

All in the Family

Just Like TV, Only Worse

By Sarah Child



Have you ever had the feeling that you're living in one of those situation comedies so beloved by TV program directors?

I have in recent days — and a very poorly written sit com at that.

It began a week or so ago as I took the baby in for her one-year check-up at the pediatrician. In order to make one trip out of the house super productive (dressing three kids in snowsuits, and opening the garage door can be verry tiring), I stopped at the post office, purchased stamps and mailed a package.

At the entrance to the doctor's office I glanced down to find the pocketbook dangling on my arm open and the wallet inside missing. Since I had just put in \$50 grocery money and several charge cards before I left, the loss was a bit disconcerting.

To lose my appointment which had been secured three months before was out of the question. To go without food for a week seemed equally impractical.

But never fear — in the best tradition of television comedy, out of the doctor's office walked a friend I had not seen in three years.

Exchanging quick hellos and me giving her an even quicker explanation as to my long face I continued into the office, she went to the post office and telephoned back to say my wallet was waiting for me there.

Oh, good and noble friend to appear in the nick of time. A few days later I am on the telephone — not an all morning chat chat with a bored friend mind you but a bona fide business call — when I hear water splashing.

I look around and there is my three-year-old breaking his record for diverting himself. This is better yet than his one-handed swing from the chandelier over the dining room table. This one takes the cake. The baby doesn't seem to mind even though she is the beneficiary of his diversion. He is giving her a shower — with wastebaskets full of water from the powder room. Only trouble is she is in her playpen and fully clothed. I hang up quickly but she has already had three basketfuls. Well, the blue rug and the playpen needed washing anyway.

Later in the day I make a trip to the outside world (snowsuits, garage door, etc.) and have a successful expedition. The only thing I lose this time is the heel to my boot. I look at little funny, but it is no calamity.

The calamity happens after we get back home and the 3-year-old pulls the television set over on him. He is not hurt, the set is on a low, well balanced stand. But I am shaking. The baby was standing two feet away and TV sets have been known to blow up under such stress.

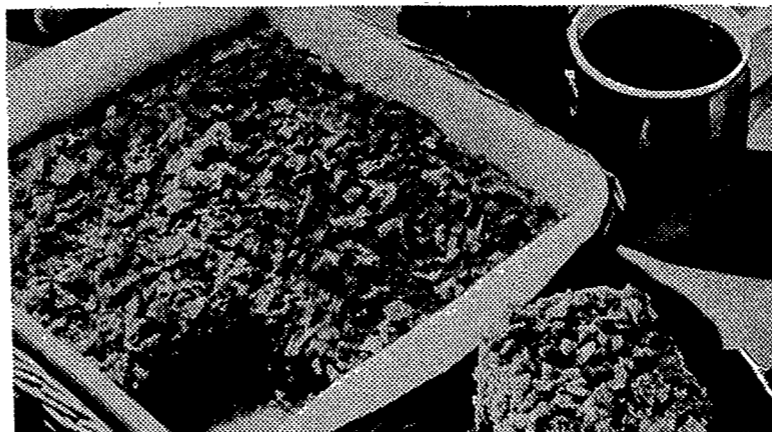
Oh dear guardian angel, I do hope you go to bed early at night. You do have such busy days.

A couple of days later I make another necessary trip out. A babysitter is in command and

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Once again, but imperceptibly as yet, the days grow longer; real calendar winter is here, with a few more seconds of light each day. The proverbial expression of this phenomenon contains a menace: As the light grows longer, the cold grows stronger.

That brings us to coffee cake; warm, comforting coffee cake to heighten the coziness of shelter. This recipe has the tang

of dried fruits, the crunch of cornflakes, to wit:

CINNAMON CRUNCH COFFEE CAKE

2 cups sugar coated corn flakes
1/4 cup sugar
1 teaspoon cinnamon
2 tablespoons margarine or butter, melted
1 1/2 cups sifted all-purpose flour
2 teaspoons baking powder
1 teaspoon salt

1 teaspoon cinnamon
1/2 cup margarine or butter, softened
3/4 cup sugar
2 eggs
1/4 cup finely cut dried apricots
1/4 cup finely cut dried prunes
1/2 cup milk

1. Measure sugar coated corn flakes, then crush to 1 cup. Combine sugar and cinnamon; mix with sugar coated corn flakes. Add melted margarine; mix and set aside.

2. Sift together flour, baking powder, salt and cinnamon; set aside.

3. Beat margarine and sugar until light and fluffy. Add eggs and fruit; beat well. Stir in dry ingredients alternately with milk, mixing until combined. Spread half of batter in greased 9 x 9 x 2-inch baking pan; top with half of corn flakes mixture. Spread remaining batter over first two layers; top with remaining corn flakes mixture.

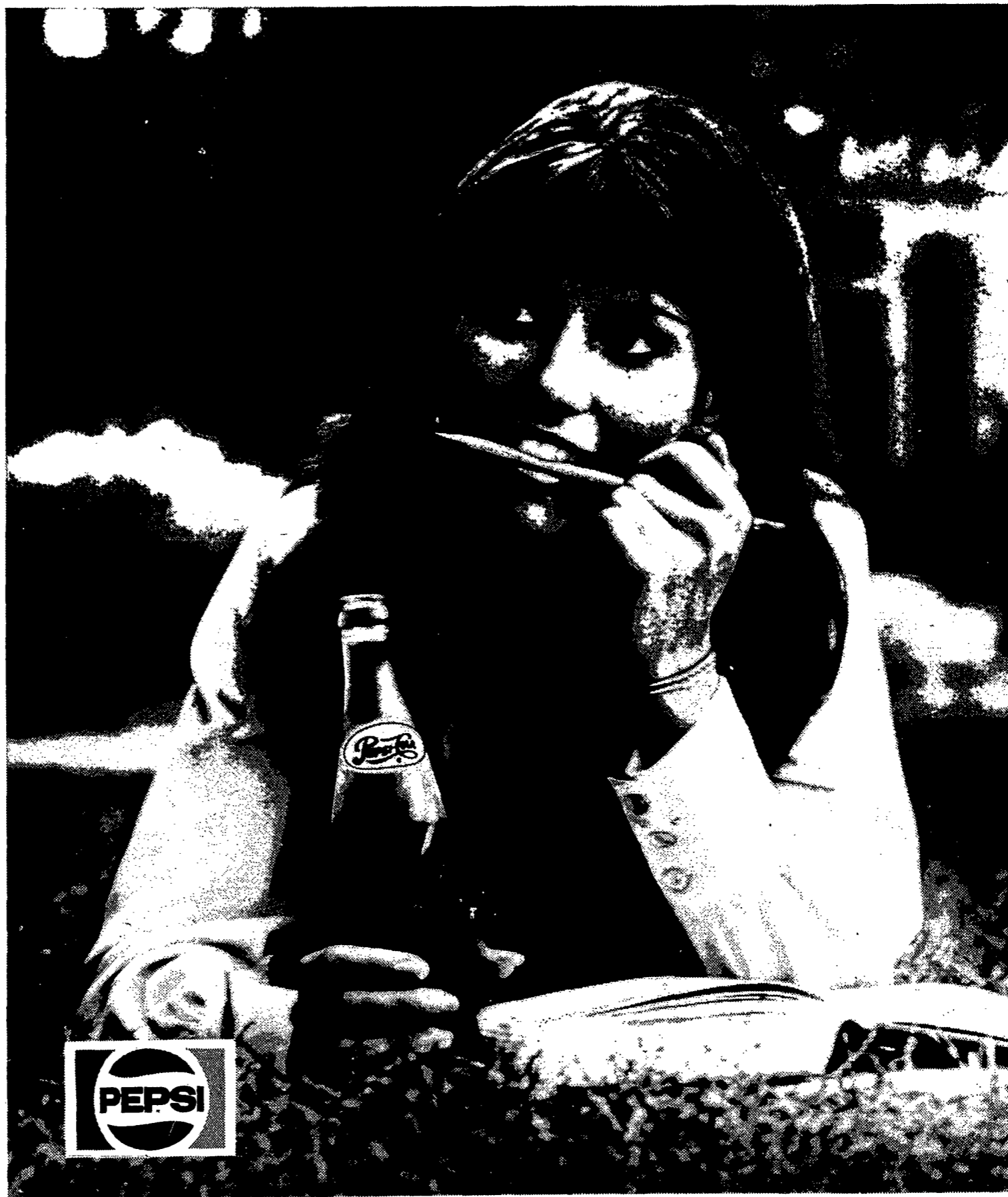
4. Bake in moderate oven (350°F.) about 45 minutes or until wooden pick inserted in center comes out clean. Cut and serve warm.

Yield: 9 servings, 3 x 3 inches

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