

On being a farm wife - And other hazards

Joyce Bupp



There was a time, in earlier days, when I enjoyed it more.

Its rushing sound through the big maples around the house made the inside feel comfortably secure and cozy on blustery winter nights. It toss-dried clean, wet laundry out on the lines with more efficiency than the electric dryer, leaving an irreplaceable fresh outdoorsy scent on every load. And its cooling effect offered refreshing relief on hot, sticky days of mid-summer.

And while those are all still enjoyable to the senses, my appreciation of wind seems to be diminishing in some sort of ratio with the advancing years.

This is starting to sound like -- gulp! -- some old codger complaining.

Maybe I've just replaced too many pieces of plastic blown off barn windows... picked up too many downed limbs... fished too

many feed bags, plastic buckets and various other unsightly wind-blown objects from in and around the little pond below the house.

The Big Wind (mini-tornado) that whipped through the farm last summer may have been the final blow -- pun intended -- to my mental outlook on air blasts. We are now burning for kindling the last residue of the wind-wrecked giant broken limbs which completely obliterated the yard and left in a skeletonized state our beloved old maple trees.

After staggering around the farm over recent days, half-blinded by bits of straw, hay and sawdust lodging behind my contact lenses, I'm expending effort to remember that continuing wind in March is normal -- if there is such a thing -- and will shortly turn lamb-like. 'Course, if you've ever watched lambs butt heads and their mothers at feeding time,

you may question what "gentle as a lamb" really means.

Still, the brisk breezes have so dried the fields that manure hauling and chiseling the nutrients into the ground is far ahead of some years. A million diamonds sparkle across the surface of the wind-whipped waters of the big pond. And our resident redtail hawks soar with magnificence on the wind currents over the greening expanses of the lower meadow.

And if March delivers a constant bluster of wind, blowing in with that are any number of unmistakable indications of the impending first day of spring.

There it was, spotted hopping around a neighbor's lawn, in the early morning sunshine a few days ago. The First Robin. Then another, and another, in other lawns and bare-branch trees of the rural development adjacent to the farm. But the first bluebird we saw had beaten the robin by a full week.

Already a dandelion's cheery yellow face smiles through the clover on the south-sloping hillside of the lawn between our house and barn. Weeping willows below the barn are pushing tender green buds and the towering pussy willow bush (tree?) waves gray-cat-fur blooms above the backyard. From beneath a blanket of leaf litter in a sheltered corner near the greenhouse, the first purple crocus bud pushes up to mark the season.

And, even without these familiar portents of spring, a drama which unfolded last weekend on the sparkling waters of windswept pond confirmed the urges of the

season of renewed life and growth.

Last year's pair of Canada geese and their single offspring return daily, nibbling at green shoots of meadow grass and growing fat and sleek on the gleanings of goose food from the ponds.

When a fourth handsome, heavy-necked bird arrived on a recent morning, it set off a day-long squabble, squawk and chase session. Since the two older geese kept themselves between their grown baby and the newcomer, we assumed the young one is a

female, and the visitor a potential mate. The territorial posturings went on all day and continued well after dark, but by late in the day the young one and the visitor seemed to be drawing closer.

Now we're back to three, with our youngest figuring Dad goose finally flogged the suitor off, honking something about his daughter being too young.

I'd like to ask the kid how he got to be so familiar with this subject.

But he'd probably suggest I go out in the wind and blow away.



FFA HAPPENINGS

Leadership Conference Held
Heather Becker from the Pequea Valley FFA chapter recently participated in a statewide leadership conference.

The annual State Legislative Leadership Conference (SLLC) was held March 3-5, 1991 in Harrisburg.

More than 100 members and teachers from across the state participated in the activities of the three-day event.

The conference highlight was a legislative breakfast where participants had the opportunity to meet their state legislators.

In addition, visits to the capital building and the state museum were scheduled later the same day.

Other points of interest that


were visited included the Pennsylvania Farmers Association, Hershey Chocolate, the Game and Fish Commission, and the Governors Mansion.

The members were also given time to learn to know each other and practice various leadership skills that were taught at a series of workshops. However, there was also time to sit back, relax, and enjoy recreational activities.

SLLC was sponsored by Chevron U.S. Inc., Sun Company, Pennsylvania Farmers' Association, and the FFA Foundation. The conference was conducted by the State Officer Team and various staff members, teachers, and special guests.


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