

WHEN A CITY GIRL *goes country*

By Annette Bridges

Don't Miss a Thing

I have read that some scientists believe human beings have a curious capacity to take things for granted. It is suggested that repetition and time are the culprits that dull our sense of wonder. For example, they say even the most exquisite diamond loses its luster with familiarity or the sunrise fails to astonish because it is commonplace.

Certainly, there are many things that have become routine and expected in my life.

Have you ever been in the shower washing your hair, as I have, when suddenly the water stops coming out because city crews have shut down the system for repairs? How about when storm damage causes the loss of electricity, or your car is in the shop and you have no other mode of transportation?

Can you remember what life was like before the internet and cell phones? What about when the brother you were always able to count on has passed away, or when your good health is not so good anymore?

Oh yes, there are many things, experiences and people I have taken for granted.

An email landed in my box that inspired more thought on this subject. It told about a group of students who were asked to name what they thought were the Seven Wonders of the World. The wonders which received the most votes included Egypt's Great Pyramids, Taj Mahal, Grand Canyon, Panama Canal, Empire State



(Photo courtesy of Annette Bridges)

Building, St. Peter's Basilica, and China's Great Wall.

Apparently, one student had trouble finishing her list, stating she could not make up her mind because there were so many to choose from. The teacher encouraged her to share her list aloud with the other students to see if they could help.

"I think the Seven Wonders of the World are to see, to hear, to touch, to taste, to feel, to laugh, and to love," she read.

This unexpected list shared in the email was followed by a poignant reminder.

"The most precious things in life cannot be built by hand or

bought by man."

This student listed "wonders" that I never thought much about until one day a few years ago when my husband and I gave a terminally ill friend a jeep ride around our ranch.

Riding in the jeep was not a big deal to me, perhaps because it was "old hat" as some might say, but my friend noticed details I never had, and she relished every moment of her ride. I found myself being captivated by her adoration and reverence of what she was seeing and by every breath of fresh country air she gratefully took in. That was my friend's last jeep ride. She passed away a few

months later.

My one jeep ride with her taught me lessons I have never forgotten. I discovered colors in the sunset I did not know were there. I learned each of our cows has its own distinct bellow and some have really long eyelashes. I noticed the deeper the hole you drive over, the louder your laugh will be. I found that looking out over big Texas pastures reminds you of the broad expanse of love. Gazing at the horizon when the sun is setting fills you with a peaceful sense of the infinity of life.

So, how do we keep our sense of wonder? How do we maintain our appreciation of all the everyday miracles that compose our day? How do we never overlook the blessings that make up each life moment?

I am learning to even ask such questions is a good beginning. Pausing to ask these questions also requires pausing to explore for the answers.

As I learned in my jeep ride, the more acutely aware we are of what makes up and who shares our days, life will be more meaningful and satisfying. Savoring and mindfully using any of the wonders of sight, hearing, taste, touch, feeling, laughter, and love, will guide you to even more wonder.

Start right now, this very moment, and keep yourself in a constant state of awe, admiration and respect for every ordinary and extraordinary wonder in your day.

You do not want to miss anything, and I sure hope I don't. 