

On being a farm wife - And other hazards

Joyce Bupp



Dear taxpayer.....
The envelope didn't exactly say that. It didn't have to.
FEW of us fail to immediately recognize the connotations of a piece of mail bearing the return address of the Internal Revenue Service.
"Now what?" I grumbled to myself.
To the best of my knowledge, all the income taxes, all the self-employment taxes, all the employee Social Security and withholding, all the "dues" that were due had been paid - in full and on time. Based on experience, that still did not likely mean this was just a "have a nice day!" friendly greeting from the IRS.
An envelope like that one always instantly prompts that knot-in-the-stomach response that makes me want to carry such a piece of mail gingerly, between thumb and forefinger, as though it

might detonate at any given moment. Back in the kitchen, I took a deep breath, ripped open the white envelope and read the introductory line.
"We changed your return - You are due a refund."
Well! This might be a "have a nice day!" letter after all.
The computerized communication informed us that our Social Security/Medicare self-employment tax had been incorrectly figured and that we were due a refund of \$18.20. Listed below were the complete figures on which the computation had been made.
Then came the line: Overpayment of taxes - \$20.20.
And a subsequent line noting a tax penalty of \$2.00.
A ten-percent penalty for overpayment? Huh?
What a racket!
How many of us, do ya' sup-

pose, could get away with penalizing someone ten percent for overpaying us? Or would even be gutsy enough to try it?

Now, I understand the logic of levying a penalty for underpayment. We've had a few of those already, too, and believe me, the penalty is figured at a fairly steep rate. Plus interest.

An 800-line phone number was listed on the communication for taxpayer assistance. The two-buck penalty was irrelevant - but the idea of it irritated me. I called. And called. And called. As expected, the only answer I ever got was the continuing beep, beep, beep of a busy signal.

It brought to mind a whole stack of government-generated mail that had arrived over a two-day span, just prior to the arrival of the money-back greetings from the IRS. These were from a federal agriculture agency, listing dollar amounts we had received through a particular program.

Every single one of the nine identical notices came in a separate envelope and every single one bore the same dollar amount we had received: \$0.00. And, every single one came first-class-mail, postage paid by..... you, the taxpayer. And me, the taxpayer.

On our front porch is a white plastic planter filled with red-blooming impatiens. On Memorial Day, I stuck into that planter a small American flag, which catches the breeze and makes me feel good every time I pass it.

It reminds me of those who made the ultimate sacrifice over

the past 200-plus years to keep this United States free - so that those of us who so wish can gripe, complain and poke fun at the waste in government agencies. Without finding someone at our door the next morning waiting to haul us away in handcuffs.

On this July 4th birthday weekend of our United States, may we remember and cherish that freedom.

(P.S. A day later, we received a check for our refund. It included an interest payment. Of 16-cents. Is this a great country or what!)

Fun And Games At Chicken Festival

GEORGETOWN, Del. — Competition was even hotter than the weather as more than 100 children and adults battled it out in the "Olympics of the Chicken World" at the 46th Delmarva Chicken Festival in Dover, Del. recently.

These games, called Chicken Capers, are an annual event at the Chicken Festival that are organized and presented by members of Delmarva Poultry Industry, Inc.'s Allied Industry Committee.

The action sizzled as 14 teams from five of Delmarva's poultry companies and more than 40 children competed in the egg scratch, spoon race, sack race, egg toss, and wheelbarrow race.

Perdue Farms, Inc. and Townsends, Inc. were the big winners of the day in the relay matches. In the grow-out competition, Perdue came out on top with the winning team of Bill Brown of Hurlock, Md.; Gerard Graham of Bethany Beach, Del.; Dan Wenner of Selbyville, Del.; and Mike Evans of Frankford, Del. In the processing plant division, a team from Townsends dethroned Perdue, Inc., which had won the relay the last three years. Townsends' victory team consisted of Harvey Holden of Frankford, Del.; Linwood Waller of Millsboro, Del.; Madelene Jones of Seaford, Del.; and Freddie Reid of Milford, Del.

The children got into the spirit of the Chicken Festival as they searched for nickels hidden in a huge pile of cornmeal in the "Chicken Scratch." Brian Rowe, 4, of Selbyville, won the 3-to-5-year-old division, while Sade Carter, 8, of Seaford, Delaware, found 17 coins to take the 6-to-8-year-old division. Michelle Cannon, 10, of Bridgeville, Delaware, found 32 coins for the win in the 9-to-11-age category.

The egg toss produced a lot of fun, despite the occasional mess. In the 12-and-under-age group, Sade Jones, 8, and Donald Jones, 10, both of Seaford, Del., were the winners. The adult winners were Freddie Reid of Milford, Del. and Harvey Holden of Frankford.

The spoon race attracted the most participants and required several heats for each age group. Coming out on top in the 6-and-under division was Steve Orta, 6, of Milford, Del. In the 7-to-12-age group, LaQueen Johnson, 10, of Bridgeville, was the winner. The adult champ was Kenny Wilkins, a flock supervisor at Allen's Hatchery, Inc., had to battle competitors in seven heats for his win.



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