

On being a farm wife - And other hazards

Joyce Bupp



A magical round wand lies at my fingertips, waiting to transport my thoughts and dreams, at a moment's notice, to distant points around the globe.

Or just to summon the farmer in from the barn office for supper.

This phone is such a common place part of our lives that we take its magical technology for granted.

Pick it up, dial and talk with just about anyone.

Still, this telephone and I, we have our moments of clash.

For months now, there has been a knot in my long-distance trunk and not one of a half-dozen courteous trouble-shooter repairmen has been able to get to the roots of it.

During every long distance call I place from the house, a brief disconnection of a second or two occurs, interrupting the conversation momentarily.

Repairmen have come and gone, one even patiently listening in on an extension to observe the temporary disconnection phenomena, which amazingly, did perform as usual. Still, the elusive problem continues, buried beneath some maze of technological switching matter.

A similar gremlin wreaked long-distance havoc recently on another call in which I was a startled participant.

Moments after I placed a call to a distant farm in the county and made connections with the beef breeder who was the object of the call, we suddenly found our conversation crossed with the parties on either end of a directory assistance call.

Ever tried conducting a four-way, completely-unrelated dual conversation?

After a futile attempt to continue our ag-related discussion through this other pair of speakers, in my most polite phone voice, I mentioned to the operator dispensing a number to her caller that I was trying to speak with a party on a long-distance call.

Her answer dropped my mouth open and sent blood rushing to my ears and as I received a rude, snapping reply that I had cut into HER line.

Out the window went all those admonitions about turning the other cheek, speaking softly to turn away anger, etc.

"No operator, you cut into MY line," I growled back. As I sat there, receiver in hand, fuming, she continued her curt instructions to the fourth party on how to reach a particular number.

After many seconds, the tangled maze disconnected as we were unplugged from our crossed wires and once again I was alone on a line with a farmer on the other end laughing so hard he could hardly speak.

A repairman spent that Saturday afternoon working on the lines outside the house and barn.

We are still getting long-distance brief interruptions on every call.

But I haven't argued with an operator lately.

And somewhere, I can just visualize a computer bustin' its keyboard buttons in laughter over the hassle it's created.



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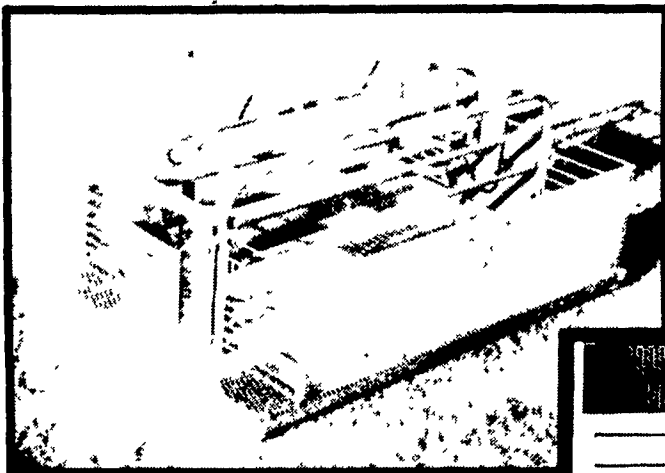
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