

No Matter How You Pamper Them, Ranch Wives Insists On Vacations

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8-25-66

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MERTZON — In spite of all the luxuries enjoyed by mother Shortgrassers, statistics prove that over 90 percent of our wives demand at least one vacation every year. This would be more understandable if the female element weren't blessed by conveniences that Cleopatra never dreamed of in the peak of her reign. And no one would deny that these ladies of the land of whirling winds didn't deserve an all-day motor tip if it were not obvious that they lead one of the most idyllic lives on the continent.

A typical case is my Chicago-imported wife, who has been the ruling force over the major portion of my morning, noontime, eventide and nocturnal activities for the past 17-odd years.

You see, she lives in such splendor as would have embarrassed Queen Anne. In the summer, her home is cooled by a three-pad, blower-type air conditioner. And there are few days during the winter when the south side of the dwelling isn't as snug as a squirrel's nest.

Every nook and cranny of her existence is blessed with fingertip conveniences, ranging from easy-fold ironing boards to a perfectly strung clothes line less than a stone's throw from the back door. Furthermore, the shelves of her cabinets are loaded with packaged baking ingredients. The storage space underneath the sink is filled with enough magic easy-on-and-off cleansers to polish the south wing of the White House.

Besides all these work-destroying items, she has the companionship of our eight children to assure that not one minute from 6 a.m. to 10 at night, is blighted by loneliness. This isn't taking into account that the inter-kitchen flow of neighborhood kids exceeds what Conrad Hilton would call a crowd, nor does it reveal that the front yard alone had enough members of the canine and feline world to entertain nearly any number of circus fanciers around the clock.

But regardless of this near-perfect set of circumstances, she sets up a show every single summer to either convoy our little group down to San Antonio or organize an informal troop movement to the Mexican border. And when the pitch of the wailing reaches the point where even the cat under the stove is threatened with a full fledge mastoid attack, I always give in to her folly.

Time has taught that it is a waste of breath to try to reason with her. There's no percentage in reminding here that it's wrong to expose the kids to a heathen world where grown men go out in broad daylight wearing short pants and adult ladies blare up and down the streets wearing their netted tresses rolled in steel contraptions.

The only way out is to load the station wagon and lead the innocent children out into an environment so shocking it would have made their great grandparents move even farther back into the wilderness.

It's a crying shame that my spouse and scores of other Shortgrass mothers can't appreciate how well off they are right in their own homes. But they can't. The lush advantages of the Great Society soar on to incredible heights of domestic grandeur, but these heiresses of the finest mode of life since Diamond Lil's time don't appear about to be ready to admit that the nearest thing to celestial bliss is managing a love nest in the land of the Indian squaws called "Hidden Throes."