

PROVIDES PLACE TO LIVE UNTIL NEW HOME IS READY TO MOVE INTO

“Home Sweet Home” In A Machine Shed

By Dianne L. Beetler

When Larry Johnson, an Altona, Ill. farmer, first suggested moving into the machine shed, his wife, Chris, didn't think much of the proposal. But, after listening to Larry's carefully thought out plan, she decided it wasn't such a bad idea.

The couple and their children, Kit, 2½, and Robin, 10 months, lived in a 120-year-old farmhouse, and they wanted nicer living quarters. But the best site for a new home was right where the old farmhouse was standing.

This led Larry to develop the idea of building a machine shed to live in while razing the old home and erecting a new structure.

He hired two local carpenters to build the 32-by-32-foot machine shed, then did much of the interior work himself. The family moved into the building last March.

Because they planned to use the building eventually as a machine shed, the Johnsons didn't want to spend too much money on interior decorating. To cut costs, they installed the kitchen sink and cupboards from the old house in the shed. Doors leading from room to room also came from the farmhouse. Larry insulated the walls and covered the living room cement floor with plastic, roofing paper and a rug to keep out moisture. The kitchen floor is painted cement.

The downstairs includes an 18-

ft.-wide living area, the kitchen and a bathroom. Two bedrooms are located in the loft.

Wafer wood covering the insulated walls gives the home a rustic appearance. A large, three-sectioned picture window in the south wall of the living room came from an old school gymnasium. Larry cut matching windows into sections* to form the smaller windows in the home.

Beneath the bathroom, a 5-ft. deep pit with a cement floor contains a natural gas furnace, water heater and water pump.

The Johnsons use a wood stove, located between the kitchen and the living room, to provide auxiliary heat for their unusual home.

To quiet the patter of raindrops, Larry used Unduline — a heavy, asphalt-type material — instead of the customary sheet metal to construct the roof.

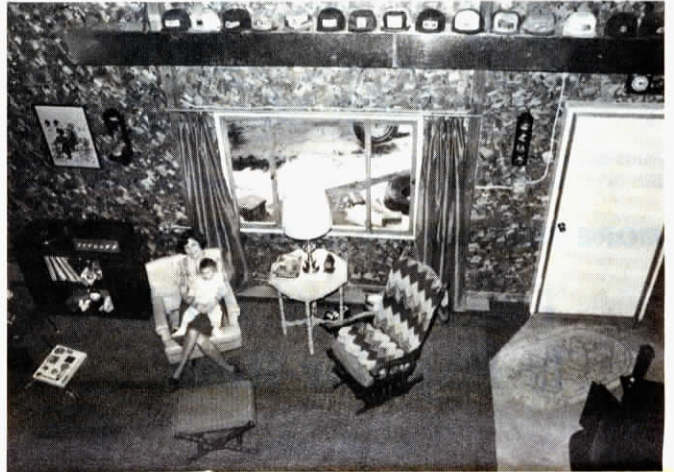
Carpeted steps lead from the living room to the loft. Because interior walls of the loft do not extend to the ceiling, air circulates so well that heat ducts aren't needed upstairs.

When the new home is finished, Larry plans to use the machine shed loft for storage and will park his machinery below. One area of the downstairs will be a workshop.

The family hasn't set a timetable for completing their new home and, for now, are living comfortably in their “glorified” machine shed.



From outside, it looks like an ordinary machine shed. The large overhead door on left forms east wall of the living room.



Inside the shed is the living room, kitchen and bathroom, plus two bedrooms in upstairs loft.

Recently, a visitor walked into the shed expecting to find Larry at work on some equipment. The visitor was quite startled to find himself in the family's living room.

The Johnsons don't mind the amazement of their visitors. In fact, little Kit loves to tell people, “We live in a barn.”

ANIMAL HARMONY IN A HOG BARN

Farm Dog Willingly Nurses Little Pigs

By Wally Schulz

The Bob Bleser farm family, of Elkhorn, Wis., has an unusual crossbred collie that's attracting a lot of attention as it nurses little pigs.

“Our dog ‘Cocomo’ gave birth one chilly night to eight pups. She had the pups outside, as she's an outdoor dog. Two of her pups died and six of the litter survived,” explains Bleser.

When he came out in the morning to do the hog chores, he found Cocomo and her newborn pups by the closed farrowing barn door. She had carried them there, awaiting entry to the inside warmth of the farrowing barn.

Bleser immediately moved Cocomo and her babies inside the farrowing barn, putting them in with

three sows and their 32 little pigs.

The pups and porkers hit it off right from the start. Walk into the barn and you'll probably find the sows nursing pups, and Cocomo nursing little pigs.

“She doesn't mind at all and willingly shares her milk with them,” notes Bleser. “It's a scene where animals live in true harmony. The sows don't fuss a bit as the pups scurry in and out of the farrowing crates with the little pigs.”

Many visitors have stopped at the Bleser farm to see the unusual sight of a dog nursing pigs, and sows nursing pups. “Visitors tell us they've never seen or heard of anything like this. They just stare in amazement and shake their heads,” notes Bleser.



Not only does “Cocomo” let pigs nurse her but the sows, in turn, let her puppies nurse them.