

Ida's Notebook

Ida Risser



Recently I went on a tour of homes which were expertly decorated for Christmas. As three of them were neighbors of mine, I was especially anxious to see them. They were all very attractive but I know that I'll never find the time to fix up my home to the same degree.

There were a few ideas that I can adopt to my house such as red bows on the chandeliers and filling an old barrel on our front porch with evergreens and ivy. But the lacey white fans on the trees and the other time-consuming decorations are not for me.

Usually I buy a tree the week before Christmas and lately I've had to decorate it by myself as I feel lucky if the children manage to get home, from all over the country for Christmas Day. I was in a store the other day and saw a

tree that was already decorated and on it was a price tag of some \$500. This did include the decorations. Mine might not be as beautiful but it will satisfy me as we've collected quite a few hand-made decorations over the years.

I spend a lot of time writing some seventy Christmas cards and putting notes in them to people that I seldom see during the year. Also on my list of necessary things to do are making twenty different kinds of cookies and wrapping gifts. It has become a custom to exchange gifts with our Amish neighbors and visit a bit.

One other time consuming job is cutting up a forty pound block of cheese, which we buy from our milk company, and wrapping it to give as gifts to the twenty-five families that we have invited here to our home for covered dish meals over the Christmas season.

Deadline nears for Chicken cooking contest entries

WASHINGTON, D.C. - Time is running out for entering your best chicken recipe in the competition for a \$10,000 prize. Deadline for entries in the 36th National Chicken Cooking Contest is Dec. 31.

A finalist from each state and the District of Columbia will be chosen to take part in the cook-off on May 16, 1985, at the Grove Park Inn in Asheville, N.C. In addition to the \$10,000 first prize, four runners-up will share another \$10,000 in prizes, ranging from \$4,000 second place to \$1,000, fifth.

Recipes will be judged on taste, appearance, simplicity and appeal. The only required ingredient is chicken, whole or any part or parts. The 51 finalists will be selected by an independent recipe-judging agency and a panel of nationally-known food experts will determine the five cook-off winners.

It's easy to enter. Just write your name, address and telephone number on the front page of your recipe and mail it before the Dec. 31 deadline to: Chicken Contest, Box 28158, Central Station, Washington, D.C. 20005.

The Chicken Cooking Contest was first held in 1949 and was an annual event until this year when it began an alternate-year schedule. During the years of competition, chicken has been cooked in hundreds of different ways and over a quarter-million dollars in prizes awarded.

Although only five of the 51 finalists in the National Chicken Cooking Contest take home one of the \$20,000 in prizes, each contestant is already a winner, having been chosen the best entry from their home state or the District of Columbia. And each enjoys an expense-paid trip with many special events in the cook-off city.

Scoring high with judges in the 35th Contest was the Indiana contestant's recipe for "Lemon-Caper Butter Chicken". Try it and then enter your favorite recipe in the 36th competition before the December 31 deadline.

- LEMON-CAPER BUTTER CHICKEN**
- 4 whole broiler-fryer chicken breasts, halved, boned, skinned
 - 1/2 cup butter
 - 1/2 pound mushrooms, sliced
 - 2 tablespoons fresh lemon juice
 - 1 teaspoon salt
 - 1/2 teaspoon paprika
 - 1/8 teaspoon freshly-ground pepper
 - 1 1/2 tablespoons capers plus 1 tablespoon juice
 - 1 large garlic clove, minced
 - 1 cup chopped parsley

In large frypan, place butter and melt over medium heat. Add mushrooms and saute 5 minutes; add lemon juice, salt, paprika, pepper, capers with juice and garlic. Heat to boiling. Place chicken in single layer in frypan and heat again to boiling. Reduce heat, cover and simmer about 20 minutes or until fork can be inserted in chicken with ease. Uncover and cook, turning once, about 10 minutes longer, or until chicken is lightly brown on both sides. Serve with rice; garnish with parsley. Makes 4 servings.

Del. 4-H'ers sacrifice gifts for Ethiopians

NEWARK, Del. - The Highlanders 4-H Club of Wilmington, Del., has decided to forego their traditional exchange of Christmas gifts this year and instead donate the \$5 they previously had agreed to spend on each other to the famine relief effort in Ethiopia.

The club's donation will amount to \$160 and will involve all 30 members plus two leaders who had earlier in the year drawn names for the gift exchange.

According to 4-H leader Pat Shaffer, the idea came from the kids themselves. She said they originally wanted to go door-to-door to collect famine relief money but decided that giving up part of their own Christmas would be more meaningful.

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