

## Rodgers visit Israel

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tomatoes and other salad bar kinds of vegetables.

A highlight of the trip for both Steve and Michelle was a visit to an Arab home in a refugee camp. "We were very welcome there. They were so hospitable. We were offered pineapple drink and mint tea."

They explained that the refugee camps were, in fact, slums and sections of larger cities. No improvements are allowed, there is no answer and nothing like a youth center is allowed. There is a patrol for those entering or leaving a given area, but the area is not sealed off. Homes in these areas are very small, limited to one story and often just one or two rooms. Some refugees have lived in these centers since 1948, when they were first displaced from their homes. Most have jobs, and most of these Arabs work for Israelis.

Once when they were hitchhiking, a very acceptable, safe and common practice in that country, they were picked up by an Arab who made friends with them and insisted on taking them home to meet his family. This was typical of the reception they received.

Michelle noted, "We were very acceptable there, but not favored. There were many, many tourists, it was like Intercourse, Pennsylvania, all the time."

Clothing proved to be very expensive, and most women's clothing seemed to have to be purchased in boutiques, where prices might average \$50 for skirts and \$30 for blouses. Michelle said it is her understanding that women purchase one or two really good outfits and wear them over and

over. She said, "They follow American trends in clothing."

Shoe stores were in abundance and many designer clothes were in evidence, including designer jeans and designer eyeglasses. In fact, jeans were everywhere and many public employees like bus drivers wore jeans instead of uniforms.

School children wore uniforms and Michelle said, "They are schooled religiously in history. They are very disciplined." Public schools are the norm, and religious instruction is given before or after school. "The children are very forward and independent. They aren't paranoid: they are used to the soldiers being everywhere."

A normal work week in Israel is six days, and the Sabbath is from sundown Friday until sundown Saturday. In addition to the Jewish population there are Christians and Moslems as well as a small group of "Jewish believers", those who follow the teachings of Jesus.

Visiting the ruins and the holy places made Israel and the Christian religion more real to Steve and Michelle. Spending three weeks in this troubled area of the world also brought home to them the realities of the tragic problems which continue to plague the country. It was no ordinary vacation, but it was one which will not soon be forgotten.

Steve concluded, "It was very good timing for us. It's fascinating."



## Ida's Notebook

Ida Risser



If you have never seen a flock of fifty of more goldfinches fluttering around in a tree, then you have missed a beautiful experience.

Only twice in my life have I been treated to such a sight. One time it was in a small willow along a stream and this spring it was in our white mulberry tree.

Usually you are attracted by their twittering sound as they chirp continuously and move rapidly. Their tiny yellow bodies can be recognized by their roller-coaster flight and their clear song. Sorry to

say but they are close relatives of the pesty sparrows that live at our house and in my garden.

Another sight that surprised me last week was the sight of a squirrel sitting in our apricot tree and quietly nibbling the tiny grapes off of our white grape vine. Somehow this vine escaped from its trellis and climbed a nearby tree. Even with me standing nearby and scolding, this grey squirrel continued eating delicately at the tiny

If only I could have reached him!

He often runs on the top of the rail fence surrounding my garden as I can recognize him because he has a scrawny red tail.

The other week, after another big flood covered our meadow, I saw a groundhog sitting on top of the same rail fence. Maybe he didn't want to get his feet wet. We have an over abundant supply of these rodents. During the night of the flood, we had to get up at 3 a.m. and chase our herd of cows through water to the safety of higher ground and the barn. It happened to be the same day that we had workmen come and build a completely new front porch. While they worked, the muddy waters of the Conestoga rushed by taking trees, boats and drums downstream and leaving lots of debris behind.



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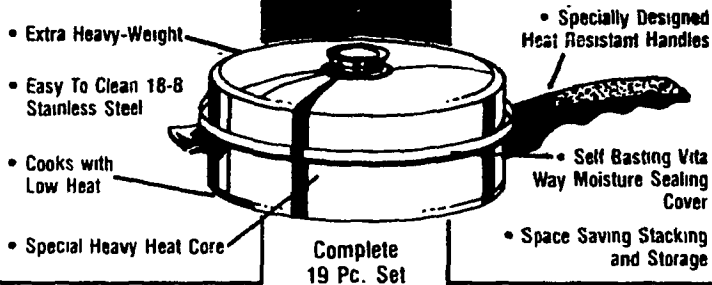
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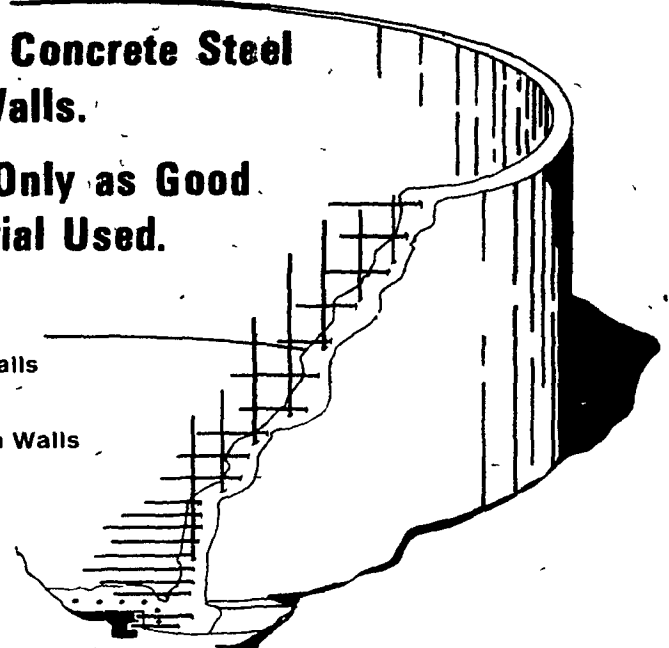
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