

On being a farm wife - And other hazards

Joyce Bupp



As November days go, this one was priceless.

The sky overhead throbbled with vibrant, deep blue, a brisk breeze, ruffled the tenacious leaves still clinging to the oaks and sunshine splashed the meadow with golden rays of warmth.

Certainly no day to sit at a typewriter. Deadlines or no deadlines.

So I went bear hunting.

After all, it was the first day of bear season. And, our still-male-dominated society tolerantly smiles on taking to the woods to prowl with a gun for wildlife, while questioning the value of hooking out of work just to go for a walk on

a gorgeous day.

Like I said, I went bear hunting.

See, there's this abundant growth of bittersweet, just burdened with bright red-orange berries, way down on the far side of the heifer pasture, a good half-mile or so away. The branches are lovely in fall arrangements, or for adding color to holiday wreaths. Besides, maybe there was a bear hiding there in the thick brambles.

Rifles are a pain to lug around - not to mention my lack of a hunting license - so I armed myself with the trusty old pocketknife kept for cutting bale strings. The point of the blade is broken off, so the weapon is far from lethal, but in

a pinch, with a snorting bear hot on my trail....who knows.

For extra added protection, Fritz tagged along. Fritz doesn't see too many bears here in our populated section of York County, but he'd doubtless chase one if he did. A groundhog hater with a vengeance, Fritz would likely figure the bruin was merely an overgrown, overstuffed wood-chuck.

We poked along the fencerows, taking note that the multiflora roses are hanging heavy with berries, a possible sign of impending cold winter, with Mother Nature providing food for her bird children to nibble.

One stretch of fence was badly smashed, where the heifers had stretched their necks out over hunting tasty morsels, or maybe just sniffing for trouble. We yanked the crushed wire back up a couple of inches.

Farther along, a gate to the pasture was leaning badly, and any heifer in her right mischievous mind could have cleared it without half trying. Setting the gate back

up, we re-wired it in place.

Well, I did anyway. Fritz was busy scouting ahead for signs of bear.

Thick and weedy, the bittersweet stands glowed with cheery color. In no time my arms were full of the scratchy branches. On the way back, after battling with their

sharp, biting thorns, I added some multiflora rose clusters to the arrangement materials.

But, you know, we never did see that bear. It was a wonderful walk, though, and a day I'll remember for a long time for the sheer joy of being outside.

Too bad bear season is so short.



Thursday, Dec. 1
Lancaster Society 20 meets to sing Christmas carols.

Friday, Dec. 2
Lancaster Society 1 will hold a Christmas party at Luther Acres Dining Hall.

Lancaster Society 17 meets for a Christmas celebration at

Mechanic Grove Church of the Brethren.

Saturday, Dec. 3
Lancaster Society 12 meets for a Christmas party at the Lions Building in Millersville.

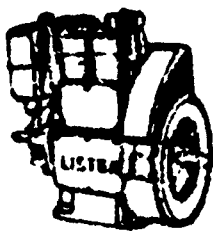
Lancaster Society 9 meets for a Christmas party.

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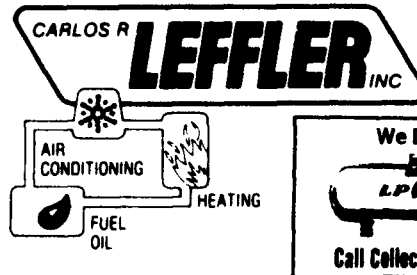
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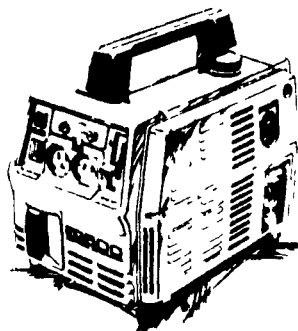
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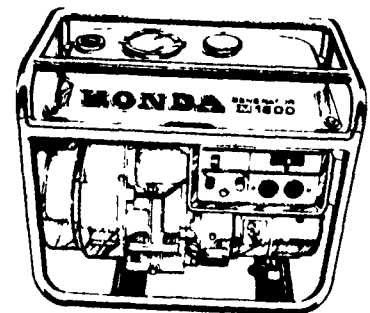


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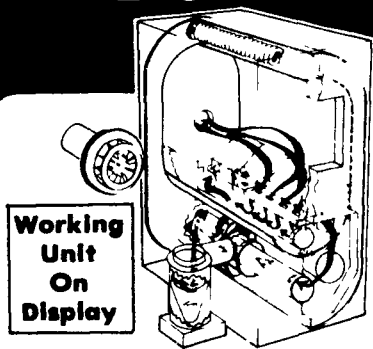
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