

## On being a farm wife - And other hazards

Joyce Bupp

The family that sleighs together, stays together.

And it certainly has been a winter for sleighing - or sledding - giving us three "kids" ample chance to break in our Christmas sleds.

Last weekend, we even coaxed the farmer into joining us. He unearthed his battered old coaster, suffering from more than its share of splintering, since his favorite childhood winter sport

was zipping down icy hills and smacking into frozen snowmen.

As ice crusted over the roads, we discovered that we could lug our sleds nearly the quarter-mile up the road, gather speed down the steepest grade, angle around the corner and glide for long minutes, way out past the house.

Or, with a sharp turn right above the old barn, and a sharp left around the calf barn, then one quick slide around the stone wall at

the milk house, you'd sail right up and over the pile of snow pushed by the truck's snowplow as it cleared a way for the milk truck.

Of course, you never made that goal if you first oversteered and crunched into a solid snowbank along the way, or rolled off the sled into the yard fence, or clipped the protective bale of hay at the fence corner, or plummeted down over the bank and came face-to-face with the chickenhouse wall. Or ran over your finger with the sled like a certain employee whose name I won't mention.

We'd finished milking one evening and were coasting these paths after dark, our way lit by the whitish glow of the farm night lights. Fog had blanketed our little valley, and from the hills above the house, it looked as though the farm floated in space, an oasis of soft light in the surrounding darkness.

"This is eerie," whispered one youngster, as the other sledgers trudged up the hill, resembling some outer space beings gliding through the murky black night.

Sunday afternoon sledding was even more stunning.

It was the kids who first

discovered that the law of gravity decrees that a sled rider, parted from his vehicle, will continue the downhill trek across ice-slick smooth fields, preferably feet-first and posterior side down.

"I slid over three alfalfa fields!" hooted one after finally stopping bottomsides at the foot of the contoured hill. That was after parting company with the sled, somewhere near the beginning of the roller coaster trip.

It was a Dukess of Hazard sled-

ding experience, skidding sideways, or spinning round and round, before you finally came to rest at the end of the run, which fortunately never ended in the creek.

Together, we compared sore muscles and clustered before the medicine chest for band-aids for scraped wrists.

Looking back, I breathe a sigh of relief that we didn't end up, together, at the hospital's emergency room.

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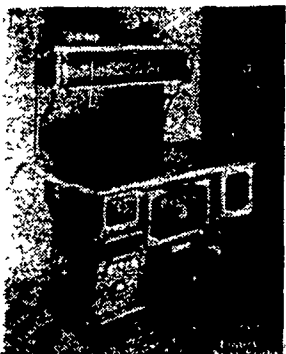
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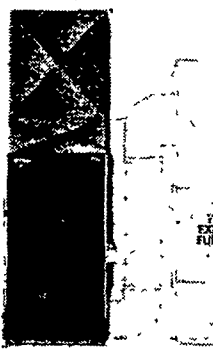
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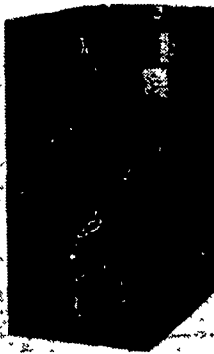
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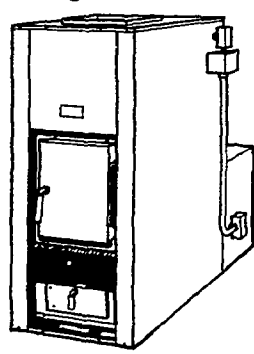
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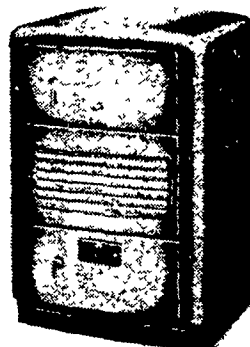
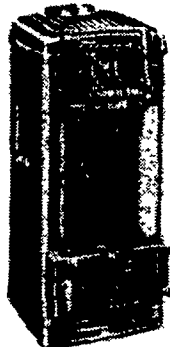
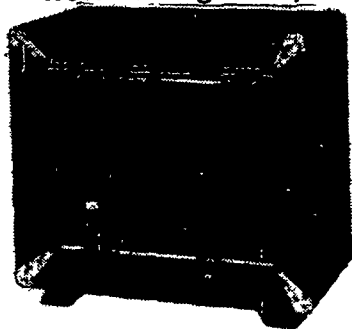


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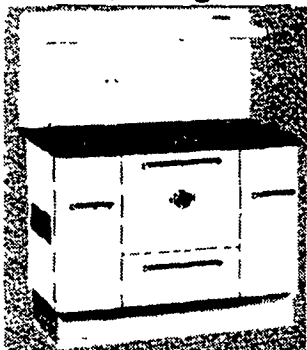


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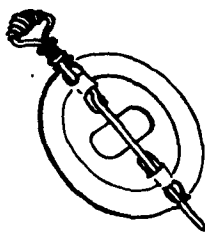
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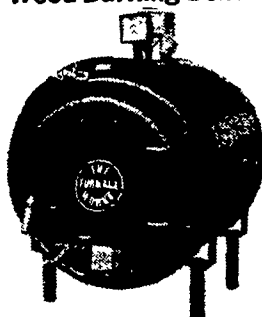


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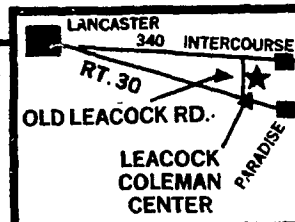
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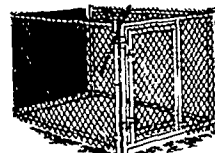
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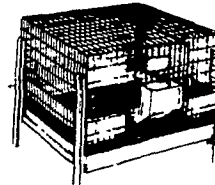
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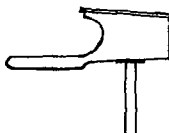
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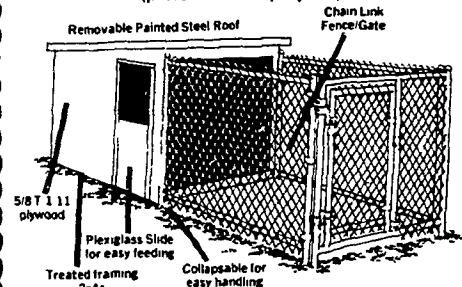


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