Opportunity

The lazy, hazy days of summer give most of us some time to sit back and dream about what opportunities we want for our families, ourselves, our neighborhood, and our community.

Some will wait for Lady Luck to come knocking on the front door. Others will remember that opportunity often enters through a back window.

Opportunities are everywhere, but only those who are prepared can recognize and use them effectively. If a person is not prepared, he or she simply doesn’t see or take advantage of a situation.

Opportunity means functioning well under stress.

Opportunity is directing yourself to a productive goal, to make something out of your talents and abilities.

Remember, everybody has occasional setbacks and frustrations. But each of us has a wealth of potential and possibilities. Unhappy people focus on what their failures and weaknesses are. Joyful individuals concentrate on their inner strengths and creative powers.

How do you make your own opportunity?

Explore. Invent. Adapt.

Above all, remain open and optimistic.

You’ll soon hear opportunity knocking, not at the front door, but within your soul.

Taken from: The Joy of Working, Wailley, Dennis and Wit
Summer's here and the warm weather we dreamed about over the winter has finally arrived. Time to stash your heavy clothes and break out your shorts and t-shirts; picnics and barbecues are here. Time to do a little yard work around the house, too...

Before you crank up the power tools or head for the beach, take this short True or False test from the Leviton Institute to bring you up to speed on summertime safety.

1.) A wooden ladder is safe to use while working around power lines, because wood isn't a good conductor of electricity.

2.) The circuit breakers in my house will protect me from shock if I'm using a power tool outdoors.

3.) I can be struck by lightning on a clear blue sunny day.

4.) Using the wrong extension cord outdoors can damage my power tools.

5) If my house loses power during a storm, I can plug a portable generator into a wall outlet to restore power.

Answers:

1.) False. While wood normally does not conduct electricity, damp wood can, with shocking (and possibly fatal) results. Always keep ladders, whether wood, fiberglass, or aluminum, a minimum of 10 feet away from power lines.

2.) False. Circuit breakers trip to prevent a current overload from starting a fire in your electrical circuits. While current leaking from an outdoor power tool through you may be nowhere near enough to trip a breaker, it can still give you a potentially lethal shock. A Ground Fault Circuit Interrupter (GFCI) will prevent that from happening, which is why they are required on all outdoor outlets.

3.) True. It's hard to believe, but lightning can travel sideways as much as 10 miles, leaving you in real danger even though the sky above you is clear blue. Remember the "30/30 rule"; if less than 30 seconds passes between lightning and thunder, head for shelter, preferably in a sizable structure like a large building, and do not go out until 30 minutes after the last lightning or thunder is seen or heard. By the way, do not forget your pets; they are just as vulnerable to lightning as you are.

4.) True. It is important to use the appropriate length and thickness of extension cord to provide enough current for your leaf blower, lawn mower, or hedge trimmer (the amperage is usually displayed somewhere on the tool itself). Too little current can damage the motor, and create a fire hazard. Always check that the cord is rated for outdoor use.

5.) False. Avoid this practice, called "backfeeding", at all times. It bypasses your house's protection circuits, endangering you, your neighbors, and any utility workers in the area. Plug appliances, lights, extension cords, etc. directly into the generator. But do not use generators indoors. They produce carbon monoxide, which can quickly build up to poisonous levels in enclosed areas.

Source: Helpful Hints on Home Electricity, Vol 15, Leviton Institute, as printed in Connecting Lewis County, June 2007
UPCOMING EVENTS
Mark your Calendar!!

Herkimer County Fair: August 14-19 at the fairground in Frankfort
Garlic & Herb Festival: September 8 at Canal Place in Little Falls
Central New York State Farm Progress Show: September 12 & 13 at Len-Lo Farms in Mohawk

Hope to see you there!

Enjoy Fresh Produce

Take advantage of locally grown produce this summer by stopping at any Farmers' Markets in Herkimer County, open weekly on these days:

Middleville: Rts. 28 & 169, across from Stewart's .......... Wednesday .......... 3 pm - 6 pm
Herkimer: Albany St. between Prospect & Main Sts. .... Thursday .......... 9 am - 1 pm
Dolgeville: Municipal lot, N. Helmer Ave, near Kinneys .......... Friday .......... 8 am - noon
Little Falls: Partners Trust Bank lot, Albany St. ............ Saturday .......... 8 am - noon

Food Preservation Resources

"Food Preservation Resources" lists all food preservation publications available from Cornell Cooperative Extension of Herkimer County including some commercial sources and web sites. Topics included are home canning, freezing, pickling, dehydrating, and making jams and jellies.

For your free copy stop at our office at 5657 State Route 5 in East Herkimer, or get a copy from our website at http://www.cce.cornell.edu/herkimer/foodpreservation.htm.
SUPER SUMMER SQUASH

Zucchini Pizza

Crust
3-1/2 cups grated zucchini
3 eggs, beaten*
1/3 cup flour
1/2 cup low fat mozzarella cheese, shredded
1/2 cup parmesan cheese
1/2 tsp. dried basil

Topping
2-3 cups favorite vegetable toppings sliced or
diced as desired

Combine all the crust ingredients and spread
into a lightly oiled 9x13 inch pan. Bake at 350°
for 20-25 minutes until the surface is dry and
firm. Brush the top with a little oil and broil it
under moderate heat for 5 minutes. Add all of
your favorite vegetable toppings on the crust
and bake at 350° for about 25 minutes.

*To reduce fat, use 2 egg whites instead of 1 egg.

Yield: 12 servings; serving size one 3”X3”
square (70 calories, 3 grams fat, 50 mg
cholesterol, 65 mg sodium)

Fresh Italian Zucchini

2 cups thinly sliced zucchini
1 medium onion, sliced
1 clove garlic, minced
1/2 green pepper, chopped
1/2 teaspoon basil or oregano
1 medium tomato, cut in 1/2” chunks

Combine all ingredients except tomatoes.
Cover. Microwave on high 4-5 minutes until
zucchini is tender-crisp. Stir in tomatoes.
Cover. Microwave on high 1 to 2-1/2 minutes or
until tomatoes are tender. Serve over pasta or
rice if desired.

Yield: 4 servings; serving size 1 cup (30
calories, 0 grams fat, 0 mg cholesterol, 10 mg
sodium)

Shared by: Cameron Miller, Summer Nutrition Assistant

Summer squashes include pattypan
squash, yellow crookneck squash, yellow
summer squash and zucchini.

Most people harvest
summer squash too late.
Like winter squash,
summer squash is an
edible gourd. Unlike winter
squash, it is harvested at the
immature stage. Ideally, summer
squash should be harvested at 6 to 8 inches
in length. Pattypan is ready when they measure
about 3 to 4 inches in diameter or less.

A 1/2 cup serving of cooked summer squash
contains about 20 calories, no fat, and is a good
source of fiber.

Summer squash can be grilled, steamed, boiled,
sautéed, or used in stir fry recipes. It can also
be enjoyed raw or in soups, salads, main dishes
or desserts. Summer squash mixes well with
onions, tomatoes and okra in vegetable
medleys. Tiny baby squash can be used as
appetizers or left whole and sautéed with other
vegetables.

Summer squash can be stored in the refrigerator
for up to 5 days. To prepare, scrub squash
gently with cold water. Cut off both ends, then
slice, chop or cut squash into wedges as
desired.

Barbeque Ideas for Zucchini
Slice zucchini from end to end making long
slices. Brush both sides lightly
with vegetable oil, and sprinkle
with garlic powder. Grill slowly
until tender.

For kabobs, alternate zucchini
cubes, green pepper squares, onion wedges,
and fresh mushrooms on skewers.

Marinate in Italian dressing overnight in
refrigerator. Grill slowly until tender.
“The most completely lost of all days is the one on which we haven’t laughed.” French proverb

If you want to raise healthy kids then make them laugh. Nine out of ten parents say that having a sense of humor will improve their quality of life according to a survey by Harris Interactive.

As parents we want our children to be happy and healthy, to make friends, and be at ease with themselves and others. A sense of humor facilitates all of this.

No one is born funny. Children learn to create humor and appreciate it. Aside from a hug, nothing brings you closer to your child than sharing a giggle.

Parents who joke around with their children, share funny incidents from their own day, and generally try to see the humor in life’s day-to-day challenges are more likely to raise children who like to laugh and can roll with the punches.

Even Start would like to share a list of books to use to help your children appreciate the lighter side of life!

Have fun and remember humor affirms life and brings families together.

Pass the Fritter, Critters by Cheryl Chapman
Activity: Practice the manners described in this nonsense rhyme.

Apple, Banana, Cherry by J. Cowley and E. Fuller
Activity: Use foods from these silly poems in your dinners.

Who Put the Peppers in the Pot? by Joanna Cole
Activity: Talk about a recipe or a meal you made a mistake with. Tell stories about a silly meal.

The Cabbages are Chasing the Rabbits by Arnold Adoff
Activity: Make coleslaw.

Mean Soup by Betsy Everett
Activity: Another way to work off a bad day is to exercise together.

Source: “Menu for Mealtimes”, Metropolitan Life Insurance Company, Middle Country Public Library
SAVE MONEY AT THE GAS PUMP THIS SUMMER

With hotter days and family road trips, filling up your car can add up.

On the Road: Drive More Efficiently

$ Stay within posted speed limits. Gas mileage decreases rapidly at speeds above 60 miles per hour.

$ Stop aggressive driving. You can improve your gas mileage up to five percent around town if you avoid “jackrabbit” starts and stops by anticipating traffic conditions and driving gently.

$ Avoid unnecessary idling. It wastes fuel, costs you money, and pollutes the air. Turn off the engine if you anticipate a wait.

$ Combine errands. Several short trips taken from a cold start can use twice as much fuel as one trip covering the same distance when the engine is warm.

$ Use overdrive gears and cruise control when appropriate. They improve the fuel economy of your car when you’re driving on a highway.

$ Remove excess weight from the trunk. An extra 100 pounds in the trunk can reduce a typical car’s fuel economy by up to two percent.

$ Avoid packing items on top of your car. A loaded roof rack or carrier creates wind resistance and can decrease fuel economy by five percent.

At the Garage: Maintain Your Car

$ Keep your engine tuned. Tuning your engine according to your owner’s manual can increase gas mileage by an average of four percent. Increases vary depending on a car’s condition.

$ Keep your tires properly inflated and aligned. It can increase gas mileage up to three percent.

$ Change your oil. According to the U.S. Department of Energy (DOE) and Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), you can improve your gas mileage by using the manufacturer’s recommended grade of motor oil. Motor oil that says “Energy Conserving” on the performance symbol of the American Petroleum Institute contains friction-reducing additives that can improve fuel economy.

$ Check and replace air filters regularly. Replacing clogged filters can increase gas mileage up to ten percent.

In Advertising: Check Out Claims About “Gas-Saving” Gadgets

Be skeptical of claims for devices that will “boost your mileage by an extra 6 miles per gallon,” “improve your fuel economy up to 26 percent,” or the like. EPA has tested over 100 supposed gas-saving devices — including mixture “enhancers” and fuel line magnets — and found that very few provide any fuel economy benefits. The devices that work provide only marginal improvements. Some “gas-saving” devices may damage a car’s engine or increase exhaust emissions. For more information and a full list of tested products, check www.epa.gov/otaq/consumer.htm.

At the Pump: Use the Octane Level You Need

The recommended gasoline for most cars is regular octane. In fact, in most cases, using a higher octane gasoline than your owner’s manual recommends offers absolutely no benefit. It won’t make your car perform better, go faster, get better mileage or run cleaner. Your best bet: listen to your owner’s manual.

The only time you might need to switch to a higher octane level is if your car engine knocks when you use the recommended fuel. This happens to a small percentage of cars.

(continued on page 7)
Unless your engine is knocking, buying higher octane gasoline is a waste of money, too. Premium gas costs 15 to 20 cents per gallon more than regular. That can add up to $100 or more a year in extra costs. Studies indicate that altogether, drivers may be spending hundreds of millions of dollars each year for higher octane gas than they need.

What are octane ratings?

Octane ratings measure a gasoline's ability to resist engine knock, a rattling or pinging sound that results from premature ignition of the compressed fuel-air mixture in one or more cylinders. Most gas stations offer three octane grades: regular (usually 87 octane), mid-grade (usually 89 octane) and premium (usually 92 or 93). The ratings must be posted on bright yellow stickers on each gasoline pump.

Will higher octane gasoline clean your engine better?

As a rule, high octane gasoline does not outperform regular octane in preventing engine deposits from forming, in removing them, or in cleaning your car's engine. In fact, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency requires that all octane grades of all brands of gasoline contain engine cleaning detergent additives to protect against the build-up of harmful levels of engine deposits during the expected life of your car.

Should you ever switch to a higher octane gasoline?

A few car engines may knock or ping - even if you use the recommended octane. If this happens, try switching to the next highest octane grade. In many cases, switching to the mid-grade or premium-grade gasoline will eliminate the knock. If the knocking or pinging continues after one or two fill-ups, you may need a tune-up or some other repair. After that work is done, go back to the lowest octane grade at which your engine runs without knocking.

Is knocking harmful?

Occasional light knocking or pinging won't harm your engine, and doesn't indicate a need for higher octane. But don't ignore severe knocking. A heavy or persistent knock can lead to engine damage.

Is all "premium" or "regular" gasoline the same?

The octane rating of gasoline marked "premium" or "regular" is not consistent across the country. One state may require a minimum octane rating of 92 for all premium gasoline, while another may allow 90 octane to be called premium. To make sure you know what you're buying, check the octane rating on the yellow sticker on the gas pump instead of relying on the name "premium" or "regular."

For More Information

If you're concerned about the accuracy of an octane label - or if you don't see a yellow octane sticker on a gasoline pump, write: Consumer Response Center, Federal Trade Commission (FTC), Washington, DC 20580.

The FTC works for the consumer to prevent fraudulent, deceptive and unfair business practices in the marketplace and to provide information to help consumers spot, stop, and avoid them. To file a complaint or to get free information on consumer issues, visit www.ftc.gov or call toll-free, 1-877-FTC-HELP (1-877-382-4357); TTY: 1-866-653-4261.

DRINK MORE WATER!

We drink milk, juice, soft drinks, coffee, and tea. Sometimes we forget to drink the most important beverage – water!

Drink water often during the day:

😊 Drink a glass of water in the morning before you leave the house.
😊 Carry along a bottle of water.
😊 Have water breaks at work instead of coffee breaks.
😊 Stop and take a drink when you walk by a water fountain.
😊 Order water instead of soft drinks at restaurants.
😊 Drink water before, during, and after exercise.

You can mistake thirst for hunger. Try drinking water first when you feel hungry between meals and snacks. You may be thirsty, not hungry. Water will satisfy your thirst and prevent overeating.

Water is also found in food. Fruits and vegetables are the best sources of water.

Eat fruits and vegetables for nutrition and water!

- Lettuce ......................... 95% water
- Watermelon ................... 92% water
- Broccoli ......................... 91% water
- Strawberries .................. 91% water
- Carrots ......................... 87% water
- Banana ......................... 75% water

Some children drink a lot of sugary drinks such as soft drinks, sport drinks, and fruit drinks. Children can become overweight from what they drink, not what they eat.

Small children know how much they need to eat. They will eat when they are hungry. They usually stop eating when they are full.

Drinking sugary drinks is not the same as eating solid foods. The calories in sugary drinks are not as satisfying as the calories in solid foods.

Drinking sugary drinks may not satisfy a child’s appetite. Some children will drink a large sweet drink and still eat a normal size meal.

Some children will sip on sweet drinks all day long. This can add up to a lot of extra calories and cavities! A 12 ounce can of soft drink has 150 calories.

An average preschool child needs about 1400 calories each day. Drinking 1 can of a soft drink each day will add up to 1050 calories in a week. At that rate, a preschool child who eats normally and drinks 12 ounces of a soft drink each day will gain **1 extra pound** each month or **12 extra pounds** in a year!

Limit Sugary Drinks!

1. Drink water between meals. A glass of cold water tastes great!
2. Keep a pitcher of cold water in your refrigerator. Children like to have a drink of the “special water”.
3. Keep sugary drinks out of your house. If there are sugary drinks in your refrigerator, your child will want to drink them.
4. Limit fruit juice to 4-6 ounces each day or less. Too much juice can be a problem.
5. Limit sport drinks. They have a lot of sugar and calories, just like soft drinks. Your active child needs water and real food!
6. Snack on fruits and vegetables – they are great sources of water! Children will be less thirsty when snacking on fruits and vegetables.

Source: Compiled by Dolores DeSalvo – Eat Smart New York! based on materials from Kid Food and Smart Food, Nutrition Matters, as printed in Connecting Lewis County, May 2007
Summer means lots of fairs, field days, and other community events.

Big portions with lots of sugar and fat calories characterize many of the foods we traditionally associate with these events. For many of us, they wouldn’t be nearly as much fun without these tasty treats.

So... how much exercise does it take to walk off our favorite fair foods?

We know on average, we have to walk about one mile to burn 100 calories. To visualize how far that is, think approximately 12 city blocks to the mile. Calories per our favorite fair food can vary depending on portion size, recipe, and more.

Following are the approximate distances we likely need to walk to burn off the calories of some popular midway foods:

- Caramel apple: 3 miles
- Corn dog, large: 4.5 miles
- Cotton candy: 1.5 miles
- Fried candy bar on a stick: 4.5 miles
- Funnel cake, 6-inch diameter: 3 miles
- Soft drink, 32 oz: 2.5 miles
- Sno-cone: 2.5 miles
- Soft pretzel: 3 miles

Does this mean we need to load a picnic basket with carrot and celery sticks before heading to the fair? No. With a little planning, it’s possible to fit in many favorite fair foods. Here’s how:

- Quench your thirst with a small soft drink instead of the larger sizes. Better yet, buy or bring along bottled water. Save your fair-day calories for something else.

- Split foods among several people. For example, share a large funnel cake with friends. Everyone gets a taste, and no one gets overloaded!

- Plan times when you’ll sit down and eat, rather than graze your way from one end of the fair to the other. It’s hard to keep a handle on how much we’re eating when we’re walking, talking and eating at the same time.

- Limit yourself to one treat. Choose reasonable serving sizes of lower sugar and lower fat items for the rest of your foods.

- Dress in comfortable shoes so you’re more likely to walk off some calories. Wear a pedometer and see how many steps you can take at the fair. One mile equals about 2,000 steps, or around one third of the calories in a typical caramel apple.

- Check out all the food booths before making your selections. Imagine you have a "calorie salary." Enjoy the foods you like the most for your "salary."

- Finally, if you do indulge a little too much, remember to return to a more balanced way of eating the next day. A day or two of overeating won’t affect our weight that much - weeks of it will! Eating 100 extra calories daily can result in a 10 pound weight gain yearly.

Source: Nebraska Extension, June 2007
REDUCE YOUR AMOUNT OF TRASH

The Three R’s: Reduce, Reuse, Recycle

Everyone likes the convenience of modern life, but we pay in dollars now and garbage tomorrow for a lot of that convenience. So far it’s up to each family to decide for itself where to draw the line. When your family wants to start being green, there’s help available.

- Many neighborhoods have bulk food stores that help you reduce the amount of packaging you use.
- Most towns have charity outlets such as the Salvation Army that reuse your old things to help someone else.
- Communities in Herkimer County are providing curbside recycling. We hear a lot about recycling as a way to keep the earth clean, but that’s actually the third step in cutting trash down to size. Let’s look at the other two first.

Reduce

This simply means, use less stuff! If you bring less stuff home, you have less stuff to throw out!

For every $10 spent on groceries, we spend a dollar more just for the boxes and bags! What are some alternatives?

- Bring your own bags to the store.
- Buy food in bulk, not individual servings.
- Use reusable containers for leftovers and in your lunch bag.
- Cut back on fast food meals; they pollute more than your arteries!

Reuse

There’s a used store for almost anything. Just check out the yellow pages.

- When you buy used CDs, books, games, and clothes, you save money.
- When you sell your old stuff, you get money back.
- When you donate your old toys and appliances, you’re giving someone else a present!

Recycle

Set up a recycling center in your kitchen.

- First find out what your town recycles.
- Most towns give you a card to put on the fridge that reminds you what can be recycled.
- They usually give you a big plastic bin to hold your bottles and cans between pickup days.
- Get a big paper bag for newspapers.
- Keep a record for a month and record how many garbage bags your family fills up each week.

Watch the number get smaller as you begin to recycle things you would have thrown away!

Some trashy facts

The US produces half of the world’s garbage, but has only 6% of the world’s people! In the US, each person generates about 4.3 pounds of trash a day. For a family of four, that’s 6278 pounds or more than THREE TONS of trash each year!

What does a family throw away?

- 35% is packaging and containers. That’s over a ton a year that we have to throw away just to get to the thing we bought!
- 27.4% is what we call “nondurable goods,” things we use once and throw away, like disposable diapers, paper towels, magazines and newspapers. Each family throws out 10 pounds of paper every week! Think how much you’d save just by using both sides of your printer paper before you toss it out!
- 15% is durable goods: things that are meant to last a long time, from big things, like cars, refrigerators, and last year’s computer, to tiny ones, like batteries. That’s half a ton every year, just because we got bored with our old toys or couldn’t be bothered to fix them!
- 14.3% (another half ton) is yard trimmings, which should go right back in the yard as mulch!
- 8.3% is food waste. That’s 10-15 pounds a week! Think how many meals that could provide!

Source: The EPA’s Municipal Solid Waste Factbook, as printed in Connecting Lewis County, May 2007
GOT A WIRELESS NETWORK?
IT’S TIME TO SHORE UP SECURITY

Some words to the wise: if you have a wireless Internet or network connection, make sure you’ve got the best possible security measures in place. And don’t delay.

Why?
The basic protection against intruders - Wireless Encryption Protocol, or WEP - is increasingly vulnerable to accomplished hackers.

What is WEP?
In layman’s terms, it’s one way computers try to keep unauthorized users from tapping into your wireless network. A wireless network is more vulnerable to outside hackers than a closed one, which physically connects computers with cables.

WEP is generally the lowest level of security that comes with a new wireless network. Hackers have been improving their ability to get around the security settings in WEP for years. They know that most people don’t even bother to set up password protection, and when they do, they simply use the default.

That can be a boon to “wardrivers,” people who drive around looking for unsecured wireless Internet access points to hijack. After they tap into the connection, they can do all sorts of things - including illegally sending spam or pilfering your computer’s data.

You might not even know if these hackers have gained access to your connection. They may be a couple houses over or on the next street. But if they’re doing something illegal with your Internet connection, it’s going to come back to you.

So what can you do?
At the very least, set up password protection and change the default and security settings on the WEP, if that’s what you’re using. Then we recommend you consider changing your wireless security to a more secure protocol, like WPA2, TKIP, or AES.

Don’t know how to do that? Check the website of your wireless router manufacturer. All of the major companies have websites devoted to security.

There’s a lot of information out there about making your wireless system more secure. Take a layered security approach. That is, throw as many locks on the computer to thwart these hackers as possible.

Source: Federal Bureau of Investigation May 4, 2007 Headline Article
**CHILD AND PET SAFETY IN THE YARD & GARDEN**

Start at an early age to teach your child or toddler to "always ask first" before touching, testing, or smelling anything in the garden. Even if you don't use fertilizer or pesticides, your neighbor may and depending on weather conditions, wind or rain can carry these chemicals beyond the area to which they were applied. So, before eating fruits or vegetables from your garden, be sure to teach your child to wash them first.

Landscaping can make the yard look beautiful but be aware of the potential dangers for young children.

- Call or visit your local garden center to identify the names of the plants growing in and around your home. For a list of some common poisonous plants, visit the Poison Center's website at www.upstatepoison.org.
- Avoid planting spiny plants and plants with thorns that could harm a child, especially in or around the play area.
- If you use a fertilizer, decorative mulch, or gardening soil, be aware that some of these products may contain lead or other toxic substances and should never be consumed.

Garden chemicals can be very dangerous if mishandled. This includes organic pesticides.

- Store garden chemicals in locked cabinets and in their original containers.
- Never use empty food or drink containers for storing pesticides, cleaning products or fertilizers.
- Keep children away from the area while pesticides are applied.
- Take necessary precautions during and after using pesticides to be sure children do not have access to the products.

Most importantly, always keep the number for the Poison Center easily accessible. Take time to post a Poison Center phone sticker or magnet in the garage, storage shed, or any location where hazardous products are stored. If you would like stickers or magnets sent to your home, call the Poison Center at 1-800-222-1222. Their goal is to prevent poisonings before they happen.

**Keep Your Yard and Garden Safe for Pets Too**

Many common garden products can be poisonous, or even fatal, to dogs and other pets. Slug pellets are poisoned cereal chunks used as bait to attract slugs. Unfortunately they also attract dogs, birds and beetles, causing death or injury if consumed in large amounts.

Weed killers are pesticides that should be used with caution. Read the instructions carefully and keep these products well away from animals. Some weed killers claim to be pet-safe. Be sure to check the small print, as this applies only after they have dried, so animals may need to be kept away for several hours after application. Plants and flowers around the yard and in the garden are attractive and often smell good. However, keep in mind they can often be toxic if ingested.

Some of the most common plants, which can be poisonous to dogs, can range from mildly toxic to very poisonous.

- Foxglove - Digitalis purpurea
- Water Hemlock or Cowbane - Cicuta spp.
- Yew - Taxus cuspidate
- Oleander - Nerium oleander
- Lily of the Valley - Convallaria majalis
- Poison Hemlock - Conium maculatum
- Destroying Angels - A. verna (type of mushroom)

If you suspect your dog has eaten slug pellets or been exposed to any other toxic substance, contact your vet immediately. You can also call the ASPCA Animal Poison Control Center at 1-888-426-4435 or visit their website at www.aspca.org.

Source: Upstate NY Poison Center, Poison Prevention Newsletter, June 2007
PARENTS SAY GOODBYE: THE LAST SUMMER BEFORE COLLEGE

Tips for Parents

Carleton Kendrick, Ed.M., LCSW writes many columns for www.familyeducation.com. He is co-author of Take Your Nose Ring Out, Honey, We Going to Grandma's. Kendrick has been in private practice as a family therapist and has worked as a consultant for more than 20 years, conducting parenting seminars on a variety of topics.

As a recent veteran of two bittersweet departures as his children left for college, he offers some guidelines on making the best of this highly emotional time for parents:

1. Acknowledge your mixed emotions to yourself and to your departing child. Realize that if you act emotionally disabled, your kids worry more about leaving you.

2. Share your feelings about this new stage of your life with those who are supportive and with those who have been through this transition.

3. Think about and plan how you will use all that emotional energy and time you have formerly devoted to parenting.

4. Allow yourself to trust in your child’s ability to make sound judgments on his/her own. It helps when they can feel your trust.

5. When your child expresses fears and uncertainties about leaving and “making it” in college, let them know that everyone has these misgivings. Tell them you are confident in their abilities to both “make it” and enjoy it. Make references to some of their past challenges and successes.

6. Make sure you consider the feelings (most often intense and confused) of your other kids. They need their own sibling goodbyes and reassurances.

7. Do not feel ignored or hurt because your child wants to spend every waking moment with their friends. A desperate attempt to spend an endless summer with friends is a natural response to leaving them.

8. You and your college child may unconsciously create considerably more tension and disagreements than usual in an effort to make leaving more desirable.

For more information on this topic see www.familyeducation.com, Last Summer Before College.


HAVE AN ENERGY SMART SUMMER!

There are many things that you as a consumer can do to stay cool this summer and yet lower energy usage and your costs. Consider these ideas:

- Use ceiling fans to stay cool.
- Use your washer and dryer at night.
- Use a programmable thermostat.
- Close shades and windows during the day.
- Turn lights off when a room is not in use.

- Remember that it pays to conserve energy.
- Purchase an air conditioner with the Energy Star® label.
- Shop for an alternative energy supplier. Use your power to choose.

For more information about this, and many more energy saving topics go to www.GetEnergySmart.org or 1-877-NY-Smart.

Source: www.GetEnergySmart.org
10 FUN ACTIVITIES THAT WILL KEEP CHILDREN’S SKILLS SHARP DURING THE SUMMER

1. Adopt a tree! Keep a journal of photographs, drawings, writings, and things you collect from the tree to show how it changes through the year.

2. Make up silly tongue-twisters together and say them as fast as you can.

3. Write a letter to a family member or friend and mail it - maybe you will get one back!

4. Make a time capsule - include photos, mementos, and a list of your favorite things (movies, books, songs, etc.). Plan a time to open it a year or more from now.

5. Make a sun print! Find several small flat objects and arrange them on a piece of colored construction paper. Leave your design in the sun for several hours, and then remove the objects to reveal a work of art! Don’t forget to title your masterpiece.

6. Make up new words to your favorite songs - or your least favorite songs!

7. Communicate with song. For 10-15 minutes, sing everything to each other instead of speaking.

8. Write a rebus message. A rebus uses pictures instead of words, for example draw an eye for the word “I” or a honeybee for the word “be”.

9. Together, write the names of all family members and list what each of them does best (tells jokes, rides a bike, read, etc.); add to the list each week.

10. Make your favorite recipe - together!!

Have Fun!

Source: Scott Foresman, as printed in CCE Update-Schenectady, July/August 2006

COAST GUARD STRESSES SAFETY FOR BOATERS

The Coast Guard is asking boaters and paddlers to do five things as they prepare for another season on the water:

- Take advantage of a free vessel safety check from the U.S. Power Squadrons and Coast Guard Auxiliary by calling 1-800-368-5647 or by visiting http://www.vesselsafetycheck.org/.

- Always file a float plan with a responsible individual who knows where you’re going, when you’ll return, and what to do if you don’t.

- Strive to be a responsible and prudent mariner by boating and paddling safe and sober. Save the alcohol until you’re safely ashore.

- Wear your life jacket. There are styles to fit every boater and paddlers’ need, and remember, when you need your life jacket, you need it on. In the cold waters of the Northeast, sudden unintentional immersion can be fatal. The sudden shock of cold water can immediately immobilize the most competent swimmer, and a life jacket is essential. It’s your insurance for in-water survival.

- Take America’s Boating Course by calling 1-800-BOAT-ABC or by visiting http://www.americasboatingcourse.com/.
VACATION YOUR WAY TO BETTER HEALTH

Sure everyone needs a vacation to take a break from life’s hectic pace, work, and hassles. But a vacation from a stressful job doesn’t have to mean adding pounds to your waist this summer.

It can mean a jump start to better health and allow you to come back invigorated and ready to do better. What better time to focus on eating healthy and exercising than when you have the time? Here is a checklist to help you plan a good getaway:

Destination(s):
________________________________________

Health goal:
1) Get in better shape
2) Stay in shape
3) Not gain weight
4) Other: ________________________________

Activities:
1) Walking and sightseeing
2) Water sports
3) Hiking
4) Biking
5) Working out in gym
6) Other: ________________________________

Exercise equipment/apparel needed:
________________________________________

Can I cook or do I have to eat most of my meals out:
________________________________________

Foods that will help me follow my plan, e.g. fruits for snacks, breakfast:
________________________________________

High-risk situations that may occur, e.g. midnight buffet, large restaurant meals:
________________________________________

Tips for better calorie control:
• Plan, plan, plan and plan. Before you begin, plan how you can incorporate exercise and a healthful diet at the same time.

• Try to find hotels that have refrigerators and exercise facilities.

• Choose a balance between high-calorie and low-calorie foods. Start your meal with the more filling, lower-calorie foods such as fruits or vegetables.

• Many restaurants serve very large portions, so try to decrease portions by splitting an entrée or getting a child’s portion or appetizer.

Snack and breakfast shopping list:
Here is a basic shopping list of healthful foods for breakfast and snacks. If you have a refrigerator or cooler for perishable food, that would be best. Otherwise buy just what you will consume within 2 hours.

• Fruit-flavored light or nonfat yogurt
• Apples, bananas, melon, strawberries
• Pretzels
• Low-fat popcorn
• Diet drinks
• Cereal and skim milk
• Baby carrots

Source: Communicating Food for Health, June 2007
We’re on the web!!
www.cce.cornell.edu/
~herkimer

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