

January 27, 1952

Happy New Year! Today is Chinese New Year and for the Orientals is the end of a week long celebration. It is the most important holiday of the Chinese people.

It is celebrated with every thing in the book. Fireworks that we have never seen and feasting that lasts for hours in each meal. Sometimes there are over a hundred different dishes at a meal.

Instead of having as we do Turkey as the main dish, they have not truly celebrated this important occasion unless there is a dish representing very known fowl, fish, or meat that is eaten by the Chinese. A meal is much like our potluck dinners. It is a poor place for anyone on a diet.

Perhaps you have seen pictures of the Chinese New Year parades with all the dragons and fierce masks and the clowning. But the nicest feature of this New Year is that all the bills must be paid; so I am thinking about declaring a Chinese New Year for Americans.

Sure would be a clean feeling to start out another twelve months free of debt; so I think we should all turn over a new leaf, like the Chinamen, and at least once a year try to pay off all the debts.

If all the Americans were debt free, that would really be cause for the biggest celebration in the world. Just think, we could have such a wonderful credit standing we could buy anything we wanted and start all over again.

Too, we should have a Chinese New Year and pay off all our bad habits and start out with some good ones. This will take some thinking. I am not quite sure what I consider my bad habits; but I know I can clean out the attic and maybe be a better citizen. Can you?

January 28, 1952

My, I am glad to be an American wife! Some places in Africa the wife is a servant. The old man doesn't do a thing but think about war. (A few men in this country have almost back tracked to that.)

On the dark continent, the girl doesn't have much to say about who she marries. The man buys her for so many cows; according to whether she is a chief's daughter or just a commoner.

Most of the burdens the African wife packs on her head; and most of the American spouse's burdens are packed in her head. The dark man's wife actually supports the family and also helps earn enough cows to buy her old man another wife. That is what I call real Democracy.

How many American wives would work so the husband could afford another wife? The native wife is much in favor of polygamy; as then she gets some help in supporting

the husband. It would have to be reversed in this country. It almost takes two men to support any wife now days.

The plural wife system could only work in dark Africa, where there are few luxuries and the main concern of life is food and shelter. The only jealousies could be affections; and perhaps these peoples haven't cultivated "love" like we have.

There wouldn't be any quarrels over clothes--few are worn. The woman accepts the customs from birth on to death. Apparently it makes little trouble that the man has a favorite wife. I suppose that would be the dream of every woman. I hope I am the favored wife in our household.

January 29, 1952

What will it be, girls, a poodle or a horse tail? The two latest hair dos are the panacea of the beauty salons. The home permanents sort of flattened the pocket books of the beauty operator; so now they have come up with something new.

Naturally, I am not in favor of anything to do with a "horsy look" as I am getting to be an old gray mare fast enough. Any severe pull back hair do always looks too extreme to me and hardens feminine facial lines.

I think the poodle cut is cute and has many advantages, too. The hair is short and never down in the eyes or dragging around the collar. It should eliminate much pinning up of the hair every night; and surely would be easy to wash and with little heavy hair on the head, the scalp would be aerated and healthier.

In the early 1920s, there was a similar hair style called the Pineapple Bob and later another version, the Peacock, which wasn't quite as short and had some waves in the front.

The Poodle Cut fits our carefree life; and is certainly appropriate for the sports woman. Women of shorter stature and round faces would look better than those of height and long faces.

There is one disadvantage to such a short hair cut, it takes at least six months to grow hair of any length again. So if you get the idea for a Doggy hair cut, you better be sure you want it for awhile.

Even in hair styles there is nothing new under the sun. The boys have their long hair cuts now and all they would need is a home permanent and they would go around barking, too; and it could be called the "Rover Boy".

January 30, 1952

For the past twenty years we have been building a new house; which has turned out to be castles in the air.

Each year the cost of construction rises and we can never seem to build up the income to where we can safely gamble on a new home. In the meantime, we live comfortably in our small house and are thankful to have one as good.

But this does not answer a long wished for achievement; and my greatest desire is to move into a completely new home with everything done. I am tired of painting and remodeling, and unfinished corners. Yet, I am told, the new house always needs adjustment and requires many hours of work, too.

Humans are never satisfied; and that holds true when they build a home. If it were not so, we would still be living in a cave. I have kept home ideas these many years and each season weed out the file in preference to the latest.

The home that I would build now hasn't any relationship to the one dreamed of ten or fifteen years ago; so I suppose it will be, the longer the castle is in the air.

It is a terrible worry, this home building. The experienced say one must be on the job with the workmen and during the construction practically live there. That is one reason I have hopes of having a big enough pocket book to do the work without worrying about the financial strain, too.

It is a problem to find a plan to suit the location and all the family. It is harder to find one to please all the neighbors and relatives.

January 31, 1952

There is only one reason for winter and it is the same as for having grief—so we will appreciate the sunshine.

Winter the past two months has been full of bleak days and so much rain and wind; but we should be thankful not to have drifts of snow and that terrible bitter cold that most of the world suffers.

Somehow we live through these unwanted months and catch up on our reading and sewing and mending. We spend some time with the seed catalogues dreaming of the time we can dig in the soil.

Men aren't as lucky as women to find something to occupy time these winter months when they cannot work out-of-doors. They become restless as caged lions and sometimes their tempers are as beastly.

Modern man is a well off winter dweller; he has automatic heat and insulated houses and a thousand other conveniences; so he is a "baby" to complain too much about the weather. Why, I can remember way back when----but I won't go into that, aren't we living in better times?

Nothing pleases us—not even the weather. “Isn’t it an awful day?” I answer, “No, it is fairly nice.”

Is there any point in saying otherwise? We can’t do a thing about the weather; and we couldn’t please everyone if we could.

February 1, 1952

There is being a lot said and written on the subject of Juvenile Delinquency. The blame is mostly placed upon the parents. What a huge burden we parents must bear?

I realize much of our children’s short-comings are our fault; but there are other factors, too. Community life has some influence. Few communities provide any social activities for growing boys and girls; that is, wholesome, likeable entertainment and character building.

Not enough is being done in the schools to find the niche where each student belongs. There should be more “trades” offered in the high school curriculum. The teen-ager, especially likes to use his hands; and does better under the influence of “learning by doing”.

Modern conveniences have robbed today’s youngster of work to do. Instead of cutting the wood and bringing in the day’s supply or tending the family cow, the boy of the family now is running the streets and roads. In the past, “sonny” came home from school and spent the remainder of the day with his chores. Sister was busy cleaning the lamps or a thousand other small tasks we do not have to do these days.

It is hard to find enough little jobs to keep the young folks occupied; so naturally they turn their energies to other activities good or bad.

Yes, the modern parent must constantly be alert and guide young minds into useful channels; yet be tactful and patient. There are so many factors governing the causes of delinquency, we cannot overlook any.

When we have successfully reared a family, we parents deserve a needed rest; but then it is time to think about the grandchildren.

February 2, 1952

By working with children in 4-H the past seven and a half years, I have learned the recipe for staying young in spirit. I can’t say it will keep you young looking; as there is much worry and aggravation with it.

No matter how the young ones try your nerves, you cannot help absorb some of their enthusiasm and youthful glee. When the world looks the blackest, there is always a gay

sprite among the kids; and like the measles, you cannot help getting a lift and a few good laughs.

“It is so much work,” I have been told to work with these children, “Why do you do it?” I think they would see the reason if they, too, worked with young people. Call it duty or whatever you may; but being with and helping the kids gives me a satisfaction no other volunteer work ever did.

Youngsters have a natural spontaneous appreciation that makes me feel I have been sincerely thanked for everything I ever do for them. I can't say that for their parents. It is with regrets we cannot all keep this spirit of youth.

“Thank you” is not always spoken by these youth; but more likely it is a smile. Perhaps, it is but a small accomplishment; but for a ten year old, it is a huge project; and I enjoy seeing the satisfaction they experience in doing these little things on their own.

The boys and girls in knitting clubs often teach parents this art; and then they really find great joy in passing on their accomplishment.

The greatest lesson I have probably learned in 4-H work, is PATIENCE. This is something many lose with age. I am keeping mine in good working order, I hope.

Another lesson, is understanding youth. In growing up, we lose this and only look upon our own youth as example for the present generation, who live under entirely different set of rules.

So being with the youngsters, I think I have learned by teaching. I know I have improved my knitting technique.
