



**Elkhart County
Extension Homemakers**

Over The Coffee Cup Newsletter



March/April 2022

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Letter from Your County President

Happy Spring to ALL!

As I write this article, it is still early in March and the sun is shining, however, the weather report is saying snow is coming next week. Well, that is March in Indiana, right? I cannot wait to see green grass and trees again!

At this time of the year our organization is thinking ahead to the next year and putting committees together. I sincerely hope you have turned in your forms to the office and have added your name to them. The board will be meeting next week and will be discussing those forms and getting the committee positions filled.

My theme this year, as you know, has been to walk hand in hand together and one of the ways to do that is for everyone to get involved. Even if you did not put your name on the form but are rethinking that decision, we would like to hear from you and will gladly add you to the committee you chose.

The past month's weather prevented us from meeting with the President's Council so we did not have a vote on adjusting the yearly dues for our membership. We are planning on having that vote in our March 31st Council meeting as that will be the last meeting of the year for the current Council. We will be discussing items concerning the upcoming County Fair and all the activities that happen in our HFA building. It will be a very important meeting and we are asking that every club be represented in that meeting.

As of this writing, there is no news on a new Extension Educator for us. The Extension Office has been very helpful in trying to organize the lessons we are doing and the board is very grateful for their help. As your board, we are asking that questions or concerns you have concerning our program be directed to us. We will find the answers you need and help you move forward. It is important for all of us to remember that the staff in the office have many things they are responsible for and it is usually an Extension Educator that spends time helping our organization. Since Extension has two openings for an Educator, the office staff has been taking on the responsibilities of our organization as well as the other things expected of them. Please remember to thank them for all they do for us if you should call or stop into the office.

Remember that your Cultural Arts projects are due later this month. Check out the information concerning all the events leading up to the summer including our State Conference in Noblesville in June.

Blessings on you and your families as we enter the spring season and enjoy all that Mother Nature brings us.

Sincerely and respectfully,
Brenda Mestach
President
Elkhart County Extension Homemakers



Mark Your Calendars

March 2022

1	Homemaker of the Year Applications due in office
1	County Committee Sign-up Sheets due in office
1	Program Planning Suggestion Sheets due in office
5	Heritage Skills Workshop, HFA Bldg.
7	County Officer Board Mtg, 4:30 pm, Ext. Office
8	VCS Sewing Day, 9 am—3 pm, HFA Building
15	Volunteer Hours Sheet due to County Vice President
15	IEHA Spring District Meeting
24	Educational Program, Sleep Well, Be Well
31	Club President Council Mtg, 7:00 pm, HFA Building (Cultural Arts Entries due)

April 2022

1	Point System Forms due in office
4	County Officer Board Mtg, 4:30 pm, Ext. Office
12	VCS Sewing Day, 9 am—3 pm, HFA Building
19	Achievement Night, ECCC
21	Educational Program, Green Cleaning
30	Past County President's Brunch

Happy Birthday!

March—Tammy Bainter, Cinda Beggs, Bea Blosser, Marla Carlson, Carol Denton, Jan Ganger, Denise Goveia, Jo Harris, Staci Hartsough, Ramona Huber, Sally Kyle, Peggy Malott, Beverly Mauck, Debra Parcell, Joy Von Blon, and Suzette Yurko

April—Cheryl Baker, Rebecca Buss, Shai Fields, Carol L. Kauffman, Brenda McCuddy, Elaine Miller, Susan Rowe, Doris Wall, Pauline Yoder, Eleanor Yoder, and Maryann Zerbe



Extension Homemaker News

Club President Council Meeting Reminder—March 31st

Current Club Presidents, we encourage you to personally invite your newly elected incoming President to this meeting. Also, Cultural Arts items are due at this meeting. The special project is a lawn ornament.

Spring District Meeting

The Spring District Meeting will be held Tuesday, March 15th at the Knox Community Center at 55 E. Lake St, Knox, Indiana.

Home & Family Conference

Mark your calendars for June 6-8, 2022 for this year's Home & Family Conference at the Embassy Suites Conference Center in Noblesville, IN (13700 Conference Center Dr South, Noblesville, IN 46060).

Welcome New Members!

The membership committee is pleased to welcome new member Lauren Hickok from Goshen. Lauren will be joining Friends and Neighbors and was sponsored by Nancy Thwaites. Lauren enjoys crocheting, reading, cooking / baking, and being outdoors. She is the first child in her family to receive a bachelor's degree. After graduating in May 2021, Lauren got married in June 2021. If you see her, be sure to congratulate her on these two major life events. Welcome, Lauren!

Achievement Night—Tuesday, April 19 at 6:00pm

The theme is "We Will Walk Hand in Hand, Side by Side." Doors open at 5:30pm for club members to arrive. Please bring a salad or dessert to share. See you there!



Help Needed to Make Baby Hats for Hospital

This is a request for handmade baby hats for the area hospitals. We need sizes newborn to 3 months. They can be knitted, crocheted or sewn. If you need yarn to make them, there will be a crate in the foyer of the Extension Office for this project. There are lots of free patterns on Pinterest or if you want a paper copy I'll put a sheet in the foyer. I only crochet at this time, so I'll put an easy crochet in the round pattern and a crochet in rows pattern. Both work nicely with 4 ply yarn. I have 3 ply yarn I will put in the crate also if you want to try other patterns.

Please return your hats to the Extension Office and I will pick them up. This is an ongoing project, so please just do what you can to help. No need to get all of our wrists hurting.

Thank you for your help!

Jenny Huffman
574-370-0699



Quilt Gardens

The Extension Homemaker organization works with the Michiana Master Gardeners to plant and maintain the garden on the fairgrounds. The Extension Homemakers have the responsibility every other week of maintaining the garden. This means we need to pull the weeds, sometimes trim the parsley, and just do general maintenance. The weeks we have the responsibility are the 2nd and 4th weeks from June through September. The days can vary but we need to make sure one of the visits is Thursday or Friday so it is nice for the weekend, and the other is earlier in the week. To sign up to help maintain our Quilt Garden, call or email the Extension office at 533-0554 or fink24@purdue.edu



Fair-time Thoughts

July 22-July 30, 2022

- **Educational Booth**— If you have an idea for a booth, get with your club members and reserve your spot!
- **Hostessing and Craft & Needlework Demonstrations**—We need volunteers to help greet visitors and answer questions. We also need your crafting/needlework skills for demonstrations.



To schedule a time for Hostessing or Craft & Needlework Demos, call or email the office at:

533-0554 or fink24@purdue.edu

Hostessing Schedule

Two hostesses per time slot. Times are as follows:

- Opening shift (arrive 8:45 am) from 9am—11am
- 11:00 am to 1:00 pm
- 1:00 pm to 3:00 pm
- 3:00 pm to 5:00 pm
- 5:00 pm to 7:00 pm
- Closing shift from 7:00 pm to 9:00 pm

Craft & Needlework Demonstration Schedule

Demonstrators are encouraged to participate in both shifts per day.

Dates and times are as follows:

- Friday, July 22 — 1 to 3pm and 4 to 6pm
- Saturday, July 23 — 1 to 3pm and 4 to 6pm
- Sunday, July 24 — 1 to 3pm and 4 to 6pm
- Monday, July 25 — 1 to 3pm and 4 to 6pm
- Tuesday, July 26 — 1 to 3pm and 4 to 6pm
- Wednesday, July 27 — 1 to 3pm and 4 to 6pm
- Thursday, July 28 — 1 to 3pm and 4 to 6pm
- Friday, July 29 — 1 to 3pm and 4 to 6pm
- Saturday, July 30 — 1 to 3pm and 4 to 6pm

Family Resource Management

Tips on Saving for Retirement

Source: Take Charge America Inc.

For many of us, a “nest egg” may seem like a fantasy. We all realize that we should be saving for retirement, but many of us are consumed with mortgage payments, auto loans, child care, tuition, and credit card debt, among other expenses. Instead of planning for retirement “later,” or hedging your bets on social security, making a plan now for that nest egg will reduce stress and challenges down the road. The earlier that you start saving, the better off you will be. Remember, it’s never too late to start. Here are a few tips to help you kick off the process of saving for retirement!

First things first, pay off any high-interest debt and outstanding credit card debt! As your credit card balances decrease, your momentum and drive will likely increase. I recommend checking out a personal finances calculator to determine how long it will take to pay off your credit cards.

If your employer offers a 401(k) account, be sure to participate! You can contribute a percentage of each paycheck, before taxes, to retirement. For those who need a reminder to save regularly, I highly recommend this method! The money is automatically deducted from your paycheck, so you don’t see it and have the opportunity to spend it! Many employers offer a matching contribution to 401(k) plans. This means, that they’ll add money to your 401(k). In this case, opting out of your company’s 401(k) is like saying no to free money! In order to maximize this benefit, you should contribute the same percentage of the employer match, at a minimum! What if you are self-employed or your employer doesn’t offer a 401(k)? I recommend opening a Individual Retirement Account (IRA) or a Roth (IRA). If you want to pursue this option, I recommend seeking guidance from a financial advisor to help you determine the right retirement account for your needs and your goals!

Have you considered a health savings account? If you are enrolled in a High Deductible Health Plan, consider a Health Savings Account (HSA) to ease healthcare costs as you enter retirement. HSAs allow you to make tax-free deposits into a savings account designed for health-related expenses. Just like a regular savings account, your contributions collect interest and grow over time! You can pay into an HSA now, and withdraw for medical costs in your older years. Just keep in mind that withdrawals for non-medical expenses will incur stiff penalties!

As the catch phrase goes, don’t put all of your eggs in one basket. This certainly applies to your nest egg! Take a look at U.S. Savings Bonds and treasuries for safe, guaranteed, inflation-linked investments. “Safe” investments become more crucial as you come close to retirement age. Remember it’s never too late to start saving for retirement. Socking away \$25 a week, or even \$25 every month will significantly improve your quality of life in retirement while providing peace of mind right now!

Leadership Development

Things Your Parents Said That Were Wiser Than We Knew

Source: Kevin Eikenberry

Recently, I have been hearing my mom and dad in my ear. There are things my parents told me as a kid that have become a part of my belief system. But when I thought about them as a leader, I gained a whole other level of insight. Because of this mental exercise, I decided to ask others about the things their parents told them, to see what other leadership lessons I could uncover. This article is the result.

“Do it right the first time.” As valuable as this idea is, there is a downside. Sometimes, when we haven’t done something before, we may not be able to “do it right” because we might not know what “right” is yet. As leaders, we can set clear directions and define clear expectations. When people know what “right” is, this makes great sense. Until then, this advice might keep us from taking any action at all.

“Every thought in your head does not need to come out your mouth.” This is a powerful thought for us as communicators, but especially as leaders. A bit more thought about our words will serve all of us well.

“Work hard and it will pay off.” And the related, **“Hard work never hurt anyone.”** Doing the work of leading is hard work. Investing in ourselves to become more effective will pay off in our results and our example. If you want others to work hard, show them your example.

“What do YOU think the answer is?” I love this question because it is encouraging the other person to think. As leaders, one of the most important things we can do is to engage our teammates in thinking and solving problems themselves. When we continually expect input from our teammates, we will get broader perspectives, more commitment and engagement, and better results.

“Just because everyone’s doing it, does that make it right?” As leaders, we must lead to the best outcome, not the just the popular one. In fact, often the best leaders will take a contrarian approach – zigging when others zag.

“Leave things better than you found them.” What if, in every situation, everyone on our team did this? What if every leader made this their mantra? We would have continuous improvement, higher quality and safety results, and a culture of accountability and success. When leaders adopt this idea, they will get those results, and leave a legacy that will far surpass their career.

Food and Nutrition

Did You Know... Some Foods Could Improve Sleep at Night?

Source: National Sleep Foundation

Eating and drinking for better sleep means more than just avoiding caffeine and heavy, heartburn-inducing foods at night. Certain foods and beverages could actually help you fall asleep faster and sleep more soundly. Here are some things to put on your grocery list for more restful nights!

Complex Carbohydrates: Skip the white bread, refined pasta, and sugary, baked goods, which may reduce serotonin levels and impair sleep. Instead, choose stick-to-your-ribs whole grains for your bedtime snack: Popcorn, oatmeal, or whole-wheat crackers with nut butter are all good choices. Complex carbs increase serotonin levels which contribute to good sleep!

A Handful of Nuts: Nuts are a good source of heart-healthy fats. And almonds and walnuts, specifically, contain melatonin, a hormone that helps to regulate your sleep/wake cycle. Eating them can increase your blood levels of the hormone, helping you sleep more soundly.

Cottage Cheese: Foods that are high in lean protein, like cottage cheese, also pack the amino acid tryptophan, which may increase serotonin levels. Serotonin is a brain chemical and low levels of it can contribute to insomnia. To sweeten it up, top the cottage cheese with raspberries, which are rich sources of melatonin.

Bedtime Tea: A nightly cup of caffeine-free tea can be a perfect relaxing ritual. Chamomile, ginger, and peppermint are calming choices for bedtime.

Warm Milk: Although some experts think of it as an old wives’ tale, others say that milk helps you sleep because it contains tryptophan.



Fruits: Certain fruits that contain melatonin may help you fall asleep faster and wake up less often during the night. For instance, tart cherry juice and whole tart cherries contain a lot of melatonin. Bananas, pineapple, and oranges are also good sources. If you have insomnia, eating two kiwis before bed can increase your sleep duration by an hour over the course of a month. Other fruits and vegetables that are rich in antioxidants (like berries, prunes, raisins, and plums) may have a similar effect by helping to counteract the oxidative stress caused by a sleep disorder.

Human Development

Grow Happiness Through Focus and Patience

Source: Mayo Clinic

Many people wait around for happiness to find them, when in reality it's sometimes only a positive thought away. Being happy can be a choice you make. There are many small techniques you can try to create a happier and more enjoyable life.

What science says about happiness

"Research has shown you have control over your happiness," explains Stacy Blackburn, D.O., Mayo Clinic Health System family physician. "It all relates back to your personality and also your thoughts and behaviors, which can be changed."

While some people think landing their dream job or driving a fancy car will bring them lots of joy, this is not often the case. On average, people who have wealth, beauty or less stress are no happier than anyone else.

This is great news for many, because there are ways to live a happier life that don't reflect your income or appearance. Happy people seem to build their life choices around five pillars, says Dr. Blackburn. They include:

- Appreciating what you have
- Devoting time to friends and family
- Feeling a sense of purpose
- Living in the moment
- Maintaining an optimistic outlook

Choose optimism

Optimism is one aspect of your life over which you have complete control. Being optimistic involves seeing your situation from the positive side instead of the negative. It can be easy for negative thoughts to take over, but they don't have to. If you aren't naturally an optimistic person, there are ways you can challenge your pessimistic thinking. Dr. Blackburn suggests combating negative thoughts by recognizing them and asking these questions:

- Is the situation really as bad as I think?
- Is there another way to look at the situation?
- What can I learn from this experience that I can use in the future?

Invest in relationships

Relationships are an important part of being happy. Can you think of a friend who can always make you laugh? When you surround yourself with happy people, their happiness is likely to rub off on you and improve your mood. Dr. Blackburn says research suggests that relationships provide the strongest meaning and bring the most purpose to your life.

While it can be easy to take family and friends for granted, they're typically the people who are there through good and bad times. It's important you make time for these relationships and give happiness in return. Communicating kind words and actions to the special people in your life and showing appreciation can help you become a happier person.



Express gratitude

Gratitude is a sense of wonder, appreciation and thankfulness for life. Taking time out of your day to recognize the good things in your life and appreciate what you have can help practice gratitude. It can be as simple as taking a minute every day to identify at least one thing that enriches your life. Practice substituting ungrateful thoughts for grateful ones. Try practicing gratitude before you go to sleep at night and right away when you wake up in the morning.

Find your purpose

People who strive to meet a goal or fulfill a mission are happier than those who don't have such aspirations. Goals provide a sense of purpose, boost self-esteem and bring people together. The goal itself doesn't matter as long as it is moving you closer toward living a happier life.

"Aligning everyday activities with the long-term meaning and purpose of your life can help you feel more content," says Dr. Blackburn. "Some people are engaged in activities they love, while others aren't. If you're searching for your purpose, ask yourself these questions:

- What excites and energizes me?
- What are my proudest achievements?
- How do I want others to remember me?

Practice

While all of the aforementioned advice suggests ways to help you become happier, practice is the key to achieving happiness. Remember that your choices, thoughts and actions all carry influence over your happiness. Making an effort to cultivate optimism and express gratitude can become a simple habit over time.

Live in the moment

"Don't wait for joy to come on a day when you're less busy or stressed, because that day may never come," says Dr. Blackburn. "Look for opportunities throughout your day to enjoy the small pleasures in life. Focus your energy on the positives of the present instead of dwelling on the past or worrying about the future."



PURDUE UNIVERSITY COOPERATIVE EXTENSION SERVICE

Elkhart County

Elkhart County 4-H Fairgrounds

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