



Taking advantage of a brief glimpse of sunshine this week, a young pony and its Mom graze contentedly in a pasture off Lusted Road.

Photo by Mark Floyd

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## You can take the girl out of the country, but...

It's hard to shake the hay seed out of my hair when I take the giant step back to the big city.

An R and R trip to Portland doesn't feel like a trip back to the old neighborhood anymore. Things have really changed on those so once-familiar streets.

There is an old phrase, "You can take the girl out of the country, but you can't take the country out of the girl." It's hard to get the mud off the shoes and the aromatic smell of pigs out of your Designer jeans. (That is what Levi's are, isn't it?)

I wanted to look the part of a city resident, so I left my farm clothes at home and dug a dress out of the closet. Come to find out that 70 percent of the town people were wearing jeans and cowboy boots. It's hard to tell where the country leaves off anymore.

The streets and names of the stores were, on the whole, unchanged. There was the addition of a golden arches here and there, but the thing that caught my eye was the size of the buildings. I couldn't help but gawk.

There was no inconspicuous way to avoid craning my head around like a dizzy owl. One woman I bumped into demanded an explanation so I told her I was window shopping. But 12 stories up? You never know where you'll find a bargain. The next one I tripped over was more sympathetic. She asked how long I had been afflicted with that awful kink in my neck. I told her I used to be a sniper scout in Viet Nam and she actually believed me.



Margaret Schmale's

Bits and pieces

I was surprised to find sociable people roaming the downtown streets. Everyone was moving so fast I figured no one even knew I existed. I was at a corner waiting for a light to change when a uniquely dressed fellow with a faraway look in his eye asked me for directions.

He seemed to look at me with the same quizzical look I gave him, then I realized with considerable embarrassment that I had a piece of hay in my mouth that I had been chewing on while driving. Fascinated, he asked what it was that I was chewing on. I explained that it was just a piece of grass and that it was a nasty habit I'd developed down on the farm.

He muttered something, then asked what kind of grass I had, since he had never seen anyone chew it before. He seemed like a nice sort, so I told him it was just a simple variety of Timothy. "Wild," he said.

"No, we raise it ourselves," I told him. The light had changed three times now, but this fellow was so interested in my odd habit that I forgot to cross the street. Then this guy asked, "How much do you want for a kilo of your Timothy?"

I'm not too good at math, but I figured he deserved some sort of an answer. I told him it was \$2.50 a bale or \$75 a ton; \$85 a ton if we deliver. "Alright," he said. "You don't even use a drop?"

"A drop?" I replied. "No, we use a conveyer belt." "Whatever," he shrugged. "Do you make night deliveries into the city?"

I had to admit that we had never made any deliveries into town and he said he understood and would meet us halfway. A real amiable fellow, I thought.

I asked him if he had a horse and he said he didn't deal in that anymore as he'd been busted too many times. He didn't look like your typical rodeo bum to me, but sometimes it's hard to tell. I told him I knew just how he felt, as I had also been busted up for messing around with a no-good horse. Every few months now, I get stiff in the joints to remind me of my exploits with the horse.

I couldn't believe how impressed this guy seemed. Finally I just had to leave. I told him I was sorry we only had enough grass for our own consumption, but I knew he would find what he wanted somewhere else. I offered him one of our cards and he said, "You advertise?"

As I crossed the street, he yelled after me, "Right on, mama."

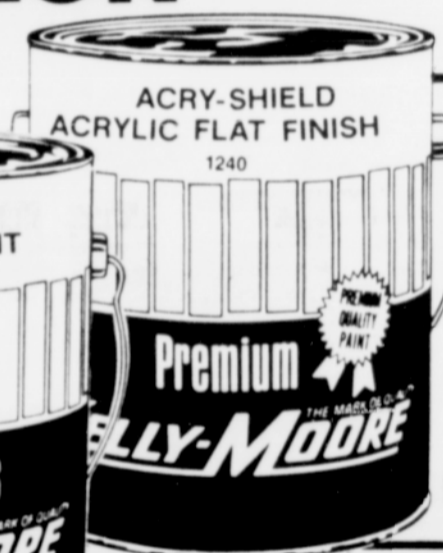
Now how do you suppose he knew I had kids?



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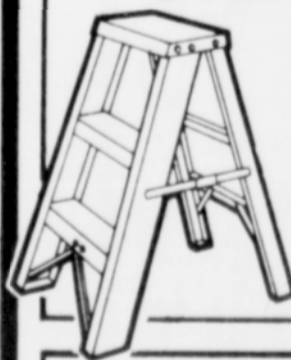
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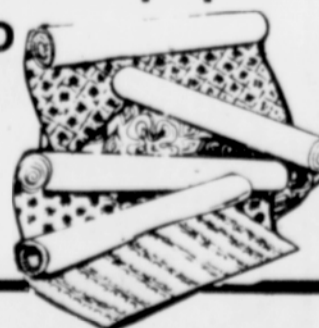
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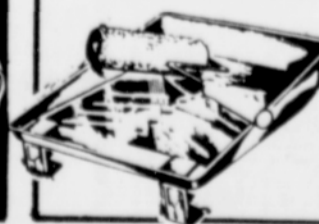
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