

On Being a Farm Wife
(and other hazards)

Joyce Bupp



It's a perfect and pristine world out there.

Beyond the windows of the farm house lies a lovely snowscape. The latest in the series of late fall (hey, it wasn't even officially winter yet at this writing) storms had blanketed and softened the landscape.

And gentled the brown barrenness of the season with a festive, twinkling holiday fix-up.

Beneath the frozen cover in the back yard are assorted small twigs and limbs, fallout from earlier bouts of Mother Nature's wave of weather tantrums. They mix with the scattering of limp, crumpled maple leaves littering the scruffy, green grass.

Also under the grainy, icy snow is a flattened mass of longer-than-should-be grass. The usual last mow-the lawn/chop-the-golden leaves November go-round with the riding mower was an impossibility this year. Snow and ice overtook the maples long before they had turned golden, and left us with an ugly, ragged residue of dead leaves still stubbornly clinging to their summer homes.

It's as though they never had their final, fall dress-up and refuse to leave the premises out of sheer stubbornness.

But Mother Nature, with her flair for decorating and sometimes aggravating sense of weather humor, sends a new look to magically transform what had deteriorated to ugly and unsightly.

She gently (sometimes not too gently) sprinkles several inches of snow over the ragged lawn, changing the litter to interesting little bumps that add texture to the flatness of the white expanse. Wind does the same to the blanket of snow covering the fields, as it creates patterns of higher and lower spots in contrasting shades of whiteness and shadowy blues.

A sparkling glaze, like lovely crystal, wraps around every branch, twig and exposed blade of grass or tired, dead weed stalk. Branches of pine and spruce bend under the weight of the burden of ice, changing their normal symmetrical shape to something more suggestive of a Picasso painting.

But the willows, their slender, supple limbs graceful in every season, hang heaviest under the collection of glimmering ice. Our calf population has overflowed into temporary pens between the dairy barn and the willows on the manure pit bank. After-dark feeding there, lit with a floodlight, reveals gloriou: "fountains" of

drooping willows, their ice-coated limbs sparkling with the glitter of thousands of diamonds.

Neat rows of large, round hay bales line the field nearby. Weathered to a deep brown, these mundane packages of heifer hay each now sports a cap of pristine snow. More than anything else, lined up there in rows, they remind this dessert lover of chocolate cake rolls topped with rich whipped cream.

And, by gosh, even the manure pit has become a thing of prettiness. Its bumpy, crusted top looks for all the world like a series of miniature, snow-covered, mountain ranges. Or maybe the bumpy moguls on a ski slope. Anyone for a ski run over the manure pit mountain slopes?

Each new year, it seems, is something like waking to a coat of new-fallen snow. The old, the ugly, the muddied, the messed-up, the half-finished, the ragged, are no longer there. Instead, hanging a new calendar flings open the doors of our lives to a new landscape, a fresh, unblemished opportunity, where each step can further blaze a brave new trail where none went before.

Snow came early. But New Year, with its fresh promises and new opportunities, is right on time!

May yours be filled with peace, happiness, good health and many, many blessings.



H A P P E N I N G S

4-H Club Organization

The Ephrata-Cocalico Community Club will be re-organizing Monday, Jan. 8 (snow date Jan. 15) in the cafeteria of the Ephrata Middle School from 7 p.m.-8 p.m.

For more information on joining 4-H, contact either the 4-H leader Rebecca Irvine, (717) 733-0024 or Zoann Parker or Laurie Schmidt at the Lancaster County Cooperative Extension Office, 1383 Arcadia Road, Room 1, Lancaster, PA 17601, (717) 394-6851.

4-H Vet Science

Bucks County 4-H will be offering a six-week 4-H Veterinary Science Program for any youth between 12 and 19 years of age.

The program is an excellent learning opportunity for youth who have an interest in animal science or biology.

The program is taught by a veterinarian and covers normal animal behavior, nutrition, and health. Field trips and hands-on activities are also used to help provide an exciting learning opportunity for county youth.

For more information and to register, contact the Penn State Cooperative Extension, Bucks County, at (215) 345-3283 and ask for Celeste Ball.

Youth-Animal Programs

Bucks County 4-H offers fun and exciting programming for youth between the ages of 8 and 19 (as of Jan. 1, 1996) in the following animal science areas: dairy cattle, sheep, market lamb, swine,

beef, fiber or dairy goats, rabbits, guinea pigs, backyard poultry (including chickens, turkeys, pigeons, and capons), horse and pony, dogs, Seeing Eye puppies, and cats.

Youth enrolled in 4-H animal projects will develop life skills in areas including personal development, leadership, citizenship and communications. Youth will also increase their skills and knowledge related to animal science, animal care, management and the use of animals and their products, also including nutrition, genetics, reproduction and physiology by completing learn-by-doing activities in a club setting.

For more information or to register in one of the above programs, call the Bucks County Cooperative Extension office, (215) 345-3283.

4 Paws To Freedom Seeing Eye Puppy 4-H Club

The 4 Paws to Freedom Seeing Eye Puppy 4-H Club elected their new officers for 1996. President, Katie Hammell of Hampton; vice president, Kristin Castenschild of Clinton Township; secretary, Laura Luchettio of Flemington, and treasurer, Ian Callahan of Bloomsbury. On October 18th the Paws for Patient Therapy Dog Club gave a wonderful talk and demo about therapy dogs to our club.

The Original Old Fashioned

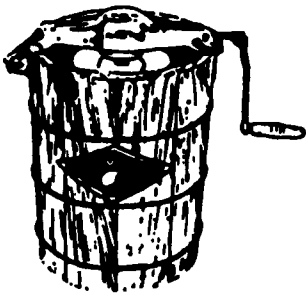
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