

**On being
a farm wife
- And other
hazards
Joyce Bupp**



You'll find it in the simplest things. It transforms them from the mundane to the magical. Love. This is the season for it. There it had stood, just a plain old cedar tree, an overgrown weed for all it was worth. Growing on the

pasture bank, it likely had sprouted years ago from a seed, borne by the breeze or a bird. Among rocks and clay subsoil, exposed to the hog summer sun and winter's icy blasts, the seedling had emerged, tough, and

grew defiantly against all odds. Unnoticed. Unwanted.

Then, the pre-teen, ax in hand, undertook a mission to gather the tree. About 15 feet of it. To surprise us when we arrived home after a brief business trip. Overwhelming in size, the trunk had to be cut - and cut again - to squeeze under a seven-foot ceiling.

Together, he and his sister rummaged through the attic to find the jumble of ornaments, carted them down and dressed the tree in fitting glory. To surprise us.

This is love. Cookies. The same varieties we devour year round - chocolate chip, molasses, drop sugar. But at this season, bits of red and green cherry, sprinklings of nuts, or dustings of brightly-colored sugar add a festive feeling. Sure, it takes a couple of extra minutes. But all over the country, cookie bakers grab precious moments from

packed days to add these special touches.

This, too, is love. Packages. Shopping. Cards. Letters. Sharing with those we don't remember as often as we would like. Somehow, more moments are stretched to the limit, as friends pause to renew old ties of warmth. Love, reaches out to others, across the miles.

A child, carefully empties a jangling piggy bank and earnestly counts out pennies, dimes, quarters. And counts them again. Then, clutching this hoard tightly in a closed fist, he agonizes at length how to stretch this small cache to cover remembrances for his special people.

It matters not what comes in those smudged packages, a jumble of crinkled red and green patterns, tape attached at awkward angles. Size, color, shape, smell - or fancy wrappings - are irrelevant compared to the real contents. Love.

Even the most simple, basic part of our own farm business, for one brief night, takes on a new

meaning. For it was there - in a barn - that this all began.

Did the cattle somehow know to low more softly that night, the ewes to call more quietly to their lambs, so as not to wake Him?

Did kittens curl into balls in other nearby mangers, to keep silent vigil with donkey stablemates and ragged shepherds?

Did His mother brush wisps of hay from his swaddling clothes, and find comfort in the meek solace offered by cobweb-hung dusty barn beams that kept out the chill night air blowing in from distant hills pastured with flocks?

It, too, was a place transformed from the mundane - a simple barn - to a place of magic, a magic that still reaches around the world, even today.

All through a gift of love. May that love reach out to you and yours, and bring to each of you the blessings and peace that is Christmas.

From our house to yours, Merry Christmas!

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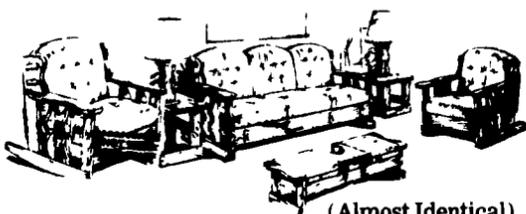
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Deadline nears for recipe contest

HERSHEY - The 1985 Pennsylvania Apple Recipe Contest will be held at the Hershey Convention Center, Hershey, on Jan. 29, 1985.

All entries must be postmarked no later than Dec. 31. Any Pennsylvania resident 18 years or older, without a professional food status, is eligible to enter. Each contestant may enter only one recipe with the contestant's full name, address, zip code and telephone number with area code.

Any recipe using apples or apple products may be entered in the contest. The dish must contain a minimum of one cup of apples or apple products.

Garnishes on the dish are permissible and, when used, should be included in the recipe. Accessories such as placemats, flowers and figurines are not allowed.

The apple dish must be prepared

according to the recipe submitted. The recipe must be specific, with no use of brand names, and must state the number of servings and approximate preparation time.

The apple dishes will be judged as follows: taste, 40 points; ease of preparation and practicality, 20 points, originality, 20 points, and appearance, 20 points.

All recipes become the property of the Pennsylvania Apple Marketing Board.

All finalists will be reimbursed for round-trip mileage and will be given a complimentary luncheon at the Hershey Motor Lodge.

Prizes are as follows: first prize, \$200; second prize, \$150; third prize, \$100; fourth prize, \$75; honorable mention winners, \$50.

Send recipes to Apple Recipe Contest, 2301 North Cameron Street, Harrisburg, PA 17110.

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