

Grandparents Rights Recognized By National Grange

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



Fifteen million. Fifteen million? For that? "That" was a painting. According to the early-morning television news, the painting had sold on a \$15 million bid the prior day at an art auction.

Now, this painting wasn't a pretty landscape of meadows, woodlands or countryside. It wasn't a city streetscape or a noted building or any of the world's numerous natural or manmade wonders. It wasn't a portrait of a famous individual - no Washington crossing the Delaware or Whistler's Mother or the Mona Lisa with her elusive hint of a smile.

It was a woman. A sort of modernistic, stylized, impressionist type of a painting of a female of the species.

Fifteen million? For that? Obviously, I'll never make it as an art connoisseur.

Moments after laughing in disbelief at the sensibility of the \$15 million art wonder, I glanced outside the kitchen window. Painted across the canvas of the early-morning sky was one of the most artistic of sunrises, lavish with streaks and splashes of lavender, neon-pink, deep fuchsia shades and streaks of oranges.

And the colors reflected and shimmered on the still waters of the ponds in the meadow.

Now that was a picture. Up through the misty, dark green of the meadow, single-file, came the heifer herd, enroute to breakfast at the feed bunk. Each of the distinctive black-and-white markings, no two exactly alike, shaped a moving pattern against the dark pasture backdrop. Puffs of steam rose above the plodding parade, joining in the mist floating up from the warmer-than-air water of the ponds.

The white-tail doe and her twins that eased their way out of the edge of the woods on August evenings, their rusty hue shining in the setting sun against the brilliant green of the alfalfa and corn.

Or, a dramatic portrait of Mother Nature on the verge of a mid-summer tantrum, her countenance frightening in the steely-gray of an awesome thundercloud, curling edges of whiteness at the forefront, and anger sparking jabs of lightning.

Or, flashes of red against the white-tipped branches of our towering, backyard pine, the cardinal pair scattering snow as they arrive for breakfast. And a matching picture that usually follows, altered

SPOKANE, Wash. — Building upon the 130-year tradition of representing family issues, delegates to the National Grange voted to support grandparents' rights at their annual convention, November 11-17, in Spokane.

Delegates from 37 Grange states voted to support policies that would grant legal surrogate decision-making authority to

only by the electric blue feathers of the jays screaming as they land.

Or, the V-formation of Canada geese that winged across a bright orange moon rising out of the eastern sky on an evening some time ago, a real-life scene so haunting it etched itself in my memory probably for all time.

Now, those are pictures.

We even have still lifes, like that of the pair of lavender chrysanthemum blooms in a small, cut-glass vase, framed by the kitchen window. They're the last, remaining blooms of the flowering season, a poignant, delicately-scented farewell to warmer times.

And if it's portraits that you favor, we have a set of companion prints entitled "The Snoozers" - The Farmer stretched out on the couch, sound asleep after a long day in the fields and the cat curled up on the furnace register, blocking 90 percent of the warm air easing up through the vent.

Now, these are pictures. And they're free as part of our farm lifestyle. Of course, if someone wants to bid \$15 million ...

The Farmer not included in any art deals.

grandparent caregivers in the absence of responsible parents or stepparents, to protect the visitation rights of grandparents and to grant consideration first to grandparents in custodial situations when a child is legally removed from his or her parents.

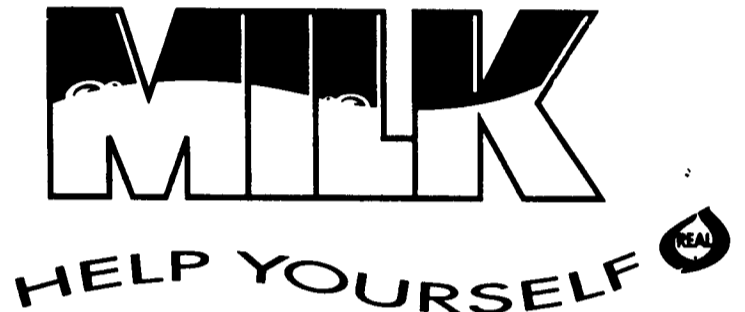
Recent census figures showed that over 4,000,000 children in the United States currently live in a home with one or more grandparent caregiver. About one-third of these children are cared for solely by their grandparent(s), either by court order or on an informal basis.

Studies show that substance addiction, child abuse, and female incarceration are among factors that are resulting in the deterioration of the nuclear family. Grandparents of children affected by one or more of these factors function as surrogate parents with all the same responsibilities, but, too

often, without adequate assistance. Many grandparents live on fixed incomes (\$20,000 or less), and are denied assistance. They attempt to cope with tremendous burdens. Challenges facing these caregivers cover a wide range of issues, including medical, financial and respite care.

"When the National Grange looked at this issue, we knew that as an organization who represents families, we needed to become involved," said Kermit W. Richardson, Master (president) of the National Grange. "These grandparents are our members, our neighbors, our extended family, and they need the support of the Grange."

Founded in 1867, the National Grange is the nation's oldest general farm organization. There are approximately 300,000 members in 37 states.



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