

On being a farm wife - And other hazards

Joyce Bupp



Ahhh, glorious October! My favorite month of the year.

Month of brisk breezes and bright leaves. Month of crisp, clear, moonlit nights and frosty mornings sparkling the meadow with icy sprinkles. Gone is the heat, the humidity, buzzing mosquitos and hordes of flies (well, most of 'em, anyway.)

Harvesting of corn and beans, and planting of spring grain crops,

keeps the fieldwork pressure steady. Still, I begin to sense subtle hints of another urge, a primeval draw with roots way back to man's beginnings.

Mealtime conversation is peppered with references to licenses, season openings, clay birds, shells, compound bow weights. Our youngest affirms that, yes, a camo-colored thermal sweatshirt would indeed be a timely addition

Collegiate Look

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her ten-year-old mistress sported beautiful bead work from Africa. The spectators picked Griffin out as a favorite early in the competition and there was a lot of cheering when she was selected as the winner.

Griffin, a fourth grader at Whitehouse School, shares ownership of the Tunis with her sister Carmen. She also owns and exhibits Romneys and has received champion ram and ewe honors at state and county shows in Hunterton, NJ. Griffin, who lives in Whitehouse Township in New Jersey, also studies violin.

Rachel Lawrence, White Hall, Md., placed second with her yearling ewe, Hopeful. Lawrence bought the animal at KILE last year. Lawrence was wearing a teal 100% wool flannel suit that she made herself.

The third-place award went to a dapper 12-year-old, Patrick

Zagrodnichek of Clarksburg. Wearing a rich looking suit of 100% wool made by family friend Janet Irwin, Zagrodnichek appeared to be one of the most confident contestants in the junior division. A seventh grade honors student, Patrick has been a member of the 4-H for five years and has exhibited dairy animals and market lambs. He led a South-down sheep owned by Tim Bishop.

Results are as follows:

Senior Division

1. Jane Endslow, 2. Susan Wise, 3. Stacy Suffel, 4. Susan Mawhinney, 5. Arlisa Snavelly, 6. Rachel Hixenbaugh, 7. Amy Musser, 8. Karen Mullen, 9. Amy Eshleman, 10. Donna MacCauley.

Junior Division

1. Jaeme Lee Griffin, 2. Rachel Laurence, Patrick Zagrodnichek, 4. Christine Baxter, 5. Carly Kelly, 6. Megan Perry, 7. Renne Cleverey, 8. Kristin Long, 9. Leon Hunter, 10. Stephanie Bowman.

to his outdoor wardrobe.

Still, over the years, there has been a shift in emphasis hereabouts on preference of seasons to take to the woods to wait and watch, to track and trail.

October's archery season, for instance, usually finds mountain environments far more hospitable to parking one's posterior somewhere in or under a big, old oak or hickory or pine, than does December. Indeed — the woods are warmer, less likely to play host to a blinding blizzard, or to an ice storm sending branches crashing around one's head.

Personally, the idea of trekking around windswept mountain wilds in early December leaves me cold. October's golden beauty seems far more appealing.

My October visits along to mountain wilds, though, are strictly for goofing off — no hunting. I hunt, track and trap big 'game every day and have no intention of doing it for recreation.

My elusive quarry slips unseen from field to field, farm to farm, allowing only an occasional glimpse from a distance. Season is open year round, and the licenses are issued at the county courthouse.

I frequently stalk the game with questions and messages, generally trudging back to the house empty-handed. And even though you can expect "it" to be in a certain spot at a certain time, the moment you

stalk "it" with an emergency is when "it" will have dashed off somewhere to pick up a part.

It quickly learns to feed at feeders, mostly resembling the kitchen table. Anything in the cakes-pies-cookies line is a sure-fire, catch-em bait. Baked ham, pizza or chocolate likewise generate quick appearances at our kitchen feeder.

Tracks and droppings are plentiful, making this quarry fairly easy to trail. The tracks are easily read, usually left in grimy, black machinery grease, shaped like fingerprints, and liberally scattered over white-painted doors, woodwork, and creme-colored phone. On occasion, tracks of the residue can be found splattered around and over the soap dish at the kitchen sink or even the front door window.

Droppings take various forms: trails of hay dirt through the

office, corn dust on the chair cushions, husks of manure on the basement floor. Other surefire signs are scatterings of hats so grubby the dirt obscures their colors and advertising logos, damp sweaters, and jeans thick enough with shop grease they can almost walk themselves to the washing machine.

You can try calling "it," like you do turkeys for instance, but "it" probably won't answer anyway. In the years of my "hunting" experience, no surefire call for this game has ever proved reliable.

However, just give up the search, sit down on an easy chair, and pick up something to read. Instantly, the game will materialize from the wilds of the farmstead, sounding its most familiar call.

"What's for lunch?"
Happy hunting.

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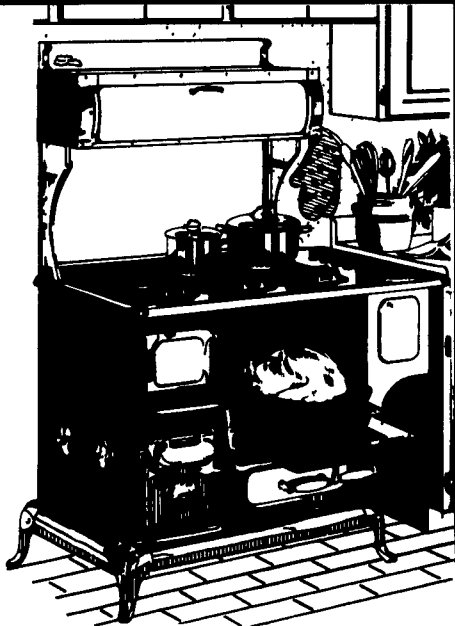
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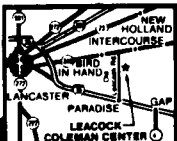
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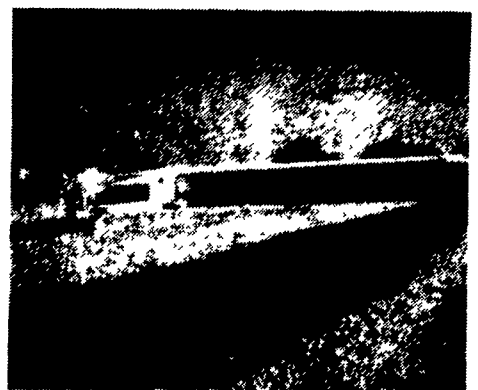
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6/28/88

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