# Days of Rationing

## Shortages on the home front in World War II days left readers long on memories.

### Back to Basics

WHEN SHOPPING for a new baby carriage during WWII, my wife, Ferne, and I were surprised to learn that the only ones available were constructed of wood, due to the civilian rationing of steel and aluminum.

Aside from its bulky appearance, our carriage was made quite well and could be easily collapsed for convenient transport in the car. But golly, those wood disk wheels made it look like something out of the Dark Ages.

That's our daughter Pamela (right), in the spring of 1943, riding in the carriage, which received steel-spoke wheels after the war.

—Howard Schaffer, Allentown, Pennsylvania

### Four Feet of Generosity

WHILE IN LABOR with what was to be my sixth child, I heard two student nurses discussing their upcoming graduation and the problem of shoe rationing.

"I've polished and polished," the tall one said, "but my shoes still are shabby."

"Mine, too," the other nurse said, "and we won't get new shoe stamps in time for graduation."

I gave birth to twins, the second one unexpected. When the day came to take the babies home, I called over the two girls who had attended my room and gave them each a shoe stamp from the babies' ration books. "They won't be needing these for a while," I said.

Two very happy nurses left with grateful thanks, and the twins kicked their little feet in booties until the next shoe stamps came.

—Alverna Anderson, Grand Rapids, Minnesota

## Shreds of Evidence

MY GIRLFRIEND finally got a swimsuit she had put on layaway in downtown Racine, Wisconsin, and off we two teens went to the local pool.

After swimming and leaving the water, I was walking behind my friend. To my horror, the suit was split in many places, leaving much of her derriere exposed.

My friend promptly took the suit back to the store, whereupon the clerk showed her the small print on the tag: “Do not use in chlorinated water.”

Many of the wartime fabrics, shoes and so on were of a quality that left much to be desired.

—Audrey Harmann, Sturtevant, Wisconsin

## Toast to Perseverance

IN JULY of 1943, small appliances were to be sold at Riback Furniture in downtown Vancouver, Washington, where we lived. Our family of five had saved for a toaster, but the sale of appliances was limited at the start of WWII.

My problem was my husband used the car to drive 13 miles to work, so I walked nearly a mile to the bus stop with my young son, Larry, who was quite a “chunk,” in my arms.

There was a crowd of ladies waiting for the store to open. Looking through the window, I tried to pick out which size box contained a toaster. When the doors opened, we all dashed in. With barely a look, I grabbed a box. Luckily, it turned out to be one with a beautiful chrome toaster.

I caught the bus and then trudged back home carrying Larry and the box; it took some time for my arms to recover.

Now, all these years later, my Toastmaster sits proudly on my counter still making me toast.

—Marian Larsen, Vancouver, Washington