

On being a farm wife - And other hazards Joyce Bupp



We're getting ready to market a new service.

Weathermaking.

The way we make weather changes occur here is to leave the farm.

It worked effectively last year. One snatched weekend at the beach -- out of the entire summer of 1990 -- resulted in one of the worst windstorms to ever sweep through our little section of York County.

Just recently we have begun to put back together the barn flattened by what we figured was a tornado, but what weather experts called "straight line winds." And the downed tree limbs, which

filled the yard around the house, served their final duty as wood-stove kindling and fuel for house warmth through last winter's cold.

The one day through this entire summer that we stole a few hours away for our local Holstein cattle show it rained buckets at the fairgrounds -- though the ground around the farm got a mere sprinkling.

So it seemed only proper and fitting that, as we headed for the Delaware coast for a few days away with the kids, prior to their return to college classes far and near, a major weather event would be bearing down.

Bob. Hurricane Bob.

Actually, we had reached the point in this season of heat and crop-devastating-drought where it seemed only some massive system -- like a hurricane -- would alter the entrenched dry-weather pattern. Never mind that the first reports of one forming came as we made preparations and gathered provisions for this brief getaway of several families and generations joined by blood, marriage, and friendship.

Threatening weather seemed far distant as we headed southeast through a hot, sultry afternoon. But gradually, fat thunderclouds slid over the horizon, trailing darker, more ominous, bluish-gray thickness.

Within an hour from the seaside house, so generously shared by our sister and brother-in-law, traffic backups jammed the opposite, northward-bound highway lanes.

Was everyone fleeing the beaches? We hit the car radio button for local weather reports. Bob was headed straight up the coast. And two generations of family were already settled in at the beach house.

"What hurricane?" they collectively asked on our arrival. So busy had they been with "beach stuff" and playing games, no one had turned on a radio or picked up a newspaper.

Though clouds hung heavy over the sand and moderate waves, the still, humid air belied the hurricane warnings issued every few minutes on the weather radio. With the storm's center predicted to pass a hundred miles farther east over the Atlantic, no one on the south Delaware shore seemed too concerned. Flashlights, batteries, water, food and gas, however, were reportedly selling like hotcakes.

A slow drizzle starting near midnight hinted at the fulfillment of the weathermen's warnings. Our cars had gas, we had run a small supply of fresh water -- and

all we could do was go to sleep and wait it out.

By dawn, Bob had noisily arrived. Gusts of wind whistled between the sturdy houses and through beach pines. Waves crashed, if you could hear them over the wind. Mists of moisture soaked porches and poked through cracks of windows left up for fresh air.

And as quickly as he came, Bob blew off, leaving counter-clockwise swirling cloud patterns over the coast that even before lunch parted to bright sunshine. But ahead of and behind him, Bob churned the weather enough back at home to give us more rain than had fallen in the past three months

and coax touches of green from our barren, brown pastures and lawns.

Bob brought powerful waves, closed beaches for a day, stirred rain at home and detoured us from the surf to snagging crabs for supper with chicken necks dangled on lines from a back bay floating pier. While he wreaked considerable havoc elsewhere, Bob left us with only memories of a little extra seaside excitement and much-needed moisture.

Next time we need summer rain, I'll just volunteer to go to the beach.

It's a tough job -- but I think I'm up to it.

Workaholics

(Continued from Page B12)

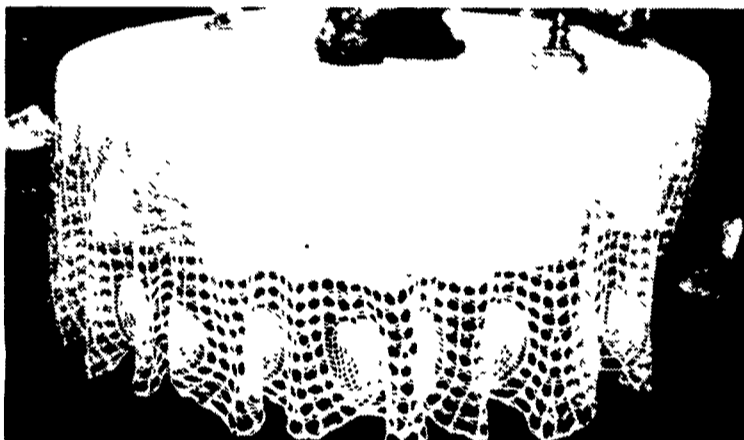
They have been driving bus for 35 years.

When the farm work isn't pressing, Marian works on many different projects. It seems impossible to name a craft that Marian doesn't do expertly. Among them, she crochets intricate tablecloths, counted crosstitch, knits, macramés lawn chairs, canes chairs, and makes ceramics.

In the past, she has won top prizes at Bloomsburg Fairs, but in

recent years she does not take the time to enter her projects. Some skills she has learned from her mother and mother-in-law, but much of her expertise has been picked up by studying instructions from Penn State's at-home courses.

Marian is an adamant supporter of Penn State's courses. "Working is fun. I wouldn't want to sit and do nothing," she said.



This intricate crochet tablecloth is only one of the many projects that Marian Snyder made that took first prize at the Bloomsburg Fair.

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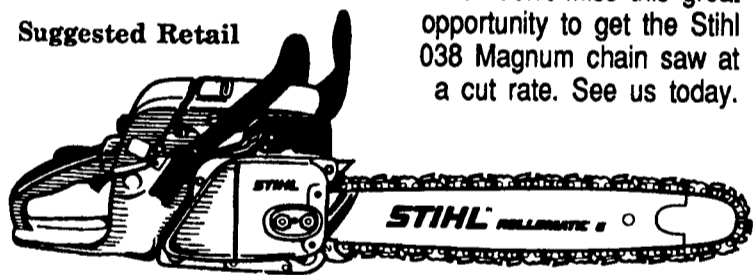
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