

Clarice's Column

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FCE Council Chair



Alice in Wonderland, the Mad Hatter, and the March Hare would have been envious of the Spring Tea Party at the March FCE Meeting. Our members appeared in a variety of hats—hats worn as going-away hats, handmade hats, garden hats, antique hats, and borrowed hats. The hats brought comments from people attending other meetings in the building. And, we did have teas of many varieties and information about the teas. Members brought delicious cookies which we enjoyed at the meeting and were able to take some home too. Thank you to the Busy Bees, Emerald, and Tuesday Tinkers

for this activity and a special thanks to Marie Rockenbach for sharing her stamps and stamping expertise with us.

At the business meeting, it was decided all clubs do what they can to rebuild the scholarship fund which will be depleted after this year's scholarship is awarded. At this point it is hoped all the members of each club will be able to help in this effort.

Just as Alice used the golden key to unlock the gate to the garden, FCE members can attend the June 26 Council Meeting and unlock the answers to their gardening questions. The guest speaker will be Bob Gilmour, Master Gardener. The meeting will be hosted by the

Live & Learn and Salt Creek Circle Clubs and refreshments will be served. This meeting is scheduled for 7 p.m.

Please mark your calendars for the Sizzling Summer Sampler on July 13 at 6 p.m. A light supper will be followed by learnshops. This event will be hosted by the Beltline, Classy Lassies, and Gateway Gourmet Clubs. Watch the NEBLINE for details of this event.

I hope all of you enjoyed a special Mother's Day with your family or someone very special to you.

See you at the June Council Meeting. Remember, all club members are welcome.

Ways to Save Money

As you finished your taxes this year, did you wish you had "more to show" for the gross income you earned? A recent survey revealed large numbers of Americans do not save or invest regularly. Thirty-nine percent of the families sampled had no scheduled savings plan. Other research studies indicate Americans' saving rate is between 3 and 5 percent of disposable income, much less than other industrialized nations. Why? The high cost of living, government tax policies, and lack of knowledge are some common explanations. Below is a list of strategies, some relatively "painless" for saving more money for future goals:

1. Pay yourself first. Treat savings like a bill and put a part of each paycheck into savings and leave it there.
2. Collect coins. Place all loose change in a jar. When it's

full, deposit the money into a savings account.

3. Bank refunds.
4. Continue paying a loan. Just finished paying for your car? If you're about to pay off a loan, and don't need the money for another big purchase, continue making the same monthly payment to yourself.
5. Break costly habits. Do you really need to buy lunch every day? Are you trying to stop smoking?
6. Take advantage of payroll deduction plans. Many people eliminate the temptation of spending their savings by never seeing it in the first place.
7. Save "extra" paychecks. If you're paid biweekly, in two months of each year you will receive three paychecks. Employees who are paid weekly will receive an "extra" check in four months of each year.
8. Bank a windfall. When-

ever you receive unexpected money—an inheritance, bingo winnings, retroactive pay, an insurance dividend, etc.—put at least part of it into savings.

9. Fund IRAs one week at a time. Try to set aside \$38.46 each week. As you accumulate sufficient funds, place them in your IRA. At the end of the year, you'll have saved \$2000 (plus IRA earnings). Use this same strategy for a Keogh plan if you're self-employed, subject to your maximum contribution limit.

10. Set goals. You'll be better able to save if you know what you're saving for. Make a list of your goals in priority order. Then determine how much money you'll need and when. Calculate the amount of periodic savings necessary to achieve each goal. (LJ)

Making a Family Budget: A Smart Move



A budget is meant to be a master plan for managing your family's money. It gives you a guide how much money your family will spend for purchases and how much will be put into savings for emergencies and short and long-term goals.

Budgeting is important because it helps a family maintain a balance between needs and wants and reduces the stress of constantly walking a financial tightrope. It helps keep you in control of spending and,

through planning, more effectively reach goals and achieve financial security.

Some important keys to setting up a family budget List immediate needs—these are things your family absolutely cannot do without. Some examples might include: food, clothing, housing, electricity, heat and other utilities, health care and transportation.

Think about short-term goals—these are things you want for the near future. Some examples might be a new washing machine, more education. A hint: Be realistic! Limit your list to things that you really want and can likely afford.

Now think about long-term goals. These are the things you want for the more distant future. Examples could include a down payment on a house, a dream vacation or retirement plans.

What is your current general financial health? Add up your

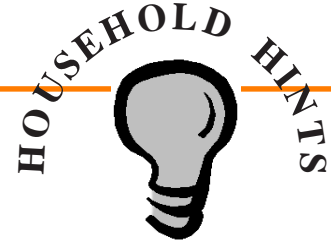
total assets. This is a dollar figure for the current value of everything your family owns, including: cash on hand and in bank accounts, cars, furniture and appliances. Next, add up your total debt. This is the total amount of money you owe, including what you owe on credit cards, loans you need to pay back, unpaid bills.

Compare your assets to your debt. If your assets are higher than your debt, congratulations! Your family has a good start toward financial health. If your debt is higher than your assets, it is essential to plan a way to steadily pay down your debt.

Next it's time to take a close look at your income and expenses. Figure out your family's total monthly income including salaries and wages (after taxes and other deductions) interest and dividends and other sources

See SMART MOVE on page 11

Family Living



by Lorene Bartos, Extension Educator

Preventing streaky windows

To help prevent streaking when cleaning windows, wash them on an overcast day. Direct sunlight tends to dry the window cleaner before the glass has been completely cleaned, causing streaks. (LB)

Parents and Teenagers - Different Definitions

A good example of the different ways parents and teens define the same problem is the conflict that is common in many families—cleaning the bedroom. To many parents, keeping a clean room is simply the right thing to do. Also, there is often a sense of convention involved; it may be embarrassing to a parent for guests to see a child's messy bedroom. From the teen's perspective, it is a simple matter of personal choice: "It's my room, why should it bother you?"

Ultimately, this is a struggle over authority—who controls the teenager's personal space, and who has authority in family relationships in general. It is critical for families to talk and listen to each person's point of view. By listening to your teen, you teach him or her to listen to you in return. Once each person understands the other point of view, solutions may not be easy, but compromise will be possible. It is impossible to compromise if you are arguing about different things! (LJ)

The Impact of Work on Teens

One of the risk factors which leads to youth problems is long work hours. Recent studies indicate part-time work by an adolescent during the school year may lead to academic, social, and emotional problems.

Long work hours are generally defined as over 10-15 hours per week. These hours have been associated with lower grades, less time for homework, less extracurricular involvement, increased class-cutting, and day dreaming. Drug and alcohol use as well as delinquency and psychological distress are frequently noted in these students.

These findings do not suggest teens should not work during the school year. Researchers don't claim cause and effect between working and behavioral problems and lowered achievement. The findings do suggest caution should be taken if adolescents are involved in excessive amounts of work. School should be the primary work of the teen. (LJ)

Character Counts! Corner

Citizenship – Doing Your Share

- Do your share to make your school and community better
- Cooperate
 - Stay informed, vote
 - Be a good neighbor
 - Obey laws and rules
 - Respect authority
 - Protect the environment

What can you and your family do to make your community a better place for everyone? Take time to choose a project and have fun doing it together. Recycling, clean-up projects, doing a good deed for a neighbor, participating in an election campaign—all are sure recipes for family fun that reinforce the pillar of citizenship. (LJ)

