

On Being a Farm Wife

(and other hazards)

Joyce Bupp



Gray colors our world each morning, as dawn begins to meander up through the meadow.

Night's blackness eases away to the coming first hints of daylight and faint shapes begin to emerge from the paleness. A thick cluster of dark marks the woodlot's cluster of oak and locust trees, while shadowy silhouettes appear on our neighbor's houses on the hills. Far in the distance, poking through a gap in the hills, the picturesque spire of a community church points heavenward.

Distinctive notes telltale the early birds scratching through the seeds scattered around the snow remaining in the backyard. Over the quiet twittering of titmice and chickadees, a cardinal's clear chirps punctuate the morning's somber stillness.

A salmon hue eases over the gray in the eastern sky, gradually brightening to a stunning yellow. Suddenly,—bingo!—up pops the sun over the horizon. In the instant of that flooding with a golden glow, the day becomes warmer, happier, more friendly one.

If you happen to be the person milking the cows on the south-east-side row of the dairy barn, you suddenly find a need for sunglasses as the morning's brilliance shines directly in your eyes. But it can turn a mood in a moment.

How appropriate that the universal symbol of the "happy face," with black oval eyes and upturned curving grin, sports a face color of bright, sunshiny yellow. Because, any day the sun shines—and certainly no more than during these bleak, gray

days of winter—is a happier, more upbeat-feeling day.

Our daughter and I pondered recently if there's an epidemic this year of SAD, the Seasonal Affective Disorder that leaves one feeling somewhat down, somewhat tired, somewhat depressed. Add to that, being cooped up in the house from bitter cold and multiple-feet of snow, and you get mobs of people fleeing to the mall or the marts the moment a plow goes past to escape confinement.

Tied to the lack of light during the short days of the season, maybe the affliction could just as easily be dubbed TOG, or Tired Of Gray.

With water levels at their critical lows just six months ago, it was obvious that our region's extreme droughty condition could only be corrected by lengthy and extensive injection of moisture. And we don't generally get moisture when the sun shines. We do get rainbows, those colorful upside-down smiles from heaven, but we don't usually get the sort of soaking water recharge that our ground so desperately needed.

So, it was a given that moisture correction would entail lengthy stretches of gray, dark, damp, dismal weather. Or, as the case may be, mounds and moun-

tains of icy, blowing flakes of white.

Last week's deluge of rain into the mountains of snow sent cascades of water everywhere, creating for us our scenic whitewater stream pouring down the road, through the road culvert and on down the field road to swell our tiny stream many times its usual flow. But, for lots of folks, it meant collapsed roofs, injured and/or dead animals, barns and basements full of water, and accidents as returning arctic air transformed the runoff to treacherous black ice.

Done! Enough! The water levels are recharged!

Now we long for sunshine to temper the harsh grayness, to texture the wintry landscape with its warming glow and changing patterns of shadow. Sunshine to sparkle on the unfrozen corners

of the ponds and toss diamonds across stretches of icy, hardened snow cover. Sunshine to flood through our windows and brighten our homes and our psyches.

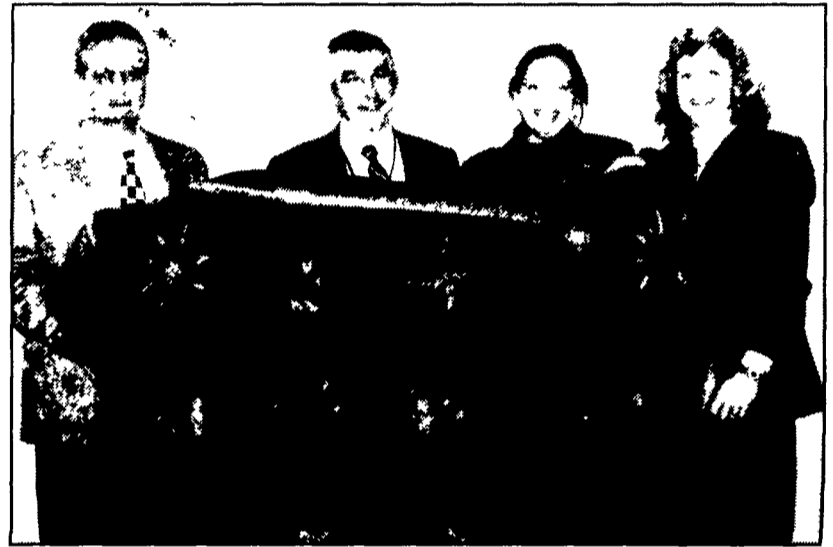
No need yet for excessive heat, just a little sunshine. Fruit trees need to remain dormant, and bulbs and perennials to remain safely tucked underground. Animals fare better if not exposed to extremes in temperature swings, just gentle moderation. And we certainly don't want any more winter—extending groundhogs to stay put.

There is an antidote to SAD and TOG and the cabin fever that sends folks out onto unsafe highways just to get out, go somewhere, go anywhere. flee the walls of confinement.

So we're sending out an SOS for the cure.

Send Our Sunshine.

Auction Raises \$2,525 For Pennsylvania's Holstein Youth



Attendees at the Pennsylvania Holstein Association's Annual Awards Breakfast had the opportunity to support the Pennsylvania Junior Holstein Association by bidding on various items donated for a fun auction. Topping the sale at \$1,300 was the winning bid from Paul and Ellen Hartle, center, from Bellefonte for the "Moon Glow" quilt donated by Dave, left, and Phoebe Bitler, right, from Vista Grande Farm. Phoebe pieced the quilt and commissioned her neighbor Alma Snyder to do the hand-quilting. A "to-date" set of Penn State Dairyman's Club milk bottles was donated by Donald Harwood and was purchased by Bob and Jane Pepple for \$225. Milk bottles from Keystone and Penn Gate Farms were also up for the highest bid. Several pieces of redware, a clock, several paintings, a coverlet and a wallhanging all helped to bring in a total of \$2,520 for Pennsylvania's Holstein Youth.

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