

Springhouse Ink

It's deer season and the chilly weather has the dogs wanting to run around. They don't have hunter orange so we don't venture far.

Hunters set up stands at Leavell Cemetery down the road in previous years, but nobody is hunting its wooded outskirts this year. Our Golden Retriever, Maggie, has taken up a running hobby at that steep cemetery. A person can't climb to the top without breathing heavily and Maggie was resistant to carrying her 100-pound bulk up the hill all summer. Now that it's cool, she lumbers to the top and sits at attention until I reach her. When I give the command, "Let's go!" she races down to the bottom. She likes to run, especially when gravity is on her side.

On Nov. 16 Maggie was insistent on visiting the hill for another downhill charge, but first had to sniff around the neighbor's compost for any scraps. The other dog, Sasha, a mutt that resembles a miniature Husky, was walking up the hill with me.

I was examining the pile of cemetery debris at the cemetery's edge and thinking about items that could be scavenged from it to aid in survival situations. A white plastic pot could be used for storing and transporting water. That brownish green block of foam could be a pillow or fire starter.

Movement caught my eye and I looked up. Maybe there was a hunter after all. Up among the cedars and yuccas, the Barnetts and Burroughs, was a 10-point buck that sniffed the ground, walked a few feet and sniffed again. I reached into my pocket for my phone knowing the deer would be gone before I switched into camera mode. But the deer remained as I took my shot. Sasha saw the deer and gave one short "huff" sound. The deer allowed me to take four photos before disappearing into the woods.

The deer was also near to the stone of my former neighbor, avid hunter Ron McGill, who died in 2016. Etched on Ron's stone is a 10-point buck.

Had it not been rutting season and the deer not been preoccupied with tracking down a doe none of those photos would have been possible. The buck would have run off before I ever knew it was there. It occurs to me this is why hunting season opens when it does. The bucks are easier to kill when survival is less of a priority.

On the way home I inspected the cherry trees in the yard. In late summer they lose their leaves and go into a dormant state — in normal years. This year they lost their leaves and all three greened back up. In October they flowered again. There were not as many flowers as in spring, but they had missed out this spring. When the trees blossomed in April it was still so cold no bees were out to perform the pollination duties. There were probably 40 cherry fruits total between the three. Then in October with a few days of up to 90 degrees the white flowers reappeared and as late as Nov. 16 some of those flowers were still evident. The trees produced no fall cherries.

It has been a weird year. The Ohio River bottoms flooded during the September corn harvest. Our propane delivery man reported one semi tractor-trailer hauling out corn through about a foot of water. The temperatures remained so mild the kernels lost on the ground grew to knee high before the cold set in. Some bean fields also threatened to grow back.

On Nov. 17 while grilling hamburgers in the backyard, I noticed a false morel on the ground. It had been uprooted, but remained oddly cool and fleshy. It was a strange find for the time of year we normally expect to see brown puffballs ready to release their cloud of ugly spores.

Since our last issue we have lost three friends of Springhouse.

Luong Thi Doi Carr, known to friends as Chi, died June 1 of a stroke. Back in the early days of *Springhouse* — I would have been about 8 years old — the magazine was delivered in the form of facing pages. Chi; her husband and Springhouse co-founder, Bill; and their kids Lilia and Jim, would come to our house to collate the magazine. Working in a circuit we would stick the pages within the others, finally add the cover and hand it to dad for stapling on a chest-high, foot-powered stapler. After the majority of a day the magazines were ready to deliver to the post office.

Chi loved cooking Vietnamese cuisine and chiding visitors. "How come you don't come see me?" she would say, which would catch me off guard. "But, I'm here and I'm seeing you," I would say, and she would laugh.

Doris Ann Nelson was a contributor to the mission

from the beginning. An avid researcher and compiler of genealogy books, Doris suffered a heart attack while researching at McLeansboro's McCoy Library. I last spoke to Doris at the Southeastern Illinois College's Heritage Festival in 2015. We hadn't spoken since I was a kid and she, husband, Ron; and kids, Ryan and Lisa, would run around with our family working on some project or other. During that brief 2015 conversation she impressed me with her wry wit, though I can't recall exactly what we were joking about.

In the early days of *Springhouse* there was a need to deliver the magazine to the vendors. Bill Carr's brother and sister-in-law, Edward "Pat" and Linda O'Connor, filled that need. It couldn't have been much of a money

maker, but for years team O'Connor placed the publication on the store's shelves and collected money for it. Then they took a job in over the road trucking and I never saw either of them again. After struggling for years with diabetes, Pat died Nov. 5 at his home in Creal Springs.

It would be disingenuous of me to claim a close relationship with any of these three, but each was a character who played a role in this fledgling publication and in my upbringing.

Due in part to the contributions of these three people...

The adventure continues.



Brian DeNeal photo

These blossoms were opening on a cherry tree Nov. 7. They remained evident, but were wilting Nov. 16.

Ozark Echoes

Dear Springhouse,

According to my checkbook register, I sent you a subscription renewal at this time last year, so this check should carry me forward to Vol. 34 No. 5, whenever that be, as my mailing label says.

It is funny, seeing various references to "Old Shawneetown" in *Springhouse*, because it was always Shawneetown to my mother and my Earnshaw and Eswein relatives. I was there a few times in the late 1930s, before the war, but do not recall much because I was only three to five years old. I do remember a slope full of tents above the Ohio River, so it must have been after a bad

flood. Did they rename the town sometime? I thought they called the other, higher and drier, place "New Shawneetown." Maybe someday they will say my brothers, sister, and I were born in "Old East St. Louis."

By the way, that Black Widow on the cover of Vol. 33 No. 2, gives me the creeps. I learned long ago to avoid and fear those things, as well as the Brown Recluse, and taught my children and Irish-born wife to shun them, too. I have seen a Brown Widow spider around here, which is bad news, too. To be truthful about it, though, there was a grade school teacher in San Diego seventy-five years ago who encouraged us to catch bugs and