

On Being a Farm Wife
(and other hazards)
Joyce Bupp



Ice and snow.
More ice and snow.
Even more ice and snow. After two years of pleas for rain, so we are thankful; yes, remember, we are thankful for moisture levels improved by rain and snow. Now, having worked hard this winter battling the weather stuff, we are now all due a good laugh. So here's one for you.
Spring fashions are out. Know what looks to be popular this year? Miniskirts. And, among other things, apparently, garb with a "peasant" look.
Ha, ha, ha, ha, ha!
Give us a break. As if it wasn't bad enough, spotting swimsuits at a local retailer while we were still shoveling off heavy, frozen residue of the great Presidents' Day blizzard. Then, to flip open an advertising flier last week and eyeball a salmon-orange peasant dress was the fashion equivalent of a really bad "groaner" joke.
Just for information's sake, I grabbed a paperback copy of the "Collegiate Dictionary" from the shelf and paged to "peasant." The first description was "countryman."
Well, guess what. We're about as "countryman" as you get.

And ... we don't wear peasant dresses. Nor do we wear miniskirts. We'd catch our death of pneumonia from the draft in this old house with its built-in fresh air flow.
For all those fashion folks out there in designerland, let me brief you on what we "peasants" do wear: as much as possible, in this fading (hopefully) Siberian winter with its Mt. Washington levels of snowfall.
What is stylish around "countryman" land right now are insulated coveralls. Found in classic shades of denim blue, outback brown, or hunter-glow orange. Thermal, hooded sweatshirts and vests are also popular choices, with colors ranging from black to navy to shades of gray. Once layered with coats of manure, machine oil and liberal flecks of total mixed ration feed, color is irrelevant, anyway.
Of course, the above must be accessorized by heavy work gloves, again in varying shades. Most popular at this particular "peasant" establishment are those thick, fuzzy gold-colored work gloves. If you can tell the color under the stains of shop grease.

My personal favorite hand gear is a pair of thick, fuzzy, pink gloves, perfect for after-dark dog walking in subfreezing temperatures. For more mundane daily chores, like heifer feeding and moving hay bales, heavy cotton ones are more practical and dry faster after getting damp.
A hat, of course, is mandatory. Some of us go for the wooly, ski-type hats we can pull down over our heads and ears until only our eyes are visible. More rugged types sport winter-weight "farmer" caps, though how they can stand to have their ears exposed to the weather wearing those is beyond me.
Not all of us go for coveralls because of their bulkiness. Some of us just go for layers of vests piled over sweatshirts piled over sweaters piled over thermals. Which is why it takes 10 minutes to dress to go out to do barn chores.
And 10 minutes to peel off the layers after we're finished and hang them up to dry. And 10 more minutes to sweep up all the hay dirt and straw bits and sawdust that fell out of all the pockets during the layer peeling.
We long ago decided that "fashion" is just another name for spending money. And, what's "in" and what's "out" in fashion can change as quickly as the March weather. Which is why we "peasant" types around here stick with rugged, practical gear.
And, whenever possible, purchased at our favorite sales establishments:
The Salvation Army and Goodwill.

4-H Awareness Week To Celebrate 4-H Programs

WEST CHESTER (Chester Co.) — Across Pennsylvania, 4-H will celebrate Pennsylvania 4-H Awareness Week 2003, Sunday, March 16 through Saturday, March 22. Pennsylvania 4-H Awareness Week, celebrated annually, provides recognition to the 125,000 youth involved in Pennsylvania 4-H programs.
4-H gives youth age 8-18 the opportunity to explore new things ... from rocketry, community leadership, livestock, horticulture, sewing, horsemanship, computer, and internet programs. There are more than 150 projects available to choose from, researched based and developed to respond to youth and community educational needs.
4-H America's movement equipped for the future by a century of service. In 2002, the 4-H movement celebrated its centennial as America's premier youth development organization. Reflecting in its historic vision, 4-H hopes to commemorate this centennial initiative through conversations that brought together our nation's youth, youth leaders, and communities.
In Chester County, the week will include the Chester County 4-H Community Flower Show coordinated by Penn State Cooperative Extension and The Chester County Master Gardeners. The theme for the 4-H Community Flower show is "New Directions and New Beginnings." The flower show exhibits can be viewed in the Chester County Government Services Center in the lobby and on the third floor during Pennsylvania Awareness week. Also, throughout the county, different locations will exhibit our window display contest.
For more information on the Chester County 4-H program or to volunteer call the extension office at (610) 696-3500.

Child Care Directors Workshop

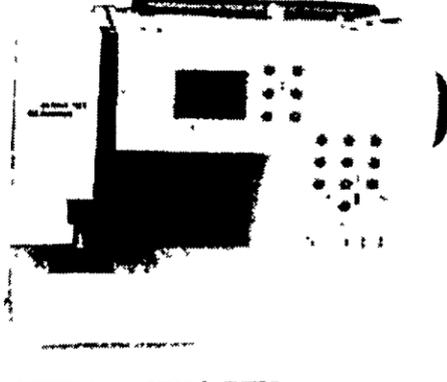
LEESPORT (Berks Co.) — "Hot Topics for Center Directors" is the title of the workshop being presented by Penn State Cooperative Extension. All directors and supervisors can participate in the workshop from 11 a.m. to 2 p.m. on Thursday, March 20, at the Berks County Agricultural Center, 1238 County Welfare Road, in Leesport.
Sue Giachero, Penn State Cooperative Extension family living agent in Berks County, says "This workshop will provide valuable information on recruiting and training new staff and on selecting training for all center staff."
Participants can receive two Department of Public Welfare training credits for participating in the workshop. Continuing Education Credits (CEUs) are also available.
For more information on the program, support materials, and other services from "Better Kid Care Program," call Sue Giachero at (610) 378-1327. Visit the Better Kid Care Website at www.betterkidcare.psu.edu.

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