



**On being  
a farm wife**  
—And other  
hazards

By  
**JOYCE BUPP**

Is there a doubt in anyone's mind that winter's icy thrust is here to stay for a while? The telltale evidence is in: frozen water pipes, unconscious tractor and truck batteries, lines of soggy mittens crisscrossing the basement, and puddles of dirty melting slush polka-dotted every floor in the house.

But Winter can be fun! It hands us a smorgasboard of recreational opportunities, free for bundling up and stepping out the door. One of our favorites is sledding.

As youngsters, my brothers and I spent hours zooming down the steep hill of a neighbor's pasture. Locally dubbed "Ironstone Hill," the area's most famous fixtures were huge round boulders jutting up through the sod. What a challenge to pilot a flying sled down the slippery course, zipping around those grey rocks and jumping the one that jutted out slightly in the path. Approaching the bottom of the hill, you leaned your weight and steered sharply to the right; and if lucky, a kid could maneuver

across the dry bed of a storm gully and navigate a scenic stretch along the small, never-frozen creek. Mothers frowned upon a final ending in the creek, however; and if you went home wet, your excuse had better be a good one.

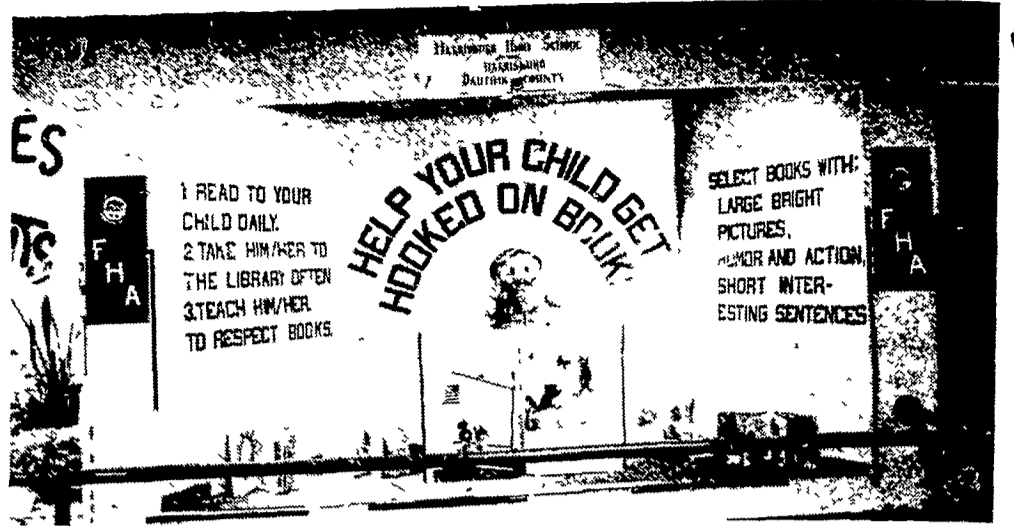
Since I never outgrew my love for sledding, mothering two outdoors-lovers has given me the perfect chance to hang on to my coaster. Last week, Grandpa's long dirt road hill was solidly packed and icy slick, untouched by a failing PennDot budget. So we gathered, family members and cousins

appearing from assorted directions for a white-world roller coaster ride. Even as you belly-flopped onto the old wooden sled, it was already picking up speed. Between the house and barn we flew, cold winds turning cheeks apple-red and toes numb-cold.

"Get outta' the way!" yelled our five-year-old, riding second story atop his Grandpa's back, and racing past me as I ground to a halt in the loose snow to escape the impending collision. I'm losing my touch when I get out-raced by my own flesh and blood.

If you have a hankering to really make a fool out of yourself, no sled is better to try than those curled up sheets of hard plastic. Steering is impossible, and going down backward or sideways is expected as part of the challenge. Let me warn you: it's not uncommon to land at the bottom of the hill, upside down in a drift, or maybe a fence, with refreshing cool snow sifting down your thermal underwear.

Enjoy it! Remember those days last Summer when it was 95° in the shade???



This window exhibit created by Harrisburg High School was the first place entry in the Pennsylvania Farm Show last week. Taking second to Harrisburg's entry was Red Lion Senior High School; third, Garden Spot High School; fourth, Juniata-Mifflin Co. AVTS; fifth, Central Columbia High School; sixth, Crestwood High School; seventh, Pine Grove Area High School; and eighth, Manheim Central High School.

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