

On being a farm wife - And other hazards

Joyce Bupp



"We've got a problem."

The look that announcement generated from The Farmer was not one of surprise, but rather of the "NOW what?" variety. (Poor grammar aside, the phrase "we've got a problem" sees almost as daily use as the "what's to eat?" one.)

"There's water all over the back basement. The water tank has a leak and it's spraying right out the side."

He abandoned me temporarily as I handled the milking chores by myself and pondered the unwelcome possibility of having an indoor swimming pool by morning.

This particular problem was not completely unexpected. The old galvanized tank was probably close to a quarter-century old and had run millions of gallons of water through the house and barn plumbing systems. Rust spots had increasingly pockmarked the surface over the past few years, leaving it pitted and weakened from our acidic water.

Someday, something would bump against the deteriorating metal and we'd have a gusher. Or a leak would just start itself - as it just had. It would happen on a holiday, or a Sunday, or some evening after plumbing supply businesses were closed for the day - as it just had.

After about ten minutes of worry over imminent floating furniture and a drowned furnace, I saw our resident plumber returning.

"Well, it's permanently fixed," he grinned. "No more leak."

"Riiiiight," was my skeptical answer. "What'd you do to it?"

"Propped one of your rubber gloves against it with a stick wedged against the sink."

Farmers' Quick Fix service strikes again.

Mastering the art of make-do is an accomplishment of many farmers I know. It's a skill honed by years of assorted equipment, electrical, plumbing and miscellaneous breakdowns at most inopportune times and carried out by use of such essentials as baling twine, duct tape, old electrical wires and pieces of retired innertubes.

Even rubber gloves and sticks. The prop-it-shut system did indeed do the trick, buying adequate time to pick up and install a replacement tank and appropriate fittings. And, over the years, I've learned that sometimes making-do with what's at hand is often more sensible than an inconvenient and costly purchase of some specialized item - which doesn't even always work.

"Mom, can you get me some kind of window cleaner for the chopper?" asked the youngest a few weeks ago. He got a quick lesson in the best window cleaner Mom ever found - a little vinegar in clean, warm water, wiped off with clean newspaper.

Last week I spied him taking the glass cleaning a step farther. He swiped my sponge floor mop from the closet to get the water-vinegar cleaning solution up to the glass sides of the forage harvester cab.

For sometime now, some old, dirty pieces of cellophane tape stuck to the sides of my white refrigerator have been bugging me. They looked so dirty, but wouldn't peel loose, nor had I been able to scrape them off.

Peanut butter! Of course. It dissolves sticky price-tag residue, why not tape? And for the first time in months, that side of the refrigerator is minus the dirty tape and looks new again.

Last week, with a cold Canadian air mass whipping 'round the barn, it seemed appropriate to install the frames covered with plastic into the open windows of the weaned calves' pen. The first went smoothly into the opening -

except for one stubborn corner. I had just seen a hammer left somewhere. But where? Not in the office. Not in the calf barn. And the one for my house tool box had long ago gotten legs. Nearby lay a couple of pieces of broken cement

block. A couple of whacks with a sturdy chuck and the stubborn corner fit nice and snug. Somewhere, a caveman ancestor - the original men of make-do - must have smiled smugly.

This is progress?

Somerset County Auctioneer

(Continued from Page B3)

The conversation gets distracted as a snowy kitten slips under the table and circulates around the ankles resting there.

Obviously, the everyday affairs in the life of Betty Lou are balanced with laughter and affection. Her conversation is spicy, intelligent, extremely fun, very entertaining.

But the best thing about her is that, trim as she is, when the milk chocolates are disappearing, she never once said that tacky, over-worked cliché "There goes my diet." You have to enjoy being with that kind of person.

At the junior livestock sale during the county fair, Betty Lou was the sole female among the five auctioneers. Her attractive dark curls and light blue eyes brightened the arena. Opting to wear a longish skirt and matching shirt in vibrant color, fine black leather boots, she cut a classy looking figure. Unruffled by the normal habits of farm animals moving around the showing, she simply did her professional best, casting observant glances across the packed crowd in search of bidders until her own turn on the podium.

She says she finds the junior livestock sale very enjoyable and looks forward to it each year. However, she, Matt and Reed do a variety of sales.

"Most of the time it is total fam-

ily with us," she says. Recently, even Heidi is getting involved in helping as a runner.

Preparing for a sale is an involved process. It starts with the pre-sale contract. She says the sellers are usually full of questions and confer with the auctioneers about everything. The sale is booked and everything in the house from basement to attic is examined. It is an inventory of all the owner's possessions. It is also a time-consuming aspect of the whole sale. Generally, it is done by Betty Lou and her mother. "We put it in order," she says, "Grouping categories for advertising. We start with the most expensive or treasured items. We do the advertising and include the cost in our fee. We line up the help, which takes a whole staff. There is one clerk, two cashiers, two runners, and three auctioneers."

Post sale time is equally important. "We're there until usually two hours after the sale. It takes time to match the money with the paperwork. We don't leave until the money and the paperwork match." There is also equipment to dismantle, she says.

Like good partners, David and Betty Lou help one another in their professions. He, with auctions, she, with land reclamation following the conclusion of a coal stripping operation. Land recla-

mation restores coal-stripped land to useful land.

Involved on one occasion was the planting of 28,000 trees and seeding the land. Of the three persons needed for the job, Betty Lou was to drop the young tree into the hole as the hole digging apparatus was propelled forward. To get the job done right, she had to sit in an ungainly position with her knees bent in an area near her ears. The third person followed, closing the holes around the tree roots.

February is the finest time of the year for land reclamation. The freezing and thawing of the ground help to firmly anchor the tender roots. It's been tired at all seasons and winter conditions can't be improved upon for the best planting results.

The Svonavec's big white house with its tall pillars stands graciously at the end of a country lane flanked on one side by a dark crisscross fence. On the lower side of it is a pretty pond with a floating gazebo which David built by using styrofoam material on the bottom.

With a shortfall of vacations during the last ten years, just two of the, actually, David and Betty Lou decided recently, to take their children on a Disney Cruise in waters off Florida. Betty Lou admitted to being just as excited about the trip as were the children.

MILK. IT DOES A BODY GOOD.
MIDDLE ATLANTIC MILK MARKETING ASSOCIATION, INC

ASHLEY
WOOD & COAL STOVES
NEW & USED FURNITURE
FISHER'S FURNITURE, INC.

Bart, Pennsylvania 17503
Rt. 896 at Georgetown - 6 Miles
South of Strasburg
Hours: Mon. - Thurs. 8-5, Fri. 8-5, Sat. 8-1

HARMAN STOVES
For The Quality Buyer!
LEACOCK
Coleman
CENTER
89 Old Leacock Rd.
Ronks, PA 171-768-7174
Open Mon. - Thurs. 7 to 5
Fri. 7 to 4
Sat. 7 to 3

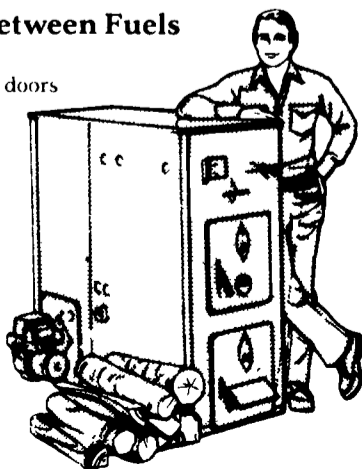
Stoker, Furnaces Etc.

Wood • Coal • Oil Gas • Electricity

HS TARM MULTI-FUEL CENTRAL HEATERS BURN THEM ALL!

Experts agree! Hot water (hydronic) heating is the most comfortable way to heat a home, and there's no better way to stay warm than with the HS Tarm Multi-fuel Boiler. Its flexibility (burns 5 fuels) and heavy duty construction make it "the last heating system you'll ever need."

- Automatically Switches Between Fuels
- Easy Cleaning & Loading
Cast iron shaker grates and extra large doors
- FREE Hot Water
Tankless heating coil makes domestic hot water on demand
- 20 Year Warranty



HS TARM
MULTI-FUEL CENTRAL HEATING
ALTERNATIVE ENERGY SYSTEMS
460 W. Main St. Ephrata, PA 17522
(717) 738-0708

GOOD FOOD OUTLET STORES

See Our Original Line Of Golden Barrel Products Plus All Kinds Of Nuts, Beans, Candies, Etc. At Reduced Prices



Processors Of Syrups, Molasses, Cooking Oil, Funnel Cake Mix & Shoofly Pie Mixes (With or Without Syrup)

- ★ CORN SYRUP
- ★ PANCAKE SYRUP
- ★ PURE MAPLE SYRUP
- ★ SORGHUM SYRUP
- ★ TABLE SYRUP
- ★ COCONUT OIL
- ★ CORN OIL
- ★ COTTONSEED OIL
- ★ PEANUT OIL
- ★ SOYBEAN OIL
- ★ 100 LB. BAG GRANULATED SUGAR
- ★ BAKING MOLASSES
- ★ BARBADOS MOLASSES
- ★ BLACK STRAP MOLASSES
- ★ HONEY
- ★ PEANUT BUTTER
- ★ FUNNEL CAKE MIX
- ★ SHOOFLY PIE MIXES

If your local store does not have it, CALL OR WRITE FOR FREE BROCHURE & PRICES

— WE UPS DAILY —

Good Food Outlets
— Located At —

L&S SWEETENERS

388 E Main St., Leola, PA 17540

717-656-3486 1-800-633-2676

GOOD FOOD OUTLET

— Located At Good Food, Inc. —

W Main St., Box 160, Honey Brook, PA 19344
215-273-3776 1-800-327-4406

We Have Excess Stock Available Delicious Old Style Golden Barrel

TABLE SYRUP

(As used at the Veterans Administration)

#10 Can Only **\$4⁰⁰**