisons and aerosol sprays, but the ants are tougher than they look. Nothing has ever stopped them from parading across the stove top or marching along the edge of my kitchen counters.

So this year, in a desperate last stand, I squirted them, and their 'hole', with sticky blue Dawn dishwashing detergent. To my surprise it stopped them cold. I was elated; I had finally triumphed. Or so I thought until yesterday when I opened the dishwasher and found the clean dishes swarming with hundreds of unwelcome intruders.


There is no doubt in my mind that insects will one day inherit the earth. After all, they've have already succeeded in conquering my kitchen.

It rained early this morning; six tenths here on the home place, more around Scottsbluff. Around five a.m. there was a hail storm between Torrington and Morrill; several tire shop customers mentioned the ground along the hi-way was white and crops were 'stripped.' Morning storms are an unusual occurrence in the valley, but every so often, when the weather is a little more cockeyed than usual, we manage to get one.

Our crops are recuperating from Thunderstorm Katrina. But as I predicted, some of the corn is twisting into tight ropes because the growing point can't find an escape out into the sun. In an attempt to save the tattered sweet corn I walked every row, tearing open the tops of each plant in trouble. I'm not sure I did any good, but it made me feel better. The fields look a little nearer to normal now that new growth has appeared, but the stands are thin.

Many of our neighbors replanted their beans this week, even those fields where the beans hadn't yet emerged. The soil, pounded by hail, and then baked in 100 degree heat, crusted to a thick, concrete-like hardness, trapping the germinating seeds underground. The fields were ripped and reseeded; all that initial seed, fertilizer, and diesel, not to mention the man-hours and growing time.....gone.

I spent last Saturday in the fields picking up ‘flood trash’, hoisting and forking pile after pile of junk onto the bed



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of our spare pickup, a little blue Mazda with an engine that overheats if it's driven more than eight miles from home. Venture much further than that and it begins to act like a homesick kid away at camp.

Following church on Sunday we indulged in a Father's Day picnic, enjoying a few hours of rest and recreation down along Horse Creek with our sons and their families.

And unfortunately, as we've been able to do every year since the drought began, we were able to walk from the mouth of Horse Creek out into the North Platte River. This year, for the first time, our two-year-old granddaughter and three-year-old grandson walked with us. It's hard to believe the drought has been with us longer than they have.

The Platte was ankle deep and bath-water warm.

Maybe next year things will be different.



Chimney Rock, on the Oregon Trail

What is a *Dowser* and a *Healer*?

by Joe Smith

I get that question every once in a while. You know what our answer is most of the time? He or she is a person like the old water witches. They say, “Oh yeah, I know what you mean. Then we say, “But a dowser is much more than that. True they find water, but also lots of other things. That is just the tip of the iceberg.” Then I explain some of the things dowsers do now. “Dowsers dowse for health matters, for weather forecasting, planning trips, find lost people and lost planes, dowse for the right stocks to buy on the stock market, and so forth. There is no end to what dowser can do with his or her talent. 90% of the people could dowse with just a little training. My wife and I started dowsing because we needed a well to help in a drought. A fellow came over from another town and showed us how to dowse. He started out with a map of the farm. My wife went in the other room so she wouldn’t laugh in his face. That was our first look at map dowsing. He then taught me how to dowse. I guess I was a natural at it. I took to it like a duck takes to water. Wasn’t long until I found out it did work very well and then I started looking for other uses for this new found talent.

We had several stripper oil leases in Texas. I decided if it works for water why not oil. That again came naturally to me. I used that talent many times in Texas and several other states. We had a lease in Kansas and I found several wells on it also. The main problem with oil dowsing is the money involved. You had to go with a bunch of partners. Not all of their decisions were good ones. But I’m not broke yet. Right now I am out of the oil business altogether. I sleep better at night that way. While drilling a well in Kansas I learned by accident that I could send healing en-

ergy to people, That instance caused a big turn in our lives.

The fellow drilling the well for us was a veteran of Vietnam. I’m not sure of the spelling but he had been shot in the right shoulder and hard work bothered him. We were setting up a water tank for the drilling of the well. He hurt his shoulder while using a pipe wrench. The fellow with us was from Denver, he told Eric to go over and I would heal it for him. I looked around to see if there were any more Joes around, surely he wasn’t talking about me! Eric was a big old boy anyway. He backed up to me and said, “Heal it then.”

I had seen healers on TV rub their hands together, so I rubbed my hands together and said to myself, “God, if ever I needed your help it is now.” I worked on the fellow maybe 30 seconds, not even touching him. I asked him how it felt. He turned around with a strange look on his face, shook his arm, flexed his shoulder and said, “Stay away from me, you’re plumb weird.” His shoulder quit hurting at that point of time. Since then I have done a lot of this type of “energy work.”

There are a lot of dowsers that do “energy work” - more all the time. We are actually doing healing work but have to call it energy work. We as dowsers don’t do the healing. That is done by the Lord and the person we are working on. The word “Healers” is really a misnomer. We are just a small part of it. The power comes from God to do this work. If you don’t believe in God then maybe you get the power from your mailman or your drug-gist. Me, I want help from above.

I started out talking about dowsing and ended up talking about the healing side of it. It all runs together, the same place you get your info to dowse is the same place we get the info to do body scans, to find out the problems people have. I have given two doctors pendulums and they

have studied the “Letter to Robin” to get an idea of how to use it. One of them checks the prescription he gives to people with the pendulum for reaction problems. It is a start.

Most people are interested in dowsing but they don’t want to become dowsers. Our best chance to make dowsers out of wannabes is at a conference. People that go to conferences are serious about dowsing. That reminds me, how many of you have been to a conference? If not, plan to go to one. Sure, it will cost you a little cash, but you will never be sorry. There are conferences all over the country. I got four invites to speak at four different ones next Spring and have already turned down one because of time conflicts. So they are out there. Join in and really learn a skill that will help you the rest of your life.

Detrimental energy is another use for dowsing. There are several geopathic zones all over the world grids. One is called Curry Zones, another one is the Hartman lines. These were found by doctors in Germany. Combined with water veins under your home, will cause a drain on your immune system. This is similar to living under a high voltage line, not very healthy. These zones are detectable by dowsing or a gravity meter. There are many ways to alter these noxious zones so they won’t be harmful to people. My wife and I teach this work all over the states at conferences. Another thing we use dowsing for is to forecast the weather as much as three months ahead. Finding potential storms capable of producing a tornado is another way we use dowsing. By dowsing, they are easy to find on maps. Storms put out a large amount of energy. Don’t ask me how it works but I know it does. Planning trips in the winter by dowsing is yet another use of dowsing. This is enough for now. I have you totally confused, but dowsing does work. Take my word for it. Joe Smith

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Joe and his Sawmill

HYPOTHYROIDISM

by Ursula Waln N.D.

This material is for informational purposes only. Readers are encouraged to confirm the information contained herein with other sources. The information is not intended to replace medical advice offered by physicians.

Hypothyroidism affects many Americans, so thyroid hormone testing has become a standard part of the bloodwork ordered by many doctors during regular checkups. Common signs and symptoms of hypothyroidism include fatigue, constipation, unexplained weight gain, poor circulation, fluid retention, cold intolerance, ringing in the ears, dry skin, yellow skin, small bumps on the backs of the upper arms, hair loss, brittle nails, forgetfulness, depression, and muddled thinking. Other associated conditions include anemia, high cholesterol, menstrual irregularities, infertility, decreased resistance to infection, and a tendency toward cyst formation (e.g., fibrocystic breasts, ovarian cysts). A goiter (enlargement of the thyroid gland) may or may not be present.

Often, hypothyroidism is the result of an autoimmune condition (Hashimoto’s thyroiditis) involving antibodies to thyroperoxidase (TPO) and/or thyroglobulin (TGB). Because knowing whether there is an underlying autoimmune condition does not change the conventional treatment, most doctors do not test for the above antibodies. (Most naturopathic doctors consider the distinction important because they seek to identify and address underlying causes.) Other causes of hypothyroidism include congenital defects (cretinism); loss of functional thyroid gland (e.g., from surgery or irradiation); inflammatory conditions; pituitary or hypothalamic problems (secondary or tertiary hypothyroidism, respectively); use of certain pharmaceutical preparations (e.g., lithium, amiodarone, sulfonyleurea, glucocorticoids, propranolol, propylthiouracil, phenytoin, diazepam, furosemide, salicylates); and excessive dietary supplementation of selenium or iodine.

Sometimes thyroid hormone production is fine but the symptoms of hypothyroidism are present due to poor conversion of thyroxine (T4) to the more active triiodothyronine (T3), a process which takes place throughout the body, but especially in the liver and kidneys. This indicates compromised function of these vital organs. In such cases, it is necessary to identify and address the underlying causes of the dysfunction.

The conventional treatment for hypothyroidism is long-term replacement with synthetic thyroid hormones. This is safe, and most people respond very well to it. However, natural thyroid hormone (dessicated bovine or porcine thyroid gland) has its proponents. While some people do seem to respond better to the natural thyroid than to the synthetic, others respond better to the synthetic. The natural hormone carries the risk of evoking an immunologic reaction (more likely when an autoimmune condition already exists) and even leading to increased autoimmune tendencies, so in my opinion it is probably best reserved for those who do not respond well to synthetic hormones and who do not have any existing autoimmune conditions.

GENERAL DIETARY GUIDELINES:

Avoid foods containing refined sugar, refined flour, partially hydrogenated oils (e.g., margarine, shortening), or chemical

additives (e.g., dyes, artificial sweeteners, preservatives). Also avoid foods to which you have known sensitivities.

Eat plenty of fruits, vegetables, whole grains, nuts, seeds, legumes, poultry, and fish. Especially therapeutic foods include seaweed, sprouts, onions, garlic, artichokes, asparagus, dulse, Swiss chard, romaine lettuce, parsley, egg yolks, wheat germ, cod roe, lecithin, coconut oil, sesame seeds (tahini), oats, rye, quinoa, and turmeric.

Limit consumption of raw goitrogens, foods that inhibit thyroid function. Some of the most common goitrogens include turnips, cabbage, broccoli, cauliflower, rutabaga, kohlrabi, radishes, brussel sprouts, mustard greens, kale, collards, rapeseed (canola oil), soy, millet, pine nuts, peanuts, peaches, and strawberries. If cooked, these foods may be eaten in moderation, as cooking reduces their goitrogenicity somewhat.

OTHER CONSIDERATIONS:

Avoid using an electric blanket. Having to generate heat to keep warm raises the body’s metabolic rate.

Supportive herbs and supplements include burdock root, cat’s claw, dandelion root, milk thistle seed, nettle, pau d’arco, rehmannia, schisandra, chlorophyll-rich superfoods (e.g., alfalfa, blue-green algae, chlorella, spirulina), fish oil, flax seed oil, bromelain, quercitin, vitamin A₁, vitamin B-complex, vitamin C, vitamin E, iodine₂, and zinc₃.

Tyrosine, an amino acid found in protein-rich foods (especially in meats) and produced in the body, is a building block for thyroid hormones. However, supplementation of tyrosine carries many risks and is not necessary for most people.

Herbs to avoid include bugleweed (*Lycopus virginicus*), gromwell (*Lithospermum ruderale*), lemon balm (*Melissa officinalis*), and motherwort (*Leonurus cardiaca*).

Notes

1. Vitamin A supplementation should not exceed 10,000 I.U. per day. Food sources of vitamin A include fish liver oils, fish, and — to a lesser extent — butter and cream. Pre-formed vitamin A is not found in plant foods. Note that “Vitamin A [as beta-carotene]” on a supplement label is not the same as “Vitamin A,” and in hypothyroidism the difference has practical significance. Carotenes are constituents of plant foods which the body can, under normal conditions, convert to vitamin A. In hypothyroidism, however, carotenes are not efficiently converted to vitamin A. The body becomes deficient in vitamin A deficiency while unconverted carotenes build up in the skin, causing an orange or bronze tint (known as carotenodermia).
2. Iodine is a building block for thyroid hormones. However, supplementation should not exceed 500 mcg per day, as too much iodine can actually inhibit thyroid function. Food sources of iodine include kelp and other sea vegetables as well as iodized salt.
3. Long-term supplementation of zinc should be balanced with copper. Supplementing either mineral alone can create a deficiency of the other over time. Nuts and seeds are excellent food sources of both.

The Common Cold

by Jeffrey G. Meade MD

With all of the medical breakthroughs and research into new drugs that we have seen in the past two decades: why isn't there a cure for the common cold?

This issue will start a four part series on herbal and natural remedies. In this issue I will explore and explain what is known about the effectiveness of Echinacea, zinc, and vitamin C. Then over the next two issues I will cover five of the most popular herbs: ginkgo biloba, St. John's wort, ginseng, saw palmetto, and kava. Finally in the last issue I will cover homeopathic medicine, invented in the late 1700s by German physician Samuel Hahnemann, who believed that the weaker the solution, the more effective the medicine.

Three articles ago I explored with you some of the past history of the influenza virus and the death toll from some of the past major outbreaks as well as the estimated 20,000 to 35,000 deaths in the USA this last flu season. I also talked about avian influenza, or "Bird Flu" and the fears that it too will soon be a major threat to our health. But today, I would like to talk about its lesser cousin, the common cold.

There is still no cure for the common cold, but as the season of sniffles and sneezes will be upon us once again all too soon, are there any proven remedies to lessen the misery of the common cold?

Echinacea, zinc, and vitamin C are all touted as cures for colds, but do they really work? Americans spend billions on these supplements each year and although some studies have shown them to be effective, most of the evidence remains inconclusive.

Over three decades ago a Nobel-prize winning chemist Linus Pauling wrote about megadoses of vitamin C as a cure for colds as well as a preventative for cancer. In 1997 he published the book, *Vitamin C and the Common Cold*. A study, published in the spring of 2002 in the journal *Advances in Therapy*, has shown that a patented form of vitamin C known as Ester C reduces the severity and number of colds versus placebo. There were 37 colds among the group taking Ester C compared to 50 colds in the group that took placebo. However, most studies have not found Linus Pauling's claim to be correct. In fact most studies have shown that vitamin C shortens the duration of colds by about one day, which most people find insignificant. If you choose to take vitamin C, you will need 1 to 2 grams (1000 to 2000 mg) to have a therapeutic effect.

Early studies have shown that the herbal supplement Echinacea had an antiviral effect. And remember that we are talking about a virus, which conventional antibiotics do not have an effect on. However, better-designed studies have shown little evidence that Echinacea does more to shorten colds by more than a day or so.

Zinc has been studied more than any single element in the periodic table as to its effect on illness. There are more claims made for Zinc than for any other medicine. I happen to believe that it is because it begins with the letter "Z". Have you

ever noticed how many new drugs begin with the letter "Z"? So many in fact that the Food and Drug Administration is slow to grant approval to new drugs beginning with "Z" because of its apparent popularity. My theories aside, Zinc, like vitamin C and Echinacea have shown only modest reduction of a day or so in the symptoms of a cold. The problem is that you can't really measure how sick you would have been without the treatment.

The bottom line is that these supplements appear to be safe and may do some people some good. We just don't know or haven't proven how much good.

The best way to prevent a cold is to take good care of your health. Things that are known to boost your own immune system are to get enough sleep, eat a balanced healthy diet, exercise, reduce stress and don't smoke. Other things that help are to wash your hands frequently and avoid touching your face, eyes, nose or mouth. Use hand sanitizer if you can not wash with soap and water. If you have a cold, sneeze into your arm rather than your hand to avoid spreading the virus.

Now what do I do when I get a cold? Basically I take Echinacea, Zinc and mega doses of vitamin C. Of course I supplement these with chicken soup, but that's a whole column by itself.

Until next month, stay healthy!

Jeffrey G. Meade, M.D.



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Catastrophes

by Frieda Burston

Coming to my 87th birthday in June, I asked myself, “WHY?” What’s the point in people living this long, when all the good stuff is over? Then, reading two of the articles in “Country Neighbor” about preparing for catastrophes and disasters, I understood why people live this long. Somebody has to be around to tell the younger folks about the catastrophes and disasters that THEY had gone through in THEIR time, and what THEY had learned from it. If nobody passes on these practical lessons, then everybody has to make the same miserable mistakes over and over again.

So there is a point to my getting to this age, and clearly it gives me an excuse to tell my stories.

I have gone through tornados in Missouri, hurricanes in Texas, earthquakes in California, and enemy attack here. The same basic things were in our Tornado Cellar, our Hurricane Pantry, our Earthquake Shed, and our War Chest. And the most basic of all the Basic things was Water.

No matter what happens, you will always need clean water to drink. Your Safe Room, whether it’s under the house, outside the house, or deep inside the house, needs to contain as much water as you have room for. You can go without food for 70 days, but if you go without water for 70 hours, you won’t last much longer.

The problem is: what containers? Glass breaks. Small pots and pans take up too much space. Metal contaminates. Plastic contaminates too. In the last crisis, I laid in a dozen bottles of bottled water. I knew that chemicals erode from the bottles into the water, so I did what I could by rotating the bottles, using them and replacing them every few weeks, not saving them for disasters.. There must be a better solution, surely?

That’s the drinking water you need. You also need a lot of sanitation water. Your Safe Room either has a toilet in it, or you provide a covered corner with a covered slop bucket for human waste and a bucket of sanitation water to keep the solid waste submerged. It’s amazing how a stressful situation can cause the body to jettison waste, but that’s the good old flight-or-fight reaction — and you’d better have more than one bucket of sanitation water if you have old people and children taking shelter in that Safe Room. I don’t know what to do about the family pet — cats can have a litter box, but dogs? One friend told me they are affected like humans, and she provided a stack of newspapers in the Safe Room for the dog. Others closed the dog into the family bathroom and hoped he would forgive them.

Food is a different problem, because it varies not only with taste and custom and availability, but with the disaster. I see TV pictures of big bags of rice being distributed at earthquakes, mud slides, tsunamis, and hurricanes — but rice has to be cooked, and I don’t see anyone handing out stoves or firewood on TV. How do those starving people get the rice soft enough to eat without cooking it? In a big disaster everything is wet, or everything is buried under rubble. How will they make a fire?

And that reminds me of something else — In earthquakes (and the Midwest has had some big earthquakes, too!), the first thing they tell you to do, is to turn off your gas and your electricity at the connections into the house, to prevent fire. (No use burning down the house to cook the rice they’ll fly in for you.) That means you have to know where the turn-offs are — do you ?

Tornados are the simplest to prepare for — you have time to use the bathroom before you pop into the cellar or the inside closet, and you won’t be there long enough to need water.. But take a flashlight — don’t turn on the electricity, and stay away from electric outlets or electric appliances — lightning can come inside and get you. And if your stomach curls up and cries when you see a darkening funnel outside, carry some Tums in your pocket on stormy days — you may survive a climate attack, but the GERD may get you. One friend in the Midwest rates tornados by how many Tums she took.

Hurricanes last longer than the usual tornado, and sometimes it doesn’t help to evacuate because the hurricane can turn a little and come on land at exactly the place you’ve gone to — happened one time when Abe was in Japan and I was home in South Texas with Lulu. Radio told us to leave and head north. I had no car, so we couldn’t. Radio told us to board up the windows. I had no boards and no expertise in nailing them across

windows in a concrete block house. I opened windows on opposite sides of the house and then sat up rocking Lulu all night so we’d both blow away together. In the morning we learned that the hurricane had turned away from Brownsville and had come inland on the road north. People in cars on that road had a fearful time.

The Chinese say that animals can sense earthquakes an hour ahead, so if you have pets who suddenly want to hide or want to lean on your legs and make whiney noises, fasten things down and stand under a door frame when the lights begin to swing from the ceiling and the road outside undulates like ocean waves. In California, school children were taught to get under the tables so they were protected if the lights fell or the windows broke. (We did the same thing for Nuke Drill, but I never understood why — if the windows blew in, we were dead ducks anyhow.)

Wars? That’s the hardest to get ready for, but the government and Civil Defense will usually have specific instructions. My main comment here is that it’s a great way to get rid of food addictions — I laid in a big supply of chocolate bars to reward us for living through the bombardments, and found when the crisis was all over and we had torn the tape off the windows, that I couldn’t stand even looking at chocolate bars — in my mind, they were tied up with gas masks and slop buckets. As for food, be sure anything you stash away in the Safe Room can be eaten without cooking — if your windows are sealed to keep out poison gas, don’t burn up your oxygen with a Sterno Stove. And candles are fine in case the electricity is knocked out, but again — sit in the dark and breathe, there’s more of a future in it.

I don’t know that there’s any defense against nukes, or any preparation you can make, because you can’t stay in the Safe Room forever, and the radiation will still be hanging around outside the house when you go out. My brother (who is even older than I am) was in the first boatload of Americans to enter Hiroshima after our bomb, and he described the radiation as still around weeks afterwards. However, if you check the Net, you will find that there are some minerals and a few B vitamins you can buy ahead of time, and keep handy to defend the body if you expect nuking. It would be fun to stay alive just to aggravate the Ayatollahs.

Lulu bought me a shirt when I turned 80 — it says on it, “I’ve Seen it all, I’ve Done it all, I just don’t Remember any of it”.

At 87, today’s world being the way it is, I’m looking for a shirt that says, “I’ve Seen it all, I’ve Done it all, and I’m ready to Tell it all, too.”

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Diary of an Unemployed Housewife

By Merri Johnson

A couple of weeks ago a friend offered me some free cherries; all I had to do was help her pick them. I'm usually game for an outdoor, domestic activity so I agreed to show up at 8:00 a.m. the following Thursday. We would put the step-ladders in the back of my pickup to reach the top branches and have a gab-fest while we were at it.

The appointed day arrived, blest by overcast skies and a good breeze to keep the insects off. I drove into the orchard and maneuvered up close to a tree just covered with ruby-colored, marble-sized cherries. As a child, I used to pick cherries on my grandparents' farm and I'm sure I remember sitting on a branch of the tree to do it. But there's no way I could have wedged myself into this tree's thicket of branches.

No matter. After an hour and a half of tunneling through the dense foliage to pluck the sticky fruit, I had accumulated a pretty fair amount in my bucket; enough to bake a couple of pies, I thought.

It's funny, though, when I got home and spread the cherries out to prevent crushing, the quantity looked like a whole lot more than two pies. I was planning to meet with some friends later in the day, so I loaded up a couple of quart-size, zip-lock bags, sure they'd be happy (or at least not repulsed) to receive the makings of an organic, fresh cherry pie.

No way, José. I must have offered those cherries to half a dozen people. Who knew that so many other people also had a cherry tree with fruit going begging? Turns out cherries are the zucchini of fruit. Everyone who wants it, already has it, and they have it to the point of not wanting it! But being frugal with food, as I imagine most growers of their own tend to be, they begin "gift-ing" unsolicited produce to unsuspecting neighbors. They just can't bear to see it go to waste.

With cherries, it's truly the pits.

I mean the fact that there *are* pits.

If you could just eat cherries out of a bowl like strawberries, or nibble around the pit like a peach, people would be thrilled to take them off your hands. But the prospect of an evening spent pitting cherries on the patio doesn't turn too many people on these days. And even if the pit problem could be overcome, there's the matter of their pucker power. Those babies are tart with a capital T. It takes a lot of sugar to turn them into tasty pastries.

So, there you have it. After 90 minutes of picking, another 90 or so of pitting, about two hours to do the baking, and I had five "free" cherry desserts. I thought they were delicious. And so did all the people who helped me eat them. They couldn't bear to see that cherry pie go to waste.

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