



WHEN A CITY GIRL

goes country

By Annette Bridges

I'm always surprised and delighted by the messages that whisper in my ear while I'm driving my beloved red tractor. Every. Single. Time. If you read my first "When a City Girl Goes Country" column then you will notice I'm donning a new hay hauling dress in this picture. On that note, I am shocked yet tickled I have no problem these days having my photo taken and published with no make-up, hair in a ponytail and at the heaviest weight in my life, but my friends, I do have on my dang lipstick and I am in my Wonder woman pose. Enough said.

Have you ever considered how driving an old tractor on a hot summer day to pick up hay bales is like your life?

Maybe your sciatica is screaming at you as you hit every hump in the field, but you keep going because that is what you must do. There is no stopping. You wouldn't even consider quitting. You keep moving along because you know that is the only way to accomplish what is needed. It's the fastest way, too.

Some days are especially hot. There is not even a little breeze to wipe the sweat off your brow, and so you sweat. A lot. You feel every agonizing drop. The more you sweat the messier you get, too. Every piece of grass or grain of dirt gets embedded onto your skin. There is no time or way to wipe anything off. Both hands are needed to maintain control of your steering wheel. You can't allow yourself to be distracted. You must stay focused on the task at hand.



Annette Bridges in her Wonder Woman pose. (Photo courtesy Annette Bridges)

Why are those darn bales in the corners so difficult to get sometimes? Do you need to change your course? Pull out a little wider? Move in a little closer? Sometimes you have to stop and drag the bale to a better spot to make it possible for the loader to pick it up. You keep making adjustments as you take every turn. It's satisfying when what you did worked. You feel proud of yourself, and you should.

Your old tractor seat is not comfortable. Sometimes you feel

like you're going to fall off as it rocks you in every direction as you move along your way. You wish you had a new one, a better looking one without holes, one with more support, one that feels stronger and sturdier, one that is softer and provides more padding when you hit the big bumps in the ground. Yet your old seat survives every ride. Even though it always feels like it's going to fall apart, it doesn't.

There are the delights even during a not-so-pleasant ride. You

love seeing the birds that sit on hay bales in the distance. You love the broad horizon that surrounds you. You love the fragrance of fresh cut grass. You are grateful to share every moment you can with your husband.

I bought a new phone case recently that has two statements inscribed on it. Live the life you love. Love the life you live. I don't always remember to love the life I'm living, especially in a hot hay field on a hot summer day, but this day? I do remember. ☺