


## On Being a Farm Wife

(and other hazards)

### Joyce Bupp



Where's the sun? That thought passes through my head each morning in the past few weeks, as I squint through the 6 a.m. darkness on the way to the barn to help with morning chores. Seems like just yesterday that bright sunshine washed over the eastern hill and flooded the barn with glowing light that made us wish for sunglasses at that early hour. Now the light beaming down is from long fluorescent tubes overhead, adequate, but of little ambience. Meanwhile, the sun hunkers down under the bed-covers for a few more moments each morning. Gone, too, is the cheery, early-morning sound of the robins chirping overhead in the trees.

When did they leave? Perhaps earlier than usual, since lack of moisture has rendered our soils rock-hard with dusty topping, sending the robins favorite wormy-food deep into the ground. Annual departure of the robins is one of those occurrences we miss through the late summer time crunch of corn silage harvest and planting of fall grains and grasses. But suddenly, we notice the absence of their early-morning greeting and late-evening signoffs to each day. Even the year-round feathered residents appear to be pretty scarce in the backyard, but only because they are all clustered together, hanging out in the patches of sunflowers we planted

earlier this year. Glowing with golden-yellow flowers for a few weeks, the patches matured into scruffy stands of fading heads hanging heavy under their seed loads, surrounded by weeds thriving and healthy, despite the drought. True wildlife corners, these small patches absolutely teem with birds feasting on the fresh black seeds. In fact, many of the drying heads bending low are already nearly devoid of their nutritious and tasty centers. "Stop!" I want to plead to the finches and chickadees and screaming blue jays. "Save some for later." Also hovering around the sunflower seed feeding stops is our resident, people-tolerant, meadow-raised, red-tail hawk, which apparently finds the patches to be productive hunting grounds. One afternoon last week, I spied him (her?) sweep low, right over the sunflower stand behind the yard fence, perhaps taking inventory of the wealth of sparrows stuffing themselves. Other signs point, surely as the sun dawdles abed longer each morning, of the official arriving this coming week of the au-

turn equinox. Fall is my favorite season, with its cool, moonlit evenings, bright blue skies and scented with the fragrance of drying leaves gathering in corners of the yard. (Please don't burn them!) Signs of fall abound already. Cattails hold fat, velvety-brown heads above tall stems at the edge of the widening circle of sticky mud rimming our largest pond. With only a fraction of its normal water containment left, the pond hosts only a few remaining clusters of our once thriving stand of this classic wetlands plant. Further down in the meadow, on a steep stream bank (former stream, now dry), stalks of goldenrod, taller than my head, are turning into fluffy bunches of cheery yellow. It takes some effort to snap the strong stems into an armful-sized bouquet for the

front porch, to set beside the growing pile of seasonal decorations of nature: Indian corn in reds, purples and polka-dotted ears mingling with a variety of gourds in interesting shapes and colors. If there was any doubt about fall's proximity, it would have been erased by a small tree I spied standing, alone, in the grassy median of a stretch of interstate highway north of here, several days ago. Surrounded by concrete lanes, steel dividers, almost endless truck-heavy traffic, this small tree, solidly rooted in probably poor soil amidst a most unfriendly setting, was cheerfully turning lovely shades of red. So we eagerly embrace the arrival of cool, crisp (hopefully wet) fall. And offer a boot to summer's lingering flies, ticks, and mosquitoes.



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## EPHRATA FAIR 2002

SEPT. 24-28

### Calendar Of Events

<p><b>TUESDAY SEPTEMBER 24</b></p> <p>9:30 A.M. T.R.A.C.K. Bake Sale</p> <p>11 A.M. Midway Opens</p> <p>12 Noon Market Goat Judging</p> <p>4 P.M. Exhibits Open</p> <p>5 P.M. Special Dinner (Tent City)</p> <p>6:00 P.M. Swine Judging</p> <p>6:30 P.M. Fantastic Dessert Judging</p> <p>7 P.M. Rides Open</p> <p>8 P.M. Antique Tractor Games</p> <p>8 P.M. Pig Chase</p> <p><b>WEDNESDAY SEPTEMBER 25</b></p> <p>9-11 A.M. Agricultural Demonstrations</p> <p>10-2 P.M. Senior Citizens' Day</p> <p>10 A.M. Midway &amp; Exhibits Open</p> <p>1 P.M. Lamb Judging</p> <p>4 P.M. Rides Open</p> <p>7 P.M. Parade</p> <p><b>THURSDAY SEPTEMBER 26</b></p> <p>10 A.M. Midway &amp; Exhibits Open</p> <p>12-5 P.M. Dairy Cattle Judging</p> <p>1 P.M. Kiddies' Day</p> <p>2 P.M. Market Steer Judging</p> <p>6 P.M. Dairy Beef Judging</p> <p>7 P.M. Livestock Sale</p> <p>8 P.M. Rabbit Judging</p> <p>8 P.M. Tug-Of-War</p> <p><b>FRIDAY SEPTEMBER 27</b></p> <p>10 A.M. Midway &amp; Exhibits Open</p> <p>4 P.M. Rides Open</p> <p>7 P.M. Family Fun Contests</p> <p>7 P.M. Antique Tractor Pull Entertainment</p> <p><b>SATURDAY SEPTEMBER 28</b></p> <p>9 A.M. Exhibits Open</p> <p>8-10 A.M. Exhibits Removed in Park</p> <p>12 Noon Rides Open</p> <p>1 P.M. Baby Parade Registration</p> <p>1 P.M. Baby Parade</p> <p>7 P.M. Entertainment</p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>PENNSYLVANIA'S LARGEST STREET FAIR</b></p> <p style="text-align: center;"><b>WEDNESDAY, SEPTEMBER 25</b></p> <p style="text-align: center;"><i>Senior Citizen's Day 10A.M.-2 P.M.</i></p> <p style="text-align: center;"><b>"The Appalachian Players"</b></p> <p style="text-align: center;"><i>old time folk and gospel entertainment</i></p> <p style="text-align: center;">12:30-1:00 in the Bingo Tent</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><b>Ephrata Fair Parade - 7:00 P.M.</b></p> <p style="text-align: center;"><b>THURSDAY, SEPTEMBER 26</b></p> <p style="text-align: center;">KIDDIES' DAY ENTERTAINMENT:</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><i>ON STAGE: Enjoy the Actors from the Ephrata Performing Arts Center as they perform many scenes from children's classic stories!!!</i></p> <p style="text-align: center;"><b>FRIDAY, SEPTEMBER 27</b></p> <p style="text-align: center;"><b>DUANE SLAYMAKER &amp; HIS BAND</b></p> <p style="text-align: center;"><i>On The Church Street Stage - 8-9:30 P.M.</i></p> <p style="text-align: center;"><b>SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 28</b></p> <p style="text-align: center;">Radio &amp; Recording Artist</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><b>CRYSTAL MARIE</b></p> <p style="text-align: center;"><i>On The Church Street Stage - 8-9:30 P.M.</i></p> <p style="text-align: center;"><b>46th Annual Baby Parade - 1:00 P.M.</b></p> <p style="text-align: center;"><i>Judging will take place at the starting point at 12:00 P.M. The parade will move at 1:00 P.M. In the event of rain, the Parade and Judging will be held in the Grain Tent in the Ephrata Park at 1:00 P.M. For more information call 484-4284 or 733-4451</i></p> <p style="text-align: center;">FOR INFORMATION: Visit the EPHRATA FARMERS' DAY ASSOCIATION OFFICE at 19 S. State St., Ephrata for premium books or any other questions (717) 733-4451</p>
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