



The Adventures of Meg

By M. M. McCallum

Pigs in hot water

Meg's mother waved goodbye as she shut the door behind Meg and her grandfather. Her smile faded as she wondered how this weekend would turn out.

Having Meg stay overnight on the farm with Greatgran while her grandparents went to a wedding seemed simple enough. Why this feeling of something amiss? Oh well! It's springtime and folks do get funny notions this time of year, Mum said to herself.

Greatgran and Chipper were waiting to greet Meg and Rex.

"Child dear," said Gran. "How thin and pale you look. I'll mix up some sulphur and molasses for you. That's the best spring tonic I know."

Meg laughed and tossed her red hair. She loved the stuff. What fun to dip a spoonful of the golden powder into the rich dark liquid, turning it this way and that before swallowing the fuzzy golden drops.

Night was closing in. Meg and Greatgran packed away the quilt scraps. The kettle was singing on the cookstove and the rain was pelting down harder than ever.

Mr. Sullivan, who had come to do the chores, poked his head in the door long enough to say hello. He hoped the hydro would not pick tonight to go off as the new litter of pigs needed the heat lamp. Wasn't this quite a rain, he said; the creek is just about over its banks. No, he wouldn't stay to supper; Maw would be holding his.

Meg awoke. It seemed as though she had been asleep for a

long, long time. Was it morning? No, the rain was still coming down but no light showed through the unshuttered window. Rex stirred beside the bed.

Then Meg heard it... a steady slap, slurp! slap, Slurp! Getting out of bed, she looked out the window. What light there was reflected on water... water everywhere.

Hearing a sound from Greatgran's room, Meg and Rex pushed open her door. Greatgran was fumbling with her bedside lamp. Click, click went the switch.

"Burnt out," said Gran. "Try the hall switch."

"No luck Gran," reported Meg. "I guess the hydro is off."

"Oh dear," said Gran. "Mr. Sullivan was worried about the piglets. Help me up Meg."

"No Gran. You stay tucked up nice and warm here. The cookstove is out and if the hydro is off so is the furnace. I'll go to the barn."

Raincoat, rubberboots, kerchief, and Meg was ready. Carefully striking a match, she lit the coal-oil lantern that Granpa always kept ready at the back door. Rex sloshed along beside her and whined impatiently as Meg's cold fingers worked the latch of the barn door. They could hear Chipper whimpering anxiously inside.

At last, the door creaked open. Meg swung the lantern high. Dark eyes looked back at her from the cow stanchions.

"That's funny," said Meg. "All the cows are standing up. And what is that sow making such a

ruckus about? Oh my! There's water everywhere and no lights."

Meg saw mama pig chewing frantically at the board separating her from her babies, all the while calling them to her. Meg knew there was room under the board for the piglets to come to nurse but in the excitement they were slipping and sliding and not listening to their mother at all. Meg knew that an unhappy mama pig could be very dangerous.

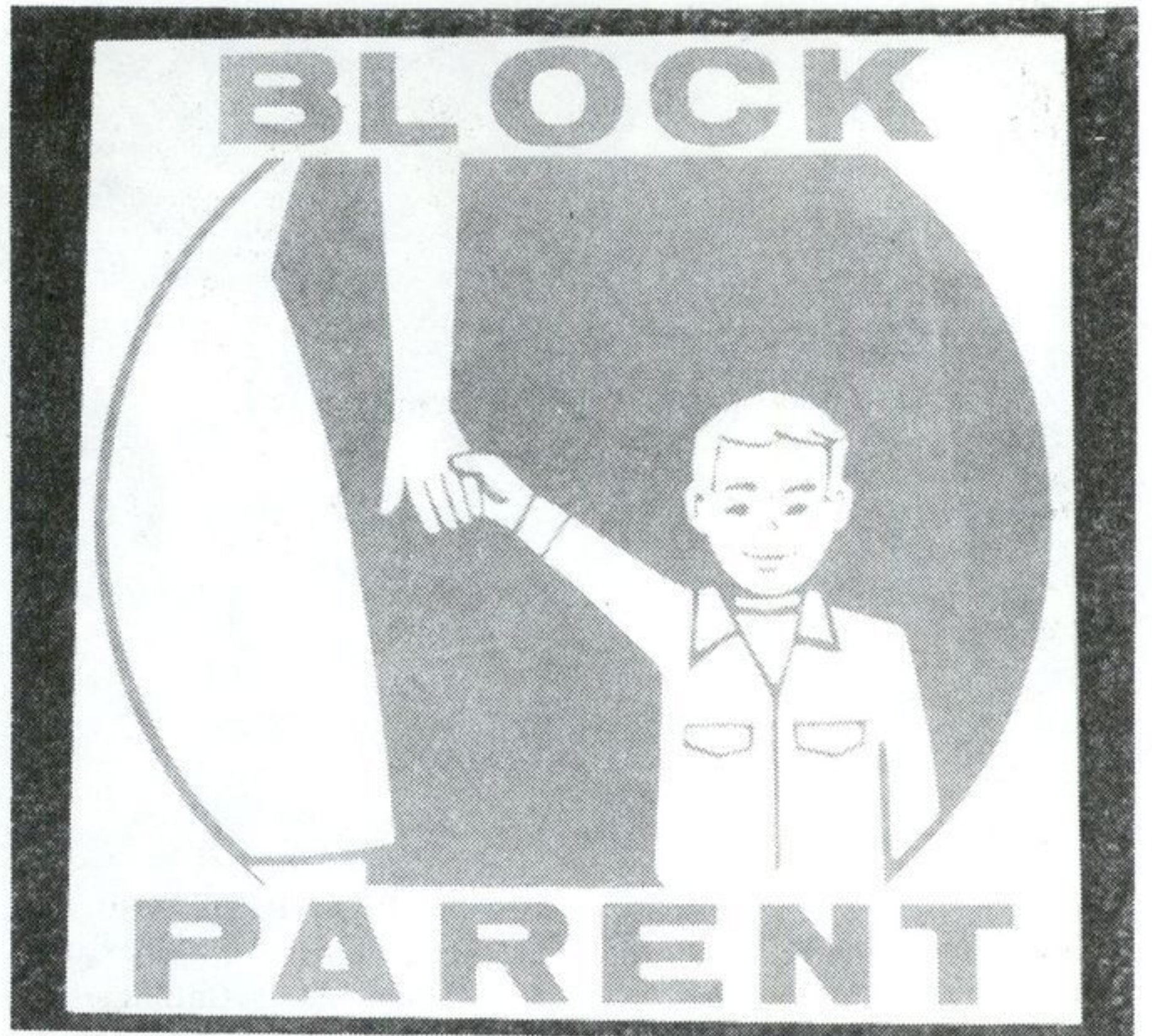
Hanging up her lantern, Meg searched for a box. Finding one, she scooped up the baby pigs one by one, put them in it, and struggling with her heavy burden, made her way back to the house.

Darling Greatgran was up and had the wood stove going. She told Meg that Mr. Sullivan was on his way over and that Meg was a brave girl and had done just right to rescue the pigs.

A tired Meg and two soaked dogs helped Mr. Sullivan turn the livestock loose and find the high ground near the house. It seemed that along with the rain and the rising creek, the barn water system had overflowed. It could be fixed once daylight arrived.

Bustling around the lamplit kitchen, Greatgran smiled happily. Maybe she couldn't stay alone, but she could feed hungry farm babies as well as ever. And she said to herself:

"Mix plenty of sulphur and molasses to help ward off the chill of this night and a dose of 'Senna Lea' won't come amiss either. After all, it's spring."



SIGN UP

A block parent movement is underway in the Russell area with anyone over 16 invited to apply. Block parents display signs in their windows when they wouldn't mind being disturbed by children who think they need help. Block Parents can be single, married, working, or senior citizens; they're carefully selected and receive instructions on what to do. Designed to reduce the number of child molestations and to assist police, the program has been tried and proven successful in other communities. For more information call Chris Edmunson, 445-2817.

VISITING
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of Mr. and Mrs. Robert Matthew, Colin and Ian.

Mr. and Mrs. Stuart Le Baron of Belleville and Mrs. Bowman of Gananque were weekend guests

Miss Irma Zarateg of Mexico was weekend guest of Mrs. Cecil Weatherall and family.

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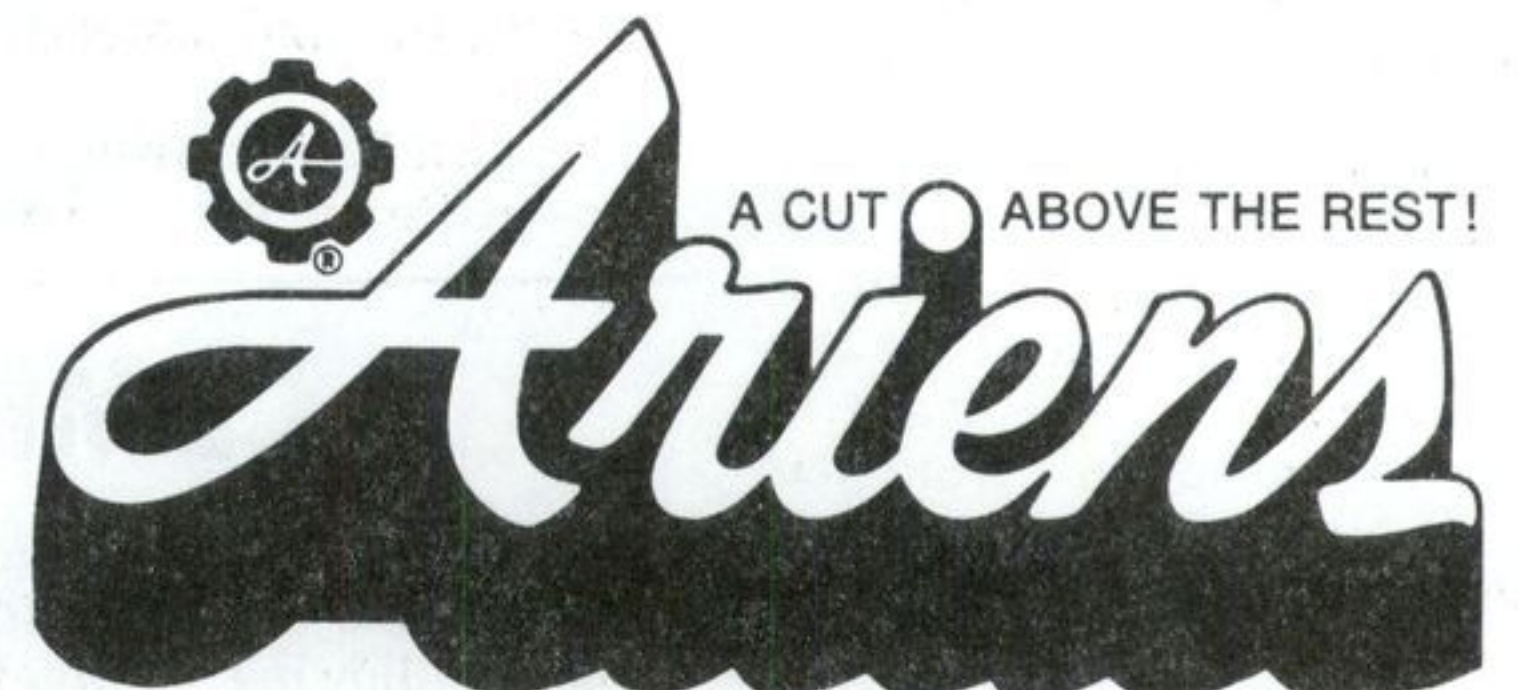
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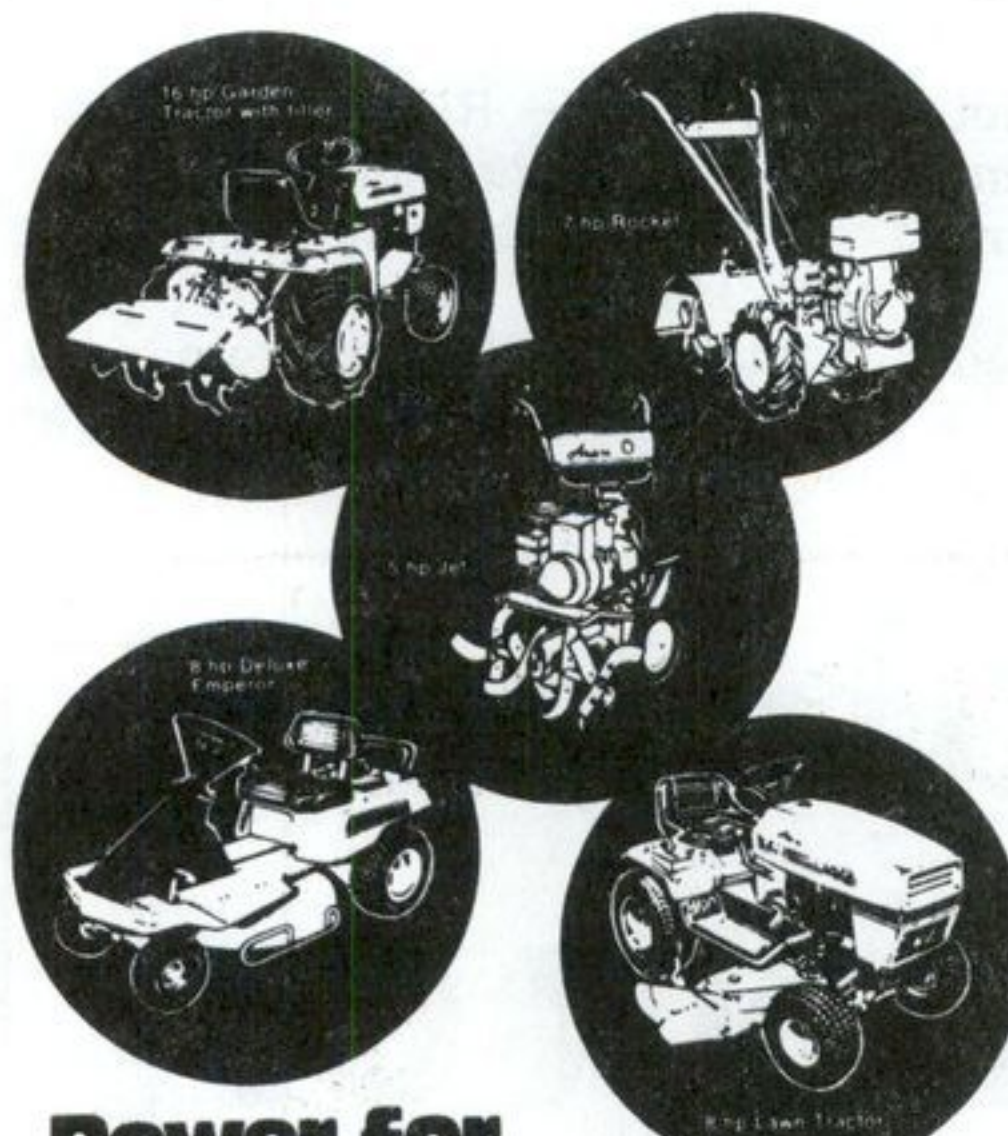
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