## On Being a Farm Wife

(and other hazards)

**Joyce Bupp**

We are a shifty bunch.

In a spare room upstairs stands a very large, plastic bag. This bag is stuffed so full that it stands by itself, layered with an assortment of blankets, comforters, afghans. None of them is new. Most of the layers, in fact, lean toward the scruffy side. Still, each possesses the promise of plenty of warmth potential despite worn edges and frayed corners.

These snuggly-warm covers are being shifted. They will move from taking up space in our upstairs, to taking up space in the rooms of our grandchildren, across the meadow and around the hill. The bag's contents, including at least a layer or two from among the stuff we removed from mom's house last year, will be the fodder of bunk bed tents and hide-and-seek coverlets, summer sleepout snugglies, and cushioning to sprawl on the living room floor to watch a video.

For our shifty family, the bagful of blankets can be more useful elsewhere than taking up space in our spare room. So, we are shifting them to the next generations.

Miscellaneous items shift back and forth between our houses until sometimes we lose track of what belongs to whom. Food storage containers, a result of sharing meals, leftovers and treats, have almost become so blurred that some of our kitchen cupboard contents appear to be cloned.

Pot roast leftovers shift out of our refrigerator and salads shift back to take up the spare room. Muffins and soups shift places in our menu plans. We've actually shifted brownies back and forth on at least one occasion, when we both made them on the same day with intent to share.

Sometimes the lids don't shift back and forth as efficiently, and we have to a stage a shifty lid shakeout session to rematch container bottoms to tops.

A log splitter camped out in a corner of our yard just shifted back home to their house. But a small lawn wagon shifted here last fall remains, waiting to be shifted back home, probably with some load that needs to be shifted back there.

Being shifty has its advantages. When they were absent a lawn mower, ours shifted across the meadow, trimming around the ponds in the process. After ours bit the dust temporarily in late summer, theirs shifted here, trimming around the ponds in the process. Obviously, pond landscaping is a beneficiary to the family mutual shiftiness.

Come garden season, their tiller will shift briefly to our garden, perhaps in the same trip when a pile of bark mulch from our stockpile shifts back for use around their shrubs and flower beds.

There's even an assortment of refrigerator magnets, everything from crocheted butterflies (which also shifted here from mom's house) to farm supply business magnetic business cards. The kids love to pick them off the refrigerator, plunk them in a little plastic bag and carry them home. After finding the assortment strewn all over non-magnetic places in their house, their mom promptly shifts them back.

Being shifty sounds a little suspicious, until you explain it to folks. Who often find that they, too, have pretty shifty families.

All in all, we figure that being shifty is at least more desirable than being shiftless.

# Lancaster County Extension To Conduct 90th Annual Meeting

LANCASTER (Lancaster Co.) — Attend the 90th annual meeting of the Penn State Lancaster County Cooperative Extension Association scheduled Thursday, Jan. 30 at the Farm and Home Center, 1383 Arcadia Road, Lancaster.

Learn what is happening in the areas of: dairy, horticulture, nutrition links, food safety, Better Kid Care, West Nile Virus, wine grape industry, 4-H, urban programs, financial resource management, agronomy, master gardener program, livestock, and more.

The evening begins at 6 p.m. with a social hour including samples from the food court. A business meeting will follow and feature highlights from last year's county and regional extension programs. Entertainment will feature the J.P. McCaskey Gospel Choir.

Activities for children 3-10 will be coordinated by the family strengths agent during the business meeting.

Adult and children's tickets for this event can be obtained by contacting the Lancaster County Extension office at (717) 394-6851. Cost is $4 for adults and $2 for children age 6-12.

## American Cancer Society Kicks Off Daffodil Days

LANCASTER (Lancaster Co.) — The American Cancer Society's Daffodil Days launched a festive kickoff celebration on Thursday, Jan. 16 at the historic Conestoga House and Gardens, Lancaster, from 4 p.m.-6 p.m.

The 2003 Cancer Resource Directory, which includes information designed to help local cancer patients and their families, is available free of charge throughout the year to patients, area hospitals, physicians, treatment centers, and the general public by calling the Lancaster Unit Office at (717) 397-3744.

Chairperson LaVon Harnish will oversee the distribution of thousands of freshly cut daffodils shipped here from the state of Washington, to local businesses, schools, churches and community sites throughout Lancaster County during the week of March 17. Since Daffodil Days started in Lancaster County in the 1970s, more than $34 million has been raised in Pennsylvania.

The American Cancer Society provides information 24 hours a day, seven days a week, 365 days per year through its toll-free number, 1-800-ACS-2345 and its Website, www.cancer.org.


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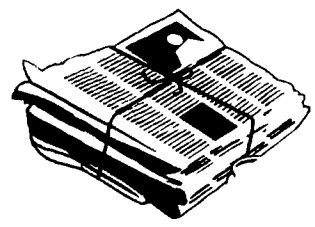

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