

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



Beyond the wide windows of plate glass, darkness was gathering. Only a few people traversed the bright, long halls beyond this small table in the airport terminal's coffee shop.

We spoke little, the Farmer and I, both dealing with painful emotions in our own private way. Concentrating on the newspaper I tried to read was difficult; tears, unbidden, blurred the print. To have spoken would have unleashed them uncontrollably.

The last farewells, the last lingering hugs were over. Our daughter and son-in-law were headed back to their home in Moscow, Idaho; and the farm awaited our return. This parting was almost as difficult as their departure a year ago, newlyweds by a week, to begin their life together as students at the University of Idaho. Only once in the interim had we seen one another.

Their visit at Christmas had been back to their childhood homes. Now it had been for us to enter their world, a world nearly three-thousand miles away, with new home, new friends, new environment, new way of life. How swiftly our brief time together had passed, with no promise of seeing them again for a long time.

One of the more difficult parts

of parenting is the setting free. But that is countered with a satisfaction in seeing your children successfully settled and thriving in their own pursuits, and have them welcome you back into their lives in friendship.

And this had been a wonderful visit, a visit not so much with

children as with friends. For nearly a week, the four of us had shared a camping trip around sparsely populated, largely mountain-and-desert wilderness, areas of the Northwest, so completely different from Pennsylvania. Our brief time together had whisked by much too quickly - but the memories will remain for a lifetime.

Memories like sitting together around a dying campfire in a primitive area of the Sawtooth Mountains, and watching a glittering, full moon edge up over the top of a towering, pine-spiked ridge.

Memories of the spine-tingling howl of a coyote from deep in the hilly, roller-coaster terrain of Idaho's dryland wheat country. And of the shriek of an osprey, in territorial battle with a family of bald eagles fishing from a tall pine, as the sun rose over Montana's Flathead Lake.

Of steaming irrigation-grown sweet corn on a campfire griddle for two young corn lovers who

hadn't munched "good" roasting ears in two years. Of bacon and pancakes beside a tumbling stream after a long mountain-meadow walk at daybreak. Memories of wading among the slippery round rocks and icy currents of the Salmon River and velvet-antlered buck deer meandering into the waters for an evening drink.

Of a breath-taking climb up Glacier National Park's Going-To-The-Sun highway, carved from sheer cliff dropoffs, and the whimsey of stumbling across a semi-tame, tourist-wise, mountain goat in brushy crags near the top of the awesome Logan pass.

Memories of card games and laughter in the light of a camp lantern, while thunder echoed through the mountain darkness. Of supplies-gathering at a Sun Valley supermarket complete with

wood paneling, fireplace, and trophy elk heads on display. Of huckleberry (wild blueberries) ice cream cones and grazing elk in the hunting haven of Elk River.

When I could again read the newspaper print, it also spoke of loved ones bidding farewell for long periods of time, children and spouses destined for other wilderness spots - baking deserts of the Middle East. I suddenly felt very selfish, weeping for children far away getting their education, while others were headed halfway around the world to an uncertain and dangerous destination.

So we will smile with our memories of this special time shared with our kids and rejoice for their happiness. Our tears...and our gratitude...and, most of all, our prayers, we offer for other far-way sons and daughters, standing for us on the front line for freedom.



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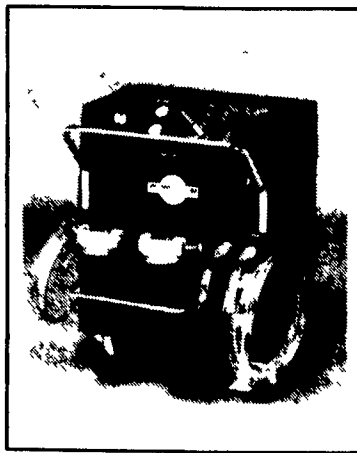
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- * Sept. 17 Association Steer Sale
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- * Oct. 1 Association Steer Sale
- * Oct. 8 Association All Breed Calf Sale
- Oct. 15 Open Steer Sale
- * Oct. 22 Association All Breed Calf Sale
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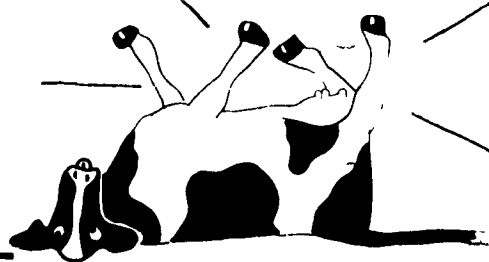
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