

Every year about this time I get a special attack of "Christmas-Card-itus". It's in my blood and affects everything I do

It usually starts about the first of December when I begin to notice that I spend more time checking to see if the mail has come yet. When the mail is late, my hands start to sweat and I worry that something has happened to the mailman. Sundays are especially rough for I keep wondering what's keeping the mail.

As soon as that familiar car disappears around the bend, I bound out of the house, charge over to the mailbox, and flip the lid open. Grabbing the contents, I search through them, looking for my name. If I find some, my day is made. Gloom settles if the box is empty.

I guess this sickness all started in college. My mailbox used to collect nothing but cobwebs and I think it affected me. About the only time I could

count on getting mail and find out what was happening in the real world was around Christmas time.

Then folks would suddenly remember that I existed, and send me a Christmas card, letting me know what was happening. Every card received was a treasure to hang on my door for the season.

To this day, I treasure Christmas cards. I love getting them and I love sending them. My friends may not hear from me from one year to the next but they can always count on a Christmas card telling what the latest news is.

So I spend long Wintery evenings writing letters and addressing envelopes to friends with whom I share fond memories. I scribble long pages of happiness to good buddies and tell them all the happenings since last Christmas.

I drop a friendly note to new acquaintances that I have met in the past year to let them know that I am thinking of them. And I try to take the time to keep in touch with all the aunts and uncles that are spread all over the United States.

I hear other people complain that writing Christmas cards is a bore and that they aren't appreciated. Not so with me. Every card received and sent is something very special.

Christmas is a beautiful time with special thoughts and what better way of sharing them besides letting your friends and acquaintances know that you care.

So for all of you out there, this is my Christmas card to you. May the joy that is part of the Christmas season fill your hearts and souls, and may the happiest of new years be your present from Santa.

Dry milk can save you in a baking emergency

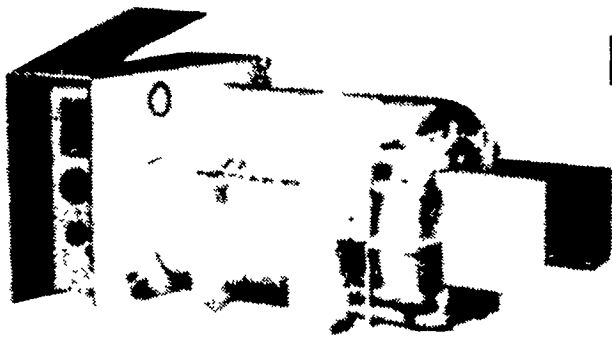
YOKR - If you've ever started your Christmas baking only to change your plans after discovering you're out of milk, you'll want to begin keeping dry milk in the cupboard. It's simple to substitute dry milk for fluid milk, says Marceil A. Seckman, Extension home economist. Just check to see how much milk is called for and then use that amount of water in the

recipe. For each cup of water, add a third cup of instant nonfat dry milk. Put the dry milk in with the rest of the dry ingredients.

Getting a little more dry milk in the recipe than the exact substitution calls for will not cause any great baking problem. But the baked goods may come out of the oven a little more brown and a little drier.

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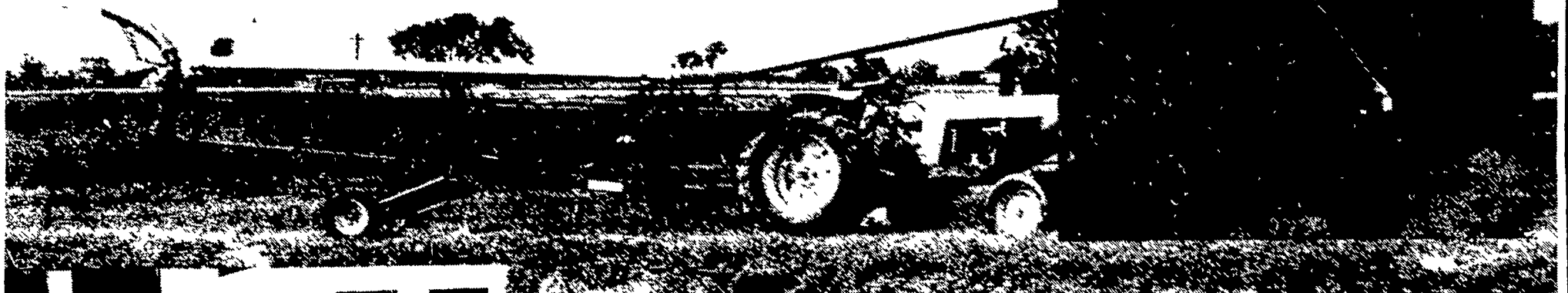
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