

On being a farm wife - And other hazards

Joyce Bupp



Through the square glass passes a parade of interesting entertainment, an ongoing look at life with high drama, humor, excitement, suspense - and occasionally, even tragedy.

Not the television set screen. My kitchen window.

Outside our farmhouse, a series of little scenarios unfolds constantly, played against the backdrop of changing seasons, the curtain ringing down only when evening's darkness interrupts the presentations.

Sometimes the action is the choreographed movements of green and red and orange machinery, hauling, turning, planting, harvesting across the ribbons of crop colors that hug the gently curving contours of the land.

More often, though, the characters with the lead are animals. We humans mostly get to play bit parts in the story plots created by the domesticated birds and beasts.

Three chickens cruising the backyard a few mornings ago enacted what reminded me of those brief skits we used to perform around 4-H day camp's evening campfires.

The action took place among the maple leaves decomposing over the youngsters' old sand pile, once busy with the toils of toy machinery, but mostly abandoned these days.

A handsome white rooster, one

black feather curving gracefully through his tail plumage, scratched with a vengeance through the rotting leaf mold. As he apparently uncovered some tasty morsel, one of the hens he'd been chattering to as he scratched swooped down in a split second to grab some goodie he'd uncovered.

That seemingly made the other hen in the harem furious. She began wildly chasing the first hen, which still clutched the uneaten bit in her beak. Round and round they went, the pursuer never letting up a second for the pursued to gobble down the goodie.

Meanwhile, Mr. Rooster totally ignored the hen fight, seeming relieved to finally be able to get on with enjoying his own breakfast.

Before the hens had negotiated their differences, in the driveway came a buyer for the junior farmer's newly-weaned piglets, the offspring of those notorious sows, Atomic and Bomb. In a sort of assembly-line loading arrangement, a human chain began loading the feeder pigs onto the waiting truck.

Suddenly from out of the pen burst Bomb, not in protest to the removal of her children, but almost as though she was helping with the arrangements. Up through the yard, past the truck, beyond the barn she trotted, as fast as those short, hooved legs would carry her heavy, bulky body.

It looked for all the world as though Bomb was dancing off the

burden of motherhood, embracing the unexpected welcome freedom from the squealing, grunting, pushing, constantly-hungry brood.

No, the scenarios through our windows aren't alive with cars that talk, contestants that scream and dance when they win expensive prizes, or detective shows where the good guys always manage to get their men within the 60-minute show limit.

What we see in window-watching is much closer to afternoon soap opera, the never-ending sagas of little disasters, everyday pleasures, frailties, trials and triumphs.

Besides, there are no commercials interrupting the action beyond the kitchen window.

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Saturday, March 24

Lancaster Society 23 meets to entertain husbands at Meadow Hills Dining Room. The Lancaster Lads will have the program at 6:30 p.m.

Lancaster Society 26 meets at General Sutter Inn at 6:30 p.m. to entertain husbands. The program will be an African Safari with Bob at the Brubakers.

Lancaster Society 4 meets at the home of Lorna King for a

program by Kristine Van Erlach.

Tuesday, March 27
Lancaster Society 24 meets for a craft night.

Thursday, March 29
Lancaster Society 11 meets for a program on India by Ruth Mellinger.

Saturday, March 31
Lancaster Society 5 meets at noon for a tour of the Blind Association. Cost is \$5.

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