

On Being a Farm Wife
(and other hazards)

Joyce Bupp



No, not here. And, not here either. But I know it has to be here somewhere. So I keep rooting through the box.

"Lemont, The Lonely Monster." No, that's not it. "A Charlie Brown Christmas." Not that one either. Not "Kittens." And not "Milk." But I add those to the growing stack of books.

This particular box of beloved books from our kids' past had been temporarily "lost" under other boxes stacked on top of it in a storage area upstairs. Gathering Christmas decorations in anticipation of the upcoming holiday, I found this treasure.

"Dinosaurs." And "Sea Full of Whales." Not the book I'm hunting, but add those to the stack as well.

Books have always been a personal treasure, from the time my first grade teacher at York Township Elementary School taught me those early-reading words...Dick, Jane, Spot.

"Katie and The Big Show." A battered, bedraggled, soft-backed book about a bulldozer on a community highway crew who saves the community after a blizzard, when all the other equipment was too wimpy. An all-time favorite of our equipment enthusiast son. Definitely put that one to the pile.

A vow I made early in our parenting years was that our kids — in any way I could influence them — would grow up loving to read. Early on, we started a routine of making trips to our local community libraries. We read every day before nap times — and often other times. There

were always books wrapped in the modest stack of gifts under our decorated tree. We rarely missed ordering a few good, inexpensive, soft-back children's books when the Loganville-Springfield Elementary School sent home its childrens-book-sale selections.

"If I Had a Bus." A cardboard, "tiny" book, which folds into a small package, but unfolds into a two-foot long tale about imagination and a mini-van. Held together with love and oodles of cellophane tape. Old tape, falling off. We have wider, stronger, better tape around here to extend its years of use for an 18-month-old who likes those little, chunky-style books.

On the pile it goes, with "A Child's Garden of Verses," and "Gobble, Growl, Grunt" and "On the Farm," and "Star Wars Pop-Up Book." And an assortment of titles by Richard Scarry. And lots of Golden Books.

Old friends, these books are. We spent literally hours together, on the couch, on the floor, curled up before bedtime. Now, we are passing them on to the next generation, our grandchildren Josh and Caleb, Rachel and baby-girl still unnamed but due in the springtime.

They were born into a family of booklovers and book collectors; we hope to encourage their early enthusiasm for reading by sharing these one-time favorites of their mom and uncle. We have few "old" toys to pass on to them because the few we bought became well used. But these books, as they were outgrown, were carefully packed away...for this

very purpose.

Ahh, there it is. "Corny Cornpicker Finds a Home." A story about a cornpicker parted from his tractor friend at the equipment dealership, bought by a farmer who promptly dumps him off the truck, dents his tender snouts, forgets to grease him, and then grumbles because he squeals as he harvests. A book with a machinery maintenance moral and a happy ending.

This was another favorite of our son, who has since turned his affinity for farm equipment and mechanics into a career. And the book I'd been hunting especially for grandson Caleb, whose first words included "dealership" and who snags every "tractor" magazine he can find in our house.

Our paper delivery boxes are currently sagging under the weight of pounds of shiny, colorful ads filled with all sorts of stuff aimed at making kids eyes shine with glee during the "giving," sometimes more resembling (to risk sounding like the Grinch) the "gim'me" season. They advertise glitzy electronics stuff of sci-fi nature, dolls that do more things than real babies, cars kids can actually drive (like they need earlier encouragement?), and the usual annual rollouts of some new piece of chattering, talking furry character. Books are rarely featured in the glossy holiday brochures.

Instead of battling to bust doors down into stores at 6 a.m., holiday shoppers might find it much more leisurely to do some gift gathering in childrens' book departments — thus encouraging another generation of our kids to read.

And there are probably no long lines there at the checkout.

Secrets For Making The Holidays Special

ARDEN HILLS, Minn. — From caroling in the streets to decorating the tree, there are many ways to celebrate the holiday season.

Host a Holiday Recipe Swap
Show off your favorite family cookie recipe by hosting a holiday swap where friends and neighbors come together to exchange their most treasured holiday treats and recipes.

Pass Holiday Baking Secrets to Your Children

Make the baking experience special by sharing information about your special family recipes with your children. Share family stories or memories associated with the recipe. Getting your children interested in baking is one way of having family traditions and stories live on.

Create a New Recipe Book

Create a new holiday recipe book from your family's favorite recipes. Include dad's beloved butter cookie recipe, the nut bread recipe you can't live without and your child's favorite candy recipe. It'll be easy to bake up the family's favorites next holiday season, or to pass on the recipes to the next generation.

Design Special Ornaments

Get the whole family involved in holiday decorating by creating edible decorative ornaments. Using a basic butter cookie recipe, have kids cut out

ornaments with cookie cutters shaped like stars, wreaths and trees. Everyone in the family can decorate the cookies with bright sprinkles or colorful icing.

Share Bountiful Baskets

Create a personalized basket of homemade goodies for anyone on your gift giving list. Use decorative tins, colorful cellophane and festive ribbons to wrap an array of homemade baked treats, such as biscotti, cookies, muffins, breads or candies. Then add small trinkets that might be of interest to your recipient, such as herbal teas, flavored coffees, dried flowers or stuffed animals, to add a personal touch.

Make Presents For Those In Need

Give back to the community this holiday season by gathering friends and family to make baked goods to donate to a favorite charity. Whether it's cookies, cakes or homemade breads, the gift of giving will fill your heart with holiday cheer and be a blessing to those less fortunate.

Spice Up The Table

Add a taste of the season to the table by accenting the delicious creations you've prepared. Decorate with traditional pumpkins, gourds, holly and seasonal flowers and greens. Use scented candles.

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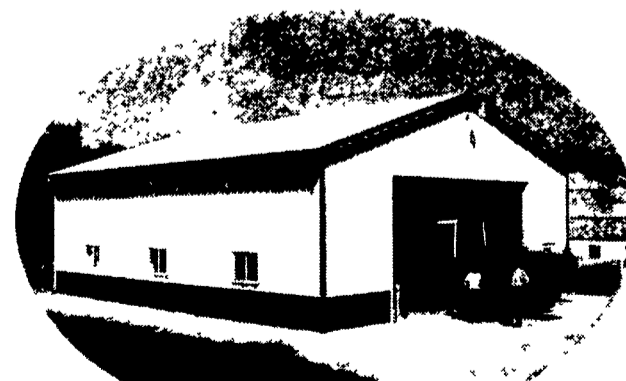


Does your body get the oxygen it needs?
(Adapted from a quiz by Dr. Eign Noguchi)

- Check all the boxes which apply to you
- I wake up tired even after eight hours of sleep
 - I sleep restlessly waking up frequently
 - I suffer from chronic fatigue
 - I have poor physical endurance
 - I tend to be moody and irritable
 - I am susceptible to colds and flu
 - I suffer from allergies
 - I frequently feel tense and on edge
 - I am frequently constipated
 - I have frequent pain in my shoulder and/or back
 - I have weight problems
 - I crave sweets, alcohol or soda
- If you checked more than three boxes, your body might not be assimilating sufficient oxygen. Please consult your physician. You may wish to have your blood oxygen levels tested - before and after you begin to use the Chi Machine.

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