

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



OK. I can take a hint. "That's a good shirt, but it needs some buttons," The Farmer informed me a few days ago, gesturing toward a plaid work shirt he had tossed on the laundry pile in the basement. "There's one split and a couple missing."

Those few buttons I can handle. Getting anything else sewn in recent months has gone no farther than my good intentions.

A year or so ago, I sat down at my sewing machine one afternoon to mend some jeans. (The extent of my seamstress endeavors in recent years.) And the faithful, 30-year-old machine, which for more than three decades had been instrumental in constructing and/or repairing everything from the ever-present torn blue jeans to little-girl dresses, from Barbie doll clothes to crazy quilts, from curtains to calf-dressing-contest outfits, just wouldn't sew.

Oh, the motor hummed and the threaded needle zipped up and down for a little while - and then would stall. After fooling with it for a bit, I figured the belt needed to be replaced. No mending that day.

But a replacement belt didn't help. No mending then, either. A second replacement belt, just in case the first was faulty, made no improvement. Still no jeans mending.

Then, it was planting time, and then it was children moving home, then it was summer, then it was harvest time, then it was the holidays... and, geez, a year had flown by. And still the mending pile grew.

Reality was that the machine's basement home for the past two decades, where humidity can be a summertime problem, had probably not been the optimum environment for it. And instead of a belt, it was likely the machinery itself that needed to be replaced.

Mom, bless her heart, had by this time rescued us from the plight of drafty (to say nothing of embarrassing) blue jean rips and tears with her willing and skilled-professional mending ability. Still, getting a replacement sewing machine before another spring season was upon us really began to bug me. Finally, a few weeks ago, I set an afternoon aside to be a responsible-consumer, comparison shop-

per of the latest in sewing machines.

Sewing machines have changed considerably in 30 years. Oh, the basic design is still similar, but many of the newest machines are computerized. (Surprise!) Some of the most highly-intricate models look like major electronics installations, with rows of little "Windows"-like icons strung across the front from which to select. For professional seamstresses who need lots of speciality and decorative stitch capability, the possibilities of these computerized machines are almost astonishing.

I ran the sewing machine consumer-data I'd gathered pass our daughter, whose degrees are in home-economics and computer technology. We share recipes, clothes, cow milking, and records keeping. Likewise we lament with one another over computer glitches and have swapped disks, keyboards, and printers trying to overcome electronics trip-ups.

Her reaction to my report was reassuring - and identical to mine.

"A sewing machine with a computer chip? I don't think so."

So, call me old-fashioned. Call me stick-in-the-mud. Call me anti-technology.

Call me the owner of a new, non-computerized sewing machine. One that I am confident will not have its brain-chip blown out the first time lightning zaps us and demolishes the surge protector on it recommended for all electronics. (As a better-quality, supposedly-insurance-covered, surge protector did here a year ago, taking two televisions out along with it.)

# Celebrate Family Farm Appreciation Day

LEESPORT (Berks Co.) - Farm Families and supporters of farm families from Berks, Lehigh, Northampton, Schuylkill counties and the surrounding area are invited to attend the Farm Family Appreciation Celebration and Hoedown.

The event, which will be held on April 1, at the Hamburg Field House, Hamburg, is designed to help build community among farm families and local citizens.

The evening, which will include a hot buffet meal and a hoedown featuring the music of Lynn Ekert and "The Outlaws," is open to all farmers and their children at no charge.

Family farm supporters can attend at a cost of \$8 per adult and \$5 per child (ages 3-11), children under the age of 3 are free.

This event is being sponsored by the Pomona Grange, the Northeast Pennsylvania Synod of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, the Pennsylvania Cooperative Extension, the Eastern Pennsylvania Agency of Lutheran Brotherhood and Aid Association for Lutherans, Paul Wangerin and Kenneth G. Becker Agencies.

I love my new basic-stitches, heavy-duty, low-tech sewing machine. But if summer comes before I find time to use it on that stack of drafty jeans, we will have ourselves a good supply of worn denim cutoffs.

My good, sharp scissors doesn't need a computer chip either.

Doors will open at 7:00 p.m. with the meal being served at 7:30 p.m. The hoedown will be from 8:30 p.m. - 10:30 p.m.

Registration information is available by contacting Penn State Cooperative Extension-Berks County, P.O. Box 520, 1238 County Welfare Rd., Leesport, PA 19533-0520 or Phone (610)-378-1327.

## ADADC Officers

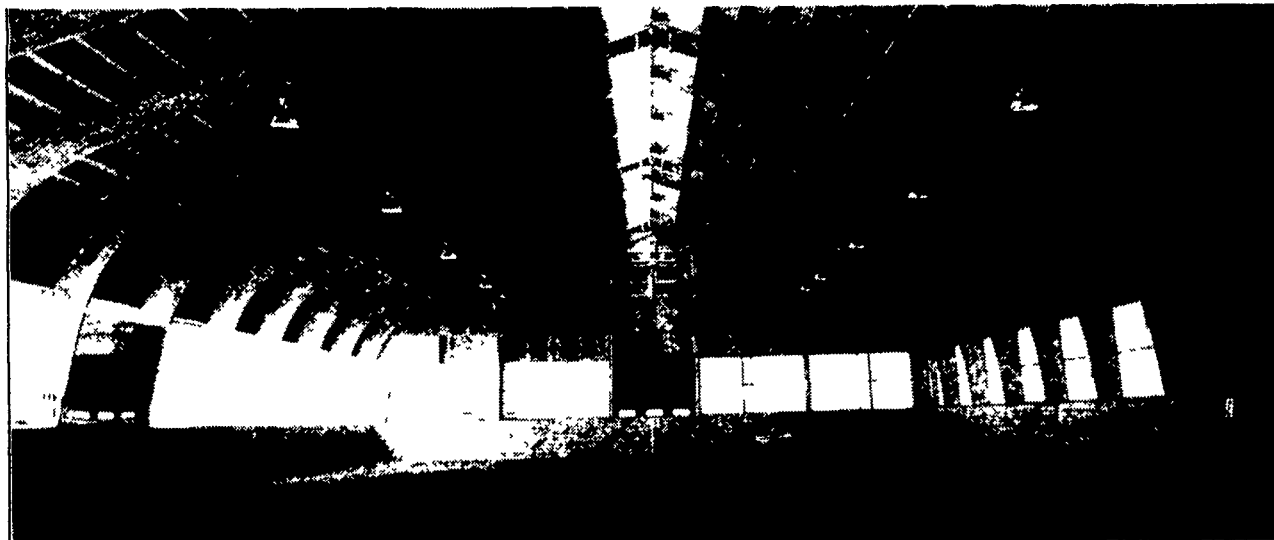
COLUMBUS, Ohio-The American Dairy Association & Dairy Council Mid East board of trustees elected its 2000 officers.

Reelected for a second term, Paul Broering, from St. Henry, Ohio, Mercer County, will continue as president in 2000.

"It is an honor to be elected again to serve my fellow dairy farmers and represent their best interests in the area of dairy promotion," Broering says. "The checkoff program strives to increase the demand for dairy products-and it's doing just that. Last year, total milk sales increased 3.1 percent!"

Newly elected officers include Merle Chaplin, Moundsville, W.Va., Marshall County, vice president; and Connie Finton, New Philadelphia, Ohio, Tuscarawas County, secretary. Also returning for another term as treasurer is Alice Moore, Frazeysburg, Ohio, Coschocton County. All officers have been elected to serve one-year terms.

Riding Arena

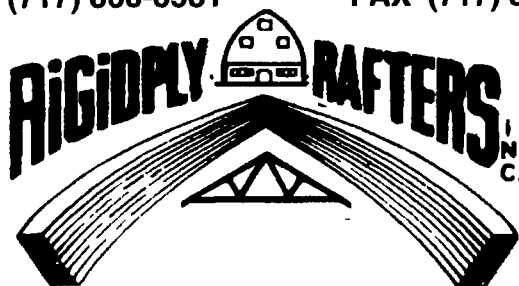


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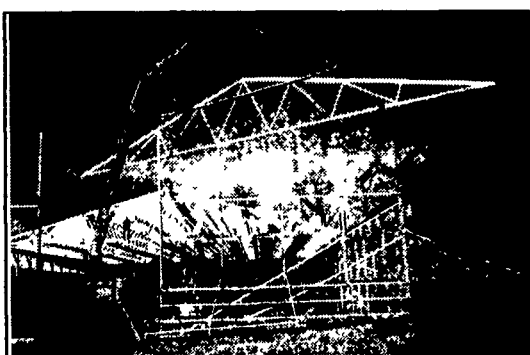
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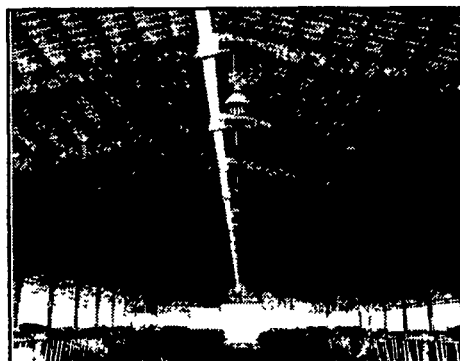
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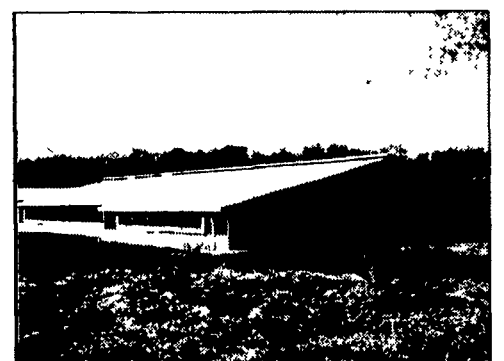
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