


Foreign Exchange Needs Host Families

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



Once again, the time had come.

I had delayed. Procrastinated. Ignored, avoided, and denied. Now, there could be no more putting it off.

The farm books are printed out and, hopefully, ready for our accountant. We're still waiting for the last of the tax information. And I filed the last of the year's bills and receipts while watching the Rose Bowl parade on New Year's Day.

There were simply no good excuses for running from the inevitable.

Thus, housebound under a siege of freezing rain, I began burrowing down through the layers of torn, shredded, holey blue jeans that have accumulated on the workspace extension of the sewing machine. A workspace - dare I admit - that hadn't seen the light of day in months.

The day of reckoning. The time to meet my mending. Which inevitably includes a stack of trashed blue jeans.

Farmers are hard on our work clothes. For most of us, the clothes of choice are denim of some nature or other - blue jeans, bib overalls, coveralls, etc. Durable, heavy-duty stuff, with roots deep into the gold rush days, a time when Levi Strauss is credited by history with having invented specialized work duds for Mother Lode-seeking miners.

Blue jeans take horrendous abuse from The Farmer. (And, from almost all farmers, according to lots of other farm wives).

It is not unheard of for a pair of brand new jeans to leave the house in early morning and return a couple of hours later with a ragged, three-cornered tear somewhere in the leg.

One of those three-corner-tear mend jobs topped the stack burdening the sewing machine, as a matter of fact. But this pair wasn't new. They'd been worn at least a month. Onto a repair stack they went.

Unearthed next were a couple of pairs of denims torn through the crotch seams, the fabric ripped away from the lower end of the zipper. This dreaded injury to jeans is inflicted mostly through climbing on and off tractors. Jeans tearing away from the heavy zipper stitching generally signal fabric worn thin enough to make mending questionable. And can be tossed without too much guilt.

Hooray. Onto the "rags" pile they go. My favorite way of mending, I might confess.

Next came two pairs with long, rectangular tears in the leg fabric in front of the bottom of the right pocket. Where the pocket knife usually resides. Along with a couple of nails, a bolt, two nuts, cotter key, fence staple, ear tags and at least a few cents of change. Mostly pennies. That metal accumulation rubs holes in denims.

Pocket-area patches are among the easiest, you can get at 'em with a sewing machine without crawling down into the narrow leg of fabric like a cave explorer. One pair in otherwise

ALEXANDRIA, Va. - ASSE International Student Exchange Programs (ASSE) is seeking local families for boys and girls from Scandinavia, France, Italy, Spain, Portugal, Germany, Holland, Great Britain, Poland, the Newly Independent States of the former Soviet Union, Czech Republic, Slovakia, Switzerland, Mexico, Brazil, Thailand, China,

Taiwan, Japan, Canada, Australia and New Zealand. The students are 15 to 18 years old and are coming to this area for the upcoming school year. These personable and academically select exchange students speak English, are bright curious and anxious to learn about the USA through living as part of a family, attending high school and sharing their own culture and language with their newly adopted American host family.

The students are sponsored by ASSE, a nonprofit, public benefit organization, founded by the Swedish Ministry of Education. ASSE also cooperates with the Canadian Provincial Ministries of education and is approved by the Australian and New Zealand Departments of Education. ASSE is the only organization with these credentials.

The exchange students arrive from their home country shortly before school begins and return at the end of the school year. Each ASSE student is fully insured, brings his or her own personal spending money and expects to bear his or her share of household responsibilities, as well as be included in the normal family activities and lifestyle.

The students are well

screened and qualified by ASSE. Families may select the teenager of their choice from a variety of student applications, family photos and biographical essays. Students and families are encouraged to begin corresponding prior to the student's arrival.

ASSE is also seeking local high school students to become ASSE exchange students abroad. Students should be between 15 and 18 years old and interested in living with a host family, attending school and learning about the lands and people of Scandinavia, France, Italy, Spain, Portugal, Germany, Holland, Great Britain, Poland, Czech Republic, Slovakia, Switzerland, Canada (French or English speaking), Mexico, Brazil, Thailand, China, Taiwan, Japan, Australia or New Zealand. Students should have a good academic record and desire to experience another culture through living with a warm and giving volunteer family. Academic year of short summer vacation programs are available.

Those persons interested in obtaining more information about becoming a host family, or becoming an exchange student, should contact your local ASSE Area Representative Lynne Tryon at 717/738-4690 or call 1-800-677-2773.

fairly good condition went straight to the mend pile. The other was additionally riddled with tiny holes which looked like the result of a rampant attack of welding sparks. That took a bit more debate, but the holes weren't THAT bad yet. Unfortunately.

Eventually, the "menders" were on on stack and the "pitch-outs" lay in a heap on the floor. A sharp scissors made quick work of the throwaways, yielding up plentiful patch material to extend the life of the keepers.

First patch pinned in place, I stitched the three-corner-tear job. And felt like I'd really accomplished something. Halfway into the second repair, the machine began laboring. A new needle solved the problem. Temporarily. The laboring returned. Groaning, I removed the jeans from the machine and took it apart for a cleaning and oiling. that too, helped. Briefly. Finally, I yanked off the old belt and replaced it with a spare from my sewing supplies. But the spare looked suspiciously like a used one and worked no better than the old one.

Oh, the heck with it. I'll get a new belt tomorrow.

After suffering months of guilt over the untouched mending pile, what's one more day?



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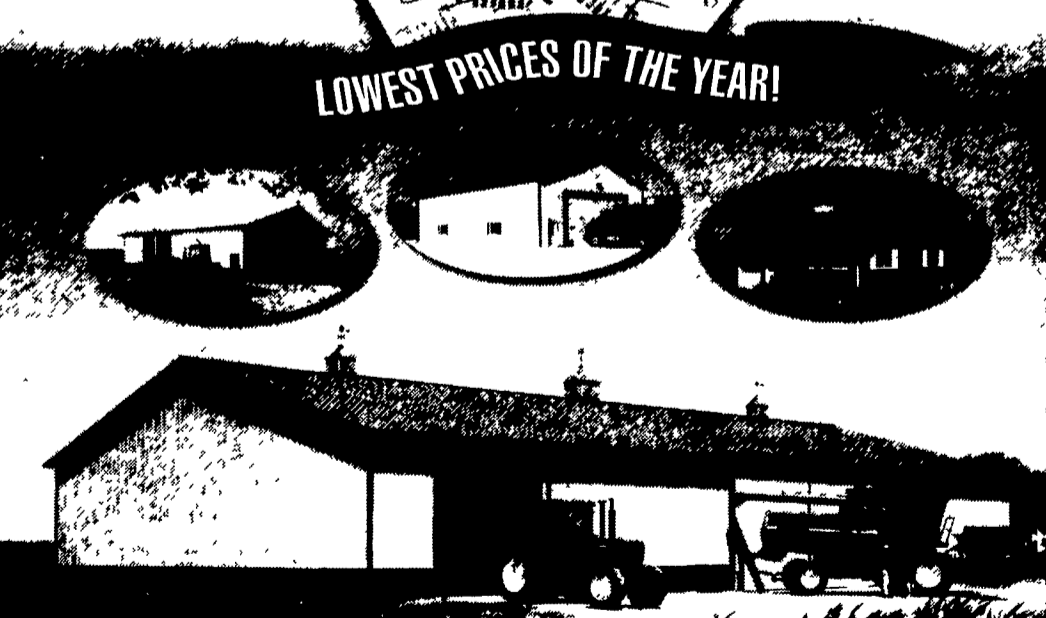
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