

Bedford County Dairy Maids To Do Princess' Work

On Being a Farm Wife

(and other hazards)

Joyce Bupp



They've been used to salutes heroes and holidays.

They've been used to salute cartoon characters, wildflowers, automobiles. With annual dependability they pay tribute to love with a new graphic depiction. And we're all stuck on 'em.

Postage stamps, that is. We hundreds of millions of Americans may come from all walks of life, all corners of the country, all sorts of colors, creeds, faiths and heritages, but we have at least one thing in common. If we have an address, we get mail.

Long before the advent of cyberspace, our mailboxes were proclaiming, "you've got mail." Well, geez, if nothing else, one could at least count on getting bills and junk advertisements.

Lately, the Postal Service, at least in several local York County rural post offices with which I'm familiar, has begun marketing itself. While once the lobbies of post offices displayed little more exciting stuff than the obligatory Internal Revenue Service tax forms (who wants extra of those?) and those grainy photocopies of "most wanted" criminal mug shots, today they've become virtual gift shops. For fairly reasonable prices, you can now buy colorful ties for the favorite guy in your life, lovely note paper, postcards, gift wrap, even jewelry. All with a postal theme, many of them holiday related.

But even if none of those trip your consumer trigger, you still need stamps. (Believe me, you can't mail anything without them. I stuck an insurance check in the mail just the other day with a whole stack of other bills, and accidentally missed putting a stamp on that envelope. It promptly came back

shaking it's "returned for postage" finger at me.

The day some Postal Service forward thinker suggested marketing adhesive stamps was truly a "red letter" day for those of us who abhorred the taste of the glue (yuk!) on the old-fashioned "licking" ones. Yes, one could wet them with a sponge — and then one would have them sticking to one's fingers.

While Old Glory is an always-loved symbol of the country, and adds a professional and businesslike touch to a letter, when available I opt for the colorful theme stamps. So long as they stick themselves fast.

Those annual Valentine's Day "love" stamps are a personal favorite. I even used one this year to send our income tax payment on April 14 to the IRS. Except for the one put out a couple of years ago with the pair of cherubs, which I initially liked, then decided they were somewhat gargoyle-ish looking. Nature-related stamps are my usual choice, depicting animals or wildflowers or trees. Currently, our mail is going out ornamented with seasonal strawberries, blueberries and raspberries.

But... can you believe this? There is no U.S. postage stamp which pays tribute to the dairy cow. No commemorative honor to the "mother of mankind" whose devoted production has helped to nourish and sustain billions of peoples' diets around the world. No tribute (egads!) to the source of ice cream. Now cow stamps! In a country which has commemorated Elvis Presley on its stamps for crying out loud.

So, it just tickles me to no end that there's a grassroots movement growing from some of the country's dairy farmers to

EVERETT (Bedford Co.) — No dairy princess was crowned at Bedford County's Dairy Princess Pageant recently, but that doesn't mean dairy promotion won't get done.

Dairy Maids Cindi Mearkle and Jennifer Stup will work together promoting one of the county's largest industries—dairy farming.

Cindi, 15, is the daughter of Gerald and Barbara Mearkle, Everett. Cindi is a sophomore at Everett High School, where she cheers for varsity football and wrestling. She is a member of senior band, senior chorus, Student Council, National Jr. Honor Society, Chieftain staff, yearbook staff, talent pool, and senior high envirothon.

In the community, Cindi is a member of Girl Scouts, National Holstein Association Jr. member, secretary of Chapman's Run 4-H Club, and a member of Grace Brethren Church.

Cindi also served as dairy maid last year. She said, "I enjoyed it very much. It's a great opportunity to promote the dairy industry, and I will enjoy serving another year.

Jennifer, 15, is the daughter of David and Penny Stup, Clearville. She is also a sophomore at Everett High School. Activities include Talent Pool, Electronic Magazine



Dairy Maids, from left, Cindi Mearkle, outgoing maid Beth Karna, and Jennifer Mearkle work together to promote milk and its products in Bedford County.

Group, National Jr. Honor Society, and soccer. In the community, Jennifer is a member of 4-H, church youth group, and AYSO soccer.

Students Visit Center



HERSHEY (Dauphin Co.) — Milton Hershey School (MHS) Agricultural and Environmental Education (AEE) students brought a variety of farm animals from the School's AEE Animal Center—including sheep, a pony, rooster, and calf—to visit the residents and staff of West Shore Health and Rehabilitation Center, Camp Hill. Pictured, from left, Maude Demma says "hello" to an MHS lamb and MHS student Rachel Beissel.

change that. And wouldn't it be fitting to have a cow-salute postage stamp in place by the first Dairy Month of the new millennium, honoring the dairy cow?

How appropriate. Want to help?

Send your comments about a dairy cow stamp to: U.S. Postal Service, Citizen's Stamp Advisory Committee, 475 L'Enfant Plaze, Washington, D.C., 20260-2437.

In lieu of colorful stamps of the dairy cow breeds, I'd even settle for a plain black stamp with the white-lettered message "Got Milk?" stamped on them.

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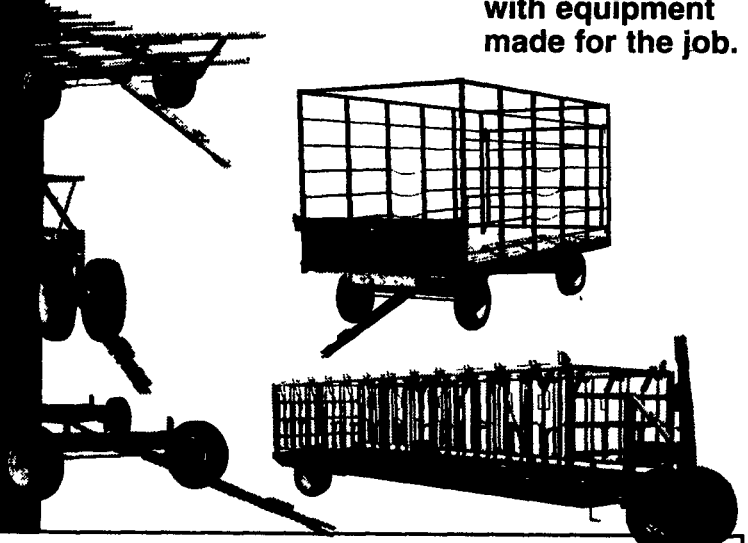
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