



**On being
a farm wife
- And other
hazards
Joyce Bupp**

BY JOYCE BUPP
"Will you be able to get off work?" I ask my partner at the other end of the canoe. We were near the end of the last "pond classroom" session of a woman's canoeing course, and making final plans for the "test" — a run down

beautiful rock strewn Muddy Creek.
"Maybe I can take a mental health day," she mused.
Mental health day? I liked the sound of that. It drums up images of some pressing need — a brief respite that no one would

dare think of denying you.
By contrast, "sick leave" sounds depressing, conjuring up thoughts of lying miserably on the couch with a fever, red nose, supply of tissues and quart of orange juice. And while "vacation" has a somewhat more pleasant ring to it, experience hints of a period of rushing around, packing and unpacking, and trying to squeeze too many activities into too short a time.
No, mental health day sounds much better.
And who could possibly use a mental health break more than a mother in the middle of summer school vacation? Perhaps we could band together and negotiate having this benefit written into our lifelong contract.
Rules for mental health day for mothers would require no running to 4-H or Scouting meetings,

recreation, swimming classes, ball games or shopping. Periodic refereeing of the "but-hit-me-first" crowd would be absolutely outlawed.
All requests for pitchers of cold drinks, snacks and meals for the day would be banned. Lift no mops, brooms, vacuum cleaners, dust mops, dash cloths or clothes pins. Go somewhere, by yourself or with a close friend just spending the day in some enjoyable way. Maybe even just curl up with a good book.
Do you suppose there's even a vague chance we may someday pull it off?

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Homestead Notes

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some time as an apprentice on an approved farm.

Helmut's family will have such a farm when Helmut finishes his last year of schooling. He will then have the qualifications to have an apprentice under him.

To further economize on the farms which average fifty acres, most farmers use smaller machinery and keep their machinery for a long time by repairing and maintaining it in good repair. "We buy new machinery, but we keep it a very long time," Helmut said.

Helmut came to the United States on May 11, a very hot day in Washington, D C. He was unaccustomed to the heat and humidity and found it very uncomfortable. But he chuckles good naturedly when he explains that he is scheduled to spend much of the Summer in the state of Iowa. "I have already heard about the weather there!" he grinned.

After spending a brief time in the nation's capitol, Helmut came to Chester County to stay for three weeks at the Art Hershey farm near Cochranville. After that time he went to visit with the Wollastons for three weeks. Following that he left for a Beaver County host farm. He will be in Iowa during July and August.

Helmut said that three weeks was too short a time to spend with each family because by the time he and they felt at

home with each other it was time to move on. He would like to have more time to visit in each area and enjoy the family and farm life of each host.

The Wollastons took Helmut to market in Lancaster and to Longwood Gardens before he left. He also walked across the fields to tour the neighboring mushroom plant.

Although Helmut admits that he never did like mushrooms to eat and has not eaten them here yet, he has eaten more ice cream since here than ever in his life.

"I never knew anyone to eat so much ice cream as they do here," he said. "Ice cream for dessert after every meal, almost," he added. "In my family we do not have as many desserts after meals as here," he explained. "I will have to be very careful!" he sighed as he patted his still trim and firm mid-section.

Another part of our everyday life which is novel to Helmut is putting ice in drinks. They are too cold for his liking. He says his family usually has coffee, toast and butter for breakfast — no cereal — occasionally eggs, a hot mid day meal and small supper. So far his hosts have had large breakfasts, light lunches and larger suppers. But Cathy explained to him that not all farm families across the nation follow the same patterns.

Helmut looks ahead to several months of discovering just what American farmers are like

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