

With all that goes on in the world, it is sometimes necessary for one's own mental health to bring the focus back to the very local. And, in our case, I mean this farm where our family has lived since the 1870s. Whatever else takes our attention, there is still Halvan to milk every morning, kittens to feed, and cattle, sheep, and horses to look after. There is still the garden with weeds that increase daily, regardless of the rest of society. There is still hay to cut, rake, and bale. There is still the live trap to monitor and sometimes, a raccoon or woodchuck to relocate out of the garden area. There is still movable electric netting to shift as the ewes move from one area of pasture to another. And, there are meals to cook, dishes to wash, clothes to hang on the line, and butter and bread to make. So, in spite of constant concern about assassinations, wars, mass shootings in our own country, Supreme Court abuses, Covid 19, and rightwing pseudo news, we carry on pretty much as usual here on Coe Creek. We don't have any choice. There are too many other beings that depend on us. And, maybe that is a good thing.

This forenoon I hiked up to the cattle pasture to open a gate so the cows and calves could go to a new area. They were lying on the hillside, the breeze keeping away the insects. I opened the gate to the Speicher Woods lot, but they didn't follow. They were filled up with grass, forbs, and browse and were enjoying just lying there chewing their cuds.

I opened the gate and then walked along the fence in the woods, checking for limbs on the wires and also to move a wire to bring electricity to another stretch of fence.

The Speicher woods is damp, rough, and rather buggy. But, it is also interesting. On my hike along the fence this forenoon, I took particular notice of ferns. I didn't go looking for them, and I know of several other kinds that are in that woods, but I did see sensitive ferns, Northern maidenhair, bracken, royal fern, and cinnamon fern. Some day when there aren't so many mosquitoes, ticks, and flies, I am going back with the fern field guide and see how many I can locate. And down in the corner where I changed a wire to send power to the west side of the pasture, there was one lone cardinal flower, a splash of scarlet in a forest landscape of many greens.

The cattle eventually made their way into the new pasture and settled down to munch on the trefoil, clover, and other grasses and diverse plants and flowers that make up the Speicher Woods pasture.