



TRAILBLAZER —(Washington, D. C.—Mrs. Elizabeth E. Curtis of Washington, veteran U. S. Department of Agriculture employee, looks over floor plans of Minneapolis Exposition Center where USDA will have an

Award-Winning Agricultural Technician Stresses Education

WASHINGTON, D. C. — Being "first" is a habit with Mrs. Elizabeth E. Curtis, a veteran U. S. Department of Agriculture employee in Washington, D. C.

In 1954, she was the first black typist employed in the school lunch branch. In 1961, she was the first black administrative aide in the family food donation group. And in May, 1970, Mrs. Curtis became the first black female to design USDA publication covers.

A soft-voiced D. C. native with a radiant smile, Mrs. Curtis earns in excess of \$10,000 yearly in the Food and Nutrition Service as a program technician.

If there is one thing that has contributed most to Mrs. Curtis' success — aside from the opportunity with USDA to show what she can do — it has to be her amazing capacity to recall what she has learned.

One semester of typing in junior high school many years ago is all the typing training she's had (despite holding down typing jobs for most of her career) and her only preparation for becoming an artist were high school courses a few years later in costume design and illustration. Mrs. Curtis studied art at the USDA Graduate School in Washington, but by then she was an expert.

Coupled with Mrs. Curtis' recall ability as a means of achieving success is her willingness to go above the call of duty. She doesn't wait to be asked to do something—she just goes ahead and does it.

Once she received an award for suggesting that her agency

combine into one office the mailing of publications and the typing of printing orders. Another time she helped a colleague suggest a form letter for reply to publication requests.

Seated in a seventh floor conference room, Mrs. Curtis recalled an opportunity she had to demonstrate her ability. "I was working in the technical services branch as a clerk typist one day when our director asked if there was anyone who could do some artwork on a publication he was planning. A co-worker remembered that I did a lot of doodling and recommended me. She said "maybe you can make the sketches." So I started the sketches and finished them and got an outstanding rating. Then I was asked to do more art, but not as much as I would like to do."

Speaking of youngsters, Mrs. Curtis said: "I think young people should put all of their resources to work in doing the best job they can. They should show greater interest in their work and continue their education. Today, it's most important to get as much education as you can. I feel that I could have advanced further and faster if I had gone to college."

Mrs. Curtis devotes much of her leisure time to volunteer work for older people. She visits the shut-in and needy in her area and throws holiday parties for hospital patients.

A representative to the Council of Catholic Women, Mrs. Curtis enjoys traveling, going to plays, and reading.

(Credit USDA Photo)

both husband and wife to be seen by a doctor. Sometimes part of the problem is psychological. There is some evidence to support the belief that couples who are tense and over anxious to have a child may have more trouble than couples who are more relaxed about the situation.

If your husband shares your strong desire for another child, I hope he will understand that the doctor may want to see him in order to obtain a complete picture of what the problem may be.

Dear Gloria:
I was feeling tired and run-down and I went to our family

doctor to find out what was wrong with me. He took blood from my finger and told me that I needed to take iron pills for a while until my blood was built up again. When I asked him why I was run down, he said it had something to do with my period. I don't understand. Do periods hurt a woman? This is the first time it has ever happened to me. Can you explain it?

Mrs. R. Y.

Dear Mrs. Y:
Menstrual periods do not harm you. They are a healthy normal function of the body. Your doctor advised you to take iron tablets for a few

months because women lose a small amount of blood each month through their menstrual flow — blood which contains iron.

In most cases a woman replaces vitamins and minerals in her body by eating the proper foods. If your blood is low in iron, it could mean that the foods you eat do not contain enough iron to replace the iron you lose during periods. You therefore need to take iron tablets or vitamins for a few months to "build up" your blood again.

This is a very common condition in women and it is not considered serious.

Address letters to: Mrs. Gloria Riggsbee, 214 Cameron Ave., Chapel Hill, N. C. 27514.

Duke To Compose Musical's Score

NEW YORK — Duke Ellington has been signed to supply the score for "The Hustler," a musical scheduled for next season, by a new production firm made up of novelist Kurt Vonnegut Jr., Lester M. Goldsmith and Michael J. Kane.

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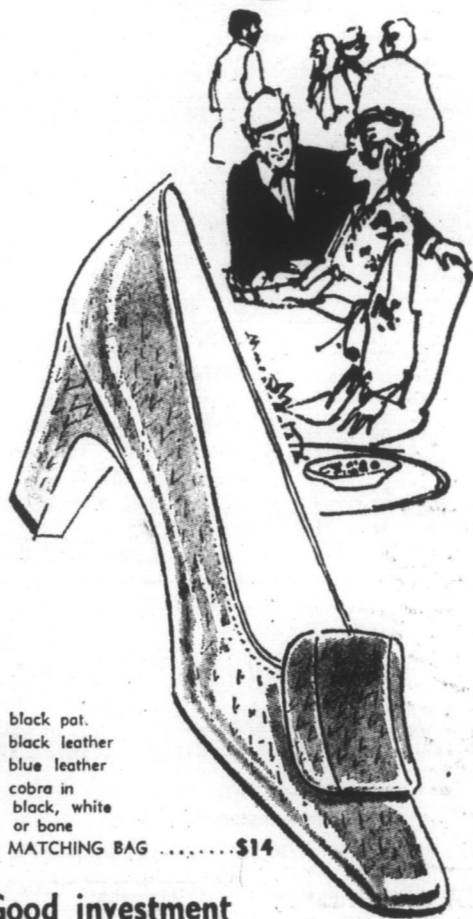
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PREGNANCY PLANNING AND HEALTH

by Mrs. Gloria Riggsbee

Dear Mrs. Riggsbee:
My husband and I have been married for 13 years. We have one child now and we lost our 8 year old daughter three years ago. We would love so much to have another child, but I just can't get pregnant again. We have never used any birth control.

I would like to know if it would help me to get pregnant if I took birth control pills for a while and then stopped taking them. Would this hurt the baby if I got pregnant this way? My doctor said there was nothing wrong with me to keep me from getting pregnant. I can't get my husband to go to a doctor.

Mrs. G.

Dear Mrs. G.:
I am sending you the free booklet entitled "Fertility Tests and Treatments," which will explain some of the reasons women are unable to get pregnant and the types of treatment that can be given.

It was once thought that if a woman took birth control pills and then stopped taking them, she would be more fertile and more likely to become

pregnant for a few months after stopping the pills. Most doctors now believe that this is not so. Once a woman stops taking the pills, she returns to the same condition she was before she took them — no more or no less likely to become pregnant than she was before. Occasionally a condition is discovered which may require the use of female hormones for treatment, but only a doctor can tell a patient when this might be the case.

I cannot tell you for sure what has caused you to be unable to get pregnant, nor can I tell you a sure cure. I do have some suggestions for you. You and your husband should read the booklet on fertility tests; you should have a thorough check-up by a doctor who specializes in treating female reproductive problems (an obstetrician-gynecologist), and your husband should see the doctor also if the doctor wants to check results of some tests on him.

Many times the failure to become pregnant may be due to several causes, not just one. It may be caused by the husband or wife or both. This is why it is usually desirable for

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