

We experienced something that has been all too rare this past year—a rainy day. It has rained, to be sure, and we have not suffered anything remotely like a drought, but it has been dry. The rains that have come have been fleeting and spotty. And, although we had good snow cover nearly all winter this past season, that snow melted rapidly and didn't fill the swamps and vernal ponds. A week or so ago, I read that our area would need about ten inches of moisture to come up to the average for this time of year.

This rainy day yesterday, something we have taken for granted most years, was a real treat. We woke before daylight to the sounds of thunder. It wasn't long before we heard the patter of rain on our metal roof.

"A good shower," we thought, never hoping that we would have a whole day of intermittent rain. But, that is what we had.

We went to the barn for morning chores during a lull in the rain. The milk cows were actually almost dry when they came into the barn. We milked, turned the separator, cleaned up the milk house, turned out the cows, and made a detour to the garden to make sure there was not another woodchuck in the live trap.

That was empty, so we left the garden and headed for the lane past the farmhouse, up behind the hay barn, and on to the cabin. Except, we never got that far. By the time we reached the garage by the house, it was obvious that a major shower was headed our way. We stepped inside, stood in the open door, and watched it rain. What a treat!

When that shower ceased, we made the trek to the hay barn, deciding to go through the building instead of around, since it would give us 144 feet of dry conditions before coming to the north door and going on to the cabin. And, sure enough, another shower came along just as we were ready to exit the hay barn. We waited again with not a bit of impatience, and when the rain slowed, we came to our yard gate.

Then, during our mid morning coffee break, we sat and watched the western sky. It has always been interesting—as we are situated here—to watch a rain shower coming from the west. First, Hardwood Hill in the west and the hill behind the Amish metal shop in the southwest go from gray to white. Then, the white gradually comes closer, and there is a sound accompanying that movement that is unlike any other. Finally, as the white shrouds the willow swamp at the edge of the west field, the raindrops begin to fall. And, soon, we are engulfed in a full rain shower. I remember watching this same scene unfold from an early age. My father would stand at the kitchen window and watch the rain come.

And, except for that early morning thundershower, this was a quiet rain. There were no lightning strikes, no thunder, and the wind was only a gentle breeze. This was a perfect rainy day.

In this time of extreme climate change, we can look at a day like this rainy day and know that this is how it should be. We know that droughts still would occur even without the catastrophic climate conditions, that there would still be devastating storms both summer and winter, but those events would be less common than is likely to be the case in the future. So, we were

particularly happy for a “normal” rainy day. A few more such days and the swamps and ponds might again have average moisture levels. The change that is needed is at the human level. People of all political inclinations need to accept that we must change the way we live—use less, and use what we need more judiciously and not see Mother Earth as a resource to “use up.”