

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

Joyce Bupp



Dusk.
Our favorite time of the summer day.

Afternoon heat subsides as the sun slips behind the western hill, its last lingering golden rays shining off the silos roofs. A touch of evening coolness settles in over the meadow and lower lawn. Bare feet sense the first touch of dew condensing on the grass.

The heifers rouse from their late afternoon, heat-induced rest period and begin making their way up through the pasture toward supper silage waiting in the bunk feeder.

Most walk, but a few laggards trot to catch up, so as not to miss out on the first, tastiest bites of feed. A slight cloud of dust rises and hovers above their path, as sets of hard hooves stir the dry soil.

Echoes of a tractor motor bounce through the hollow, as mowers or hay balers return from finishing up one last field for the day. A few barn feeding chores remain before The Farmer will call

it a day. I pull a few last weeds from the garden, gather my tools, and with cats and dog trailing behind, head for the patio or pond pier to enjoy the evening peacefulness.

Then, slowly at first but gathering momentum with each second toward impending darkness, the evening lights begin flashing on.

Fireflies, zillions of 'em scattered out across the rolling fields of farmland.

Those first earlybird fireflies seems to signal the others, who wake at dusk and rise in swarms to flit and hover over the fields. For whatever reason, the "lightning bugs" as we've always called them, seem drawn to the strips of alfalfa and grain.

When the barley was ripening, and then newly-combined, those fields seemed to draw the greatest concentrations of flashes, though the adjoinable alfalfa strips appeared a close second-favorite of the sparkling insects. But in the pastures where a few heifers still

poke around, only a small number, by comparison, of the signals flash on and off.

As darkness deepens, the firefly glow seems to brighten. Our sloping hillside of contoured fields pulsates with their constant sparkling, like gentle showers of sequins raining from the skies. The clouds of fireflies do not rise and claim the whole empty night sky, but rather hover in a narrow layer just a few feet above the fields.

Why this intense concentration of fireflies over certain areas? We've observed the same phenomenon summer after summer. Is the air above yellow, ripe grain fields slightly drier and warmer than the micro-climate just above green alfalfa, as The Farmer has speculated? Is there some smaller insect or mini-being in particular that congregates to those spots, and on which the fireflies feed? Or do those fields harbor a particularly favored environment in which the fireflies spend their days, and that's where they just appear when evening coolness or degree of darkness stirs them up into mating flight?

If fireflies lit the skies year-round, we would probably not even notice them after a week or two. But the duration of their lives is so brief and yet so brilliant, that we are enthralled with the beauty they add to summer's tender evenings.

What time do the fireflies call it a day? Or a night?



Juniata Crowns Princess

MIFFLIN (Juniata) — Rebecca Ann Woodward of Mifflin, took over the reign of Juniata County Dairy Princess. Becky succeeded outgoing princess, Anita Faulkner.

The coronation took place on June 17, at the Walker Grange Hall. A chicken bar-be-que dinner was served before the pageant. Following the dinner Becky gave a presentation titled "A Typical Dairy Farmer" and a skit about "Dairy Products as Snacks," which she will also give when she competes for the title of Pennsylvania Dairy Princess in September.

In addition, the Promotion Committee recognized six young ladies as Dairy Maids, Dairy Misses', and 'Lil' Misses. These girls will aid Becky with the promotions throughout the county. Serving as Becky's aids will be Jada Faulkner, daughter of James and Pat Faulkner of RD2 Port Royal; Diane Glock, daughter of Larry and Cindy Glock of Mifflin; Sara Hoover, daughter of Thomas and Brenda Hoover of RD2 Port Royal; Tara Kocher, daughter of Nancy Kocher Toms of RR2 Mifflintown; Danielle Mummah, daughter of Ron and Desiree Mummah of RR2 Port Royal; and Ellen Woodward, daughter of Verna Woodward Harshbarger of Mifflin.

Rebecca (Becky) Woodward of Mifflin, is the daughter of Roy Woodward and Verna and Zane Harshbarger. Becky is a graduate of the Juniata High School where she belonged to the Fashion Club,

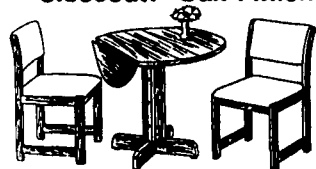


Rebecca Ann Woodward

and Foreign Foods and Languages Club. She is a member of the Mifflin Fire Company and served as 1992-93 alternate Juniata County Dairy Princess. Becky's dairy background comes from her grandfather's farm in Huntingdon County and from her stepfather's farm, "Scenic Hills Farm" in Juniata County. In addition her father, Roy is a bulk milk truck driver. As for Becky's future plans, she is unsure of what she would like to pursue, but she is looking forward to serving Juniata County as Dairy Princess.

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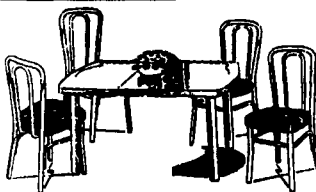
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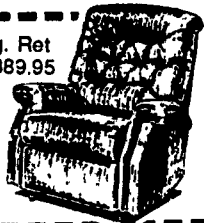
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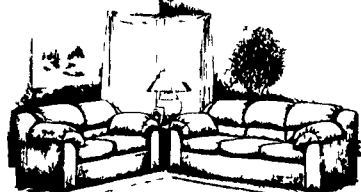
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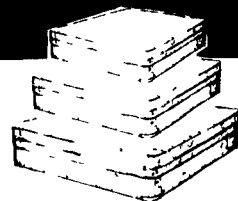
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