

Clarice's Column



Clarice Steffens
FCE Council Chair

As we move through fall and anticipate the coming of winter, it is time to enjoy the last few days of great fall weather. The winter cold and snow cannot be far away and may already be with us as you read this. As Nebraskans, we are never too surprised at whatever Mother Nature has in-store for us.

September and October are active times for FCE. September

brings reorganization of clubs and Council meeting. October brings Achievement Day.

Officers for the next two years were elected at the Council meeting.

They are Lynn Bush, chair; Jan Broer, vice chair; Irene Colborn, secretary; and Joy Kruse, treasurer.

We are also assured we will be able to offer a scholarship in 2002, thanks to all who contributed to the fund through the Bakeless Bake Sale. Thank you to Scott Young, director of the Lincoln Food Bank, for speaking at the

Council meeting. Achievement Day activities are below.

We are always looking for ideas for programs, fund raising ideas and any suggestions for the betterment of the organization. There is still an opportunity for your input. I hope to hear from you.

The transformation from fall into winter means Thanksgiving is fast approaching. It is time to renew old traditions and maybe establish some new traditions. Regardless what your plans may be, enjoy the warmth of gathering with friends and family.

Happy Thanksgiving!



★ FCE News ★

Family Community Education (FCE) Achievement Night

This year's FCE Achievement Night was a success, and everyone thoroughly enjoyed Kathy Peters' presentation on dollmaking. For more photos of the evening, visit www.lancaster.unl.edu/home/fce.htm



Kathy Peters, guest speaker.



Donna Gill (above left) received a 45 Years achievement award. Other individual achievement awards went to: Betty Baker, 55 years; Bonnie Krueger, 40 years; Leoma Winch, 40 years; Joy Kruse, 35 Years; Lois Reisel, 35 years; Martha McLeod, 25 years; Jo Yuhl, 20 years; Diane Wendelin, 10 years; and Joyce Riddle, 5 years.

Avoid Holiday Stress — Have Realistic Expectations

It is easy to expect too much of the holidays. High expectations are fostered by the media, advertisements and songs. Our culture bombards us from all directions with idealized images of the holidays.

Children's expectations begin to rise with the arrival of the first holiday catalogs in September and the magnitude of those expectations becomes apparent with the first "wish list." While children's unrealistic expectations are obvious, it is important to realize that adults, too, have expectations which are not realistic. When our experiences do not live up to the idea, we may feel disappointed, upset or worse. This contributes to holiday stress.

MONEY: Don't fall for our culture's materialistic message that expensive gifts are a sign of love and caring. Remind yourself it is possible for your family to have memorable holiday experiences without spending a great deal of money. Discuss your financial situation as a family and develop a holiday budget based on realistic expectations and stick to it.

TASKS: All gifts do not have to be wrapped at home, nor do all cookies have to come from your oven. Even with good time management, it is sometimes impossible to get everything done without becoming tense, exhausted and irritable. Learn to say no.

FAMILY PROBLEMS: While the "media" family is all smiles during the holidays, don't expect all of your time with family to be characterized by love and harmony. Family problems do not magically go away. Real people and real families are not perfect. Don't

expect them to be. There may be a few rough spots but you can still come out of the holidays with some precious family experiences.

Being realistic about the holidays is not being cynical. It is a way to avoid unnecessary disappointment and stress. You and your family are more likely to truly enjoy your holiday experiences if you are not judging them against some unattainable ideal. (LJ)

Adapted from an article by Gary Hansen, Realistic Expectations Help Avoid Holiday Stress

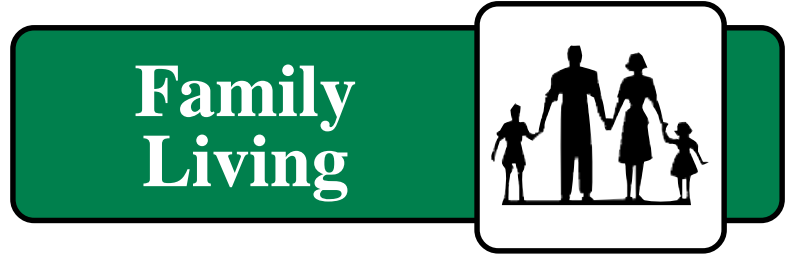
Children & Toys

Parents, grandparents and other friends carefully shop for the latest, most exciting and up-to-date toys advertised for the holiday season. They carefully wrap the gift and anxiously anticipate the delighted ohs and ahs as the gift is unwrapped. A few minutes later they watch dumbfounded as the child has

a great time playing with the boxes the gifts came in. What happened?

Sometimes the hype surrounding a particular toy has much more appeal than the toy itself. We know that it is through play children learn about the world around them and toys are often a child's tools for learning. Toys help children to:

- Use their bodies.
- Develop their social skills.



Family Living

Helping Our Kids Cope with War and Terrorism

Our sense of security and well-being has been seriously undermined since the terrorist attack on Sept. 11, 2001. We are now dealing with new realities and uncharted territory. All of us, including our children, are dealing with grief, sadness, tension, anxiety, fear, anger and other strong emotions. Economic uncertainty adds to our stress and future events are likely to bring more uncertainty. Therefore, it is important we develop long-term strategies to help ourselves and our children cope.

Tips for Parents

- Take time to think about, and cope with, your own feelings.
- Help your children cope with their feelings by simultaneously acknowledging their feelings and reassuring them.
- Don't try to talk children out of what they are feeling.
- Share your feelings with your children (depending on their ages), but be careful not to

look to your children for support. Avoid extreme language when sharing your feelings or reactions to the tragedy.

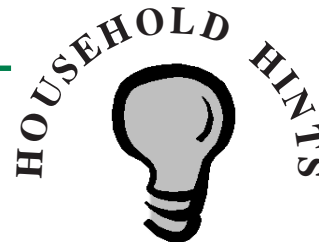
- Talk to children about constructive ways to handle their anger.

- Let children know it's okay to ask questions. Answer their questions directly, but do not give them more information than they need or more than you think they can handle.

- Try to balance the attention you give to the tragedy and unfolding events with maintaining "normal" activities and routines at home.

- Monitor what your kids see and hear about the tragedy through the media to make sure you are comfortable with the messages they are receiving based on their age, maturity level, etc.

For more information on helping families deal with war and terrorism visit the Lancaster County Extension Web site at www.lancaster.unl.edu (LJ)



by Lorene Bartos, Extension Educator

The proper way to dispose of leftover cleaning products:

- Use them up.
- Give them to someone who can use them. If you do this, be sure to leave the labels intact.
- Dispose of water soluble cleaning products down-the-drain. Water soluble products are those that are normally mixed or rinsed with water when using. Such products include all-purpose cleaners, bleaches, dishwashing detergents, laundry products, water-based metal cleaners and polishes, and toilet bowl cleaners. Use running water while discarding them down-the-drain and do not mix products together.
- Dispose of solid cleaning products in the trash. This includes products like bar soaps, soap scouring pads or towelletes.
- Dispose of non-water soluble products (those not used with water) as special household waste. This category includes such products as some furniture cleaners and polishes, spot removers used for drycleanable garments, metal cleaners and polishes not used with water, products that state on the label they are flammable.

- Develop their ability to talk.
- Learn about their senses (hearing, seeing, feeling, tasting).
- Begin to solve problems. Toys should be chosen carefully, however. For example, when choosing a toy ask yourself:
 - Will the child like it more than a day?
 - Is it suited to the child's

- abilities?
 - Is it suitable for the child's mental and social development?
 - Is it well made, strong and safe for the age of the child?
 Those who purchase toys need to make certain they are safe by checking the label to make sure the toy is suitable for the age of the child and then providing the necessary supervision for children when they are playing. (LJ)