



Nebraska City High School's *Pride of the Pioneers* Marching Band

*Voices from the Valleys of the Nemaha*

Publisher & Photographer, Stephen Hassler

**Writers this month**

Devon Adams  
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**Thank You**

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**Your Country Neighbor**

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*Editor's note:*

*Seven years of this publication are online at:*

[www.yourcountryneighbor.com](http://www.yourcountryneighbor.com)

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Arbor Lodge, Nebraska City, taken in a previous Spring.  
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Yes, I know, another Cardinal.  
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# COVER PHOTO

Stephen Hassler

Few things say *NEBRASKA* like Arbor Day weekend in Nebraska City. A cool, cloudy, Saturday morning yielded to sun and warmth by the 1:00 P.M. parade time, and watchers were not disappointed.

Purple and gold were the colors of the day, although ‘classic car red’ made a statement (see page 7). Nebraska City High School’s *Pride of the Pioneers* Marching Band is always a crowd-pleaser...and a photographer pleaser too.

## More Arbor Day Photos In Color On Page 7.

And you can view and/or buy framed photography by Stephen Hassler, YCN photographer, at the *Philly Grill* in Auburn, *Janie’s Confections* in Nebraska City and *The Snapdragon Florist* in Nebraska City.

A photo show is planned for late June at the Lyceum in Brownville, Nebraska.

## Where to Find Your Country Neighbor

*Your Country Neighbor* is hand-delivered to grocery stores, pharmacies, hardware stores, restaurants, cafes, and other businesses which advertise in this publication. Look for it in the following cities and villages in our “four corners” area. In **Kansas**; Hiawatha and Sabetha. In **Missouri**; Rock Port. In **Nebraska**; Auburn, Brownville, Cook, Falls City, Humboldt, Johnson, Nebraska City, Nemaha, Peru, Syracuse, and Tecumseh.

Past issues of *Your Country Neighbor* and more rural photos are on-line at:

[www.yourcountryneighbor.com](http://www.yourcountryneighbor.com)

## Health Care Reform, Medicare & You

Mary Ann Holland, University of Nebraska-Lincoln Extension Educator

Health Care Reform and the Affordable Care Act are one and the same. The Affordable Care Act was drafted and approved during 2009; it became law in March 2010. While the federal bill has many facets and information regarding emerging benefits, some of which will not be realized until the year 2020, the scope of the remarks to follow are directed toward Medicare benefits. This article was contributed by Mary Ann Holland, University of Nebraska-Lincoln Extension Educator and Trained SHIP Professional; Ms. Holland can be reached at the Cass County Extension office at 402-267-2205, or by e-mail at: [HYPERLINK “mailto:mholland1@unl.edu”](mailto:HYPERLINKmailto:mholland1@unl.edu) [mholland1@unl.edu](mailto:mholland1@unl.edu)

More than 5.1 million seniors and disabled people with Medicare saved money on the cost of prescription drugs and free preventive services during 2011 due to provisions under the Affordable Care Act.

The latest data available from the U.S. Department of Health & Human Services, indicates Medicare beneficiaries saved over **\$3.2 billion** in drug costs alone, averaging \$635 per person. More than 17,000 Nebraskans reported saving \$10.2 million on the cost of prescription drugs in 2011, an average of \$595 per beneficiary. Savings occurs once the beneficiary enters the coverage gap, or ‘donut hole.’ The ‘savings’ is due to the requirement under the Affordable Care Act that drug manufacturers must pay 50% of the cost of brand named medications when the individual has reached the coverage gap, as well as a portion of the cost of generic medications [2012, 14% ].

Thousands and thousands of Medicare beneficiaries enrolled in the prescription drug benefit take no medications, or take low-cost drugs, preventing them from ever reaching the coverage gap. While financial statistics cannot be reported for this segment of Part D enrollees, access to low-cost prescriptions has a direct and immediate impact on spending for those living on a fixed income.

For the first two months of 2012, more than 103,000 Medicare beneficiaries nationwide saved \$93 million on the cost of prescriptions drugs in the coverage gap. Savings for the total year 2012 are projected to be even greater than those in 2011.

Thanks to provisions in the Affordable Care Act signed into law in 2010, the coverage gap is closing. By the year 2020 there will no longer be a coverage gap. Medicare Part D beneficiaries will be responsible for 25% of the cost of their prescriptions and prescription drug insurance plans will pay the other 75% of the cost.

The Affordable Care Act also provides savings by making preventive services free for people with Medicare. Preventive care saves lives and helps keep people healthy. Beginning in 2011, the Affordable Care Act eliminated the need for a Medicare beneficiary to pay coinsurance and the Part B deductible for preventive services, allowing beneficiaries to get necessary screenings at no cost. Medicare Advantage plans provide free preventive services as well.

An Annual Wellness Visit was added which gives patients a yearly opportunity during a doctor’s visit to actively determine the plan of care that works best for them and their health status. Nationally, more than 25.7 million people with Medicare took advantage of at least one preventive care service during 2011. Through November of last year, nearly 163,000 Nebraskans received at least one preventive care screening—services that have been available for a fee prior to the enactment of the Affordable Care Act.

The Affordable Care Act also gives Medicare more tools to fight fraud and abuse. These efforts are saving billions of dollars. Another provision of Health Care Reform allows the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services [CMS] to monitor health insurance rate increases. Insurance companies are now required to justify premium increases. Insurance companies selling policies in nine states, Nebraska among them, proposed implementing rate increases that have been deemed to be ‘excessive’ according to CMS. Excessive is defined as increases higher than 10% per year.

As we look forward to the next decade, Medicare beneficiaries are likely to experience even greater savings than the last two years. Provisions in the Health Care Reform bill are designed to slow the rate of growth in provider payments, increase efforts to make Medicare more efficient, and lower co-payments and premiums which reduce beneficiary out-of-pocket costs.

Questions about Medicare can also be directed to the Nebraska SHIP, [Senior Health Insurance Information Program] of the Department of Insurance at 1-800-234-7119. Information for this article was released by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services website: [HYPERLINK “http://www.healthcare.gov”](http://www.healthcare.gov) [www.healthcare.gov](http://www.healthcare.gov)

# Poetry by Devon Adams

## TREE TIME

Sometimes I wonder what a tree thinks about, as it watches time pass. No doubt the weather is a topic of speculation. When the sky turns black and assaults your body with wind, hail and rain, one must surely consider the possibility of death. That type of destruction would possibly be a fast demise, as opposed to the failing of loose limbs due to advanced age, added to the slow creep of insects, mold and rot. Travel wouldn't be an issue, except in the sense that trees are the stationary anchors in the measurement of movement of other assorted creatures. Birds would be a joy to host in the sheltering branches, as they share their songs of praise, not to mention their droppings, which are really fertilizer that comes with long lasting benefits. Depending on location, the old codgers wearing rough jackets can watch cars and trucks moving past on dusty gravel or clean cement. Sometimes those metal bullets crash into the trees, in which case more than one life may be extinguished, or altered. There are ancient oaks perched on the edges of pastures who never see anything faster than a lumbering cow chasing her frisky calf, or admittedly, a fast bullet speeding it's way into the wild heart of a deer or squirrel. These individuals may be the trees who are in the wrong place at the wrong time and find themselves on the receiving end of a hot bolt of lightning thrown by an angry cloud. Lots of things to think about, if you're a tree, and lots of time to think.

## SMOKE IN THE DUST

As the smudge of smoke rises into a column bent by the wind, the dead, drowned trees give up their bleached bones to the fire that is burning them into ashes. Sand that used to be on the bottom of the river now lies in dry waves upon the flood plain, as it covers fertile farm fields that are buried by the aftermath of a disaster. Then the wind changes to a dragon that blows with unstoppable force. Sand is lifted and whirled into giant clouds that rise above the level of the Missouri River bluffs and ride on the wind to fill the old hills with choking dust and grime. The flood isn't over yet.

## PAGES OF DAYS

Memories aren't any longer than our lives, and when things change, like the weather, we think it is a new phenomenon. But time is old, and has many pages in the book that it is writing. Violent storms and earthquakes and volcanic eruptions and rising ocean levels are simply repetitions on a theme. They are movements in a symphony whose notes have been playing over and over for more years than imagination can conceive.

## WIND UP TOY

Some wild child has wound the key to spring too tight, and it has sprung outside the box.

## PICKING OUT THE TUNES

Tiny bird feet are dancing on ivory piano keys. They hop from note to note, pausing on the sharps and flats, looking for the melodies that sing inside their hearts.

## STRIPED SILK SCARVES

As the day faded away, clouds tinted by sun rays of rose and orange floated into patterns of stripes that rippled in the breeze. Soon the sky was filled with silk scarves flung across the horizon, like discards from a fitting room in a boutique with a big blue window.

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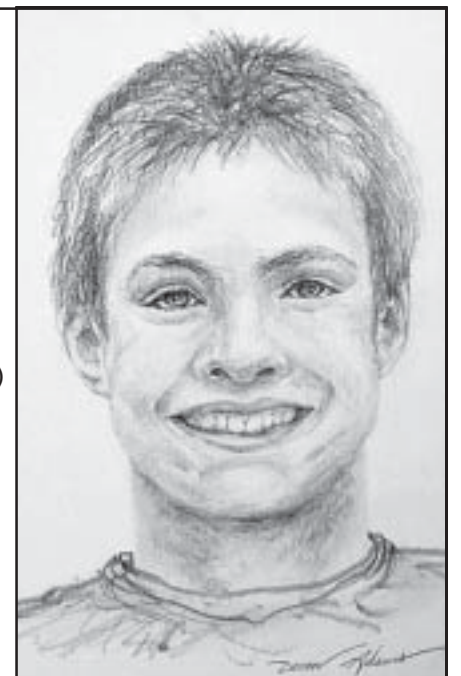
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## PROGRESS

Shirley Neddenriep

“Interesting; so it wasn’t just a rumor. It’s been fifty years, maybe that’s why they said they didn’t find a horse. Progress . . . Peony Park for a strip mall, Indian Hills Theater a parking lot and the winner’s circle with the buried famous horse for a parking garage.”

-----

On May 15, 1959, horse-racing’s 1935 Triple Crown Winner, Omaha, was laid to rest in the Circle of Champions at Ak-Sar-Ben Race Track. A monument to Omaha was erected for the 27-year old horse who had spent the last few years of his life on a farm south of Nebraska City.

Omaha was one of only 11 Triple Crown Winners since 1930. The winner must be a 3-year old thoroughbred race horse who wins the Kentucky Derby, the Preakness and the Belmont Stakes all held in five weeks of racing each May-June.

Ak-Sar-Ben (Nebraska spelled backward) Race Track closed in 1995 and the land was taken over by UNO. Early in the design planning for the new complex, the ‘Circle of Champions’ of the old Ak-Sar-Ben race track would have been the centerpiece of a round-a-bout for automobile traffic. When the search for the famous Nebraska race horse ended with no horse to honor, the concrete winner’s circle was demolished to make way for the new development: Aksarben Village - Omaha’s first mixed-use community. After the demolition of Ak-Sar-Ben, the area may have become a blighted area but for the foresight of land development engineers, building owners and architects.

The February 20, 2009, issue of Midlands Business Journal featured an article about the new community under construction in the old Ak-Sar-Ben area of Omaha. Olsson Engineering constructed a new edifice including its offices as well as apartments. The new development in the core of the city is a residential/commercial mix, organized for pedestrian traffic. For example, a grocery is located within walking distance of Olsson and surrounding existing homes.

It is significant that the new Aksarben Village is a new community in an existing area (Ak-Sar-Ben), a new development within the core of the city. For example, grocery stores, cleaners, beauty salons, located near the new Olsson Associates edifice; apartments, a residential/commercial mix - organized for pedestrian traffic, e.g., wide sidewalks, as well as streets for auto traffic. This is progress, green progress.

Omaha, rest in peace.

*Editor’s Note; More on “Omaha” at [www.spiletta.com/UTHOF/omaha.html](http://www.spiletta.com/UTHOF/omaha.html)*

## Where Life Is Good

Marilyn Woerth

Babysitting grandchildren can be a loving, joyful, daunting task. No matter what age they are. As grandparents we want to be loved and adored by our grandchildren. We also want to be loved and adored by their parents. So, ending up with the same results on these two different wave-lengths can be a little like walking a tightrope while balancing a pole. Usually, one end dips, and then we all are in trouble.

And it doesn’t seem to matter if your adult child is the mother or father. Sooner or later we grandparents find ourselves in hot water. Grandparents like my husband spoil the child and end up in the doghouse with the parents. Or like myself, try to please the parents and end up scorned by those you hold close to your heart. What does one do?

Steve and I have found that using the outdoors can keep us both out of trouble (mostly) and happy. We love to take our grandsons outside, not only on our own three acres but anywhere else that is available.

When grandson B lived twenty minutes from Powell Gardens in Missouri we would take him there for hours several times a year. Where else can you turn a kid loose to run along miles of path, in beauty, peace and safety? Public gardens, arboretums, and wildlife refuges are excellent places to bring children not only from an exercise aspect but also as an educational experience. Most of these places have educational themes that change every year.

This April, we took all three grandsons to Reiman Gardens at Iowa State in Ames. They have a collection of Lego sculptures throughout the gardens. The boys kept asking, “How many legos did it take to make this one grandpa?” After grandparents, parents and baby Z were all tuckered out the boys still wanted to keep going. Of course, Lauritzen Gardens in Omaha has that fabulous model train set-up. We could leave grandson A there, return in 50 years, and he would still be there.

The thing I like the most about taking the grandkids to the gardens or places like Fontenelle Forest (Omaha), the Arbor Day Farm (Nebraska City), Squaw Creek (Mound City), or Indian Cave State Park is not only that they are learning to love and respect nature but they behave so much better when they are outside. (They also sleep better at night.) We have found, if you buy grandparent memberships you tend to go more often, and it cost less. May 11 is National Public Gardens Day, and many public gardens like Lauritzen Gardens are having free admissions on that day.

The really cute thing about the grandsons, is watching them act like they own the place because they have been there so often, they become little tour guides to others on the trails. Where else could you hear, “This is a tree peony grandma has one in her yard,” or “That is a wood duck and it sounds like this.” or “Leaves of three leave it be.” Enjoying this vast corner of our lives, where life is good especially when babysitting grandchildren.

## Diary of a Part-time Housewife

Merri Johnson

It's May, ladies. On the housekeeping calendar, that can mean only one thing: it's time for spring cleaning! If you're like me, it's been awhile since you partook of any rug beating or changing out storm windows for screens. As dated as those seasonal traditions sound, I actually did perform them in the early years of my marriage. Our house wasn't particularly old, but it lacked that day's modern innovation of combination windows. So every spring and fall I'd do the washing, and hubby did the lugging of those heavy storm windows and the screens up or down the ladder, as the season dictated. Who does such a thing these days? No one I know.

I suppose that less dusty heating systems and more air-tight windows are largely responsible for the fact that houses don't get as dirty during the winter as they once did. And even though I don't need to undertake a massive effort to remove coal soot or wood smoke odor from every surface in the house, I still get the urge to purge come spring. Instead of ridding the house of dirt, I'm purging it of accumulated junk.

Just the other day, I got rid of a bag full of those little plastic pots that bedding plants come in. I didn't throw them away, mind you. They went back to the garden center to be re-used by them. There must have been four years' worth since that's how long we've lived in our current home. Despite my husband's claim that I save too much worthless stuff, I'm certain that I didn't move any pots over here from our previous house. So, now I have another square foot of space on the shelf in my garage. Impressive, right?

And this morning I cleaned out my stationery drawer. I couldn't find the postage stamps amid the three dozen sets of decorative return address labels I've received from every group under the sun. But again, I didn't just mindlessly toss them out. First, I separated them into categories. *Designs our going-on-four-year-old granddaughter might like to play with. Those that have hubby's name on them. (He resents the implication that he is not part of our household when I use labels that have only my name on them.) Those that are simply too pretty to throw away. And finally, those that are not too pretty to throw away.* As you have probably guessed, I actually threw away roughly 15% of the labels. So I still have ten years' worth. But at least the drawer is tidy.

I recently got my 2011 tax folder back from the accountant, so there's some paperwork there that should be sorted before I put it in the file cabinet. For now, I just put it on the desk, along with the 2010 tax return folder. Some jobs are just too boring to do, don't you agree?

I know what this article sounds like. I'm avoiding doing any actual *cleaning*, just puttering around with inconsequential tidying. I could possibly redeem myself by tackling the refrigerator. That would involve a pan of water and some baking soda. I could even justify wearing household gloves – a sure sign of serious cleaning.

Or, I could go after a really big job. Remember that rug beating I mentioned earlier? Well, our carpets need to be shampooed. That's a legitimate spring cleaning feat!

Now, where is the phone number of that carpet cleaning service?

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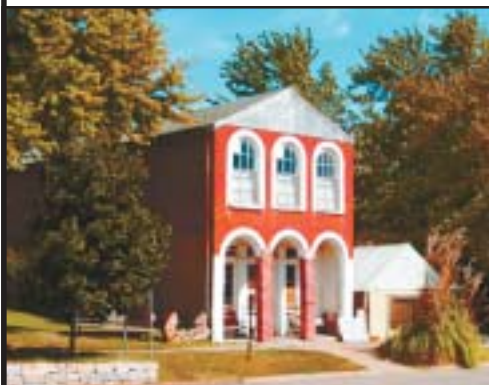
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# The Face of Drought

by Karen Ott

“The Patrick and Goshen Hole quadrangles lie in that portion of the semiarid region of the Great Plains plateau which has presented peculiar and difficult problems to those who have attempted to settle it and utilize its natural resources. The country is best adapted to grazing. Experience has shown that crops can be grown without the aid of irrigation only in exceptional years or in favored localities. In the absence of irrigation enterprises the lands were left to the use of ranchmen, who, enjoying the advantage of a wide and free range, were able to depend upon the grass and the limited natural meadows for the support of their herds. On the passing of the ‘desert-lands’ act, which provided for the sale of lands reclaimed by irrigation, a new factor entered.” (Water-Supply and Irrigation Papers of the United States Geological Survey 1902: Eastern Wyoming and Western Nebraska)

Most folks would find the 50 or so pages of this 1902 geological survey dry and dusty reading....but after I recently discovered our farm's first owner wasn't The Lincoln Land Company, but instead the Union Cattle Company, the report, which describes in depth eastern Wyoming...and a narrow strip of Nebraska about 2 ½ miles wide.....suddenly looked mighty interesting; our home place sets smack dab in the middle of that tiny sliver of Nebraska.

I was familiar with Swan Cattle Company, Bay State, and several other large cattle companies...but I'd never heard of Union Cattle.

Who were they?

On April 7, 1889 the owners and stockholders of the Union Cattle company.....along

*Continued on page 11 >>>>>>*

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<<<< Continued from page 10

with those of other large ranches were described in the Casper Weekly Mail by Jim Avrill, who, along with his wife Ella Watson, operated a modest road ranch.

“They are land grabbers, who are only camped here as speculators in land under the desert land act. They are opposed to anything that would settle and improve the country or make it anything but a cow pasture for eastern speculators. It’s a wonder how much land some of these land sharks own...in their minds...and how firmly they are organized to keep this country from being settled up. They advance the idea that a poor man has nothing to say in the affairs of this country, in which they are wrong, as the future land owners will be the people to come....as most of these large tracts are so fraudulently entered now that it must ultimately change hands and give the public domain to the honest settler.”

Jim and Ella were hanged without trial soon after the publication of his unflattering description.

One way of purchasing government land ‘on the cheap’ was to claim irrigation had been established; the Union Cattle company and their subsidiary, Goshen Hole Ditching Company filed extensive claims, using proof of irrigation by plowing a single dry furrow thirty-five miles long and F. E. Warren (later Senator Warren) and Thomas Sturgis (owners of Union Cattle) claimed large tracts of land in Nebraska...which didn’t qualify as a desert-land state.... by paying nere’do’well cowboys and women of ill-repute to file homestead claims.

This wasn’t at all how I imagined our farm’s birth.

There is much research left to do...facts to be unearthed....names to be uncovered; I can scarcely contain my excitement.

More to come on how my little piece of the ‘West’ was won.....

As Always, Karen

May 2012

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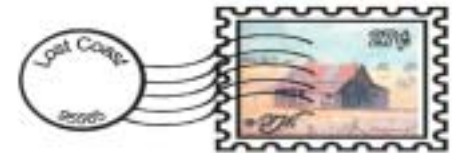
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More from the Winery...these are on the deck. The ‘light’ color is yellow.

## Make-over of a Country Mama

By Vicki O'Neal



As most of you folks know, I could use some professional help. Recently, my two daughters set about trying to 'fix me'. They introduced me to the joys of sweaty work-outs and mindless circling around a track.

They turned my life inside-out and upside down. But it was all for a good purpose.

"See how much things have changed, Mom?" said my youngest daughter as we entered the SPA/Tanning Salon where she works. "I'm not embarrassed. I take you out in public now!" "A miracle, indeed!"

"And now," Mystia said. "I want you to try really hard to be a hip, young mom, today...OK?"

"Oh, I'm *hip* all right," I said. "I still need to lose about 10 pounds of it."

"Shhh!" Mystia said. "They'll hear you." She waved cheerily at her friends sitting nearby, and hurried me toward the tanning booth.

"Mystia..." I trotted along after her nervously. "I don't want my sunspots to get worse in the tanning booth. Can I drape something over my arms while I'm tanning? Maybe some toilet paper or something?"

"Absolutely not!" she snapped. "There is NO toilet paper inside the tanning room!" Opening a door, she propelled me inside. A dark coffin-like object sat in the middle of the small room. It was an elaborate looking place with ornate woodwork and fine decor. It looked just like a viewing room at the morgue except for the various signs posted around the room.

"Danger!" they said. "Read instructions carefully before using. Use eye protection at all times!"

I felt my uneasiness mount. "Is this thing safe?"

"Of course it's safe!" Mystia said. "I use it all the time, Mom. Just don't read the warnings!"

She began pushing buttons on the ominous-looking coffin in the middle of the room. "I'm turning it on for you now. You climb inside when I'm gone. You'll be fine. It's just like tanning in the sunlight, Mom. You'll see."

Lights flashed. I felt blinded by laser beams. The room was filled with an eerie blue brilliance. It was like the brightness of on Resurrection Morn.

Then warning beepers and buzzers started going off loudly. "Stop that!" I shouted. "Look what it says right there on that sign! It says: 'Danger! Use eye protection at all times!'"

"Don't holler!" she said. "What are all my friends going to think!" She shoved a towel at me and turned to go.

"Don't leave me!" I said. "I'm scared." But she did leave me. She walked straight out of the room without a backward glance.

The coffin machine was humming away ominously. I was wasting time...and good money, too. I had to do something. I looked around. There was no toilet paper in here to drape over my arms, just like Mystia had said. I'd have to use something else. I

grabbed a couple of towels to put over my sun-spots, and then quickly shed everything except for my swimsuit.

Climbing inside the coffin, I stuck the eye-goggles on my face and lay down like a dying person awaiting my fate. It wasn't long before I felt it. A dizzy, fizzy feeling all over my body. Mystia had been wrong. It wasn't like sunlight at all. I could feel myself being bombarded with rays. It wasn't my imagination.

The horror of it all overwhelmed me. Here I was inside of a microwave oven, cooking myself like a prostrate zucchini in a bikini. There were a million electro-megavolts going through my body. Me...! A gal who doesn't like dental X-rays. Who stands back ten feet while using a microwave oven. What the heck was I doing?

I threw back the lid of the coffin and leaped out. The eye-goggles and arm-towels fell off like grave clothes on Resurrection Morn. Blue laser beams filled the room with an eerie brilliance. I closed the lid of the coffin with a bang. I was done with this foolishness. Done with Society and all its nonsense!

I pulled on my clothes and hurried outside. My daughter was waiting for me. "That's it!" I said. "No more of this business. I feel like a baked zucchini in a bikini!"

Mystia hustled me outside and into the car. "It does no good to try to help you," she said. "No good at all! I give up...!"

And so you see, folks. That's how it all went down between a modern

Miss and her mortifying Mama.

My makeover ended then and there—at least as far as my youngest daughter was concerned.

(...My other daughter still had a few tricks up her sleeve, but I'll have to tell you about that next month!) It merely goes to show that the old saying is still true today:

"You can take a Mama out of the country, but you can't take the country out of the Mama!"

And now, I hope all of you mothers have a wonderful Mother's Day! God bless!

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# Whisler's Hunting & Fishing Report



by Josh Whisler  
Photo Submitted by Author

## Fishing:

The Missouri River flow was low. Then came the first Spring thunder storms. The early warm up this year brought the severe storms with it. Tornados and heavy rain have been common the past week with rainfall in excess of two inches at times along with high winds and local tornadic action. All this has left the river banks full and trashy with water the color of chocolate milk from all the top soil run-off. You would have thought after the long high river run last summer that all the trash (trees, limbs, sticks, and grass) would have been long gone down stream but that is not the case. It almost looks as if someone is dumping it in upstream - like - "Where does all that stuff come from?" So that pretty well puts the river fishing on hold for right now, although the old saying is, "river on the rise" the fish are biting. I think that saying applies when it's a little less of a rise than four to five feet in 24 hours. There is absolutely no way that I would put a boat on it right now. But shore fishing probably would get some action right now with all the bait that was washing in during the storms. I'm sure the fish are taking full advantage of that free meal. Might want to try it if you can make it to the river. The roads were pretty soggy last I checked.

## Hunting:

Mushroom hunting this year came early and looks like it's going to end early too. Folks around are amazed at how early the Morel Mushrooms popped this year. Many were found in March and the earliest ever that the old timers remember. "Never pick one in March," not since he'd been keeping records one old

timer said. The so called Mushroom Season is when the ground is warm enough to produce these delicious truffles. But with the Lilac blooming and the Violets up all over the place, it didn't take long before the locals began to check the old reliable mushroom timbers. And sure enough, when they came on, they came on! There haven't been a lot of years that so many have been found, early or not. And big ones too! Usually you'll find a few around the edge of the woods and then later farther in you'll find more in a week or two. This year we're finding them everywhere at once, even in our yard. Most years the time to go out is late April and early May - not this year. But I am afraid that if you don't get out now, it's going to be too late.

Spring Turkey Season is open and the birds are splitting up well with lots of hens out laying. That leaves the Toms looking and strutting. That's all a turkey hunter can ask for right now. They are coming to the calls and are not hanging up much, getting well into shotgun range on most outings. The population seems to be high and success should be good this year. I don't know if it's the early spring affecting them too, but they seem very responsive to the call right now, and it's time to make them pay for that. So Right now is the best I've seen turkey hunting for quite a while due to the large amount of hens that seem to tell on your location before the Tom gets close enough. Not that there aren't any hens, but that they seem to be laying more and more leaving the Toms to look around.

## 2012 SPRING TURKEY SEASON DATES:

Youth Archery March 25 – May 31  
Archery March 25 – May 31  
Youth Shotgun April 7 – May 31  
Shotgun April 14 – May 31

## PERMIT LIMIT

Spring – three per person per calendar year

Spring Turkey Permits are still available right now if you want to give it a try. And fishing will straighten up soon enough. So get out and try some on for size, I assure you that you won't regret it. 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."



A bounty of March Mushrooms found by Jackie Whisler from Peru.

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Your Country Neighbor

13

# Poetry and Photography by Carol Carpenter

## Spring Ritual

In Nebraska, a ritual happens every spring  
without flag waving or trumpet call  
as the dogwood and red bud bloom  
as the wrens return  
and the olive finches turn to gold.

Beneath the oaks trees warmed by April's breath  
soaked in silver raindrops and moss  
a whisper of light and yeast rumbles within the  
ground  
casting its spell  
across the limestone bluffs  
along the riverbottom's loam  
which grabs the heart of young and old,  
woman and man, boy and girl.

When the wild violets bloom  
and the sun sheds its winter coat  
they gather bunches, clusters, in families,  
on the fringes of hills  
with paper sacks, plastic buckets, and onion  
bags.

Dreams of capture and chase,  
grandeur and pride  
they all come with glazed eyes  
and watering mouth  
each spring to worship  
at the altar of the  
mighty morel.



Morel Mushrooms

## Spring Ritual II

No trumpets blaring  
flags waving for ritual  
earth awakening

When red bud blossoms  
spring arrives in Nebraska  
as golden finches

April's warm breath calls  
soaking in silver raindrops  
whispered yeast of light

Rumbling underground  
magic cast across green hills  
enchancing all hearts

Wild violets bloom  
sun shedding winter's drab coat  
conjured gathering

Watering mouths, glazed eyes  
paper sacks, plastic buckets  
red mesh onion bags

Fringing limestone bluffs  
river bottom's sultry loam  
dreams of pride emerge

Bunching families  
worshipping by spring's altar  
of mighty morel

Foggy Morning in Brownville



## Common Yellowthroat

Little masked scoundrel darts  
among the prickly thistle tops  
behind the velvet green  
a gilded song ensnares

I hide among ripening wheat  
calling soft and low but  
you avoid my loving glance

Flit teasingly so close to perch  
beneath my kitchen window  
but of course my luck runs out  
for on my kitchen table perches  
a camera out of film





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