



In the Chinese calendar, every year is designated the year of a particular animal.

One year, it may be the year of the cat. Another, the year of the horse. (Around here, every year is the year of the cow.)

But in the world of folk decorating, this is the year of the sunflower.

Every few seasons, some hot new decorating decor comes into play. This is an artfully designed and carefully honed method of marketing and merchandising, otherwise known as selling stuff. It keeps the economic wheels greased and people in work. Capitalism at its finest.

Many seasons ago, we Holstein cow people were absolutely delighted when the "black and white" cow pattern decor swept the country. Black and white glistened on everything from kids underwear to teapots to my prized Holstein-spotted computer mouse-pad gifted me by a special friend.

Then, the sunflower sprouted. Few flowers relay the message of down-hominess better than a sunflower. Their brilliant yellow petals and wide-eyed face look captures the essence and cheerfulness of summer's brightest and most pleasant days. Sunflowers symbolize warmth and happiness and

little kids plying in the garden.

Suddenly, there were sunflowers on T-shirts, sunflowers on friendship coffee mugs, sunflowers on kitchen rugs. Bolts of fabric boasted yards of the cheery yellow-petaled posies and silk reproductions grew from door wreaths and table arrangements.

Not to be outdone in the effort to remain "with it" — decoratively speaking — we are pleased to announce that the farmstead has been redecorated in the latest sunflower look.

Courtesy of Mother Nature, with engineering by our bird population. And maybe a squirrel or two.

Aiding and abetting this effort has been the overwhelmingly wet summer, in which anything that sits in one place for more than an hour either sprouts or mildews. Which means that places which, in most summers will not even grow grass, have flourishing colonies of sunflowers.

Like under the maple trees, whose aggressive roots and thick canopy usually starve and shade out all plant growth beneath — flowers, grass, even weeds don't do well at the feet of maples. But, this summer, oodles of sunflowers have sprouted in the mulch around

the maple's trunks from seed dropped there from the birdfeeders and not found by the rooster and guinea-fowl clean-up crews. Most are a bit scruffy and anemic, due to the heavy shade cover, but are nonetheless forming miniature bloom heads and seedheads.

Where the environment is more promising, sunflower volunteers have trunks like small trees and multiple blooms. One eager-beaver set roots just off the black-top outside the dairybarn, and grew a fat, wide head with a flat spot on which the birds are already sitting to snatch the developing seeds.

Another took root in the raspberry patch, guarding over the briars (and weeds) like a lofty sentinel. A support wire for the electric

pole in the center of the patch runs right by the developing seedheads, ideal perch for the finches to check the seed progress.

My favorite is the sturdy fellow in the middle of the back yard, which sprouted in soil stirred loose when The Farmer yanked our dying willow tree. When the rain finally stopped enough that I could mow the lawn, the stalk was already a yard-high, sporting a bud. How could I kill that? So there it stands, mid-yard, with multiple golden blooms crawling with honey-making bees, outperforming the row of ornamental sunflowers just beginning to bloom in the garden.

We have a new garden motto. "Sunflowers Happen."

Indiana County Selects Dairy Princess

INDIANA (INDIANA Co.) — Julie Lockhart was recently crowned Indiana County Dairy Princess by Amy Trimble, the former dairy princess.

Dairy promotion is not new to Julie who served as a dairy maid for four years and was alternate county dairy princess last year.

Julie is the daughter of Charles and Jackie Lockhart. In the fall, Julie will be a senior at Marion Center High School, where she is active in FFA and ROTC. Julie also in active in church activities and in 4-H.

To help with county dairy promotion, Julie will have four dairy maids to assist her. They are Jennifer McMillen, daughter of Bill and Karen McMillen; Tammy Trimble, daughter of Tom and Faye Trimble; Kathy LaVan, daughter of Joe and Barbara LaVan; Barbara White, daughter of Ronald and Irene White.

Participants at the pageant held at the Holiday Inn included Master of Ceremonies Todd Marino, flower girl Tricia Wallace, crown bearer was Jacob Scott, pages Fred Beatty, Aaron George, and Keith Pollock, pianist Hazel Johnston, and County Commissioner Bernie Smith.

For booking reservations, call contact person Charlotte Deabenderfer at (412) 463-0321.



Indiana County Dairy Princess Julie Lockhart is eager to promote the dairy industry.

PDPP Bicycle Tour

PITTSBURGH (Allegheny Co.) — The Pennsylvania Dairy Promotion Program Board will promote milk with a sponsorship of the 10th annual Tour de Toona bicycle race August 21-25, in Altoona. The American Dairy Association & Dairy Council Mid East will coordinate and implement the sponsorship on behalf of the PDPP Board.

Tour de Toona is one of the largest pro/am bicycle races in the United States and annually draws more than 30,000 spectators to Altoona. Television, radio, newspaper and cycling magazines from southwestern Pennsylvania and across the United States will cover the event.

"As a Blair county dairy farmer, I look forward to welcoming the riders and spectators to Altoona," says Ray Diebold, Pennsylvania Dairy Promotion Program board member. "The PDPP Board sponsorship will create greater awareness of the dairy industry and dairy products by promoting to this health-conscious audience."

PDPP will sponsor the "King of the Mountain" portion of the race and will award a "got milk?" jersey and milk toast to the fastest male to ascend Blue Knob Mountain. The grueling seven-mile climb is part of the 90-mile road race around Blair County on Saturday, August 24. The winner will then wear his jersey during the final portion of the race on Sunday.

Media coverage of the race is extensive on both the local and na-

tional levels. Altoona media reaches a 17-county area and includes Johnstown, State College, and Pittsburgh. The PDPP Board plans to capitalize on the media exposure at Tour de Toona. "Got milk?" banners will line the race course reminding spectators and TV audiences to drink milk. Tour de Toona radio coverage includes daily updates and wire-to-wire coverage of Saturday's race on WALY-FM radio, Altoona.

"Got milk?" cow bells will be distributed to the nearly 500 spectators expected to line Blue Knob Mountain for "King of the Mountain." Similar to racing crowds in Europe, the fans will not only cheer the racers as they tackle the most challenging section of the course, but will also take home a milk reminder.

The PDPP Board's involvement in Tour de Toona will extend beyond the race itself. Six hundred race marshals will wear hats with the "got milk?" logo, and other marketing opportunities to incorporate the "got milk?" logo will reinforce the dairy message throughout the year. In addition, local dairy princesses and promoters will serve milk punch and dairy product samples for racers.

ADADC Mid East is the producer-funded organization that implements advertising, promotion, marketing, and nutrition education serving dairy producers in 33 counties in western and north central Pennsylvania on behalf of the Pennsylvania Dairy Promotion Program Board.

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