

TWAS THE NIGHT BEFORE FAIR

Twas the night before Fair, and all through the house,
Not a person was sleeping—not even the mouse.

The unfinished clothes were hung with care,
In hopes to be finished in time for the Fair.

The children were hustling, making mother see red,
While visions of blue ribbons danced in their heads.

As Judy sewed kerchief and Sue knitted cap,
Mom and Dad wished for a long winter's nap.

When out on the lawn, there arose such a clatter,
Those darn steers were out again! That was the matter.

Away to the window flew Mom like a flash,
Pulled open the drapes and threw up the sash.

The moon on the breast of the lawn freshly mowed,
Gave aluster of mid-day to creatures below.

Bill ran for the halters, Dad put on his shoes,
The girls smelled bread burning—there go the blues!

Around 10, it's hard to be lively and quick,
But they knew at the moment they couldn't be licked.

More rapid than eagles, the steers, running, came,
As Dad whistled, shouted and called them by name.

"Come Dasher, come Dancer, come Prancer and Vixen,
Here Comet, here Cupid, here Donder, and Blitzen."
(They were named after the reindeer.)

To the corn on the porch, they charged at the wall,
Mom grabbed the broom screaming, "Now get away
All!"

Out to the barn, the steers quickly flew,
Followed by Dad, Mom, and her broom, too.

Meanwhile, the girls filled out fair tags, too fast,
Forgetting that first names **always** go last.

As they started again to turn names around,
In came the rest of the folks with a bound.

Bill was covered with hay from his head to his boot,
So Mom quickly scolded and told him to "Scoot".

Washing her hands, she eyed clothes on the door,
And wondered if others followed this pre-fair score.

"I'll finish the tags, you finish the sewing,
Dad'll help John wash sheep, where **is** this night going?"

The bread a bit brown, but preserves looked quite merry.
Sue iced coffee cake, topping it with a cherry.

Mom finished the tags and proceeded to wrap
The foods in plastic which ran out with a snap!

Now blouses have buttons, skirts hems at last,
The long dress looks better with seams pressed flat.

By two in the morning, the sheep clean at last,
John sat in the kitchen and took a short rest.

Bill said his tool box paint was still wet,
But Mom said, "At this hour—too late to fret."

"Go take your shower." And she tweaked his nose.
With yawns and a stretch, the children arose.

Mom cleaned the kitchen while Dad sipped iced tea.
Glanced at his watch, and said "You'll agree

"the kids really did it—they've got time to spare."
Said "Kids, 4-H is really a family affair!"

With a wink of his eye and a nod of his head, he said
"Let's go to bed Mother, we've a big day ahead."

The theme of this story, in case you can't guess
Is "A 4-H family, **together** works best".

By LaVerne Cwiklowski,
Marthasville, Missouri