

**On Being a
Farm Wife
(and other
hazards)**
Joyce Bupp



Would there be any room at the inn?

It had been a long day for weary travelers.

Their journey had been one of great distance. Lights and warmth beckoned, with promises of a hot meal and a place of rest at the end of the lengthy trip. Then, the cry of a baby.

Josh was awake. He'd fallen asleep in his carseat during the hour-long trip from the airport.

Our daughter and six-month-old grandson were home for Christmas.

They'd actually left their Portland, Oregon, home for this visit some 24 hours earlier. With the impending threat of an ice storm, they had hastily packed her things, bundled up Josh and sought room at an inn.

Theirs was the last hotel room available, as it turned out. Lucky, too, because when the threatening ice became inch-thick reality, the trip to the airport for her pre-dawn flight would have been in serious jeopardy.

Another room waited for guests at the inn on our side of the country. The room at our inn (Bupp's Bed and Breakfast, one of our friends calls it) had been readied a few weeks before, when I packed up some of our son's remaining things not yet moved to his home on an adjoining property.

Now the inn began to quickly fill. Grandpa came in from the barn after milking (while Grandma went out to feed calves). The Farmer II and his friend Jen arrived, bringing their two big white dogs to further complement our

one, and generating considerable irritation from the inn's unsociable housecat pouting behind the couch.

Baby things combined with the traditional to give the inn a popular holiday decorator look, known as Grandchildren Visiting for Christmas. A portable crib and baby seat complement the big wicker basket piled full of stuffed toys. Candles on the television illuminate temporarily-added accent pieces, like diaper bags and baby toys. Bottles and baby food jars keep company with the seasonal gift cheeses, cookies and holiday candles beginning to accumulate about the kitchen. And the rocking chair has a real baby being rocked, not just Teddy bears.

Meanwhile, we learned that Josh's daddy was stranded at a truck stop in the lower reaches of the Columbia River Gorge. Towing a car to a friend in Idaho, he traveled a mere 10 miles when the ice storm shut down the highway for two days. After he finally and slowly did make it to his destination, newscasters told how our kids escaped the 100-mile-hour winds which devastated parts of their state and brought out the Oregon National Guard.

Like those first Christmas young-couple travelers, this pair

overcame adversity to safely reach their destinations, taking refuge when necessary along the way.

Like that first Christmas baby, this one is perfectly happy at the barn and seems both content and fascinated with the cattle around him. He chatters in his own language to the dogs who come to sniff him and the cat who wishes he had taken refuge at any other inn than hers. Especially when he goes crawling across the floor after her with astounding haste, pausing only momentarily to inspect her food and dump the water from her dish.

Like that first Christmas baby, this one enchants those who love

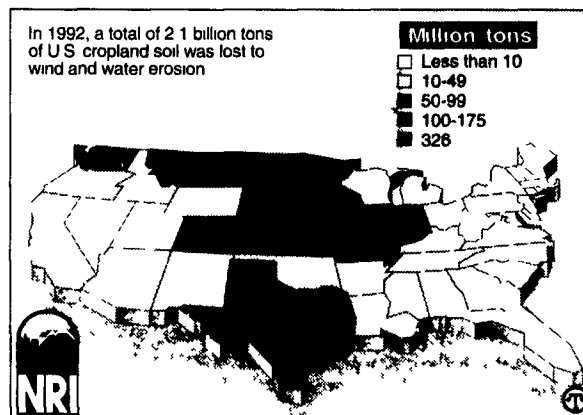
him (especially grandmothers and great-grandmothers whom he can melt with the ear-to-ear sweep of a single grin).

Christmas will find them back home a few thousand miles from us, they celebrating the holiday with friends and us with family here at home. Our welcoming room at the inn for the family's baby is empty again, awaiting the next visit. Only Monk, the housecat, doesn't miss them.

And their visit helped make the celebration of the birth of the Christ Child that much merrier.

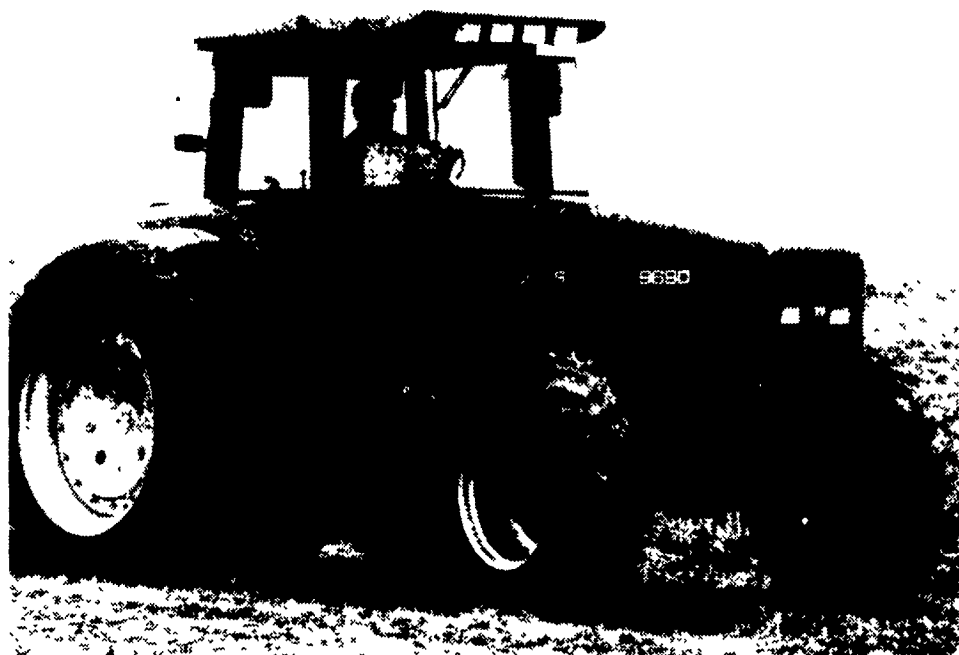
From our family to yours, a blessed and peaceful Christmas season!

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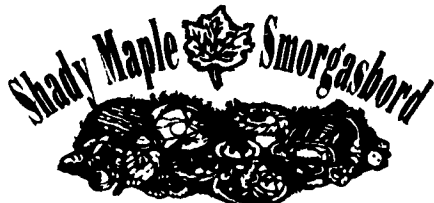
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