



Elkhart County
Extension Homemakers

Over The Coffee Cup Newsletter



*September/October
2025*

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Extension - Elkhart County

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Letter From Your County President

Hi Friends,

I recently heard someone speak about the wonders of water. He spoke not only about the necessity to animal and human life of water, but also about the danger, adventure, and mystery that also comes with it. This got me thinking about my thoughts on the topic. For those of you that know me, you know how much I enjoy boating, going to the lake, and being around water. Some of my most memorable vacations have been spent at the ocean. Nowadays, you will find me and my family on the lake many weekends.

My theme for this club year is “Forever Young”. As the years continue to pass, I am reminded of the physical aging process. It can be the gentle or harsh reminder of aches in my body that creep up, the wrinkles and lines that suddenly appear in my face, or my eyeglass prescription changing yet again. When I think of being forever young, it is more of a mental aspect, rather than a physical one. Being near or in water gives me that youthful feeling. I am reminded of about 25 family members taking tubes down the Shenandoah River in West Virginia or the wild white water rafting trip we took down The Potomac River. I also find peace and solitude by simply sitting and watching any body of water.

Volunteering helps me also to keep that youthful feeling. There are many volunteer opportunities to be had by being an Extension Homemaker. Many of our clubs volunteer by knitting or crocheting items and then donating them to a community organization. We volunteer by picking up members who can't or prefer not to drive anymore. We volunteer by hosting an event or being a part of one of our wonderful committees. I encourage all of us to look at our clubs and committees. What can we do to improve them? Our club (Clinton Clique) has a lady who loves to make cards. What a joy it is for me to see one of her cards arrive in the mail. She is clever with her words and always puts a smile on my face when I read what poem she has created. Our club also volunteered with the Volunteer Community Support committee a few months ago. They provided a delicious homemade lunch and gave us simple tasks that most anyone can do. I am not real “crafty”, but I did leave that day feeling like I had contributed in a small way.

So, what helps you to keep that forever young feeling? Whatever the answer is for you, I encourage you to do more of it. I believe you will feel better physically, spiritually, and emotionally for it. Now let us all look around and see where we can contribute to make our organization stronger. As we watch summer start to fade, I wish you peaceful, wild, and adventurous times around your campfires, in the apple orchards, making that favorite fall soup, watching the falling and colorful leaves, and whatever it is that helps you to feel “Forever Young”.

Lisa Stephens
County President
Elkhart County Extension Homemakers



Mark Your Calendars

September 2025

- 2 ***VCS Sewing Day, Maple Hall.—9 am to 3 pm***
- 8-9 Camp ELKO Retreat
- 11 County Officers Board Meeting, Ext. Office—4:30pm
- 16 Achievement Night, ECCC—6:00pm

October 2025

- 7 Fall Michigan City District Meeting (Lake County)
- 9 County Officers Board Meeting, Ext. Office—4:30pm
- 14 VCS Sewing Day, Maple Hall—9 am to 3 pm
- 20-24 IEHA Week
- 23 Council Meeting , Ext. Office—6:30pm
- 25 Fall Holiday Program, Maple Hall— 9 am to Noon
- 25 IEHA Make a Difference Day

2025 Achievement Night

Join us on Tuesday, September 16th at 6:00pm for Achievement Night!
Bring a dish to share for the celebration!



September— Barbara Bender, Michelle Blough, Jen Chupp, Phyllis Cooper, Janet Gardner, Nancy Gleim, Vickie Gortney, Carol S. Kauffman, Barbara Ogle, Deb Pepple, Marilyn Potthast, Norma Schrock, Nikki Stump, and Margaret Weybright

October— Kathy Graber, Nancy Hawkins, Karen Hershberger, Judy Hickman, Tena Jakubowicz, Kathie Myers, Kathy Overholt, Marlys Prough, Janet Ryman, Ruby Snyder Bontrager, and Sherry Weaver

Extension Homemaker News

2025 Fashion Show Highlights

Fourteen local seamstresses entered into the Fashion Show. The 1st place winners of each category are Aprons: Sharol Cloud; Coats or Suits: Melody Moore; Dresses: Karen Meade; My Choice: Elaine Mast; Separates: Louanne Gressman-Dunn; Sewing for Others (infant to 5): Jean Burtsfield; Sewing for Others (ages 6 to 12): Karen Meade; Sewing for Others (ages 13 to 17): May Beane; and Sewing for Others (adult): Kathy Leinbach. Melody Moore won the Overall Grand Champion award.

2025 Open Class Results

Over 300 exhibitors entered into the Open Class contests. Congrats to our Grand Champions: Antiques: Kathy Stoltzfus; Aprons: Elaine Mast; Creative Arts: Cheryl Ringler; Culinary Arts – Baking: Cathy Stump; Cul. Arts – Cake Decorating – Cakes: Christeena Dinehart; Cul. Arts – Food Pres., Canning: Carl Lauster; Culinary Arts – Food Pres., Misc.: Valerie Jacobs; Handicrafts: Max Samuelson; Holiday Handicrafts & Paper Art: Tommy Sarber; Needlework: Myrtis Justiniano; Photography: Terry Gagich; Individual Small Quilt—Pieced: Fern Bontrager; Group Quilt—Machine Pieced: Denise Sanders; Individual—Hand Quilted: Kathy Leinbach; Sewing (Wearable): Barbara Brown; Sewing (Non-wearable): JoEllen Frend; and Overall Grand Champion: Myrtis Justiniano.

The Special Contest winners are: Metal Yard Art: Dennis Hahn; President's Baked Item: Lisa Giddens; Charcuterie Board: Erin Datzman; Dairy Delicious: Karen Meade; Fastest Fingers: Gwen Hernley; Year of the Pea: Kathy Stoltzfus; Longest Apple Peel: Patricia Hochstetler; Annual Senior Citizen's Cookies: Lisa Giddens, Carolyn Riddle, and Karen Meade; Cookie Stacking: Owen Phillips, Wesley Pinion, Kerensa Barber, Charity Wesco, James Pena, and Chad Renner; Unique Birdhouse: Jenny Huffman; Bursting with Blueberries: Mark Zak; Best of Michiana Ribs & Byler Lienhart Cook Off: To Be Announced

Fall District Meeting

The 2025 Fall District Meeting will be held Tuesday, October 7, 2025 at Andorra Banquets (1112 US 41, Schererville, IN). Registration and refreshments will be at 10:00am EST. Lunch is \$20 per person. Reservation form is due by September 25th—no walk-ins. The reservation form was emailed on August 18th to all homemakers that Jenn at the Extension Office has an email address for. Hard copies are available for pickup at the Extension Office in the office foyer. If you need a ride, please contact any of the County Officers (phone #s are in Yearbook).

Silent Auction Donations

All donations for the Fall Holiday Program Silent Auction need to be turned in by October 11th. Contact Sherry Weaver at 574-208-7971 for more information or to schedule a drop-off. No drop-offs at the Extension Office please.

New Gingerbread Contest at the Fall Holiday Program

The Fall Holiday Program is coming up on Saturday, October 25 from 9am to noon. Like past years, there will be food tasting, craft demonstrations, make-and-take items, and a silent auction.

New this year will be a gingerbread contest for the Extension Clubs. Each club is asked to create at least one gingerbread item in any medium. For example, a painting of a gingerbread house or gingerbread man; a cake decorated like a gingerbread house; gingerbread houses made out of wood, paper, or crochet... or even gingerbread! No larger than 12" x 18".

Attendees will vote for their favorite gingerbread item and then Extension Club whose items receives the most votes will receive a certificate as the winner of the first annual gingerbread contest. All gingerbread items will be raffled off to attendees.

Gingerbread entries must be turned in by 4pm, Friday, October 24 to Sherry Weaver. Contact Sherry for more information at 574-208-7971.

Health & Wellness

Gut Health

Emily Christ, HHS Educator

Maintaining good gut health is essential for overall well-being, influencing not only digestion but also immune function, mental health, and even weight management. At the center of gut health is the microbiome, a complex ecosystem of trillions of bacteria, fungi, viruses, and other microorganisms that reside in the gastrointestinal tract. These microbes play a crucial role in various physiological processes, from nutrient absorption to immune system modulation.

According to research published in the journal *Nutrients*, the gut microbiome is intricately linked to immune function, helping to regulate inflammation and protect against infections. A diverse and balanced microbiome is associated with better overall health outcomes, while imbalances (dysbiosis) have been linked to conditions such as inflammatory bowel disease (IBD), obesity, and even neurological disorders like Parkinson's disease and depression.

Diet plays a significant role in shaping the composition and diversity of the gut microbiome. Fiber-rich foods, fruits, vegetables, and fermented foods promote the growth of beneficial bacteria and support a healthy microbiome. On the other hand, diets high in processed foods, sugar, and unhealthy fats can disrupt microbial balance and contribute to inflammation and disease risk.

Probiotics and prebiotics are also key components in promoting gut health. Probiotics are live bacteria found in certain foods (like yogurt and kefir) and supplements that can help replenish and maintain a healthy gut microbiota. Prebiotics, such as fiber-rich foods, serve as food for beneficial bacteria, helping them thrive and improve digestive health.

Maintaining good gut health is not just about digestion but about supporting overall wellness. Research continues to uncover the intricate connections between gut health and various aspects of human health, highlighting the importance of nurturing a diverse and balanced microbiome through diet, lifestyle, and, when necessary, supplementation.



Creative Crafts and Cuisine

HOMEMADE FOR THE HOLIDAYS

Saturday, October 25, 2025

9am-Noon (Door opens at 8:30am)

\$15 if preregistered before October 15

\$18 at the door (Cash/Check)

Maple Hall (Old Home & Family Arts Building)

Elkhart County 4-H Fairgrounds

- Food tasting
- Make-n-takes
- Craft demonstrations
- Silent auction
- Holiday decorating ideas
- Fun morning with friends

New this year: Gingerbread Contest between Extension Clubs

Make a gingerbread item, ie, house, man, cookies, etc. out of any medium, no larger than 12" by 18". Examples: on canvas, paint a gingerbread man or house, or make them out of wood, crochet, paper, or even gingerbread. Deadline: Friday, October 24. Attendees will vote on their favorite and will receive the entries as door prizes. Winning club will receive a certificate for winning the first annual Gingerbread contest.

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Registration

Name: _____ Pay at door: \$18.00

Phone: _____ Amount Enclosed: \$15.00

<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Check	Cash

Registration/Gingerbread Entry to: Sherry Weaver, 21115 CR 36, Goshen, IN 46526

Make check out to ELKHART COUNTY EXTENSION HOMEMAKERS

Before October 15 cost is \$15; after October 15 cost is \$18