

OHCE NEWS



Medical Tests Men and Women Need

As we age, different medical tests are warranted as a screening or a baseline for later comparisons. Men and women need different tests; find out what these are on January 29th at 10am in the Extension Office. This program will serve as the February OHCE Leaders Lesson.

OHCE AWARDS

Awards applications for Rookie, Member, Young Member and Heart of OHCE for 2007 are due January 15, 2008. Rewards and recognitions are an important part of a viable organization. So, recognize the work of your members. Application forms are available in the OSU Extension office or online at <http://www.ohce.org>.

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Beaver County Cooperative Extension Service
Oklahoma State University
111 W 2nd ST
PO Box 339
Beaver OK 73932

EXECUTIVE COUNCIL MEETING

Beaver Co. OHCE President, Barbara Patzkowsky, has called a meeting for Monday, January 7th at 10am in the Extension Office. Please make sure your group is represented.

WORKING ON REPORTS

A Workday for Committee Reports will be Monday, January 7th at 11am in the Ext. Office. This will follow the executive council meeting. Bring pictures and clippings of OHCE activities.

SEW THOUGHTFUL

January 16th is another workday for the Adopt-A-Room Project. Please bring sewing supplies or a willingness to make temporarily housing nicer for future families in need. We'll meet at the Fair Building at 10am.

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Liz Gardner-McBee
Extension Educator,
Family & Consumer Sciences/4-H Youth Dev.



BEAVER COUNTY FAMILY AND CONSUMER SCIENCES

Newsline January 2008

Beaver County Extension Office * Courthouse * Box 339 * Beaver OK 73932 * (580)625-3464

NEW YEAR'S RESOLUTIONS FOR YOUR MARRIAGE

Like growing a precious plant, growing a healthy marriage takes time, a supportive environment, and lots of high-quality nourishment. What better time than the beginning of a new year to reaffirm as a couple the high priority that you place on the well-being of your relationship?

In today's fast-paced world, one of the most treasured gifts we can give to one another is the gift of time paired with our undivided attention. Why not make a new year's resolution to dedicate special blocks of time this coming year to your marriage? Time beyond what you normally give. Special times for having fun and nourishing your relationship--just the two of you--in whatever ways you hold most dear.

Don't just talk about jointly making one or more new year's resolutions for your marriage; look ahead at the calendar for the coming year and block out some definite times for marriage enrichment. For example, you might want to designate the first Saturday of every month as Marriage Enrichment Day. Your monthly commitment could be to use the whole day or, perhaps, just the evening to feed your relationship in ways that are important to both of you. You might go hiking in the woods, attend a marriage enrichment seminar, or take in a play, a ballet performance, or a ball game.

Here's another idea: Why not plan a weekend getaway three or four times during the year for just the two of you? Let your creative juices flow and dream up outings or other adventures that will truly be memory-makers for both of you. Think twice before you decide, "We can't afford the money and time this would take."

Time and money are two of our most important resources; how we use them tells us a lot about what we really value. Your marriage is extraordinarily important; give it the time and money it deserves!

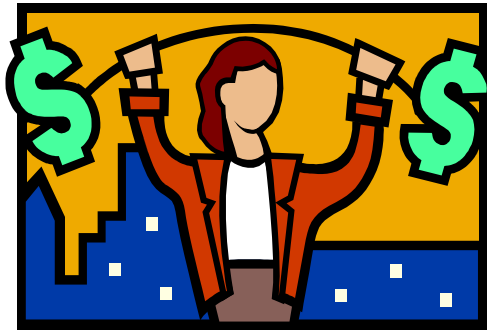
In addition to blocking out special times this coming year for enjoying and enriching your marriage, you may want to try one or more of the following marriage enrichment ideas:

- Write a romantic, from-your-heart love letter to your spouse. Address and stamp it, then mail it from somewhere else in your community.
 - Plan a little surprise for your loved one that you know he or she will really appreciate.
 - Get out some old pictures from earlier in your relationship, and enjoy the memories they invoke.
 - Make it a point to tell your spouse some of the things that you like most about him or her. Share your appreciation on a regular basis. This is one time when repeating yourself is definitely OK.
 - Express your love by showing affection in ways that you know your husband or wife will appreciate. Little gestures of shared affection help to keep the romantic fires burning brightly.
 - Jot down three special things you would like your spouse to do for you, and ask him or her to do the same for you. Then exchange your lists and see what happens in the next few days.
 - Take turns completing the following sentence stems with one another: I love it when you . . . You seem most peaceful when . . . I hope that we . . .
 - Exchange neck, shoulder and back rubs. Take your time, relax, and thoroughly enjoy it. At another time, do full-body massages.
 - List seven activities that you love to do with your partner as he or she compiles a similar list. Then share your lists with one another and make some plans.
- A happy marriage is a joy, and for most, it's also a tremendous challenge. Don't feel discouraged when problems crop up; disagreements are normal. Accept these challenges as opportunities for learning and growing.
- When a difficulty arises, handle it in the most skillful way possible. Ask yourself, "What can I learn from this situation that will help me become a better and more loving person?" and "How can we, as a couple, use this opportunity to strengthen our marriage?"



Source: <http://hancock.osu.edu/fcs/archive/0701.htm>
Prepared by Sam Quick, Ph.D., Human Dev & Family Relations Specialist

Shape Up Your Budget in 2008



The lights have been taken down off the house. Bits of wrapping paper and ribbon have been thrown away. The Christmas tree has been picked up from the curb. The only thing remaining from the holiday season is a mailbox full of bills.

Despite your best efforts, it can be extremely easy to overspend and exceed the budget during the holiday season, said Sissy Osteen, Oklahoma State University Cooperative Extension Service resource management specialist.

“While you may be on top of your budget throughout the rest of the year, even the best intentions can fall apart during the rush of the holiday season,” Osteen said. “Holidays are a time of year when there is a lot of concentrated spending. Families often incur additional expenses in all areas, including food, gifts, postage, utilities and travel. November and December are not good months to try to plan a budget because everyone is so busy. Now that we’re beginning a new year, take some time to plan your holiday needs for 2008.”

Oftentimes stores run big sales on toys following the holidays. If your budget allows, purchase a few toys now to have on hand either for upcoming birthdays or the next holiday season.

Take advantage of price cuts on wrapping paper, ribbons, cards, gift tags, ornaments and lights. These all are items that most families know they will need each year, so it is a great idea to stock up when the prices are lower. Buy these items in solid colors without holiday markings so they can be used during other seasons too.

There are some families who may have completely blown their holiday budget and are now facing what feels like insurmountable bills.

Osteen said the first step these families need to take is to completely assess the situation and determine exactly how much money has been spent.

“Don’t avoid opening bills because you know the balance will be high. Face up to your debt and determine how much damage has been done,” she said.

“If you’re in way over your head, you may need to seek financial counseling. Just make sure to find a reputable agency that is a member of the National Foundation for Credit Counseling.”

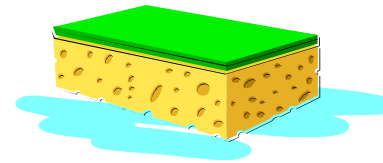
Families who do not need professional financial assistance should develop a new budget on their own and stick to it. Gather all the bills and classify all of the expenses. Be sure to include periodic expenses such as birthdays, holidays, taxes and insurance.

“Holidays and vacations aren’t a regular part of a monthly budget so it can be easy to overlook these expenses when developing your spending and savings plan,” Osteen said.

Families must have a good understanding of where the household money goes every month. In some cases, the budget may need to be adjusted as changes occur.

“It’s important for the family to work on the plan together and agree to discuss the initial plan as well as changes that may need to occur,” she said. “Setting goals and following your spending and savings plan will help make the 2008 holiday season less stressful. You’ll not only be prepared for the upcoming year, but you’ll be establishing sound financial strategies that will work for years to come.”

Clean Kitchen Sponges Correctly



Many of us use kitchen sponges because they are effective, inexpensive, and reusable. But because they’re reusable, they can create problems. Sponges can harbor foodborne pathogens, yeasts, and molds. Using contaminated sponges can spread germs around your kitchen.

The Agriculture Research Service, the principal scientific research agency of the U.S. Department of Agriculture, conducted tests to determine the best way to disinfect kitchen sponges. ARS soaked sponges at room temperature for 48 hours in a solution made to simulate a very dirty sponge.

Each sponge was then treated one of five ways in hopes of reducing or eliminating contamination. Some sponges were left untreated. The cleaning methods included:

1. Soaking in a 10 percent chlorine bleach solution for three minutes
2. Soaking in lemon juice for 1 minute
3. Soaking in deionized water for one minute
4. Heated in the microwave for one minute
5. Washed in a dishwasher with a drying cycle.

The scientists chose these methods because they’re commonly used in most household kitchens. They found that between 37 and 87 percent of bacteria were killed on sponges soaked in the bleach solution, lemon juice, deionized water, and those left untreated. That still left enough bacteria to potentially cause disease. Between 6.7 and 63 percent of yeasts and molds survived on sponges also.

Microwaving sponges killed 99.99999 percent of bacteria present on them, while dishwashing killed 99.9998 percent of bacteria. The sponges treated in the microwave or dishwasher were found to harbor less than 1 percent (0.00001 percent) of yeasts and molds.

To reuse sponges safely, cleaning them in the microwave (only heat wet sponges to reduce fire hazard) or washing them in the dishwasher are the best treatments. These simple and convenient treatments can help ensure that contaminated sponges don’t spread foodborne pathogens around household kitchens of today’s busy families.

<http://www.ars.usda.gov/is/pr/2007/070423.htm>

OKLAHOMA’S COMMEMORATIVE QUARTER



The first commemorative quarter-dollar coin released in 2008 honors Oklahoma, and is the 46th coin in the US Mint’s 50 State Quarters® Program. The quarters have been released every 10 weeks since January 1999—in the order they were admitted to the Union. Oklahoma, nicknamed the “Sooner State,” was admitted into the Union on November 16, 1907, becoming our Nation’s 46th state.

The Oklahoma quarter features an image of the State bird, the Scissortail Flycatcher, in flight with its distinctive tail feathers spread. The bird is soaring over the State wildflower, the Indian Blanket, backed by a field of similar wildflowers. The coin’s design also bears the inscriptions “Oklahoma” and “1907.”

The depiction of Indian Blanket (or Gaillardia) symbolizes the State’s rich Native American heritage and native long grass prairies that are abundant in wildlife. Oklahoma was formed by the combination of the Oklahoma Territory and the Indian Territory of the Five Civilized Tribes – Choctaw, Chickasaw, Creek, Seminole, and Cherokee.

The process to choose the coin’s reverse design began in February 2006. Citizens submitted more than 1,000 concepts for consideration. This eventually led to the creation of ten narratives based on these concepts. A vote by Oklahoma citizens narrowed the field to five, which were sent to the United States Mint for consideration.

The final artistic renderings, developed by United States Mint Sculptor-Engravers and artists in the United States Mint’s Artistic Infusion Program, were then proposed to Oklahoma for a state-wide vote.

On April 30, 2007, Governor Brad Henry announced his recommendation of the State bird and wildflower design, based on the overwhelming number of citizen votes for this design. The Department of the Treasury approved the design on May 25, 2007. The Oklahoma quarter will probably be released by mid January.

Source: www.usmint.gov

To help families get started on a budget plan, OSU Fact Sheet “The Financial Puzzle: Putting the Pieces Together,” contains spending worksheets to help consumers keep track of their money. Contact the Extension office for a copy or download the Fact Sheet at <http://pods.dasnr.okstate.edu/docushare/dsweb/Get/Document-2485/T-4149web.pdf>