

With another holiday weekend upon us, millions of our citizens will be taking to the highways.

Few developments have physically tied our nation closer together than the interstate highway system. Via its seemingly endless stretches of asphalt, we have the capability of traversing the country in a matter of a few days, slowed only by only minor details like sleep, food, "potty" and refueling breaks.

Near miraculous, that is, when one ponders the travails of our forefathers who headed West in those Lancaster-built Conestoga "ship of the prairie" wagons. (And I always wonder just how many millions of times those weary pioneer kids plaintively whined: "Are we there yet?")

For getting from here to there, in a big hurry, our multi-laned interstates are highly efficient. But to really see this country, you'd better get off at the next exit.

And, take to the "back" roads.

The Farmer and I are die-hard back road fans. Unless terribly pressed for time or out of necessity (which is most of the time!), we will avoid like the plague those stretches of highway rife with traffic lights, shopping malls and suburban sprawl. Instead, give us a quiet, tree-lined, scenic, back road, even if it takes a bit longer.

Back roads in this part of the country rarely run straight for more than a few hundred yards. They wind around hillsides of contoured fields and twist past meadows where cows, sheep or horses laze in the grass. They make sudden sharp turns, when old field passageways once separated property lines or long-dead trees and fencerows grew. They pass on intimate terms through farms, sometimes right between the barn and the house. Often you can spot a dog of some sort, sprawled on porch or in the yard, keeping watch, a cat curled up on a windowsill or lawn chair, even the occasional chickens scratching in the gravel road berm.

Streams like to follow back roads — or maybe it's the other way around — crisscrossing back and forth many times in the stretch of a few miles. Back road travelers may glimpse families of ducks splashing in steambeds, watch mini-falls of tumbling

water cascading over tiny rock ledges, or enjoy colorful patches of wildflowers which thrive at waters' edge.

Neighbors wave to neighbors and may pause to share a few pieces of local gossip for a moment or two along back roads. Folks are more likely to wave to passing strangers, at the same time wary unfamiliar vehicles or faces passing by. Back roads rarely have "neighborhood watch" signs on them, since residents look out for one another more as a matter of course than by official designation.

Meandering along a back road you can spot kids playing a pick-up game of ball or surprise a doe deer and her fawns nibbling grass. You might stumble onto a roadside patch of berries black raspberry, red raspberry, blackberry — available for the picking. You can spot red-tailed hawks being harassed by crows, come upon a crayon-box-colorful flowerbed in a rural back yard, still see wash flapping on lines and kids fishing in farm ponds.

Farmers favor less-traveled back roads for moving equipment — and for keeping tabs on neighborhood agriculture developments. Back road travels keeps us abreast of cropping patterns, building changes or additions, additions of new tractors or machinery or pickup truck. New tillage, planting and harvest ideas can be gleaned or discarded based on observing neighbors' experiences. And it keeps us all aware of weed control "skippers," wet spots, plugged planters leaving missed spots, infestations by leafhoppers, grasshopper, Johnsongrass, thistle, and hungry critters like groundhogs and deer.

One of my very favorite rural paved-ways is a country drive near the hunting cabin, on a meandering little road which traverses farms, fields and forest stands, crisscrosses a wide mountain-valley stream, and passes along well-kept, rustic homes and nearly hidden hideaways. It's called — appropriately — Back Road.

For a peaceful way to celebrate our nation's birthday, go for a leisurely and scenic drive on a rural road, soaking up the green and the quiet and the beauty and the rural heritage which formed a foundation of our nation we celebrate this weekend.

Treat yourself.
Take a back road.

June Dairy Month



Bedford County Dairy Princess Amy Zembower, left, was crowned by the county's last reigning dairy princess Lyneice Chamberlain.

Amy Zembower Named Dairy Princess

LINDA WILLIAMS
Bedford Co. Correspondent
BEDFORD (Bedford Co.) — Amy Zembower, daughter of Faith and Brian Zembower of Bedford Valley, was named Bed-

ford County dairy princess at a luncheon pageant held on Sunday, June 11 at the Arena Restaurant.

Since then, the role has been carried out by dairy maids. Last year, it was Jennifer Stup and Cindy Mearkle who fulfilled this role.

Dairy maids for 2000 will be

ford County dairy princess at a luncheon pageant held on Sunday, June 11 at the Arena Restaurant.

Amy, a senior at Bedford High School, has been helping on the Zembower farm since she was in grade school.

She was presented with a check for \$200 from Dorothy Naugle of the Allied Milk Producers. The association promised an additional \$300 as her year progresses.

Former Bedford County Dairy Princess Amy Mearkle emceed the event and also in-



Bedford County Dairy Princess Amy Zembower with dairy maids, from left, Sara Karns, Heidi Zembower, and Dorie Fetter.

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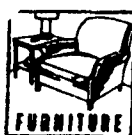
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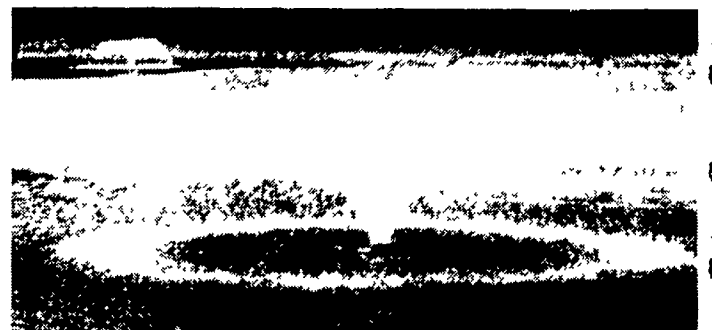
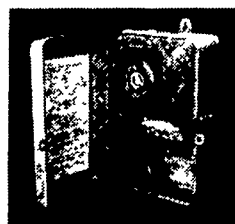


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