



Angus Stakes

► by *Shauna Rose Hermel*, editor

Don't stare at candles

I sit at my dining room table with three candles beaming from the ledge that separates our kitchen from the dining area. I came to the table with so many random thoughts of the issues that suppress us in our endeavor to feed the world as we raise our children to uphold the moral values, work ethic and faith inherent to those who work the land.

But those candles give me pause tonight.

Simpler times

Three generations ago, those candles or a kerosene lantern would have been the only way to see at this time of night.

Excuse me for a second; I'd better get up and turn off the lights in our bedroom, the living room and the kitchen. I'll leave the light on here in the dining room where I'm working (don't want to ruin my eyes) and in the stairway up to the bedroom. My dog's getting older and doesn't like to go up and down stairs in the dark. Better to pay the electric bill than a vet bill.

I cheated and turned the furnace up a bit as I went by the thermostat. On cold nights like this, it seems the furnace never quits running. I think the fireplace is built more for looks and effect than it is to add heat to the house. Of course, right now I'm not jumping out of my chair to go get wood from the woodpile, either. I wonder if they thought about how much wood they'd have to cut or how many cow chips they'd have to gather to heat the house when they built houses back in my great-grandparents' day.

Three generations ago, we wouldn't have had to worry about freezing the water pipes — there wouldn't have been any to freeze. Dad even talks about the glass of water he took to bed with him as a kid being frozen by the time he woke up the next morning. We're a long way from the temperature dropping that low in this house.

Contradictions

As I write this, we're a couple weeks away from Christmas. You can bet most kids won't be asking for a candle to read by. More likely they'll be asking for a computer or an iPod to listen to their favorite singer. And before we get down on the kids for being spoiled and into all these new-fangled gadgets, we need to look at our own toy chests.

I poke fun at myself and us in general not to belittle the problems we face today. There are many, they are substantial and we will devote considerable page space to them in coming issues. I am just reminded of the

conveniences we take for granted. We've raised the bar on what it takes for us to be contented. That has its upsides and it has its downsides.

What do you want from your farm or ranch? Three generations ago the answer may have simply been to have a place to call your own, to live in peace and raise a family unimpeded. The profit goal may have been to make enough to carry you through one more season. Candles to read at night may have been optional luxuries — recreation that kept you from a good night's sleep and hampered getting the work done the next day.

Now, as we judge candles more on look and scent than light production, we require more of our farm ventures than meeting the necessities of living. And while it's not difficult to agree upon an individual's right to the necessities to survive, it becomes more gray for us to agree on what we need to stay on the farm in an age when candle-making is an art instead of a periodic backyard task.

We used to endure hardships to enjoy the farm life because we knew the opportunity wasn't to be taken for granted.

As we ring in the New Year, let's count our blessings for the conveniences we enjoy today, but let's also count our blessings for the hardships that take us back to the necessities, which can actually bring clearer focus and make us better people.

With that said, boy am I glad I don't have to run out to an outhouse.



E-MAIL: shermel@angusjournal.com
www.api-virtuallibrary.com

ANGUS PRODUCTIONS INC.

3201 Frederick Ave., Saint Joseph, MO 64506; 1-800-821-5478; fax: 816-233-6575; office hours: (M-F) 8 a.m.-4:30 p.m. (Central) home page: www.angusjournal.com

Staff are listed by name, phone extension and e-mail prefix. All direct phone numbers are "816-383-5..."; all e-mail addresses are "...@angusjournal.com"

General manager — Terry Cotton, 214, tcotton

Editorial Department — Editor, *Shauna Rose Hermel*, 270, shermel ■ Assistant editors, *Mathew Elliott*, 277, mellott; & *Linda Robbins*, 245, lrobbins ■ Artists, *Mary Black* & *Craig Simmons*

Field editors — *Barb Baylor Anderson*, 305 Valley View Dr., Edwardsville, IL 62025, 618-656-0870, anderagcom@sbcglobal.net ■ *Kindra Gordon*, 11734 Weisman Rd., Whitewood, SD 57793, 605-722-7699, kindras@gordonresources.com ■ *Ed Haag*, 317 W. 16th, Spokane, WA 99203, 509-747-2908, agscribe@aol.com ■ *Becky Mills*, Rt. 1, Box 414, Cuthbert, GA 31740, 229-732-6748, lovettmills@windstream.net ■ *Troy Smith*, 44431 Sargent River Rd., Sargent, NE 68874, 308-527-3483, wordsmith@nctc.net

Advertising/Production Department — Manager, *Cheryl Oxley*, 216,

coxley ■ Advertising coordinators, *Annie Cluck*, 223, acluck; & *Karri Mildenerberger*, 289, kmildenerberger ■ Production assistant, *Carol Beckett*, 226, cbeckett ■ Advertising artists, *Mike Bush* & *Monica Ford* ■ Proofreader coordinator, *Jacque McGinness*

Special Services Department — Coordinator, *Sharon Mayes*, 221, smayes ■ Assistants, *Julie Tylicki* & *Vickie Whitsell* ■ Artists, *Susan Bomar* & *Bradley Redmond* ■ Proofreader, *Melinda Cordell*

Web Services Department — Manager & sales coordinator, *Rich Masoner*, 239, rmasoner ■ Coordinators, *Doneta Brown*, 232, dbrown; & *Sara Reardon*, 212, sreardon ■ Web developers, *Tim Blumer* & *Thuy Copeland*

Photo Department — Photo services coordinator, *Kathrin Breytenbach* ■ Photo services assistant, *Colette Weipert*

Circulation & billing manager — *LaVera Spire*, 203, 220, lspire

Network systems coordinator — *Bruce Buntin*

Board of Directors — *Joe Hampton*, chairman; *Bryce Schumann*, vice chairman; *Terry Cotton*, president; *Richard Wilson*, secretary-treasurer; *Chad Hoffman*; *Jim Rentz*; *Darrell Silveira*; *Gordon Stucky*; *Philip Trowbridge* & *Cathy Watkins*

