



WHEN A CITY GIRL *goes country*

By Annette Bridges

Three things I love most in the world are getting pedicures, wearing lipstick and smelling fresh cut hay! Who would have thought it! I certainly had never given much thought about the smell of any type of grass until I spent time with my honey hauling in coastal square bales.

My love for pedicures and lipstick is no surprise to those who know me well. I doubt anyone has ever seen my lips without some sexy or bold hue, and I can assure you no one would ever see me wearing flip-flops without my toenails donning some fashionable shade.

Wearing lipstick has long been a must-do fundamental of my life. In fact, even on those rare days when I don't immediately put on my make-up, my lips are coated with moisturizer and tint. I suspect this inclination came from my southern roots. I never saw my mamma or her mamma without their lipstick even after they reached their 90s. So anytime my husband pops his head inside the house to yell "Let's pick up!" I quickly coat my lips before I run out the door. Every time.

In our early years of hauling hay together, I drove an old flatbed truck. Honestly, I didn't like driving it back then too much. There was no air conditioner so having the windows down was a must. Inevitably when my husband was stacking the bales close to the truck cab, my sweaty arms and legs got covered in itchy grass shavings that blew in the truck windows.

Thankfully, eventually, my



Annette Bridges at the farm in Tioga, Texas. (Photo courtesy Annette Bridges)



One of Annette Bridges' favorite things in the world is a pedicure. (Photo courtesy Annette Bridges)

darling husband got brave enough to teach me to drive our vintage red Ford 601 tractor and an unex-

pected love affair began. I had no idea what I had been missing.

To begin with, let me just say

the hay hauling experience on our tractor is pretty darn pleasant. The blowing hay rarely reaches me. Seated on an open tractor with a buggy top umbrella rather than inside the cab of a truck is much cooler even on the hottest of summer days. If there is a breeze, even a little one, I feel it enough to keep the sweat off my brow.

Oh my goodness, driving such a tractor provides the most amazing broad view of the fields and the massive Texas sky. You can immerse yourself amidst the fragrance of the freshly cut hay. Just thinking about it right now makes me take a slow deep breath and sigh, almost getting excited for hay season to begin.

Indeed, that big horizon before my gaze reminds me how infinite life is. Any troubles that might have been burdening my heart begin to seem quite small in contrast. My mamma taught me to look for what is good in everything and to be grateful!

She often reminded me how gratitude would help me see what was there instead of what wasn't. I was blessed with a very wise mamma. She was right, of course. The gratitude I feel when I'm driving my beloved red tractor in our hay fields always diminishes any worries and gives me some fresh perspective.

My husband knows better these days than to suggest I drive the truck. It ain't gonna happen. He knows there are essentials and requirements that keep his hay-hauling partner happy. Getting pedicures, wearing lipstick and driving the red tractor to pick up hay bales are three of them. ☺