

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

**Joyce Bupp**



One never knows, whence one sows, what seeds might spring forth. . . .

Once upon a time, on a sunny and beautiful fall day, four people set off together on a family outing. At the appointed destination, they

joined others - relatives and acquaintances - with whom they would share this afternoon.

Leaves, red and gold and brown, quivered and shimmered and fluttered lazily to the woodland floor beneath. Birds whistled

and chirped and swooped through the multitude of branches. And diamond-like sparkles shimmered on the surface of a wide stream, ripples marking the stony bottom and small ledges over which the waters tumbled on toward a greater river.

Into these gentle, whispering waters went a convoy of small vessels, guided by quiet paddles angling the graceful canoes into the stream's quiet flow. Then, the soft loveliness of the gentle afternoon was shattered by piercing shrieks.

"Nooo! Let met out! I don't wanna' do this!"

Seasonal shallowness of the stream left our fiberglass, keel-bottomed canoe and its four occupants occasionally scraping bottom. Reluctant over this initial float, our offspring had responded to the scraping of the keel against

a shallow ledge in fearful - and loud - protest.

Not wanting to frighten them away from this new venture of family togetherness, we set them back creekside with Aunt Linda until we had cleared the six-inch mini-waterfalls. But at ages seven and four, even tiny riffles in a creek 18 inches deep must have appeared terrifying - especially when you were dead certain you didn't want to be there in the first place.

It was the first of sporadic canoe runs we would make in the ensuing years. There was a recurring worry in that time that bundling them in lifejackets and shoving off from the shores of area waterways might have some adverse effect on their future love of water. Safety, though, was always uppermost in

our planning and consideration.

Once upon a time, three people set off on a family outing. The fall afternoon was warm and sunny and golden, rich in woodland colors of red and yellows and browns. Birds whistled and sang and flitted through the hills of hardwoods. And the bright sun reflected a million sparkling diamonds from the face of the waters.

Into the flow went a few small vessels, nudging out into a strong current, and angling downstream toward the muffled roar of choppy, white-edged waves. Taking the lead, seeking out the bounciest waves and dropping legs was a battered, second-hand kayak. From within the protective helmet peered a face, older, leaner, but resembling that of a once-reluctant four-year-old.

Encouraged further by Aunt Linda and Uncle Dave, under whose reassuring wing he once took refuge on a creek bank, he now practices paddling technique in the second-hand kayak which he has added to our former two-canoe family armada.

It is the enthusiastic kayaker who paddles the lead. Out ahead, he scouts whitewater and passages over ledges, spots shallows and boat-biting rocks. Though milking chores limit time and distance, float trips have added memorable moments to our family togetherness.

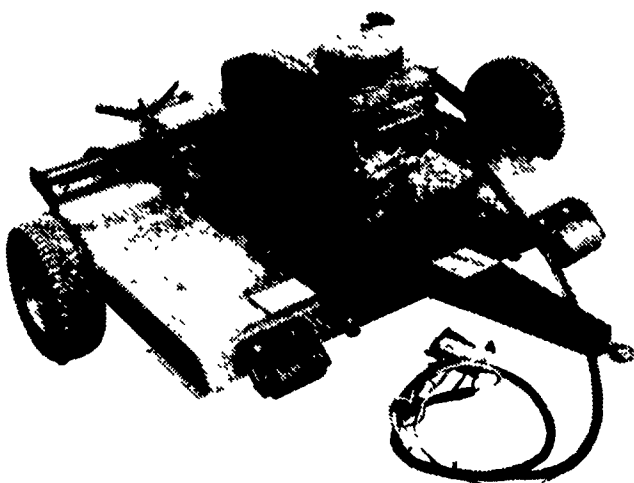
We've glided through quiet, backwater hiding holes spying on giant granddaddy carp. Once nearly-extinct ospreys have swooped over our heads, plunged headlong into the river, and emerged clutching fish in curled talons. Climbing skyward with their catch, ospreys shake water from their feathers in a motion reminiscent of a wet dog.

And, Sunday afternoon, we watched fascinated as a deer swam the slightly-swollen currents between islands on the Susquehanna, seeking refuge from some unknown disruption to its life.

It is the teen-age kayaker who now usually initiates these trips, seeking out opportunities for spending Sunday afternoons with two somewhat older and grayer paddling parents.

Sort of a parental fairy tale, come true, we figure.

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