

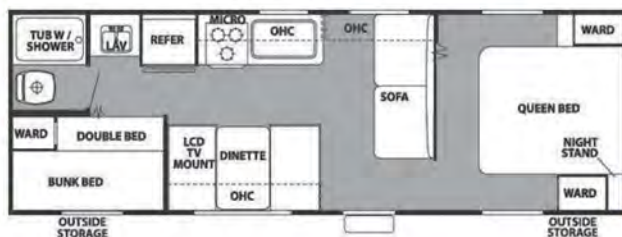
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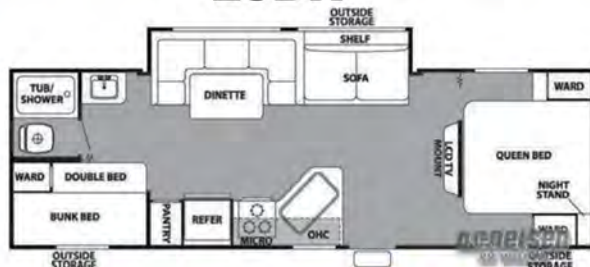
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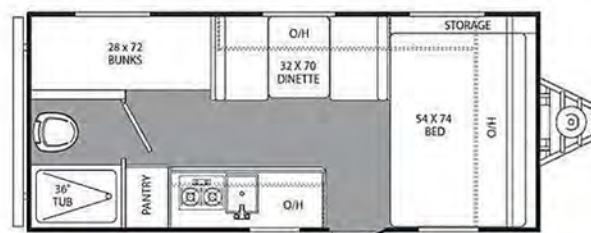
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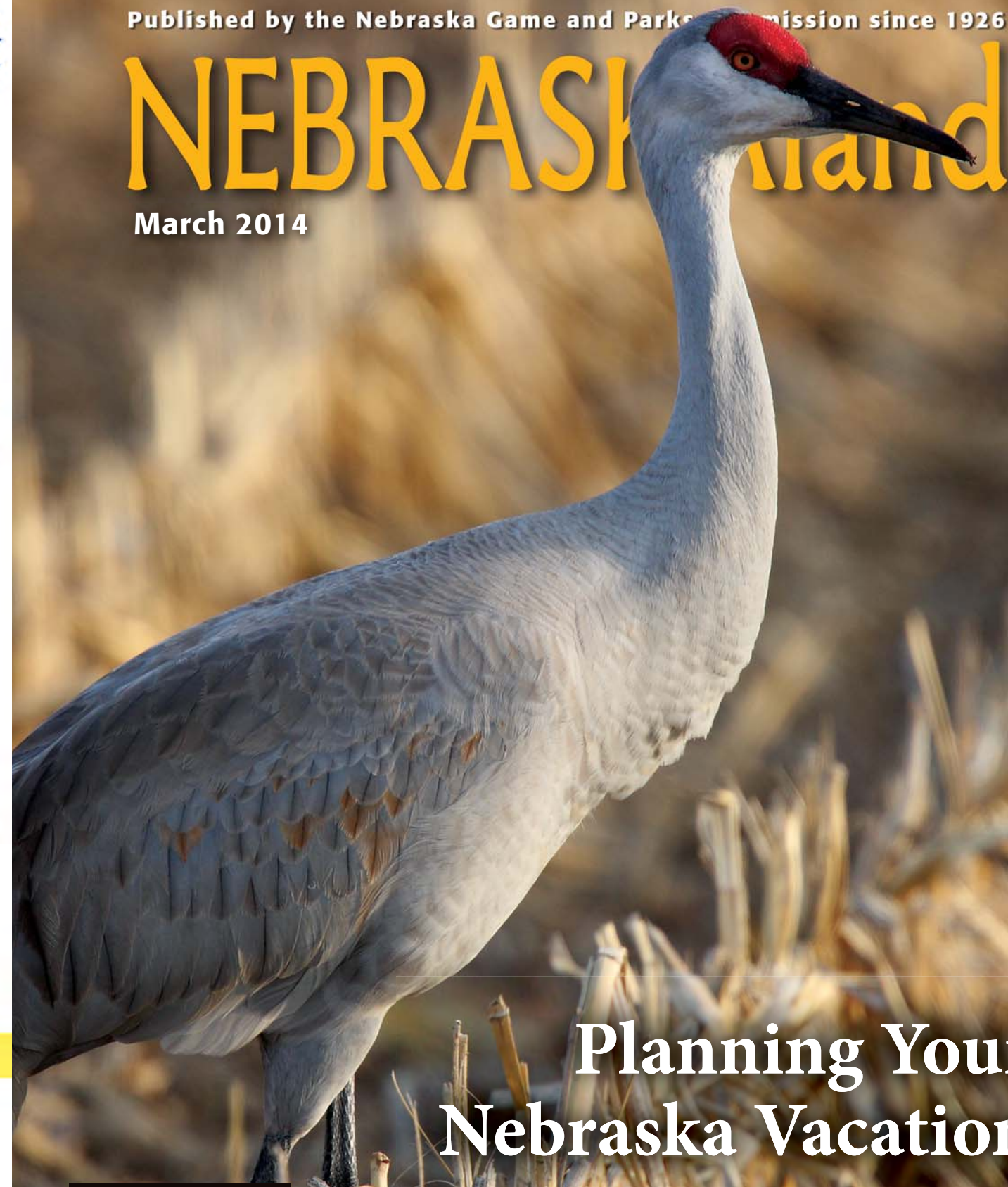
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It's Snow Goose Time • Man Cave Décor
A Mule Deer for "G" • The One-person Town



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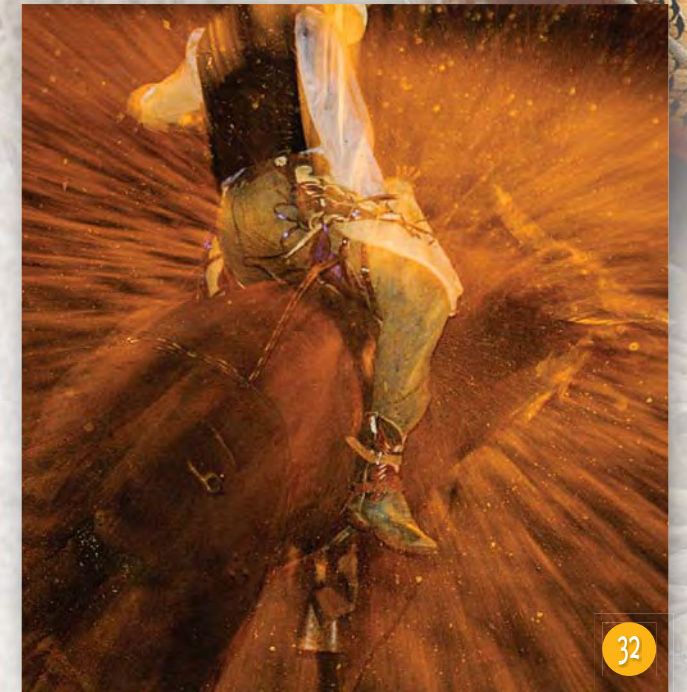
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Cover: A sandhill crane moves through a corn field near Gibbon. Photo by Luke Kathol. Wildlife viewing in the spring or summer is just one option for vacationers in Nebraska, as is visiting the re-enactors at Fort Atkinson State Historical Park (opposite). See story on page 24. Photo by Bobbi Anderson.



Car Hawk

One day in December, I went out to Yankee Hill Wildlife Management Area to take landscape shots. But what I came across was so much better. A handler was working his hawk in the prairie grasses. For some reason, the hawk took a liking to me and flew toward me, swooped in over my head, and landed on the roof of my car, where he decided to stay for the next five minutes. His name is Leonard.

Lisa Woerly
Lincoln, Nebraska



Fair Fight

About 25 years ago, my brother-in-law Bob Cole and his son “Chip” came upon this pair while checking cattle in a pasture 5 miles southwest of Emmet where they lived. One watched while the other went back for a camera. They took numerous photos until they got too close and the snake let go and took off. The hawk rested quite a while before it gained its strength back and flew away.

Larry Schaffer
O’Neill, Nebraska

Dragons and Damsels

Reading the story in the Jan-Feb issue of *NEBRASKAland* reminded me what we kids back in the 1920s and 30s thought about these insects. We called them “ear stingers” and it was taken as gospel that if you let one get near you it would stick that long slender body in your ear with devastating results. This was in Chicago where I grew up.

Bob Pierson
Omaha, Nebraska

Colorado Boy’s First Deer

My son, Jacob Naibauer, was 10 years old last season when he shot his first deer, a white-tailed buck on the eastern edge of Sioux County.

He shot the deer with a .25-06 that he thought was my friend’s gun until it was given to Jacob for Christmas. He lives for hunting, having gone on his first pheasant trip at five years old and walking for two days without the first complaint. After this trip I knew he had found his passion.

David Naibauer
Castle Rock, Colorado

From Visitor Letters

The grasshopper was very elusive. It took three of us to find it on the upper left hand corner of page 3! *NEBRASKAland Magazine* is a family favorite, and we continue to add new subscriptions to family members and friends who haven’t seen it before. Thanks, and keep up the good work.

Kimberly Schaaf
Scottsbluff, Nebraska

Black and White Bird

I have a black and white photo I took this summer of a bird that I have been told belongs in a magazine.

Dustin Geihs
via e-mail

Editor: Dustin, you’re exactly right.



The January/February visitor, I believe, is a grasshopper on page 3 in the upper left of the page. The visitor blends in quite well and was a tricky one as it almost looks like it belongs there.

Thanks for keeping the issues interesting.
Dan Kaup
West Fargo, North Dakota



Petroglyph Protection?

In your October 2013 issue of *NEBRASKAland*, I read about Indian Cave State Park and the petroglyphs on cave walls. We visited the park several years ago and saw the Indian carvings on the side of a hill and I wondered, aloud, why they were not protected from vandalism?

I remember a trip to Glacier National Park, in Montana, when one of the highlights was a trip outside of the park to see a hillside covered with Indian hieroglyphics with the ranger telling their story. The hillside was fenced and locked at night to prevent vandalism.

These carvings are a historic treasure in Nebraska, and someone should be protecting them before they all disappear.

Juanita Simonds
Grand Island, Nebraska

Send your comments to:
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P.O. Box 30370
Lincoln, NE 68503
or e-mail Jeff.Kurrus@Nebraska.gov
Please include your postal address and telephone number.
Letters may be condensed and edited for clarity. Photographs are welcome and will be returned.

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Competition Between Two Favorite Nebraska Panfish?

By Mark A. Kaemingk and David W. Willis

Supply and timing dictate many events in nature. For example, some fish benefit from hatching earlier than others and can take advantage of a resource (e.g., food) that is in limited supply. We noticed this during our research in Pelican Lake on the Valentine National Wildlife Refuge in Nebraska. We observed that **yellow perch** spawn earlier (late April or early May) than **bluegill** (late June), which allowed their young to arrive onto the scene earlier than the bluegill young.

Arriving sooner allows for a first chance at the food. In this case, their food, a type of zooplankton called *Daphnia*, was in short supply. *Daphnia* are important for young fish because they are usually bigger than most other types of zooplankton, and fish that eat *Daphnia* grow faster than fish that do not. For people, it's like eating three eggs (more protein) versus half of an apple (less protein) for breakfast.

In some years there is a small amount of *Daphnia* remaining when the young bluegill arrive, but usually it is not enough to substantially benefit the bluegill. By this time, yellow perch will have eaten most of the available *Daphnia*. As a result, the bluegill young resort to scrounging for food, do not eat as much and are not able to grow as large as they could if they were feeding on *Daphnia*.

This situation happened in 2004 and 2006-2010, but not in 2005 in Pelican Lake. Although yellow perch hatched first in 2005, few young survived – possibly due to adverse weather conditions – and even fewer reached a size where they could eat *Daphnia*. With yellow perch largely absent from the scene, bluegill young were able to feast on the available *Daphnia* and reached a size much larger than in any other year studied. What does this mean for bluegill young? Because growth during the first year of life is extremely important, it allows a fish to swim faster and outgrow the size of a predator's mouth. In addition, because winters can be somewhat severe with long periods of cold weather and low food availability in northern latitudes, enhanced growth may help that fish endure and survive the winter, hopefully making it to your dinner plate.

Our study was the first to document negative effects of young yellow perch on young bluegill growth during the first year of life. We found that bluegill may be at a disadvantage when it comes to eating *Daphnia* unless yellow perch are absent (as was the case in 2005), or *Daphnia* no longer become limiting, or bluegill are hatched before all the *Daphnia* are eaten by young yellow perch. In addition, the roles appear to be reversed later during summer. Juvenile bluegill may outcompete juvenile yellow perch later in the summer, extending this competitive relationship between the two species throughout the entire first growing season. These results were surprising given that both species often reside together in many systems and the popularity of these species as sportfish. ■



BLUEGILL



YELLOW PERCH



Daphnia, small planktonic crustacean, are commonly called "water fleas."

Wildfire Cleanup

By Justin Haag

Pine Ridge wildfires in 2012 left an immeasurable amount of work to be done after the smoke cleared, and an untimely storm in early October 2013 brought 20 inches of snow and snapped countless trees and branches that were still carrying leaves.

Considering the massive clean-up facing Game and Parks Commission properties in the region, a visit from an Americorps crew in late October proved timely, as the helping hands were welcomed in clearing downed timber on two wildlife management areas and Chadron State Park.

Americorps is the U.S. government program, and part of the National Civilian Community Corps, that engages adults in intensive community service projects. A team of eight workers from points across the nation took up residence at Chadron State Park for 10 days at the end of October. Even though the workers' visit was delayed and shortened by the federal government shutdown earlier that month, their accomplishments were plentiful.

The crew assisted Commission personnel reseeding and raking 23 acres of erosion control and re-vegetation at Ponderosa Wildlife Management Area southeast of Crawford. They also cleared downed trees and brush from 4½ miles of service trails, roads and fence lines on Chadron Creek Ranch WMA.

At Chadron State Park, the crew cleared and stacked countless branches and logs and removed downed timber from Chadron Creek. Members also helped frame a new fishing dock for the park's pond that is under restoration.

Commission officials are already discussing the possibility of another Americorps project next year. ■

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March 01	Lower Elkhorn Valley PF	Wisner
March 01	Rainwater Basin PF	Sutton
March 02	Boone County PF	Albion
March 07	High Plains PF	Sidney
March 07	Nemaha Valley PF	Johnson
March 08	Corn Country PF	McCool Junction
March 08	Dixon County PF	Ponca
March 08	Heartland PF	Omaha
March 08	Heritage PF	Alliance
March 08	Loup River PF	Ord
March 14	Wachtel Fur Immer QF	Eustis
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March 21	Logan Creek PF	Wayne
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March 22	Otoe County PF	Syracuse
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March 22	Washington County PF	Blair
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March 29	Republican Valley PF	Cambridge
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Travelogue

By Jenny Nguyen

Blair

Located just north of **Omaha**, the city of Blair offers small-town comforts with easy access to “big town” life. From outdoor opportunities, to art, history and mom-and-pop businesses, Blair has much to offer a wandering traveler.

For those looking for some fresh air, outdoor opportunities are available in town and nearby. **Black Elk-Neihardt Park** is one of Blair's more prominent parks and is the highest point in the city. The Tower of Four Winds, designed by Dana College Professor F.W. Thomsen, is the focal point of the park, nestled in 80 acres of rolling hills, which are traced by hiking trails. The park also features a 9-hole disc golf course, a picnic area, bench swings, fire pit, grill and playground.

For wildlife viewing, **DeSoto National Wildlife Refuge** and **Boyer Chute National Wildlife Refuge** are located nearby along the Missouri River where deer, wild turkeys, bald eagles and other migratory birds can be seen.

Those history buffs looking to learn more about the area's beginnings should take a drive down to Fort Atkinson State Historical Park. Located just 10 miles south of Blair on Highway 75 at nearby Fort Calhoun, Fort Atkinson offers living history events all summer long, complete with uniformed re-enactors, musket and cannon firing, butter making and period musicians. Check with the park for 2014 scheduling at FortAtkinson@Nebraska.gov or (402) 468-5611.

The **Heartland Tasting Room** is Blair's new hotspot, offering both artwork and drinks to those looking for a more relaxed, comfortable setting than the typical bar scene. Gather here with friends and colleagues to view works from local Blair artists while enjoying craft beers on tap or one of 26 different wines from around the world. Artisan cheeses, rustic breads, oils and vinegars are available to pair with your drinks.

Hungry? Head over to **Main Street BBQ & Grill** for some seriously good eats. Here you'll find a friendly staff and mouthwatering BBQ classics like baby back ribs, pulled pork sandwiches, charbroiled steaks, brisket sandwiches and some of the juiciest, crunchiest fried chicken you'll ever eat.

For more information, visit Blairnebraska.com, Heartlandtastingroom.com, Fortatkinsononline.org and Benpark.org.



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Warming Cold Extremities

By Nebraska Outdoor U!

This time of year, it is hard to stay inside no matter what the thermometer tells us. Here are some tips to stay warm and measures to take if you've stayed out in the cold a little too long.

When tent camping, get some sort of air pocket between your body and the cold ground while you sleep. Of course, warm clothes should always be considered, but a big meal before bed makes a difference when it comes to surviving a cold night. A properly sized tent for the amount of people is also a factor. Five people can make a four person tent much toastier than one person.

For hunting, snowshoeing and other activities that leave you exposed to the elements, build your body fortress. Place fleece, polyester or wool next to your skin to insulate and wick moisture. Next, use any fleece or other good insulator as your middle layer, and top it all off with a waterproof or canvas-type shell layer to block out wind or rain. There are many fleece gloves that are warm in moderate weather but will not stand up to a cold wind. You'll want a solid windproof glove if you're out in the hardcore winter weather. Try a thin fleece finger glove, with a heavy, loose wool mitt to wear over it.

The biggest problem with boots has the simplest solution. Keep your boots laced up loosely instead of cinching them

tight to keep blood flowing to your toes.

If you feel your hands getting cold, warming them in your arm pits may help, but wind milling your arms in large fast circles is by far the best way to unconstrict your blood vessels and allow your hands to stay warm for a longer amount of time. If you've stayed out in the cold long past your cold threshold and your extremities have gone numb, the best way to warm them is to immerse them in warm water (about 104 degrees F).

In more serious cases of frost nip or frost bite, warm your frozen extremity, and then treat it like a sun burn (it is, in fact, damaged skin tissue with vulnerable tissue beneath it). Bandage it in sterile tissues and avoid any direct abrasion to the injured skin. In extreme cases, seek medical help.

Visit OutdoorU.org and start your own pathway to exciting and memorable experiences in the outdoors. ■





Joseph Beckwith homestead, near Broken Bow, 1888.



Pile of cow chips, Sheridan County.



Cow chips near post office and store, Norway, 1937.



Gathering cow chips in Cherry County in the 1890s.

A Brief History Buffalo and Cow Chips

By Patricia C. Gaster,
Nebraska State Historical Society

The scarcity of wood west of the one hundredth meridian forced a reliance on animal-made fuel there. Buffalo excrement, when allowed to dry a few weeks in the hot Plains sun, was clean to handle and usually odorless. It burned with little blaze but formed hot coals, which were very effective for cooking or heating. It was almost the only fuel used by the Forty-niners and other travelers on the Oregon and Mormon trails.

The first permanent settlers came not long after the buffalo were decimated. Fortunately for the settlers, after the buffalo were gone, great herds of Texas cattle were driven to or through

Nebraska and filled the ranches that occupied the United States grasslands. Homesteaders were said to invite trail bosses to bed down herds on their property, thus gaining enough cow chips for a winter fuel supply.

According to Everett Dick's *Conquering the Great American Desert*, an initial aversion to using the fuel, especially among women, soon dissipated. "In spite of the fact that cow chips were absolutely clean and not messy to handle, not infrequently a fastidious housewife from the East turned up her nose at this effective fuel and, taking a chip between a dainty thumb and forefinger, gingerly tried to get it into the firebox without touching it any more than she could help, as though it were poison. It wasn't long before she overcame her squeamishness, however, for in this case familiarity did not breed contempt

but rather respect and appreciation."

The following poem from the *Trenton Register* of December 28, 1894, makes much the same point.

An Idyl of the West

Over the sun-kissed prairie swells
She strayed in her youthful grace.
The wind-blown tresses of auburn hair
Half hid her bewitching face.
Her gathered apron, one slim hand held,
As she scanned each tuft with care.
And oft and again she lithely stooped
To place her treasure there.

"O maiden fair, what seekest thou?
Pale lily, rose divine
Or the shy, sweet buds of the violet?"
She lifted her eyes to mine.
And then the answer, soft and clear
Fell ripe from her coral lips,
"Stranger, there hain't no posies here—
I'm lookin' fer buf'lo chips!" ■

Great Park Pursuit Update

By Julie Geiser

For the seventh year, The Great Park Pursuit (GPP) will be taking people on a scavenger hunt of sorts, encouraging them to explore parks throughout Nebraska and live a healthy active lifestyle, and rewarding many with prizes, including one outdoor package valued at \$1,500.

Twenty locations in Nebraska, including state historical parks and recreation areas, local parks, natural resource district areas and a national forest, are part of the free program.

Teams of friends, families, coworkers, youth organizations or any other groups start by registering online at NEGPP.org. They can then select parks to visit and print off the page for that park, which includes information about the park's attractions and a clue to guide them to their ultimate goal: a post tucked away in the woods and topped with a nature impression. When the post is located, teams can use a pencil, crayon or marker to make a rubbing of the impression on their park page.

That rubbing is their entry they mail to the headquarters of the contest, which

runs from May 1 to September 16, 2014. The more parks a team visits, the more prizes they qualify for.

Prizes consist of *NEBRASKAland Magazine* calendars and subscriptions, state park permits and cabin stays, outdoor packages valued at \$250, \$500, \$750, \$1,000 and \$1,500, a digital camera, a backyard bird package and more.

In addition to the fun of finding



there are many educational and fun activities you can download from the site, including how-to guides on making binoculars or a pinecone bird feeder, and directions for scavenger hunts that challenge hikers to look for different colors or shapes rather than objects, and even one to record things heard rather than seen in nature.

This program is made possible by a partnership between the Nebraska Game and Park Commission and the Nebraska Recreation and Park Association, a non-profit organization comprised of professionals and advocates dedicated to the promotion of park resources and recreation advancement in Nebraska. Other sponsors include the Papio-Missouri River Natural Resources District and Scheels.

The program is looking forward to hosting more teams, encouraging people to have an active lifestyle and increasing the awareness of all the outdoor recreational opportunities of the state. ■



Participants of the Great Park Pursuit can win many prizes, including a *NEBRASKAland* Calendar.

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Nebraska State Historical Society

Biodiversity Exhibit Has New Home

By Lindsay Rogers

A snapshot of Nebraska’s biodiversity that *NEBRASKAland* highlighted in the November 2013 edition is currently on display at the “Explore Nebraska’s Biodiversity” exhibit currently at the Wildcat Hills Nature Center in Gering, Nebraska. The exhibit includes a double-sided photographic mural featuring nearly 100 images of Nebraska species.

In addition to the photographic mural, the exhibit includes multiple hands-on components. Visitors can explore insects, bones, furs and birds with magnifying lenses. Or, visitors can compare their “wingspan” with those of Nebraska’s bird species, or match their height with those of Nebraska’s prairie grass species.

The exhibit was created by the Nebraska Natural Legacy Project, with funding from the Nebraska Environmental Trust, and can be seen at Wildcat Hills until March 28. ■



The “Explore Nebraska’s Biodiversity” exhibit at Wildcat Hills Nature Center in Gering is on display until March 28.

PHOTO BY LINDSAY ROGERS

Catching Marsh Madness

By Jenny Nguyen

If you want to witness the peak of the spring waterfowl migration along the Missouri River this March, sit in one of Ponca State Park’s bird viewing blinds. Every weekend (weather permitting), park staff will host Avian Adventure Blind Tours with the assistance of

birding experts from the Loess Hills Audubon Society Chapter. Learn how to identify different species of ducks and geese as they fly overhead. Then go down to the riverfront to sit in the bald eagle blind: you may see a nesting pair in the trees or juveniles down on the sandbars.

Some of the species spotted last year were Canada geese, shovelers, pintails, scaup, green-winged and blue-winged teal, wigeons, mallards, buffleheads

and ring-necked ducks. Other species included the pied-billed grebe and yellowlegs.

In addition to scheduled birding tours in the mornings and evenings, family games and activities will take place during the day at the Resource and Education Center, including a movie and popcorn. For those wanting to stay at the park, getaway packages are also available, including 30 percent off lodging rates, free guided sunrise and sunset waterfowl blind tours, unguided bald eagle blind tours and special programming and activities. Guests staying at the park will also have first choice for blind reservations over day attendees.

To reserve your front-row seat for the migration, contact Ponca State Park for full details at ngpc.ponca@nebraska.gov or 402-755-2284. ■



Ponca State Park is the eastern gateway to the 59-mile section of the Missouri National Recreational River, one of two unchanneled sections of river bordering Nebraska. It is located 2 miles north of Ponca in northeastern Nebraska.



Olivia Zink glasses for birds during Ponca State Park’s Marsh Madness with the guidance of Audubon Society bird specialist Bill Hueser.

PHOTO BY JENNY NGUYEN

Outdoor Message Plates

Greg Medlin of Omaha loves following his “suburban” Redbone coonhounds through the darkness outside the city, so much he advertises his passion on his pickup and even published a book, *Memoirs from the Night*.

If you have a unique outdoor message plate you would like to share or know someone who does, e-mail a photo (high-resolution, JPEG format only, please) of it to Eric.Fowler@Nebraska.gov, along with your name, hometown and a brief description of the interests expressed on your license plate.



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NEBRASKA GAME PARKS



Upcoming Events

by Jerry Kane

Contact the Nebraska Game and Parks Commission at 402-471-0641 or visit OutdoorNebraska.org for more information. Visit HuntSafeNebraska.org for a list of hunter education classes and BoatSafeNebraska.org for a list of boating safety classes.

March 1
Bird Banding
Ak-Sar-Ben Aquarium, Gretna, 9 a.m., 402-332-3901

March 1-2, 8-9, 15-16, 22-23, 29-30
Marsh Madness
Ponca State Park (SP), 402-755-2284

March 5
Workshop
Prescribed burn training workshop, Sherman Reservoir WMA, Loup City, noon-3 p.m.

March 19
Workshop
Prescribed burn training workshop, Wayne State College, Wayne, 9 a.m.-4 p.m.

March 21
Commission Meeting
Nebraska Game and Parks Board of Commissioners Meeting, Norfolk, 8 a.m.

March 22
National Archery in the Schools Program State Tournament, Lancaster Events Center, Lincoln, 8 a.m.

March 25
Spring Turkey Archery Season
Archery and youth archery spring turkey hunting season opens

March 31
Trapping
Trapping seasons close for muskrat and beaver

March 31
Mountain Lion Season
Pine Ridge Unit Season 2 mountain lion hunting closes, unless quota or female sub-quota met causing season to close earlier

Man Caves

By LeRoy Poppe

This room was once a single car garage and was turned into a “man cave” in 1991.

The deer and turkey were taken between 1966 and 2006 on my farm. I did the taxidermy work on two of the deer. The antelope was taken near Harrison, Nebraska, the elk from Wyoming and the dall sheep, moose and caribou from Alaska in a once-in-a-lifetime hunt. The game in the photo are not records but are reminders of the hunts and provide interesting stories.

The room also has my woodcarvings and some photos. One particular photo is a scenic view of “Rooster Lake” on my property.

Do you have a man cave photo to share? Submissions must be outdoor-related to be considered. Please send high-resolution images to jenny.nguyen@nebraska.gov, along with your name, a brief description of your man cave, your city or town of residence, and best contact information. ■



LeRoy Poppe's single car garage turned man cave.

PHOTO BY STEVE BUNCK

See You Out There... But Where?

Do you know where this Nebraska photograph was taken?
See answer at the bottom of page 15.

PHOTO BY DOUG CARROLL

Send Us Your Trail Cam Photos!



Marian Langan sent in this photo of a doe and her fawn drinking at Spring Creek Prairie Audubon Center, south of Denton in Lancaster County.

Please submit your trail camera photos by e-mail to: nebtrailcam@gmail.com. Also include where you're from and any information that will help explain your photo.

Leopard Frogs

By Jeff Kurrus

In August of 2013, I began working with Julie Elvers's kindergarten class at Besser Street-Aldrich in Omaha, putting to practice how I come up with article ideas at NEBRASKAland Magazine by asking who, what, when, where, why, how and can anytime I see a photograph. The students have learned to ask these same questions and, with the help of author and NEBRASKAland contributor Dan Fogell, find answers. Here are the results of their recent leopard frog discoveries.

Dear NEBRASKAland readers,
We found the following facts about leopard frogs interesting. We hope you do too.

Sincerely,
Mrs. Elvers's Kindergarten Class

- Females are bigger than males.
- Females lay hundreds of eggs. Only 5 or 6 make it to adulthood.
- They have sticky tongues and will eat whatever will fit in their mouths.
- They hibernate under the ice in winter.
- Its eyes are on top of its head so it can sit in the water and still see what's going on above the water.
- A frog's legs are bent, making them ready to hop.
- The bottom of their back feet have bumps that help them dig into the ground.
- All frogs, including the leopard frog, have poison glands.
- Each night leopard frogs peel off their mucus and eat it.
- They have webbed feet and hands to help them swim.
- Male frogs have bigger tympania, or ear drums, than female frogs.
- Frogs see well in color, and at night.

NEBRASKAland Visitor



Last issue's winner of the Visitor drawing was Kimberly Schaaf of Scottsbluff, Nebraska, who found the **short-winged grasshopper** on page 3. Readers are encouraged to contact NEBRASKAland within 10 days after this issue's publication with the correct page number and name of this issue's "Visitor" – a critter found in Nebraska. We will then gather the correct entries and draw one to win a NEBRASKAland Magazine mug. To enter each month, write:

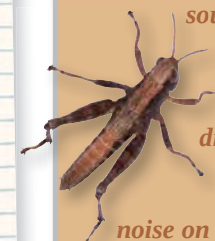
NEBRASKAland Visitor
2200 North 33rd Street,
Lincoln, NE 68503.

Or e-mail:

Tim.Reigert@Nebraska.gov
with "Visitor" in the subject line of the message.

HINT: This issue's visitor is not on page 4, 6, 7, 11, 12, 15, 32, 43, 46, or 54.

Last month's visitor is an **immature grasshopper** – most likely *Dichromorpha viridis*, often referred to as the **short-winged green grasshopper** – a member of the slant-faced grasshopper sub-family. The head of the slant-faced is pointed, and often appears tilted forward. They can be distinguished from other sub-families by the lack of either colorful wings or a spur near the throat. They communicate by stroking their hind leg across their forewing, called stridulation. The hind leg has a row of spines on the surface that rub against the hardened forewing, causing sound and is frequently used by males seeking a mate, and each species has a distinct sound. Their attempts to attract a mate are a familiar noise on a warm summer day.



Special thanks to Julie Van Meter, State Entomologist, Nebraska Department of Agriculture. Visitor image by Chris Helzer. Bugguide.net is a good site for identification.

NASPTOURNAMENT AT LANCASTER EVENTS CENTER

It's Snow Time

Photos and text by Zach Cunningham

As winter loosens its icy grip on Nebraska's Rainwater Basin, so begins the journey of millions of geese on their northern migration, and with it, the start of what many waterfowl hunters have spent countless nights thinking about – snow goose season.

Each year, with the arrival of warm south winds, thin lines begin to appear on the horizon, the signal that lesser snow geese are starting their long migration back to their breeding grounds far into the Arctic.

Stirred, too, by the signs of an impending spring, goose hunters begin their preparations for the inevitable grind to come. With baited breath, they listen for high-pitched barks in the night, assemble their armada of decoys and watch for distant white tornados to appear in the skyline. Once it begins, there will be little rest for the weary. Late to bed, early to rise – the motto of the modern snow goose hunter.

The migration starts as a trickle, with small flocks of adult birds arriving well before ice-out. Within a month, birds will pour in by the millions, and not just snows. Hundreds of thousands of Canada's, Ross's, and white-fronted geese, ducks and sandhill cranes will soon be competing for valuable food resources to fuel their migration north. The geese come to the Rainwater Basin to rest on its many shallow wetlands, spending the day in search of kernels of corn and soybeans in the fields.



TOP: Kent Fricke, of Lincoln, scans the sky for birds during the last few minutes of shooting light.

BOTTOM: Snow geese leave a Rainwater Basin wetland to feed.





TOP LEFT: Part of a snow goose decoy spread can be seen in the reflection of C. J. Cowan's sunglasses as he watches for the next flock of geese to appear on the horizon.

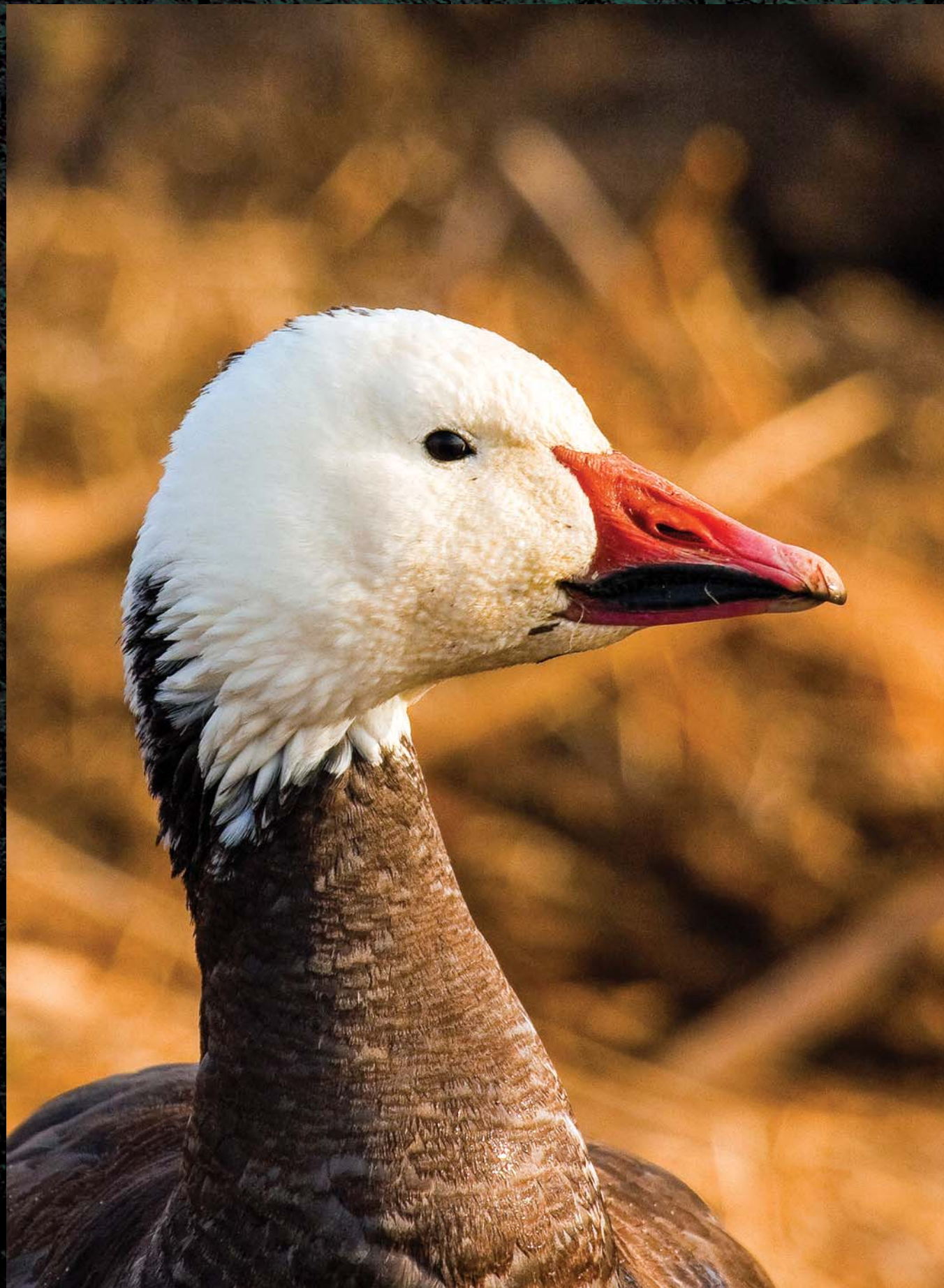
LEFT: Dustin Rose's black Lab, Three, retrieves a white-phase snow goose.

TOP RIGHT: Windssock decoys – like these being used to hide a pit blind in Fillmore County – are one of the many tools of the modern snow goose hunter.

For the snow goose hunter, the time is now – the moment you have been waiting for all year, when man, dog and fowl meet.

Persistent hunters can have luck on both dry land and water, but it is a tiring task. The days are long, full of mud, sunburned faces and, with any luck, bruised shoulders. Still, there is something special about snow goose season, a powerful and wild feeling that only the sight and sounds of millions of birds can convey.

And as quickly as it started, the birds will be gone, leaving behind only feathers, footprints and memories, leaving the snow goose hunter longing for next year. ■



OPPOSITE: A blue-phase snow goose in a Fillmore County wetland.

BELOW: Waterfowl calls adorn the lanyard of a goose hunter like ornaments on a Christmas tree.



Zach Cunningham is a wildlife biologist and award-winning photographer based in Lincoln. He has worked for University of Nebraska-Lincoln, Ducks Unlimited, the Nebraska Game and Parks Commission, and is currently a wildlife biologist for the Nebraska Department of Roads working with threatened and endangered species, migratory birds and other wildlife resources.

This is his first feature article in NEBRASKAland Magazine.



Getting Started

Snow geese can be hunted in a variety of ways. While my preferred method is over decoys, they can be jumped, pass-shot, or stalked using a cow silhouette – a method called “cow boarding.” For those interested in trying snow goose hunting this spring, here are a few tips to help you get started.

- As with most hunting, timing is everything. The peak of snow goose migration in Nebraska is typically around the first week of March. Those interested in hunting over decoys may want to consider hunting after this time, as juvenile birds tend to bring up the rear of the migration and are much easier to decoy than adults.

- Scouting is important for a successful hunt. Fortunately, snow geese are easy to spot. Look for birds using stock ponds or crop fields during the day. If you can, set your spread away from large roosts, as competing with thousands of live birds can be frustrating.

- When it comes to decoys, snow goose hunting is a numbers game. Spreads of 1,500 to 3,000 decoys are common. I consider 300 decoys to be a minimum, but use what your budget allows. Snow goose season is a great time to hunt with new people and teaming up is a quick way to compile a larger spread.

- Snow geese move around a lot, so having motion in your spread is key. I use a mix of windsock-style decoys and floaters. A windless day with lifeless decoys can ruin a hunt.

- With so many birds in a flock, it's important to hide well. Wear full camo if hunting from layout blinds, or dress in white Tyvek painter's suits if sitting amongst the decoys.

- Because of their vertical nature, long shots at snows are common. I use a 12 gauge with 3-inch, No. 2, non-toxic shot with a modified or full choke.

- Electronic calls are allowed during the Light Goose Conservation Order – use them. You can build your own e-caller out of an inexpensive mp3 player, motorcycle amplifier, 12-volt battery and P.A. speaker. Veteran snow goose hunters will run multiple e-callers, each playing a different recording. Mouth calls work great on singles and pairs.

- Don't have access to decoys? Try getting underneath a flight path and pass shooting birds on a windy day. It can make for some challenging but rewarding shooting.



Reflections: Home Décor for the Hook and Bullet Set

By Don Gabelhouse

There was a time, I believe, that most anglers and hunters were allowed to decorate only one small room in the house. This room was usually in the basement and was out of sight and off limits to civilized guests because of its tasteless contents and its frequent state of squalor. The room would often project a force field that repelled those generally intent on dusting.

Times have changed. Although dead animal parts are still usually relegated to the basement, at least some fishing- and hunting-related items are now considered tasteful and appropriate to adorn upstairs rooms. I suggest this ascent to main floor status began after antique fishing and hunting memorabilia began to appear on the pages of home-decorating magazines, written and read by people who had never cast a line or fired a shot. Items that reflected our nation's rich fishing and hunting heritage suddenly were in.

So there has been a growing market in fishing and hunting paraphernalia made expressly for in-home decorative use. We now can

give an entire home the look of a lodge or decorate any room in fishing or hunting motifs. You might purchase a fishing-reel toilet paper holder, a camo stool lid-cover, antler chandeliers, and even the stuffed heads of moose and bear. The possibilities are almost endless.

Fakes made in Taiwan may pass for fashionable, but authentic fishing and hunting collectibles provide much more than a "good look." My sunroom is crammed with items that celebrate a bygone era of fishing and hunting. Collectively, they soothe my soul, and individually, many of them have stories to tell that rekindle past pleasant memories of people, places and events.

I officially became a collector in high school. For speech class, I gave a presentation on duck decoys. I "borrowed" for my prop a decoy my

grandparents used as a doorstop. Later, I discovered the decoy was a Mason Detroit Grade Canvasback hen. It now sits in the sunroom on a shelf constructed expressly for decoys, and has plenty of company. Every time I look at that decoy I see my late grandparents sitting in their kitchen.

The best of my decoy flock has been given to me by my wife, Diane. The Mason Painted-eye Blue-winged Teal hen she gave me in 1995 was the best Christmas present I ever received (at least until my brother-in-law gave me a new 9.9 hp, four-stroke kicker motor for my boat). More recently, a Mason Premier Grade Seneca Lake Canvasback drake proved that Diane's antiquing trips with her twin sister should not just be tolerated, they should be heartily supported.

Once duck decoy prices started skyrocketing, my collecting transitioned to antique fishing lures. Several hundred now reside in my sunroom, most in two large display cases built by my son. The majority of these came from my mother-in-law. For over two decades, Marye Francis combed the garage sales of northern Illinois looking for lures that she would give to me as Christmas and birthday presents. God, I miss that woman.

After she died, my wife's brother assumed the tradition, and I still occasionally get a lure from family members. For the past several years, I have refrained from buying lures for myself. This is a necessary part of my recovery.

Collectors can become crazed and lose all sense of when enough is enough.

For several years, on-line auctions fed my insane desire to possess the most beautiful fishing lures ever made. Prior to putting rubber Hula skirts on their lures, the Fred Arbogast Company attached metal tails to

lures cast in lead to resemble minnows, sunfish, northern pike, muskie and walleye. My collection of these intricately detailed and gorgeously painted Tin Liz lures is displayed in the sunroom on a shrine built by my brother. Though my collection is incomplete, I have come to my senses and am no longer driven to obtain the muskie and walleye models.

I am, however, unable to kick my Tin Liz lure-buying habit cold turkey, for during withdrawals I did purchase four more lures. I decided I needed (that addiction thing again) to have a few of the original wooden floating Heddon Punkinseeds with the line tie above the lip (this, before Homer Circle suggested that the lure's action would be improved by putting the line tie in the mouth). I also decided that I would stop buying Punkinseeds once I had obtained the 740s in just four colors: sunfish, bluegill, rock bass and crappie. I haven't purchased another Punkinseed or any other lure since I got the last of the four, so I may be cured.

Diane says that three or more similar items constitute a collection. I guess I therefore also have fishing reel, fish decoy, miniature outboard motor, arrowhead and woodpecker toothpick dispenser collections in my sunroom. I enjoy them all, but my collections don't necessarily provide me more enjoyment than items present in ones and twos. In fact, some of the accents in my sunroom provide as much pleasure as the collections.

My favorite books reside in an oak roll-side buffet that supports the TV. A few years ago, I got copies of two books that I used to check out repeatedly from the neighborhood public library 40 years ago. I was fascinated with fish at an early age and read Billy Bass and Bobby Bluegill over and over again. A fishery biologist was the hero in Bobby Bluegill and this portrayal apparently

contributed to career decisions I had made while already in grade school.

Close contact with fish at an early age also had a lot to do with my occupational choice. Most of these contacts occurred at the family cabin on Stalker Lake in Otter Tail County, Minnesota. The three-gallon Red Wing crock water cooler, used before the cabin had running water, sits today in the corner of my sunroom. It was actually given to my wife (not me) by my parents.

Diane is a special person and it should be obvious that she condones decorating with fishing and hunting collectibles. She does, however, have her limits. She reads those decorating magazines and periodically exerts authority as the Style Police. Two bare-chested mermaid bobbers are not displayed in the sunroom, but rather sleep in a box tucked away on a corner shelf.

My attempt to buy a lighted beer sign with running water and a cartoon forest-dwelling animal did not work with Diane either. It didn't take long for her to find a substitute to occupy the intended space in the sunroom where two lighted pictures now hang, the pictures rotated seasonally – one a scene that reminds me of the Otter Tail River, and the other, a frozen lake with snow-covered banks and birch trees. I guess they will do.

There also is no way dead animal parts will ever hang in the sunroom. I am fine with it, even though I know a moose head would go nicely above the entrance. I was surprised, though, at Diane's reaction when a

replica of a 20½-inch smallmouth bass showed up at our house.

The replica was given by my brother as a Christmas present to commemorate a fish I caught and released on the Otter Tail River. Diane couldn't understand why I would want a phony fish in the sunroom. We were able to strike a compromise by putting the smallmouth in the corner. I can see it from my recliner, but it's obscured from view elsewhere in the room.

I never tire of spending time with my treasures. I especially enjoy them after a long trip away from home. They may be old, but they never get old to me. I occasionally flip the switch on one of my miniature outboards, just to hear it purr. Pushing the spigot on the Red Wing water cooler brings back decades of memories at the cabin. If special guests are to visit, I have an excuse to yet again handle my decoys and the lures not in cases. Wiping the dust away gives opportunity to once again marvel at the graceful lines and patina of a Mason decoy and the detailed scales cast into a brilliant orange Tin Liz sunfish.

Quality craftsmanship just never goes out of style and, in fact, its appeal increases as I age.

Don Gabelhouse is the Administrator of the Fisheries Division at the Commission. This article originally appeared in In-Fisherman Magazine.



Destination: Nebraska

Planning Your Next Adventure

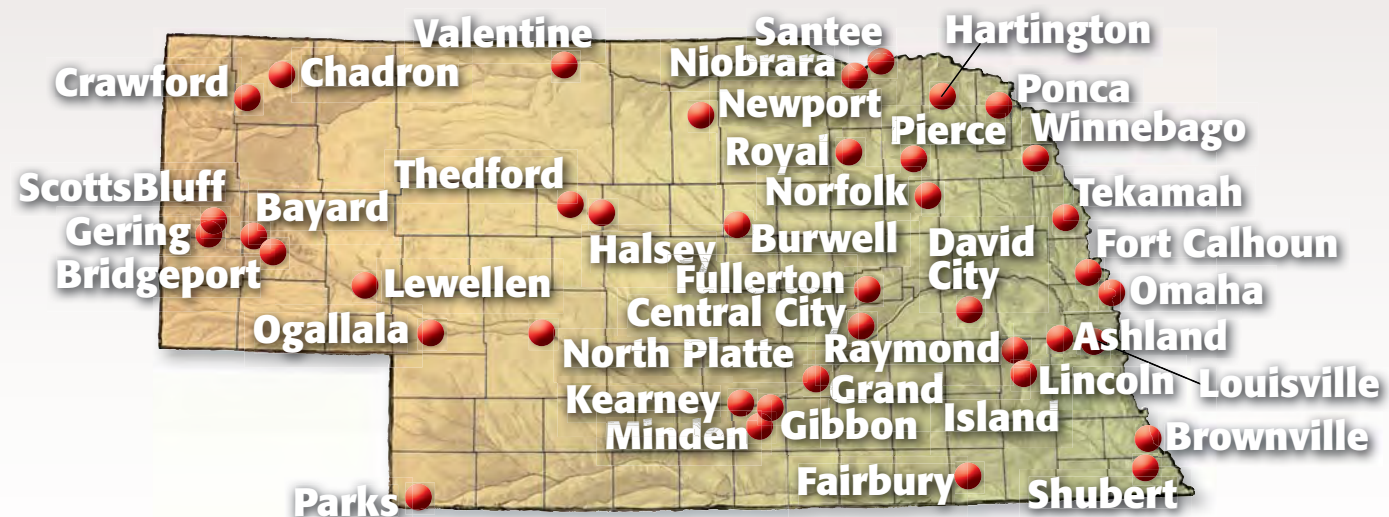
By NEBRASKAland Staff

Will winter ever end?" will be asked by more than one Nebraskan this month, as brief glimpses of spring are inevitably shrouded by white snow. But with spring break right around the corner and the dog days in the not-so-far distant future, getting a jump start on your vacation planning, as well as a little last-minute ice fishing, is how you should be spending your March.

We've taken the guesswork out of some of that planning with our annual list of where you should be visiting and what you should be doing once you're there. Whether you're solo or with your entire family, there's a spot in the state for all of us, from everyday historians to weekend warriors.

Start with this list and then add to your own memories.

Opposite: Fort Falls, one of more than 200 waterfalls in the Niobrara River Valley, is easily accessible by foot, canoe and tube for those visiting the Fort Niobrara National Wildlife Refuge near Valentine.



WILDLIFE VIEWING

- Hutton Niobrara Ranch Wildlife Sanctuary, Newport
- Nebraska National Forest, Halsey
- Rowe Sanctuary, Gibbon
- Switzer Ranch and Nature Reserve, Burwell
- Valentine National Wildlife Refuge, Valentine

HISTORIC

- Ashfall Fossil Beds State Historical Park (SHP), Royal
- Buffalo Bill Ranch SHP, North Platte
- Fort Atkinson SHP, Fort Calhoun
- Pioneer Village, Minden
- Morrill Hall, Lincoln
- Museum of the Fur Trade, Chadron

PHOTO BY ERIC FOWLER

POWWOWS

- Fort Omaha Intertribal Powwow, June 13-15, Omaha
- Fort Robinson Intertribal Powwow, June 13-15, Crawford
- Santee Sioux Tribe Powwow, June 20-22, Santee
- Winnebago Veteran's Powwow, July 23-25, Winnebago
- Ponca Tribe of Nebraska Powwow, August 8-10, Niobrara

RIVER TRIPS

- Cedar River at Fullerton
- Elkhorn River at Elkhorn Crossing, Omaha
- Middle Loup River at Thedford
- Missouri National Recreational River at Niobrara State Park (SP), Niobrara
- Niobrara National Scenic River at Smith Falls SP, Valentine



PHOTO BY ERIC FOWLER



PHOTO BY ERIC FOWLER

RODEOS

- Buffalo Bill Rodeo, June 18-21, North Platte
- Days of '56, June 27-28, Ponca
- Camp Clarke Stampede, July 4-5, Bridgeport
- Nebraska's Big Rodeo, July 23-26, Burwell

LEFT: Dancers wear full regalia at the annual Intertribal Gathering and Powwow at Fort Robinson State Park near Crawford each June.

TOP: Several outfitters offer tubing, tanking and other paddle trips down the Elkhorn River in the Omaha area, putting the chance to cool off and relax on a summer day within an hour's drive of half of the state's residents.

RIGHT: Chimney Rock near Bayard serves as a prominent landmark for travelers today, just as it did for westward pioneers of the 19th century. Operated by the Nebraska State Historical Society, the site's visitor center offers travelers a hands-on opportunity to "pack their wagon" each summer.



PHOTO BY JUSTIN HAAG

BEACHES

- Calamus Reservoir State Recreation Area (SRA), Burwell
- Lake McConaughy SRA, Ogallala
- Merritt Reservoir, Valentine
- Mormon Island SRA, Grand Island
- Willow Creek SRA, Pierce

OUTDOOR EDUCATION

- E.T. Mahoney SP, Ashland
- Henry Doorly Zoo, Omaha
- Pioneers Park, Lincoln
- Ponca SP, Ponca
- Wildcat Hills SRA, Gering

PHOTOGRAPHY

- Chimney Rock, Bayard
- Fort Niobrara National Wildlife Refuge, Valentine
- Henry Doorly Zoo, Omaha
- Indian Cave SP, Shubert
- Toadstool Geologic Park, Crawford

VINEYARDS

- Big Cottonwood Vineyards, Tekamah
- James Arthur Vineyards, Raymond
- Nissen Winery, Hartington
- Prairie Creek, Central City
- Sage Hill Vineyard and Winery, Parks

UNIQUE LODGING

- Fort Robinson SP Officer's Quarters, Chadron
- Lord's Ranch Resort, Valentine
- Platte River SP Teepee Village, Louisville
- Spirit of Brownville Riverboat, Brownville
- Two Rivers SRA Cabooses, Louisville

 Make a reservation at a Nebraska State Park.



PHOTO BY ERIC FOWLER

ABOVE: Rico Ellis of Texas found a cool place to play his guitar while spending the day at the swim beach at Mormon Island State Recreation Area near Grand Island.

LEFT: Chris Masada and son Daniel admire the “Fragment of Metal” dome at Lincoln’s Sunken Gardens.

RIGHT: Joslyn Art Museum, located in downtown Omaha, features permanent and temporary exhibits, a list of which can be found at Joslyn.org. The museum is open every day except Monday and major holidays, and admission is free.



PHOTO BY CHRIS MASADA



PHOTO BY JEFF KURRUS

EVENTS

- Free Park and Fish Day, May 17, Statewide
- Rock Creek Trail Days, June 7-8, Rock Creek Station SHP, Fairbury
- Nebraska Star Party, July 27-August 2, Valentine
- Nebraska State Fair, August 22-September 1, Grand Island
- Ogallala Indian Summer Rendevous, Ogallala, September 11-13

ART

- Bone Creek Museum of Agrarian Art, David City
- Great Plains Art Museum, Lincoln
- Joslyn Art Museum, Omaha
- Norfolk Arts Center, Norfolk
- Woodland Trails Art and Learning Center, Winnebago

GARDENS

- D. A. Murphy Panhandle Arboretum, Scottsbluff
- Gilman Park Arboretum, Pierce
- Lauritzen Gardens, Omaha
- Sunken Garden/Hamann Rose Garden, Lincoln
- UNL Botanical Garden and Arboretum, Lincoln

MUSIC

- Nebraska Wine & Jazz Festival, May 9-10, Kearney
- Jazz in June, Tuesdays in June, Lincoln
- Zoofest Music Festival, July 11-12, Lincoln
- MAHA Music Festival, August 16, Omaha
- Blue Water Blues Festival, July 18-19, Lewellen ■

 View a complete list of Nebraska vacation destinations.



PHOTO BY ERIC FOWLER

ABOVE: A hike through the badlands of Toadstool Geologic Park in the Oglala National Grassland north of Crawford is a must when visiting northwestern Nebraska.

A Year at the Rodeo

Photos and text by Mark Harris



LEFT: At the Buffalo County Fair's "Bull Riding Chute Out," rodeo announcer, Randy Taylor, questions a toad while its puzzled captor assesses the moment.

RIGHT: A daring youngster tumbles hard at the Cheyenne County Fair's "Mutton Bustin'" event, the first "competitive" ride for future rodeo cowboys and cowgirls.



Rodeo atmosphere in small-town Nebraska is electric. Population is no gauge of greatness. Bladen, Clearwater and Callaway, with less than 1,000 residents between them, come to mind. Early birds in these towns get the best seats as lawn chairs unfold in pickup beds backed up to the arena. Eager crowds mingle while those who rope, wrestle and race wait on horseback in nervous bunches.

Fractions of seconds matter in timed events and champions are made from countless years, or even decades, of practicing quick, subtle motions. Hyper horses seem to have been shot out of catapults as they target calves, steers or barrels. Rider and horse anticipate each

other in fluid, beautiful motion. These horses are finely specialized for their sport; they are bred to sprint, and this they love to do.

Bucking bulls show no love. They are bred to be furious, muscular freaks of nature. Those who ride them are aberrations as well. Launched 10 feet into the air by one determined bull, Jordan McAllister of Gering proves that. Driven by pure instinct, he staggered to the fence, but something was wrong – his whole body shook uncontrollably. "It took me seven months to get back on a bull after I broke my neck," says McAllister. This statement reveals the gaping abyss between bull riders and everyone else on the planet.



Ten feet off the ground, a spiraling cowboy will land hard and then sprint from the athletic bull that threw him. As opposed to broncs, bulls want revenge.

TOP LEFT: Heath Zuellner, bull rider from Cozad, mentally prepares for the havoc his bull will bring at the Eddyville rodeo. To Heath and all bull riders, intense adrenaline highs warrant extreme risks.

LEFT: Steer roper Brian Garr of Belle Fourche, South Dakota, targets a 600-pound horned animal, which he will single-handedly rope and tie down at Stapleton's annual "Beauty and the Beast" rodeo.

BOTTOM LEFT: Trevor Reiste of Panora, Iowa, warms up for bull riding at Geneva.

Heath Zuellner of Cozad lost three teeth to a bull's rock-hard head. Unconscious for four hours, he knew immediately where he was when he awoke – he recognized the X-ray machine from the previous year's wreck. The evidence doesn't vary in conversations with young men like Zuellner. "It's an adrenaline rush you can't experience anywhere else," Zuellner explains. "I need that fix when I haven't been riding for a while."

High achievers addicted to the rush: that sums up everyone in rodeo.

Colten Blanchard from Sulphur, Louisiana, is a bareback rider attending Chadron State College. He plans to join the national circuit, but one wrong move could end that dream. Broken ribs, a punctured lung, a cracked skull and a shattered eye socket haven't stopped him yet. "It's about accomplishment," says Blanchard.

As opposed to bulls, bucking horses don't hold grudges. Anxiety replaces fury. Though still injury-prone, those who ride these broncs, whether they choose to ride bareback or saddle up, don't face

the threat of attack by the animal that threw them. Madly averse to being mounted, broncs heave desperately to purge their human parasite, huffing and grunting with nostrils wide and untrimmed manes flowing like tassel.

The buzzer sounds and two pickup men race in to rescue riders. Their horses need little guidance. Bluntly converse personalities thunder by – two well-groomed animals calmly flank a dusty, disorderly maniac of the same species.

Stark contrast also exists on opposing sides of the fence: relaxed socialization and pleasant smiles on one side, ferocity, dust and danger on the other. In the midst of it all remains our Nebraska cowboy heritage. ■



LEFT: Kandis Hughes of Harrison turns her spirited horse during Fort Robinson State Park's rodeo warm-up period. A lifetime of riding creates beautiful, fluid motion between horse and rider.

TOP RIGHT: Colten Blanchard of Sulphur, Louisiana, rides a bay mare to a second place finish at the Eddyville rodeo. A determined bucking horse is crucial for a winning score.

BOTTOM RIGHT: Bull riders hold hats over hearts for the singing of the national anthem in Broken Bow.



Mark Harris is the Associate Director of the University of Nebraska State Museum. Mark has been photographing since 1992. This is his first photo essay in *NEBRASKAland Magazine*.



See Mark's favorite rodeo photos.

A Mule Deer for “G”

Text and photos by Justin Haag

A Wisconsin hunter overcomes great obstacles to bag a mule deer in northwestern Nebraska.

Hunting isn’t always easy. Countless words in print, an immeasurable amount of television time and billions of dollars of products have been sold to get a big buck deer within the sights and shooting distance of a hunter’s chosen weaponry.

However, some challenges are greater than others and can’t be overcome with the right camouflage or scent control. Garrett Williamson, a 21-year-old hunter from western Wisconsin who traveled to northwestern Nebraska’s Pine Ridge for a hunt in November, has overcome

a special set of obstacles that would keep many hunters out of the field.

What makes Williamson’s experiences in the field extraordinary is that he pursues game while battling Duchenne muscular dystrophy, a malady that eats away at the muscles and makes physical tasks progressively difficult. Along with ever decreasing strength, numerous broken bones have been part of Garrett’s struggle since he was diagnosed with the disease at age 5.

Despite the formidable challenges, Garrett has become an avid hunter, strongly encouraged and assisted by his father Dave every step of the way.



Garrett Williamson tries out the shooting house that was made for his mule deer hunt.



The hunting party relaxes in the Bentley cabin. Clockwise, from left, Bob Bentley, Garrett Williamson, Steve Williamson, John Clarke and Dave Williamson.

At age 12, Garrett became interested in the sport, which has long been a family pastime. On Garrett’s first hunt, he shot a black bear and a white-tailed deer. Since then, Garrett’s not only been hooked, but has had incredible success afield. He has shot a pronghorn in Wyoming, along with numerous whitetails and turkeys near his home. He’s even bagged a buck deer with a crossbow.

With those animals in the bag, he developed an itch to expand his deer hunting experience to the big mule deer of the West. In order to make it

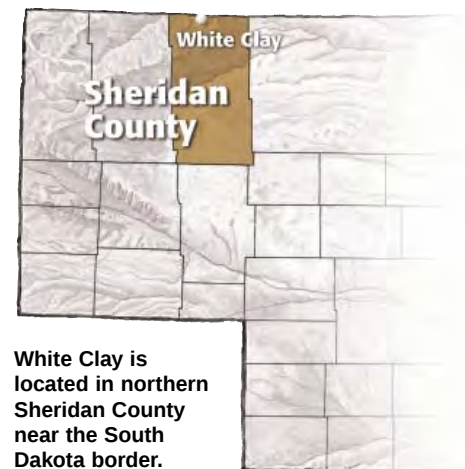
happen, though, he’d have to travel far from Wisconsin whitetail country to get one and would have to make some connections.

A Mule Deer Destination

This is where Garrett’s uncle, Steve Williamson of Omaha, entered the story. After Uncle Steve, also an avid outdoorsman, learned that mule deer had earned a place on Garrett’s bucket list, he contacted the Nebraska Game and Parks Commission’s Omaha office,

a stone’s throw from the Henry Doorly Zoo, where Steve works as a security guard. With help from Commission staff in Omaha and Alliance, the Williamsons were put in contact with Bob Bentley, a Floridian who has outstanding hunting land in northern Sheridan County – an area known for its mule deer population. Bentley, who recently retired after a successful career in the family citrus business, has hosted youth hunts on his property and has invited many locals to come fill their elk tags on his land.

Bentley, who splits time between



White Clay is located in northern Sheridan County near the South Dakota border.



Garrett Williamson wheels down the ramp of the shooting house with help from his father, Dave.

Sheridan County and Winter Haven, Florida, and his partners have put extensive work into wildlife management on their properties just south of Whiteclay near the South Dakota border. His passion is improving the quality of the area deer population, and he has been at it since he bought the land in the 1990s.

The LK Ranch has more than 4,000 acres with a variety of features to supplement the area wildlife's nutritional resources. From the many shooting blinds on the property, Bentley and his guests let many sizable bucks walk that most hunters would harvest in a heartbeat. Numerous trail cameras, some linked to the Internet, help Bentley monitor the property throughout.

Bentley said he didn't hesitate when Nordeen contacted him about the aspirations of the young Wisconsin hunter. He said he's been blessed with a great family and good health, and considered Garrett's hunt a great opportunity to give something "in return."

So, after months of planning, Dave and Garrett loaded up the truck and trailer, picked up Uncle Steve in Omaha and made the journey to Sheridan County.

The First-class Hunt

They arrived Sunday to find Bentley's picturesque modern log cabin in the pines. Its beautiful log woodwork inside and out, taxidermy on the walls, a big deck overlooking the pines and décor accented in deer and elk antlers would be the envy of any hunter. Not only did Bentley give the Williamsons a place to hunt, but also a place to sleep, food to eat, and had a custom mobile shooting shack constructed for the young hunter. The shack, built by a local craftsman, features a log cabin theme and an innovative folding wheelchair ramp. A wooden sign on the door designates the building as "Garrett's Hunting Shack."

Bentley also arranged for his friend and fellow Floridian, John Clarke, to join the group. Clarke volunteered to cook, scout and do whatever else the group needed.

Garrett and his guides rose well before sunrise Monday morning, highly anticipating the hunt for which the young man had been dreaming. The group parted ways in two trucks hoping to find a quality buck for which Garrett could get within shooting range.

Clarke spotted a number of fine mule deer at sunrise in a field near a

stock dam on land owned by Roger Donley – one of Bentley's partners. Later that morning, the hunters pulled the shack to the property and left the site for lunch. They would get rested up for the increased deer activity of late afternoon.

The plan changed, however, as the hunters were driving to the lodge. Before getting back to the main road, something caught their attention outside the driver's side windows. There among the burned ponderosa pines of Donley's place stood a big 4-by-3 buck with long, dark antler tines.

The two trucks carrying the group of six drove out of the buck's sight, where the group quickly devised a plan. Unfortunately, the custom-made rifle support that affixes to Garrett's wheelchair had been left in the shooting shack, prompting the use of the special permit Garrett had obtained from the Commission to shoot from a vehicle.

Dave placed his son in his arms and carried him from his truck to Bentley's. Father and son got situated in the back seat of Bentley's truck – Garrett on his dad's lap – and left the driving to the Floridians.

Thankfully for the young hunter, the buck – just a little more than 100 yards away – had lay down, easing the process of setting up the shot. He and his father whispered back and forth in a special vernacular they've developed over time, as Garrett worked through his first experience shooting from a vehicle: "Up. Down. Too high. Too low. Safety on. Safety off."

Once finally ready, he pulled the trigger on his Ruger .270. But ... *Click*.

With "safety first" in mind, the weapon had been handed to Garrett without a round in the chamber. The hunters quickly loaded a round and went through the entire process again.

The rifle was loaded and ready, but when it came time to fire again Garrett faced another tough bout with his old adversary – the muscular dystrophy had made the task of pulling the trigger too difficult this time around.

The fight was on. With his dad helping support the rifle out the back window, Garrett brought his other index finger to the fight. After getting

the rifle moved to where it needed to be, Garrett squeezed the trigger with both fingers, delivering the clean shot for which he had been hoping.

Success. Garrett had fulfilled another dream.

Shortly after the shot, Garrett was escorted by his dad and uncle to get a close look at his new trophy. High fives and handshakes were shared, pictures were taken, and tears of joy were shed in honor of a young hunter earning a trophy and an experience that he, and his hunting partners, will not soon forget.

"This is one tough dude," Bentley said. "What he did today took incredible skill and courage."

Bentley said being a part of Garrett's experience ranks up there with the best hunts he's had, in the United States or abroad. Even though the shooting shack didn't get used, Bentley said it will stay on the property and serve as a lasting tribute to Garrett's hunt.

The Hunt Goes On

The Williamsons left northwestern Nebraska with another great memory

to share, and more to be made. Before leaving for their mule deer hunt, Dave and Garrett had set out blinds so they would be ready to pursue those Wisconsin whitetails upon their return.

As for the fight against muscular dystrophy? The Williamsons take it one day at a time.

"I get to hug my son a lot every day. I like being able to do that," Dave told Bentley, reflecting the positive attitude that has gotten them through so many challenges.

And, Garrett quickly replied with a smile, "I like it, too." ■



From left, Bob Bentley, Dave Williamson, Garrett Williamson, John Clarke and Steve Williamson with Garrett's mule deer buck.

THE LIFE OF a photographer's child

By NEBRASKAland Writers/Photographers

At NEBRASKAland, we all see each others' children grow up through photographs. What we don't always witness, however, are the constant struggles between parent and child when a camera is involved – and the humorous tales that emerge from these moments.

My son Blake has appeared on all kinds of media since he was 4 years old – from catalogs to product boxes, even the cover of this magazine.

Last winter when he was 11 years old, he came to my wife and I and asked if he could get a laptop. We told him he had to save his own money to pay for it.

A few weeks later I had a phone conversation with another photographer who shoots for major outdoor catalogs and other snowboarding/climbing companies. I complained about difficulties with getting friends to pose for some hunting product shots. He told me I should just pay some models.

We discussed basic modeling fees, and that he may include a percentage of his earnings if they model for a shot that lands on a cover or becomes a big advertisement. Blake overheard the conversation and brought up the computer topic again. When we gave him the same answer of, "You have to save your money," he angrily retorted, "Hey, Dad! What about all the back pay you owe me for my modeling fees?"

Blake now has a really nice computer.

Doug Steinke, Freelance Writer/Photographer

New laptop owner Blake Steinke appeared on the cover of the January-February 2008 issue of NEBRASKAland Magazine. His father Doug has used him as a model since he was four years old.

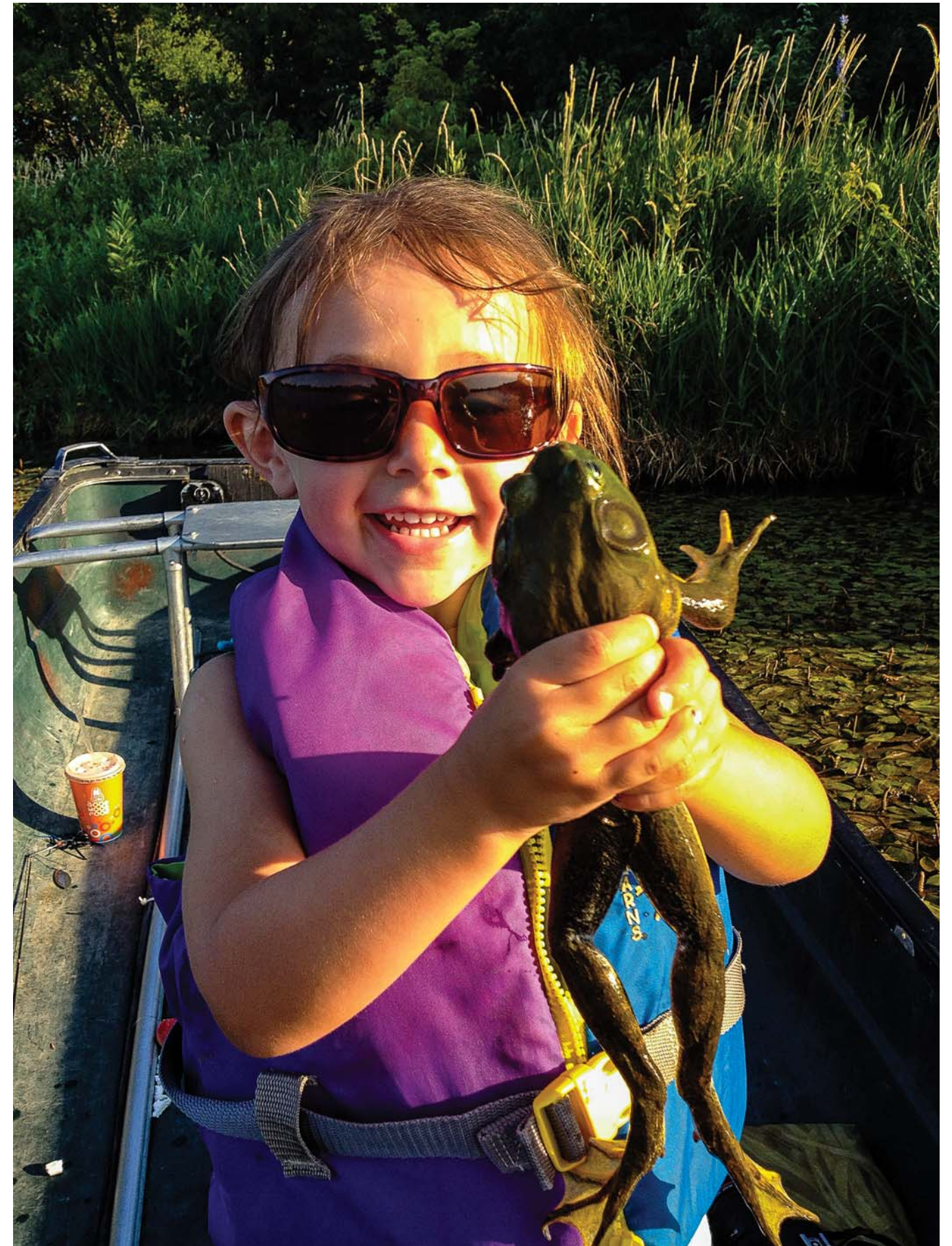
My days of fishing have been temporarily put on hold as my 5-year old daughter Madeline would rather catch toads than bass while her 1-year old brother Eli accompanies us on our afternoon walks – with me always having a camera in hand. Because Madeline will have it no other way.

"Daddy, the shadows are really long," she now tells me. "You need to be taking pictures." So I do, as she stands nearby and makes sure her brother's stroller doesn't roll away while I look for the perfect angle near sunset. And they're both patient, knowing that this is just the way life is, unless I ask to photograph them.

Because photographing them is a hit-and-miss proposition. Sometimes it's all smiles, while other times the last direction they're going to look is toward my camera.

I have demanded, threatened and eventually bribed on more than one occasion, only recently learning the best tactic at my disposal. Make sure they're doing something in nature that truly makes them happy, and the photo shoot becomes effortless.

Jeff Kurrus, Editor



Madeline Kurrus holds up a bullfrog while fishing with her dad, NEBRASKAland editor Jeff Kurrus.



Wife Kathy Sartore tends to crying son Spencer after he skinned his knee in a bike crash.

Poor souls all, Cole, Ellen and Spencer. My three kids have been photographed being born, sleeping, breast feeding, learning to walk, teething, swimming, wearing a homemade rabbit costume, eating like pigs, fighting, being punished, bored stiff, spinning, laughing, crying, freezing, sweating, dancing with a giant dog, pouting, kissing a frog, being sick and injured, singing into a fan and coming out of anesthesia. They've also served as human props in a wide variety of settings, from remote landscapes in Africa to our family Christmas cards.

Now and then I get the feeling they actually hate having their picture taken, mainly because they tell me so.

Joel Sartore,
Freelance Writer/Photographer



My family is accustomed to me having my camera everywhere we go.

Our older son Dillon, of Lincoln, is 27 years old and is a photographer's dream. When he comes home to hunt or fish he's always willing to smile and pose or put up with re-dos if I don't get a shot right the first time.

Dillon also has a 3-year old son, Gabe, who is a camera ham and always ready to get his picture taken saying "cheese" while sporting a big smile, unless he's sticking his tongue out at the camera. We also have two granddaughters that live in the same town as us, which makes them my go-to girls. Lexus is six and loves the camera like a runway model, making it sometimes impossible to get a natural looking pose from her. But she's also a great helper and loves to be outside with grandma. She holds equipment, turtles, birds or fishing rods, helps me shine a light on an object or becomes a subject in a photo when needed. Meanwhile, Paislee is three and a bit camera shy, but loves going someplace new. Running through campgrounds, playing on the beach or in the water is her specialty. She is great to photograph when I simply let her be a 3-year old.

Julie Geiser, Regional Editor



Granddaughter Paislee Erickson poses for a portrait at the family fishing night event at North Platte's Birdwood Lake last June.



These red fox pups were part of a set photographed by Haag, thanks to his son Sawyer and daughter Kiera (shown opposite ice fishing) who spotted them.

My two kids join me on a variety of photo assignments and are usually excited for an adventure. My son Sawyer, 11, and daughter Kiera, 7, are getting good at spotting wildlife. Thanks to their eyes, I captured a great set of red fox pup images that otherwise would have gone unnoticed. Thankfully, they have yet to complain about waiting in the vehicle while Dad is out pursuing whatever subject caught his eye.

Sawyer has adopted some of my old photography equipment and is developing an eye for a good shot. He has started differentiating good light from bad, and has gained

enough understanding of shutter speed to make some neat ghost-like self-portraits using the camera's timer.

They've also become helpful assistants with an extra set of hands when I need them. While on a late summer shoot of a fish-moving project at Chadron State Park, Sawyer served as my caddy. He carried one camera body with a 70-200 mm lens while I shot wide angle with another. As I was wading through the mud and muck to capture images of the park employees and college students who were rounding up fish with a seine, I looked to the bank to see Sawyer fully engaged in photographing still life objects.

As we were leaving the park, Sawyer soon began lobbying for the fruits of his labor: "Dad, you have to take a look at that leaf photo I just shot. It would make a great cover for the magazine."

Looks like I have competition.

Justin Haag, Regional Editor

On days when I work from the office, I leave my one-year-old, Norden, at home. But as soon as I hit the road, my young boy is along for the ride, shaking hands and making friends with everyone we meet along the way.

Though a natural model, with brown eyes and tufts of wavy hair, I am still surprised when he garners the attention of others, no matter the scene or situation. He's not one to turn down a photo opportunity, even if it isn't mine, compelling me to comply when asked, "Can I take a photo of your dog?"

Amy Kucera, Associate Editor



Norden, a Great Pyrenees/Ovtcharka mix, in the field with "mom."

Fellow photographers, do you ever find yourself in the field without enough hands to deal simultaneously with your camera, tripod, diffuser and other accoutrements? Have you ever been in a beautiful place but needed something in the foreground to make the photo work? When trying to photograph an insect or other small creature, wouldn't it be nice to have someone there to help keep it corralled for you?

What you need is a kid!

Kids can carry your equipment for you, block the wind to keep a flower from moving too much or hold your diffuser to soften the light on the bee feeding on the flower – sometimes all at the same time! Kids can also be incorporated into the composition of a scene that is otherwise lacking. If you plan ahead and dress your kid appropriately (I recommend a red shirt or sweatshirt) they can stand, walk, or run around in the foreground of a photograph and turn a so-so image into one that magazine editors might actually pay you for. Kids can also find something to photograph (turtles, frogs, snakes, grasshoppers, spiders, etc.) and even hold it while you shoot the photo. Or, if you prefer, you can have the kid use their hands or a stick to keep small creatures from walking or hopping away while you take a photo that looks like you just happened upon the creature while hiking a remote trail.

Yep, kids are great. Sure, they sometimes complain about the weight of your camera bag, or try to wander away in the middle of a shot, but you can find little tricks to overcome these minor inconveniences. I have found, for example, that promising to buy the kid a popsicle on the way home is a great way to hold their attention for an extra few minutes.

Sometimes I even buy them one.

*Chris Helzer,
Freelance Writer/Photographer*



Daniel Helzer holds up a moth he captured at a prairie south of Aurora.

I am the son of a professional portrait photographer, so I know what it's like to be in front of the camera. But my childhood came before the digital revolution, and while dad took plenty of photos of me, both posed and candid, film wasn't cheap, so the moments had to be extra special for him to trip the shutter.

My son, Mace, on the other hand, was born about the time the revolution was really taking off. My first digital point-and-shoot came a few months after he did. Had I been smart, the cash I spent on the 10 or 20 rolls of film I burned through in that time would've paid for the camera. He was about 6 months old when I bought my first Digital-SLR.

I can't tell you exactly how many thousand photos I have of Mace, but I think it's safe to say, even without digging through dad's old photo albums, slide trays and the shoe boxes of images that didn't make it into either, that there have been days when I took more photos of Mace than dad took of me in an entire year.

Even in special moments, dad

probably said smile, pushed the button once or twice, and we moved on with our lives. Not me. I keep pushing the button, a condition likely brought on by my background in news and sports photography, where you know that the more you shoot, the better your odds are of ending up with a keeper.

At times, it drives Mace absolutely nuts. I rarely go anywhere without a camera, be it my SLR or my point-and-shoot. Sometimes I have to fall back on the almost worthless 1.4 megapixel camera in my dumbphone. And when the light or the circumstance is right, I can't help myself: I start snapping. Days in the goose blind or on the lake, hikes, camping trips, summer vacations, on the front porch on the first day of school, birthdays, holidays, ball games, missing teeth, haircuts that followed self-haircuts, major boo-boos, and more trains than I can count. Even his interests now are all etched in pixels. If video games were something we could visit, I'd be filling hard drives with those images. But soon, there will be images of the first deer, pheasant or goose to capture.

Mostly, these photos are documentary, and I take what I get, as it happens. Occasionally – Mace will probably tell you it's much more often than that – I'll pose a photo. It's a job he is becoming more willing to accept. In either case, there are times when I want to get it perfect, and Mace becomes my supermodel.

"Look over here."

"Stand there."

"Walk this way."

"Do it again."

But there are times when all I can get is a goofy face, and others when I get the look that says: "Dad, will you stop!" and I just have to accept the fact that it ain't going to happen. I've wondered if a Hollywood photographer, working with an uncooperative self-entitled prima donna who was forced by an agent to do a photo shoot, feels the way I do at times like these.

Oh well. My job pays better than that photographer: the memories I have filling hard drives are priceless.

Eric Fowler, Regional Editor



Fowler has countless photos of his son, Mace, climbing or riding on or playing with an assortment of trains, his hobby for the first 7 or so of his 10 years. This photo was taken in Lincoln's Haymarket prior to extensive redevelopment of the area.

Remembering Ron Stave

Nebraska Game and Parks Commissioner Passes.

By Jerry Kane

Ron Stave, a member of the Nebraska Game and Parks Board of Commissioners since 2007, passed away November 28, 2013. He was 69.

Stave was an avid outdoorsman with a passion for hunting and fishing. As a member of the nine-person board, he represented District II, which encompasses Douglas County.

Following his appointment by Governor Dave Heineman, Stave served on the board since January 16, 2007. He began his second term in 2012, a year in which he held the position of board chairman.

"Ron was an advocate for Nebraska's outdoors and he will be greatly missed by Game and Parks staff and the other commissioners," Director Jim Douglas said. On the board, Stave was highly involved in, among other things, the restructuring of the State Parks system, privatization of the restaurant at Eugene T. Mahoney State Park and the effort to recruit, develop and retain more hunters and anglers in Nebraska.

Stave, an Omaha native, was a 1962 graduate of Westside High School, 1966 graduate of the University of Omaha, and 1972 graduate of Creighton Law School.

He was a private practice attorney for 35 years. He wrote the appellate brief on the landmark United States Supreme Court case, *Owen Equipment and Erection v. Kroger* (1978). ■



Ron after a turkey hunt.



Fishing with nieces Stacie and Callie Roberts.



Smiling with a yellow perch in hand.



Elk hunting in Montana.



Big game hunting in Tanzania, Africa.

Monowi: Village of One

Town small, but still thriving.

By Amy Kucera

People have come from all over the world to drink coffee with Elsie Eiler in Monowi, Nebraska.

Not only does she own and operate the only business in the village, working six days a week as a cook and bartender at the local tavern, the great-grandmother also serves as mayor, village board president, librarian and local historian.

Why does she do it?

As the lone resident in the nation's smallest incorporated village, she is the only one who can.

Ponca Creek curls through the upper rim of northeastern Nebraska, the same as it did when the Lewis and Clark expedition first traveled through the region in 1804. They had observed the earth lodge village of the Ponca Tribe who had deserted the site during a seasonal hunt for bison.

Nearly a century later, the town of Monowi was established in 1902 and named for the Ponca Indian word for the white wildflower known as snow-on-the-mountain, growing abundant in the valley. By the 1930s, the village population peaked at 123 people. Elsie's hometown once boasted a railroad line, grain elevators, post-office, elementary and high schools and churches.

However, decades later, the rail line disappeared and the people did too. Those that remained eventually passed on, leaving behind the shell of a once-lively town.

By 2000, the population had dwindled to 2: Elsie and her husband, Rudy. Both born and raised in Monowi, they married in 1955 and together they began operating the tavern in 1971.

A vacant church now stands stoic in a field, the last funeral held in it was that of Elsie's father in 1960. The remaining wooden buildings adjacent to the tavern stand crooked, shifted through time.

Regardless of circumstance, Rudy had a dream for the town they shared together – expanding his love for books, and his subsequent growing collection of them with others. He and Elsie's son, Jack, began to build a small library with fitted shelves but Rudy passed from cancer in 2004 before he could see the finish. Shortly afterwards, remaining family members helped her to move over 5,000 books onto the shelves. A plaque reading "Rudy's Dream Come True" now hangs on the wall inside.

Without her companion, many feared that she would become lonely, but Elsie couldn't imagine living anywhere else. "This is where I want to be," she smiles.



In Monowi, Elsie Eiler gives a whole new meaning to the phrase "one-horse town."

Though the village sign now says "1," she is certainly not alone. Regular patrons include a mix of local farmers and families, card-players and curious travelers. She receives the most visitors during the annual "holiday" known as deer hunting season, when she enlists the help of her family to keep up with the influx of hungry hunters. Otherwise, she runs the tavern - and entire town - on her own.

When she was diagnosed with cancer in 2008, the tavern doors remained open, only closing the grill while she underwent chemotherapy treatment.

After making a full recovery, she once again can be found cooking in the kitchen, or sipping coffee and reading local newspapers when business is slow, everyday but Monday.

She admits to closing the bar just recently: "I put up signs, 'going to meet my great-grandson'." She proudly shares photos of her family, most of which live just down the road, in the towns of Niobrara and Ponca, both names also derived from the tribe.

Upon my last visit to Monowi, I walked into the tavern for a cup of coffee and a chance to chat with Elsie. A line of beautiful flower bouquets from family and friends – including one from the Nite Owls Motorcycle Club – filled the corner of the bar.

The entire tavern would soon be brimming with people from all over the land, in celebration of Elsie's 80th birthday. As the partygoers dwindled, she sat at the round table once again and shared stories of Monowi Tavern – the grand central station of north-central Boyd County.

She has been featured on NBC News, BBC, CBS Sunday Morning, People Magazine, London Times and countless other publications and news stories. In 2010, Nebraskan comedian Larry "The Cable Guy" Whitney hosted a hotdog roast as a fundraiser to benefit the town. Over a thousand people came and raised enough money to repair the main street and roof of Rudy's library.

When I remind Elsie that she is a true celebrity, she laughs.

"Not really. I'm still here, just flipping burgers and serving beer."

And luckily for everyone, she is. ■

BOOKS/PUBLICATIONS/VIDEOS

NEBRASKA WILDFLOWERS. It's back. Out of print for 21 years, the second edition of Jon Farrar's *Field Guide to Wildflowers of Nebraska and the Great Plains* is now available. This 6-inch by 9½-inch paperback is a must have for anyone interested in learning more about wildflowers in Nebraska and the Great Plains region and makes a great gift. Richly illustrated with color photography and ink drawings. To order this publication or to learn about other great gift ideas, visit NebraskalandGifts.com or call (800) 742-0056.

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NEBRASKA LAKE MANAGEMENT. Biological lake surveys, fish stocking, rough fish control, lake aeration, algae control, aquatic weed control. Rob Hofpar, Aquatic Biologist, licensed, insured and qualified. (402) 784-6005 Valparaiso - (888) 850-2460 Nelakes.net.

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HOME BREWING/BEER AND WINEMAKING. Fermenter's Supply, 8410 K Plaza, Suite #10, Omaha, NE 68127. Phone orders only, (888) 655-2739. Advice line (402) 593-9171. Fermenterssupply.com.

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▲ Pictured is my dad and his brother, my uncle John. It was taken in 1935. They were hunting rabbits and thought it would be clever to pose in front of the 'No Hunting' sign. They were actually on the family's own farm on the banks of the Missouri east of Tekamah. Dad would have turned 100 this year but did make it to his 96th birthday. Uncle John passed a few years ago at 88.

— Al Hansen, Quincy, California



◀ Pictured is John Delp, Doug Schmeekle and Gary Schroeder, just 16 years old in 1965 at Johnson Lake. All resided in the Johnson Lake area.

Doug is deceased, but still fished there until his parting. John is still fishing there. Always has and always will. Loves it (me too!). Gary just golfs!

— Christine Delp, Smithfield, Nebraska

Send contributions to: Portraits from the Past, NEBRASKAland Magazine, P.O. Box 30370, Lincoln, NE 68503-0370. Or e-mail to Tim.Reigert@Nebraska.gov. Photos should show people enjoying Nebraska outdoor activities, such as camping, boating, hunting or fishing, and must have been taken before 1980. We will give priority to unusual photos or activities. When possible, please include a story about the photograph and identify the people, places and approximate date it was taken. Photos will be returned.



▲ Pictured top is farmer and rancher Steve Quigley before 1975, and the bottom photo is of Scott Quigley. This was when coyotes were catching and killing cattle, and a bounty was paid for their ears. These were hunted in southwestern Nebraska in Frontier and Red Willow counties.

— Mitty Quigley, Indianola, Nebraska

Eating "Sky Carp"

Pulled Berry-Chipotle Snow Goose Sandwiches.

By Jenny Nguyen

Out of all the wild game I've had the opportunity to prepare, waterfowl tests me most. Besides Canada geese, it takes quite a bit of effort on my part to make most other ducks and geese palatable. Maybe it's just me but they have an "off," bloody taste, whether it's a mallard, teal or snow goose. (And yes, I know not to overcook them.)

But when waterfowl hunters offer me their quarry, I gladly accept it; I have a wild game blog to run. And when I'm invited to hunt, I go with the promise to myself that I will eat whatever that I may kill. Because of that, I've had to be very creative in the ways I choose to cook these birds.

After I shot my first snow, I set out on a mission to not only eat my goose, but to enjoy it, too. I don't use the slow cooker very often, but in this case, it made the snow goose not only edible, but quite delectable. The berry-chipotle sauce is my own twist on barbecue sauce, which did wonders to help tame the snow goose's strong flavor.

Servings: 2

Prep Time: 30 minutes

Cooking Time: 5 hours

Ingredients:

- legs, thighs and breasts of 1 snow goose
- 3 tablespoons of light brown sugar
- 2 teaspoons of Hungarian paprika
- 1 teaspoon of mustard powder
- ½ teaspoon of ground cumin
- kosher salt
- freshly ground black pepper
- 1 slice of bacon
- ½ cup of apple cider vinegar
- 3 tablespoons of tomato paste
- 2 tablespoons of any type of berry jelly or preserves
- 1 chipotle pepper in adobo sauce, finely chopped (or to taste)
- potato buns or rolls

Coleslaw

- 3 cups of shredded cabbage



PHOTO BY JENNY NGUYEN

- ½ cup of shredded carrot
- ½ cup of Best Foods/Hellmann's Olive Oil Mayo
- 1 teaspoon of sugar
- 1 teaspoon of rice vinegar
- 1 teaspoon of Louisiana Hot Sauce
- salt and pepper, to taste

1. Run the snow goose pieces under cold water to get rid of as much blood as possible. Then pat all pieces dry with paper towels and sprinkle salt and pepper all over, to taste. In a small bowl, combine 1 tablespoon of brown sugar, paprika, mustard powder and cumin. Rub this spice mixture all over the goose pieces then set aside.

2. Next, cook the bacon over medium-high heat in a cast iron skillet. Remove the bacon and then sear goose pieces in the bacon grease until browned on both sides. Do not overcrowd the pan and do not cook all the way through. Transfer seared goose to a plate.

3. Combine 2 cups of water, the apple cider vinegar, tomato paste and remaining 2 tablespoons of brown sugar into the slow cooker. Then add the bacon, goose and all its juices, making sure all the goose pieces are submerged. Cover and cook on low for 4 hours, or until meat is tender.

4. Meanwhile, combine all coleslaw

ingredients in a medium bowl. Adjust seasonings, as necessary. Cover and refrigerate to let flavors marry.

5. Once the goose is tender, remove the pieces from the slow cooker and shred the meat with forks, discard bones. Then pour the cooking liquids from the crockpot into a saucepan. Add the jelly/preserves and chopped chipotle pepper in adobo sauce. Bring to a boil then reduce by half, or until thickened into a sauce. Add salt and pepper, to taste. Pour the sauce into another container for serving, but leave about 1 cup in the pan. Add the shredded meat to the remaining sauce. Add more sauce if it's too dry.

6. Serve pulled snow goose on potato buns with coleslaw and extra sauce on the side.

For best results, refrigerate the meat, covered, one day prior to serving. This helps the flavors develop. ■

This recipe and photograph originally appeared on Jenny's Food for Hunters blog at Foodforhunters.com.

Read Jenny's NEBRASKAland blog "Midland Musings" to see other stories from this NEBRASKAland Regional Editor.





Spider Wasp

Once in a while you stumble across small creatures that would otherwise be overlooked. Walking through my yard I spotted this spider wasp tugging a wolf spider across the grass.

I didn't want to scare the wasp away, so I slowly inched myself closer – belly crawling through my yard to get close enough to take photos. The spider wasp stopped pulling a couple times as I moved in, but seemed more occupied with the task at hand. During a 20-minute span, the wasp pulled the spider about four feet.

I shot until the light disappeared, and didn't want to scare the wasp off with lights or a flash. By that time the wasp had drug the wolf spider to a dirt area near the footings of our home, a job well done. Then it was my turn to start learning about another little creature who shares the same outdoor space as me.

Julie Geiser, Regional Editor, NEBRASKAland Magazine
August 13, 2013



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