

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



There are, at times, no worse critics than those found among one's own household.

"Mom, we have five places set for supper and each one has a different glass. We have NO

matching glasses on the table."

So, like, who cares? The Queen of England is not coming for supper. Neither is the President. Supper is for the family.

Now don't get me wrong, here. It's not that the family isn't important enough to use matching glasses. It's just that with family, I'm secure enough not to have to try to impress anyone with — picture-perfect plate settings. Goodness knows, only half of us might show up on time, anyway.

Mix-n-match place settings — the plates are all alike and so is MOST of the flatware — are simple common sense in this household. No full matched set of glassware has ever completed 24 hours in the kitchen. It's a mental block or some basic flaw of my personality

that causes glasses to break without even being touched. If the remaining of each set of say four or maybe six glasses to cross the threshold had been abandoned after the first one or two was smashed, we would have to make a continuing budget decision: buy glasses or eat.

If it's a legitimate glass, and holds liquids, it passes for family table settings. Picture perfect is saved for special occasions.

Likewise, the mug collection. We favor mugs for hot drinks around here. They are dragged all over the house, to the barn, the car, the greenhouse, the garden. Some are even specially designed, with snap-on lids and insulation, to preserve warm drinks in a chilly barn or calf nursery.

Nearly every one is different. One pats the farmer on the back with the reminder that he's "outstanding in his field." Another bears the name of a local ag-business (the other of the matched pair got broken!), one has a black and white cow, another a red and white cow, one with a pink pig, and there's the remaining orphan of a generic stoneware set; it has the handle cracked off. But, scattered hither and yon, their matching status is neither known nor cared about.

Take note — this is important — there is a matching set of six stoneware mugs beautifully decorated with floral designs. These are lovingly guarded solely for company use and dragged to the barn under penalty of severe

reprimand from the household manager.

Bath towels present yet another mis-match problem. Waiting until quality, large, fluffy towels go on sale assures one thing — they will not match the ones presently seeing use in one's household. Plus the consideration of their use — from eternal mold in a high school gym locker to mutilation by dust-straw-hay-sawdust and other related products of a cattle show — weigh in the choice of color.

Deep, rich shades which best hide the above have been heavily favored over the years. Thus, when a bright, feminine shade of peach recently fluffed onto the towel rack, the laundry manager was accused of heavy-handedness with the bleach bottle. Critics everywhere.

Fortunately, no one spied the mismatched socks hiding under my jeans and sneakers.

We have long ago decided, and will defend to the bitter end, this household's ho-hum philosophy on perfectly matched household accessories. Better to have mismatched glasses, mugs, towels, etc., than no glasses, mugs, towels, or etc. at all.

One sure way I've found to silence the critics is to suggest that, if they want matched household accessories, they purchase them with their own money.

And the resulting negative response will again prove that the personal commitment never quite matches the original criticism.

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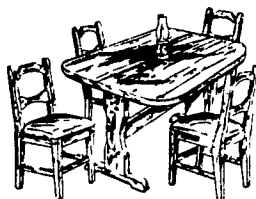
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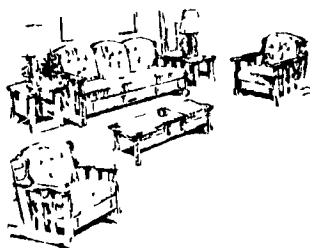


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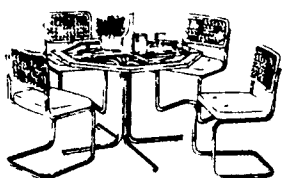
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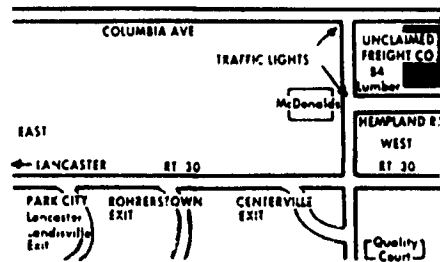
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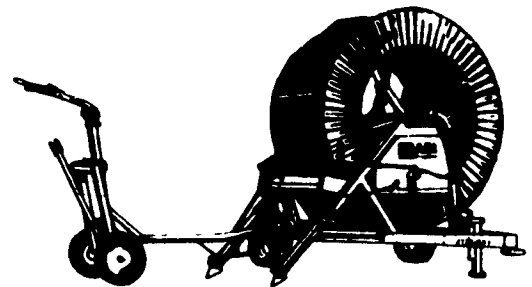
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