

THE "TIMES" PRIZE-WINNING COLUMN

From
ALMAR FARM
In Transylvania
BY CAL CARPENTER



Marge, my bride of 31 years, is a good cook, although she doesn't particularly like to cook. Nobody can beat her when it comes to putting a dinner of roast prime rib of beef "au jus," mushrooms, mashed potatoes, vegetables and tossed salad with Roquefort dressing, and a glass of dry, red, "vin ordinaire" on the table. That, and many other more or less regular meals she's good at. But when she goes, she really goes.

The other evening she came into the "TV Room" where Haole, my big German Shepherd dog, and Klug, my battle-scarred old tomcat and I were watching the news.

"Whattre we having for supper?" I asked brightly.

"I don't think I'll tell you," replied my bride. "If I do, you might make up your mind you don't like it and be prejudiced before I get it on the table."

"Very well," I said. "I'll wait in anticipation."

"Don't be expecting too much," Marge warned, and then went on to establish her excuses beforehand. "I'm trying something different tonight, something I've been wanting to try for a long time."

Now, I've had long experience with Marge's experiments, and I know they seldom turn out well. Good as she is with her established cooking, she's a slap-dash experimenter. She's what you might call an optimistic cook. She uses a written recipe only as a last resort and when she does she feels perfectly free to improvise in both ingredients and amounts; optimistically hoping everything will turn out for the best.

"Don't tell me," I begged with trepidation. "I'd rather be surprised."

"Well, all right," said Marge. "But I've read about a new way to make chili in a magazine and I thought I'd try it tonight."

"Ouch," I groaned. For chili, even though I like it, is

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something I have to be very careful about as to how much and when I eat it. You see, I have a mild problem with what the Air Force doctors diagnosed as diverticulosis; and, to put it crudely, chili can cause me a heck of a bellyache if I eat it in any large amount or in the evening and go to bed on it. Marge knows this, of course.

"Oh, my," I groaned again.

"But this is kind of different," said Marge. "You see it's a kind of cornbread and chili mixture. . . . You put the chili in a casserole, mix some thin cornbread batter, then pour it on top of the chili. . . . then you bake it. . . ."

"Oh, My. . . ."

. . . . And this isn't exactly chili the way I'm going to make it, my helpmeet went on. "You see, I had some left over beans and some left over spaghetti sauce. I'll put a little chili powder in the spaghetti sauce, mix in the beans, then the cornbread batter. . . ."

Well, we had the spaghetti-chili-cornbread casserole for supper. We had it on the table, that is. One taste of the concoction was sufficient for me.

"It's not very good, is it?" asked Marge sorrowfully.

I managed a sickly grin. "Oh, it's not too bad," I said, slipping a small dish of the stuff onto the floor beside my chair where Haole sat; waiting his tidbits from the table. My tomcat was on the floor on the other side of my chair but I didn't offer him any. I knew Klug would never touch it, but Haole will eat anything.

He did. He loves beans any way, form or fashion. He ate all I gave him and looked at me with pleading eyes, begging for more.

"Do you want any more?" asked Marge hopefully, picking at most of her helping still in her plate.

I felt like the little doll at the wrestling matches in the TV commercial. I felt like saying: "I wanna Alka Seltzer," but I didn't.

"Well, we might as well give it to Haole," said Marge. "He seems to like it."

"Al right," said I, wondering how you get an Alka Seltzer down a big, 125-lb. German Shepherd dog.

Marge gave what was left on both our plates and the rest of the casserole to Haole. He ate it with gusto. I sat and wondered if this meant I ought to resign my membership in the Humane Society.

I didn't eat enough of the experiment to cause trouble with my diverticulae that night, even though I was awake several times expecting it. I don't know about Haole; but in the warm weather he sleeps out on the porch under our bedroom window, and when I was awake I heard him making noises like he was having nightmares.

As I said, Marge is a good cook as long as she stays away from experiments. So I think I'll cancel all the homemaker magazine subscriptions at ALMAR Farm—just to be on the safe side.

EXECUTOR'S NOTICE
In The Superior Court of Justice Superior Court Division State of North Carolina Transylvania County

Having qualified as Executor of the estate of Myrtle Meece Smith of Transylvania County, North Carolina, this is to notify all persons having claims against the estate of said Myrtle Meece Smith to present them to the undersigned within 6 months from date of the publication of this notice or same will be pleaded in bar of their recovery. All persons indebted to said estate please make immediate payment.

This the 11th day of October, 1973.

S/Charles Lee Meece
P. O. Box 1136,
Brevard, N. C.
Hamlin & Potts, Attorney
10/11/73

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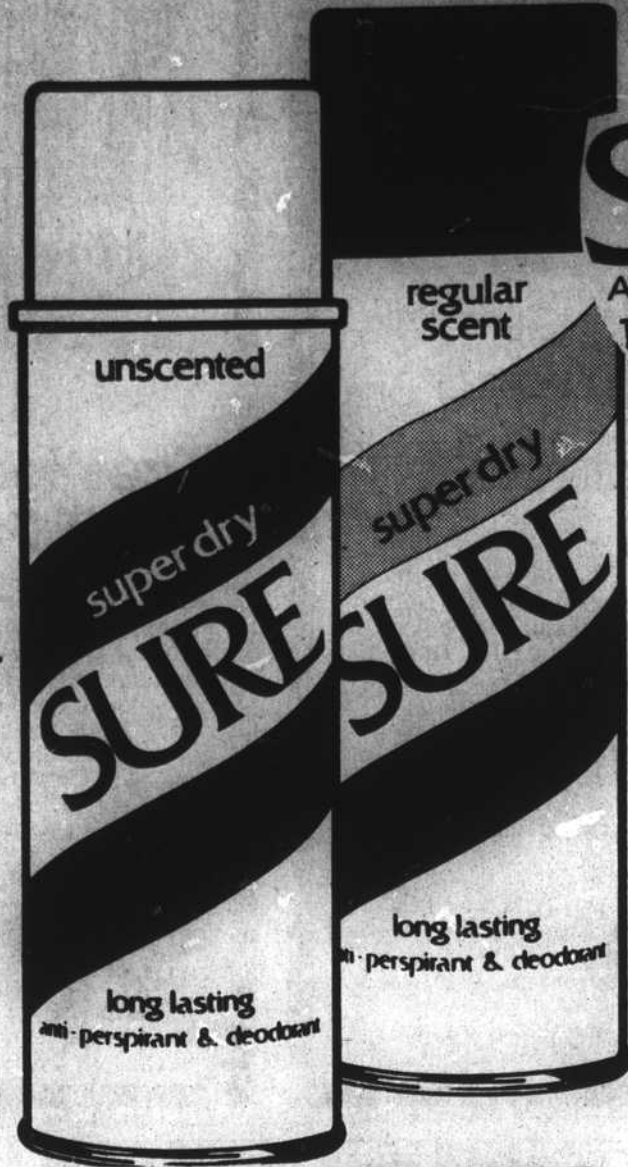
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