



On Being a Farm Wife

(and other hazards)

Joyce Bupp

One of "those" days, is it? Maybe the light bulb blew when you switched it on after the alarm rang this morning? A ringing phone woke you from a sound sleep in the middle of the night, only to be a wrong number? The back left tire on your car looked low ... or had gone flat overnight?

While stumbling across the kitchen floor in your bare feet, you bruised your big toe stepping on one of those plastic bricks left by the kids (or grandkids). Or slipped on a stray, lost grape. The only thing the mailman brought other than a stack of junk mail was a sizeable, unexpected bill. You discovered that the stray cat you befriended has gifted you with a litter of six kittens in your garage. And, when you grabbed your favorite t-shirt, it had a

stain on the front? We all have days like that. Here on the farm, one of "those" days might entail stray heifers ripping bags of feed apart or calves stuck backwards in birth canals or a blown tractor motor or having some nasty piece of metal go through the knives of the forage chopper and tear their honed cutting edges to shreds.

And, then it happens. You drop what you're doing in the middle of a job to answer the ringing phone, and no one is there. And it's irritating as the dickens.

An e-mail message forwarded by a friend last week suggests that the nobody-on-the-other-end calls are often part of the telemarketing industry's research, designed to surface the most likely time of day that a real person

is likely to answer a particular number. And, the e-mail has a suggestion on how to confound the system and get your number dumped out of it.

What this message suggests is that, when no one is on the other end of a call received, we punch the pound sign button quickly for several, maybe six or eight times. This action supposedly confuses the dialing computer, which in turn loses that phone number.

Gee, I don't know if it works or not. But, I'm going to give it a try.

You might want to, also. Especially if you're having one of "those" days and punching out something might be welcome. But please don't pound the "pound" button so hard you mess up your phone. This column doesn't want to be responsible for your phone not working.

Now, on to all those "pre-approved" letters for credit or credit card protection or insurance or whatever that arrive daily in our mailboxes. They generally have self-addressed, pre-stamped return envelopes. My friend's e-mail suggests that you thoughtfully return to the company not only their own junk mail, but maybe others you got that day.

I have actually done this at times — on "those" days — over

the years. But you probably want to carefully remove anything with your name or any kind of account number on it first.

If we all did this across the country, think how it would stimulate returns to the U.S. Postal Service. Why, the extra volume could possibly even help to delay the next postage price increase. Consider yourself a consumer-oriented patriot.

And, y'know all those glossy little advertisements you get with utility bills and credit card statements? My friend's e-mail further advises to ship those back with our regular payments (just don't overweight your envelope that it ends up costing you more money). The senders can have the thrill of re-opening and disposing of what they originally shipped out.

What fun!

So do your part to keep the outfits that insist on littering our lives, and our office desks, with all their unwanted stuff busy dealing with its return and fall-out. Help turn one of "those" days for you back into one of "those" days for the mass marketers who pay a lot less to send their stuff per piece than do you and I.

Just think how many trees you might help to save. And landfill space.

McCormick To Spice Up Maryland Fair

TIMONIUM, Md. — Maryland's own McCormick and Company, Inc. will spice up the flavor of fresh foods harvested from Maryland farms and the Chesapeake Bay and served during the Maryland State Fair, Friday, Aug. 22 through Monday, Sept. 1.

The McCormick Maryland Foods Pavilion will work with Maryland commodity groups to showcase a variety of food that grows in the State including crab cakes, catfish filet sandwiches, corn-on-the-cob, smoked ham, pork barbecue, charcoal grilled beef sandwiches, lamb shish-kebabs, fried clams, turkey subs, roasted barbecue chicken, fresh fruit salad, yogurt sundaes, and more.

Keep an eye out for McCormick and commodity group representatives who will showcase products, give away recipes, and assist with cooking demonstrations in the Pavilion's center demonstration area daily.

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