

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



No. Sorry. I just don't wanna' give it up. Yes, it's true. The early morning TV new's weatherman had hinted — in warning tones — about the "S" word. He never actually came out and said ... sss ... sn ... ssnn ... sno ... See. I can't even bring myself to say it. There is still too much corn standing in fields. Too much last-cutting hay to be tucked into silos and bales. Probably some fields that farmers would like to plant to fall-seeded grain, weather permitting. And goodness knows how many acres of soybeans continue slowly sinking to the ground while waiting for the combines to get to them. It's a blessing of a harvest — for farmers and consumers both — if we can just get it all under roof. If Mother Nature just holds off on that sss ... sn ... ssnn ... sno ... Sorry. It's a mental hangup. So, like everyone else, I have my own way of coping with it. Some people wax their skis. Some folks oil and tune-up their snowmobiles. Some of you really intimidate the rest of us by about having your snowplows on and ready to go. Imagine.

Hey, I prefer to cope by getting down and dirty. Hands and knees style. Crawling around the yard. Rummaging for more of that last-ditch stuff to crowd into the greenhouse and onto windowsills. Anything to hang onto the growing season. Sweeping the patio clear of crunchy leaves — and into a pile where the dog loves to curl up in them — turns up a bunch of volunteer impatiens seedlings in the cracks between the patio blocks. Impatiens are a personal favorite, one of the few plants to cheerfully grow bright blooms under the dense shade of our old maple trees. So the dozen or so seedlings are potted, watered, and join another two dozen larger pots of impatiens happily blooming under glass. Never mind that nearly every year we get at least one extreme cold spell that causes them to go belly-up. Every year I vow not to bother, and every fall I turn around and bring in even more than the previous year. Like I said, I don't wanna give it up. Two wax begonias growing in one of the nearby perennial beds get a reprieve from the warnings about ssss ... sn ... ssnn ... sno ...

sorry. Their roots are tugged from the ground, the (frost-nipped) tops trimmed back and the plants plunked into pots. And I'm not even that fond of wax begonias, for goodness' sake. Still, anything that will still be green and blooming come February, even halfheartedly, deserves a chance. A wild violet plant growing up next to the concrete edge of the basement porch looks as though it has a bloom bud on it. Maybe it would like to come

inside. And the bulbs that came in a birthday package went, not outside into the ground, but into pots for coaxing into late winter bloom. And then, a couple of snapdragons rejuvenated in the border and might bloom if potted inside and coaxed. Likewise some geraniums that I thought had long ago given up. All they need is a chance and protection from that sss ... sn ...

sssnn ... sno ... oh, wait, I think it's coming. Snow. Snow. There. I've said it. Come to think about it, I like snow. Maybe I will go wax my skis. But I flat-out refuse to dig up that dandelion blooming in the backyard and bring it inside. Even we fanatics have our limits.


Clover Hill Farms

(Continued from Page 52) had died while they were gone. Freeman was Dorothy Jane's grandfather and Mary's father-in-law. Phillip Walker, the second owner, was father to George P.H., then came Josiah Walker the fourth owner; Freeman, Walter T., then the Pauls. The bicentennial birthday of Clover Hill Farms was on January 11, 1988, officially recognized at the state farm show Harrisburg. Walker, in a self-written, brief history found in "The Berlin Area 1777-1977" wrote that PennDOT, by way of condemnation, took 40 acres of the farm on November 25, 1975 for a future four-lane Route 219. The road is still waiting to be built, but like her late father's opinion, the prospect is very unappealing to the Pauls. Not only is some of the original land in the designated 40 acres, but it's certain the peace and quiet they've always taken for granted would be lost, as well. And after being shelved for almost a score of years, the issue of a four-lane Route 219, primarily because of its potential as a north/south, North American trad-

way, is boiling at a hotter temperature now than at any time since the 1970s. Politicians, industrialists, tourism promoters and many agriculturalists, see the expressway as a biggy blown open by the passage of the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA), to neighboring Canada. Measuring 120 feet in length and evidently built in 1820, the well-preserved barn receives its structural support from two massive, 60-foot, logs that were placed end to end by the old timers who built it. In 1972 space was created for a second row of stanchions by closing in the barn's old foreshoot that resembled so many others of the day. Its 13-opening hex sign was apparently designed by Josiah C. Werner, whose works are detailed in "The Country Carpenter," published in 1991 by the Gateway Press in Baltimore. With other barns in Pennsylvania that have a hex sign, the book's picture illustrations include the Walker barn. Community minded, especially about agriculture, the Pauls, who in 1994 received the conservation

district's Award of Merit, make soil management on their Dairy of Distinction Farm, a habit. "We always try to practice soil conservation," says Leon. "We do soil testing, use fertilizer and rotate our crops." They are doubly conscious of land stewardship knowing that the Swamp Creek, which flows into the Casselman River at Garrett, originates on their land. An Agway committeeman, Leon is also a Milk Marketing Inc. delegate, vice-president of the Berlin Fair Asso.; overseer of the Pomona Grange; long time member of the Hillcrest and state Granges; state and county Holstein associations; state and Berlin Young Farmers Asso.; Pennsylvania Farm Bureau, church elder at Hays Mt. Zion United Church of Christ and secretary of the Consistory. Dorothy Jane, like her grandparents, belongs to the Hillcrest Grange where Freeman and Minerva were charter members some 80 years ago. A member of the First Society of Farm Women, she also teaches Sunday School at the Mt. Zion UCC.

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