

## Homemade Soap

(Continued from Page B2) then puts it into the old soap dishes, old margarine containers, cream cheese containers or anything that is a pliable plastic to allow the hardened soap to be easily removed. Apparently all of her friends assist her in collecting the containers used in this hobby. She uses either one dip or two in each container so the sizes are consistent.

The soap must be aged, Betty explains. "The longer it is aged the better it is, but it should be air dried for at least two weeks." Usually it is ready to come out of the molds in two days and then Betty puts it on large cardboard flats to continue the aging process. "It is really gentle when aged."

An advantage of lye soap is that it lasts a long time. Betty pointed out that if you wet two bars of soap they will stick together and stay, so it is easy to use up partially used cakes of soap.

While Betty sells enough of the soap to offset her costs, she adds, "It's a hobby." A very good record keeper, Betty writes down where all her fat comes from and then makes sure that the donors get some of that batch when she uses it. She attends three flea markets a year to sell her soap there.

While she enjoys telling about soap making, she will not demonstrate it for young people because of the danger with the lye. She says children are "very much interested," and she often talks with youth groups. "I tell them to keep their thoughts and bodies clean and I give them a cake of soap to remind them."

She has taught several people her method of making soap, but she says after they find out how much work it is most do not pursue the hobby.

Betty adds, "People are so nice - I couldn't pursue this hobby without this fat that they give to me."

Rug braiding is another hobby

which keeps Betty's hands busy. She keeps her braider attached to the kitchen table, and often works on a rug while waiting for the lye and fat to cool. She uses only recycled wool, finding it at garage and rummage sales, and washing it all before beginning a rug. She has pounds and pounds of wool cut into strips and turned under, just waiting to be braided.

Her rug braiding is a relatively new hobby. "I took a course in 1966 with my daughter, but I didn't do anything with it until 1976," Betty recalled. Since then she has made three dozen rugs, some of which have won prizes at both the Manheim and Pennsylvania Farm Shows. A very orderly scrapbook includes a picture of each of the rugs and information on who has it now, and how long it took to make it.

Betty says, "I take it with me anyplace where I have to sit and wait." She presently has orders for 55 braided chair seats and six rugs.

Betty also saves Campbell Soup can labels for Henderson Settlement, Inc. in Kentucky, and envelopes with stamps which she takes with her for stamp collectors when she visits retirement homes.

Secretary of the library board, Betty spends time seeing that the library is staffed, and she is currently serving as president of Farm Women #2. "Being president has been very rewarding," she says.

A member of the Salem United Methodist Church in Manheim, Betty serves on the membership committee of United Methodist women. She makes phone calls or writes notes to people who are new to the area and tells them attending church is a good way to get acquainted. She sends "dozens of cards" on behalf of her committee.

A mother of six, Betty has 14 grandchildren and five great grandchildren, so has plenty of cards to send to her own family.

Betty says she doesn't consider herself organized, but on her table are cards to be mailed in the current month, all addressed and ready to go. She puts the dates where the stamps will go and checks the cards each morning to see which have to be mailed.

Another community activity is working at the Manheim Historical Society, where she often demonstrates the art of rug braiding. Betty also helps at the Manheim Farm Show, helping to sell baked goods after they're judged.

Betty says some of her interest in record-keeping may have come about from her work in an attorney's office, a job which she started when her youngest child was four. After working part-time the last few years she retired completely a year ago, with 19 years of service.

Her retirement is a time of activity, however. Betty says, "You find time for what you enjoy doing. I say that I am often alone but seldom lonely. It is a joy to have something to share and something to give."

Betty is quick to point out that she doesn't have many "organized volunteer activities," but she is making a large commitment to her community in the activities she enjoys doing.



Betty labels the liquid soap into some of the recycled containers she uses as molds. She uses one or two dips to make all bars of soap about equal in weight.



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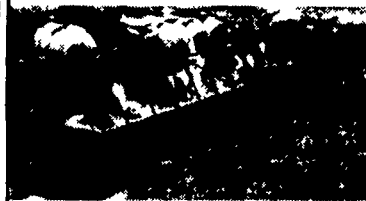


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