

Clarice's Column

Clarice Steffens
FCE Council Chair



As we turn our calendars to February, I'm sure we are all pleased to have had the year 2000 roll in so calmly. It was thankfully a very uneventful time. It appears, at the moment, that the major difference is that Mother Nature has misplaced our winter weather. That's good for temperatures, but not good for moisture!

This would be an excellent time for all our members to be thinking about an entry in the Heritage Skills Contest. The categories this year are:

1. Visual Arts—Oils,

acrylics, water colors, pencil, ink, charcoal drawing and others.

2. Hand Stitching—Needle-point, crewel embroidery, counted cross stitch, lace net darning, candlewicking, hardinger, huck or Swedish weaving or other.

3. Creative Writing—Original poem—30 lines, short story, fiction or non-fiction—2000 word limit.

4. Glass—Any glass article as stained, leaded, engraved, etched, ink or painted. Include file card describing method used.

Each county is allowed one

entry in each major category. Our county has many talented members so I hope we can have an entry in every category. We would like to have all entries turned in at the March council meeting.

Don't forget about the **earth wellness festival**. Volunteers are needed for the March 23 event.

Our next council meeting will be March 27. Details will follow as available.

Enjoy the spirit of Valentine's Day as you move through February (and the rest of the year). Share a hug, a kind word, a kind deed, a special card and have a Happy Valentine's Day!

- FCE News -

The March Family and Community Club leader training is scheduled for Tuesday, February 22, 1 p.m. LaDeane Jha, extension educator will present the lesson, Becoming Financially Fit. This lesson will offer ways to evaluate where you are financially and help establish where you want to be. Many people struggle to control spending and debts while not having adequate savings to cover emergencies and provide for reaching goals, including retirement.

If you are not an FCE member and would like to attend, call 441-7180 to pre-register so materials can be prepared.

The April FCE Leader training, Heart Healthy Foods that Help You Keep on Ticking, will be March 28, 1 p.m. Watch for more details in the March NEBLINE. (LB)

Raising boys to men

LaDeane Jha
Extension Educator

A lot has been written about the unique challenges of being a boy in today's society, and the challenges of raising boys to become healthy men. Adolescence is the time during which many of a young man's ideas about himself, masculinity and his future are formed. How can parents, other adults and even peers help young men mature? These key players in a young man's life can help him confront aggression, challenge stereotypes about what a "real man should be," and become comfortable with his emotions.

Observe young men in interactions with one another. Do they encourage each other to stifle emotions and "act like a man?" By talking about emotion

with parents, other adults and even peers, young men can practice expressing their emotions, and become more comfortable showing emotion.

Adults can help boys as they develop in the following ways.

Talk. Talk about male and female roles, masculinity and femininity and values. Boys want to know and need to hear it from adults.

Encourage. Young men need to learn to express emotions in healthy ways. Encourage them to talk about frustrations rather than act them out.

Don't lower your expectations. Many people let boys "off the hook" when it comes to emotions, assuming that they are not as good as girls at expressing their feelings, or that they are naturally prone to act out in anger or aggression. Begin early on to expect boys and young

men to respect their emotions and the emotions of others.

Examine your own expectations. The adults of today experienced all the stereotypes that boys grow up with when they were young. Think about the stereotypes that are limiting in your own life and work to avoid passing them on to the next generation.

Some sources for further reading include:

Boys will be Men, Paul Kivel, 1999

Raising Cain: Protecting the Emotional Life of Boys. Daniel Kindlon and Michael Thompson, 1999

Real Boys: Rescuing our Sons from the Myths of Boyhood, Owl Books, 1999.

Adapted from *The Ups and Downs of Adolescence*, October 1999. (LJ)

Ways to beat the high cost of having fun

- Eating out can cost less when you "lunch" instead of "dine."

- Rent or borrow equipment for a new hobby or sport. Make sure you enjoy the activity before buying. This also gives you a chance to compare brands.

- Matinees cost less for most entertainment—may be less crowded too.

- Discover your neighborhood. Enjoy local museums, zoos, historical attractions, lectures and workshops at low

cost.

- Camping vacations are fun and economical especially for a family. Try low-cost well-run government campgrounds and parks.

- Off-season vacations offer huge savings and everything is less crowded.

- Use your library. You can borrow books instead of buying them. Listen to recordings before buying.

- Check bus and train prices—taking a train or bus is

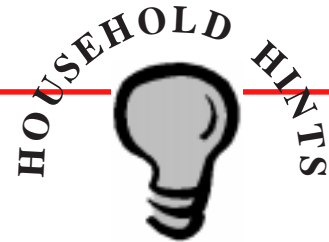
often less expensive than flying and you can see the country.

- Make your own gifts, it's fun and more personal.

- When traveling with children, look for hotels and motels that don't charge for children sharing the parents' room.

- Organize low cost parties or get-togethers by having everyone share—for example a pot-luck supper. (LJ)

Family Living



by Lorene Bartos, Extension Educator

Wood chopping block care

Routine Care: Wash and scour with an abrasive cleanser, using a stiff brush. Rinse thoroughly with sponge. Periodically apply a coating of salad or mineral oil to make the wood more stain resistant.

Special Instructions: Avoid soaking with water so that the chopping block does not split or warp. (LB)

Chance to hear Michael Josephson

Michael Josephson, a former law professor and founder of the nonprofit Joseph and Edna Josephson Institute of Ethics, will be in Lincoln February 27, 28 and 29 to present a series of seminars, trainings and presentations.

The following sessions are open to the public and you are encouraged to attend.

Community Presentation, February 27, 6:30-8:30 p.m., Cornhusker Hotel

UNL Faculty/Staff Seminar, February 28, 2:30-3:30 p.m., UNL City Union

Student Presentation (especially for high school and college students), February 28, 6:30-7:30 p.m., UNL City Union

Josephson organized the Character Counts! coalition, a national partnership of youth-influencing organizations that stress the development of character built on six core ethical values: Trustworthiness, Respect, Responsibility, Fairness, Caring and Citizenship. (LJ)

Tidbits

About one-tenth (10.7%) of Lancaster County residents are aged 65 or older, compared to 13.7% statewide.

The proportion of county residents who are under age 18 is 23.4%, lower than the Nebraska average of 26.6%.

Racial and ethnic minority residents make up 8.7% of the population of Lancaster County, compared to 10.3% statewide. African Americans account for 2.4%; Native Americans account for 0.7%; Asian Americans account for 2.4%; and Hispanic Americans account for 3.2% of the county's total population.

The proportion of single-parent families in this county (11.1%) is slightly higher than the average for Nebraska (10.9%). However, 16.6% of racial/ethnic minority households in Lancaster County consist of single parent families. (LJ)

Peer influences

The influence of peer groups becomes increasingly important as children reach adolescence. This is a normal stage of development where a child begins to pull away from the family group to find security in their peer group. You can ease this transition by doing the following:

If a child feels valued and accepted at home, the child will be less inclined to go too far with negative peer influences.

Let your children know you trust them to make good decisions. Set limits but let the little things go.

A strong caring connection with parents is essential.

Be there emotionally for your children. Their need for you to LISTEN keeps this connection strong.

During adolescence, communication and activities with the family may decrease. Find new ways to connect based on your children's interests.

Ask your adolescents what they think, rather than telling them your opinion first. You'll find out what they are thinking by listening rather than telling.

Give your child some space. They value and need privacy and solitude at this time in their lives.

Avoid "LIME" disease: Lecturing, Instructing, Moralizing and Explaining. (LJ)