

**Ida's  
Notebook**  
by  
**Ida Risser**

It is difficult to realize that winter will soon be here as we've had many nice warm days lately.

I've gathered some unusual red berries and some dark blue berries to use in dried arrangements. Then I try to put a name to them as I look through a guide to North American trees. We have several small oak and maple trees in our lawn and I hunt a name for them too. It was surprising to learn that the correct name for what I call 'Mimosa-tree' is really "Silk-tree." Sometimes it is also called "Powderpuff-tree."

Our Spirea has been pruned and we've transplanted some small evergreen trees. Even an Eastern Redbud or "Judas-tree" has been transplanted and I hope that it grows as the flowers are a beautiful purplish-pink.

Recently we had a dinner party planned, but an hour before serving time, we got a cancellation. As

I had already set the table and cooked for four couples, I decided to try and find a replacement. A number of people were not home but I did manage to invite a neighbor who kindly filled in for the absent couple. We all had a wonderful evening of pleasant conversation. Most of the couples had traveled a lot and even entertained Russians and Japanese in their home. The language barrier can be a real problem.

Our youngest grandchild will soon be one year old. He is a chubby 25 pound redhead and is very pleasant. He has practically grown up in an express wagon. For many months he sat in the barn and watched the stainless steel feed mixer go round and round. When he gets restless, my husband pulls him around for a bit. Little Gregory is growing up so fast that he makes me contemplate just how fast time passes.



# Avoid Shopping Stress, Fatigue

UNIVERSITY PARK (Centre Co.) — The holiday shopping season is in full swing. And unless you are one of those early bird shoppers who purchase all their gifts before Thanksgiving, you probably will be facing large crowds and long hours as you navigate the store aisles in search of that perfect present.

But by following a few simple tips, you can ease the shopping burden, said a family resource education specialist in Penn State's College of Agricultural Sciences.

"Holiday shopping can be very stressful," said Dr. Marilyn Furry, associate professor of extension education. "So you should take some precautions to make shopping trips less tiring and more fun."

First, Furry said, you should have gift ideas in mind before heading to the store. Use catalogs, magazines and newspapers for help. Listen for hints from people

on your list. "Browsing in crowded stores for gift ideas is a sure way to wear yourself to a frazzle," she said.

Next, organize your shopping list. Write down names, gift ideas, sizes, maximum dollar amount for each gift and other information you need to avoid duplication or leaving anyone out.

Furry recommends shopping when stores are least crowded. "If possible, go right after opening time or during the post-lunchtime slump between 2:30 and 5," she said. "Avoid lunch hours, weekends, and evenings."

Shop for short periods of time, said Furry. Choose time blocks of two or three hours when you are not tired and the stores are least crowded.

And if you are seeking last-minute gifts, avoid the crunch by shopping at smaller or specialty stores. "Hardware, book and music, and even grocery stores can provide a wide selection of

appropriate, serviceable gifts," said Furry.

If the crowds and traffic are too much to handle, consider shopping at home. "Many mail-order catalog companies have 24-hour toll-free numbers, and offer overnight or priority shipping," Furry said. "But mail-order shopping is not risk-free, so be sure to use sound buying techniques."

Furry offers the following tips for mail-order buying:

- Use well-known, established companies. Check the October 1994 Consumer Reports if you are unsure which companies offer the best merchandise or service.
- Read product descriptions carefully.
- Know the company's return policy.
- Make sure the company can offer timely shipping so the gift arrives before the holidays.
- Ask about shipping costs and payment options so there are no surprises.

## Belsnickel To Visit Hershey

HERSHEY (Dauphin Co.) — Christmas past is brought to the present when Belsnickel pays his annual visit to the Hershey Museum on Saturday, December 3, at 11:00 a.m. and 2:00 p.m. This Bearded Nicholas will ask boys and girls if they have been naughty or nice over the past year. Good children will get a treat, but bad ones—watch out!

The traditional Belsnickel, sometimes portrayed as a woman, was a mischievous mummer who visited 19th century children on Christmas Eve. A somewhat ragged character, he dressed in old

clothing and resembled a hobgoblin.

Christkindlmarkt will also be open from 10:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. Pennsylvania German crafts, food,

## Children's Workshop

HARRISBURG (Dauphin Co.) — The Historical Society of Dauphin County (headquartered at the John Harris Mansion) is pleased to announce a special Christmas Workshop for Children to be held Saturday, December 3, from 10 a.m. until 12 p.m. Children between the ages of 6 and 12 are invited to attend. The cost is \$9 per child.

and other holiday items will be displayed and sold.

Belsnickel's visit is free with Museum admission: adults \$4; children (ages 3-15), \$1.75.

Children attending the workshop will make their own miniature Gingerbread Houses. from assorted crackers, candy, and icing. Special refreshments will be provided. Pre-registration is required.

For more information and to make reservations, contact the Society at (717) 233-3462.

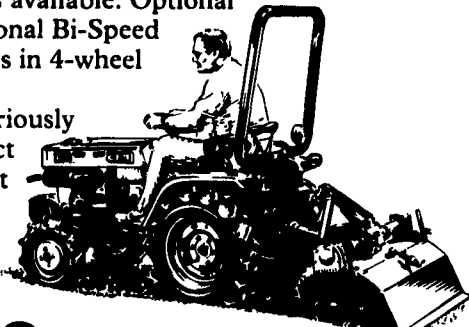
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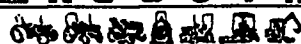


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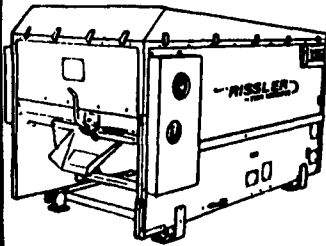
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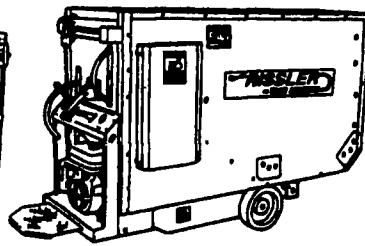
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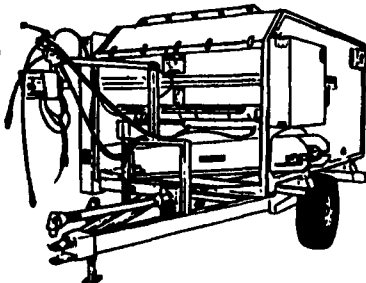
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