

On being a farm wife - And other hazards

Joyce Bupp



Okay, let's run down the list one more time.

Glue? Check. Two kinds. Tape? Check. Two kinds. Patching plastic? Check. One kind, but heavy and strong.

Satisfied that the necessary items were gathered, I paid the hardware bill and headed home. Now I could begin to replenish our household fix-n-repair stash that had suddenly turned up severely depleted of inventory.

Days before, I'd squished and squeezed the last few drops of silicone repair glue out of a crinkled tube. The tube of contact-type cement was likewise running dry.

And when I discovered my carefully-guarded roll of gray duct tape was missing, my fix-it frustration needle registered in the high range. What was going to hold the house together?

Well, it's not quite that bad. But when you live in one of those houses that the real estate people might label a "fixer-upper," the fix-n-repair stash fills an important spot in your life.

Most houses are probably fixers-uppers to some degree. Aging homes are like aging bodies, beset with little aches and pains that can quickly turn serious if not kept after, but possessing all sorts of character.

This latest character flaw in our century-plus aged farmhouse was a loose small window pane in the basement door. Earlier, a battering south wind had ripped the plastic on the outside of the storm door away, then pounded at the inside door until it had partially separated one pane of glass from the frame.

It was just one more miniscule

symptom in an epidemic of storm-stirred minor and major damage that has clobbered properties up and down the whole East Coast. Outside in the yard lay a large section of crinkled and bent rainspouting that once securely hung from a lower edge of our house roof. The rainspouting was a victim of the avalanche of a thick layer of snow and ice that tumbled from the house roof on a rare, warming morning weeks before.

That same avalanche had knocked out parts of a few panes of greenhouse glass, even though we'd covered the end of the little structure toward the roof's edge with protective wood and cardboard. A large icicle that had formed along the upper edge of the greenhouse's outer glass had also crashed down onto the slanted solar section, knocking out another pane.

Not to mention the section of heifer housing that had crumpled when a similar avalanche of snow slid off the high, sloped bank-barn roof and dumped several tons of icy stuff on one corner of our old, flat-roofed, freestall addition.

Still, compared to many winter-weather victims, our damages are relatively minor. One livestock-raising friend had three separate barn facilities collapse under snow. And as piles of snow and ice melt away in welcome warming weather, repairs and rebuilds will have to fit in by farmers already behind schedule with

manure hauling and field work.

A few minutes with the staple gun and long staples reattached the wind-blown plastic to the outside door. Sections of the heavy, clear plastic material, taped down the broken sections of greenhouse glass, temporarily patch those

holes until more permanent glass replacement can be made.

And a few dabs of sticky silicone had been enough to fasten the loose window back in place.

Wish all the winter damage across the region was that easy to patch....

Fishing Derby Needs Support

ELIZABETHTOWN (Lancaster Co.) — The Milton Grove Sportsmen Club and the Elizabethtown Area Services for the Retarded would like to hold a fishing derby for physically and mentally handicapped people in the Elizabethtown area.

Al Martin, chairperson, said, "We need financial support from service clubs, individuals, businesses, and industry to make this activity happen."

The fishing derby will be followed by a picnic for participants, aids, and sponsors. Initially

funds are needed to purchase fish, fishing bait, picnic supplies, prizes for the participants, and possibly for fishing equipment, if needed.

Any remaining money could be used to make a permanent area at the lake for accessibility for the handicapped.

If everything falls into place, the derby will take place on June 5 from 12 p.m. to 5 p.m. at the Milton Grove Sportsmen Club lake.

Any organization or individual wishing to help in this very worthwhile cause can call Al Martin at (717) 367-2380 or 1-951-0768 (portable).

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