



WHEN A CITY GIRL *goes country*

By Annette Bridges

Once Upon A Christmas Dream

My life at Christmastime has not always been the picture of a Currier and Ives card. I have had family members pass away in December, as well as family members on military deployments.

I have not always been home for Christmas, and I have had little money to spend on gifts. I have been without a special someone in my life, and I have spent holidays in the hospital.

Still, Christmas has always been a season that can totally consume my mind, body and spirit with immense hope and peace.

There is something about Christmas that has always brought on dreams of all that I longed for.

It seems I am not the only one who has had Christmas dreams. Clara wished for her Nutcracker Prince to come to life.

Children had visions of sugar-plums dancing in their heads.

Others had yearnings to be home or for a white Christmas. Everyone undoubtedly hoped the dreams they dared to dream would come true.

Forty-six years ago, Karen Carpenter sang words that resonated with my girlish dreams, "Merry Christmas, darling. We're apart, that's true. But I can dream and in my dreams I'm Christmasing with you."

Even though I had not yet met my darling, I remember trying to imagine him -- along with the day we would meet and what our life together would be like.

It was a "different" holiday



Annette and her darling at one of their earlier Christmas celebrations. (Photo courtesy Annette Bridges)

season for me in 1979. My mother had recently remarried, and suddenly all of our family traditions were changed.

I came home from college, only to leave again with my mother and her new husband to spend Christmas at his mother's house along with his children.

It was Christmas Eve. Everyone had gone to bed, and I was trying to sleep on the sofa in front of the Christmas tree.

I had just nestled in for the long winter's night when the Car-

penter's song played on the radio.

I was feeling a little sad. Romantic holiday songs and movies were a promise of what could happen to me someday, and I loved dreaming about the man I would marry. So, I blissfully fell asleep fantasizing about the man of my dreams.

I met my man seven months later. By Christmas Eve 1980, we were announcing our engagement.

Never in my wildest dreams had I ever imagined myself marrying a country boy and living

on a cattle ranch, but here we are celebrating our 45th Christmas together.

Do not give up on your dreams, my friends.

Keep your faith strong and certain.

Change is sometimes needed in order for the best to come along. Sometimes dreams come true in the most unimaginable ways and unexpected moments.

I hope all your dreams come true this Christmas and the whole year through. 🍷