

# Springhouse Ink

Can't we have some decent spring kite flying weather? Every day the sun is shining the winds are trying to blow the petals off the daffodils.

When the temperature hasn't been cold enough to shatter fingernails the wind has been blowing grit into the contact lenses.

As winter solstice and vernal equinox have been duking it out, the Springhouse staff has taken advantage of a few narrow windows of calm.

Who would have thought the melting ice at Lusk Creek Canyon's bluff could create rainbows as the sun lowers in the west? Looking from one position multiple bows of color dance down the bluff. Move 2 feet over, nothing.

Rainwater impounded by soil, leaves and moss has been pouring through channels cut into sandstone at the top of One Horse Gap. Flowing as it has for eons, a person can't help but sit and relax at nature's own water garden.

The long-suffering pear tree is blossoming, as is the little shrub struck down by the weed trimmer last year. The shrub is our popcorn bush, since it blooms white and pink popcorn-shaped flowers.

Frogs are singing when the temperatures warm. Basement fans are humming to dry up the rain seeping in through the fragmented concrete foundation.

Forsythias are in full golden flower and red buds dot the edges of Salt Well Road. The cherry trees are budding, and by the time this issue reaches the reader's hands will surely be filled with aromatic white flowers.

Spring is cooking along as per usual. Extreme flooding doesn't appear on the horizon, but this wind is something

else. It's been hard for a man to keep a hat on his head.

This spring has also made it hard to keep clean dogs. Between unsightly shedding and their joy in mud-wallowing, they are being kept outside more than inside these days.

We had a migrating turtle pass through the property, brought to my attention by Sasha who was barking at an algae-filled puddle. A few minutes later she was sitting beside the reptile, perplexed as to how to react. She knew it was an interesting creature, but seemed to be puzzled over whether to attack or defend it. So she just walked beside it, got a few steps ahead and sat down, waiting for the turtle to catch up. They continued this journey many yards into the field until Sam, the cat, also became curious and also followed along, sniffing the turtle and wearing an expression of disgust.

Meanwhile, Maggie, the golden retriever, began digging in a hillside until she pulled up a fat bullfrog in her mouth. It seemed an odd place for a frog to choose to hibernate since the muddy field was just a few yards away. Once she retrieved the frog and showed off her achievement she sat the frog back down — apparently uninjured — and I reburied it.

Vultures and eagles have been soaring. Skunks have been spraying. Ladybugs have been crawling.

Wildlife has been waking up after a long and snowy winter, heavy wind or no.

Spring comes, we throw the windows open for a few days and then the air conditioners come on as the blossoms wilt. Make the most of spring 2016. Gather your morels while ye may and take photos of the flowering dogwoods. If this spring is like every other, we'll blink and it will be too hot and humid to get outdoors.



The escarpment at the top of One Horse Gap becomes a relaxing natural garden of stone and water after a rain.

Brian DeNeal photo

In this issue we examine the implications of the new America the Beautiful series Shawnee quarter that features Camel Rock. Springhouse attended the quarter launch event and avoided conflict with the heavy police presence.

We have a story of Jim Roe's cabin in the woods. What do most of us do when we have health issues and then lose a job? Feel sorry for ourselves. Roe decided to spend his winter building a log cabin that due to some generous friends cost him only \$200 and some sweat.

Joyce Graves provides an account of raising a son in Ridgeway during the polio epidemic during the 1950s and receiving the news parents feared the most.

We visited L.O. Trigg's vacation home of Resthaven. Trigg led the annual Ozark Tour in the 1930s and 1940s which contributed to the creation of the Shawnee National Forest. After friends found a map a crew scoured the area now owned by the U.S. Forest Service to see what remains of Trigg's landmarks.

The Hardin County Historical Society is raising money to buy a decent grave marker for Anna Bixby, credited with having found the cure for deadly milk sickness. We visited Bixby's grave which is a bare rock. Within a few months, she should have a proper marker.

Dixie Terry brings us hearty recipes from old cookbooks.

The Rebel continues to add his two cents.

And in honor of Pope County's bicentennial, we are publishing as a series *Pope County Notes* by John W. Allen.

Our final foray into our region's history is better viewed as a video than described in print. We dropped a GoPro video camera tied to a rope into the salt well at the Great Salt Spring site on Salt Well Road near Equality. The video that resulted was fairly high quality due, I assume, to the recently flooded Saline River rinsing the algae and other muck from the well's surface. We share a few still shots from the experiment.

Enjoy the flowers and frogs.

The adventure continues...



Sam the curious cat meets a turtle emerging from its winter hibernation.

Brian DeNeal photo