

On being a farm wife - And other hazards Joyce Bupp



"What?" asked my friend, during a recent weather-centered conversation.

"What!" she repeated, disbelief in her voice. "What do you mean you don't read the almanac?"

But I do read the almanac. In fact, I have a collection of almanacs. And I do read them. I read the jokes. I read the recipes, I read the riddles, I read the puzzles....

And yes, I read the weather predictions. But not with any intention of taking them seriously.

(And we don't plant according to the signs of the moon. We plant at planting season as quickly and practically as we can get manure hauled out and fields tilled and ready for the planting equipment. Who has time to even look at the moon during the spring rush?)

Reportedly, at least some of the almanacs' predictions called for a cold and snowy January. My only copy on hand for 1994 is a sort of condensed publication, called Farmers' Almanac, published in Maine. It called - at various times through the month - for rain and snow, periods of colder, and a stretch of windy and warmer weather.

We got all that. We even got the "warmer" part—a move up of the thermometer from minus-10-degrees to plus-10-degrees.

The predictions toward the end of January for showers and flurries did coincide well with the last Friday of the month. If you can call the pouring rain which came through our basement, flooded area roads and then froze up into giant skating rinks across the region "showers."

What we seem to forget — especially after several years of relatively warm winters — is that snow, ice, cold, and wind chill (almanacs haven't gotten into wind chill) are normal for January. It all just got more intense and more prolonged through this year's stretch of the frigid stuff.

But remember. We also had heat last July which set records, didn't we? If there's a trend, it seems to be that whatever we get will be to extremes. Weather to the max, if you will.

Just for fun, this past week's weather prediction in my almanac called for an intense storm on the East Coast through the early part of the week, then heavy rain toward the weekend.

(I'm writing this more than a week ahead of publication. How close were we?)

This upcoming week is to see

How To Have A Happy Heart

(NAPS) — Heart attacks are the number one killer in the United States. More than half of the daily 4,000 deaths occur outside the hospital during the first three hours of symptoms.

"Overeating and drinking can be dangerous for an already overstressed individual," says William E. Baubie, III, MD, an emergency specialist in Kingston, New York.

Dr. Baubie and the American College of Emergency Physicians

clearing in the Northeast, (Clearing cold? Clearing warm? Clearing out?) with a major frost in Florida predicted around the 20th. Next week — the 21st to the 24th — is to be fair and milder, with near record heat in the Great Lakes area, then moving to sunny and pleasant in the Northeast toward the end of the month. Yessss! Please, please, please let that one be on target!

See, I really do read the almanac.

But as for taking any of it more seriously than light entertainment, let me just share this. My zodiac sign - Libra - is described in the almanac as: "charming.... gracious, and having discriminating taste.... see all sides of an issue.... keep feelings under control, are impersonal and make fine mediators."

For someone who finds herself becoming more outspoken and opinionated with each passing year, the above zodiac description sums up perfectly why I read and collect almanacs.

I like to laugh.

recommend the following tips to make this a "heart healthy" year.

• Recognize the Warning Signs of a Heart Attack

People often dismiss heart attack symptoms as indigestion. Key symptoms include a heaviness, pressure or tightness in the chest or shortness of breath. This pressure can spread to the neck, shoulder, arms or back. Sweating, nausea, "heartburn" and/or fatigue are other signs.

• Know How to Help a Heart Attack Victim

Thrombolytic therapy, or heart attack drug treatment, can save most victims if given within a few hours of the onset of symptoms.

Learn how to recognize the warning signs and get help quickly. Don't allow the person to deny the problem or feel embarrassed. Call 9-1-1 or your local emergency number. Remain calm and offer to accompany the person to the hospital.

• Decrease Your Chances of Having a Heart Attack

Dr. Baubie recommends eating wisely, exercising and actively listening to your body. "You only have one heart, which beats 100,000 times a day. Treat it right!" he says.

Be "Heart Smart" and save a life — it may even be your own. For further information regarding heart disease, contact:

American Heart Association National Center (214) 373-6300.

National Heart, Lung, and Blood Institute (301) 251-1222.

Heartlife Hotline 1-800-241-6993.

• Understand the Risk Factors

A decrease in blood flow to the heart causes heart attacks. Risk factors include high blood pressure, high cholesterol, smoking, diabetes and a family history of heart attacks. Any sudden increased demand on the heart, such as shoveling snow, excessive meals, or even grief, may cause a decreased supply of blood to the heart, which can trigger a heart attack.



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