



Blue Jeans and Rubber Boots

By *Susan Schaefer*

Cutting Grass

May on the farm meant that the days were warmer and the ground was dry and warm. My dad would be driving rectangles in the field trying to get his crop in, always with one eye on the neighbours, to see who was in the lead. My mother would plant her huge garden, trying to grow enough produce to keep her family of seven fed throughout another calendar year.

And it was also the time of year when the grass would grow like a weed and needed constant mowing.

Let me just give you some background. We had a large farm yard. There were no riding mowers, electric lawn mowers, or even quick, easy start mowers. No. We had a graveyard of old lawnmowers piled high in one of the sheds, and out of there you would drag

out a mower that was the least rusted up and could possibly make it through another season.

You would check it for gas and oil. Then, wearing a glove, you would pull and pull until your shoulder was almost out of it's socket until you heard a little cough, choke and a sputter. Oh come on baby, you can do it. A few more pulls and a few more sputters. There was a trick to this and perfect timing was needed as you had to move the lever that controlled the speed up just a bit until it would sputter, kick out a spray of dark smoke and then start. Once you got the mower started, you ran like a 'bat out of hell' around the yard cutting the grass, not daring to stop, in fear of the lawn mower quitting. No bathroom breaks allowed, or you may never get it started again. Hopefully you could swatch a fair bit of grass before it ran out of gas.

Once that happened, you'd drag your tired little body into the house, parched and overcome with heat stroke to have some ice cold kool-aid. There's nothing like a brain freeze to shake you up. Looking out the window you could see your accomplishment, as you realize the blade was dull and only cutting every second blade. Here's hoping nobody notices.

It was truly a blessing when Monday morning came around and you had a few hours break as we were off to school. After school you were grateful to have a little homework. "Sorry I would love to cut grass tonight, but I have way too much school work to do." Then the parents would send some other poor little foundling out to get it done. Snicker, snicker.

And wouldn't you know it, just as the last siblings started to leave the nest, a riding mower magically appeared on the farm.

Now I hardly ever cut the grass, as that is my spouse's domain. But there is camaraderie in joining him for a beer after it is all cut. Except in May when we practice No Mow May.

