

# Two Tell How Their Stories Became Part Of Book

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Lancaster Farming Staff  
EPHRATA (Lancaster Co.) —

Funny things happen to farm women. Terrible things also happen to farm women, but resilient bunch that they are, they look at the comic side and turn a potential tragedy into a hilariously funny situation.

A whole book compiling some of these stories is now available. The recently released book called "A Treasury of Farm Women's Humor," includes true happenings to farm wives across the U.S.

Two of the writers featured in the book have ties to *Lancaster Farming*. Bonnie Brechbill, a former Franklin County correspondent for the paper, and Marcia Garland, who sent in the notice that was published announcing the search for humorous essays, are pleased to have stories included in the book.

Bonnie said, "I've written more than 350 articles in the past 10 years, many of which have had a rather short shelf life. It's very gratifying to have my writing included in something as permanent as a book."

Marcia echoes Bonnie's sentiments. She's a correspondent for a daily Lancaster newspaper. But, to hold a book that contains a story with her byline, makes her feel more "established."

Bonnie lives on a 105-acre dairy farm with her husband Dwaine and 10-year-old daughter.

She said, "When I read the brief announcement in *Lancaster Farming* that said that Lincoln-Herndon Press was looking for humorous essays written by farm women about their lives, I figured that since I'm married to a farmer, that might qualify me as a farm woman. Being a suburban girl living on a farm in, of all places, Edenville, has certainly given me plenty of humorous experiences. I supposed I had as much of a chance as anyone else."

She sent in two articles and waited almost a year before she heard that both were accepted for the book.

One of the articles, "The 33,120-Minute Egg," is reprinted here with permission from the publisher.

But Bonnie has a confession to make. She said, "Not only do I not help on the farm, I'm not too sharp on animal biology, either. The last line of that story should read, 'Prize is queen (not king) of the chicken house.'"

Life has changed quite a bit for Marcia since the time she first submitted her story, which chronicles her transition from "suburban" to wife of a "would-be" farmer.

She and her husband Michael lived in New Hampshire then. They had purchased the small farm with a house that needed to be totally gutted so that her husband



Bonnie Brechbill holds Prize, the former resident of the egg in the story "The 33,120-Minute Egg." The story appears in the book "A Treasury of Farm Women's Humor," which was recently released by Lincoln-Herndon Press, Inc.

could have his dream of being a farmer.

Like many farm wives, Marcia heard the words, "The house will have to wait. The barn needs work first to prepare if for animals."

When the barn repairs were completed, animals needed to be purchased. The saga of her naivete of keeping calves penned up in pasture, of castrating pigs, and of weeds growing two feet overnight is one that even a born farmer can empathize with.

After working on the house for seven years, Michael decided he wanted to go back to school to become an engineer.

After he finished his schooling, the couple moved to Lancaster County where Michael found employment.

Now Michael would like to buy a few acres to raise a few more animals. Marcia laments, "I never did get to live in the house when it was totally completed."

But her account of the house that at one time had 17 jacks holding it up, and where they could only crawl out of bed on one side for fear of ending up in the cellar if they tried the other side, shows how humor sustained her equanimity.

"I love to write humor but have had little of it published," Marcia said.

She has had a few of her humorous sayings purchased by a greeting cards company, but her main sellers are feature stories and articles published by local newspapers and some Christian publications.

Marcia said that it took three years before she had an article she had written published.

"I was pregnant and I jumped up and down for joy so hard that I went into labor."

Ideas for writing constantly churn in Marcia's mind but she has little time to sit down and write them because she home schools daughters, Hannah, 9, and Mary, 4.

"The house gets dirtier because they're never gone," Marcia said. But she enjoys the individual attention she is able to give to each child.

"I didn't intend to home school, but when my 4-year-old daughter asked me to teach her how to read, I did. And, I thought, 'Wow, I can do this.'"

Marcia and her husband observed other home schooling families and were impressed by each family's closeness and the good behavior of the children. Now, the couple's oldest daughter is studying fourth-grade curriculum, one year ahead of her age level.

Teaching isn't confined to her own children. Marcia holds a writers' group for third through eighth grade boys.

"It's delightful. At first they didn't think they wanted to join a writers' group but now they want to come. Of course, I encourage them to write and enjoy it. I let their moms worry about the grammar and the spelling."

Bonnie's and Marcia's submissions were selected from hundreds of submissions that the publishers had solicited from farm and ranch wives from all over the country. The 284-page book contains from one to four stories from 63 women in 29 different states.

The book is available from B.



One of Marcia Garland's humorous incidents is printed in the book, "A Treasury of Farm Women's Humor." Marcia sees humor in everyday situations and enjoys writing about it. She snatches pieces of time for writing in between home schooling daughters Hannah, 9, and Mary, 4.

Dalton Booksellers or can be ordered from Lincoln-Herndon Press, Inc., 818 S. Dirksen Parkway, Springfield, IL 62703. Phone number is (217) 522-2732. If mail-

ordered, the price is \$12.95 per copy and \$2 for shipping and handling for the first copy and 50 cents for each additional copy in the shipment.

## The 33,120-Minute Egg

BONNIE HELIUM BRECHBILL  
The phone rings.

"My mother chicken died," my neighbor says.

So sad. Flower-sending occasion?

"It's a terrible thing, brutally hard. She leaves a nest full of eggs." I hope the survivors can adjust to their loss. "You don't happen to have an incubator, do you?"

I remember a sixth grade project, a box with a fish tank heater mounted inside, with a glass panel in the front. A constant stink! I'm afraid it's still up in the attic. The

box, not the stink. I promise to look. I find it. Too bad!

Mrs. Neighbor arrives with a huge basket of eggs. Thirty-six eggs?? No wonder the chicken died.

"No, no these are from all our chickens. They won't set on them. Poor, dear Lulu was the only one who would set."

The eggs haven't been washed. They're poopy. We put them in the box. They all fit. Rats!

"This is so exciting! Isn't this a wonderful project!" says Mrs. Neighbor. "I can't wait till they hatch!" She leaves. I disinfect my hands.

I'm a foster mother to thirty-six orphaned potential chickens. The incubator does the work. Except for:

1. Constantly adjusting the thermostat on the elderly fish tank heater.
2. Turning the eggs twice a day from the 2nd to the 18th day.
3. Providing humidity with a small gelatin mold full of water set amongst the eggs.
4. Cooling the eggs once a day from the 7th to the 18th day.
5. Breathing the stench.
6. Keeping the laundry room, where this charitable project is

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# OMESTEAD NOTES

