

On being a farm wife - And other hazards Joyce Bupp



"I was going to go to work today, but then the kids needed rides several places, I had laundry to do, and I never did get to the job."

"Gee, where can you get a job like that?" I wondered with envy, after reading the above comment in a printed article.

Reading a few lines farther revealed that the individual making the comment worked at home.

On second thought, I could have very well said that myself.

The self-help article proceeded with advice on how those of us who work (for pay, as opposed to all the daily non-pay stuff) at home with some degree of accomplishment and credibility. For instance, we're supposed to dress for the part, rather than hack around the household office in a bathrobe and slippers.

How does worn blue jeans and sneakers sound? I mean, I'd look awfully silly taking a break from the computer to put cows in the barn, dressed in heels, stockings and a skirt.

The barn is only one of the many diversions from discipline at the computer keyboard. And, on a crisp, sunny October morning, the temptation to linger anywhere but the office is heavy.

Like the "homeworker" above,

laundry needs almost constant attention, and seems to pile up endlessly. And, my deep Pennsylvania Dutch roots tell me it's unthinkable to toss wet laundry in the clothes dryer on a gorgeous day when it can be hung out in the breeze.

Besides, it's a superb excuse to get out into the sunshine.

Immediately, at least a half dozen kittens come charging through the yard, tumble around my feet, and climb into the wash basket. One takes a flying leap, and lands, claws clinging to my heavy jeans, square on my right knee -- an incredibly bad habit of these kittens. Someday one will do that to a visitor wearing expensive pantyhose.

So, hanging out the laundry takes a while. Petting kittens is time consuming when they must be pried off one's knees.

Frost damage to the flower border needs a quick check, to see what might be salvageable for indoors. Not much but the roses, which thrive on the cooler weather. Their razor-sharp thorns demand cutting with a pruner, which means another quick trip to the basement for the proper tool.

Back in the office, roses established in a vase, the keyboard and I punch out a couple of sentences. I

spot the mailman's vehicle and retrieve the day's delivery. Sorting and checking the worthwhile stuff from the junk takes another several minutes.

Before another sentence is on the screen, the phone will ring at least once, perhaps twice, maybe even three times.

Another load of laundry is ready to be hung out. Accompanied by the kittens.

Somewhere between noon and one o'clock, someone will show up for lunch. Maybe. On half-days of scheduled classes, the college student arrives home with the

day's news to share. Another call comes in.

Afternoons sometimes offer an hour or two of uninterrupted time. But supper must be started. A quick trip to the post office. Our high schooler charges through the door, home from school, and stampedes the kitchen for rescue from impending starvation. About four, I'll be summoned to help put the cows into their stalls for evening

milking.

Still, the benefits of being a "homeworker" usually outweigh the distractions. No computer traffic (except for falling over a row of kittens). A low-cost clothing budget. Flexible hours. All the coffee breaks I want to take.

Maybe I just need to have my mother remind me occasionally to get at it and get my homework done.

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