



We've had to face up to the fact that a long-time resident of the farm is gone for good.

Sadly, it's almost a year since we last saw her.

Not our mother goose; we keep an eye on her every day. She's been nesting on the mid-pond "island" for a couple of weeks, while the gander guards from the bank of the pond. If a passing flock of geese lands even several hundred yards away in one of the fields, he goes into aerial attack mode. Apparently he knows we're no threat because he tolerates us.

Within the next several days, we should have the answer we anx-

iously await every year about this time. It's a sort of contest to see who can take the first head count of fuzzy little blessed events as they waddle out of the nest to form a mini-flotilla, bobbing along in the water behind their regal parents.

And we're not missing Tiger, the mother cat, though the whereabouts of her kittens remains a mystery. Tiger has seriously trimmed down her former butterball shape and spends her days tending to her litter of goodness-knows how many babies.

She shows up at the calf nursery right on feeding schedule morning and evenings, along with the flock

of relatively useless, male barn cats. (Relatively useless because they prefer handouts of milk and catfood to catching mice and rats; barn cats are expected to at least partially work for their living around here.)

Since Tiger hunts faithfully to help feed her hidden family, she gets special treatment. While the lazy crew of furry feline fellows shares their allotment of milk in the upper part of the barn, I sneak her into the alleyway of the lower level heifer pens for her own private dinners.

Unseen — but only temporarily — are the two or three broody hens in our little flock of chickens. The hens have apparently gone to nesting in those obscure — sometimes senseless — spots they insist on using for egg laying. Too often they will pick a site near a hay drop in the barn floor. When the chicks hatch and begin scratching around for food, at least one will promptly tumble through to the heifer pens below.

Then one of us has to track down and corral the source of the terrified peeping sounds, return it up to the protective mother hen upstairs and take a chance on being feather-

flogged in the face for our trouble.

Meanwhile, the roosters gad about the farm in groups of twos and threes, crowing, squabbling and generally making a racket anytime anything disturbs them. Personally, I consider that noisy bunch to be the Chicken Salad flock. And one of these days...

Even our two remaining guineas still hang around, as useless a pair of birds as you could ever find — save for the general entertainment their shenanigans provide. They went to a new pasture with the cows a few days ago, flying and running along with the herd as the girls danced and kicked their hooves in the air over the fresh grass.

Actually, the only one of our usual cast of farm critters not

accounted for is The Snake.

Our giant water snake that lived in the stone wall of the springhouse was last seen one afternoon early last summer, when The Farmer was mowing around the pond. Though he didn't think he clipped her with the mower, we haven't seen her since then. Whenever I walk to the pond, I still look for her thick, scaly coils draped over the warm stones of the springhouse's south wall.

Last weekend, we discovered a smaller version, basking in the sunshine, curled around a gap of the stone wall. The Snake, Jr. Or maybe, in Hollywood movie-production style, The Snake II.

Looks like the old girl left a legacy.

## Lenni Lenape Corn Planting Festival

ALLENTOWN (Lehigh Co.) — Native American crafts, music and food will highlight the 14th Annual Corn-Planting Festival on May 7 at the Museum of Indian Culture in Allentown.

The Corn-Planting Festival, which inaugurates the Museum's outdoor season, is sponsored by the Lenni Lenape Historical Society and the Museum of Indian Culture. Hours for the event are from 11 a.m. to 5 p.m. Admission is free, but there will be a parking donation of \$2. The Festival, which celebrates Pennsylvania's regional Native American heritage, will focus on the traditions of the Lenni Lenape people, past and present.

Located on Fish Hatchery Road in Allentown's Lehigh Parkway, The Museum of Indian Culture sits on land that has a long, rich history of human habitation. Now owned

by the City of Allentown, the land is believed to have been the site of a Lenni Lenape village long before the Europeans arrived. Stone arrowheads discovered on the site are on display in the Museum. During historic times the land served as a family farm, and finally came into the City's hands as a gift from General Trexler. The eighteenth century stone farmhouse narrowly escaped demolition in 1982, when City Council voted to lease it to the Lenni Lenape Historical Society to house the Museum of Indian Culture.

The Museum of Indian Culture is open Tuesday through Sunday from noon to 3 p.m. Admission is free for Society members, \$2 for adult non-members, and \$1.50 for children and senior non-members. The Museum is closed Mondays, holidays and during special Society events.

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