

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



Chicago's O'Hare airport is not where I'd go looking for Christmas.

It's a huge, sprawling complex of terminals, gates, runways, hangars, peplemovers, and all sorts of shops to supply travelers' needs. Planes from all over the country and international locations land and take off there daily, moving folks to destinations everywhere but the moon.

Airports always remind me of anthills, with bodies purposefully scurrying in all directions. That's what O'Hare looked like one day a few weeks ago, as I waited in a super-crowded gate, enroute home from a meeting. Everyone in the country seemed to be flying that day — and half of 'em were trying to get on this particular flight.

Though I'd gotten my name on the stand-by list of this earlier flight, the likelihood of catching it looked nil. The waiting mob of passengers crowding the gate door was already so thick that airline personnel finally ordered them back

to let the arriving ones through.

By the time the last passengers were boarding the plane and standby announcement began, the departure was already long past schedule. In fact, it was a mere half-hour until the next flight, on which I had a confirmed seat, was due to takeoff. But with everything backed up due to weather problems, schedules had become irrelevant.

Just when I'd about given up, my name was called. I warmly thanked the ticket agent, fled down the ramp before someone changed their mind, and almost leaped onto the plane. Even before I sat down, the door was being slammed shut. Halfway back, over the wing, my place was at a window; two accommodating fellow travelers moved so I could scramble into the seat.

But the runway was backed up. We waited. And waited. In the interim, the overhead televisions were tuned in for the evening news. After hearing the headlines, I fiddled with the headphone dial to see what else was on the air.

Suddenly, the lilting music of "Joy To The World" flooded through my ears, sounding so beautiful it nearly brought me to tears. In that moment, the fatigue from leaving home at 4 a.m., late arrival at the meeting due to morning flight delays, and concerns about weather affecting the return one immediately began to lift.

Strains of holiday classicals by

Bach and Handel were followed by more traditional carols music. Christmas music, for me, is the ultimate in emotional restoration. Thoughts of the day began organizing themselves into the satisfaction of a successful meeting. I chuckled remembering the businessman I'd passed in a long terminal, striding purposefully with his briefcase, barking instructions into a cellular phone in his hand, and of the male traveler clad in a gaudy tie, bright-printed shirt and multi-colored jogging jacket.

Blinking red lights of the 20 aircraft ahead of us waiting for take-off became reminiscent of the colorful lights of Christmas. And as our plane finally lifted off, lumbering up with a chocked full load of passengers and crammed overheads, a million lights of the city stretched across the horizon, high-

lighted with a reddish gold from the setting sun, and sparkling like strands of glimmering tinsel.

At this most unlikely spot and time, Christmas, for me, had begun.

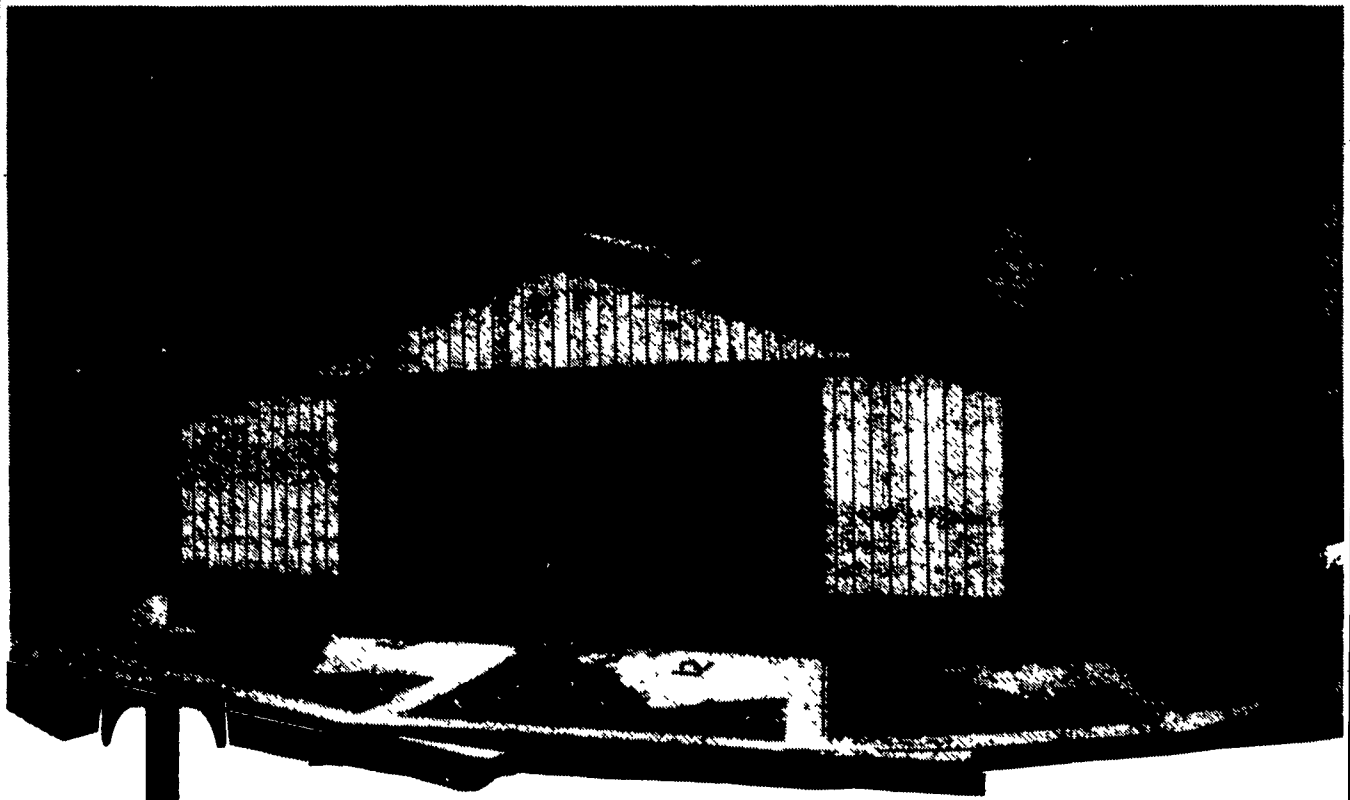
Like busy travelers, running over each other in our haste, we sometimes get so caught up in the journey of holiday preparations that we forget the original purpose. May the real meaning of the season — peace and joy, hope and love — nudge aside this busy-ness, at least for a little while, and fill each of us with renewed appreciation and faith in the promises of Christmas.

From all of us here on the dairy farm — including cows, calves, cats, dog, chickens and assorted squirrels and birds — we wish you and yours a very Moooory Christmas!

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