

December 7, 1952

A conscientious housewife has little time for thumb twiddling and when she does her thinking, you can be sure it is over the dishpan, the ironing, or as an escort to a broom.

I found a poem, very much fitted to the busy schedule we females follow and I think it needs to be placed in my diary for future reference:

PRAYER HYMN

Lord of all pots and pans and things, since I've no time to be
A Saint by doing lovely things, or watching late with Thee,
Or dreaming in the dawnlight, or storming Heaven's gates,
Make me a saint by getting meals, and washing up the plates.

Although I must have Martha's hands, I have a Mary mind;
And when I black the boots and shoes, Thy sandals, Lord, I find.
I think of how they trod the earth, what time I scrub the floor;
Accept this meditation, Lord, I haven't time for more.

Warm all the kitchen with Thy love, and light it with Thy peace;
Forgive me all my worrying, and make all grumbling cease.
Thou Who didst love to give men food, in room, or by the sea,
Accept this service that I do--I do it unto Thee.

--M.K.H.

(Although initials are almost mine, I could never write such a beautiful prayer.)

AMEN.

December 8, 1952

Eleven years ago yesterday was a shameful day in the history of the United States--when the Japanese attacked Pearl Harbor; but 39 years ago today was a more shameful one in our family--I, another girl, was born into the house of Ludemann.

My father looked upon these events with much dismay; and all the more so after I came along; because he wanted a male heir and a strapping boy to help with the chores. As the years were counted by the births, he gave up on the sixth girl.

The five living females might have been a comfort to any housewife--I don't know how much work my Mother managed to squeeze from us; but we all learned to launder the dishes and all the other hateful chores little girls do. Dad used much voice in coaxing a few boy's duties from his girls and my young childhood was spent in chasing stubborn cows, milking the same, hoeing garden, and a million other dirty tasks.

I figured he didn't lose out too much by not having any boys as I probably did as much farm labor as he would have had out of most male heirs. Mostly his vanity was hurt because there was not a male child to carry the family name. If there had been one boy,

he would have been a spoiled genius; and we girls might have been a harem dedicated to his whims.

After this many years, I can speculate on what might have been my fate if I had been that one boy in the midst of four sisters. When it comes to birthdays, the word "if" has a lot of punch and a whole day can be wasted just thinking "if"---

From now henceforth I am in the same category with Jack Benny; questioned of my age, I shall answer "39;" and if luck (there's that if again) holds and I can look younger than my years, I hope to be very convincing.

December 9, 1952

I don't know why all the ta-do was made over my birthday yesterday, because I was never born. Well, I don't have any record of such. My birthplace is in this county of Lincoln, State of Oregon; but the keeper of the records in the ancient court house at Toledo shook his head and said, "I guess you weren't born."

After 39 years what do you do to get born? I best hurry and do something or I will be dead before I am born. This could be a savings--how could there be a burial if the person isn't born? It is very complex; I am here; yet legally I am not.

According to the law, I am to fill out a lengthy blank; take it to the District Attorney and appear before the Circuit Court with witnesses to the event; and everyone swearing that I was brought into this cruel world on such and such a date.

Almost too much trouble for what I am worth; life gets very complicated and it could have been so simple if my folks would have taken a few moments and two cents in postage (that's all it cost in 1913) and written to the county clerk and had my birth recorded. Probably the Christmas rush prevented such a small detail being cared for; and anyway, what is another baby in the family?

The old timers say the country is invested with so many legal formalities; but I am glad that it is compulsory to have a child's birth recorded. Such being the case in 1913, would now save me much time and money.

How quickly the years fly by and these little details pigeon holed. This will be one job I must do (after the Christmas rush and the income tax worry is over.)

December 10, 1952

The end of the year is beginning to poke its head into the business of living and I have been thinking of a year's labor in terms of the total hours for the twelve months.

There are some who say a housewife has an easy job. I daresay some women don't exert much energy to the task; but the average earns her board and keep. This in spite of all the modern time savers and devices.

The burden of eating consumes not only food but also around 160 eight hour working days a year. The wear and tear on the brain isn't included in this figure--takes hours of meal planning while the cook is doing other jobs.

Sixty-five days, at least that many, is spent cussing the dust, shoving a vacuum cleaner, and whisking a rag over the furniture. Then there is the miles of waxing and the gallons of water sopped on the floors.

The washing and ironing keeps Mrs. Housewife out of mischief for no less than 34 days. This is average and can run more where there are babies and a large family. Think of the water meter turning during this procedure and the kilowatts of electricity and the poor hands dipped into the suds.

The weaker of the sex, if she is proud of her home, will use up fifteen days of the year garbed in old slacks and her husband's ragged work shirt, and will be painting and wallpapering.

If the lady of the house has a sewing machine and likes to keep it well exercised, she will spend a month of working days mending, sewing, and making gifts.

At least 150 hours a year can be counted for shopping and stretching the already stretched dollar. Mothers can usually figure 50 or so hours nursing.

1920 hours a year are reserved for sleeping; so we women are very busy people and don't actually have many hours for relaxation and recreation; not counting hours spent for volunteer community services.

(Oh hum, all of a sudden I am very tired.)

December 11, 1952

I am becoming well versed in the makings of the detective and mystery stories. Each day the radio has one of these yarns unraveled for every hour of the broadcast and Chet occupies much of his time listening to these "who done its."

Once the ear is pointed to listening to "Who killed the butler, etc." it is hard to keep away from listening distance. This has made it difficult for me to always get the necessary work done around the house. The diary has suffered the worst and is as good an excuse as any not to keep it up every day.

I have been trying to sew for Christmas and about the time I get really interested I hear, "Shut that thing off--how long you going to be in there--I can't listen to "The Kiss and Kill Murder" with that machine making the radio spit and sputter."

If I were to try to construct sentences for this diary and listen to one of these thriller dillers, it would be a cross between the Pickwick Papers and The Diary of the Weary Housewife.

Giving a little thought to the subject, I can see why radio time would have to have so many such stories to fill the air space. It would keep some one scratching the dandruff to think of enough music and chatter for the fulfillment of a radio day.

When a fellow is confined to the house and the weather is unfit to endure, the radio is a fine pastime; but can only be thoroughly enjoyed by one with just nothing else to do but to listen. I don't have this kind of time when Santa Claus needs some help.

Instead of writing a diary maybe it would be more profitable for me to take up mystery story writing--about the only topic I can think of this minute is "Who Murdered the Dollar?"

December 12, 1952

The Christmas celebration is much like a snow ball--the more years it is in existence the more customs it picks up. We now use about every idea originated from all the lands of the earth.

The Americans have commercialized the holiday until it is almost shameful and to some has become a burden rather than a joy. Wrapping the commercialism along with all the old country customs from way back in the early centuries and we have concocted quite a holiday.

There is a movement to put "Christ" back into Christmas and it is about time. The "X" is often used instead of "Christ" and one could say this meant ten dollars, which it almost takes to buy a suitable gift these days.

Saint Nick or Santa Claus is the patron saint of children. Modern versions have changed him into an over fed good natured grandfather and at the Yule Season he is found on every street corner jingling a bell or a drawing card for every department store.

The Christmas tree idea came from Germany. Having a tree in the house has been elaborated upon from century to century. Christmas cards were first introduced around 1862 until now it has become an industry in itself and almost supports the U.S. postoffice department.

To represent the birth of Christ the nativity scene should be used more than it is. Very decorative scenes can be arranged with the crèche and stable.

The date of Christ's birth is questioned; but does it make much difference when as long as it is celebrated? Since that time the calculations of time have been changed too often for anyone to be able to say exactly the day or the month.

Without all the modern fanfare would the birth of Christ even be celebrated? This should be taken into consideration; though some of it seems pagan, the real spirit of Christmas seeps through and the idea is yet alive.

December 13, 1952

Recently we had the pleasure of inspecting the new Pacific Communities Hospital at Newport. It is a pleasure to know that after all these years there is finally a decent hospital to serve this end of our county.

There are the pros and cons. Some, they are pessimists who never think anything will work, like to worry us optimists into believing the hospital won't pay because it is too small and there aren't enough peoples to keep it full. They will be the first occupants. I am betting it will be overfilled and a waiting list.

On entering the edifice we are awed by the simplicity and cleanliness and the modernity. The facilities are all on one floor; the latest in equipment has been installed and every convenience for the help is there. Before too many years, the other wing will probably be added; but now all the technical equipment is there and the worst expense over.

Visiting such a hospital before it is in operation is something not often privileged by the average citizen and one can see things never before known about such as edifice.

The operating and delivery rooms gave me a chill. I once visited them in other hospitals and under different circumstances.

It is comforting to know that there is a fit place to take the sick so close to home. I hope no one gets so ill to have to use these facilities; but best be prepared.
