

I keep a daily journal. Over the years, it has been more consistent at some times than at others, and there were many, many years when I did not write down a little of our daily activities in any regular fashion. For the past few years, though, I have been very faithful. For one thing, many of the records that could be written in some other places appear in my journals, and it is easy to find answers to some of our questions. I always note the date when we turn out the rams and the bull, and I keep track of the weather and seasonal jobs such as lambing, sheep shearing, maple syrup making, and haying. Entries that are important to find easily I often underline or write at the top of the page. When we have a question about something in our recent past, our first resource is my daily journal.

Today is January 4th, 2016. I started to think about how many years I had written a little about our life on that day. So, I looked back at some of the records from the last decade or so, and this is what I found:

January 4th, 2003 was a Saturday. I worked at my part time job at the post office until noon. In the afternoon, Elizabeth Widman and a friend came, and we went ice skating. We had good ice and skated a long time. I noted that I needed to contact our librarian about starting a women's book group.

January 4th, 2007--Runo and Steve hauled two loads of straw we had bought from a neighbor--one load for us and one for Steve and Laura. Meanwhile, I went to the greenhouse and picked spinach and pulled carrots from the garden. I put it all in a vegetable lasagna.

January 4th, 2008--After morning coffee break I went skiing. When I got back from touring the woods and fields, I made squash soup, and we ate a little early so I could go to the women's reading group meeting.

January 4th, 2009--I wrote my newspaper column today, describing my own version of Utopia. It would be a society with small, diversified farms, small businesses in the villages and small towns, nationalization of public transportation and big businesses, and generally, more conservative use of resources.

January 4th, 2010--We had above zero temperatures for the first

time in a few days. In fact, it misted and even rained a little. I worked on a pair of felt mittens someone ordered. They are drying now and will be ready to embroider tomorrow.

January 4th, 2011--It was 16 degrees F. this morning. We had about four inches of new snow over night. I wrote an article about our barn today. I don't know if I will submit it to a magazine or just keep it for the record of a significant building here on the farm.

January 4th, 2012--It was two above zero this morning. We had Quaker Meeting at the Ilers' home this evening. It was good to sit there in the silence and visit afterwards with a cup of coffee and some of Joanne's good baking.

January 4th, 2013--It was 18 above zero this morning, but there was a bitterly cold wind that blew all day long. After evening chores, it felt good to spend a half hour in the sauna.

January 4th, 2014--It was 15 above zero this morning. It snowed a little, and that made it a little less slippery to walk than it has been. We did our chores as usual, and Runo cleaned the calves' side of the barn. Then we went to Cadillac, mostly to the library to stock up on reading material.

January 4th, 2015--The day started out with quite mild temperatures, but by evening, it was below 10 degrees and very windy. It snowed most of the day. We have about a foot of snow on the ground.

And today is January 4th, 2016--It was ten degrees above zero this morning. The wind is blowing, and it is cold, but the sun is shining, and the world around us here is bright with new snow. The fields sparkle with thousands of diamonds. The blue jays and finches and some pine siskins are busy with the sunflower seeds at the feeder. An early lunch will give me time to get to the library for my afternoon of volunteer work there.

So, that was a glimpse into January 4th here on Coe Creek Farm. It surely varies from year to year, but the basics remain the same: winter weather, barn chores, inside work, and pleasant evenings.