

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

Joyce Bupp

"Oh, puuullleeezzzz-zzee" begged the youngsters on a recent Saturday afternoon, "can't we go Christmas shopping?"

It was a task I knew had to come sooner or later. There was a small amount of allowance money burning holes in pockets and two eager gift-givers chomped at the bit to go make their modest selections for the family.

Now, my ideal shopping excursion takes place on a rainy Wednesday morning when the majority of the world is otherwise occupied. The thought of spending a sunny Saturday afternoon waiting in traffic and jousting with thousands of other harried shoppers had about as much appeal as an appointment with the Internal Revenue Service.

I stalled. The living room needed dusting and a visit from the vacuum cleaner. Dust and hay bits had collected a quarter-inch thick it seemed on the kitchen floor. Upstairs, there were a couple of children's rooms that resembled the local landfill.

How could I abandon this mess? Even worse, how could I face it later?

Henry Kissinger would have been proud. We negotiated our own version of the SALT treaty I'd shop, if they'd clean.

Dust was still settling as we departed a few hours later, three crusaders (one still reluctant) out to do battle in the annual holiday buying skirmish.

Rounding a turn onto the large parking lot of a favorite local discount department store did little to ease my dread. In all directions, the pavement

was packed with cars! We spotted an opening about an eighth-mile from the store and grabbed it quick before the guy behind us could aim his steering wheel.

Inside, the air was heavy with crowds of people. Carols played against the noise of shopping carts, crying babies and the whirrs and beeps of electronic games, operated by fathers ostensibly trying them out for the kids.

Our youngster's eyes glowed with anticipation and big grins spread across their faces. Suddenly, what could only be the Christmas spirit touched this mother's jaded heart, and the shopping expedition transformed into what holidays should be all about: a time of sharing fun with your family.

Selecting gifts for Dad and for each other, making delightful secrets to whisper about, brought us closer together as conspirators. Even the half-hour wait in the longest check-out line in history became a chance to giggle and observe that Santa was going to be big on socks under lots of trees this year.

Although they probably didn't realize it, our children gave me a wonderful gift that afternoon.

For a few brief hours, my mind fled adult worries, the hassles of the past several months of building and restructuring our own dairy operation, the ever-present financial worries that weigh on all farmers today, and the unsolvable concerns laid on our minds with each daily newspaper and radio or TV news report.

It was the Christmas season once more I was a kid again.

And it was good.

Fulton Grange sets meeting plans

OAKRYN — Fulton Grange No. 66 held their semi-monthly meeting Monday night at the Grange Hall, Oakryn, with the Master, Thomas C. Galbreath, presiding at the business session. George Blevins, Richard Drumm and Ruth Ann Baker were

accepted into membership. Mrs. Howard W. Miller Jr. announced that the Oakryn Senior Citizens were to hold an Acme dinner December 10 and are planning a bus trip to Baltimore to tour the McCormick & Co. warehouse next spring.

Charles McSparran reported that he attended the annual meeting of the Walter Aument Family Health Center. Clifford W. Holloway Jr. announced that the Lancaster County Pomona Grange will hold a covered dish supper at Fulton Grange Hall Saturday,

January 17 followed by their regular meeting.

The Lecturer, Mrs. Jesse Wood, presented the program. She conducted a quiz concerning individual's Christmas preparedness with Mrs. Cecil Campbell the winner. Several individuals told about the best or the worst Christmas they ever had.

Sharon McCauley, Fulton Grange's contestant in the Miss Solanco contest, did a gymnastics routine which she performed in the contest. Kenneth McCauley, president of The Gaelic American Society of Lancaster County, gave an interesting talk about their organization. It was organized in 1976 and meets the second Thursday of each month at the Stauffer Mansion on the Litz Pike, Lancaster. Mrs. Wood read a poem "At Christmas" by Edgar A. Guest to conclude the program.

The youth and young marrieds committees will be in charge of Christmas carolling and the Christmas party December 22. Grange families are invited. They will leave the Grange Hall at 7 p.m. to go carolling and return afterward for the party. Everyone should bring a gift valued between \$1.50 and \$2 for the gift exchange.

U.S.-Mexico sign ag trade agreement

WASHINGTON, D.C. — The United States and Mexico Wednesday signed an agreement providing for the purchase by Mexico of at least 6 million metric tons of U.S. agricultural commodities in calendar year 1981.

According to Secretary of Agriculture Bob Bergland, the agreement is similar to a pact for 1980 signed last January covering 4.76 million tons of commodities and amended in September to 7.2 million tons.

Including purchases which had been made before the signing of the 1980 agreement, Mexico has now purchased 10.4 million metric tons of all specified commodities for delivery in 1980. This will make Mexico a \$2 billion U.S. market, the third largest customer for U.S. agricultural products.

"There are some differences in terminology and in numbers," Bergland said of the new agreement, "but the supply and purchase assurances are continued, and the avenues for cooperation are broadened and spelled out."

Bergland said the new agreement permits Mexico to purchase a minimum of 6.15 million tons of U.S. agricultural products in 1981, chiefly sorghum, corn, soybeans and wheat. "For its part, the United States will endeavor to assure that supplies are available, and will do all it can to facilitate their purchase by Mexico," Bergland said.

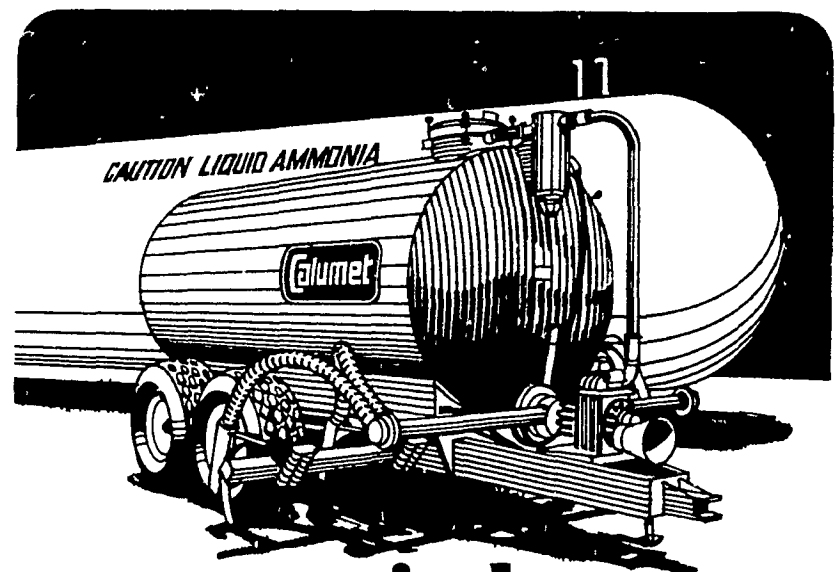
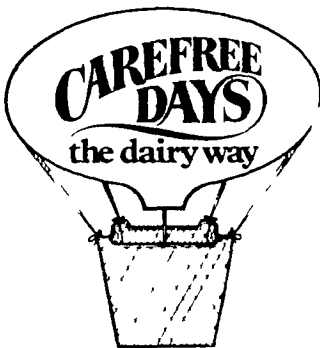
He said sales of commodities covered by the agreement will be made through normal commercial channels and the prices will be those prevailing in the market at the time contracts are negotiated.

"We have learned from our experience with the 1980 agreement that cooperation in agricultural trade is

beneficial on both sides of our common border," Bergland said. "The new agreement emphasizes the joint effort."

"It specifies consultations within six months or at the request of either party for the exchange of information on supply and needs, and it pledges the fullest mutual effort to assure delivery of the commodities, particularly a continuation of the work that has been done this year on rail transportation."

Bergland termed "unprecedented" the cooperation between U.S. and Mexican governments and railroads to alleviate transportation bottlenecks which might have prevented Mexico from meeting its 1980 needs.



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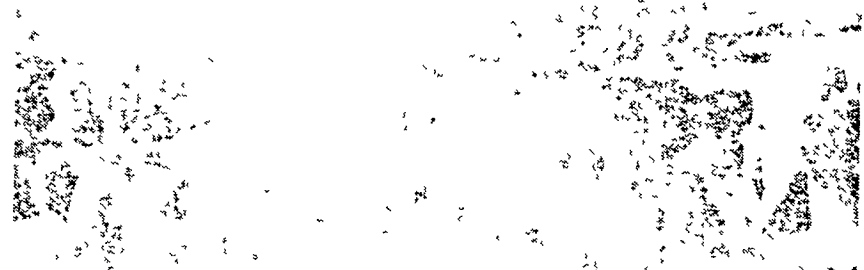
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