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Launa Rambler - Pastor Christopher Staley

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Area

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Across the Director's Desk: Furry, brown friends

BY TERESA WIEMERSLAGE

Allamakee County ISU Extension Director

Furry, Brown Friends

If they are small, brown, furry and crawl on the ground, most people tend to lump these mammal species under "gopher" or some other all-encompassing name. Different species have different requirements for food and shelter. Understanding those differences can help you manage their populations.

Ground Squirrels

The 13-lined ground squirrels are those six-inch long (plus about three to four inches of tail) critters of open grassland areas. Once uncommon in Iowa, they are now abundant across the state as we have created "short-grass prairie" areas in the form of mowed lawns, pastures, golf courses and cemeteries. They like the changes we've brought to the landscape. They hibernate for about five winter months, emerging in March to early April. They burrow in the ground in open, short-grass areas, leaving little visible dirt and holes the size of 50-cent pieces.

Chipmunks

The eastern chipmunk is the same size as the ground squirrel, but is found in more woodland or woodland edge habitat and has only two light stripes. Absent only from the northwest corner of Iowa, they inhabit neighborhoods with mature trees and

shrubs, rock and wood piles and retaining walls. While they may live in holes dug in the ground, they are more likely to live in the retaining walls, beneath decks or even in holes in trees. They do not hibernate in the winter and, though they sleep for days at a time, can be seen raiding bird feeders on warm winter days.

Ground hogs, also known as woodchucks or whistle pigs

The ground hog is really a large ground squirrel. Like the 13-lined, it hibernates through the winter, living in torpor (with body temperatures below 40 F) below the frost line. Adults can range from 24-30 inches long plus a three- to four-inch furry tail and weigh from nine to 14 pounds. They inhabit a wide range of habitat, from woodland (yes, they can climb trees) to grassland. Most typically, they live in holes in the ground, often below decks and outbuildings. Their holes are round and vary from seven to 10 inches in diameter. Mounds of dirt outside the main entrance are often large and obvious. Like ground squirrel and chipmunk dens, however, there are usually other, more hidden entrances.

All three of these species have diets of plants (grasses, leaves, seeds, nuts, berries, fruits, bulbs) though they are known to occasionally supplement their diet with animal protein (ground nesting birds, eggs). All are

ecologically important and interesting to watch, but can be nuisances depending on location. Reduce summer bird feeding of large seeds (sunflower, safflower, peanuts) to reduce attracting these mammals.

Trapping better than poisoning

Live traps baited with peanuts (or fresh-cut apples for ground hogs) and subsequent release at least five miles distant can be successful. Rat-sized snap traps baited with peanut butter (can be covered with boxes with the ends cut out to be sure birds don't get caught) and placed outside main entrance holes can quickly reduce a local population.

Poisons that contain zinc phosphide as the active ingredient are available, but must be very carefully used to avoid non-target species. Poisonous gas cartridges may be appropriate for some limited circumstances, but kill everything in the burrow, including toads, turtles and other species that may be co-habiting with the digging mammal. For this reason, trapping is preferred over poisoning.

This article is from the May 2008 issue of Acreage Living Online (www.extension.iastate.edu/acreage). Other articles in this month's issue: Spring Flood Preparedness, Grazing Management for Improved Pasture Production and Aquatic Vegetation Control.

Luana Rambler

Pastor Christopher Staley

Hello, again, from Luana where a week has made an amazing difference. We have literally enjoyed a mostly dry week. This was especially true, given the fact that the week's forecast had called for at least a chance of rain most every day.

We did experience a few sprinkles, but not enough to put much of a damper on the all-out assault on area fields by planters. The readings that were recorded this past week in Luana are as follows: Monday, 34-62; Tuesday, 46-65; Wednesday, 44-64; Thursday, 41-68; Friday, 44-74; Saturday, 44-73; Sunday, 40-72.

The week to come looks to begin on the cooler side, but end with a flourish. Temperatures should range from lows around 40 the beginning of the week to lower 50's by the week's end. Highs are forecast to warm up a bit each day, beginning at 64 and making it nearly to 80 by Sunday. A small chance of rain is found for almost every day, with the greatest chance Monday evening.

Longer range forecasts show that we are in area that is expected to see "above normal" precipitation for the remainder of this month, and then "much above normal" precipitation for the month of June. Remember, it isn't polite to shoot the messenger.

I mentioned last week, that the average soil temperature was hovering around 53 degrees, but in just a week's time, that number has shot up to 62 degrees. That said, it should be only a matter of days before the gold mine of seeds that have been planted in the soil should begin to make its presence known to watchful eyes. And then, once the planting is complete, the machinery and the laborers can breathe a huge sigh of relief, and maybe even stop worrying for a day or two.

The break in the weather, though, was not the topic of most conversations this week. What had people talking was all the goings on in Postville that began on Monday. I had received a phone call that morning describing circling helicopters and a much larger than usual police presence, so wasn't surprised when I finally heard the official reports later of the raid there by federal officials. There was a fair amount of ambivalence of those I have visited, heartened that the law was being enforced, but on the other hand troubled at the "collateral damage" of those caught by circumstances, especially the children. What the long-term effects will be cannot be known at this time.

And another question that is yet unanswered is how much blame will be shouldered by those who were complicit in the law-breaking by hiring the 'illegal' workers.

Work has been on-going on the railroad tracks that travel through Luana. A number of rotted ties have been replaced over the past couple weeks, with numerous specialized machines occupying the tracks at times. Even so, railroad traffic through town has been traveling very slowly. A couple weeks earlier, I had seen quite a long line of rail cars that were parked on the stretch of track between McGregor and Marquette. These cars held what appeared to be miles and miles of new rails. I would guess that the number of derailments over the past several years on those tracks from Marquette all the way to Calmar is the cause for the company's need to do some major repairs.

Work is also being done at the former co-op in town. Most recently, moving vans have been seen there, apparently emptying the buildings of their current content in order that the new owners can begin using them. I see that it was a little more than seven years ago when the United Co-Op vacated the premises.

On Tuesday when I was visiting Norma Riveland, I learned that she had become a Great-Grandmother recently. Eden Marsh-Rhodes was born on Sunday, April 6, in Bend, Oregon. Eden's parents are Perry & Cara Marsh-Rhodes, and her grandparents are Tom & Lynn Bellinger of Salem, Oregon.

A couple Luanans have spent some time in the hospital. Ricky Lenth was again a patient at Gunderson Lutheran in LaCrosse, while Don Baade spent a few days at the hospital in Decorah.

On Sunday, three graduating seniors were honored at St. John Lutheran in Luana: Tina Baade, Cody Bachman, and Drew Pape. First, the Worship Committee served a breakfast to them and their parents. At the worship service, Sunday School students presented each with a handmade quilt which they had helped make. Each was given a chance to describe their future plans. Tina plans to attend the University of Iowa, and then continue her schooling in the field of chiropractic medicine. Cody plans to attend Upper Iowa University. And Drew will continue his employment at Monona Wire while also taking classes at

NICC in Calmar. Finally, the winner of this year's St. John Scholarship was announced: Tina Baade.

Don't forget that on Sunday, June 1, the annual Grilled Chicken Dinner will be held at St. John Lutheran in Luana. The dinner will be served from 10:30 - 1:30 at

the church. Carry outs will be available. The cost of the meal is a free-will offering. "Hospitality is treating others as if they were at home, even when you wish they were."

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Teaming up with colleagues can make shaping up easier

The Veterans Memorial Hospital "In Step with VMH" Community Wellness Challenge has come to an end. In order to keep up the good habits you have formed during the program, you may have greater success, and a lot more fun, if you muster support from those around you. At one time or another, we all need somebody to help keep us on track, and a kindred soul to work alongside you might be just what you need to help develop and maintain healthier living habits. You'll be able to celebrate your achievements, give

each other moral support during times of temptation, and share the fun of trying new foods and recipes together.

The workplace is often a perfect setting to build enthusiasm for healthy eating and exercise since you and your colleagues can share the benefits of mutual support and encouragement on a daily basis.

Try taking brief, ten-minute "walk" breaks with a co-worker, as this can often be a better stress reducer and rejuvenator than coffee or a donut. Decide together that you will use the stairs instead of the

elevator whenever possible throughout the day. Or try exercising with a colleague after work—this may be a perfect solution for those who can't find the time or motivation once they get home.

Remember to have a back-up activity plan in case your "shape-up" partner is unable to participate that day because of a late meeting, out-of-town business, etc. This way, you can avoid making excuses for not exercising.

You'll also find it's easier to make nutritious lunch time menu choices when eating out with someone who shares your commitment to good health. Try taking turns bringing healthy snacks or lunches to work to share with each other, and you'll most likely spend less money on vending machine snacks which generally provide little, if any, nutrition and lots of fat.

As long as you pick a shape-up partner who is just as committed as you are to living healthier, simple changes like those mentioned here can become easier when you keep in mind that you're not alone.

Montauk set to open this weekend for 2008 season

Clermont's Montauk is set to open this weekend for the 2008 season. Starting on Saturday, May 24, the historical site will be open for daily tours from noon until 4:30 p.m.

There are also a number of special events planned for the site throughout the season. Upcoming events include:

- June 28: Clermont Brick City Days parade
- June 29: Organ Recital at Union Sunday School, 2:30 p.m. - Dr. Leon Couch, Spartanburg, S.C.
- July 19 and 20: Festival of Arts, time to be announced
- July 27: Organ Recital at Union Sunday School, 2:30 p.m. - Marvin Kerr, North Liberty
- August 17: Old Fashioned Picnic and Awards Program, 5 p.m.
- August 31: Organ Recital at Union Sunday School, 2:30 p.m. - Steve Story, Hawkeye
- Month of September: Month long exhibit on Mills in Northeast Iowa

• September 28: Organ Recital at Union Sunday School, 2:30 p.m. - Dr. Gregory Peterson, Decorah

• October 25: Monster/Ghost Party at Montauk, 4:30 p.m.

• October 26: Organ Recital at Union Sunday School, 2:30 p.m. - August Knoll, Wheatland

• December 7: Christmas Open House, 1-4 p.m. at Montauk; Vesper Service at Union Sunday School, 2 p.m.

For more information about upcoming events at Montauk or to schedule group tours, please contact Nadine West, site manager, at 563-423-7173 or email Montauk@acegroup.cc.

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RURAL SPRING GROVE HOME FOR SALE BY SEALED BID This house to be moved

The house to be moved is located at 15370 County 27, Spring Grove, MN. This house was the home of Raymond & Ethel Olson since 1977. It is a one owner home. A steel roof and vinyl siding were installed in 2000.



Sealed bids will be received until June 10, 2008 by Adrian Olson, 22195 CR 135, Deerwood, MN 56444

If seller exercises his right to conduct a bid-off, the bid-off shall occur on Saturday, June 14, 2008 at 3:00 p.m. at 15370 County 27, Spring Grove, MN. Notification of any bid-off will be given to qualified bidders by Wednesday, June 11, 2008. The successful bidder will be required to enter into a Standard Minnesota Purchase Agreement. The closing date is to be July 1, 2008. The house is sold "AS IS" and must be moved by September 1, 2008.

The house is 26'x 44' with two bedrooms and a 7'x8' enclosed porch. Includes all plumbing, electrical, stove, refrigerator, washer, dryer, water heater, and softener. Bids shall be made in writing, enclosed in a sealed envelope and plainly marked Olson Home Bid on the exterior. Bids shall contain the name, address and phone numbers of the bidder. Bids should be mailed to Adrian Olson, 22195 CR 135, Deerwood, MN 56444. Bids shall be deemed received on the date the bid arrives. All bids timely received will be opened on June 10, 2008 at 4:00 p.m.

Initial sealed bids shall be accompanied by a cashier's check made payable to the Olson Trust Account for five percent (5%) of the bid as an earnest money deposit. **SELLER RESERVES THE RIGHT TO REJECT ANY AND ALL BIDS AND TO NEGOTIATE WITH BIDDERS, AND FURTHER RESERVES THE RIGHT TO CONDUCT A BID-OFF BETWEEN THE TOP FOUR (4) BIDDERS.**

To view the house, please call Jim/Faith Normann at 507-498-3883. If you should have any questions regarding the house, the bid procedure or any other questions, please contact Adrian Olson at 22195 CR 135, Deerwood, MN 56444. 218-546-5497 or 218-838-4700.

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