

# Clarice's Column

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FCE Council Chair



April and spring have arrived! April is a month to be enjoyed by gardeners, bird watchers, tax collectors, and people named April. It's a month for April Fool's, the beginning of Day-light Savings Time, showers (we hope), and all the festivities of

Easter. It's a time for new beginnings—the brown landscape has turned to green, flowers are blooming, we have a new room on our house and my husband has two new knees which seem to be working quite nicely! Enjoy each day!

FCE members can look forward to the June Council Meeting (June 26), the Sizzling Summer Sampler on July 13, and the Lancaster County Fair, August 2-6. Health Awareness Day at the fair is August 4. It

seems a long time in the future, but remember the State Convention is in Ainsworth, September 19-21. More details on each of these events will come later.

I hope all our clubs are involved with their community projects. April reminds me that it's time for one of our club's projects (roadside clean up). All our clubs have the "ouch doll" project to work on this year.

And now it's time to get out of the house and enjoy the season! That means you, too!

# Appreciating Other Cultures

Residents of the United States have the opportunity to meet people from many other cultures as visitors from different nations visit here. Increased international travel, trade, and business also leads to contacts with people from different cultures. Appreciating and understanding differences among people helps us all get along better. Understanding our own values and how they affect our view of other people, improves our sensitivity to cultural differences.

Just what is culture? Culture refers to a wide range of things including the way people live, their language, clothes, foods, and values. The interrelationships of religions, classes, technologies, and belief systems make cultures complex. It is only when we can look at American values as international visitors see them, that we start to understand and appreciate the differences in values and the problems they may cause.

The Washington International Center shares the following list of American values with international visitors to help them understand our culture. The center staff believes that these values describe most (but not all) Americans. Although we view our values as positive, people from other cultures may have a different view. This list

of typical American values contrasts sharply with the values commonly held by other countries.

**• Personal Control of Environment**

Many Americans no longer believe in fate. They think people who do are backward, primitive, or naive. To be called "fatalistic"—someone who believes in fate—is a criticism in this country, mean you are superstitious, lazy, and unwilling to take an initiative. Americans consider it normal and right that people should control nature and the environment, rather than the other way around. Problems do not result from bad luck as much as having come from laziness in pursuing a better life. Americans also consider it normal that you should look out for your self-interest first.

**• Change**

In the American mind, change is seen as a good condition. Change is linked to development, improvement, progress, and growth. Many traditional cultures consider change disruptive and destructive, avoiding it as much as possible. Such societies value stability, continuity, tradition, and a rich and ancient heritage.

**• Time and Its Control**

For the average American, time is of utmost importance. To the international visitor, we

appear more concerned with getting goals accomplished on time than with developing deep personal relationships.

**• Equality**

Equality is, for Americans, a cherished value. We have even given it religious basis. We say all people have been "created equal." The equality concept often makes Americans appear strange to others. Seven-eighths of the world feel quite differently. To them, rank, status, and authority are more desirable—even if they personally happen to find themselves near the bottom of the social order. Class and authority give people in those societies a sense of security and certainty.

**• Individualism and Privacy**

In the United States an individual is seen as unique, and therefore, precious and wonderful. While Americans join groups, they still consider themselves individualistic, and they leave groups as easily as they enter them. Privacy is hard for many cultures to understand. Some don't have the word in their language. Privacy may be seen as negative by some nationalities, suggesting loneliness or isolation from the group.

**• Other Mainstream American Values**

See CULTURES on page 11

# Making a Family Budget: A Smart Move To Be in Control

A budget is meant to be a master plan for managing your family's money. It gives you a guide as to 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

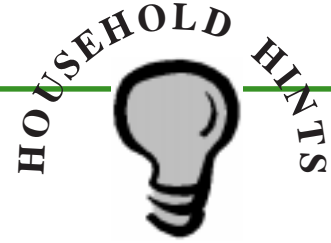
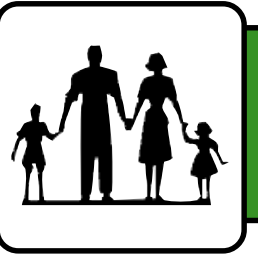
figure for the current value of everything your family owns, including: cash on hand and in bank accounts, cars, furniture and appliances. Next, add up your total debt. This is the total amount of money you owe, including what you owe on credit cards, loans you need to pay back, unpaid bills.

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 ex-

See BUDGET on page 12

# Family Living



by Lorene Bartos, Extension Educator

## Removing Paint From Fabrics

The treatment for removing paint from fabrics depends on whether the paint is water or oil-based. For water-based paints, rinse the soiled area in warm water, then launder. Removal must be done while the paint is still wet; when dry, water-based paints become permanent. For oil-based paints, check the paint can label, then use the same solvent recommended as a paint thinner. If there is no label, use turpentine. Always test on an inconspicuous area of the garment first. Rinse, then pretreat with a prewash stain remover, bar soap or laundry detergent. Rinse again, then launder. (LB)

## Have your children had their shots?

National Infant  
Immunization Week  
April 16-22, 2000

For immunization information contact the Lincoln/Lancaster County Health Department, 441-6247. (LB)



# Myths About the Human Brain

- We fix any damage done early with love and attention later.
  - We aren't that affected by experiences we had as tiny babies because we didn't have language yet and we can't remember things.
  - How we develop is mostly determined by the environment.
  - How we develop is mostly determined by genetics.
- From Up and Downs newsletter. (LJ)

## Character Counts! Corner Fairness

One of the first concepts kids pick up in life is fairness. How many times do you hear children say, "That's not fair!" Many if you're like most of us. It's easy to say things aren't fair when something hasn't gone in your favor. Being able to look from the other person's perspective, however, may help us define the true fairness of a situation.

What does fairness mean?

- Treat all people fairly.
- Listen to others and try to understand what they are feeling and saying.
- Consider all the facts, including opposing views, before making a decision.
- Make impartial decisions, using the same criteria or standards for everyone.
- Correct mistakes.

Fairness excludes:

- Taking advantage of other people's mistakes or ignorance.
- Taking more than your fair share.
- Letting personal prejudices or preference improperly influence decisions which should be based on merit.

Being fair is not always equal and equality is not always fair. Fairness, however, is an essential pillar as you build character in positive ways. (LJ)

