

It's Time For A *Spring Fling*

The sleepy lull of the winter solstice has finally come to an end. Whisk away the cobwebs, pack away the parka and haul out the patio furniture—spring is underway and not a moment too soon!

Everywhere you turn, the earth is teeming with life. It is an unabashed season of rebirth; an awakening of the dormant spirit that calls for celebration.

Now is the perfect time to welcome the outside world back into your home. Plan an afternoon tea with friends and neighbors who've been in hibernation these past few months. An afternoon tea gives you the perfect excuse to 1) get your spring cleaning done 2) use your seldom seen china and silver and 3) pretend you're a British royal and wear a fashionable hat.

Of course, Americans have favored coffee over tea since 1773, so you'll want to have both available. Additionally, offer guests finger sandwiches and sweets. The following recipe tops a shortbread-type base with the sweet goodness of strawberry preserves, popcorn for an added whole grain bonus and drizzled chocolate for an elegant touch.

STRAWBERRY BARS

Yield: 24 bars

- 4 cups popped popcorn
- 2 cups flour
- 1/2 cup confectioners' sugar
- 1 cup (2 sticks) butter, cut into pieces
- 1 egg white
- 1 (10 oz.) jar strawberry preserves
- 1 cup chocolate chips

Preheat oven to 350 degrees.

Grease a 9" x 13" pan; set aside.

Process flour and confectioners' sugar in food processor several seconds. Add butter and process until dough comes together.

Press mixture evenly into prepared pan. Lightly brush egg white on top of the mixture. Bake 25 minutes, or until golden.

Immediately spread preserves evenly over warm crust. Press popcorn into preserves; let cool.

Melt chocolate chips in small zip lock freezer bag. Heat in microwave 30 seconds, or until melted.

Snip corner of bag and drizzle chocolate over cooled popcorn.

Cool and cut into bars.

Photos, recipes and text reprinted with permission of The Popcorn Board. For more recipes visit: www.popcorn.org



TEA PARTY POPCORN

Yield: 2 1/2 quarts

- 2 1/2 quarts popped popcorn
- 1/4 cup melted butter
- 2 tablespoons instant lemon-flavored iced tea mix
- 1 tablespoon sugar

Put freshly popped popcorn in a large bowl. Drizzle butter over it and toss. Combine tea and sugar. Add to buttered popcorn and toss again.



Communication Is An Essential Life Skill

BY SHARON GUTHMILLER
Extension Educator

There is little doubt that the world is becoming increasingly fast paced.

The speed of connectivity provided through technology today can put us in touch with far away places with just the click of a button. Even with the connectivity of all the communication devices we have access to, there seems to be disconnect that is associated with the fast pace we live.

Although communication has been around since the beginning of time, the way we communicate today has evolved and has changed significantly in the last several decades. Perhaps we are overlooking and bypassing some of the essential communication needs in the social sphere around us as well as within individual family structures.

Very few things in life are free of charge, but come at a high cost if not used effectively. Communication is critical to the sustainability and functionality of the family system and social settings in which we live.

Communication is essential in life.

The act of communicating is the sole activity that all people share. We communicate any time we share meaning. People have been communicating for centuries, whether in times of great hardship or in celebration, around campfires, or in a teaching setting.

Communication is the process of giving and receiving information. Verbal communication revolves around not only talking but hearing what is being said.

Being an active listener is one of the highest compliments you or I can pay another individual.



SHARON GUTHMILLER

Active listening is a communication tool that can help individuals speak with each other and be clearly understood. Active listening is about focusing and concentrating on the person who is speaking. Being an active listener involves acting like a good listener.

In this fast-paced world around us, we spend a lot of time tuning out all of the information that comes our way. We need to change our physical body image from that of a deflector of information to a receiver.

Our faces contain most of the receptive equipment of our bodies, so it should be natural to tilt our faces toward the channel of information. You can be a better listener if you look at the other person. Your eyes can pick up the non-verbal signals people send out while they are speaking.

Concentrate on what the speaker is saying. Visualize what the speaker is saying. You cannot fully hear their point of view or process information when you argue mentally or judge what they are saying before they are completed.

An open mind is a mind that is receiving and listening to information.

Acknowledge what you hear. Acknowledging another person's thoughts and feelings does not necessarily mean that you approve of or agree with that person's actions or way of experiencing, or that you will do whatever someone asks.

By acknowledging what you

hear and then repeating back in your own words the essence of what you have heard, from the speaker's point of view, you allow the speaker to feel the satisfaction of being understood.

Ask good questions. Effective listening is an active rather than a passive activity. Active listening and listening responsibly is a worthwhile way of letting people know you care about them. The greatest honor that can be given to someone is your undivided attention.

While communication often involves words, it is not always necessary to use language to convey a meaning. When people roll their eyes, give a hug, walk away, blow a kiss, wave, huff, smile a smile, shake their heads, clench their teeth or cry, they are in fact communicating.

It may be easy to assume that family members and friends know your needs, feelings and opinions

without telling them. Relying on mindreading may result in disappointment. Expressing thoughts and feelings effectively means taking time first to listen to yourself.

Try to focus on how something is affecting you rather than blaming or pointing out what another person has said or done. Denying respect to yourself or another individual both lead to communication problems.

Communication is an essential factor in strengthening family relationships, friendships, maintaining self-esteem, nurturing another person's growth, showing love and appreciation.

Thought: One could live on next to nothing if the neighbors would live on less.

(Information from the South Dakota Extension Service Website)

Sharon Guthmiller is a Yankton County Extension educator specializing in family and consumer sciences.

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MIDWEST DIGEST

S.D. Legislators Approve Tax Rebate Changes

PIERRE (AP) — A move by legislators to modify the state's tax rebate program for large construction projects could mean millions of dollars in revenue from an oil pipeline being planned across western South Dakota, the Republican leader in the Senate said.

The bill passed Thursday and sent to Gov. Mike Rounds is an element in the budget yet to be finalized by the Legislature, which faces a possible \$40 million shortfall in the budget year beginning July 1.

As an incentive to spur economic development, the state now gives back varying percentages of sales taxes and contractor's excise taxes paid when projects such as wind farms or ethanol plants are built. Projects of \$600 million or more get back 90 percent.

The bill sent to the governor allows rebates of 45 percent of taxes on projects costing \$10 million to \$40 million, and 55 percent for those of \$40 million to \$500 million. Projects of less than \$10 million or more than \$500 million would not qualify.

The measure would end the tax rebate program on Jan. 1, 2013, but there's been general consensus that the 2011 Legislature will consider the issue again.

Lawmakers Expand S.D. Scholarship Program

PIERRE (AP) — Lawmakers agreed Thursday to add home-schooled students to a state-funded scholarship program in three years and open it up to other high school graduates who meet an ACT threshold but fall short in course requirements.

The House and Senate approved a compromise measure to change the Opportunity Scholarship program, which offers \$5,000 over four years to students who attend a college, university or technical school in South Dakota. Students must meet performance standards in a rigorous high school curriculum and score at least 24 on the ACT to qualify.

The bill now goes to the governor.

Neb. Prenatal Bill Could Be Hurt By Budget

LINCOLN, Neb. (AP) — Nebraska lawmakers may have to take more money than expected from the state's rainy-day fund if they want to continue providing prenatal care to illegal immigrants.

Revised figures released Thursday show schools will need \$3 million more from state government.

That means lawmakers would likely have to dig \$3 million to \$4 million deeper into the rainy-day fund to both balance the budget and provide prenatal care to illegal immigrants under a bill that will be considered.

The federal government recently required the state to stop providing the care under Medicaid.

Supporters of prenatal care for illegal immigrants are worried that the prospect of taking more from the rainy-day fund could jeopardize the prenatal-care bill.

Neb. Lawmakers Pass Booze Bill For Teens

LINCOLN, Neb. (AP) — Nebraska lawmakers have given final approval to a bill (LB258) that would give judges the option of suspending the driver's licenses of people 18 and under who are convicted of possessing alcohol.

Lawmakers have said teens now view convictions for minor in possession as badges of honor that don't prevent them from drinking.

Sen. John Harms of Scottsbluff introduced the bill. He had wanted licenses to automatically be suspended.

But critics said teens can be convicted of the crime just for being at parties where there is alcohol, even though they may not be drinking.

Under the bill, a license could be suspended anywhere from a month to a year, depending on how many minor-in-possession convictions the teenager had.

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NOTICE OF MEETING OF LOCAL REVIEW BOARD

SDCL 10-11-13

NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN That the governing body, sitting as a Review Board of Mission Hill (N,)Township/Municipality, Yankton County, South Dakota, will meet at the Vangen Lutheran Church in Mission Hill, South Dakota on MONDAY, the 15th day of March 2010 (being the 3rd Monday in March) at 7:00 pm for the purpose of reviewing and correcting the assessment of said taxing district for the year, 2010, and to conduct other business as needed.

All persons considering themselves aggrieved by said assessment are required to notify the clerk of the local board no later than March 15, 2010, at noon.

Laurie J. Becvar, Clerk
Mission Hill Township (N)

Dated March 1, 2010