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November, 2015

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Nov. 3	Syracuse	Otoe Co. Extension	620 1 <sup>st</sup> Street	9:00-4:00	402-269-2301
Nov. 4	Auburn	Auburn Library	1810 Courthouse Ave	10:00-4:30	402-274-4755
Nov. 5	Pawnee City	Pawnee Co. Extension	Courthouse	9:00-4:00	402-852-2970
Nov. 10	Weeping Water	Cass Co. Extension	8400 144 <sup>th</sup> St., Ste. 100	9:00-4:30	402-267-2205
Nov. 11	Nebraska City	The Ambassador	1800 14 <sup>th</sup> Avenue	9:00-5:00	402-269-2301
Nov. 12	Syracuse	Otoe Co. Extension	620 1 <sup>st</sup> Street	9:00-4:00	402-269-2301
Nov. 17	Plattsmouth	Plattsmouth Library	400 Ave. A	9:00-4:30	402-267-2205
Nov. 18	Tecumseh	Ridgeview Towers	1143 N. 3rd Street	9:00-4:30	402-335-3669
Nov. 19	Pawnee City	Pawnee Co. Extension	Courthouse	9:00-4:00	402-852-2970
Nov. 23	Nebraska City	The Ambassador	1800 14 <sup>th</sup> Avenue	9:00-5:00	402-269-2301
Nov. 24	Palmyra	Palmyra Senior Ctr.	425 C Street	9:00-4:00	402-780-5606
Dec. 1	Syracuse	Otoe Co. Extension	620 1 <sup>st</sup> Street	9:00-4:00	402-269-2301
Dec. 2	Weeping Water	Cass Co. Extension	8400 144 <sup>th</sup> St., Ste. 100	9:00-4:30	402-267-2205
Dec. 3	Auburn	Auburn Library	1810 Courthouse Ave.	10:00-4:30	402-274-4755
Dec. 4	Nebraska City	The Ambassador	1800 14 <sup>th</sup> Avenue	9:00-5:00	402-269-2301

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## Your Country Neighbor

*A Voice and a View From the  
Valleys of the Nemaha*

Publisher & Photographer, Stephen Hassler

### Writers This Month

Devon Adams  
 Stephen Hassler  
 Merri Johnson  
 Lee Nyberg  
 Vicki O’Neal  
 Marilyn Woerth  
 Thank You

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## Where Did Summer Go?

Stephen Hassler

I see the Cardinal now and then, but I no longer hear him singing. Where did Summer go? In October many days felt like Summer, but it's Autumn now. The sumac is crimson, the Monarch butterflies have all passed through on their way to Mexico, and soon the Snow Geese will appear in V's projected against the blue November skies, making their way south, away from frozen waters.

For most of October the trees were green... mostly. Some leaves had fallen; not too many. The mornings were often crisp, though yielding to warmer afternoons. But no singing from the cardinal.

Only a few patches of yellow sunflowers remained along the roadways; most of the remaining color was in the grasses. The gray milkweed pods had burst with seed and silver silk. The yellow ocher fields of corn and soybeans were being harvested.

The youngest squirrels have not felt Winter's cold or snow, nor have they experienced the deep sleep they will welcome during cold spells. They have been instinctively burying walnuts and acorns. On warmer Winter days they will waken to sniff for their stash or scrap with each other beneath bird feeders.

Where did Summer go? Perhaps the feeling of loss is due to unfinished business... or none started. Summer is a time for manifestation of Spring ideas, and Autumn is the time to harvest the benefits of Spring's planning and Summer's action. If there was no action, then we may be longing for what should have been; a productive Summer. Too late. Summer is gone and we can only benefit from what we indeed managed to accomplish. Better now to anticipate staying inside this Winter to contemplate our failures and successes and dream along with seed catalogs for new birth in the Spring. Next year, plan the future, plant the ideas, tend the action garden during the Summer, and next Fall enjoy the harvest of our endeavors.

So Summer has faded, disappeared, an almost meaningless memory. We might linger toward the past and wait impatiently for the future, but the present moment is all we have.

(Spend only one half hour each day focused on the past, one half hour planning for the future, and the rest of the time in the present moment.)



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# VISIT BROWNVILLE

Where Life Is Good

Marilyn Woerth

The sky is a solid blue; a tranquil, hypnotic, floating blue which mesmerizes me while the warmth from the sun wraps itself around me like a thin baby blanket that comfortably threatens to finish the task and lure me into a shameless sleep. Thankfully, a soft southern breeze ruffles the edge of my grey cropped hair stirring the contentment of my soul. My job is almost done. The rest is up to Mother Nature.

This past spring the first boxes arrived. I tore into them groaning I hadn't had time to even start the project and here they were, all six of them eagerly waiting to be plopped down into the ground. I don't know why I was so surprised. This is usually how I roll no matter how much I plan (which generally isn't much).

I want something, I see it, I order it and then I have to figure out where to put it or them. But this time I knew I wanted more shrubs in the yard and I knew I wanted them close to the water garden and by the horse-shoe-pits. Between the weird spring weather and being out of sorts myself, I did not get the new bed dug up... and there was a ton of other things that needed doing. My shoulders dropped. Okay, new plan. Husband was enlisted that Saturday to help with the digging, which was supposed to be a quiet job. But hubby decides to give some input to the placements of said shrubs. After much (cough) discussion, they were planted. The anchor, a curly willow called 'Golden Curls', then two 'Blue Kazoo' spirea, two 'Dark Knight' caryopteris, one French hybrid lilac, 'Ludwig Spaeth' graced its sides and front. I made a judgment call, the bed would come later when I have time, for now each plant would stand alone and have to be mowed around. Hubby shook his head. Probably glad he was working out of state for the moment.

Summer went by and during that time all the shrubs flourished but the garden bed was not completed. I wanted some things, I placed an order, and then it was October. The first box came and again I was not ready, the bed was still not dug, grass still covered the area. Hubby retreated to his man cave; he wasn't working out of state any more. I worked hard taking the grass from between the shrubs forming the garden bed into a shape that has no name, but it works for me and doesn't need one. While removing grass a thought takes form, I now know what kind of bed this will be and then another box arrives. Hubby tills the ground as I order an essential part, the main focal point. A trip to Bellevue nets twelve bags of OmaGro compost and a 220 pound rock, and one butterfly bush. Now the real working begins. Hubby positions the rock, I reposition it (of course), and then I plant nine phlox 'Blue Paradise', nine pink phlox 'Laura', 60 daffodils/narcissus 'Pueblo' (6 blooms per bulb) and 50 muscari/ grape hyacinth 'Latifolium', and one butterfly bush. And then we mulch.

The three and a half foot metal cross will be here in about ten days. The dug up grass is on the compost pile, the tools are all cleaned and put away, Tylenol has been swallowed and hubby has retreated to his man cave where I hear the strumming of a guitar. I pull out a lawn chair and put it at the foot of my new flower bed, my task still not complete.

I name all of my flower bed/rooms, and thus am contemplating what title I will christen this one. The cross pushes me to names such as healing, prayer, serenity and so forth. Next spring I will take a picture of the daffodils and grape hyacinths and then I will need a name for the new photo album on my facebook page (Woerth Family Gardens), but until then I am just contemplating... where life is good.



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## FREEZING RAIN

After the sparkle of October,  
the change in time comes with  
low gray skies and damp,  
drippy air that freezes on all  
that it touches. Suddenly,  
surfaces become covered with  
a thin layer of clear ice that  
gives no warning of it's danger.  
The sidewalk looks the same,  
as do the trees and bushes,  
but the game has changed to  
slick, where winners don't fall  
but losers take a tumble into  
some painful consequences.

## SNOW FLOWERS

They will be blooming soon,  
those pale snow flowers that  
come only after winter has  
killed the color and warmth.  
Perhaps they will be made  
of tiny icy flakes that float  
out of a frigid sky and softly  
settle on stiff, dry ghosts that  
still live in the garden. A chill  
so deep that clear air sparkles  
with spangles after the night's  
silent storm paints sun dogs  
sitting by the setting sun.

## STRIPPERS

Dancing to the beat of a brisk  
wind, the trees are swirling  
their skirts and losing leaves  
faster than a stripper on a stage  
loses her clothes. Autumn is  
gaudy and blushing with color,  
and she is reckless in her frantic  
celebration of the summer of her  
life. Drunk with dying beauty,  
she knows her bare bones will  
soon be exposed to the chill  
from the frigid northern plains.  
So she smiles at her warm  
memories and tries to forget  
that blizzards of ice will come.

# Poetry by Devon Adams

## SOCKS

When time is dark,  
and getting darker  
every day, the sun  
can't warm the air  
enough to keep our  
houses warm. Even  
with furnaces breathing  
heat, the floors are cold,  
with nasty drafts finding  
cracks from outside in,  
and feet can't function  
without cozy socks to  
wrap around their toes.  
With some sadness  
and resentment, the  
sandals find themselves  
waiting in the closet  
until summer comes.

## LOVE IS BLIND

And deaf, under certain  
circumstances. When  
the sun is on a low  
bridge across the  
southern sky, bucks  
leave their bachelor  
packs and roam in  
search of a certain  
scent that drives  
them wild enough  
to ignore common  
deer sense. Danger  
is a thought that they  
don't think about. Their  
focus is on the lady with  
the perfume, and they  
see and hear only things  
related to her actions.  
Some of them will  
cheat the bullets and  
arrows, and live to  
die another day.



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**October Colors**



## Diary of a Part-time Housewife

Merri Johnson

Once again, the calendar is about to turn over to November, a time of transition. The scarlet and gold of October are mostly gone. But still-blooming petunias poke through drifts of shriveled hackberry leaves. The cooler weather encourages the shrub roses to continue blooming more brilliantly now than in the heat of summer. At the same time, the suet feeder is once again attracting all the woodpecker cousins, as their formerly abundant wild food sources diminish.

By the time you read this, daylight saving time will be over and we will likely have had a freeze. The remaining robins will peck at the ice on the bath, reminding me that it's time to get out the extension cord to plug in the heater.

I'll pull up the vines that were still heavy with clusters of grape tomatoes a month ago. I won't even mind that the fallen fruit – like ruby eggs in a nest – beneath the overgrown plants have turned mushy.

The excitement of planting, harvesting and eating fresh vegetables will be replaced with the satisfaction of knowing that there are jars of spaghetti sauce on a shelf and layers of potatoes in a basket in the basement.

The coral-colored impatiens that overflow my kitchen window box today will give way to slender garlands of autumn-hued leaves and gourds. And soon, those autumn hues will yield to winter whites. The green luxuriance of the growing season will feel out of place, and the less-cluttered look of fall will be a welcome interlude before the crush of Christmas decorating.

I, for one, am ready for the change. Sure, there were plenty of summer bird-watching walks that didn't get taken. But I'm confident there will be opportunities on mild late fall or even winter days to take a brisk hike in the country to the sumac thickets and juniper stands near my home. I'll find a sheltered spot to sit in the low-slanting sunlight and enjoy the chickadees and other birds feeding among the branches.

Between now and Thanksgiving Day I will endeavor to notice and appreciate how the landscape is preparing to pull up the covers and settle in for the winter. By the time December arrives, I'll be in the same mode as Mother Nature. I'll take advantage of the lull in the action and rest up for the next transition.

Here's wishing you all a grateful heart and much to be thankful for this year.

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# Alzheimer's Affects Us All



## Tips For Sleep—For Those With Dementia And Their Caregivers

By Lee Nyberg

“I’m more than tired; I’m exhausted.” Janet explained, as she spoke of life with her husband, who has dementia. “He doesn’t sleep consistently, so I can’t either. Some nights, I lie awake, waiting for him to get up. I’m terrified he’ll leave the house.”

Dementia makes sleep difficult. Geriatrics published a 2009 study which found 35-70% of people with dementia experienced insomnia. Other research, from Harvard Medical School and the Alzheimer’s Association, confirms people with dementia wake more frequently and experience less REM sleep than those without it. Dr. Peter Rabins, co-author of *The 36-Hour Day*, a dementia care book, attributes sleep disturbances to:

- Lack of exercise
- Daytime naps
- Damage to the brain’s “internal clock”
- Disturbing dreams
- (Other experts add viewing any kind of screen at bedtime)

Try a variety of solutions for insomnia, giving your approach a week or two to work.

- Use a daily routine for exercise, activities, and bedtime; limit napping to 30 minutes total
- Go outside in the morning to wake up body and mind. Take a short walk; sunlight will reinforce “daytime.”
- Create a bedtime ritual, incorporating a snack, reading, prayer, or soothing music
- Exercise 30 or more minutes daily. Try dancing, walking, tai chi, or yoga. Your doctor can recommend options if mobility is an issue.
- Ask your doctor if medications could be causing sleeplessness or daytime drowsiness. Request changes in the medications or when they’re taken. Perhaps a medication which makes a person sleepy could be taken in the evening.
- Avoid caffeine after mid-morning. A 4 p.m. cup of tea can cause you to be wide awake at 4 a.m. Help your loved one return to bed quickly. Quietly remind him it is still night and he should be in bed. Use nightlights in the hallway and bathroom to reduce the chance he will get lost. Offer a low-fat, light, bedtime snack. Protein, minerals (calcium, magnesium, potassium) and natural chemicals (tryptophan, melatonin) support sleep.
- Lightly sweetened yogurt with cherries
- A muffin made with whole grains, almonds, bananas
- Chamomile tea or cold milk (one serving only)
- Protein sources (milk, yogurt, peanuts, almonds, edamame, hard-boiled egg)
- Mineral-rich fruits (cherries, dates, bananas, grapes, kiwi)

Talk to your doctor about medications. Dr. Rabins called sedating sleep medications useful tools, but cautioned they come at a cost. They affect the chemistry of the brain and can make you dizzy and prone to falling. Other side-effects include daytime drowsiness, incontinence and confusion. And, they may not work. The National Institutes of Health says melatonin, a hormone, may be useful for insomnia. Anti-cholinergic medications, i.e., Benadryl, are believed to reduce cognitive functioning.

Caregivers, the stress of caregiving may cause you to develop insomnia or depression. Ask family, friends, or hire a professional caregiver, to stay up with your loved one while you rest. Give your loved one at least two weeks to adjust to the new situation.

You may need more than time to return to your former sleep habits. Seek medical help if a good routine and exercise isn’t helping you sleep after a month. Both long-term insomnia and depression are serious conditions that require medical treatment.

Family caregivers may be super-heroes, but they still need rest.

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

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Breaking Tackle, October 31, 2015

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Dive, Reach, Touchdown, October 31, 2015

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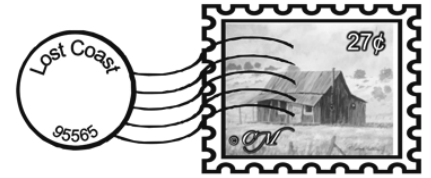
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## *Back to the Heartland*

By Vicki O'Neal



I am Home...Back from my distant wanderings..

The Old Home Place was welcoming in as usual—and so were my friends, family and neighbors. Mom, Dad and my kids were relieved to have me home from the perilous West Coast. Cheryl and Dottie gave me hugs. My cousin, Laurie, gave me ripe tomatoes. Rose was joyfully tearful as always. Nancy said I needed to house-sit for her when she went on vacation. And the Captain, of course, was his usual staid and morose self.

He brought peaches to the family farm, and suggested that we go boating and fishing very soon on the Mighty MO. He added: “I got you a birthday card for your birthday.”

At least that’s what I thought the Cap’n said.

“Why—thank you, Cap’n! You don’t usually bother with birthday cards.”

There was a long pause. “Not a Card,” said the Captain. “A birthday CARP. You know—a smoked fish for your birthday!”

“Oh,” I said. “Well...a smoked carp is so much better than a piece of paper!”

“That’s what I thought,” said the Cap’n. “Now, let’s go mushroom hunting!”

I readily agreed, and so began my first adventure—upon returning home.

We headed toward the back Forty—to the top of the ridge and stood overlooking the Barada Hills—a place of serenity and solitude. A place where mushrooms grew.

Suddenly, I paused and sniffed the air. “Do you smell that?” I murmured to the Cap’n. “Cigarette smoke! Somebody is smoking close by.” The very thought gave me the willies. There wasn’t supposed to be anyone back here. This was private property.

We stood looking around uneasily. The foliage was dense and wild. Anyone could be hiding in the brush, watching at us. It made my skin crawl, but the Cap’n was matter of fact, as usual.

“Let’s just keep walking,” he said.

We headed downhill from the ridge, and it wasn’t but a moment later that we were confronted by a man in camouflage who stepped from the trees. He looked none-too-friendly and scowled at us as though we were interlopers. There was a pistol on his hip and a deadly looking cross bow on the ground beside him. He had a flask of whiskey as well.

“Who are you and what are you doing here?” he said.

I stared back at him. Indignation rose up in me and I was no longer nervous. “This land is my inheritance,” I said curtly. “Who are you?”

It was his turn to look nervous. His scowl faded and he gave us a sheepish grin. “You scared me—coming upon me so suddenly,” he said. He explained who he was—the husband of one of my cousins who had been given permis-

sion to hunt here. He said he had just shot a doe with his crossbow, but she had run off into the brush.

Cap’n sighed. He hated this kind of thing. He said we should spread out and search the surrounding ravines for the injured doe.

The Captain and I headed one direction, and the hunter headed another. We searched for a good while before it finally occurred to me that we would never find the doe without divine intervention. “Lord,” I said. “Can you help us find that poor thing so she doesn’t have to suffer any more?” Then, impulsively, I turned and headed toward the pond. A few moments later, I pulled up short.

A small yearling exploded from a ravine and darted off. I peered into the dimness of the crevasse, and caught my breath. A large doe was looking back at me with fear in her gaze. Our eyes locked and she stood frozen for a moment, then she leaped up the bank. I could see a sickening trail of entrails spilling from her gut as she ran.

“Stop!” I shouted at her. “You need to stop! You’re going to die anyway—don’t you understand?”

No. She did not understand. She fled without a backwards glance.

I gave chase—running wildly after the doe with abandon. It was amazing that she could run so fast in her condition. I charged after her through the thicket, stumbling, shouting, half-tripping over myself as I ran—never stopping to think what I would do if I somehow caught her. What would I do?...throw my arms around her neck and hold on for dear life?...Maybe beg her to die in my arms?

A few moments later, the doe vanished and I blundered to a halt. I felt a bit foolish at that point. Belatedly, I went to tell the hunter what I had seen. With his pistol, he headed in the direction that I indicated, searching the ravines as he went.

The Cap’n and I walked wearily homeward. It was getting late. We had done what we could. The rest was up to the hunter, the Lord, and the poor pitiful doe.

We were almost back to the farmhouse when we heard the gunshot. It was a dull, muffled sound—like it had been fired in a distant ravine. I felt a strange jumble of emotions. I was relieved that the doe wouldn’t suffer any more—but I felt immeasurably sad as well.

“Thank you, Lord,” I murmured. “Thanks for not letting her suffer any more. And for helping us find her, too.”

The Cap’n nodded morosely and kept on walking.

I sighed. We hadn’t found a single mushroom, that day. but I had found something more important, of course. I had found adventure in my Homeland. I’d tread the sod of my future inheritance and had found my Roots, once more. I’d resumed my life in the land of my Ancestors...breathing the clean, fresh air of my Homeland.

And it felt good.....

So good to be Home.



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