

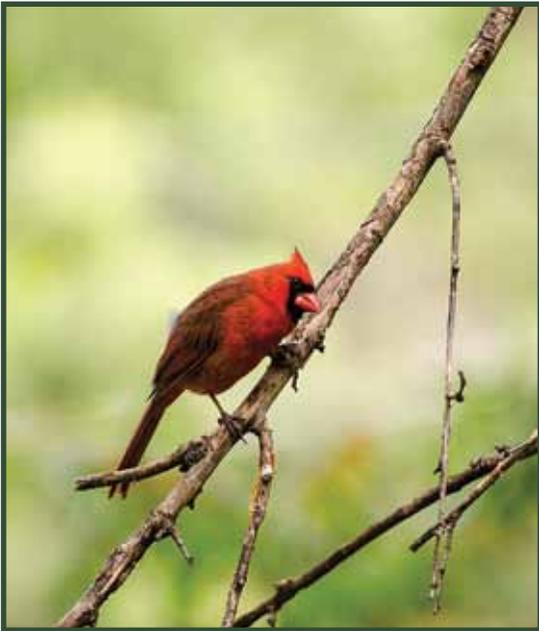
Your *Country* Neighbor

June, 2016

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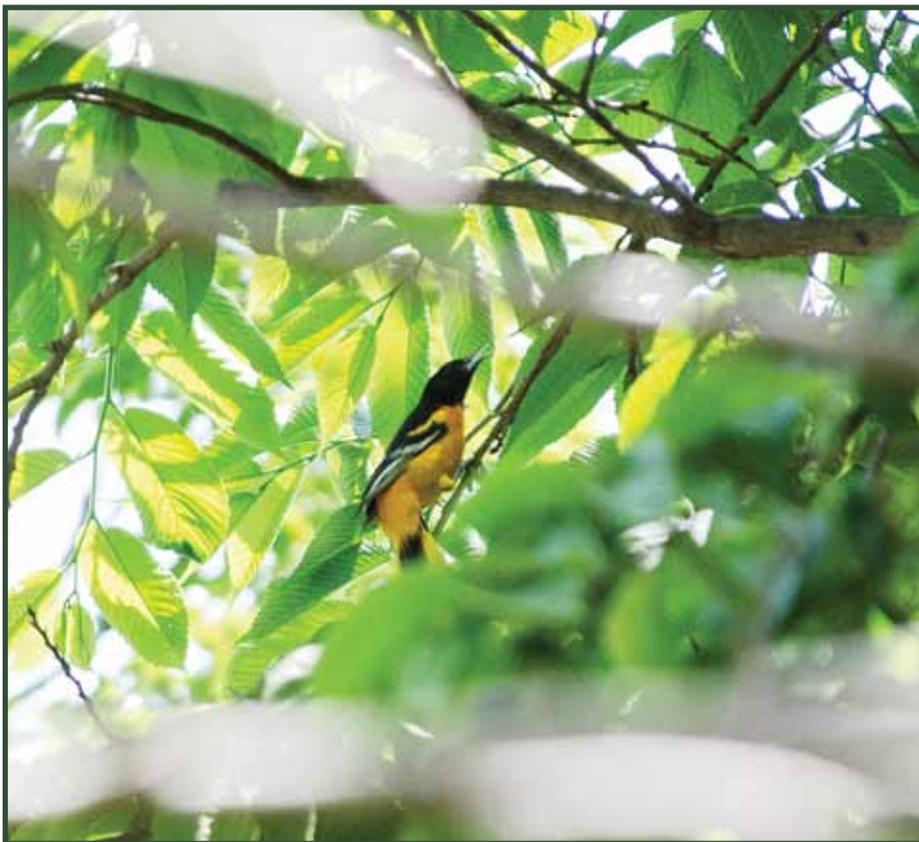
A Magazine for
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My backyard songbird, the Cardinal.



Girls' Hurdles; Track Meet at Auburn High School, May, 2016.



My Elusive Baltimore Oriole.

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Cover Photo(s)

It was a good day for a track meet in Auburn. The cover photo is of a girl's hurdle race. One of the boys' relays is on page 6. My backyard Cardinal's song is a pleasant part of my morning. The Baltimore Oriole usually arrives in this area around the middle of May. Orioles are elusive in the tree-tops; heard before seen. This one will feast on my mulberries soon.

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
Marilyn Woerth

Thank You!

Your Country Neighbor

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Where Life Is Good

Marilyn Woerth

(To my readers: Sorry I missed last month, for the second time since December my husband and I lost a parent. My father-in-law was 88 and had lived a good Christian life. With that said...)

It's June....(sigh) the month of weddings, baby birds, soft rains, blooming gardens, bluer than blue skies, white fluffy clouds and a tremendous amount of weeds. Yuck! In April I buy my plants, planting those that go in the vegetable garden immediately, providing the beds were cultivated in the fall and again in late March.

I do try really hard to start planting the end of April, but our Zone 5 planting guidelines say wait until May 15. Hard to do when you're a fanatic like me. Oh it's a nice day let's plant. Never mind that next week the temps are dropping down into the 40's or 30's. Oh how many years have I been caught planting too soon. I planted my salad bowl (loose leaf, spinach, kale, arugula, etc.) way too soon this year, not much of a harvest between the rain and cold weather). Sigh!

Seems like this year life got in the way of planting too soon for my perennials, annuals and my weeding. That and lots of cold rain. Oh of course, on those nice days we were out of town, and when we were home, obligations or weather kept us from gardening. But that is life, you take the ups with the downs and then you cry a little, think about it, sort it out, count your blessing and put one foot in front of the other. As Annie would sing, "The sun will come out tomorrow, tomorrow..."

So now it's June and the weeds (and mosquitoes) are loving the April and May rains, the maple helicopter seeds have all sprouted and boy is there a whole bunch of them shooting their green little leaves towards the sun. The seven hydrangea shrubs that were planted last year are all thriving as well as the remembrance garden planted then as well. All in all I am happy. Whatever possessed me to plant a remembrance, healing garden must have known what was to come and I am grateful for it. We all need one of those places to go to in our lives. In our busy, noisy lives it's hard to find the quiet needed to find our own way home to healing.

Now it is time to look ahead. All plants have been planted, (thank heavens for grow lights.) The Woerth Family Reunion is less than two months away, we're hosting, and I have a yard full of weeds. Believe it or not I am happy, I have weeds to pull, lots of ways to release stress. Don't bother me this month. I'm pulling weeds and planning on loving my grandsons to pieces.

Next month I plan to put on my silly, fun loving face, I just need to find it. I'm sure the grandsons and gardens will help with that. I want to thank all my readers for their patience as well as all the love I felt flowing our way. Because of people like you is why we live where life is good.

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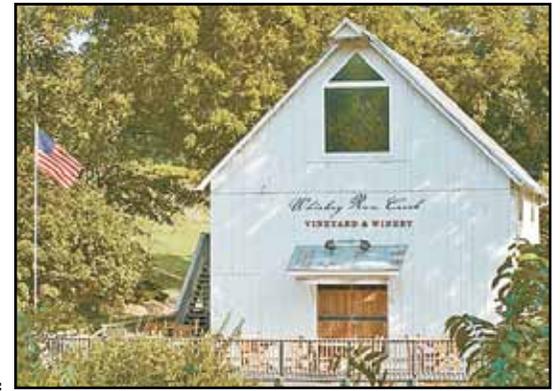
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Poetry by Devon Adams

WEDDINGS AND AISLES

June is a good month for just about anything, but seems to be about fathers and daughters most of all. In a slight of hand trick, the magical three-year old princess is transformed into an actual adult woman. Coming down the aisle, she still belongs to the first male in her life, but when the ceremony is over, she walks away from the altar with another man. But, whether she knows it or not, her father will stay beside her forever.

SPOTS IN THE SHADE

In the dappled sunshine under brush that whispers in the wind, are a pair of tiny bodies, hiding. They have no scent, so predators can't find them by their smell. Defense is a word that they don't know, but their mother told them to stay still, until she says to move. So there they are, hiding in plain sight, with white spots dribbled on their coats.

GRILLING

A slight breeze wanders through town, picking up and carrying luscious scents from backyard grills. Noses twitch and mouths water, as the creatures who like to eat smell the various steaks and burgers and hot dogs, swirling in the smoke. In the country, at the edge of town, the wild things savor the flavor of the wind and wish their tribes knew how to grill.

THE BLOOM IN THE BUD

As Spring raises her sleepy head to the sound of thunder, rain falls upon the faded and tattered fields of Winter. In a flash, bright greens arise and cover the earth with fresh bedding and clean scents. There is a rush of song and nesting behavior by all the wild things. Soon, there are buds swelling from stems, bursting with a promise of new life, and eggs waiting to crack, and babies wiggling in the womb. We love our flowers and our children before they are born, holding our hopeful breath until we can hold them in our arms.

BABIES IN THE BARN

Mama has them hidden in a corner, but I know where they are. The tiny tufts of fur who only eat and sleep will soon be crawling into curiosity. Mom will be exhausted from feeding healthy kids, and soon she'll take them out to play. They'll learn to listen to her rules, or they'll be someone's lunch. In time, she'll let them leave her, even if she has to make them go.

AS HIGH AS A KITE

Out there in the field, on a windy summer day, is a child running with a purpose. If he can slant his kite into the edge of the wind, it will explode with a life of its own and ascend to the end of the cord that tethers it to earth. Up there where the birds are, away from gravity, the fragile structure is a vessel that holds the child as high as his imagination can reach.



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Diary of a Part-time Housewife

Merri Johnson

Two of my sisters and I recently spent a day doing some spring cleaning at my mom's house, in my home town in northwest Iowa. I had brought along grubby clothes for the purpose: a somewhat faded Nebraska Game and Parks T-shirt and a pair of stained, too-short, elastic-waist denim pants. No one with any fashion sense would refer to the pants as "jeans." If they don't have a zipper and back pockets, they aren't jeans. Of course, I have never claimed to have any fashion sense. And especially when it comes to cleaning or yard work, I go for comfort.

My two sisters, however, were wearing actual jeans and tops that I would not have hesitated to wear to the grocery store. And my mom was dressed to supervise, not to work, so she was also more presentable than I was.

When lunch time rolled around, Mom wanted to take us to the local café, a short walk down the alley from her house. It was closer to 1:00 than noon, so I assumed the lunch rush would be over. I hoped not to be seen by anyone who knew me. Did I mention that my hair and make-up complemented the rest of my ensemble? You get the idea.

So, we walked down the alley and entered by the back door, out of sight of anyone on Main Street. Good: no one inside, except the two employees. For about two minutes. Then two men came in, both of whom I knew I should recognize. But, hey, when you've lived elsewhere for going on 30 years, those familiar faces still register, but their names and relationship to you don't necessarily pop into your head. I was pretty sure the two men were having the same experience I was having. My furtive glances in their direction were met by furtive glances coming from them.

As he was leaving, one of the men stopped at our table and said hello to my sister (who lives in the same nearby town as he does). She introduced me to him. Good grief; he had briefly been a former boss of mine back in the 80's! "Of course, I knew I should know you! So nice to see you," I effused. He admitted that it had taken him awhile to figure out who I was, too. I'd like to think that I haven't changed as much as some others have in the last three decades, but that's probably wishful thinking. And, of course, he was used to seeing me dressed and groomed for office work, not for spring cleaning. Anyway, that's my story and I'm sticking to it.

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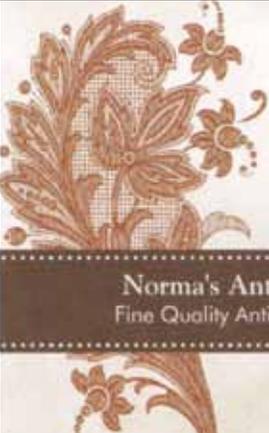






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