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COVER PHOTO

I thought I might not have a pair of Mourning Doves around my yard this year. They are only a little late, and I welcome their cooing, especially in the morning. But I’ve never caught them side by side like this before. I think the image says something favorable about nature, life, and love.

Inside are articles by your favorite writer(s) and photography of more of my bird visitors. The Gold Finch on page 8 posed nicely, as did the Baltimore Oriole on page 9. But the Bluebird on page 3 is special; I’ve only seen them in my yard in the Spring, and then rarely. A full page of my recent feathered visitors are on page 12. See also the Bald Eagle with its nest on page 6, and Carol’s photo of the owl on page 14.

Be sure to support the advertisers who support *Your Country Neighbor*, enjoy your favorite writer, and have a great month!

JAMES H. CAIN



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Voices

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

Writers This Month

Devon Adams - page 7
Carol Carpenter - pages 14 & 15
Sue Farmer - page 6
Stephen Hassler - page 3
Merri Johnson - page 13
Lee Nyberg - page 11
Marilyn Woerth - page 10

Thank You

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RAIN

Stephen Hassler

Rain; heaven's tears, sometimes it's needed, sometimes it's too much. Rain can make us feel depressed, melancholy, at peace, and too frequently, wet. When the weather is cold, rain can be miserable. When warm, it's thought of affectionately as a "Summer shower". It gives nature a fresh look of clean and green. It can sound like a patter, a roar, or music in the drain pipe and the pet's water bowl.

I think rain is better to watch and listen to than to 'be in' (many children would disagree). At night it's like 'surround sound' in the dark, except when there's lightning, and that too, can add interest if the thunder isn't too much of a distraction.

But rains can be extreme. Too much rain can produce mudslides in some places. Hillsides and houses slide to a lower elevation. Mud is of no use to anyone except maybe potters, and I've never seen them giddy after a rain, searching bare spots for just the right chunk of wet clay. Mud is sticky and gooey and you can get stuck in it... shoes, boots, cars, and tractors get stuck in it. My worst experience with mud involved my father's F-20 tractor stuck up to its axle, its big wheels spinning; the tire 'grooves' filled with smooth, shiny, sticky mud. I don't remember how we ever got that tractor out of the mud.

But I don't think about the negative when a storm begins. I like the other thoughts that come to me while listening to a Summer rain in the evening; contemplative and serene, massaging my consciousness, an opportunity for wide-awake meditation in the moment. But rain can slow me down. Sometimes that's good and sometimes it's annoying. There are too many things I cannot do when it's raining. So a rainstorm makes me appreciate electricity, and a roof that doesn't leak, and books. While reading, I pause now and then to listen... listen to the rain.

The rest of the time, I stay off tractors and out of the mud.

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WHAT'S AN ANTIQUE?

Sue Farmer

An antique (according to Wikipedia): (Latin: antiquus; "old", "ancient") is an old collectable item. It is collected or desirable because of its age, beauty, rarity, condition, utility, personal emotional connection, and/or other unique features. It is an object that represents a previous era or time period in human society.

When Bill and I bought Recollections in Rock Port almost two years ago, we thought we knew "antiques." We renamed the store "Farmers Exchange" after Bill's great-grandfather's saloon in Osceola, Missouri. We added an accessible bathroom, rearranged the inventory that came with the purchase, added display cases, and made a wide aisle down the center. After numerous auctions, estate sales, yard sales, flea markets, and visits to other antique stores and thrift shops, our Farmers Exchange is full of antiques, collectibles and memorabilia that can catch the eye of shoppers.

My invitation to the public has been "come in and sit a spell, have a cup of coffee, and visit the past". Since becoming a widow last January, memories are a very important part of my life... and when people come into our store, my hope is what they see will trigger a fond memory of someone they love or of a time long ago when life seemed less complicated.

Focusing on a single category is difficult; but for this article, I'll talk about one of my collections: McCoy Pottery. The beginning of McCoy pottery was over 150 years ago in 1848. After numerous name changes, mergers (including Brush McCoy in 1911) and industry changes, Nelson McCoy Sanitary and Stoneware Company began in 1910. In 1918 the company joined with eleven other stoneware potteries and formed the American Clay Products Company (ACPC), which was located in Zanesville, Ohio. In 1926 the ACPC was liquidated and the original companies went into competition with each other. By 1929, the company had changed its name to the Nelson McCoy Sanitary Stoneware Co.; and it was around this time that the company began the practice of marking its wares. No evidence has been found that the company had ever marked any of its wares prior to this time. In 1933 the name was changed again and became the Nelson McCoy Pottery Co.

In 1967 the company was sold to the owners of the Mt. Clemens Pottery Co. and after about seven years of operation the Lancaster Colony Corporation purchased the pottery in 1974. In 1985 the pottery was sold again, this time to Designer Accents of New Jersey. Production was moved to the Nelson McCoy Pottery. Selected items previously made by the McCoy pottery, and some newly designed items, were marketed by Designer Accents under the name Nelson McCoy Ceramics. Some of these items have the familiar McCoy name on them. The Floraline line with its distinctive mark, first produced by the Nelson McCoy Pottery in 1960, was also continued.

Designer Accents operated for about five years until closing in late 1990. The portion of the pottery containing the offices burned in the fall of 1991.

In summary, when I started collecting McCoy pottery it was relatively inexpensive, and it still is when compared to potteries like Roseville. However, it is still very collectible and some rare pieces can bring higher dollars in the right market.

Next time, I'll share with you how I research and find value for items for sale at Farmers Exchange!

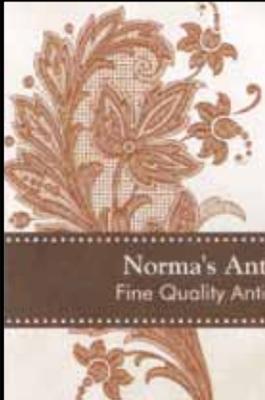
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Poetry by Devon Adams

WILDWOOD FLOWERS

Like colored stars in a green universe, they shine like beacons. With carefully counted leaves and petals, and fancy centers, these are wild and beautiful designs. Nothing is arbitrary here, as the patterns are strict, and read like a secret code in the seeds of life that carry one generation into the next. No formal settings are allowed with these symmetric blooms, as scattered species clump together in a random riot of scents and shades and tints. Tread carefully, as you walk through this earthly heaven, and pause often to let the scene sink deep into your soul.

PLANTED

All things start somewhere, and then they find a path to follow. Walking through time seems slow, until the end of the trail comes into view, and then life is compressed, and full of wishes that longer would be better, and even that forever wouldn't be enough. But all we ever have for sure is just one day, just one now. All the rest is done, or isn't real. And then we are planted, and the seeds that we have planted will grow beyond all the tomorrows that will be.

WITH LOVE

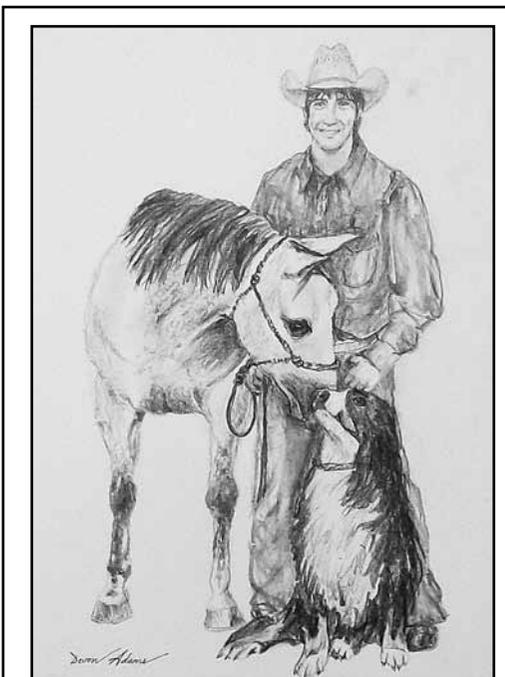
There is a message in the wind that whispers from the trees and in the undulating grass. It ripples waves in water and sings through wires and cracks in walls and windows. It carries the mingled scents of hay and roses, the sweet notes from feathered throats, and the distant chimes from the bell of a country church. It is the echo from a father's life that comes to you with love.

FEATHER BLUES

A shimmer in the shadow patterns of the trees, that darts around and calls it's name in lilting songs, is the glinting piece of iridescent jewelry that is pure blue indigo. Illusive spirits who send their music in echoes, they seem to be here when they are there, and if you do see them in a glance, the sight is like holding flashing sapphires in your hand.

SEA OF SKY

Above the mirrored lake, the sky looks down and sees itself reflected, so that there are two halves of a whole. A perfect sphere, where the water and the air are both the same, and the shimmer of an edge is all that marks the boundary in between. So it is with life and death: a line that runs past all we know.



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Where Life Is Good
 Marilyn Woerth

Hey, what are you doing this 4th of July? Did you know that some people are getting up early the morning of the fourth for the Brownville Freedom Run at 7:00 AM? This race is awesome and there's something about using chips to make it the most accurate. And they have water tables and portable johns along the route, and some really neat tee shirts, cool medals and prizes. You can register on line at www.brownville-ne.com.

I also heard that there will be a Children's Fun Run for all age groups. Registration is from 11:30-noon; with the run starting at noon. Each participant will receive a medal.

Brownville is known for its hospitality and good food. The Freedom Day Breakfast opens at 8:00 at the town hall; Eastern Star ladies know how to dish it out. After breakfast step outside at 9:00 and trot your favorite canine down the street for the "Strut Your Mutt Dog Show". At 10:00 gather around the street for an ole time Fourth of July parade featuring Ms. Firecracker and Mr. Independence, our parade marshals. Your young bike riders can participate in the parade by simply participating in the "decorate your patriotic bike" contest, with winners in the boys and girls categories. Let's see who is the best at "tricking out" their bike. Put some real effort into it kids.

After the parade, tune up your ears and sit back for the most memorable ole time patriotic program you will ever experience. Where else can you hear patriotic speeches, patriotic music, and good ole patriotic pride then at the Brownville square? Following the patriotic program, lunch will be served in the Town Hall, Anita and the gang always put on a wonderful spread.

Looking for some more excitement? Join us in a bunch of children's activities starting at noon: Children's Fun Run, games and activities and face painting. For those of the more grown-up taste, come join General Grant at 1:00 at Whiskey Run Creek Winery for a historical good time. Brownville museums will be open from 1-4, as well as trolley rides. The most enjoyable Southeast Community Band concert will be in full swing at 2:00. Horse and buggy rides will start at this time as well. At 3:00 there are a couple of choices; riverboat rides on the Spirit of Brownville, or watch a good ole repertory performance at the Brownville Village Theater. The afternoon will end with a smashing fun game of "Bingo" located along the Missouri River within the comfort of the River Inn. Your fantastic Fourth of July winds down in a spectacular way with supper served in the town hall, catered by Nemaha Country Market. Then back to the River Inn at 7:00 for some energetic music by "Enigma". Get down with Carolyn and Dave... way down. Then as your day draws to an end, sit back and enjoy the fireworks display over the Missouri River, either on the boat or on the shore (don't forget a blanket or chair). Hope you all enjoy the day as much as the town of Brownville and the Fourth of July committee enjoy bringing it to you. Oh yes, and if you want to place an entry into the parade, just give us a call; Steve and Marilyn Woerth at 402-274-5722. See you all there at one of the places where life is good especially on the Fourth.

Alzheimer's Affects Us All



Stroke and Dementia, Common Culprits

By Lee Nyberg

“You see that; it’s stroke damage.” The doctor pointed to white areas on the MRI results and explained Dad’s confusion, disorientation, and trouble speaking were caused by Vascular Cognitive Impairment (VCI).

VCI is the second most common type of dementia. Cognitive losses result from brain damage due to stroke, in a single major stroke, or a series of very small ones. Stroke is the result of blood flow disruption in the brain and occurs when a blood clot blocks an artery or an artery ruptures or leaks, bleeding into the surrounding tissue. Even a few seconds of this havoc dramatically effects the brain’s function. People with unhealthy blood vessels, often from high blood pressure (hypertension) and clogged and hardened arteries (atherosclerosis), are at the greatest risk of suffering a stroke and developing VCI. VCI occurs in 20-30% of the people who’ve had stroke and depends on the location of the stroke(s).

A person experiencing cognitive problems, such as confusion, difficulty following instructions, and memory loss, needs a medical evaluation to eliminate reversible causes, such as thyroid problems or medication side effects. According to Mayo Clinic, VCI coexists with Alzheimer’s in about 20% of people who have Alzheimer’s. Doctors rely on three key elements to diagnose VCI.

- * Cognitive problems which have begun or worsened within the last 3 months since stroke
- * Evidence of one or more strokes via brain imaging tests (CT Scan or MRI)
- * Signs and symptoms consistent with what has occurred after previous strokes, (nerve problems on 1 side of the body or other; or a change in specific function, like speech or fine-motor skills)

Despite some commonalities, VCI is different than other forms of dementia. This type of cognitive loss, and its progression, is linked with an event: stroke. The good news is that managing stroke risk is well established; lower your risk of stroke and by extension, your chances of developing VCI:

- * Exercise 30 minutes/day
- * Maintain a healthy weight (DASH diet)
- * Manage stress
- * Limit sodium
- * Limit alcohol

- * Use medication
- * Take B vitamins
- * Don’t smoke
- * Control diabetes

The Mayo Clinic says if you’ve had a stroke and are experiencing VCI, your need to change lifestyle factors is greater than ever. You may be able to diminish the severity of your VCI by continuing to manage your risk factors for high blood pressure and high cholesterol.

A key part of a healthy lifestyle is food. Dr. Mark Hyman, of the Cleveland Clinic said, “Food is so important, it’s like medicine.” Turning a “diet” into “edible” meals can be tricky. From Mayo Clinic (<http://www.mayoclinic.org/healthy-lifestyle/nutrition-and-healthy-eating/in-depth/dash-diet/art-20047110>), here’s a day in the life of the DASH diet:

Breakfast:

- 1 whole-wheat bagel with 2 tablespoons peanut butter
- 1 medium orange
- 1 cup fat-free milk
- Decaffeinated coffee

Lunch: Big spinach salad made with pear slices, orange sections, almonds, red wine vinaigrette, reduced sodium crackers (12) and 1 cup fat-free milk

Dinner:

- Herb-crusted baked cod, 3 ounces cooked (about 4 ounces raw)
- 1/2 cup brown rice pilaf with vegetables
- 1/2 cup fresh green beans, steamed
- 1 small sourdough roll
- 2 teaspoons olive oil
- 1 cup fresh berries with chopped mint
- Herbal iced tea
- Snack (anytime)
- 1 cup fat-free, low-calorie yogurt
- 4 vanilla wafers

For most of us, lifestyle is what stands in between us and stroke. Changes aren’t easy, but reducing one’s risk of Vascular Cognitive Impairment is a pretty big incentive.

Lee Nyberg seeks to help families and those living with dementia through education and her company, Home Care Assistance.



Summer Tanager



American Robin



Rose-breasted Grosbeak



Red-bellied Woodpecker



House Finch



Northern Cardinal

Diary of a Part-time Housewife

Merri Johnson

Dear Readers,

In honor of rhubarb season I'm re-running a rhubarb pie story from 2009. I hope you enjoy the column, and I hope you get to enjoy some rhubarb pie real soon!

Merri

Flying used to be glamorous, back in the days of TV ads showing perky attendants in chic uniforms offering passengers pillows and serving coffee in china cups. It sounded pretty impressive, too, when the strains of Gershwin's "Rhapsody in Blue," United Airlines' old theme song, swelled as a jetliner lifted across your television screen.

I believe I took my first flight in 1971. Honestly, I don't recall much about it, except that I'm pretty sure the return flight was delayed, as we arrived home in the small hours of the morning. That's almost standard operating procedure now.

Last month, my husband and I flew to Savannah, Georgia to visit our daughter and son-in-law. Security at the Kansas City airport was a breeze. I had been a little concerned that I might be questioned about having a rhubarb pie in my carry-on. What? you're asking. You read correctly. I had a rhubarb pie in my carry-on. My daughter loves it, so I baked it specially as a surprise for her. I knew she'd get a kick out of it. I mean, who packs a pie in their carry-on bag on an airplane?

Anyway, the pie cleared security along with everything else, but then things started to go downhill.

Take-off was delayed for 45 minutes. Our scheduled one-hour layover in Atlanta had seemed like a stroke of good fortune initially, but cutting it to 15 minutes was cutting it a little too close. We dashed off the plane and made an exhausting run for the shuttle in a desperate attempt to get from concourse B to E before they closed the airplane doors. I knew in my heart that it was all in vain as the minutes to our departure time ticked off. But when we got to the gate, lo and behold, our connecting flight was also late. What great fortune! We hadn't missed our connecting flight after all.

But, remember that hassle-free security check at Kansas City at the start of our trip? It seems that was too good to be true. The bottles of cosmetics exceeding the 3.5 ounce maximum capacity that raised no concerns in Kansas City were taken quite seriously by the crack team of Savannah airport security agents. I could either spend \$15 to check my bag, or let them confiscate my items. The choice was pretty much a toss-up money-wise, but my natural aversion to waste is pretty strong. What do they do with all those tubes and bottles of cosmetics and shampoo? I wondered. One could hope they at least go into kits for the homeless. I wouldn't mind donating them. But I expect that hygiene laws, being about as nonsensical as airline security rules, would prohibit that.

Ultimately, I gritted my teeth and handed over my self-tanning lotion and other skin care products. As the security agent tossed them into the "potential bomb components" bin, I grinned a little grin of self-satisfaction: at least they hadn't gotten my rhubarb pie.

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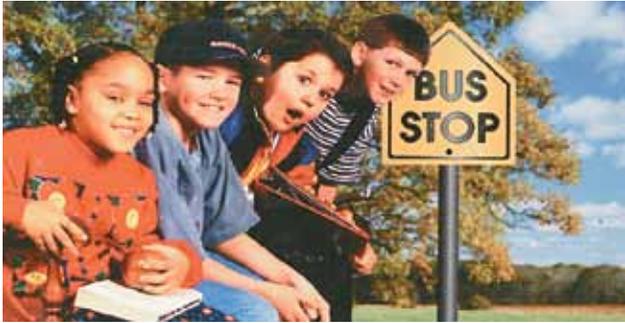
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Poetry & Photography

Barred Owls

Last year a pair of barred owls
nested in the old maple tree
and raised one fuzzy chick
that fledged in early May.

We came home to find
our three cats had the baby owl
cornered on the ground
near the basement door.
The little one fluffed up
to twice the size with
sharp talons and
clacking beak kept
the cats at bay.

This spring the owls returned
calling to one another
swooping silently through the yard
catching nightcrawlers and voles
mice and small snakes
raising two fluffy owl chicks
and I kept watch while taking pictures
of the fuzzy little fledgling
who fluffed up and clacked at me
for the shadow of
its parents plunging
silently overhead.



Barred Owl in Flight (by Carol Carpenter)

by Carol Carpenter

Putting up hay

I remember watching young men
loading square bales of hay
onto an open wagon under
the warm Nebraska sun
gloved hands gripping
then tossing the bale while
another young man
stacked them.

The fluidity of their motion
often shirtless, muscles
flowing beneath bronze skin
chaff caught in the sparkling air
and my breath more often than not
caught in my chest.

I know putting up hay is back breaking
work
and rarely done anymore because
gigantic round bales replaced
the small square ones
but I miss the warm summer sight
of poetry in motion
of strong young men
in the fields
putting up hay.



Hay Bales

Carpenter's first chapbook,
Earth Songs
Poems and photographs
is now available at Amazon.com

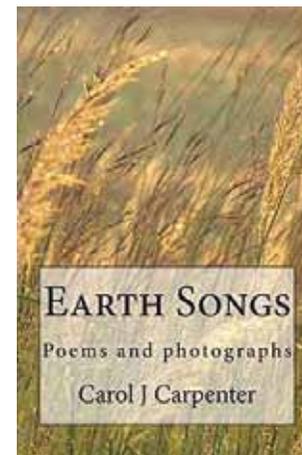
Frog roar

Tucked under the blanket
of a spring storm
we turned off the lights
to watch the lightening
crackle between the trees
across the purple sky.

Rain pelted the windows and
the lilac bushes swayed
under the beat of the breeze.

Around the marsh, leopard frogs
gathered to mate, the shore
alive and writhing with
their slick green bodies.

When the storm moved away and
the heavy rain stopped and
a family of barred owls called
to one another while at the
edges of the marsh
the unabashed leopard frogs
started to roar.



Bullfrog

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#	Year	Model	Miles	Engine
8392	1993	CAD DEVILLE	141505	V8,4.9L
1009	2000	HONDA ACCORD LX	132895	V6,3.0L
2587	2003	F150 EXT CAB	140861	V8,5.4L
4740	2004	DODGE RAM SLT	151673	V8,5.7L
2463	2005	FORD RANGER XLT	129308	V6,4.0L
6466	2005	FORD TAURUS SEL	113203	V6,3.0L
2905	2006	CADILLAC DTS	109651	V8,4.6L
3974	2006	SILVERADO K1500 LT	151263	V8,5.3L
3920	2006	SILVERADO Z71	89715	V8,5.3L
1820	2006	SILVERADO Z71	198984	V8,5.3L
9586	2006	SILVER K2500HD LBZ	109411	V8,6.6L
2887	2006	CHRYSLER T&C VAN	102083	V6,3.3L
8801	2006	CHRYSLER 300C HEMI	80326	V8,5.4L
6833	2006	FORD F150 XLT	105605	V8,5.4L
2208	2006	JEEP LIBERTY 4X4	123958	V6,3.7L
0638	2006	LINCOLN ZEPHYR	74419	V6,3.0L
0052	2007	FORD FUSION SEL	96748	V6,3.3L
5389	2007	MERCEDES E350 4MATIC	61322	V6,3.5L
5409	2007	NISSAN MAX SL	86744	V6,3.5L
6494	2008	CHRYSLER T&C VAN	89157	V6,3.8L
0173	2008	FORD EXPLORER XLT	91153	V6,4.0L
7117	2008	ACADIA SLT1 AWD	97149	V6,3.6L
3017	2008	PONTIAC G6 SE1	71510	V6,3.5L
5191	2009	PONTIAC G8 LOADED	100806	V6,3.6L
1508	2010	DODGE AVENGER R/T	41385	V4,2.4L
1116	2010	GMC SIERRA TRUCK	107927	V8,5.3L
4572	2012	CHRYSLER T&C VAN	30379	V6,3.6L
5424	2013	KIA SORENTO LX	14255	V4,2.4L



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