

CONVERSATIONS

With

Anne Skillman

Originally published in the
Maryland Gazette
1970

Table of Contents

Conversations with Anne Skillman - 1/19/70	3
Conversations with Anne Skillman - 1/26/70	4
Conversations with Anne Skillman - 2/2/70	5
Conversations with Anne Skillman - 2/9/70	6
Conversations with Anne Skillman - 2/16/70	7
Conversations with Anne Skillman - 3/2/70	8
Silent movies refreshing if predictable - 3/23/70	9
Overweight and undermined - 3/30/70	10
Spring: the frog mating season - 4/6/70	11
Computer age just not as charming - 4/13/70	12
Whatever happened to white shirts? - 4/20/70	13
Kids and dogs inseparable—or should be - 4/27/70	14
Driving not worth the trouble - 5/4/70	15
One day not enough for mother - 5/11/70	16
Spring doesn't seem like spring - 5/18/70	17
It's no wonder women feel oppressed - 5/25/70	18
Wives and the throwaway phobia - 6/8/70	19
The generation gap is for real - 6/15/70	20
How would you spend Onassis-sized budget? - 6/22/70	21
Summer clearance in June? - 6/29/70	22
Pennsylvania hospitality revisited - 7/6/70	23
You have to nag to be a mother - 7/13/70	24
If they could only see my kitchen - 7/20/70	25
Don't let your husband loose in a supermarket - 7/27/70	26
Big weekend that never was - 8/3/70	27
Vacations harder to mobilize - 8/10/70	28
Men mum about women in slacks - 8/17/70	29
A wife is the best buy yet with \$2 price tag - 8/31/70	30
Husband who keeps promise - 9/7/70	31
The incurable football fiend - My hero, hero worshipper - 9/10/70	32
Christmas plans in August - 9/14/70	33
Family could put Goodwill out of business - 9/21/70	34
Phonovision could be embarrassing - 9/28/70	35
Sleep husband's favorite topic - 10/5/70	36
When children 'borrow' clothes - 10/12/70	37
Solutions to the 'blahs' - 10/19/70	38
Watch out for the doorbell goblins - 10/26/70	39
Children are politicians - 11/2/70	40
The 'Big Three' are coming up - 11/9/70	41
Who's superstitious? Not me! - 11/16/70	42
If the blank fits, fill it - 11/23/70	43
Christmas commercials take over - 11/30/70	44
Life in commercials is great - 12/7/70	45
No more Christmas toys for Dad - 12/14/70	46
December poltergeist inhabits the house - 12/21/70	47
Ranking the best whatchamaycallits - 12/29/70	48

Conversations with Anne Skillman - 1/19/70

Recently our managing editor rummaged through his file of story ideas, suggestions and miscellaneous information and said, "We want you to write a column."

Trying not to show any apprehension I asked, "On what?"
"Anything, just anything, as you see it."

The whole idea turned me off. "No. I can't write that type of material." After more no-I-can'ts and yes-you-cans, he closed with, "Think about it. We'll talk later."

I thought. I even told my husband, Bill. He snickered and he's still snickering. He was still grinning evilly as he snatched for the first page of copy. His attitude hasn't improved.

Another thought came across: maybe the boss would forget the whole idea. But I knew better. He's nice, but stubborn; and in my category of favorite bosses he was slipping downhill.

He didn't forget. The battle is lost.

For those who like the brisk cold and white stuff, the recent weather was nice to have. During the week, the neighborhood youngsters had spent every available moment on their skates and sleds. Looking forward to our first ice-skating trip of the year; Bill, our almost-13 Karen and I drove off in the direction of Lake Waterford.

Our departure was preceded by the usual frantic hunt for gloves, hats, other once-year-gear and replacements for the just discovered broken laces. Our outing had a time limit. After all, ice-skating can't interfere with watching the Super Bowl.

Fifteen-year-old Greg, who grows too fast to stay in one size more than a month or two, stayed home so Dad could use his skates. Not every neighbor has size 11 skates, and the other pair was already in use at Waterford by son Tom.

Halfway to the ice, via a new way that seemed to take twice as long, the thought struck: the most essential skating accessory, my ankle supports, was still in the attic. At that point, I didn't dare ask to go back. Besides, after a year of jogging with my aerobics-minded husband, maybe my ankles would be able to skate on their own.

Letting us out on the drive by the lake, Bill drove off to park. What seemed like 15 minutes later (there was a large crowd using the county lake) he joined us on our chilly log seat in its snow base, (thank goodness for wool slacks and long johns) to put on his skates. We had also forgotten the lace tightened. Skating would be much more fun if skates didn't have to be put on and taken off.

Gingerly making my way toward the lake down the small slippery hill, I was glad I had watched others make the descent. With the aid of another log and a tree I reached Bill's outstretched hand without disaster. I was ready to skate.

The anticipation was brief. The overheard remarks about the snow and bumpy ice were true.

My partners were halfway across the ice before I moved a foot. There was no graceful gliding across the ice, just a careful, slow walk that didn't do a thing for a waistline broadened by holiday goodies and no jogging for more than a week.

Reaching a cleared spot crowded with people who were really skating, I knew I had it made. Hah! I didn't have it made. The ankles didn't cooperate and the toes were cold.

Heading toward shore, I looked back to locate my family. They were enjoying themselves off in the distance. I shouldn't have looked back. Getting off my derriere, I walked across the ice, crawled up the small incline to the log, unlaced the skates and put on the COLD boots.

Inside the refreshment building, I headed for the counter for a hot cup of coffee: I needed it. No money.

Well, at least it was warm as I watched the skaters, my two included, having fun and listened to the teenage cacophony behind me. Oh yes, I did get the coffee when Bill gave up and Karen went it alone.

Back home, Tom asked how the outing was. After listening to all the complaints, he gave me THAT look and said, "Donna and I skated three and-a-half hours. It was great." At 18, I would have thought so too.

With luck, we'll have another cold snap with smooth ice and I'll have a great time too... if I remember my ankle supports. In the meantime, I better get back to jogging.

The weekend wasn't all bad, though. Friday night we traveled to the Garland Dinner Theatre in Columbia, where the food is fatteningly delicious and the current attraction, Charley's Aunt with Robert Lewis Karlin, is a light and airy dessert. The small crowd was surprising. Perhaps people were tired of "going out" or still paying those Christmas bills.

For the first time in months I read a book. The Assassin by L. W. Robinson was on Tom's desk, and I just intended to glance through it. Unless a book is exceptionally dull, one chapter at a time isn't enough for me.

This leads to complications. Either the house work and cooking doesn't get done or else it's done with one hand and very little concentration. With my schedule and lack of organization, reading a book is pure luxury.

Yes, reading in bed is a solution, but with no will power to stop it leads to awfully tired mornings, and the editor frowns on staff members falling asleep at their typewriters.

Speaking of editors, does anyone know where one of those old-fashioned, nasty-type valentines can be found?

Conversations with Anne Skillman - 1/26/70

Last weekend was my first opportunity to browse through one of the stores catering exclusively to the “now generation.” The opportunity was not by choice. It happened to be the only place number two son, who has hippie leanings, could find the right size dungaree jacket.

Although I’ve had some acquaintance with the sights and sounds associated with this generation, I wasn’t prepared to the total effect.

Still adjusting my senses to the initial impact of the psychedelic atmosphere, we climbed the wooden steps to the jacket area.

After a little discussion on size among man, son and mom, the jacket was chosen. More discussion ensued on why we were not buying the most wanted item: a fringed buckskin jacket. I’m not anti-style, just against the price for style. Where my pocketbook is concerned, we don’t pay \$75 for a jacket for one season’s wearing. This settled, we browsed, separately.

Trying not to feel completely out of place among the mod fashions displayed on the racks, the salespeople and the customers, I wandered through the store to the strains of a musical background I’ve become accustomed to over the years.

The colors and patterns were fabulous. Ties and shirts fought each other for color and pattern supremacy. I loved them. They fabrics were perfect for summer fun clothes for me, that is.

Stopping before the array of wide ties, looking like modernistic paintings, my main thought was “if”—If I hadn’t given those ties to Goodwill a few years ago, dad could be in style, too.

For the more conservative young, there were solid color shirts ranging from a stark black to more vivid hues. Belts with eye-catching buckles decorated the wall. And vests... there wasn’t a staid one among them. The suedes, fake furs and knitted creations needed nary a watch chain for accent.

Tucked in between the fashions were colorful apothecary jars of temple incense in scents of lemon, lotus, violet, and oriental and woody pine. To further give rooms an atmosphere, there were decorating kits, zodiac accessories and black-light posters.

Returning to the mainstream of Glen Burnie Mall shoppers was almost a let-down. The tour through the turned-on generation shop was a fun-happening. Try it. You might enjoy it.

---O---

Our news staff loves to eat. Anytime from 10:30 to noon, sometimes even earlier, the question, “Anybody ready for lunch?” brings a unanimous and vocal response. With that, a willing lunch-getter takes off for our favorite spot with a mammoth order.

For before and after those lunch hunger pangs, the office’s coffee club has doughnuts to keep up the stamina. Frequently there’s a cake. Any occasion, even Beethoven’s birthday, is a reason for one of the office gals to make a cake. In the newsroom, I’m usually the cake-baker.

Staying away from fancy recipes makes it easy. A tube cake made from cake mix, instant pudding, Jell-O or juice, along with extra eggs and shortening produces, a variety of tasty cakes. A simple glaze and its eating ready.

Our most faithful lunch-getter’s leaving was a cake occasion. To reward her, a staff-member was hosting a small Sunday evening farewell party. It was suggested the cake be baked as a present.

Wanting it to be special, I decided it should be decorated. Baking comes easy, but decorating does not. For this I rely on my husband the cake decorator.

Bill’s hidden talent came to light a few years ago. Wanting to decorate one of the children’s birthday cakes a little differently, I bought a writing tube of icing. After several undecorative attempts to make roses and a message, I was bailed out of my frustration by said husband, who decided to try his hand at the task. He has continued to be chief decorator.

He probably wouldn’t qualify for a bakery, but our cakes are friendlier.

Who decorates his birthday cakes? The bakery of course.

---O---

Desperate for time Thursday, I stopped in downtown Glen Burnie to buy a last-minute gift and card and to take a quick look at the five counties annual art exhibit. Per usual it’s a fascinating display of local talent. A special thanks to those “behind the scenes.”

Perhaps I’m overly impressed, particularly with the pupil art, because of my zero art talent, but I think it’s worth a trip to Glen Burnie. I was one of those kids who couldn’t paint or draw anything the art teacher assigned. No wonder she gave up teaching.

Maybe that’s why I can’t decorate cakes.

Conversations with Anne Skillman - 2/2/70

Most women are bargain-hunters and I'm no exception. Most are practical bargain-hunters who take advantage of white sales, furniture and carpet sales, special food-buys and off-season buys.

But there are other types. There's the antique buff who finds ugly-duckling items in out-of-way places and restores them to objects of beauty and value; the specific-hunter who finds stores specializing in seconds, irregulars, discontinued lots, and overstocks of pottery, glassware, material and clothing; and there's me. I'm the hopeless type. I can't resist taking a quick look at anything that has the air of "bargain" surrounding it, anywhere it might be.

During the first years of our marriage, I collected Stangl pottery. I owned one piece that came from the store. The rest was acquired from rejects housed in a special building in Flemington, N.J. It was only a few miles off the route we traveled when visiting relatives.

Acquiring my Stangl collection with gift money this way was pure necessity. Bill was in college and economy was the key to our financial survival.

Those were the days when my one "little black dress" was dressed up or down to suit the occasion; I explored the 101 recipes for thrifty hamburger that were supposed to taste like steak; and I discovered the day-old baked goods table.

My pottery collection and Bill's college days are long gone, but not my mania to bargain-hunt anywhere and anytime. Since he can't cure my mania, Bill has resigned himself to it. He's learned that putting the car in reverse and letting me have "a quick look" through an interesting shop is better than listening to me moaning something like, "Well, it's my vacation too," the rest of the trip. He's not always gracious doing it; but then I'm not always gracious where his idiosyncrasies are concerned either. A marriage counselor might not term it true compatibility, but it works fine for us.

He doesn't bargain-hunt with me locally. Only when he's trapped into it.

Fashion bargains are my favorite buys, particularly dresses, shoes and handbags. I love variety as well as quality. Good bargains provide both, while keeping the budget and husband in a reasonable state.

The other Saturday I took a "swifty" trip through Harundale Mall buying needed items and checking the clearance racks. I

hadn't bought a "dressy" dress for the holidays and I had a yen for one. I found three.

One was still too expensive and one was beautiful on the hanger but "blah" on me. The third was perfect. It fit, it won't go out of style this season and it was half-price. That smug feeling I get when I find a good bargain was in full bloom. I wore my bargain to a cocktail party that evening.

It was a great party. The snacks were delicious and besides my co-hostess and husband, there were only four familiar faces among the wall-to-wall guests. I enjoy meeting new people.

After eating, introducing and chatting my way around the goodie table three times, I wandered downstairs. In the group around the piano were two familiar faces. They belonged to John and Sue Norris of Severna Park. Many area residents are familiar with them from their appearances in musical productions in the county.

Listening to John accompanying the piano in his rich bass baritone, I continued introducing myself and chatting. Then I met another familiar face. Councilman Charles C. Hartman, Jr., wearing a beautiful blue turtleneck. After introductions (my face wasn't familiar to him) we talked of many things, including the '70 election. Being nosy, I asked what his plans were for the election. "We have a lot of bills coming before the council," he said. That took care of that question.

After more talk with a variety of interesting new people, we moved upstairs again to say goodbye to our hostesses. There we met what we call, "isn't it a small world" people. We find them everywhere. We get to talking and suddenly you find you have a mutual friend or interest and the polite conversation leads to a marvelous talk.

By this time the guests were no longer wall-to-wall. It was going-home time, but I just had to have one more taste of the hot cheese dip I'd been eating all evening.

It was my downfall. It dribbled off the cucumber dipper to the bodice of my new dress. Berating myself, I took off for the powder room to clean it with cold water. It didn't do much. The spot remover applied at home didn't do much either.

I hope the cleaner can save my "good bargain." My prospects of finding another aren't bright. I know, because I'm a good bargain hunter. Just ask my husband.

Conversations with Anne Skillman - 2/9/70

Without my usual number of newspapers to read during the strike, I've found time to scan the stacks of magazines decorating the coffee table, end tables and other pieces of furniture in the house. The scope of subjects covered in magazines is a little overwhelming to an over-30 like me who didn't grow up during these years and has to adjust to changes.

Some require no adjustment, because I've believed in them before they were fashionable. In some areas I can't see myself changing. After all, I can remember when the Maidenform advertisement in national magazines was considered "shocking" by some. Now we have women and men advocating the abolishment of this feminine apparel. Somehow it fits in with the concept of unisex clothes, the bisexual society (it's predicted by some) and the trend toward nudity, sexual freedom and other social changes.

According to one article, unisex clothing is the coming fashion because the now generation and coming generations won't feel a need to make a big thing of masculinity and femininity. That was too much for me to adjust to. I may be old-fashioned but like Linda Low in Flower Drum Song, "I enjoy being a girl." This doesn't mean I want to go back to the days when women weren't allowed to have rights or to have their own thoughts and identities and were forced to stay in this rigid concept of women.

I'm grateful to those courageous females who took the first steps toward female emancipation and equality. But I'm not ready to take over the leading role and probably never will be.

Maybe this is why I get annoyed with television shows where the man is portrayed as a bumbling idiot, or when I read about women going into areas exclusively male in their quest of equality. After all, men have identities, too.

Perhaps I feel this way because I don't have a domineering husband. He's encouraged me to be myself, to try new ventures and given me encouragement when needed. He doesn't always agree, but he doesn't forbid me not to do it. I think I have equality, not only with him but other men, based on mutual admiration and respect.

Because I have such a hang-up on femininity and masculinity, I was delighted to read an article about a group of women whose beliefs coincided with mine.

They believe women should do and be what's best for them. They also believe in a positive femininity and being nice to men. They believe in women working to change laws, improving schools, fighting pollution and all other vital objectives to make a better and happier world.

But they are disturbed by the tactics used by some female militants to achieve these objectives. To them, the female militants seem to see man as an enemy. These gals don't and they feared that this attack on the male would cause a serious backlash among men who might consider all women working for change as "man-haters."

This group intends to work to improve women's image and to strive for reform through positive, persistent and logical

persuasion. They are convinced that yelling, punching and threatening men won't win them over. They believe dissent loses its punch when used indiscriminately.

They also think that doing those little chores for the male's comfort doesn't make them any less a woman. I remember several years ago when a female author almost made me feel ashamed because I believed in doing these mundane things for my family. Certainly I had "housewife fatigue," but not because I felt constantly oppressed and unfulfilled. I sometimes have "reporter fatigue," especially on Conversations deadline. At that point I gnash my teeth, grumble and feel dominated by my boss; but after it's written I regain my normal outlook. I enjoy my job.

This group I'm talking about intends to openly and actively acknowledge the masculinity of men, appeal to man's protectiveness and to keep rituals so dear to the feminine heart alive (I don't open the door for him, unless the situation calls for it).

Although this organization is only a few months old, I think it has a great future. Of course they have a name: the Pussycat League. Don't laugh. They're serious about their relationship to men and I'm in full agreement. In fact so much, that I might even become militant about it.

After reading the article I decided I just couldn't send that mean, nasty-type valentine to my boss. I'll just have to find a gentle, nasty one.

That day of sentimentality is almost here. Do you remember what a big event it was in elementary school? First the mailbox was decorated and each day its contents grew and grew, as did the anticipation. Finally delivery day arrived.

Some were nice, some weren't. Some were signed and some weren't. If there wasn't a signed one from that boy you really liked, you tried to believe he was too shy to sign his name. The belief was a little hard to hold onto, though, when the prettiest girl in class had one with his name on it.

There aren't too many nickel valentines in the card racks anymore, but then they weren't always inexpensive either. In reading about the holiday (I warned you the league has made me sentimental) I discovered that back in the 1800s elaborate cards cost as much as \$10. Somehow I'm not quite that sentimental with today's inflation.

There are many romantic customs associated with Valentine's Day. In Sicily, some young unmarried females would arise before sunrise to stand by their windows watching for a man to pass their house. Each girl believed the first man she saw, or someone similar to him, would become her bridegroom within the year. Many girls have used various charms on their pillow to bring dreams of what their future husband would look like.

Over the years, single girls have used many ways to find out the identity of their future husbands or to find out if the special one really liked you. I use to pull petals off a daisy. I told you I was over 30. Way over.

Conversations with Anne Skillman - 2/16/70

About this time of year the winter “blahs” are almost in full swing. Everything seems so drab and dull.

The holidays with their bright anticipation, festivities and decorations have been put away for another year. A good vacuuming, washing and waxing wouldn't improve the car's winter balkiness, but it would improve the driver's spirits.

The wool dresses, suits and sweaters that were so crisp and perfect when readied for fall and winter wearing have taken on a limp, tired look. But the most “blah” feeling arrives on a nice bright sunshiny day when I take a critical look through the window unable to sparkle properly because of its outside grime or take a walk through the yard on one of those “warm” days.

It all looks so bleak. The grass is a depressing brown. In November the barren branches seemed to have a stark simple beauty silhouetted against the sky. Now they just look stark. Many of the azaleas look as if they will never have the bright greenness of spring again and the summer-lush peony bed shows no sign of life under its windblown blanket of litter. Suddenly it's difficult to remember how beautiful it looked with its snow cover a few weeks ago. The only bright spot is the monstrous Chinese holly at the corner of the house.

As new homeowners we planned our planting very carefully. The holly was to be a corner accent. We have tried to keep it that way with consistent pruning; but this only seems to stimulate its growth. It now wraps itself both ways around the corner, is reaching for the eavesline and is stifling all the growth of the perennial bulbs planted at its base.

Its size gives me one advantage: I can clip all I want to provide a green background for winter flower arrangements or just cut big branches for the house without my husband screaming that I'm ruining its shape.

When the “blah” mood arrives, the arrival of catalogs and magazines brimming with gay spring fashions, flowers, recipes and projects give me a dramatic urge to plan for spring.

Poring over the flower-bulb catalog I make my umpteenth firm decision that this year will be different. I will plan my bulb and seed planting. I will purchase before the stocks are depleted and I will plant on schedule and stagger the planting to have continuous bloom during summer and fall.

At this point I'm ready to order every page. But I restrain myself. Those lectures over the years from my practical husband on the flowerbeds I have trouble keeping weed-free and watered

have tempered my pre-planning enthusiasm. I'll buy only what's needed for replacement and to fill the empty spaces.

There's only one problem. The picture of a hanging basket overflowing with bright beautiful begonias is becoming a must in my mind. I've seen them in magazines and for real on patios, porches, etc., and they're spectacular. When I mentioned to my husband about having one of these lovely trailing things in the summer garden planning, he went practical. “And just where do you plan to hang it? On the mulberry tree?” I didn't think it was such a silly idea; especially since we don't have a patio or porch.

I won't discuss why we don't have either one. It's been a “touchy” subject for several years. Anyway, back to the tree. It could use some beauty. Over the years it has become scarred from climbing kids and numerous treehouses. Besides, the brochure says to plant in a protected, partially shaded place.

As if he hadn't been practical enough already, he brought up something I'd rather ignore. Begonias hate me. Not one single bulb I've planted has seen the light of day.

After a little thinking, I have to agree with him. The tree idea isn't practical; but according to the brochure, trailing begonias are great for window boxes. I can see them now.

Already I'm planning. First, an early Father's Day present: two window boxes and large bag of soil; second, a nice warm day and the right approach for an affirmative answer to my “please, honey, will you?” question.

Certainly I'll try begonias. If they don't grow, I'll plant petunias. They love me. The whole idea was just what I needed; the “blahs” are beginning to fade.

Also helping dispel the “blahs” was Thursday's concert by the Tucson Arizona Boys Chorus at Severna Park High School. It was the third in the Anne Arundel County Concert Association's current year.

With Bill unable to attend I almost gave in to the urge to stay home. At the last minute I called a friend and off we went. Am I glad we did!

According to their director, Jeffrey R. Haskell, the 27-member group was on a 44-concert tour in 81 days covering 33 states and 33,000 miles. I didn't find out what number concert it was, although it wasn't the first. But the enthusiasm and brightness of a first was there. All in all, it was a delightful evening. One more triumph over those “blahs.”

Conversations with Anne Skillman - 3/2/70

According to some authorities, the current generation may encounter hearing problems as they grow older. This will come from listening to music amplified above the decibel danger level determined by studies on record players, at discotheques, concerts and dances.

This I can believe. For many years I've listened to the sounds of the Beatles, Jimi Hendrix, James Brown, the Rolling Stones and others emanating from our sons' rooms. Even our pre-teen Karen is caught up in the magic of vibrant listening to her singers and groups.

There have been winter days when, returning home, I can hear these sounds from the front walk. After all, it sounds so much better and louder on dad's hi-fi and through the wall speakers than on their own record players. And only when they are alone can they play their records at top volume and rattle the windows. . One thought has always sustained me as I walked down the hall hearing the Beatles in one room, the Iron Butterfly in another and Chewy Chewy drifting down the stairs: it's only for a few more years.

But a few weeks ago my plans for a soft musical background for the coming years were shattered: my husband's long cherished dream was a reality. Our living room now has as its most important piece of furniture, a two-keyboard, 22-stop and 17-foot-pedaled electronic organ.

Since starting piano lessons a few years ago, Bill's imagination has wandered to the great magnificent sounds that could be accomplished on such an instrument. His first thought was to buy an electronic chord organ. This was quickly vetoed by his and Karen's piano teacher. These were not for piano students thinking of becoming organ students at a later date.

He continued to practice and practice (at least the piano is downstairs) trying to keep up with Karen. A mean task.

A couple of years ago the idea was kindled anew when he went to see, hear and play a huge three-manual electronic organ built by one of his co-workers, which occupied two-thirds of a recreation room with the console, numerous amplifiers, reverb units and speaker cabinets. At the time I remember casually sympathizing with our friend's wife who, if possible, left the house during his practice sessions.

Again there were thoughts about buying a ready-made organ, but they were just thoughts. After all, I didn't consider it essential to our living room decor; son number one thought it would be better to buy a new car; and son number two thought an electric guitar would be the best purchase of all.

In September, husband received a brochure from the Shober Organ Company stating that on Oct. 1 all prices on organ kits would be increased. In his mind it was now or never.

He skipped all the way to the mailbox. He could hardly wait. Several weeks later the console and bench arrived. After a communication or two between husband and company, the boxes containing assorted wires, transistors, resistors, capacitors, nuts, bolts, printed circuit boards, foot pedals and instruction book arrived.

Taking one look at what seemed an infinite array of foreign objects covering the pool table, I left. It was his project.

For hours on end Karen, Greg and Dad sorted, mounted parts and soldered. Hopefully they would have this phase completed before the keyboards arrived.

They did.

Bill's goal of playing carols on Christmas Day was to be achieved.

Thanksgiving came and went, so did December and 30 days of January. As each keyboardless day passed, the chief organ-builder became more angry and frustrated. The whole project became a very sensitive subject.

We weren't completely without organ music. Karen would lie on the floor and play the bass pedals. She could have sat on the bench, but it was more fun the other way.

After various communications between Bill and the company, a card arrived. The keyboards were in Baltimore. Retrieving them with a frantic dash to the express office, all three kit-builders were working on the keyboards before dinner.

Husband left his two paid volunteers working while we went to a wrestling match. Making our speediest departure ever from any event, he returned to work.

At midnight I went to bed. Came morning and it was completed. It had taken until 3:30 a.m., but when you're obsessed time ceases to matter.

All day and all evening the walls, accessories and my head vibrated. Everybody played and at full volume, particularly the foot pedals. They even gave telephone concerts.

Monday morning the piano teacher arrived for their lesson. When she played it was beautiful. A lovely, full sound but no overwhelming bass and vibration. I mentioned this to her and she said, "Don't worry, they all play that way in the beginning."

Most of the time it's better. There's one exception. The small powder room adjacent to our bedroom seems to funnel every vibrant note. The sound level is so intense I retreat to another spot to put on my lipstick.

To be perfectly honest, things are much better. Bill bought himself a pair of earphones for Christmas. Now he and all others can practice all they want without disturbing the rest of the household.

Come summer and I'm sure our neighbors will be as appreciative of those earphones as I am.

Silent movies refreshing if predictable - 3/23/70

Although March signifies the official arrival of spring, it's my least favorite month. The weather is usually miserable, the blahs are still in full control of my spirit, the social scene is dull and the sap is rising steadily in our offspring as a prelude to their annual attacks of spring fever.

To give my drooping spirits a lift, Bill suggested he take Karen and me to the movies. It was the first movie I'd been to in months, and I wasn't sure I was going to enjoy the one he'd chosen.

A full-length silent feature wasn't quite my idea of Tuesday night at the movies. The only silent movies I had seen (that's right, there are some things before my time) were the shorts shown after the late-late show Saturday nights on television.

But then I underestimated my husband as usual.

He wasn't taking me to just any silent film. It was the winner of the first Academy Award for the best picture of 1927. It also featured Gary Cooper in his first screen appearance along with stars Charles "Buddy" Rogers and Clara Bow.

Yes, he did have an ulterior motive. In the days before sound, the movie houses had pianos or if they were of good size, a theatre organ, to provide appropriate background music.

Along with the movie, "Wings", this particular evening at the Virginia Theatre in Alexandria, Va. featured Jimmy Boyce at the Grande Barton Theatre Pipe Organ. For two and a half-hours (I didn't think they made epics like that way back then), with only one 15 minute intermission, he played. Except for the introduction he played without music.

From the moment we entered the spacious theatre with its figured carpeting, glistening chandeliers and the grillwork at both sides of the stage that concealed the organ and its pipes, it was an unusual and fascinating evening.

My first surprise was the line-up at the box-office. I don't know what I expected, but I really didn't think there would be a large audience.

The next surprise was the audience itself. From Karen's age to mini-skirted teeners and older with their barbered and un-barbered escorts, middle-aged men and women and some who probably saw the movie when they were teenagers.

It was rather an eerie feeling as the lights dimmed, the curtain started its rise and the previously closed grillwork opened to allow the gold console with Jimmy Boyce playing moved out on

the rollers to the stage front. The whole score was so attuned to the movie's action that much of the time I forgot he was there in the shadows playing.

The picture didn't carry a message; just a movie billed as a World War I air adventure. It certainly was a picture for a general audience. Even the scenes of the heroes on leave in Paris were mild compared to today's movies.

It was a simple story of two boys from the same hometown, USA, who went off to become flyers. Antagonists at first because of their interest in the same sophisticated city girl, they soon became inseparable.

Clara Bow was the vivacious girl next door who followed her next-door hero overseas as a "puddle-hopper" driver in the Women's Corps.

Much of the plot was predictable even without the printed titles. When Gary Cooper made his brief appearance (maybe all of two minutes) while his new tentmates were discussing good luck charms and said, "Luck or no luck, when your time comes you're going to get it; you knew he was right."

He was. He got it immediately while practicing figure eights before dinner to a shattering crescendo of sound.

The ending was predictable too. One of the heroes had to die and we knew which one. Again we were right. But this knowledge didn't keep the feminine tears from flowing during the long-long conclusion. And as predicted, Clara did get the boy next door.

One reaction of the audience was somewhat surprising. In a scene where the American planes and flyers made their first appearance in the European skies, the title read something like, swift and straight as arrows of vengeance came the Americans. As it flashed on the screen there was applause and cheering.

It just seemed odd there was no opposition to the rah-rah patriotism displayed. Perhaps all ages were caught briefly in another time of a different American scene.

And you know something else? According to the movie, Snoopy, the famous World War I flying ace is accurate. They did wear helmets with scarves streaming in the skies.

Leaving the theatre, I admitted I enjoyed the evening thoroughly. Even if you're not a theatre organ buff or a silent movie buff, it's an interesting evening and worth trying once.

Overweight and undermined - 3/30/70

December and January bring a weighty problem with them every year. These months with the pre and post-holiday parties, baking, candy making and eggnog are my figure danger months.

Before Bill converted me to jogging, I had a pretty good formula for staying within the seams of my holiday fashion while enjoying the festive life. By losing a few pounds in November and watching calories occasionally during the season plus a little extra exercise I wouldn't be in very bad shape at the end of January. By mid-February with more exercise, no desserts and no pre-bedtime snacks the extra pounds were gone.

This year has been different. Counting on my jogging (it worked last year) I didn't lose those extra pounds.

Weather, time and various other excuses kept me from my usual schedule. Once I go off the schedule, the alibis come easier. I still went jogging but only on weekends. It wasn't enough. Then I skipped even the weekends. I had had my hair done for some weekend activity and a hair set doesn't improve with jogging.

Stepping on the scales a few weeks ago, the indicator confirmed what I already knew. The indicator was above the figure that signifies "overweight" poundage for me.

I've always known when that point is reached without scales. The skirt zippers require an extra pull, a deep breath is needed to button the waistline and my slacks have extra bulges.

All the signs had been there, but had been ignored.

Then came the promise. Jogging would start the next week along with some slimming exercises for the waistline and gluteus maximus.

There would be no more steak sandwiches and French fries for lunch, nor more desserts, etc. It isn't difficult to lose 10 pounds; I'd done it once or twice before when I'd let my eating habits go to pot. The first day of my promise went fine. That night I started sneezing. The first cold of the year hit. The jogging stopped and so did the exercising. I was tired, miserable and weak.

When at lunch-time a fellow staff-member said, "I'll bring you special non-caloric French fries," I believed him. Besides, I needed the nourishment to keep going.

Thursday I stepped on the scales. Now I knew. Don't trust anyone under 30. He hadn't brought me special non-caloric

French fries. The indicator registered two more pounds. Something drastic had to be done.

Looking through my collection of pocket diet books, there was no fast and painless way of losing those pounds. Still hopeful, I tried Tom's bookshelf.

Being athletic-minded he's collected quite a few paperbacks on nutrition, diet and physical fitness. One stood out. The chapter titles read intriguingly. There was food for figure protection; eating patterns to protect you from disease, including the common cold; foods to help you avoid fatigue; and all types of headings that lead me to believe I hadn't been living right because I wasn't eating properly.

It was time to change! I quickly went to the chapters with the menus to make me feel alive again. One of the book's main features was a special health drink to drink every morning before breakfast.

Mornings are not a strong time of day for me anyway; and this drink just didn't seem like it would help. Wheat germ flakes, apple juice, orange juice and honey I could manage but not combined with apple cider vinegar, yogurt and other ingredients.

I read on. There were other health foods and hints galore. But none appealed to me. The majority of the foods by themselves were okay but the combinations - ugh! When I arrived at the whole-wheat waffles doused in apple cider vinegar, I gave up. I wasn't really that bad off healthwise and it might take me a few weeks but I was going back to my own method of losing weight. Feeling a little nauseous and headachy I decided a couple of aspirin, a walk to the drugstore for vitamin C pills for my cold (everything else had failed and the book had a good suggestion on vitamins) and I would feel much better. I did. So much better in fact that I was ready to have the last piece of delicious apple pie that had arrived in our local woman's club's traveling dessert box the day before. Since it was a small piece, I ate it á la mode. After all, what's one more pound? It's much too much to ask myself to start dieting on Easter weekend. Monday starts a new week and a new me.

Spring: the frog mating season - 4/6/70

Being bogged down in February and March with the blahs, I'm only vaguely aware of spring slowly pushing winter out of the scene, but then a special day arrives and suddenly all the little signs (the occasional glimmer of green grass, color creeping back into the trees and shrubs and more green as daffodil tendrils poke skyward) are big signs and spring seems everywhere.

Thursday happened to be the special day. Despite the irritations and worse experienced from the storm, I couldn't suppress the feeling of spring I felt. Driving home in the brilliant sunshine after the storm, the lawns had a bright greenness they lacked earlier in the day and the buds on the branches looked plumper as they swung in every direction from the wild wind.

Youngsters of all ages felt none of the anger and frustration of their parents as they splashed in the enormous roadside puddles spilling over the roads and in some yards that were now ponds. I envied them. It's such a carefree feeling sloshing through puddles and spraying the water as you go.

Although winter might return for a day's visit, it wouldn't do anything to the bright, washed feeling that the outdoors and I had.

The whole thought of it made the prospect of bailing out our basement a little more tolerable.

Walking on the sponge that was our backyard, spring's arrival was more evident. The croci were blooming, here and there a forsythia bud had flowered and the daffodils were two inches taller and their buds were bursting at the seams.

Four our 15-year-old, spring arrived over a week ago when he brought home his first catch of the season, frogs. After taking a dutiful look at the tiny things hopping around in their jar of cloudy pond water, I made some appropriate complimentary remark.

Finding frogs rather repulsive, I told him to keep them in his room. (That, I hoped, would keep us both happy.) At least they would be out of my sight. Unfortunately, they weren't out of

hearing. About 10 at night they became very vocal - a state that continued for several hours. Finally, after a night or so even he couldn't take it and they were moved down to the ping-pong table.

But before the move, another discovery was made. He had caught frogs of both sexes. Naturally this caused some excitement. We had had puppies and kittens but never frogs. I thought he had caught baby frogs, but no, they were tree frogs and fully-grown and we are going to have more frogs.

To make room for the population explosion, the frogs and eggs were transferred to an aquarium. According to the encyclopedia frogs can be heard calling during the mating season. These frogs have been calling before, during and they're still calling.

If this means more frogs, something has to be done. According to the encyclopedia, frogs may lay several thousand eggs at a single time. I don't think we have that many, but if all the calling means more frogs, something has to be done. Puppies and kittens are easy to give away; but frogs?

If they're returned to the pond, a fascinating lesson on amphibian growth goes with them. We could separate the sexes if we knew which was which but the encyclopedia didn't list any distinguishing characteristics.

According to the information, in their natural environment many of the eggs are eaten by fish, insects and other water animals. Because of this natural balance few frogs grow to maturity. Unfortunately, the aquarium is not equipped with this built-in balance. The cat tries to provide it, but she can't get through Greg's barricades.

For the time being we've moved them to the picnic table in the backyard, which gives us quiet nights. If we're in for a rainy spring, the frog population can be solved too.

We'll just empty the contents of the aquarium into our backyard pond.

Computer age just not as charming - 4/13/70

There are some days when everyday living is more complicated for me than it was before computers equipped with number brains took over some of the work in our society.

Yes I've been told the use of computers is a faster, more efficient and more accurate way for businesses and agencies to operate. I don't disbelieve this (except when trying to get a bill straightened out that's been fouled up by one of those non-human bookkeepers); but they haven't helped me be faster or more efficient. At least not yet.

Take long-distance calls. Before automatic long-distance dialing was put into everyday use, all I had to do was pick up the telephone, give the operator four numbers (unless I was calling someone in a big city), the name, town and state and in a short time I'd be talking to my party.

Sometimes it was even accompanied by a brief chat with a friendly operator. When dial systems came into use in small communities conquered memorizing the extra three numbers for the most frequently called people.

How things have changed. If I don't have the 11 numbers (yes I'm one of those people who occasionally forget to dial 1 before the area code) required to call out-of-state jotted down by the relative or friend's name (being out-of-staters all of our relatives and old friends are also), it takes me much longer to complete the call.

First I must look up the area code for the place I'm calling, dial information and get the number from the local operator. Not being a dainty jotter, I write the number on any handy piece of paper planning to transfer it carefully and legibly to the small space allotted for it in my personal directory after making my call. Frequently, I neglect to do this.

Finally I'm ready to make the call. Carefully I push the 11 buttons (yes the advertisements are right, push-button telephones are faster and I love them) in the correct sequence.

Perhaps it will be faster when I remember to purchase the larger address-directory book that has been on my "someday" list for so long.

Over the years I had memorized the addresses of those same relatives and friends scattered in various states; and even postal zones for the ones in cities. Then came the zip code. Addressing letters, birthday cards and other correspondence became a major task.

Before investing in a zip code book, all the zips we used were recorded in our Christmas card list-address book. Being a seasonal item we always packed it away with the Christmas letters to answer when the next holiday season arrived, the half-price Christmas cards purchased for the next year and other miscellaneous lists in a not-too-convenient drawer.

Having been so indoctrinated by the post office's plea to use zip codes, my conscience wouldn't let me mail the envelope without digging out the list and getting the zip.

Occasionally I would mail one without the zip. Feeling guilty about it I always felt rather furtive as I mailed it.

Even with a zip code book I have problems. Sometimes I write letters while waiting for appointments or we're on a long drive. Not having memorized too many zip codes I've carried the letters in my purse or glove compartment for days before mailing them.

Then came charge-plates with numbers. My irritation with the numbers and my inefficiency grew. Using them in the store was no problem.

But then comes the day you order something by telephone.

For quite a while I would always forget that in addition to my name and address (I have no difficulty remembering them) they wanted the number also. I didn't know it then and I still don't. Asking them to wait, I'd go and get the charge-plate.

By the time I'd get back to the telephone I'd be feeling grossly inefficient and irritated because I'd forgotten it in the first place. But it still wouldn't be the end of the feeling. Reading off the numbers slowly I'd come to one that looked like an upside down T or an unusual S and I said so.

"It has to be a number ma'am."

Since it had to be a number, I guessed a 5. It was right. Fortunately I was always lucky enough to have salesgirls who were kind.

But I'm improving. I know my own zip code and have several others stored in my own computer with a couple of 11 telephone numbers. In the process I lost a number. A few months ago when I opened a savings account, I couldn't remember my social security number.

But then computer efficiency is not always infallible. Bill remembers many years ago he was paid on Wednesday for the previous week's work. Then a computer was installed to make the issuing of weekly paychecks faster. They then received their checks on Thursdays.

But humans have infallible moments too. This week the Woman's Club of Linthicum Heights sent its monthly bulletin to its 20 plus members. Included were two delicious sounding menus for the club's annual luncheon, the date and time, luncheon price and how to make reservations.

Where this event was to be held was a mystery. By dialing the seven digits belonging to president, Dot Skowronski, the mystery was solved.

Since the program and luncheon, scheduled for Busch's Chesapeake Inn, sounds like a delightful way to spend an afternoon, maybe the boss will let staff-member 1911121213114 cover it.

Whatever happened to white shirts? - 4/20/70

Not so many years ago my teenage son became disenchanted with my conservative taste in clothes.

When he, along with many of his contemporaries, started compiling wardrobes containing a variety of mod styles and colors, I was a little aghast. Their choices seemed to be invading the fashion scene I considered to be strictly feminine and it's taken me a while to adjust to what seemed to be a new look.

After all I wasn't around in the 1800's when men abandoned their place on the fashion scene as the more colorfully dressed sex. For centuries the nobleman were the pacesetters in their brilliant ruffled costumes while the feminine styles were dark colored and changed little. By the early 1800's all fashionable young men in the western nations converted to trousers and changed hairstyles.

By the time I was growing up and beginning to notice the opposite sex, men's dress was quite subdued. He was dressed for any occasion in his good suit (usually a basic dark color), white shirt and if daring, a colorful tie.

Yes, there was an occasional change in style, I too remember the zoot suits and duck tail haircuts.

Until a few years ago, my husband, like most men his age, wouldn't have worn a brightly colored or patterned shirt anywhere but on vacation, to very casual gatherings or at home.

His wardrobe has changed. The realization came one morning when I noticed he was wearing a white shirt to work. What once had been standard dress was not almost an oddity.

The change took a long time. His first venture (we'll exclude, the Christmas and St. Patrick's Day ties, his canary yellow and holly red corduroy shirts and his Hawaiian print) into the colorful fashion scene was the purchase of a pastel blue shirt and then pastel yellow.

From pastels he progressed to a deep bright blue, added golds, vibrant browns, whites with bolder stripes and finally colored backgrounds with contrasting stripes. He even bought a gold sports jacket and slim cut trousers.

Evenings still brought out the traditional white shirt. Then came the turtlenecks. I liked them; but he was hesitant.

To settle the issue I bought him one for Christmas two years ago. Now it's unusual when he wears a white shirt for evening instead of one of his turtlenecks or bright shirts.

Last week he took another step. He bought a new suit. For him just buying a new suit is a big step. He's one of those men who

doesn't go suit shopping until his others are six months beyond the threadbare stage.

But the step was bigger.

After trying on several styles and colors, he finally chose a medium gold with a deep brown tiny plaid pattern. I tried to get him to buy two but out of all those suits he couldn't find another he liked.

And they talk about women!

While he was going to the dressing room, the salesman picked up the coat and asked, "Do you want a shirt and tie to go with it?" Having failed with the second suit, I wasn't about to pass up this opportunity.

Off we went to the shirts and ties. What a galaxy of colors and patterns.

Our salesman selected two shirts, a beige hue and a deep, but not gaudy, orange. On these he placed an ultra-wide tie with narrow stripes of contrasting, complementary and matching colors.

When Bill arrived and didn't balk at buying the accessories and even chose the orange shirt, I knew he'd come a long way. So have many other men.

Where it will end I don't know. He is still anti-bell bottom and flared trousers, ruffled shirts, polyester knit outfits and all the kookie styles that look good only on the young.

Hopefully he won't change, except for a fun evening.

But who knows, maybe men too will become slaves to fashion as they say women have. When he goes and buys Filippo Nativo's leopard suit with a below the knee coat whose skirt zips off, leaving the top half to zip back on the pants to make a one-piece jump suit, I'll move over to make way for the new slave.

I don't think the average man will leap that far. Like women, they're adapting the new fashions that are right for them and they look great.

Besides I have ulterior motives for applauding the trend of variety in male fashions. It's much easier to talk him into letting me buy the navy blue number on the clearance rack across the aisle in the women's department and it also helps him to understand why I need some new items for my wardrobe when styles change.

Kids and dogs inseparable—or should be - 4/27/70

Children and dogs belong together. At least that's the impression I have from my childhood reading.

Occasionally other animals were featured, but it was a rare story if somewhere among the pages a friendly, loyal, protective dog wasn't found.

Bill and I were deprived of this childhood advantage. We decided not to deprive our children. Besides we wanted one as much as they did. Before choosing a dog on our own we had a couple given to us.

When Tom was six months old, we knew a couple who firmly believed every child, no matter what age, should have a dog. This was a nice gesture, but it didn't work out. He didn't survive being a puppy.

When Tom was four and Greg six months old, these same friends decided we had to have another dog. Naturally they had one for us. He belonged to a family, who were moving and unable to take him with them.

Skippy, an adult dog of dubious parentage, had advantages. He was housebroken, accustomed to children, cute and playful. There was one disadvantage. He didn't want us as his family. He was accustomed to older youngsters and wide-open spaces. Every time the apartment door opened, Skippy took off with Bill close behind him.

One day he lost him. When found several days later, he was living happily with a fancily group resembling his former home. He was glad to see us, but we knew he would only return if we took him back with us.

This ended dog ownership for a couple of years. After moving into our home and Karen was born, we decided, after much persuasion from the boys, it was time for another dog.

We started anew with a dog of our choice and my favorite breed, a boxer puppy. Dubbed Betsy, Davey Crockett and his trusty rifle were the current TV rage then, she was everything a pet should be, after she was housebroken (she was a little difficult).

Then came the question of puppies. For several weeks we had six adorable boxer puppies occupying the basement. We made one mistake. We didn't sell them all. We couldn't resist keeping one beautiful male.

For a while Betsy kept a strong matriarchal hold over Gus. He waited for her to finish eating before he dared even smell the food and she was always first in line for scratching, attention and tidbits.

Gus grew. Soon he was taller, 25 pounds heavier and very aggressive. Mama could no longer push him into the background. She withdrew and developed a queen-size inferiority complex.

We tried to compensate with extra attention, but it didn't help much. She always looked rejected and never completely recovered. Even when Gus was killed and she was the sole object of our affection, one reprimand would bring back the look of utter rejection.

During that time we saw an article about dog psychiatrists. We didn't laugh, we sometimes thought she needed one.

In June she died. Despite her slightly damaged psyche and the infirmities that came with age, she lived up to her title as man's best friend.

For a week we moped. Off we went to buy another dog. I wanted another boxer. The rest of the family wanted a German

shepherd. I had many reasons. They were vicious; they didn't like strangers (I had visions of her attacking anybody who came into the yard or house. After all I'd seen K-9 dogs in demonstrations).

Our Trini is none of these. She's friendly and lovable. She thinks everybody (even the gas and electric meter reader) comes just to play with her. Somehow the meter reader doesn't agree.

There's no doubt about her intelligence. She's easy to train. But her protective, guarding and alerting qualities have not yet emerged. She has made progress.

She now chases cats. Two months ago when a cat hissed and arched, she'd turn and flee. She still turns and flees to the outer reaches of the yard when a dog comes to the gate and barks back at her. I could comprehend if the dog were larger, but a dachshund?

Yes, she barks, but only at cats, dogs and the youngsters when they leave the fenced-in yard and her and move to the open area.

The only person she attempts to attack is Bill when he playfully whacks Karen or me.

I'm gradually adjusting to the differences between Betsy and Trini. Tail-less Betsy expressed her joy by wiggling the whole rear. Trini has a tail. When she expresses joy, it hits and smashes anything in its way. Betsy was an outdoors dog only in spring and fall, not Trini. Rain, snow, and cold she loves them all and will stay outside by herself to play or sleep no matter how bad the weather.

Her eating habits are peculiar too. Betsy ate anything you gave her.

Not this one. What she doesn't like, she doesn't eat.

When any meat mixture is mixed with kibbled biscuit, she licks off the meat and drops the biscuit on the floor. This I can live with but it's her outside appetite that worries me.

When she was tiny she hid under the azaleas and chewed them. The vet said they were dangerous and we did cure her of azaleas. Then she turned to our garden.

I didn't know, what was happening to all the ripe tomatoes until one day we watched her prance into the garden, come out with a juicy ripe tomato and ate it. She never touched the green ones (intelligent).

The garden hose, the shoes, slippers and other little items were blamed on ourselves (we'd left them within her reach) and she was still a puppy. But it's the other things she eats. We found out the extent of her appetite when we toured the yard a few days ago.

Our dwarf peach tree (planted last year) needs replacement. It's only a foot tall. Three small forsythias planted for decorative purposes by the fence are now only stubs. Our fledgling rose bush had been shortened, thorns and all, and the mock orange was mangled but will recover.

By accident I discovered her burying grounds; my flower garden. She buries bones like all normal dogs; but she also buries dog biscuits, bits of bread, tidbits and anything else she has the urge to save.

Somehow she doesn't fit my pre-conceived image of the stalwart German shepherd but I wouldn't part with her, nor would the rest of the family.

She seems to have an unusual personality but then it seems I've heard it said that dogs often reflect their owners.

Driving not worth the trouble - 5/4/70

Raised in a small town where every important spot could be reached with a 15-minute walk, I didn't learn to drive until after I was married.

Having a car and license when I was a teenager didn't have the same status as it does for my teenagers, so I didn't worry about being a social outcast.

We didn't have driver-education in the schools; and cars, gasoline and everything to keep them going were pretty scarce during the war and after. When I did learn to drive there was still no particular need to get a license. My husband preferred to be the driver in the family and was always willing to chauffeur me wherever I wanted to go.

There were other reasons. The driver's permit expired before I learned to park; I would become pregnant and wouldn't get enough practice driving; or we'd move.

But then when we moved to the suburbs where nothing I needed was within walking distance; the errands with three children became more numerous; and my driver caught the mumps from the boys.

During these weeks, my neighbors and friends were wonderful chauffeurs, but I was determined not to be in the same predicament if ever the situation would occur again.

The convenience and freedom of having a license were wonderful. I really considered myself a dum dum for not getting it sooner. I could grocery shop and make appointments at more convenient times; and best of all Bill could baby-sit while I went shopping in the evening or went out for an occasional evening with other wives.

My fun time soon ended. Tom started school, I became involved in community activities and I made all those trips to the bank, the garage, the repair shops, etc., etc.

Soon I was taking Bill to work every day because I needed the car for some errand. The hours before 9 a.m. have never been my finest. I'm grouchy, I grope around the house in a daze and I need lots of coffee to stay on my feet.

In the days before getting my license I would toss on a robe to feed the baby, cook breakfast and fix Bill's lunch. This was out on the mornings I'd take him to work.

I had a horrible fear that I might have an accident or for some reason have to get out of the car while coming or going. I wasn't glamorous but I was clothed.

One particularly hectic morning my horrible fear came true.

Bill was late. He was backing the car out of the drive and I had to have the car. Still in pajamas, robe and slippers, I grabbed my wallet, the baby; the boys would be okay this once for 15 minutes; and left.

No I didn't have an accident, just a little trouble with the motor on the return trip. Pulling to the shoulder I knew I couldn't just sit in the car hoping the problem would disappear. By the time I had the hood up, trying to look like I knew what I was doing, a car pulled over and a completely dressed man came over to help me. The thought crossed my mind to fully explain the situation

but I was mortified. He made some little adjustment under the hood; I thanked him and took off for home.

I made a firm decision. Never, but never, would I ever take the car out unless I was properly dressed. It's one of the few firm decisions I've kept.

The situation became worse. Soon I needed the car everyday. First it was the kindergarten car pool, Cub Scouts and then Little League.

The car was mine and Karen's second home. Something had to be done. We made room in the budget for a second car.

At least two trips out of the daily schedule were eliminated. But we soon made up for them.

My children were never shy about volunteering my services as a driver and I soon found out they knew a lot of other boys whose mothers worked or didn't drive - or didn't own a station wagon.

Even a little planning on their part would have helped; but somehow they'd forget to tell me about picking up the other four until we were backing out of the driveway and it was always on the day when there was a cake in the oven or I was preparing a special dinner.

It was worse if they forgot until we were halfway to our destination and I'd be informed, "You forgot Joe."

"What do you mean I forgot Joe?" I'd ask while thinking the cake only had 15 more minutes to bake. "He needs a ride to the game and I told him you'd pick him up."

Sure enough when we turned around and went back Joe was waiting. There were times when I wished the boys were twins. At least they'd be in the same things at the same times.

In a few years, the driving schedule tapered off. For a year or two the boys' activities didn't overlap as much, as soon only one was in Scouts and baseball, and I Karen hadn't started any out-of-the-neighborhood activities.

The lull didn't last, but somehow I was able to juggle schedules better and the time came when the boys didn't need to rely on Mom for their main source of transportation.

They had friends with cars and licenses and then Tom had his license.

Things were settling down. We were through with daily trips to baseball fields, practices, etc. and down to weekly events. I even contemplated turning in my chauffeur's license.

Then Karen heard of a softball league over the line in Baltimore County. "Please Mom I have to let them know in five minutes if I can join." I hesitated and then came the clincher. "You don't have to drive, the team's manager will take me."

She came home from the first practice full of enthusiasm, except for one thing. She wasn't on her friend's team. "Why?" I asked. "I was late signing up," she explained.

If I'm lucky there'll be another girl she knows on her team whose mother can drive and we can share those 5:15 dashes to the field.

If not I guess I'll have to renew my chauffeur's license for a couple of more years.

One day not enough for mother - 5/11/70

Back in 1872, Julia Ward Howe made the first known suggestion in the United States for a day honoring Motherhood.

She suggested a mother's day in June as a day dedicated to peace (I'm wondering if she meant world peace or a peaceful day for mothers).

After experimenting with the idea for several years, mother's day received national recognition on May 8, 1914 when President Woodrow Wilson signed a joint resolution of Congress recommending that Congress and the executive departments of the government observe Mother's day. The following year the president was authorized to proclaim Mother's Day as an annual national observance.

Since then the holiday has reached the point where the advertising of gifts and other remembrances "for her special day" begins weeks in advance of the actual day.

Don't get me wrong. I'm not against mothers (after all I'm here and a three-time member of the mother's club myself). Nor am I against Mother's Day and the gift giving. I'll accept any gratuities my offspring give me in compensation for being a mother).

And over the years I've collected quite a few. What mother throws away the construction paper cards with their original verses written unevenly and decorated with paste fingerprints? Or the special gifts that she receives during a child's elementary school years.

Some are too fragile to endure such as the tissue flowers or the macaroni necklaces; but the candle holders made from tuna fish cans, the painted seashells, handprint plaques and purses made under the guidance of scout leaders, den mothers, Sunday school teachers and Indian Guide dads are used long after the day, the year and that particular phase of the child's life has passed.

And then there are memories of a popular tradition with children under twelve; preparing breakfast on Mother's Day. It takes lot of willpower to stay in while the cook makes numerous trips to the bedroom with numerous questions on how to prepare his or her particular menu.

Later as you clean the kitchen you wonder briefly why you exerted such will power,

I'm just against the one-day bit. After all peanuts, apples, pickles, pears and even youth have a week to call their own. This

indicates something. We moms have pretty inefficient public relations help.

What we need is an organization to send out public releases to children for the family bulletin boards advocating special weeks.

The variety of suggestions is endless. One week could be devoted to learning not to leave the bathroom looking like a disaster area after taking a shower and dressing. This could be followed by an illustrated bulletin to teach them how to use the cleansing powder and sponge so the bathtub ring would be banished forever.

Another bulletin could celebrate bedroom week. It could describe how a bedroom can be kept neat. It might explain that floors are for walking and not for clean, dirty or I decided not to wear this shirt or dress today clothing. It might also explain a desk is not a place to keep mom's kitchen shears, the family cellophane tape dispenser, the one and only can opener or half-eaten oranges.

One could deal with the joys of eating. This could tell the youngsters how to have a relaxed atmosphere while eating constantly. It could suggest putting the peanut butter and jelly away after making a sandwich, closing the bread wrapper to keep the brand new loaf of bread fresh and cleaning up the excess jelly before the evening paper is spread out to read.

It might also suggest that soft drinks lose their "fizz power" when left uncapped at room temperature. Along with this it might also suggest refilling the ice cube container when empty. It might also include suggestions on how children can contribute to happy mealtimes. It might say that "ugh" is not a description guaranteed to make mom happy about a new recipe she has spent hours preparing.

As I said there are endless possibilities: chores, curfews, use of the telephone, how to change Mom's no to yes, etc., etc.

An agency devoted to such a business could revolutionize home life and take away nagging; if only the children would read the weekly bulletins. Knowing my offspring; they wouldn't read them.

With this in mind I'll settle for that one day when peace reigns in the household as they all try to make it the best Mother's Day ever.

After all, we mothers are a little better off than fathers. Their day is observed throughout the country. But to my knowledge doesn't have the benefit of a presidential proclamation.

Spring doesn't seem like spring - 5/18/70

Whatever happened to spring?

Once upon a time, when I was a young teenager, May seemed to be the heart of spring. The trees, grass and flowers were at a perky peak and the days were warm.

Not hot or cold, just right and seemed to last forever.

For me it was a time of dreaming and doing nothing but enjoy the season. Even studying for finals was easier.

For my grandmother it was the time to tear the house and its contents apart for the ritual of spring cleaning and giving it a summery look.

In those days before air-conditioning it was necessary to replace the heavy winter drapes with airy curtains, cover the heat-giving upholstered furniture pieces with cooler looking and feeling slipcovers and other changes to make the house seem cooler.

It was also the time to pack away the woolen clothing and bring out the cottons for washing, starching and ironing. It was also a deciding time and sorting time on every stored article.

May still brings the bright look of spring to the trees, grass and flowers, but something has happened to the just right days. We have a few in January and February, a few more in March and April; but the unbroken stretch of days from April to June that I remember seem to be no more.

The days are either cold, rainy or hot.

In mid-April I start thinking that maybe I should go to the attic to at least attempt to survey the summer clothes situation and other stored articles. Usually that's as far as I get. Suddenly it's summer at the beginning of May and I'm in desperate need of a cool summer dress.

Making a mad dash to the attic, (it's stifling) I make a frantic search through the boxes and garment bags looking for something cool for everybody.

All the time I'm there I'm berating myself for my usual lack of efficiency. If I had sorted, labeled and stored correctly in the fall or if I'd done it in April I would have been ready for instant summer. But I'm not.

There are buttons to be replaced (if they can be found), zippers to be fixed, dresses shortened or lengthened, and shoes to be repaired. Clothes have to be tried on to see if they still fit. After all the kids did grow another few inches during the year.

In addition to the repair to clothes worn last summer, there's a stack left over from the year before. But it's a little easier to sort because the kids have outgrown them.

Struggling through the stacks, I sort and make smaller and more efficient stacks. Things needing buttons in one, zippers another and discards another.

This takes me about two months. Then I'm ready to tackle the repair jobs but I run into a familiar roadblock, I can't find the missing button or whatever is needed. By the time I've located everything fall and winter is around the corner.

It's time to sort through the fall items (stored haphazardly when I had to make room in the closets for the summer clothes) to see what needs repairing, what's in style and what's outgrown.

After following this disaster course for several years our attic, basement and any other available storage place looks like a big magnificent rummage sale.

Something has to be done. If I attempt to go through the rummage piles trying to make decisions on what to do with each item I'll never finish. At this point I'm contemplating hiring a rent-a-truck and take it all to a real rummage sale.

Then I could start over and resolve never, never to become inundated by indecisiveness over the simple task of spring and fall sorting and throwing away.

With this area under control, I could plan to revitalize the other disaster areas. There are so many. Bill's workshop (I could really do a good job in it) needs a king size sorting job. Surely all those little scraps of wood, wire, half-empty paint cans and other miscellaneous odds and ends under a foot of dust could be discarded. I'm sure I wouldn't be indecisive there.

If I could find a place to walk, I might try working in the catastrophes called bedrooms by my two youngest teenagers. But I've attempted those areas before and given up in total discouragement.

Since that requires more stamina and time than I have, I'll just do the next best thing. Close the doors.

Perhaps the upstairs bookcase would be the best place to start. It's the smallest area needing sorting and discarding.

Somehow the whole situation seems insurmountable. It might be easier to pack everything and move to a climate where spring lasts forever and there would be enough time to sort and discard efficiently.

It's no wonder women feel oppressed - 5/25/70

If I were inclined to be an active member of the women's liberation movement, the determining factor in joining would be the man who really believes being a housewife and mother is the world's easiest job.

There are many who say it, but fortunately, few are serious.

When the subject comes up for discussion, jokingly or seriously, they invariably use the same old reasons to support their belief. We've heard them: what other type of job lets you sleep until noon, or lets you watch soap operas all afternoon or spend the day in coffee klatches reading or doing whatever is your thing, in between the few household chores to be done. This I can take.

Any man who has ever pinch-hit in the role of housewife and mother knows the whole theory is a pipe dream. They don't hesitate to give up the job when the wife returns to her post. True there are a few men temperamentally suited to the role; but they're as rare as five-leaf clovers.

But back to the man who is sincere in his beliefs. His clincher to support his view is usually to remind today's women of how much easier their life and role is than that of their grandmothers.

Emphatically they point to the modern conveniences in today's homes: the washer, dryer, dishwasher, waxer, etc. etc.

And they're absolutely right. The appliances are wonderful times-savers. The washer and dryer enables today's housewife to wash and dry ten times the amount of clothing her grandmother did. And she does.

After all, once a youngster finds it's a lot easier, and faster to put the clothes down the laundry chute than hang them up, it's natural to continue the practice. And once they're all lumped together and wrinkled, it seems easier for me to just toss them in the washer than take the time to sort and press.

And ironing that's almost extinct with today's wash and wear fabrics and dryers. So they say. In many cases it is, if you are there to take them out of the dryer immediately. That's a big if. Back in grandma's day it could be done punctually because grandma would have been home.

But where is today's housewife? She's out helping in the school health room, collecting for a charity drive, going on a class trip, ferrying youngsters to Scout meetings, piano lessons, etc. etc.

Our grandmothers and great-grandmothers worked harder physically but they didn't have to contend with the schedule of a

modern day society. A schedule that can be just as tiring as doing a day's housework without modern conveniences.

Another point I like to bring up when I'm on the proverbial soapbox defending my peers is the availability of help. In those bygone days there was help. If not paid help there was frequently an unmarried aunt or a grandmother living with the family.

This help was available to occupy the children while Mom did her traditional chores on the traditional days. They were also available to help with little things like mending and doing the dishes. How many families of today have this kind of help? Not many.

In the mobile society of today, young families many times live too far away for any help from their parents. When she's grocery shopping, today's woman takes her pre-schoolers with her unless she hires a sitter. What did my grandmother do? I remember. We lived in a small town. We walked to the store with our list, they filled it and delivered it. For the items forgotten and needed at dinner time, I just walked to said store and bought them. Homes of today are not always within walking distance of shopping centers.

Then there were the evenings. If the mending hadn't been done or if the wife of those days just wanted to sit and do some handwork she could. There were no PTA meetings, civic association meetings or little league or political meetings to attend. If they had any, the woman didn't attend anyway; that was the husband's traditional role.

Somewhere along the line these men who really think this way have not really thought. You can't compare today's wife and mother with the one many years ago. It's a whole new scene. Besides I'll bet that same husband wouldn't want to go back to those days either.

After all, he couldn't sleep until noon on Sunday. In those days it was traditional for the whole family to go to church. Since it was usually some distance away transportation was required. And even in the early days of the automobile, few women drove.

It was good old dad who did the transporting. Now days if he wants to skip church, he can. His wife can drive the family to church. Or if he's so inclined he can keep his early golf date.

Those few men may really believe we have the easiest job but I'll bet these guys wouldn't trade places with their wives.

Wives and the throwaway phobia - 6/8/70

For the past several years I've been taking my second tour of the bridal shower circuit. On the first tour I was a receiver as well as a giver.

Now I'm just a giver.

Not that I mind giving. Every bride should start her homemaking career with bright, shiny utensils; unfrayed sheets and dishtowels; and unspotted potholders. It's the only time in her whole married life she'll have everything new at one time.

At every shower I've looked and gently touched all the gifts and with my envy showing said, "I wish somebody would give me a shower." After all when one has been married 20 plus years, the gifts still around are showing signs of age and use.

When our daughter Karen reaches the bridal shower stage of life, she will have difficulty recognizing some of the items. Take muffin tins. Once mine were shiny and unblemished. But over the years they've taken on a genuine baked in the oven look.

They have a lusterless grayish black finish, the corners are bent and if muffin liners were omitted, our muffins wouldn't pass the health inspector's standards.

Who could blame her if she would be unable to recognize muffin tins in their virgin state? She never baked muffins or cupcakes in a utensil that shiny at home.

And then there's my tube cake pan. A few years ago I was forced to replace it. The old one had so many dents, (being a one-piece style, it frequently required banging with a knife handle to loosen the cake), the cakes were always scarred. But have I thrown the old one away?

Old utensils are never thrown away by housewives, another use can always be found.

When I need an extra large mold, I fish it from the bottom of the pile in the cabinet. At these times I'm glad I didn't heed my husband's exasperated and frequent comment, "You wouldn't need more cabinet space if you'd throw some of the junk away."

What it is that possesses women to keep things, even when they're beyond hope, is inexplicable.

Maybe it's a nesting instinct. I have a saucepot whose lid would have to be hammered to stay on and yet I keep it. Even

though I don't use it often, it has its place. It makes a dandy temporary frog-keeper or turtle holder and it can be used for open pot cooking in an emergency.

And what housewife doesn't have one cherished kitchen utensil she wouldn't part with?

I have two. A wooden rolling pin; smooth, golden and so old it could qualify as an heirloom and a hand-powered food chopper. The new plastic rolling pins with compartments for ice-cubes fascinate me but not enough to part with my antique.

And who knows, like Maggie in the comic strip I might want to use it someday on my Jiggs and the plastic model just doesn't carry the same authority.

As for the food chopper, the electric ones may be faster, but there's something relaxing about turning the handle on mine.

One item seems to really be lost. The breakfast bun and roll warmer. Its disappearance is still unsolved, but I do have suspicions.

For years it had done a commendable job. During those years it became darker and darker and warped and more warped from being stored in the oven. Its embarrassing, decrepit appearance really turned my husband off. But it wasn't the warmer's fault.

Rarely would I remember to remove it before I turned the broiler on. Remembering came with the odor of charred wood. At the time of its disappearance, the wooden knob was almost non-existent. It was one of those items you didn't let guests see. I know it wasn't dirty, but they didn't. Someday he might buy me a new one.

If somebody doesn't take pity on me and give me a shower, I guess I will just have to make a trip to the five and ten and replace a few items.

After all I'm a little tired of drinking out of jelly glasses. The rims just don't fit my lips and I refuse to use my other heirlooms: the Snow White and Seven Dwarfs glasses and my Ranger Joe mugs.

The only other alternative is to get married again; but since bigamy is illegal I'll keep the old husband and utensils. They're still good many years.

The generation gap is for real - 6/15/70

Yes, my children are right. There is a generation gap.

When I was growing through the fun and not-so-fun phases to adulthood there were many things my generation didn't have.

We didn't have groups with strange sounding names like The Who, Ten Years After, Strawberry Alarm Clock, 3 Dog Night and Jefferson Airplane; all with their own style of instrumental and vocal sounds, presentation and unique dress.

All we had were an aging crooner, Bing Crosby, (well he was over 25 and to me that was really over the hill) and a young, skinny singer, Frank Sinatra, who had the girls fainting in the aisles; singing groups with not too unusual names like the Andrews Sisters and the Ink Spots; and the big bands. Oh, yes, we did have one singer with an unusual hairstyle, Ish Kibibble.

Neither did we have drive-in movies, drive-in hamburger stands, drive-in banking or drive-in car washes. In fact, we didn't have anything to drive in during the war years

With gasoline rationing and no new cars in production, the family transportation was not used by teenagers for "just riding around" in the early 40's. Besides, I was too young for that privilege.

There were other things we didn't have: television, mini-bikes, stereo records, transistor radios, record and tape players. Of course things like television and radio bring to parents of my vintage the inevitable question, "Did they have radios when you were a kid?"

The image I conjure up that they must have of me perched over a crystal set listening to the personalities of the era, Tom Mix, Jack Armstrong, the All-American Boy, and Uncle Don is too much. But I restrain myself. After all, they'll be "ancient" someday, too!

Nor did we have boutiques catering to our current style of dress. One of the girl's favorite pieces of clothing, the man's white shirt, to be worn shirttails out with jeans (my grandmother was horrified; "No, you cannot wear that outfit downtown, it's not ladylike."), bobby sox and saddles (otherwise known as shoes) was not bought. It was cajoled from some male member of the family.

Mine was particularly fashionable. Tailored to fit my uncle's six-foot frame, it gave my five foot three inches the sloppiest look on the block and my grandmother apoplexy.

But once in a while I find a gap that doesn't exist.

The other night, my seventh grader in a panic pleaded to be taken to our local five and ten to get an autograph book. The next day was the last day of school and everybody but everybody had one but her. Not having a stock of autograph books on hand, we went.

Our local store was closed (I told her it would be, but then mothers are never right), and the drug stores didn't have any. Two shopping centers and five stores later, we bought the last one in stock.

The following afternoon she read me some of the priceless bits of autographical writing. Another no-gap area.

There was the old classic on higher education:

Two little boys, late one night tried to get to Harvard on the end of a kite. Now don't get excited and don't get pale. Instead of going to Harvard they went to Yale.

Then there were the rhymes referring to the autograph collector's beauty.

Roses are red, violets are blue, I know a bulldog that looks just like you. Or: Roses are red. They grow in this region. If I had your face, I'd join the foreign legion.

And the one pertaining to her disappearance of sveltness that occasionally comes with getting older. *When you are old and out of shape; remember girdles cost \$2.98. This particular one was followed by a p.s.-Good luck in the future. (Good luck for what? Keeping in shape?)*

On the subject of family planning there was this wish for the future.

Wish you luck. Wish you joy. Wish your first a baby boy. When his hair learns to curl; wish you then a baby girl. When her hair is straight as pins, I wish thee a set of twins.

Evidently seventh graders are not too concerned with the population explosion. That rhyme adds up to four.

On morality; a brief bit of advice:

Love thy neighbor, but don't get caught.

And what autograph book would be without a rhyme explaining why we have he's and she's.

God made apples. God made cheese. God made Jane for John to squeeze.

Then there's the perennial rhyme bordering on the risqué to bring a snicker from its reader.

Sorry about that; but we've run out of space, you'll just have to rely on your memory of autograph days to remember that one.

How would you spend Onassis-sized budget? - 6/22/70

Recently I read an article itemizing the money spent by Jacqueline Kennedy Onassis and husband Aristotle during their first year of marriage.

I was fascinated.

Not having any wealthy relatives to remember me in their wills, I tried to conceive how I would spend the money categorized. If I had it.

It was exhausting.

As I glanced down the list I was particularly interested in speculating on two of the items. The first was gifts. This included his gifts to her and to others. The amount was staggering. Her's was an even five million.

I thought of all the things I've ever yearned for in my wildest flights of imagination.

It didn't add up to five million.

I've always wanted to travel and would consider any traveling that included staying in hotels, eating in restaurants and just doing what we wanted to do when we wanted to do it would be an absolutely gorgeous gift from my husband. This would also include leaving the offspring at home secure with a sitter. My imaginary vacation is one of complete relaxation just for Bill and me.

Reading further I found this couldn't be added to the gifts list. Hotels were included in the category of homes, apartments, hotels and villa; and travel was included with automobile maintenance. Not only that, they have a yacht to get away from it all and it had its own niche in the expense list.

Not having spent any of the gifts category, I tried again. I thought of clothes, cars, jewels, furs and all kinds of feminine frivolities. I know if I tried, I could spend a few hundred on clothes. Furs might be nice; but I don't have any great yearning for a closetful.

As for real jewels, they're out. Diamonds, they say, are a girl's best friend; but I don't think the same way. Somehow I just don't

seem to be sophisticated enough for emeralds, diamonds or rubies. Besides I'd be afraid of being robbed. No, they're all out for me.

A new jazzy little sports car all my own sounded like something to have if the money were ours. The car took care of a few more dollars. I really thought I was making progress in the gifts department.

There are many things I could think of in the house. A new stove and refrigerator would be appreciated (the latest models of course). New carpeting and furniture would be nice gifts too. Unfortunately they probably came under the homes category.

Suddenly another thought leaped into my head. A full-time maid would be better than a vacation. It would be a vacation in itself. That was out too. That's right, they had a sum set aside for servants.

I kept thinking I should be able to spend the five million but I couldn't. I was beginning to get a feeling of frustration thinking about it. I continued down the list.

The other intriguing listing was the amount spent on miscellaneous. It was the second smallest item in the list.

Our miscellaneous includes anything and everything. But it usually ends up being the "big spender." A portion of our miscellaneous goes to the in-between items (in-between necessities and gifts) for the children. This didn't fit in with the Onassis' listing. Children (allowances, etc.) were allotted \$205,000. That's what I would call a lot of et cetera. We have an allowance listing (a little less than theirs, of course) but we don't have et cetera. It's probably just as well. It might surpass our miscellaneous.

The smallest expense item on the list came under Ari's personal expenses. Was my husband surprised at this? No. He thought it was the typical status of all husbands, no matter what the financial status.

And you know what? I think he's acting like a typical husband. They enjoy talking about how much money women spend and if they spent more than us they'd lose one of their favorite topics.

Summer clearance in June? - 6/29/70

Summer is barely toddling on its sandaled feet and already the powers to be in charge of the consumer market are telling me it's time to think "fall."

How can I think fall when I'm just beginning to enjoy summer's special way of life and trying to get myself and the house a little more organized to enjoy it further? According to the Girl Scout calendar on the kitchen bulletin board, summer officially arrived June 21. And who am I to argue with a Girl Scout calendar?

And I'm not just taking the Girl Scout's word. The calendar, emblazoned with the Scout insignia, is the system used to determine our days, weeks and months and has been in use by a large part of the world since Pope Gregory XIII, on the advice of astronomers back in the 1850's, corrected the errors in the Julian calendar.

But I knew it was summertime without consulting the Girl Scouts. My "comfortable" temperature span is a short one. When shorts became the house uniform, it's summer.

It's summer when the first semi-sizzling days make me forever grateful to the air-conditioning, fans and other cooling devices available today.

It's summer when our menus revolve around the barbecue and eating under the tree is worth all the "to and fro" trips to the kitchen. It's the first dip in the ocean or pool when you come out refreshed instead of shivering.

Nature backs me up. We're getting thunderstorms; the flowers, vegetables and weeds are on their way to maturity; nightly the warm weather insects gather on the lighted screens; and the long days trap me into doing household chores later and later in the evening. But will those interested in my buying summer power let me enjoy summer? No.

Summer hadn't officially arrived when one of my favorite stores sent its giant-sized fall and winter catalog. I know it's necessary for them to think months ahead of me; but sometimes I get the feeling I'm being pressured into thinking, planning and buying before I want to. As usual the catalog is filled with an array of tempting merchandise. But somehow I can't get up enough enthusiasm to think about what I want to wear when winter arrives. Especially since the beautiful fall days loaded with color and briskness aren't even in sight and I'm still enjoying summer.

Knowing the enthusiasm will come around August when I'm a little weary of summer, I put the catalog aside to read the paper.

Starting with the women's section I find all the fashion articles are written about the fall and winter designers' showings now in progress. This is current news and I enjoy reading it.

As I said these fashions have to be shown to the store buyers now to have them in the stores come fall. This is logical. Turning the page I find advertisements displaying winter coats, another displaying the dark tone clothes for late summer into fall wearing; and on the next page there's an ad with the eye-catching title: mid-summer clearance. Others say summer clearance, summer reductions and so forth. Suddenly my annoyance is growing. The mid-summer bit was too much. After all July 4 isn't even here and it's plenty warm in July and August. How can I replace my leaky swimming tube in August if they're all gone?

After the annoyed feeling passes, I begin to wonder where I will find the pair of white shorts, the special pair of sandals and all the other summery things I need and want for summertime. By now the summer stock is somewhat depleted and the sale prices advertised haven't reached my bargain level to tempt me into buying a second or third choice on specific items.

Part of my annoyance comes from the feeling that once again I've been an inefficient planner. After all it's been this way for quite a few years and I haven't learned to accept this selling philosophy.

Over the years I've made some progress. This year I bought a new bathing suit in early May. In late May white shoes were on the shopping list. In mid-June after much shopping, I found exactly what I wanted. The salesgirl was dubious about the availability of a size 6 in the style chosen. Her appraisal of her stock was correct. Size 6 shoes were no more. She offered to check the other stores. They were out of my size too. And would they be getting anymore in I hopefully asked. She was very nice saying no and explaining why. "We had a large stock in at the beginning of the season and we're now waiting for the fall line."

Officially fall arrives Sept. 23. How can I become enthused over fall and winter shopping when I haven't even stored all of last winter's clothes for the summer?

It's impossible for me. Besides if all the new midi-fashions are gone when I shop in October I won't care at all. And if my swimming tube collapses in August, I won't worry. The lifeguards' summer employment doesn't end until Labor Day.

Pennsylvania hospitality revisited - 7/6/70

After moving to Maryland 16 years ago, Bill and I resolved we would take advantage of our proximity to areas rich in the historical heritage of the country and other numerous attractions.

We planned to take day trips, weekend trips, etc. to Washington, Annapolis, nearby Virginia and Pennsylvania and Baltimore. Especially since we hadn't done all those planned things while living in Allentown, Pa. and Rochester, N.Y.

For a few years we did keep our resolution.

We've visited Ft. McHenry, taken many day trips to Washington, Gettysburg, Yorktown, Williamsburg, Annapolis, etc. But like many of our resolutions, it joined the long road of intentions we've been building over the years. Not intentionally; but a family, home, community involvements and children's interests and activities have a way of filling the once lazy, relaxing weekends we had in earlier years.

Of the three states we've lived in, Pennsylvania has been our favorite. Perhaps because of its many memories and firsts. We lived four years in the Allentown area while Bill attended Lehigh.

It was the place of our first apartment, where our oldest son was born, where I held my first full-time job after graduating from medical technology training and it was where we made several friendships that have endured despite distance and the many changes that have come into our lives.

It's also an area of lovely parks, beautiful countryside and the home of many Pennsylvania Dutch folk. Working in the office of a local doctor with a general practice I came into daily contact with many of these people.

I was continually amazed by the friendly, warm relationship extended by them, not only to my boss, but our entire office staff.

Our regular patients rarely came in without some homemade treat. At Christmas we were overwhelmed with goodies and gifts. It was many a year before I had to buy cologne or handkerchiefs after working there.

I never baked a Christmas cookie while there either. And I have yet to taste a sugar cookie as good. Cut microscopically thin, they came in a variety of tiny shapes and individually decorated.

I have the recipe; but mine are never as good, as thin or as beautiful. It's an art I couldn't master.

In 1949, the first festival devoted to the folklore of the Dutch was held in Kutztown. Did we go? No. Nor did we go in 1950, 51 or 52.

We've been going to go for the past five years.

This year we made it and it was a fascinating evening. We had planned an all day visit; but we stayed overnight with one of our friends. After a marathon talk session (eight years is a long time and there was lots to talk about) until 4 a.m., we started in at 9:30 a.m. until leaving at 5.

Arriving in Kutztown, the first sights we saw on the street leading to the festival site were an Amish couple leaving in their horse-drawn carriage (an incongruous sign among the "machines") and porch after porch of local residents enjoying the tourists.

Unfortunately, we arrived too late to see the many crafts demonstrated by the Dutch folk. But we were in time to hear the

strolling German band playing gay polkas and visit the folklore tents still crowned with visitors.

In the snake lore tent, a young teenaged boy walked around with a black snake casually draped around his neck.

It looked dangerous to me but I was told (while being invited to touch it), "He's harmless." I wasn't taking any chances. In the corner, an older teenaged boy offered to put his hand in the glass box containing a rattlesnake so I could see him strike; and only for \$5.

Forget it. I don't like snakes and wouldn't part with money to see him move. He must have been accustomed to the limelight. No amount of glass tapping by the visitors disturbed him.

At the Funeral Lore tent, we inspected caskets and carriages used by the Mennonites and read the many intriguing beliefs lettered on placards among the displays.

Outside the tent, dressed in rather formal attire, a man was telling a family group that the "gay Dutch" no longer use the horse-drawn hearses and handcrafted caskets. They prefer using the hearses and limousines in use today. It indeed was a place of contrasts.

Many of the stands were operated by local organizations. The hospitality tent was manned by the Woman's Club of Kutztown. One member said if it was a good year, the club needed no other fundraising event. In between conversing I bought two more cookbooks, hex plaques, some copies of a sing-along, Schnitzelbank (all we need now is the piano roll) and other irresistible items.

Food was everywhere: corn on the cob, sausage sandwiches, watermelon, hot dogs with sauerkraut, family-style Dutch dinners, and funnel cakes. And we ate our share.

I only had room for one funnel cake, a delightful concoction dusted liberally with powdered sugar. Greg managed three. With cookbook in hand I intend to try making them. I think it's the only way to keep number two son quiet.

The festival was a Mecca for local youth looking for temporary work. Behind every corn stand boys husked corn constantly. Girls, from 14 up, were busy clearing tables and selling behind the counters. The only requirement for the job was to make their own long cotton skirt and sunbonnet.

Arriving late had one plus. We weren't too tired to stay for the balloon ascension by Nimbus Secundus. Accustomed to space age feats, it was still a rapt experience for the crowd from the first preparations to his ascent accompanied by cheers.

Watching him rise, one little boy was begging his Dad to hurry and leave so they could drive to the other side of town and watch him land.

As we left, carefully carrying our freshly baked shoe-fly pies (Bill's favorite Dutch treat), we promised ourselves we'd come back next year and spend the day.

After all, where else can you find a covered bridge to run back and forth, a gallows to climb and inspect, a merry-go-round that really is a horse driven grinding machine or a fence to whitewash?

Besides, I didn't get my turn to enjoy those attractions this time.

You have to nag to be a mother - 7/13/70

For years I've been what some might call a full-time nagger.

Some are the people who don't understand all the ins and outs of being a mother. Like children.

Now to my way of thinking it isn't nagging. It's just trying to be a good mother. But to my young crawling son, who wanted to explore every cabinet, eat the dust balls under the bureau, dump containers and any other no-no activity attracting him - it was nagging. Maybe he couldn't define it as nagging but he must have sensed it.

When he was old enough to go outside by himself and play in the backyard, my good common sense must again have given him a little more proof I was a nag.

After all a good mother would let him eat the nourishing bone left in the grass by the dog or the sandbox sand he found so tasty.

And why not let him play in the street. The backyard does get boring after a while and a change of scenery is good for everybody. Three-year-olds included.

And I'm sure he never could understand my request to pick and put away his toys. He was going to play with them the next day. If he'd been older he would have joined with the other members of his sex who term us illogical.

But then came a bright day. A brother arrived. Surely a mother couldn't find time to be a good nagging mother with a baby to tend to.

Somehow 3 1/2 olds don't understand mothers. We're good to all, no matter how many children in the family. And it's still possible to admonish while busy with something else.

Besides, there were other things. "Certainly you can hold the baby; but don't drop him or carry him up and down the stairs."

"No he can't take a bath with you in the big tub and play boats." But explaining why didn't convince him. It was still nagging.

Suddenly he reaches school age. Surely each child thinks, "At last independence!" Once again they've underestimated a mother's interest.

Before leaving the house, interest is continual - "Don't forget your homework - Don't forget your lunch - Hurry up or you'll miss the bus. " All of this advice is necessary. How else would he get there?

Then there are the rainy days. "Yes, you have to wear boots, raincoat and a hat. It's raining." They know it, but as far as they're concerned it's not a very good reason to be seen in an outfit like that by their friends. The clothes and shoes will dry.

Everybody knows that; except mothers.

Even a child's own questions like where's my English book, my shoes, my jacket or whatever the missing item brings on a flood of unsolicited advice leading off with the old standard: "If you'd put them where they belong, you'd know where they are."

Mealtimes are also important to the mother. Eating is essential. Especially the food mother thinks is essential. How else will the child grow up and be big like Daddy, Uncle Joe or Aunt Matilda? A mother's theory is: child does not live by dessert alone.

When said child is a teenager, he doesn't live on cokes, potato chips, a hastily downed hot dog or pizza. He tries, but with a mother there he isn't always successful.

Then there is the areas of rooms, record players, television, lights, closing doors, cleaning off feet before entering the house, etc., etc.

I realize, as I'm sure most mothers do, the room is his; but how will this said teenager ever become a neatnik (even of small proportions) if an advice giving mother doesn't remind him to pick up his clothes, clean off his desk and make the bed?

And take the matter of doors. Kids have a real problem with them. Somehow doors are perverse where they're concerned. They don't close even when the child swears he did close it. To get even with them, he slams them shut. You all know what happens then.

Turning off lights, radios and televisions when said child or teenager leaves the room seems to be the thought buried in the deepest recesses of his mind as he or she leaves the room.

No amount of gentle reminding that television tubes, light bulbs and radio parts might wear out due to overwork penetrates their minds. Nor does the fact that someday they will be paying their own electric bills.

At least I'm not alone. Another voice on our radio can be heard saying, "Will you kids please shut the refrigerator door?"

The only difference between her and me is the tone. Mine is much more dulcet.

The tone doesn't matter. It's just nice to know that at least temporarily I have some giant backing from the electric power companies in one of my many areas of "advice giving" to my children. Not only the power companies but even the President of the United States is behind me, too. At least that's what I read into his recent statement about conserving electric power.

With all this it didn't bother me one bit when my husband, upon hearing the radio voice said, "Now there's a real nag." "Yea" my 15-year-old said. "It sounds just like Mom."

If they could only see my kitchen - 7/20/70

Men really are great.

I wouldn't want a world without them. But there are some areas where they need the help and advice of women.

Not being a fully liberated female, much of my married life has been spent taking care of the house, children, yard, and other miscellaneous chores that go with the title of housewife.

Practically everything I use to operate a household 365 days a year has been conceived by a man from its initial design to the product's retailing.

Naturally every inefficient functional design from the odd shaped coffeepot that was a real stinker to clean to the decorative magnet holding the recipe card to the refrigerator door, brings a tirade against these men whose only visits to a real live working kitchen has been to open a bottle of beer. If they had to use these items under the "never ideal conditions" of most homes, they might suffer from housewife frustration, too. These products may look great on the drawing board and in store displays, (I admit they appeal to me and I buy them) but obviously they have not been tested under the conditions existing in my house. Frequently my pleasure is brief.

Once upon a time they attached a string tag containing all the information pertinent to the product. A quick snip with the scissors and the item was ready to use. Then I think some genius in his laboratory invented a new glue formula. Many items still carry tags, but we buyers have been given the advantage of a label attached directly to the item.

My frustrations begin the moment I attempt to remove the label or labels. Glass items will shed their labels if soaked long enough in soapy water followed by cleaning with cleanser and then some scraping with a fingernail or knife. It's time consuming, but it works.

Some items will not stand this torture. Wood or wood-type trays with lacquer or other finishes with glued parts (obviously not the same type of glue) take a little more ingenuity. Unfortunately I haven't had enough. I have several items that have dirty, sticky spots on them. No amount of cleaning wax has ever removed them.

Either some plastics don't like cleanser or the glue doesn't like it. Whichever, I discovered the hard way. I have a beautiful orange thermoware pitcher with a black smudge (twice the size of the original king-size label) marring the pitcher's face.

The same problem crops up with stainless steel. When the labels are on the bottom, it's okay, but I have a pair of salt and peppershakers that have a permanent spot on the windowsill above the sink. In spare moments I work on them carefully trying to remove the last bit of tenacious glue still clinging the exact spot you touch when picking them up.

If it were just a couple of items, I could live with it. But I have can openers permanently decorated with tiny pieces of paper, a wallet decorated in the same manner, plastic storage containers and a plaque all with extra decor. They were all old items by the time I've gotten around to giving up and using them.

But the most irritating of all are the items bought for gift-giving. Sometimes I buy them on sale or at a discount store. Removing one stuckon price tag is enough work. But when there are two, it's practically impossible. And the one hardest to remove is the sale price. After all I don't really want the person receiving the gift to think I was cutting costs on their gift. They may suspect I'm a miser, but I don't want to confirm it.

Sometimes I'm inclined to think it's a conspiracy to make us buy more. Or it could be a plot by the men to keep women in the home and out of business.

They might think if we devote our time, brainpower and energies to removing their plastered on labels, they might be able to keep some of us out of their domain a little while longer.

Any man with any intelligence at all should know that old cliché about what happens when women get riled up to the point of rebellion.

If these same genius type men would just take over in the household for a few weeks and absorb our feelings of frustration over the little things they probably could keep a few million women from joining the liberation movement for a few years.

Before they make the move I would like them to do just one thing. Please use the label glue on the magnets. My knees, eyes and nerves are weary from crawling around the floor looking for the decorative fruits and vegetables glued briefly to the magnet.

Although I've re-glued them they haven't stayed. Obviously they're hoarding the glue label formula and not marketing it for consumers.

Don't let your husband loose in a supermarket - 7/27/70

Ordinarily my husband has a sterling brand of will power and unbounded common sense when it comes to shopping.

He rarely has any difficulty resisting bargains I've found. Especially the furniture bargains.

The coffee table I'm so excited about loses its glamour bit by bit as my common sense husband takes it apart with his logic, knowledge of construction, etc., etc. By the time he's told me the legs are too spindly and not attached properly, the finish is terrible and it will collapse if used for seating by the kids, the salesman has long gone. He knew the sale was lost.

And so it goes. "Yes Anne the lamp is gorgeous, but isn't it a little large for the sofa corner? Besides you don't have the proper table for it." Of course I don't have the proper table. I don't even have a table. He talked me out of buying it a year ago.

But like the average male, he has his weaknesses.

Music departments and hi-fi shops tempt him and he can be a real spendthrift when it comes to buying music for the piano and organ, records, hi-fi components or gadgets.

In these stores and departments, his will power may waver, but his common sense never deserts him. He'll dash to a store to get a look at an advertised "bargain". But if it doesn't meet his standards; he doesn't buy.

He's almost immune to hardware stores. He still enjoys browsing; but he no longer comes home with every gadget on display. There's no need to. He bought them all a long time ago.

There are two types of stores where the sterling Skillman will power vanishes instantly.

One is the food store. Food shopping can be a bore and I enjoy having an extra cart pusher and bag carrier along. With all the extras my husband puts into the cart, I'd save money by hiring a helper.

When the offspring were little I had the same situation. At the checkout point I'd find extra steaks, assorted canned goods, cookies or whatever happened to be within reaching distance from their seat in the shopping cart. Those items were a lot easier to return to the shelves before paying for my purchases.

With a husband it's more difficult. A female checker might be sympathetic. But if you have a male checker, he's positive you're just another nagging wife. After all why make such a big fuss over a few packages of cheese? I can tell him why. If they weigh two ounces I'm lucky. That way it only costs me 80 cents. Thank

goodness he doesn't buy it by the pound or use it for grilled cheese sandwiches.

No wonder the cheese industry loves people like him.

Cheeses are not the only budget wreckers. Over in the fancy groceries he's tempted to buy exotic sounding expensive canned delights like terrapin soup, rattlesnake filets or fruits and vegetables in brandied sauces. Someday when I'm not with him he'll give in to the urge to buy chocolate covered ants. Fortunately what I usually find in the cart are the unusual (expensive) tid-bits to go with soft drinks or beer.

His spending splurge of my food budget money hits the high peak in the bakery department. The meringues, tarts, turnovers, gooey doughnuts, eclairs and anything else high in calories and price are his downfall. They're mine too. But at least I have will power.

I only send him to the store by himself in cases of extreme emergency (we need milk, unexpected company coming, or I'm too tired). When I do, I've learned never to ask for the change from the \$20 until I check through the groceries.

Another department where this unique male will power, common sense and attention to quality construction of an item vanishes is in today's lingerie store. Men probably weren't allowed in the corset shops of yesteryears.

Today, the lingerie saleswomen (I've never seen a lingerie salesman) are delighted to have male customers (sometimes known as the last of the big spenders).

These saleswomen (if I were in their place, I'd think the same way) know immediately these buyers are not looking for a simple white petticoat for an anniversary, birthday or Christmas gift. They're the ones who will buy the mink trimmed nightgown, the imported silk lounging pajamas or the completely impractical but bridal-beautiful robe for the wife who made her trip down the aisle 20 years ago.

They may not be worn often (somehow they don't go with pancakes and syrupy fingered kids). But just looking at them makes you forget temporarily the lamp and table you still want.

At times like that I get the feeling I'm being dominated. But who cares? I just won't ask his advice on the next piece of furniture until it's delivered and in its chosen spot in the living room.

That's my idea of compatibility.

Big weekend that never was - 8/3/70

A couple of Saturday nights ago an old acquaintance called - one we rarely get to see but keep contact with via the telephone.

I was weeding our vegetable garden at the time. While walking to the house to take the call, I tried to walk the ache out of the small of my back.

His opening remark, "Now I know you're getting old when I find you home on a Saturday night," really started me on a train of thought after our conversation ended.

Not about getting old; nor my aching back. The back always aches when I try to do two hours of weeding in the last half-hour of daylight. No, I thought about being home on a Saturday night. I was home because I had planned a really big weekend. Just like the weekend before, before and before.

Planning for the big weekends begins Wednesdays. By then I'm fully recuperated from the previous weekend. From Wednesday's view Saturday and Sunday look like infinity. My plans follow the same pattern. The plans also include my husband and the kids.

First we'll plan on something special for one of the two days. I review the promises of summer fun things. Maybe we could go to Patapsco Park for a picnic and hike. We had promised the offspring we'd go as soon as it was warm enough. July weekends can be hot.

If it is too hot for picnicking and hiking, we could just spend the two afternoons at the pool relaxing and swimming. Or we could spend an evening playing miniature golf or at a drive-in movie. The special event is a Friday not a Wednesday decision.

Weekend planning also includes a lot of "must do" things (food shopping, cleaning, ironing, lawn mowing, weeding, etc.) catch up or finish off jobs from other weekends (summer clothes mending, store the last of the winter clothes or clean another closet); do some of the items on the "put off until next weekend list" (it's endless); and good planning always includes a new project.

For me it could be sewing. The pattern and material for Karen's slacks were still in the bag.

For Bill, I couldn't decide. There were too many. When I told him to decide he said, "Forget it. I'm working on the car."

The kids' project is easy. It never changes from week to week, Saturday is room-cleaning.

To accomplish these tasks, an early Friday start is necessary. This means making a good shopping list Thursday night and shopping after leaving the office Friday afternoon. It also means some of the washing and ironing must be done Friday night.

It never works out the way I've planned.

Something always interferes with Friday's plans. Sometimes the list isn't written, I work late at the office, or I have to drive kids hither and yon.

But why worry, I'll shop early Saturday afternoon. Instead of cleaning the house thoroughly, I'll just skim through the rooms. Besides I'll get a few things done Friday night, go to bed early and get up early.

What happens? The kids con me into having friends stay overnight. They take over the basement, the living room and keep me awake until 2 a.m. At this point I'm still unrealistic. I assure myself I have all of Saturday. We can postpone the special event until Sunday.

Saturday morning doesn't start quite as anticipated. The bed feels great. Naturally the kids are asleep (they talked until 4 or 5 a.m.). Besides I have a good reason to turn off the alarm. It's one of my two days to sleep a little later.

By noon the breakfast clutter has been cleared away and everybody is clamoring for lunch. Naturally the kids haven't started their rooms and conditions are worse than on Friday.

Bill has started the car and is at a crucial point. He needs a certain tool. Unable to find it, he asks our mechanical genius Greg if he knows where it is. Oh yes "I loaned it to Joe last week." With an exasperated roar, Bill tells him to get it immediately. As Greg takes off Bill is chanting very uncomplimentary things about his son.

Greg returns in five minutes without the tool. Joe and his parents are away for the weekend. Knowing what's coming, I quickly leave. So does Greg; but he has to stay.

For me it's decision time. Lunch clutter has to be cleared away. Then if I rush I can vacuum lightly before going to the store. After all I can skim through the house early Sunday morning.

Leaving the house I notice its 3 o'clock. I don't have enough time to do a regular shopping trip and still have dinner ready before 7. Besides I didn't make out the list. I'll get the necessary items and plan on shopping Thursday after work.

Before making it to the car, Bill has a few requests. "Please stop at the hardware store and get exactly what's on this list. Also pick up the tire at the gas station."

Coming back at six I find our overnight visitors are still there. "Why?" I ask my children. "Oh Dad said they could stay for dinner if it's all right with you," they tell me. There's only one answer when they've already missed dinner at home. Walking into the kitchen I throw a wait-till-later look at Bill and start cooking.

Vacations harder to mobilize - 8/10/70

Vacations, unless marred by some unforeseen incident, usually are the period of rest, recreation or change of pace they are intended to be once we arrive at our destination. A vacation serves two purposes. It enables me to recuperate from the hectic pre-vacation chores and prepare for the post-vacation chores. The pre and post periods are my downfall.

This wasn't always true.

In pre-children days (an almost forgotten time) preparations were nothing. One suitcase was enough for the two of us, the apartment was a breeze to straighten before departure and everything about the venture was uncomplicated. At the time, it probably wasn't all that rosy; but in retrospect it was.

When we became a family of three, the vacation pattern changed. One suitcase wasn't enough. Here we had another human being weighing less than 20 pounds and a footlocker was needed to hold his clothing. Those were the days before wash and wear and throwaways. In addition there was the playpen, high chair and other necessary items to keep him happy in another environment (otherwise long vacations were becoming too expensive. But, my husband had the solution: camping.

By the time I flopped in the car with a diaper bag putting a dent in one shoulder, a handbag in another, plus all the forgotten items picked up in the final swing around the apartment, I was exhausted. I never recuperated.

With the first child I was a perfectionist. This is synonymous with keeping the grandchild at his shining best still in the vicinity of our hometown.

Returning home had its problems too. In addition to the monstrous task of unpacking everything, it took days to get the child back from his star attraction status to his normal loving personality.

The advent of two more youngsters over the years didn't help vacations. Packing tripled, but I was no longer a perfectionist.

Having them spic and span was almost an impossible feat. Mine always had the knack of getting dirty after being dressed to go someplace. I often thought being a mother octopus would have advantages. Clutching two while dressing the third might have helped.

Finding a time slot for vacation became difficult. Vacations had to fit in between school closing and opening, Little League, swim team, Scout camp and the beginning of football practice.

Besides unless we had inexpensive housing accommodations, long vacations were becoming too expensive. But, my husband had the solution: camping.

His sales-pitch was great; particularly in the area of clothes packing. All we would need was swimming gear and casual clothes. It wasn't quite that simple. Unless you go absolutely primitive, you need towels, washcloths, bathrobes, dish towels and a multitude of washable items. It's true I didn't have to pack

the tent, stove, sleeping bags, etc., but I was chief cook, and cooking away from home under adverse conditions requires a large amount of planning and packing.

He was right about the actual clothing we wore. Until kids reach the teen years clothes and appearance doesn't matter, especially to boys. But then the day arrives when going to the campsite's bathhouse at 6 a.m. requires a Beau Brummel appearance before leaving the tent.

Gradually the pre-packing and post unpacking reached ridiculous proportions. With the advent of modern conveniences at campsites (mainly electricity), our teenagers agitate to take record players, radios, etc. They also agitate to go "Where the action is." This means taking their entire wardrobe, when we agree to a few days at the place of their choice.

Something had to be done. More time was being spent getting ready and cleaning up from vacations than was being spent vacationing. The car was beyond capacity load and the kids were too tall to sit pyramid style.

Bill had another solution. A tent-trailer would solve all our problems. It could be pre-packed and ready to go. It sounded great.

No more tent, sleeping bags, mattresses, etc. But I was wrong. It all goes. When there's room at a campsite we use both. The tent for the boys and the tent-trailer for us and Karen.

Through the years I've tried various systems to ease the pre and post vacation periods; but as is typical with me, nothing has been totally successful. As I see it there are four solutions.

We could go completely primitive. There are camping areas without electricity and miles from nowhere where we could wear as little clothing as possible and perhaps live on berries and a few canned goods.

Solution number two: Bill and the kids could go by themselves, and leave me with a week or two to recuperate from getting them off and to prepare for their return. I've mentioned this idea to him without success.

I've also suggested another type vacation. Pack a few suitcases and go to plush resort where we would do absolutely nothing but pay the bill. This suggestion I don't make too frequently. When a man reaches 40 you have to avoid upsetting him.

My number four solution of just staying home and hiding from the world hasn't turned him on either. Maybe it's because I suggested he might do some work on the patio in between sleeping, reading and relaxing.

Perhaps the only solution is to face the facts squarely. Until I have a staff of robots to do the work for me, I'm going to have to prepack and unpack to take a vacation.

After all I don't really want to spend two weeks home alone. Two days would be sufficient.

Men mum about women in slacks - 8/17/70

For years women's appearance in slacks and shorts has been the target of jokes and cartoons usually from the ridiculing pen of the opposite sex.

It occurred to me during the recent emphasis on pants' fashions that it had been a long time since I had come across this type of material and the "why" of it flitted occasionally across my mind.

My first thought was perhaps men were more accustomed to women wearing slacks and shorts and it was a worn out topic. My second thought was maybe since today's pants fashions are much more attractive than their forerunners they were more acceptable to the male eye.

Even the legions of us who have less than model figures have found flattering pants fashions to wear in public.

After a summer of people watching, I think I've found why these talented writers and artists aren't making fun of women in shorts and slacks.

They don't dare!

Men of all ages, sizes and shapes are wearing shorts, ranging from mid-thigh to droopy below-the-knee, in stores, restaurants, fairs, festivals and anywhere shorts are acceptable.

I can remember when men only wore shorts to wash the car, mow the lawn or for backyard relaxing on a hot day. I also remember how difficult it was to convince my husband he would love wearing Bermuda shorts "at home." Now he wears them every place he can when the weather is hot, and is no longer self-conscious about showing his legs in public.

Neither are the other men, or so it seems. The majority of shorts attire I've been observing is a long way from the impeccable Englishman in his desert tan Bermuda shorts and knee high socks.

After all I've seen a lot of English movies and all the men I've seen in them looked like they had pretty good-looking legs. But then there was only the small portion of leg showing and it wasn't in living color either. Nor did any of them have a portion of midriff draping over their belted Bermudas. Maybe I'm being unfair to expect men not to wear shorts in public if they don't own a pair of good looking, semi-hairy and slightly tanned,

muscular legs. After all, most women don't look exactly like a svelte actress in shorts and slacks either.

Often in the era when men were critical of us females in pants, my husband might say to me, "Couldn't you have bought a pair that fit better?" Translated this meant I looked great (meaning size) from the rear view.

Of course I couldn't. If I bought the slacks to fit loosely at the hipline I had to take 16 tucks in the waistline and shorten it 10 inches to avoid tripping over the excess length that went with the larger size.

Since becoming addicted to shorts for summer wear I think my husband is beginning to grasp the problem of sizing in ready-made fashions. He has a similar problem. When his shorts fit at the waistline, no amount of belt tightening eliminates the baggy look caused by too much material over a slim hipline.

Oh, how I wish I had a problem like that. But I never make snide remarks about how they fit, unless he provokes me. But the fitting problem is getting easier for both of us now that manufacturers and designers of male and female clothing are becoming more aware of our varying shapes.

And I've discovered the majority of men I know just don't make nasty remarks about our pants attire these days since many men have decided to tiptoe behind the younger generation's trend of wearing "their thing."

There's one really good thing to say for this shorts wearing trend of men. If and when the unisex look really takes over the fashion world (seems to me I was reading somewhere Rudi Gernreich had designed skirts for men). I'll be prepared. I won't expect all men to look as good as the actors did in their tunics when they portrayed Greek and Roman warriors.

Or if men would be the least bit reluctant at switching to skirts, they could always wear knee-high socks like the kilted bagpipe playing Scotsmen.

But I don't think either we or the men have to worry about it. If skirts for men become fashion in my lifetime, I'll insist my husband goes maxi.

A wife is the best buy yet with \$2 price tag - 8/31/70

After leaving my career to become a mother and before starting to work in the outside world again several years ago, I would clip and save articles on a wife's worth.

Then on those rare occasions when I was disenchanted with being a housewife I'd quote facts and statistics to impress upon my husband what a good bargain he got when he married me.

Oh, yes, there were a few down payments: dates, gifts and an engagement ring but I don't count those in the basic cost of marrying me. (After all there were other girls in his life). In those long-gone days there wasn't much "Dutch-treating." I followed the traditional female role and he the male. We didn't think too much about the equality of sexes then.

After we had children and I was a full-time mother (also means part-time nurse, counselor, arbitrator, chauffeur, psychologist, pre-kindergarten teacher, etc.), housewife (that one also covers quite a few specialties) and most important of all, wife; I'd occasionally remind my husband of my worth and what it would cost him in cash if he paid me a salary.

This reminding would be triggered by some minor incident or remark like, "Baked beans and hot dogs for dinner? What did you do all day?"

And I would tell him. Trip by trip, errand by errand, interruption by interruption and ad infinitum.

Then I would launch into my accumulated facts and statistics, on my financial worth. "Do you know that in a recent survey it was estimated the average housewife-mother with preschool and school-age children works 99.6 hours a week?" At \$2 an hour I was worth more than he could afford to pay. But if I were to hand him an itemized bill of services charging rates for specialized skills, he would have to moonlight 16 hours a day to pay me my worth.

Was my husband impressed?

Not particularly.

He always had a stock reply. He'd make up a bill for me. Then he enumerated: room and board, clothing, medical

expenses, an occasional evening out, visits to the beauty shop and anything else he thought worth including.

He was right. It has a way of equaling out. And I didn't really want to be paid. It never crossed my star-crossed mind when we were married. All I wanted was a little sympathy and understanding for my day which might have been as bad as his. By the time we reached his favorite dessert I'd found time to make, the subject was resolved and not discussed for another year or two.

All of this was before recent congressional action on the women's rights amendments. All of us who have enjoyed feeling protected (a protection we've always had) in our role of wife and mother while still having quite a bit of equal status may have cause to worry, if it becomes law.

I may not be able to threaten my husband with the prospect of leaving him and living in luxury while he pays the bills. It is possible with this equality bit I could also be responsible for financial support of the offspring.

And that's not all, I could find myself liable to pay alimony to a wronged husband.

There's one consolation. I won't have to worry about military service. I'm a few years over draft age.

Since I can't keep my husband from listening to commentators and reading the news about this amendment, I think I better go home and cook a fabulous dinner featuring a steak cooked over the flames from my collection of articles on a wife's worth.

Equality or no equality, my husband is no indoor chef and the way to a man's heart and understanding is still through his proverbial stomach.

If it isn't I might find myself in a difficult situation. I've always thought he kept copies of my columns because he was sentimental. But if he's keeping them as proof of defamation of his image, I sure hope I have a lady judge when we go to the courtroom.

Husband who keeps promise - 9/7/70

My husband keeps his promises. When we were married, he promised he would take me on a formal honeymoon trip to some far-off place when his budget permitted. Almost 22 years and three children later we spent four days in Nassau, N.P., the Bahamas.

The trip was a last minute luxurious addition to our camping vacation to Miami, Fla. As Bill and I boarded our midmorning flight at Miami's International Airport, our two youngest were already on their way to a local beach with their Miami grandmother.

As we taxied from Nassau's airport to our hotel, I frequently wondered if we'd get there intact. Traveling via automobile on New Providence Island is not a soon-to-be-forgotten experience. First you must adjust to riding on the left. Then you must adjust to the way of driving. In outlying areas, drivers rarely stop at stop signs. Just about the time you're wondering when they'll slow down for the sign, they blow the horn and keep going.

Overtaking (Bahamian for passing) cars and zipping back to the proper lane while missing an oncoming vehicle with only what seems inches and the seemingly unconcern of the driver of pedestrians and vice-versa is normal procedure.

Our driver, like the majority of the Bahamians we met, was courteous, friendly and informative. In-between the panic-stricken moments (and I had many) I enjoyed the scenic drive dotted with pastel houses which to my big touristic eyes looked like palaces with their acres of beautifully landscaped grounds and privacy guarding stone walls. The tropical fauna and foliage was even more lovely than Florida's.

By the time we arrived at our hotel we were ready to relax. After lunch and a tour of the hotel and its grounds, we spent the remainder of the afternoon on the beach. The travel brochures were right. The clarity, beauty and temperature of the water were nothing like anything we had seen before as was the sugarfine soft, white sand. And kept constantly comfortable by the trade winds. After a welcome nap, we enjoyed a late dinner at the hotel followed by a walk around the lighted grounds.

The next morning we boarded our hotel bus for the five-mile drive into Nassau. Over my initial panic, I only gasped a few times at what seemed impending disasters.

Disembarking on Rawson Square we had our first look and trip through the island's famed straw market. Row after row of stalls overflowed with straw handbags, carry-alls, hats of all shapes and sizes, and novelty items brilliantly decorated with raffia flowers and pom-poms or shells. Sometimes all three were incorporated in the design. Also in the market were wood carvings (many still damp from the recently applied coating) and necklaces.

It took only a slight pause in one's step to have a ready seller offering you a good price on the item you were eyeing. The market was manned by women of all ages and youngsters, whose deft hands never stopped working on more wares as they cajoled you to buy.

Before browsing and buying our way along the bustling Bay Street shopping area filled with a confusing array of shops bulging with a bewildering amount of merchandise, we toured the waterfront. To a first-time visitor I'd say don't miss it. It's a fascinating, cacophonous walk.

The entire roadway was clogged with horn-blowing vehicles (the horn warns, designates right of-way and is used as greeting), chattering pedestrians and merchants. Lining both sides of the thoroughfare are native merchants displaying fruits and vegetables, some familiar and some strange. Every little market also had its baskets of hot peppers, pigeon peas and black and white crabs still milling about.

At one point, a willing Bahamian took us through the fish markets laden with freshly caught fish in all stages of cleaning hanging from the ceilings and draped on the counters with not a piece of ice in sight. In one market large turtles paddled about their own pool awaiting their turn to become restaurant specialties.

The sights and sounds are many in the Bay Street area. One of the most picturesque sights is the white-helmeted policeman, impeccable and imperturbable, directing the hodgepodge of vehicles (bikes, motor scooters, cars, trucks and sightseeing, horse-drawn surreys.) from his umbrella-covered pedestal in the center of the street.

Friday and Saturday of our stay we used the hotel bus to ride into Nassau early in the morning for shopping, wandering and lunch. We returned to the hotel via the bus for an afternoon of swimming before returning to Nassau at 8:30 p.m. for dinner followed by a leisurely walk through much quieter streets,

In addition to the fine restaurants, we found carry-out shops featuring Kentucky fried chicken, hamburgers and one serving fried grouper (a most delicious fish), conch fritters, cracked conch and conch salad. All were served with Bahamian peas and rice, Bahamian biscuits and a salad. And on the box containing Bahamian food was advertising extolling (I kid you not) "Maryland fried chicken, a tantalizing, taste-teasing delicacy."

There I was enjoying being away from it all and some advertising company just had to remind me that the Gazette and my editor still existed. And being an editor, he's very conscious of space and mine is all used up. Our last and most interesting day will have to be described another time.

The incurable football fiend - My hero, hero worshipper - 9/10/70

School had just started, summer's last fling, Labor Day weekend, is only arriving and professional football is after my husband already and he isn't resisting.

The professionals don't want him on the playing field, just his time in front of the television screen. And that time is indirectly my time.

First this sport, associated only with autumn, took over the lovely fall Sundays and now is trying to disrupt my summer weekends with exhibition games.

Once upon a time we did lots of fun things on Sunday afternoons. Sunday drives were favorite family fun-times. I vaguely remember beautiful afternoons spent in Gettysburg, Washington and Annapolis. I also remember drives to a nearby orchard.

Once there, we browsed leisurely through the heaping baskets of glistening apples and spent a long time at the great pile of pumpkins before making a decision. Finally it was made and home we went laden with apples for eating and applesauce making and choice pumpkins for jack-o-lanterns. We had to buy four. One for the master carver (Dad) and one each for the kids.

Sometimes we would take an unplanned drive through the country-side taking time to explore anything catching our interest from a snapping, turtle crossing the road to a covered bridge discovered along the way. The afternoon would also include a picnic lunch or dinner in a favorite restaurant.

And then there were Sundays spent working in the yard, reading it for winter and planting for spring bloom. Some Sundays we'd take walks through nearby woods, enjoying fall's color and gathering pinecones for Christmas decorating.

But those were the days before my husband became a Colt fan. Without a season ticket, he became a radio and television fan.

How our fall Sundays have changed. When the game is on television, we can't leave the house before it's over. If we leave before it starts, we have to be back by kick-off time. Heaven forbid, our football fan might miss a 90-yard run-back. A football fan never lets his wife forget, if he misses an exciting play like that -NEVER. I know.

Soon my football fan was so addicted he took in two games; the one on television and the Colts via the transistor with him on the sofa.

Not only did Sundays' activities change, but so did the eating pattern. Unless hot dogs, hamburgers or sandwiches were served

during the games as dinner, Sunday dinner became a matter of precision planning.

Eating a regular dinner while watching a game can be hazardous to your health. You could choke, stab yourself with a forkful of food or be burned with hot coffee spilled during an exciting play.

Dinner can be served at three times! During half-time, before, and after; but not immediately before or immediately after. Just before, it's the pre-game show with interviews, speculations on the upcoming game and scores and standings.

In-between all this there's always a bit of folksy gossip about the players, coaches and other personalities associated with game; past and present. And no pre-game show is worth anything if it doesn't re-run the highlights of last week's game.

Just after is the post-game show. It follows the same pattern except we are privileged to hear an interview with a sweaty, smudgy, out-of-breath game hero. And there are more scores and standings along with replays of the game's big moments and a discussion on why the team won or lost. For a long time I battled the situation. Then when our number one son became a football addict I gave up. Fighting two was too much.

I became a Colt fan too; but not to the same degree. I don't scream at the coach or players when they make boo boos like other fans at my house. Nor do I go around calling them bums when the team loses a game. After all I tell them, "you can't win them all," as I dash up the stairs to save myself from their ire.

But Colt fan or not, I can't get up much enthusiasm for the exhibition games. First, they take away time I had planned for my husband. Between baseball and now football he's only completed two of the projects I had scheduled for him this summer.

Secondly, it takes away the color television. The game comes before the good movie in Technicolor I had planned to watch. Somehow it just wasn't the same in black and white. And worst of all, because I wanted to watch something besides a fall sport on summer television I missed Tom Matte's stellar play in the first exhibition game.

If the people who plan these things would keep football where it belongs such a thing wouldn't have happened. Because when they play for real, I'll be in front of the television set with my sandwich along with the other fans at our house.

Christmas plans in August - 9/14/70

A few weeks ago, a woman called to tell me how much she had enjoyed one particular column I had written. In the course of our conversation she suggested that since I seemed to have difficulty with organization, perhaps it might be wise if I'd start planning for Christmas right then. Right then was the beginning of August.

Actually she had a top-notch idea. And, believe it or not, I do plan for Christmas in August. Hardly a year passes that I don't buy a few presents during the August sales or while on vacation that I think will be enjoyed by those I give gifts to.

Buying early always gives me a secure feeling. So secure that I put off the rest of my gift shopping until the week before Christmas. And being bargain minded I try to stock up on cards for the next year at the day-after-Christmas half-price sales. Last year I even goofed on that. It was several days after Christmas when I went past the counter and was able to find two boxes of cards I liked.

Anyway, her suggestion must have been hovering somewhere in my mind when a sales-minded youngster called and asked me if I wanted to order the Christmas cards I had promised to order several weeks ago. Shortly after hanging up the telephone, the young card-seller arrived with her sample folder.

Since Bill liked one style and I another, we compromised. I ordered both styles. Besides, I had promised to buy two boxes since it was a brother-sister team. Besides if they're like mine they would have been fighting over the extra penny profit of buying only one box.

Not only did I order the cards; I also had them imprinted with our names, all of them. Maybe this will help me get them addressed and mailed before Christmas this year.

A few more suggestions and I may be so organized that I won't have a thing to write about. Unfortunately, it's a remote

possibility. You know the old cliché about teaching old ones new methods can be very true. After so many years of disorganization it might take more years than are left. And if it should happen, I wouldn't tell my friends. They wouldn't believe it.

Speaking of readers' suggestions, I'm always delighted to receive column ideas (some days they are harder to find than my kids at dinnertime). But not having any powers in the ESP department, I have no way of contacting a reader when a name or telephone number isn't included.

Another subject that occasionally comes up in a conversation with readers is the subject of husbands. He may sound like yours in some ways; but this one is not a composite of all husbands nor is he a figment of my imagination. He's for real. When you meet my husband for the first time, don't feel at a loss when you're trying to reconcile the man at my side with the one you occasionally see in the paper. Again, the man with me (in most cases) is the real husband. The ones in the pictures don't belong to me.

And on the subject matter: as much as I hate to disillusion you, the ideas are not flights of fancy from the barren mind of a writer.

Going back to the opening subject. If you've followed a schedule like one printed in a recent magazine (it allowed so many days on which a certain number of Christmas cards were addressed with the last day assigned to finish them up) follow the advice along with it about not telling anybody, especially me.

After all, you wouldn't want to be the one to put me on a path of organization and destroy my image would you?

Family could put Goodwill out of business - 9/21/70

Sometimes I wonder how organizations like the Goodwill Industries, Salvation Army, Purple Heart and their counterparts stay in business. Obviously they don't rely on families like ours.

Like all women I have bursts of frenetic frustration when I decide to dispose of the no longer useful items taking needed space in the closet, on the shelves and other areas in the house.

With a growing family, the number of items grows as rapidly as children. It took a long time, but I finally learned never, but never, ask the kids or my husband what they no longer wanted or needed to keep. If I do, the organizations end up with absolutely nothing useful.

Making decisions on my own clothing, collection of chipped dinnerware, books and magazines is traumatic enough without raising the emotions of four other people to the hysterical level.

I've lost track of the number of times in the past four years I've donated my flared orange wool skirt and matching fitted jacket to the "give-away" bag. There have been times when I've even relegated it to the "must-go" bag. But always in a weak moment of reconsideration I rescue them with the dedicated thought of shortening the skirt to have an extra outfit for casual wear.

Not having carried through the thought, I'll put it in the "maybe wearable" bag, provided the moths haven't found it since my last appraisal of it. Perhaps if the urge hits to go midi, I can buy a wide belt, a new blouse and if I'm completely hysterical, buy a pair of boots and march forth in the new look.

If my husband sees me, I won't be able to march anywhere. To complete the outfit, I might wear the old felt cowboy hat left over from Greg's stage of playing cowboys.

The cowboy hat is just one of many childhood mementos that have been in and out of the bags over the years. To ease this frustration I plan on giving each of my children their own bag when they leave home. If they still want these mementos, they can clutter up their own home with them.

When they were younger I tried to dispose of the assorted toys which were broken or minus essential working parts and hadn't been played with for months. As soon as I put them in the discards, they became the most important toys they owned. No matter how sneaky I was in removing the items from their rooms, they managed to miss them immediately. No amount of reasoning prevails with a screaming child who has been deprived of what he thinks is his choicest possession.

The only reasonably safe way to give away these items is to zip through their rooms after they've left for school the very day the truck is scheduled to arrive. This way when they ask (about six months later) about the missing item you just answer with a

simple, "I don't know." And it's the truth. At that stage of the game you don't know where it is.

Another thing I learned the hard way. Don't give cherished items to the local rummage sale. Occasionally toys and books have returned home via the kids who bought them back with my money.

Once you're through the toy stage, the same pattern evolves with clothing. Never throw away a favorite pair of jeans or slacks that are too short or a wee bit too tight. With a little snipping here and there they make great shorts. In fact the raggedy, stringy shorts are worn everywhere while the brand new Bermudas stay in the closet day after day until they're ready for the give-away bag. Ditto for shirts and sweaters. My kids were wearing "in" fashions, long before they were sold in the groovy shops at exorbitant prices.

Husbands are the same way. They never let you throw away a shirt until all the buttons are gone and the hole in the elbow extends from the shoulder to the cuff and the color is no longer recognizable beneath the grease and paint stains that even enzymes won't take out.

For years I couldn't give magazines away. As soon as I did, someone wanted an article in Life, Popular Mechanics or Time they had read five years before. (How can they remember things like that, but forget what I told them to do five minutes before?) The particular article or picture in question was just the needed item to complete their notebook and now it was my fault they wouldn't get an A on it.

Just recently I cleaned out a few closets and came up with four bags of discards. I called organization after organization to pick up the bags. Unfortunately, not one of them had my area on their schedule at the moment. They promised my turn would come in the next few weeks.

To prevent pilfering from the bags, I stashed them in the attic and locked the door.

My turn finally came, but we were on vacation. The other day I took some more giveaways to the attic and found my once neatly packed bags surrounded by some of their contents. Sure enough, somebody had been looking for something they still considered useful. On one of my trips to the attic storage I had forgotten to lock the door.

It was my downfall.

As I repacked the bags, I came across a few things I thought might be useful for the coming year.

I wonder if I need any kind of permit to have a lawn sale on used items?

Phonovision could be embarrassing - 9/28/70

The telephone caller caught me shortly after I returned home from work and was in the process of changing from office clothes to my getting-dinner outfit.

While I was struggling with the long back zipper, the telephone receiver, clutched between my collarbone and chin, slipped and hit the floor. Retrieving it I apologized for any ear damage and since I knew the caller well, explained what happened. "Well," he said in THAT tone, "it's too bad we don't have phonovision."

"Well," I said. "If we did I wouldn't have answered the telephone." After all I don't think the majority of women are pictures of graceful movement as they contort this way and that to undo a back zipper.

While preparing dinner, I mulled over the thought of a video type telephone. They do have them. In fact I saw it in a movie once and it was regarded as an everyday appliance. And I've often thought aloud how grateful I was it hasn't progressed to a practical price level where it would become part of my daily living.

It would be devastating to my pattern of life.

Out-going calls I could adapt to; but the incoming calls? The more I think it could become a reality, the more I shudder.

It's bad enough with the present set-up. I'm rarely idle or looking my best when the telephone rings at home. Frequently I'm not fully clothed (I don't know about your house, but at ours it's not unusual to receive calls from 7:30 a.m. until after 11 p.m.) and if I am, I may be elbow deep in baking and have chocolate cake batter or frosting sprinkled across me from lifting the beaters out of the bowl while they're still twirling.

And how could I convince the telephone salesman trying to sell me property in Alaska I didn't have time to talk because I was just ready to walk out the door when I'm standing there in full view with a can of window cleaner in one hand and cleaning cloth in the other?

How would I cope with the callers who plunge into a friendly conversation without identifying themselves? Without video I can concentrate (this involves all kinds of facial grimaces) carefully on the conversation without giving the caller any reason to believe I don't immediately recognize him or her by the voice. How will I manage when I have to pretend recognition while being seen as well as heard?

Think of the trauma to our daughter when that special boy calls (She had waited three hours beyond the time he said he'd call before giving up hope) and there she is: hair in curlers, dressed in old clothes and medicated cream on her face? To her nothing could be more tragic at that moment.

Or how do you answer your husband's hand-signaling saying, "Get off the telephone. You've been talking a half-hour and I'm starved." From here it looks like a difficult task unless you have a large cookie sheet to casually cover the screen with while you answer visually.

Calls during the dinner hour would have to be handled another way. You could stop eating and let dinner get cold or ask to call them back. But no longer could you continue to munch quietly with an occasional answer to assure the caller they have your full attention without them getting any inkling they're interrupting your dinner.

Getting organized and keeping up with all the work now is an involved task. Much of my work I can continue doing while talking. With our long telephone cord I can move to many areas and quietly continue what I was doing without a missed word. My impression of this visual and hearing instrument that one day may be in practical use is that I have to remain pretty stationary to stay in visual contact. If that's so, I'll get absolutely nothing done.

Certain habits may have to be revised. No longer can a secretary or telephone answerer cover the mouthpiece and whisper, "Are you in? John Smith is calling." For a reporter calling an anti-press individual it would be great.

A system like this could have certain advantages. The proverbial husband who supposedly calls his wife from a tavern to tell her he won't be home for dinner due to an extra-heavy workload at the office, would have to plan ahead or go home.

It also would be great for telephone shopping. You could see the item before saying, "Charge and send." It might also save trips to the doctor. With a practiced look, he could tell you that your 10-year-old definitely doesn't have anything seriously wrong with him. The lumps are just mumps.

It has one advantage I really think would be great. By having one of my cloche type hats on a nearby hook and putting it on before answering the telephone I'd be ready for any caller. If it's a sales call, or some other type I don't enjoy taking time with at the moment or I'm really too busy to chat, I can say, "I'm just going out" and my appearance will be testimony to the statement. If it's a welcome caller, I can just take the hat off and chat.

There's only one thing I must remember if and when we have a visual type telephone. Never answer the bedroom extension if I'm still in bed, asleep. No, I'm not the anti-pajama type. But I'm an awful grouch when I wake up and I look just like I feel. I can't even stand myself at that hour.

Sleep husband's favorite topic - 10/5/70

If I ever became an insomniac, my husband would lose one of his favorite topics.

When a conversation turns to the subject of sleep he thoroughly enjoys going through his collection of "funny" little tales about my sound sleeping habits.

Invariably when the conversation group consists of married couples the small talk between the husbands evolves into a can-you-top-this contest between the sound sleepers' husbands and a friendly discussion between these husbands and the insomniacs' husbands over which it is worse to be married to.

I don't object when he tells people how I never wake up during the worst thunder and lightning storm of the year to help him close the outside cellarway, house windows or the windows of HER car.

Why should I object? I consider myself lucky to be married to a man whose senses are tuned to little things like that. Naturally I sleep soundly having one as capable as he is around. Does flattery keep him quiet? No.

Nor do I lose my cool when he tells how one of the kids banged on the bedroom door for a full five minutes yelling, "Where's the Pepto Bismol? I'm sick."

Why should I? When they were unable to fend for themselves I was endowed with mother-hearing. I heard every move and sound they made and leaped immediately out of bed when he didn't hear a thing. I also gently remind him I'm still endowed with the mother's insomniac syndrome of not being able to fall asleep until I hear the car drive up and know the last of the brood is home from his Saturday night date.

But he wouldn't know this if I didn't tell him. How could he? He'd been asleep for the last hour.

And I'm practically immune when he starts his favorite story. I have to be. He's told practically everybody we know and some we don't.

One night he came home from an out-of-town trip earlier than anticipated. Arriving home early in the a.m. he unlocked the front door, dragged his suitcase in, turned on the hall light, came into the bedroom, put on his pajamas, brushed his teeth and climbed into bed.

Not expecting him until late the next afternoon, it was only natural that I was startled to find him next to me as I reached over to shut off the alarm.

Men just don't understand a woman's logic. I can tell him precisely why his arrival did not awaken me. One bark from a boxer or German shepherd lying on the bed or the floor wakes even a sound sleeper like me. When they bark, I'm sitting upright by the time I open my eyes. And why should the-dog bark? She knows him well.

In addition, it's much easier to feel secure when sons, both bigger than their dad, are sleeping across the hall and the oldest and strongest is the lightest sleeper in the household.

I'm tolerant as long as he stays with the facts. But when he starts to spice it with a few of his own exaggerated witticisms my wifely smile becomes a little strained.

The smile disappears completely when he tells people I snore. Snoring in keeping with my female thinking is something that belongs almost exclusively to the male. And I know he snores, although he vehemently denies it. Occasionally I have a bit of insomnia and when his snoring gets too loud I try the old elbow in the rib trick. Never works. He merely grunts slightly, barely breaking the rhythm.

After several rib and elbow maneuvers, he becomes a little more aware and mumbles something like, "What are you hitting me for?" Explaining at 3 a.m. is fruitless. He insists he doesn't snore.

After years of having the stories of how I sleep used as entertaining conversation I've decided I need to save our friends from the boredom of hearing them for years to come.

As you know many husbands are thrifty when it comes to spending money on clothes, cosmetics, etc. for their wives. Mine is one of these.

And I think maybe I've found a solution. The other day I read that sound, deep sleep is probably the most important beauty aid I have. According to the story no amount of creams and lotions (and you know how expensive some of them are) can erase that draggy face I get from lack of the deep slumber.

If I can't reach him through his wallet I'm going to reach him through his tape recorder.

The next time I can't sleep because he's snoring, I'll turn it on and record the elbow in the rib approach on the end of one of his class lectures.

It may be dirty pool; but sometimes we defenseless women have to take drastic measures against story-telling husbands.

When children ‘borrow’ clothes - 10/12/70

During their “kid” years our youngsters borrowed our clothes for play or for Halloween. When the requests came we were always generous and loaned the oldest, most unfashionable items cluttering our closets.

They were always thrilled with our choice. So were we.

Like most parents with young children, we enjoyed the first-time experiences. We chuckled as we watched them trying to cope with shirts six sizes too big, pants many inches too long and shoes that had to be stuffed with paper to get a somewhat near fit.

Particularly cute was our daughter as she went through the years of dressing up. Every borrowed dress became an instant evening gown and the sight of her struggling to walk evenly in high heels was cute except for the panic-stricken moments when she teetered and regained her balance before hitting the floor.

It was a cute phase.

Then the age that comes to every boy came to ours. Dressing up was for real.

Suddenly the trips to the shower were no longer at mom’s relentless insistence. Nor were they the dash-in and dash-out type relying on the towel rather than soap and water to remove the dirt. They even reached the point where they wanted shirttails tucked in rather than hanging hither and yon in the breeze.

They even decided deodorant was a good idea along with a liberal splash of after-shave lotion. Then the day came when the good, practical inexpensive lotion didn’t smell near as good as dad’s Christmas presents. And when it came time to wear tie clips a little more sophisticated than cowboy types it was only natural to borrow Dad’s for the occasion.

He didn’t mind loaning these small things. Besides they didn’t want anything else. Nothing in his wardrobe fit or wasn’t their idea of style.

Slowly things took a turn for the worse from dad’s point of view and better from the boys’. Dad was buying some really “cool” ties and they were beginning to fit into some of his shirts, shoes, socks, and underwear.

Soon when he wanted to wear his new tie or colorful textured knit shirt he had to search for it. Sometimes he was successful. More often he wasn’t. If the item wasn’t in the dirty clothes, it was on its way to a dance or some other event. It was never hanging ready to wear in the borrower’s closet.

I thought it all a little funny and frequently laughed lightly at his predicament. In return I’d get one of those sneering irritated

looks accompanied by, “Just wait, maybe someday you won’t think it’s so funny.”

“Oh well,” I’d reply, “Maybe I won’t; but it’s a long time away.”

The time wasn’t as far away as I thought. When Karen entered junior high school she became a little more fashion conscious and feminine. No, she wasn’t my size but there were other items.

My necklaces and pins were prettier than hers. I also had a collection of chiffon scarves in all hues. In fact it seemed like I had one to match every outfit she wore. Now it was my turn to search when I needed one to protect my hair from the wind.

Was it in her drawer? No. If it wasn’t holding her ponytail in place it was stashed away in some unknown spot.

Then she finally obtained permission to wear a pale, pale lipstick. I gave her one out of my makeup box. It wasn’t long before she wanted to try another pale shade and so it went.

After the lipsticks, she decided maybe a little cleansing cream would be good for her skin. I tried to convince her soap and water was the best for her youthful skin. Mom lost again.

From there we progressed to the point where she could wear nylons for special occasions. I even bought her a pair of inexpensive hose. Then she begged to wear hose one day a week to school.

I relented. This worked fine until my supply of not too well liked shades and little imperfections were exhausted. I’ve been thinking that when she starts to wear them everyday it might be less expensive to buy a suntan lamp.

Shoes were next. When she reached my size it was, “Please may I wear these today? They are just right with this skirt and blouse.” Luckily I only had a few pair that were suitable. My shoe stock is safe again. She now wears a size larger.

I breathed more easily. Everything else was safe. My dresses are not the right size and if they were, they would be much too long.

But I was wrong. Even if blouses, sweaters and shells are just a size larger it doesn’t matter. The other day she was giving the once-over to my blouse collection and sure enough she found several that pleased her.

“Well look at it this way Mom, you won’t have to buy me all those new ones I wanted.”

But is my husband chuckling over my being in the same predicament? No, he just discovered his last clean undershirt went out the front door while he was in the shower.

Solutions to the 'blahs' - 10/19/70

Once in a while I am afflicted with the undefinable ailment that seems to be peculiarly female. Call it the blues, blahs, the droops or as old-time novels described it, malaise of the spirit; it appears without warning and for no apparent reason.

It has nothing to do with the weather. I might understand it more if it always occurred on a rainy, miserable-type day; but not when it's a gorgeous, sunny great-to-be-alive kind of day. Nor does it have to be a let-down Monday after a fun weekend, a certain quarter of the moon or month of the year. It's just there out of nowhere.

There are no concrete physical or emotional ailments to blame it on.

Nothing specifically is wrong; but yet everything is wrong. I'm not even physically tired. But the struggle to reach the kitchen and pour what I hope will be a reviving cup of coffee turns out to be wasted effort.

Looking in the mirror only deepens the feeling. Overnight it seems I've aged only 10 years, but I feel 101.

My hair looks as limp as yesterday's unrefrigerated lettuce and drab beyond belief. Even with sufficient sleep the bags under my eyes resemble kangaroo pouches and I'm amazed over the number of age lines appearing overnight.

My first impulse is to crawl back into bed and pretend it's a day that wasn't. Maybe a few extra hours of sleep will change everything. Usually this is impossible. Besides how do you explain to the cleaning man that no you're not really ill when you answer his doorbell ring at 2 p.m. clad in pajamas and robe?

After all, I can't explain it to myself, much less to the cleaning man. No matter how polite he is, I can tell by the look on his face he thinks I'm a wee bit kooky.

Over the years various methods have been suggested to rid one's self of this dispirited feeling.

One perennial solution has been to go and get a new hairstyle or renew your present one.

This has never worked for me. Even if it were possible (this always involved a lot of telephoning to various establishments and if it's a Friday, Saturday or pre-holiday time, you may as well not try); the thought of the energy required to get me there is usually too much to overcome. If I do make it, the trip and money is for naught.

My hair looks much better, but it only emphasizes the age lines and baggy eyes. The rest of me feels just as seedy as it did before the trip to the beauty shop.

Buying a new dress doesn't help either; provided I can overcome the undefinable drooping spirit to make a trip to the nearest shopping center.

I may have lost 10 pounds the week before, but on one of those days the sveltness I saw in yesterday's mirror is gone. Suddenly I'm fat, bulgy and nothing fits correctly. If by some crazy reason it does fit, the color isn't right. No matter how perfect the saleslady says it looks, I cannot agree, nor can I pinpoint exactly what is wrong with it.

Other women say the best way to dispel this unblithe spirit is to tackle some hated household task. Scrub and wax the kitchen floor, clean the oven, shine your streaky, dusty windows, clean and polish the oil burner or clean out the overstuffed "catch-all" drawer.

This is fine for the women who have only one of those hated chores to do. But women like me who have all those mentioned plus more, the decision of which to tackle first takes all day.

Before returning to a job in the outside world I tried various solutions. One was to sit down after everyone had left the house and lose myself in a good mystery, romance or light historical novel. It works fine until you emerge from the pages and find you're still in the same mood when you started reading.

Nothing has changed. The dishes are still dirty, the beds unmade, the rug still needs vacuuming, there's dinner to think about and to top it off there's a meeting to attend in the evening.

I used other escape methods like taking the dog for a very long walk. This was my escape mechanism for a nice day. It never worked. The fresh air and sunshine didn't ease my depressed spirit and the return home depressed it more.

I also tried lecturing to myself. Even after going down the list of pluses I had going for me, the feeling was not dispersed.

Having tried all these methods I've decided not to fight it. The next malaise-of-spirit day that comes my way I'm going to give in to it completely.

First thing to do is stay in bed. Maybe if I don't struggle to the kitchen or look in the mirror, the feeling won't take hold of all of me and sleeping until noon will cure me.

Watch out for the doorbell goblins - 10/26/70

The other day as I put the potato peeler down, dried my hands and made my way to the door to answer the doorbell's impatient ring, the thought occurred to me that if there were a job opening for a woman to serve as a doorbell answerer, my vast experience would surely give me an edge among the applicants.

Answering doorbells for other people is a service I've been performing for years.

Being a paid doorbell answerer would have certain advantages, besides the money.

For one thing I would always be dressed in proper "answering-the-door" attire. No more peering around the doorjamb because the rest of me isn't ready to be seen. And I would be stationed just inside the door to answer on the first ring. This would be a prime advantage for me as well as the ringer. Surely the energy used to set the chime in motion six times in 10 seconds could be used for something else.

From my side of the door, it would be a much better idea. No more would there be a mad scrambling to get out of the shower while grabbing a towel to blot the soapy eyes and excess water before diving into my robe and trying to get it buttoned while dashing to the door. Surely it must be an emergency. Why else would the ringer be so insistent?

Flinging open the door I don't find a bleeding child or neighbor needing help; but there is a figure at the end of the driveway. Just as I spot him, he turns and says, "Is Greg home?"

With three kids this same situation is repeated umpteen times daily, week in and week out. By the time the 30th birthday comes, your experience in this field is of gigantic proportions.

It's strange, but I have very few memories of having the doorbell ring when I've been standing ready and waiting within a few feet of the door.

It never rings before I get down on my knees to scrub the layers of built up wax in the corners of my kitchen floor. I have to get down and scrub it. I've never found the miracle cleaner that dissolves it with a swish of the mop.

Nor does it ring before I climb the ladder and have the paint roller in my hand to put the first of the paint on the wall.

And it never rings before I go to the basement laundry room to load the washer. Long after I've gone upstairs I remember the soap wasn't added before I dashed up to answer the door.

When watching television, a ringing doorbell has perfect timing. At least for the people who make the commercials. It never rings in the middle of the 30-second station break. It waits until the murderer is ready to be revealed. I've watched some movies three times before I've learned who was the villain.

As well as being a qualified all-round doorbell answerer, I've also accrued much experience for special occasions like Halloween.

Years ago the tricksters started their phantom ringing a couple of days before Halloween. Each year they start earlier and earlier. Perhaps they think they need more time to practice their touch-the-button and run procedure.

On Halloween night, the tricksters don't get a chance to ply their skills. There's never enough time in between the costumed trick or treaters wending their laden way up the sidewalk in crowds, trios, duos or singly.

Just to make sure they won't forget the procedure for the next year, they get in a little practice the week after Halloween, too.

I never learn. Every year it takes me at least three days to wise up to these doorbell goblins. After I make a few trips and find I'm flinging the door open to nothing, I get my reflexes to the point where I don't take a step until a third ring.

Doorbell ringing this year must be "out," and roller parties in. For the last two weeks, trees, shrubs, post lights and other handy objects on our street and neighboring streets have been decorated with various shades of bathroom tissue.

Looking at the height of some of the trees I'm sure of one thing.

The kids of today have better throwing arms than I did. I could never toss a roll that high. I had to climb the tree and weave it among the branches.

Children are politicians - 11/2/70

Politicians and my kids have two things in common: their rhetoric and their promises.

Over the years my youngsters have covered every issue from farm policy to law and order. The first-words my children learned were, "Please, Mom, I promise."

Their stands and approaches on farm policy haven't changed much over the years from the first time our son brought home a stray animal.

"Please Mom can we keep him? He likes me. He followed me all the way home. And I know he doesn't belong to anybody because he doesn't have a collar or anything. If you let me keep him, I promise I'll feed him, give him water, take him for walks and clean up after him. Please, Mom?"

By the time the campaign speech to keep the forlorn specimen of doghood by his side is over; I'm weakening. I think to myself. With a bath he might not look quite so scroungy and he does have a cute face with eyes as beseeching as the boy's. Then comes the clincher, "Gee, Mom, he likes you. Look how he's licking your hand."

Thoroughly stripped of my defenses I reply. "Well, maybe we'll keep him. But only if you really promise to take care of him." Eagerly and sincerely he replies, "Oh, I will."

And he does. But not for long.

His abdication of the promise isn't deliberate. It just happens. First he's late leaving for school and pleads, "Please feed Spot just this once, Mom. You don't want me to be late for school do you?" Am I smart enough to answer yes? No.

The reasons for not taking care of the animal become frequent. Soon the dog or cat is Mom's best friend. And why shouldn't he be? Mom is the one who keeps him looking like a respectable family pet instead of the skinny, dirty creature brought home six months before.

I've tried to hold the children to their promises by threatening not to feed the animal or give him to a nice kid who will take care of him. But I never do. After all he's become my best friend too. He follows me around the house, doesn't question my wisdom and is grateful for every kindness that comes his way.

Even after animals are members of the family, the kids find another reason to campaign. The hims frequently turn out to be hers and the campaigning that goes on in support of motherhood is too much to resist.

On revenue and the budget kids have a natural expertise. "Please advance me my allowance for the next three weeks. For tomorrow only the Flip Flop's newest album is on sale at three dollars off the regular price." Before he or she can continue, I deliver an instant lecture on budgeting. "Mom you don't

understand I haven't been able to save anything from my allowance. I used it all on your Christmas present. Besides look how much I'll save if I buy it on sale." Having a bargain streak, I see the point and advance the allowance. It never ceases to amaze me how many wants crop up in the next three weeks and campaigning for another advance is launched.

When the allowance campaigning proves unproductive for immediate spending money, they try the chores route. "Lend me the money and I promise I'll wash and wax the car first thing in the morning."

Around our house education is a campaign issue from September to June. Somehow homework time coincides with television time. If I'm not vigilant the promise of "Just 10 more minutes and I'll turn it off," runs into the next scheduled program and the second call for homework leads to a heated debate. The education issue really comes to the floor at report card time. The parental platform of rules presented before the issue of low marks comes up is subjected to intensive campaigning for change. "Please I have to go out Friday, Saturday and Sunday nights. I made plans weeks ago for the weekend. I promise to bring the E to a C."

Labor policy (the jobs that have to be done for free) are always a prime target for campaign promises. "I promise I'll clean my room after bicycle riding in the morning."

Cultural exchange also becomes an issue. In exchange for money for a teacher we expect practice from the pupil. This is a very difficult point to get across when friends are waiting at the door on Saturday morning for the pupil to participate in the planned activity. The shopworn promise of, "Please let me do it later. They can't wait a half-hour for me" now falls on non-hearing ears.

When the magic age of 16 arrives and you have another driver in the house, transportation becomes a vital topic. Once the campaign of learning to drive and getting a license is won another parental platform is assembled.

"But dad I have to use the car Friday night. I have a date. I know I was 40 minutes late last week, but it wasn't my fault. I took two extra home and I didn't know they lived 20 miles from here when I promised to take them home."

And on it goes. Trade, "Please let me wear your cashmere sweater to the dance, just this once. I promise I'll never ask to borrow it again."

Or law and order, "But, Mom, I need trampoline practice and the sofa is just right." And so it goes, day in and day out.

When I said "I do" way back when, I thought the hard-fought campaign was over. Little did I know it was just the beginning.

The 'Big Three' are coming up - 11/9/70

In less than three weeks, Thanksgiving, the first of the Big Three winter holidays will be here. For me, this means "party time".

Somehow the winter holidays give me a special impetus to have parties of all sizes and types.

The decorations are easy. If I'm particularly efficient and plan an early December event, the house (except for trees) is festive looking and ready for guests before Christmas Eve.

Even the food has a headstart. Some cookie, cake and candy making have already been done and stashed away from the family.

Planning the party is easy. Over the years I've clipped enough articles on how to plan and give a successful party to plan one for every night for the next 25 years.

There are articles describing how to organize a party from its very beginning to its very end. There are articles telling you how to plan your menus to the last detail, from shopping, putting away the food, advance preparation to exactly what time to put the specialty in the oven, whether it be a complete dinner or hors d'oeuvres.

If it's a cocktail party or open house there are articles telling how much liquor is needed for x number of people and articles telling you how to economize when serving liquor at parties. I even have items telling how to arrange furniture for small and large parties.

Then there are the ones that give you a detailed plan to get the house in apple-pie order and save the hostess from last minute exhaustion.

They cover everything from polishing your silver to what time to take your bath. Many of them even include in the timetable a period allotted to the little emergencies that crop up even in well-ordered households. All the articles are informative and extremely helpful.

The only unfortunate part about these articles is that the writers overlook that some of us don't have well-ordered households and no matter how many lists are made some things don't work out as planned. And there are topics I've never seen in print that would be a great help to me.

In my collection there is not a single thing written about how to expand my refrigerator when preparing for a party. My refrigerator is always overcrowded. By carefully calculating every square inch I can squeeze the dips, punch mix and extra jars of pickles in-between the milk and other items ordinarily residing in its cold, protective housing.

When it comes time to put in the large pan containing the chicken, there is no room. At this stage of my well-planned schedule I remove everything. With pushing, shoving and

juggling, every item is ready and waiting to be heated or served. Unfortunately, I've used the time allotted to emergencies in my schedule.

Nor are there any articles telling me how to find storage for the extra potato chips and pretzels bought two or three days before the party. Left out in the open the tempting items are fair prey for hungry kids and their friends. The same goes for the orange slices carefully stored in containers for garnish.

Over the years I've coped with these problems in one way or another; but never successfully. I first tried using king-size notes saying, "Don't eat. These are for Saturday's party." This worked with party tid-bits in packages but not in canisters. The kids wouldn't open a package, but they were tempted to take just one or two at a time out of the canisters.

Then I took to hiding the party supplies. This works with non-refrigerated items, provided you remember where you put them. Refrigerated items take a little more ingenuity.

Butter is a big problem. Our kids eat toast 16 hours a day. Since they coat it with cinnamon-sugar, jam or honey, I decided using margarine was a smart economy move. Butter is used melted for pancakes, French toast and waffles which are weekend treats. When I purchase it for the hot rolls or breads being served with a buffet dinner it has to be protected from the toast eaters if there is to be any the day of the dinner.

Obviously its hiding place cannot be written on the list on the refrigerator. My success in hiding the butter has been phenomenal; I don't find it until three days after the dinner.

Another area the articles don't cover enough are the times allotted to emergencies. The author suggests you do the major cleaning (scrubbing and waxing the floors, vacuuming the furniture, etc.) and just do a quick "pick-up" job before taking your bath and getting dressed. They also suggest it's best to feed the youngsters before the guests arrive.

I do all these things, but catastrophes still occur. As I'm relaxing in the bath, I know exactly what the crash is. It's somebody's glass of milk splashing all over the freshly waxed kitchen floor.

Or it is raining, you come out of the bedroom dressed, relaxed and ready to greet your guests and find somebody let the dog in complete with wet fur and muddy paws. Everywhere you look there are droplets of water and fur and muddy footprints.

With my emergency time gone I hope the doorbell doesn't ring on time.

Otherwise instead of a gracious, charming hostess, my first guest will see a screaming, frustrated mother whose schedule was torn to bits by normal occurrences that have never been written about in my collection of how to plan a successful party.

Who's superstitious? Not me! - 11/16/70

When I was a little girl I tried not to believe the chant, "Step on a crack and break your mother's back."

It was ridiculous to believe a saying. But no matter how much I told myself it was silly, there was always a nagging doubt when it was said. Suppose I did step on a crack while the thought was in my mind and my mother would break her back? I probably would have had a guilt-complex about it for years.

Fortunately I've come a long way since then. No longer am I superstitious about black cats, breaking mirrors (as long as it's only a little one and the breaking was unavoidable surely there's nothing to worry about), Friday the 13th or walking under ladders. Practicality has replaced superstition.

After all, walking under ladders isn't unlucky. But why take the chance? Suppose the painter tipped his bucket of paint or the carpenter dropped his hammer while I was walking under it?

When I was growing up my grandmother had many beliefs about luck and things, about which I have a practical philosophy.

Now I don't really believe opening my umbrella in the house will bring bad luck. But why open it in the house? It's not raining inside.

And for years she really had me believing that bit about the blister on my tongue. Unfortunately, I always managed to get a tongue blister after telling a whopping big lie like, "No, grandma, I'm going to the library to study, not to meet Bill. I know I'm not allowed to see him on school nights."

I know that superstition is not true. I haven't had a blister on my tongue for years.

Nor do I believe bubbles in my cup of coffee or tea is a sign of receiving money in the near future. But since the bubble doesn't offend me or hinder my enjoyment of drinking the beverage, why take the chance of breaking the bubbles? My budget always has room for extra money.

And wearing a penny in your shoe on your wedding day or putting a coin in a purse given as a gift is pretty traditional. And who am I to break with tradition?

When bragging about my good fortune, I do knock on wood even if I have to walk across the room to find something wooden. Not that I believe in evil spirits, but I have enough problems in the known world without taking a chance on the unknown.

And when it comes to the superstitious belief about the child born on Sunday will be proud, on Wednesday stupid and on Saturday will be hardworking, I have positive proof it's untrue. I have a Saturday child and he is definitely not hard-working.

And when it comes to wishing on the turkey's wishbone, a falling star or throwing a coin in a magic fountain, I follow along with the custom. Surely, they don't really grant your wish, but it doesn't hurt me as long as I don't jab myself with the bone or fall in the fountain.

And although it takes a bigger breath each year, I always blow out the candles on my birthday cake.

Whether my grandmother really believed all the superstitions and beliefs she passed on to me, I'll never know. But believe them or not, they've been part of my life for so long that they have become second nature.

When silver is dropped on the floor, I automatically say, "Company's coming." When somebody sneezes, without thinking I say, "Gesundheit." When the salt shaker is knocked over at the dinner table, I automatically pour some in my hand and toss it over my shoulder. And when I find a four-leaf clover I get a warm feeling of well being despite the fact that I pooh-pooh the idea of it being a lucky omen.

Along with all her beliefs on omens affecting her waking hours, she also had many about dreams.

Since it would be impractical to lose sleep trying to avoid dreams I take the next best step on her favorite theory. When sleeping in a strange house the last thought in my mind (as I cross my fingers) before going to sleep is, "If her saying about what you dream the first night will come true, I hope it's a pleasant dream."

And if I dream something not so pleasant like a funeral, I'll remember that it signifies a much more pleasant event, a wedding. This is a fine opposite dream as long as my husband isn't planning on replacing me with somebody who has fewer candies on their birthday cake.

If he does get any thoughts on the subject, I would advise him not to walk under the ladder while I'm nailing the cast-iron horseshoe over the front door.

It might not be a practical thing to do.

If the blank fits, fill it - 11/23/70

On the deposit ticket attached to the bank-by-mail envelope were specific instructions for sending in my savings by mail to the bank.

Number one on the list of instructions told me to fill out the deposit slip. For my convenience there were four lines. Filling out the first two, the date and book number was easy. There was plenty of room on the line. Starting the third line which called for my name, I knew I was in trouble.

Not with spelling, but with space. Writing smaller than usual, my pen went up and around, down and around and wherever it could to find blank space to fit the 22 letters in our names and the 20 letters and numbers in our address. For me the 2 and 5/8-inch line for the name and the 2 ½ inches of line for a complete address were not enough.

It was another bout in the battle of fitting too much into too little.

Being a slightly stubborn type, I spent years trying to fit the sewing pattern back into its envelope as compactly as it was when it was initially removed. No matter how many times I folded and thumped it with my hand to flatten it, the pattern would never fit the envelope as it did originally.

In sewing class they taught me how to chose a pattern, how to lay it out on the fabric, pin and mark it; but never how to put it back into its envelope as neatly as when purchased.

After years of wrestling with the problem, I gave up. A trip to the stationery department eased my frustrations. Armed with 9 by 12 envelopes I removed the patterns from their small envelopes with a little steam iron pressing the major wrinkles disappeared. Some casual folding and the pattern fit its new home perfectly.

There was only one flaw with this method. The new envelopes were missing a picture of the pattern. With a little bit of smugness I split the company's envelope. I pasted the picture portion to my envelope and put the printed matter in with the pattern pieces and instruction sheet.

Conquering my folding umbrella has been hopeless. Removing its snug-fitting cover and opening the little strap holding the ribs to the handle takes only a second or two. But returning the umbrella to its condensed form after using it, is a time consuming ordeal. There only seem to be two solutions. Either the strap and cover become smaller or the umbrella grew larger.

For years I struggled to print my name and address on the newspaper and magazine coupons provided to order items at a reduced price. Rounding up the envelope, stamp, boxtop and money along with tape and cardboard to attach the coins was frustrating enough. I know if I had not acquired all the other necessary items first, I would have thrown the coupon in the wastebasket after mutilating it while attempting to print the required information. But no longer do I have to retype coupons, return address labels have saved my sanity.

The makers of the plastic cardholders are the ones who just might send me over the brink. The individual compartments are spacious enough for my library card, most membership cards and other miscellaneous cards. But does my driver's license or an average size snapshot fit? Not without alterations they don't.

I can cope with what I consider impossible feats such as parking the car in what I think is too small a space. I don't mind driving a little farther to find a larger spot and do unless there happens to be a helpful male nearby. There's something about a woman parking a car that brings out the most dramatic directorship I've ever seen in a parking lot. Between the hand waving, the facial instructions and the verbal directions, "Cut your wheels lady, cut them hard," the car is parked but my feelings of inadequacy are very high from the feeling that, "He knows I wasn't going to try to fit the car in the space." But being a wife, I can cope with that too.

And I can cope with the fact that toothpaste, hair cream and salve can't be put back into their tubes once they are squeezed out of them.

But it's the "fits" I haven't been able to conquer are my despair.

Fitting the plastic hair shield back into its space-saving, convenient case is so difficult I only use it for emergency use.

Or trying to fit what I need for an overnight visit in an average overnight case is virtually impossible. Either I take too much for an overnight stay or the suitcase designer travels lightly.

But it's the battle of the bulge that puts me into a perfect fit of frustration. After all, I ordered the proper size, according to the instructions, and I refuse to accept the fact that I have too much to squeeze into my new girdle.

Obviously the manufacturer and I don't use the same type of measuring tape.

Christmas commercials take over - 11/30/70

The other night I had a great big attack of nostalgia followed by an equally large side effect of irritation.

It was the night before Thanksgiving and I had decided to tag along with my husband on a brief last-minute trip to one of our local shopping centers. As we stepped through the door and went our separate ways, I noticed in my rush to the women's clothing department that the store was gorgeous in its Christmas dress.

Absorbed in flipping through the display racks looking for something elegantly festive for the first holiday party I was barely aware of the alternating voice and music floating through the store. After all music and commentary is nothing new in today's stores. Besides it was impossible for the sounds to penetrate through my shock of the price tags attached to what I liked.

Later, while waiting in another department to pay for a purchase, I became aware of what the voice was telling the store's shoppers. For the convenience of its patrons, the store would remain open later than usual from now until Christmas. This wasn't startling news either. I had heard the same announcement earlier in the week at another store.

Then the lovely sound of one of my favorite Christmas carols replaced the voice. Suddenly I was overwhelmed with the Christmasy feeling the seasonal music evokes in me.

It brought back memories of the years I had gone caroling with groups during my pre-teen and teen years. It brought back the excitement of Christmas Eve that kept me awake even after being told, "If you don't go to sleep, Santa Claus won't come."

I remembered the strings of colored lights across the main streets in the little town and the green boughs decorating the streetlights. I remembered the trips to nearby woods to cut greens and a tree.

Also in the train of memories were the hours spent making construction paper decorations for our schoolrooms and the non-school atmosphere in the days preceding Christmas vacation. Also there were the Christmas dances, the last minute Christmas Eve shopping and the exchange of a Merry Christmas with everybody you met.

And why not, it was a small town and everybody knew everybody. The nostalgia was so overwhelming I could smell the pine and taste the chocolate cream drops we had every Christmas Day at my uncle's house during our rounds of present exchanging.

Being so lost in my revise of Christmases past, the salesgirl had to ask me twice if she could help me. Handing her my purchase I have her a big floppy smile and said, "Isn't the music beautiful? I love Christmas Carol." "So do I," she answered; but by Christmas I'll be sick and tired of them." As I walked through the store to the exit, my lovely attack of nostalgia was turning into irritation.

I was irritated because I couldn't return to the days when I couldn't or didn't remember being besieged by recorded Christmas sounds in stores and television and radio advertising (oh yes we did have radio in those days) converting every salable item into Christmas gifts via a few bells or Christmas music to accompany the selling pitch from before Thanksgiving until the last store closes Christmas Eve.

I don't get sick and tired of hearing the music in the stores like the salesgirl; but then I'm not exposed to them for the length of time she is either. But I do become irritated when in the middle of a note, a commanding voice calls my attention to an absolutely terrific sale on a certain item. It always seems like an intrusion to my personal Christmas spirit. For many years the Christmas spirit has been something special that comes with the first of December, the playing of Christmas Carols on Thanksgiving night on my own record player, the arrival of the first Christmas card or unpacking the Christmas decoration box the first week of December to see if we have everything to make the house festive.

I may be quietly thinking and planning for Christmas before Thanksgiving but I'm sentimental about it and would like to keep it that way. And I'm not really too irritated with the commercial aspect of Christmas until I hear one of my youngsters singing a Christmas song and realize the words are not the ones I learned.

Listening carefully, I know what has happened. He's turned into a singing Christmas commercial.

Life in commercials is great - 12/7/70

During the past couple of weeks I've been in the process of rearranging and reorganizing our enlarged bedroom into what might be called mom and dad's last stand against the takeover of the rest of the house by our teenagers with their interests, activities and noise.

The work devoted to this project falls into leftover time in the evening after the "must" chores are done.

One night, instead of working to the accompaniment of the radio, I decided to work to the companionship of our black and white television set. After watching a few of the shows on the late re-run circuit with their abundance of commercials, the feeling that I had been deprived of some interesting happenings right in my own home and neighborhood began to develop. Even with an outside job, much of my "at home" time is spent at the kitchen sink washing pots and other non-dishwasher items. But not once have I had a visit from the talking dove, flapping hither and yon trying to solve its identity crisis of whether it's a dishwashing liquid or a hand lotion.

There are times when talking with a mixed up bird would be just as satisfying as talking to myself, nonexistent kids, or our cat and dog. At least I would get an answer. This is more than I get from one of the children who pop in and out of rooms frequently but who are beyond the reach of my voice before I start to speak and although our animals are as articulate as any animal with their meows and barks and encounter with an English speaking bird sounds far more interesting.

After watching the dove a few more times, on the screen, I really began to get the deprived feeling and wondered why he only flew into her house and not mine. Since the show was old (the men wore white shirts and the women's hemlines were pre-mini) I thought maybe the dove was too old to do anymore flying offscreen. To erase the deprived feeling, I dashed downstairs and flipped on the color set. The show was old. It was still in black and white. I waited for the bird. And there he was in glorious color and full of flying energy. Talking to my housewife counterpart who was not wearing a midi-skirt.

Was I deprived of a visit because I didn't have a vanity table in my bedroom?

There are other strange visitors who have never come to my house while I'm home. I've never had the outer-space man drop in and advise me on a detergent or had a visit from the giant-sized guy who use to appear out of nowhere like a genie and give cleaning advice. And not once in all my travels around the county have I encountered the man who appears out of the sky with his supply of plastic bags. A lot of strange boys have come through the kitchen with my sons, but not one has come scooting in on a shield guaranteed to keep the floor clean. The boys I know come dashing across the floor leaving a trail of black heel marks and muddy footprints. Even if we had an available shield to hang by the door, they would forget to use it.

Something else I've been deprived of is having dueling soap pads in my kitchen. But being deprived of this fun sight is my fault since I've never put two different brands side by side in my kitchen cabinet.

Not only do some of the commercials give me a "left out" feeling, they also make me envious. I would dearly love to have a dishwasher which with the right kind of detergent would give forth a table completely set for dinner.

My kids would love it, too. No longer would Karen and Greg have to be called from watching television, playing ball or listening to records to set the table or take the dishes out of the dishwasher.

Fortunately I can survive feeling deprived of being left out of these fantastic happenings television housewives experience in their television homes. But, my intellect may never recover from the fact that some male with chauvinistic (thank you women's lib. Without you I would have never known the meaning) tendencies is convinced that I will believe what he is trying to tell me in the television fantasies.

There is only one way the chauvinistic male can make me a believer.

If just once he will send a bottle of liquid cleaner containing the white tornado that blows out of the bottle and cleans everything, and I mean everything, throughout my house while I go for a ride through the countryside with the knight on the white horse.

No more Christmas toys for Dad - 12/14/70

Christmas Day, 1970 is not going to be as much fun for my husband as Christmas past. For the first time in 19 years, Santa Claus won't be leaving any toys at our house for him to play with on Christmas Day. Go ahead, laugh, but this is a pretty rough situation for a 42-year old kid who for those 19 years has had the opportunity of playing first with all the fascinating toys that weren't even on the drawing board when he was a kid.

Now, he wouldn't admit he was playing with the toys. He preferred to say he was teaching them how to operate them properly to prevent first day breakages.

And I went along with his explanation. After all, what can you say to a seven-year-old who asks pleadingly, in the middle of potato mashing, "When is Daddy going to let me fly my airplane?"

"Honey, he'll let you play with it just as soon as he's sure you know how to work it and not crash it." "But I can't learn if he doesn't let me play with it for a little while. He's been flying it ever since we ate breakfast."

When the youngsters are a little older you appeal to their generosity by explaining that Dad is having a lot of fun and Christmas Day is the only day he has to play with their toys.

And so it would go year after year. Several years ago one of our boys received a rather large plastic battery-operated robot with flashing eyes who executed a number of maneuvers with the press of a button and had the capability of guiding himself away from obstacles. Dad took so long checking it out that the batteries went dead shortly after the owner's turn came to use it.

The first year Dad set up HIS trains (they really were his when he was a little boy) for our boys it was obvious who was going to be the one and only engineer. When the boys were older and new and intriguing cars were added, the kids had to fight for their turns to run the trains, even though Dad had spent many hours Christmas Eve testing them.

Then came the road race sets. At least the kids now had an equal chance. There were four individually controlled cars to the set, three kids in the family and one Dad. Everything was fine until late afternoon. When Dad's friends arrived, the kids didn't have a chance. By the time the set was free again, they were in bed.

This year as the kids began thumbing through the gift catalogs and marking the items they liked, I knew it would be a fun-less

day for their Dad. There wasn't a single toy on the lists. The closest thing to childhood memories was a new Monopoly game on our 13-year-old Karen's list.

I had to think of something. He has several of the brain-teasing cube and wooden puzzles we've given him over the years. And he has the motion teaser, or executive tranquilizer as some call it that I gave him a couple of years ago when the number of toys dwindled. This little fun thing demonstrating one of Newton's laws of motion is even sophisticated enough for the 16-year-old and 19-year-old to play with without being embarrassed.

Then the 1971 lawn, garden, and farm catalog arrived in the mail. I listened carefully as he exclaimed over this and that. The riding mowers caught his eye, but they weren't practical.

Our lawn is too small to rate a riding mower. He also spent considerable time reading aloud the various types of snow throwers available. That was out too. After all we don't have too many snows in Maryland and we have two strong teenagers to cajole into shoveling our walks and driveway.

Then he found the pages containing the various tillers. They looked pretty good and they would be practical. It would be practical for our friend who owns one, too. He wouldn't have to lend it to us every spring. He also liked the new tractor models shown in living color. But again who needs a tractor for a few tomato plants, radishes, lettuce and squash? As he turned a page, he yelled, "Hey look at this." As I looked, I thought maybe I had found a substitute for the toys he wouldn't be getting.

It was a jet sweep for a complete four-season cleanup of the yard. For a few extra dollars you could get a "bag it" hose to vacuum up the leaves and into an attached plastic bag.

The more I thought about it, the more I decided none of the items he liked would do, even if they had a practical use for our household. It just wouldn't give him the same type of fun he's been having for the past Christmas Days.

There's only one way to solve the problems. On my next shopping trip I'll make a special trip to the toy department to find the latest mechanical toy guaranteed to make any kid happy on Christmas Day and mark the tag, "To my favorite kid, from Santa."

December poltergeist inhabits the house - 12/21/70

Although I can't prove it, I'm convinced there is a December poltergeist who inhabits the planning calendar at our house.

When our calendar for the coming year is purchased in November or December, it looks perfectly normal. It has the exact number of months and days, all in proper order.

For 11 months the calendar behaves like the good marker of time it is intended to be. But during the first week of December this poltergeist makes its presence known and goes to work. My calendars have been this way for many years and each year the poltergeist becomes more aggressive with his timewrecking mischief.

This year is no exception.

Now this December spirit is very clever. It doesn't actually steal days from the calendar. I have counted them frequently and Christmas is always on the 25th and there are 24, 20, 15 days left, depending on what day I check, preceding Christmas. But it has a knack of manipulating the days and me.

For instance: an evening in the first week of December was marked, Christmas shopping. Sometime in November my calendar dweller must have read it and started plotting. Somehow he managed to have my husband spend more evenings working on wiring the organ's percussion unit than had been allotted. Since the wiring came first, our first shopping trip was rescheduled for the next week.

One thing I've learned over the years is to leave some open spaces on my calendar. With a poltergeist, it's essential.

On the weekend the spirit went to work again. It did very little, but what it did was enough to slow me down.

Sunday's square said, "address Christmas card envelopes." Now I don't blame any little spirit because we came home much later than anticipated from a Saturday night party. Nor do I blame it because we slept later than usual Sunday morning. But I do blame it for putting an unplanned, four-hour practice session of the band my 16-year-old is a member of.

How can one concentrate on addressing envelopes when the entire house shakes with sound. I tried to outsmart the spirit, but my earmuffs couldn't be found. Taking a walk, I mentally juggled December's schedule.

When I returned, I looked at the calendar. "Yes," I thought, everything could still be worked in without too many frustrations. By addressing a few envelopes each day, I could still find time the following Sunday to finish them. After all Dec. 14 wasn't too late for mailing.

And with help from our 13-year-old who is still enchanted with cooking, the cookie batters could be mixed, refrigerated and ready for baking in small batches during the week.

This year I've become convinced my calendar poltergeist reads minds.

Throughout the entire week unexpected chores popped out of nowhere. By the weekend only a few of the hundred envelopes had been addressed. My little friend continued on his mischievous path.

By Sunday afternoon, panic was taking over. I was almost ready to surrender to my December poltergeist for the first time in 20 years. Then I decided I would not.

Perhaps everything planned on the little white squares won't be done. But what isn't done won't be noticed.

Despite the poltergeist's interference, our Christmas cards have been mailed. And since I'm delinquent about correspondence during the year, they all have the "keep-in-touch" notes and letters included.

And there is one very definite advantage to doing the baking and fudge making later than planned. All the goodies haven't mysteriously disappeared before Christmas Day.

But I do have a few little scars to show for my concentrated effort to defeat my calendar poltergeist. The blister on my middle finger from clutching the pen for long periods of time will not go away overnight. Nor will the burn on my hand from trying to rush the cookie and cake baking. But once again I will survive the December spirit wh4 tries to get the best of me.

Come Christmas Eve, the house and trees will be decorated and most of the presents wrapped. And if they aren't? Well Christmas Eve wouldn't be Christmas Eve if I didn't have anything to do.

Ranking the best whatchamaycallits - 12/29/70

It's inevitable. As the old year is tottering through its last days to oblivion, the list-makers go to work.

They make lists of the year's best movies, books, records, concerts, television programs, sports events and anything else that pops into their fertile brains.

There are even lists of personalities including the males and females who were the best and worst dressed, the best hatted, the most traveled, the biggest bash givers, etc., etc.

Reading the lists, I realize how much of the almost-gone year I've missed. Naturally some of the "best" happenings were impossible for me to attend and if they weren't televised my opportunities to enjoy or participate in them were limited. The list that really makes me decide I've missed a lot in the fast disappearing year is the year's best movies. Now, some years are better than others. One year I actually saw four of the ones picked by the various critics as best. To achieve such a good average I had to read five lists.

1970 was a very bad year at the movies for me. I only saw one of the ten best listed by two critics. I did much better when it came to a list compiled by newspaper readers. I saw two of their 12.

As for books, I almost feel illiterate. Sometimes the book is five years beyond its year of honor before I read it. And since I'm not a "household word" (1968, list of most used phrases) in the nation's homes, I have no hope whatsoever of making the worst-dressed or best-dressed list of females.

Even if some enterprising homemaking editors would compile a list of the 100 women with the cleanest floors I couldn't qualify. I couldn't even garner an honorable mention if it would be limited to ten women in my community or on my street. Nor could I qualify as one of the best ironers, sock-menders or women who serve dinner graciously and promptly at 5 p.m., no matter what kind of day they have had.

Since the list-makers don't choose categories that I can relate to or be eligible for, I decided to make my own lists. After all, my

ego is getting more and more bruised from being left out of this New Year's tradition year after year.

Since eating is one of my favorite habits I decided to make a list of Anne's Gourmet Dinners. It was easy. All I had to do was write on a piece of paper all evenings my husband had taken me out to dinner. It was quite an impressive list when I added all the times we had eaten at McDonald's, Gino's and other similar eating places. Then I thought about the 365 evenings in the past year and how I would categorize the best and the worst. That was easy too. The best nights were when my kids decided to stay overnight at a friend's house and I had the television and hi-fi all to myself.

The list of worst nights was equally easy. It included the nights I had goofed and promised the two younger kids they could have two friends sleep overnight on the same Friday night. It also included letting my 13-year-old celebrate her birthday with a pajama party for seven guests and then saying yes to sleeping in the camper in our backyard. The nights on the worst list also did double-duty on the longest nights and nights of very-little sleep as well as my ten "most grouchy" mornings list.

And what year would be complete without a listing of the year's most joyous moments.

The list was tremendous. But two appeared over and over again, daily and weekly.

My daily joyous moment came when my husband, otherwise known as the most maligned organist in northern Anne Arundel County, manages to play one of his assigned selections without a single wrong note.

My weekly moment comes when I stagger, bleary-eyed and weary, into my editor's office and put my Monday's gab-fest on his desk.

So much for 1970. On to 1971 and as they say in Sweden, Gott Nytt Ar to you all.