February 2002

The NEBLINE, February 2002
2002 is 4-H Centennial

President George W. Bush joined 4-H members from Texas and the Metropolitan Washington area to officially inaugurate 4-H's 100-year anniversary at a White House meeting on Jan. 17. During the meeting, 4-H presented President Bush with its highest honor, the “Partner in 4-H” award for his support of 4-H and the Texas Cooperative Extension Service while serving as Governor of Texas.

On Feb. 5, Gov. Mike Johanns proclaimed 2002 “4-H Centennial Year in Nebraska” and City of Lincoln Mayor Don Wesely proclaimed Feb. 3–9 “4-H Centennial Week.”

4-H is celebrat-ing the Centennial on all levels: national, state, county and city. Lancaster County 4-H and 4-H Council are excited to be a part of this celebration and have planned activi-ties throughout the year!

Note: Unfortunately, the “Lancaster Conversation on Youth Development in 21st Century” scheduled for Jan. 31 was canceled due to bad weather.

Unicameral Day

More than 100 4-H youth from Nebraska’s 49 legislative districts convened at the State Capitol on Feb. 5 to visit with their state senators, attend workshops and learn about Nebraska’s Unicameral system. Eleven 4-Hers from Lancaster County attended.

Kathleen Arends said she enjoyed seeing the Unicameral in action. She also felt like the 4-Hers were really able to have a voice in the State Conversation, which passed ideas regarding youth development onto the National Conversation (to be held Feb. 28–March 3 in Washington D.C.). For Jami Rutt, the best part of the day was the mock hearing where the 4-Hers got to debate a bill.

Sen. Marian Price and Sen. DiAnna Schimek joined the Lancaster

City of Lincoln Mayor Don Wesely (back row center) attended the Feb. 5 “4-H Centennial Celebration” and proclaimed Feb. 3–9 “4-H Centennial Week.”

4-H’ers for lunch. Price, a 4-H alumni, shared her own 4-H experiences. Doris Seivell (left — pictured with daughter Sherry Hutchison) was recognized at the Feb. 5 “4-H Centennial Celebration” as the oldest alumni in attendance.

Throughout the evening different generations of 4-H’ers were able to share what 4-H was/is like for them.

4-H alumni Merna Maahs’ scrap book contains this 1939 photo of the 24th Annual Boys and Girls 4-H Club Week.
Vinca ‘Jaio Scarlet Eye’

Vinca or Catharanthus rosea ‘Jaio Scarlet Eye’ is a distinct rose-scarlet flower color with a small white center. There is no other vinca with this flower color. The two-inch, non-fading blooms cover the handsome one-foot tall plants. Tested across North America, ‘Jaio Scarlet Eye’ proved to be heat and drought tolerant. This improved vinca is perfect for gardeners who want season long garden color with minimal garden care. It is easy to grow in a full sun garden or in patio containers.

Geranium ‘Black Magic Rose’

The unique bicolor leaf pattern distinguishes ‘Black Magic Rose’ from all other hybrid geraniums. Each leaf has a black center with a green leaf edge. The exceptionally dark foliage contrasts with the bright rose florets and each floret has a green leaf edge. The exceptionally dark foliage contrasts with the bright rose florets and each floret has a black center with a green leaf edge.

Cleome ‘Sparkler Blush’

Cleome ‘Sparkler Blush’ has with less space and not over whelm the design. Heat and drought tolerant, ‘Sparkler Blush’ is a carefree plant. Adaptable to most soil types and growing conditions, ‘Sparkler Blush’ is a remarkable plant.

Pansy ‘Ultima Morpho’

This AAS Winner has a distinct bicolor design. The upper petals are mid-blue with bright, lemon yellow lower petals and rays or whisiers radiate from the center. ‘Ultima Morpho’ is named after the Morpho butterfly, which is blue and yellow. A slight variation may occur in the pastel design, but this adds to the variety appeal. Recommended for spring or fall gardens. ‘Ultima Morpho’ proved to be free flowering all season. Mature plants can spread eight to ten inches and attain a height of five to eight inches. This plant is an excellent performer in containers, but remember to maintain adequate moisture levels.

Petunia ‘Tidal Wave Silver’

Sporting silvery white blooms with dark purple centers, ‘Tidal Wave Silver’ is distinct. Unlike other petunias, gardeners can decide the height of the mature plant. ‘Tidal Wave Silver’ can attain heights of two to three feet if spaced closely together, about 6 inches, and given support such as a trellis. If plants are spaced a foot apart, the mounded, hedge like plants will reach 16 to 22 inches. Neither pinching nor pruning is needed for flowers all season. Exhibiting excellent botrytis resistance and rapid recovery in severe weather, ‘Tidal Wave Silver’ is also adaptable to container culture.

Basil ‘Magical Michael’

An ornamental, edible sweet basil, has a clearly refined plant size and shape. ‘Magical Michael’ plants are uniform and reliably 15 inches tall and 16 to 17 inches wide. This uniformity is rare in sweet basil plants. The lush aromatic, green leaves can be harvested within 30 days of transplanting. Plants may flower when mature in about 80 to 90 days from seed. The small flowers are a curiosity since they are purple and white.

Rudbeckia ‘Cherokee Sunset’

This Rudbeckia hirta contains a blend of sunset colors; yellow, orange, bronze, mahogany and shades of these colors. The three to four inch flowers are double or semi-double and long lasting as cut flowers. Best when grown in the full sun. ‘Cherokee Sunset’ plants are about 24 to 30 inches tall, spreading about a foot. Many plants are self supporting and others may need staking. ‘Cherokee Sunset’ offers gardeners a blend of autumn colors and late-season garden performance. Flowering profusely the first year, ‘Chero kee Sunset’ may overwinter in northern gardens.

Cucumber ‘Diva’

Sweet flavor and high yield describe the improved qualities of ‘Diva’. The fruit will be sweet, non-bitter with a crisp texture when harvested in four to five inches. Normally seedless, a few seeds may grow when pollinated by other cucumber plants. ‘Diva’ produces all female flowers and does not require pollen to set fruit. These traits result in high yields. Expect mature cucumbers in about 58 days from sowing seed in warm soil. Plants are resistant to scab and tolerant to powdery mildew.

Pumpkin ‘Orange Smoothie’

Children will be infatuated with ‘Orange Smoothie’ pumpkins. The dark orange, smooth skin is ideal for painting Halloween faces. The size is desirable for young hands, weighing five to eight pounds with a strong, long handle. ‘Orange Smoothie’ pumpkins will mature early, in about 90 days from sowing seed. Another benefit is the semi-determinate habit requiring less space in the garden. Easy to grow from seed, ‘Orange Smoothie’ is an all around great pumpkin for carving, painting, decorating and even the meat is sweet for homemade pumpkin pie.

Cucumber ‘Tidal Wave Silver’

Cucumber ‘Tidal Wave Silver’ is a distinctive cucurbit with a striking blue and yellow color. A slight variation may occur in the pastel design, but this adds to the variety appeal. Recommended for spring or fall gardens. ‘Tidal Wave Silver’ proved to be free flowering all season. Mature plants can spread eight to ten inches and attain a height of five to eight inches. This plant is an excellent performer in containers, but remember to maintain adequate moisture levels.

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Cucumber ‘Diva’

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West Nile Virus Expected in Nebraska This Summer

According to Wayne Kramer, Nebraska state medical entomologist, the West Nile Virus (WNV) will likely show up in Nebraska and spread to the Rocky Mountains, or even farther west, in 2002. Kramer spoke at the Nebraska Pest Management Conference January 17-18 in Lincoln. WNV appeared in New York City and spread rapidly south along the eastern seaboard and westward. By fall, 2001, the virus was detected in 27 states, including eastern Iowa and Missouri. Researchers have discovered that more than 80 species of birds, as well as horses, bats, cats, rabbits and humans can be infected by the disease. Crows, jays, magpies and ravens belong to the family Corvidae and are susceptible to the virus and often die. However, the virus doesn’t harm most other species of migrating birds that intermingle in Mexico and Central America during the winter. In 2002, Kramer and other experts believe that birds will carry the virus north and west with their spring migration to states in the great plains, Rocky Mountains and possibly even farther west. The WNV has killed horses and humans. Because this disease is only transmitted by mosquitoes, preventing exposure to mosquitoes will be key to protecting horses and humans. Eliminating stagnant water sources where mosquitoes breed will be important. Once WNV is confirmed in Nebraska, it may also be useful to vaccinate domestic animals against the disease. A vaccine for horses has been developed, but it is only available in states where the virus has been confirmed.

State and national experts recommend people who spend time outdoors where mosquitoes are active, should protect themselves with a commercial insect repellent containing DEET. Guidelines for using DEET safely can be found at the Nebraska Health and Human Services System website at: www.lhss.state.ne.us/epi/wvn.htm

There are several similar viral diseases transmitted by mosquitoes that are found in Nebraska. They include St. Louis Encephalitis, Eastern Equine Encephalitis and Western Equine Encephalitis. There is no evidence that the WNV will be any more virulent or common than these already established diseases. It is likely fatalities from WNV will be relatively rare. (BPO)

What should you do when you find dead birds?

Wayne Kramer, medical entomologist for the Nebraska Health and Human Services (HHS) System is interested in analyzing dead birds within the State of Nebraska. The HHS System is interested in analyzing dead birds within the State of Nebraska. Particularly, crows, jays and magpies that often die from the disease. Birds infected with WNV are more likely to be single cases, rather than a whole flock. If you find dead crows, call Wayne Kramer (402) 471-0506.

• For accurate laboratory analysis, birds must be freshly dead, less than 24 hour old, and in good condition.
• Crows, jays, magpies and related birds are of most interest.
• Even though WNV cannot spread directly from birds to people, use gloves to place the dead bird in a double plastic bag.
• Label specimen with type of bird, date found and address where bird was found, zip code and county.
• Freeze bird or put it on ice. If birds are not suitable for analysis, use gloves to carefully place dead birds in a double plastic bag and place dead birds in outdoor trash.

Rats and mice... Did you know that...

Rats can: run along electrical wires, ropes, cables, vines, shrubs and trees to gain entry to the house; climb almost any rough surface; gnaw through a wide variety of materials including aluminum sheeting, wood, rubber, vinyl, plastic and concrete block. Rats can: jump up 36 inches vertically and 48 inches horizontally. • drool feet without sensory injury. • burrow straight down into the ground to a depth of at least 36 inches. • swim 1/2 mile in open water, dive through water traps in 24 degrees F if adequate food and nesting materials are available. • gain entry through holes as small as 1/4 inch in diameter. • prepare your crop for market.

Invasion of the Tiny Mites

On warm, sunny winter days, you may find very tiny reddish-brown mites crawling around your windows, countertops or floors. These pin-point sized mites sometimes invade homes in large numbers. They squeeze through the tiniest of cracks, especially on the south side of buildings where they have been overwintering. The Clover mites sometimes cause homeowners alarm, but the mites do very little damage inside the home. They do not damage most house plants, they are not interested in people or pets and do not infest your food items. They do not live or breed in the house. Once indoors, clover mites will die very quickly.

Clove mites (magnified)

Clover mites can: • jump up 36 inches vertically and 48 inches horizontally. • drop feet without sensory injury. • burrow straight down into the ground to a depth of at least 36 inches. • swim 1/2 mile in open water, dive through water traps in 24 degrees F if adequate food and nesting materials are available. • gain entry through holes as small as 1/4 inch in diameter. • prepare your crop for market.

Several kinds of small arthropods are often found in firewood, but it would be unusual for any to infest furniture or your house structure. In nature, dead trees and logs are used by a variety of small insects as shelter—living in cracks and crevices in or under the bark. Others may live in the wood itself. When dead trees and logs are cut into small pieces for use as firewood and transported to a home, a number of critters may come along for the ride.

Some arthropods that are found in firewood are sowbugs and pillbugs, millipedes, centipedes and spiders. Insects include wood-boring beetles, wood roaches and silverfish. Termites are never found in firewood stored outside when temperatures are below freezing. Termites typically overwinter in their colony several feet deep in the soil to escape freezing temperatures.

Carpenter ants nest in wood that has gotten wet and started to decay. Firewood that has been stored for several years may house a carpenter ant colony.

Bugs Coming out of Firewood? Don’t Panic

Decaying wood makes poor firewood. Wood that has been stored on the ground may become infested with termites during warmer months of the year. You can burn this wood during the winter, but it is likely to be light and burn too fast.

Wood boring beetles leaving firewood are not likely to infest your home. There are many species of wood boring beetles than may infest wood, and they range from 1/2 inch to 11/2 inch long. Often these beetles (or their larval stage) leave the wood after it is cut; some may die as the woods starts to dry out.

If insects start to emerge from your firewood, do not panic! Get out the vacuum cleaner and sweep ’em up. Insecticide treatment of firewood is definitely not recommended because dangerous fumes may arise when you burn the wood.

The best way to eliminate a pest problem is to keep the firewood outside or in an unheated garage until you get ready to burn it. And, only store or buy enough wood that you will burn in one season. (BPO)

Environmental Focus

Beginning Beekeeping Workshop

Discover a New Hobby!

Cost: $20

Call Barb Ogg at 441-7180 for more information.

Learn to: • manage honey bees by understanding their biology and behavior • identify the best Nebraska honey plants • locate hives for best survival and production • install packaged bees • manage honey bee diseases • harvest honey and beeswax • prepare your crop for market.

Outdoors: Several options are available for nonchemical and chemical controls depending on the situation and your preference.

For detailed information on controlling clover mites, visit the Lancaster County web site at www.lancaster.ne.us (SC)
Renting Livestock Facilities

From time to time, someone will inquire at the extension office about establishing a fair rental price for a livestock facility. While the Extension office, in no way, is in a position to set rental rates or judge what is fair to both parties, there are some guidelines that have been presented by farm management specialists at the university that can be used as a guideline.

For both the owner and tenant, determining a fair rental price for livestock facilities such as hog barns or feedlots should include consideration of alternatives available. For example, the owner should consider whether the facility will be in use or sit idle if not rented. If the owner had planned to use the facility for his or her own operation, annual rent equal to 18 percent of the current asset value is considered a good rule of thumb. This amount should cover maintenance, interest, normal repairs, taxes and insurance. On the other hand, if the facility will remain idle if not rented, annual rent equal to 10 percent of value may be satisfactory. Generally, this will cover cash expenses such as repairs, taxes and insurance and the loss of value due to use or depreciation. For example: Using these guidelines, a hog barn valued at $25,000 would have the rent set between $2,500 to $4,500 per year. The prospective tenant meanwhile should consider other alternatives for renting or building facilities. For example, would the building cost amortized over the useful life of the facility, plus ownership costs (repairs, taxes and insurance) of constructing a similar facility be more or less expensive than the rental price? The answers to such questions will help determine if the asking price is reasonable. Probably the hardest thing to do when using this method is setting a fair market value on the facility in question. Normally, one would expect the value of partially or fully depreciated facilities to be somewhat less than the replacement value. One good approach is to estimate how much the facility would add to the value of the property if the property was sold. (TD)

Fertilizing With Phosphorus

The extension office receives several calls each spring asking about proper phosphorus fertilizing rates and methods. Many times, questions stem from a misunderstanding of the differences between how phosphorus and nitrogen react in the soil and how each is measured in the soil test. Although nitrogen can be applied in various forms, initially, eventually, the nitrogen is converted to nitrate in the soil. Nitrate is not attracted to clay or other particles in the soil and remains in the soil solution (dissolved in the soil water) which can be used by plants. Post growing season tests for nitrate nitrogen (NO3-N) in the soil test are measuring all of the available nitrogen in the soil.

Phosphorus fertilizer, on the other hand, is completely water soluble (completely plant available) when manufactured, but it does not remain this way very long after it is applied to the soil. This process of available phosphorus being made unavailable to plants is called “phosphorus fixation.” Tests which estimate the amount of phosphorus that is available for uptake by plants are only measuring a small fraction of the total phosphorus in the soil.

Phosphorus fertilizer is applied either in the band or broadcast style. Generally, broadcast applications are a common practice in high lime soils, where the fertilizer is applied to the surface of the soil. Generally, broadcast applications are a common practice in high lime soils, where the fertilizer is applied to the surface of the soil.

For annual crops, such as wheat, corn, milo or soybeans, the most efficient way to apply phosphorus is to apply it in a band at the time of planting. An alternative is a broadcast application before planting when it can be incorporated into the soil. Generally, band applications of phosphorus fertilizers require only half the rate of phosphorus per acre to achieve the same yield results as broadcast and incorporated applications because the more concentrated band is not converted to unavailable forms (fixed) as quickly. Topdressing phosphorus can be effective for perennial crops such as alfalfa and bromegrass. These crops have very vigorous crowns from which many fine roots originate, thus phosphorus uptake can occur from the upper portion of the soil profile. Make applications in early spring when crown growth is most active and soil surfaces tend to be moist.

On new alfalfa plantings, if the soil pH is neutral (pH 7.0 or below), a common practice is to apply the triple the annual rate of phosphorus fertilizer and incorporate it into the soil prior to seeding. This should be effective for three to four years for alfalfa growth. For high lime soils, with high rates of phosphorus fixation, annual or every-other-year topdress applications are suggested for alfalfa.

For more information, see “Using Phosphorus Fertilizers Effectively.” (Nebraska RES 601-A) (TD)
Excess Solids May Harm Septic Systems

Pruning Overgrown Lilacs

The common purple lilac is a tough, reliable shrub that may reach a height of 15 to 20 feet. Unfortunately, as lilacs mature, the shaded lower portions of the shrubs usually lose their leaves. As a result, large, overgrown lilacs can be renewed or rejuvenated by pruning. Home gardeners can choose between two different pruning methods.

One way to rejuvenate a large, overgrown lilac is to cut the entire plant back to within six to eight inches of the ground in late winter (March or early April). This severe pruning will induce a large number of shoots to develop during the growing season. In late winter of the following year, selectively remove some of the new shoots, depending on the size of the plant. If left unpruned, the entire plant will again be covered with shoots, delaying flowering. A second way to prune old lilacs is to cut back the overgrown shrub to within six to eight inches of the ground in late winter. Begin the procedure by removing one-third of the large, old stems at ground level in late winter. The following year (again in late winter), prune out any remaining old stems. Also, thin out some of the new growth. Retain several well-spaced, vigorous stems and remove all the smaller growth. Keep removing all of the remaining old wood in late winter of the third year. Additional thinning of the new shoots should also be done. Since lilac wood needs to be three or more years of age before it blooms, this pruning method should allow you to enjoy flowers every spring. When properly pruned, an old, overgrown lilac can be rejuvenated into a vigorous attractive shrub within a few years. Once rejuvenated, pruning should be a regular part of the maintenance program for lilacs. The shrub can be kept healthy and free of pests by removing a few of the oldest branches every three to five years. (DJ)

Harm Septic Systems

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Working with the Right Tools for Pruning

Late winter or early spring is an excellent time to prune many trees and shrubs. The keys to pruning are a basic understanding of pruning techniques and the use of proper tools. There are various types of pruning tools. The size of the plant material determines the best tool for the job. Pruning or hand shears are generally used for cutting stems (branches) up to 3/4 inch in diameter. There are two basic types of pruning shears. The scissors-type shears has curved blades that overlap (scissor action) when making the cut. The anvil-type shears has a sharp, pointed blade against a flat surface (anvil). Each type is available in different sizes. The anvil-type shears is recommended rather than the anvil-type shears. A sharp, properly used scissors-type shears can make closer cuts and is less likely to crush the plant tissue than anvil-type shears. Hand shears are not very successful in pruning stems larger than 3/4 inch in diameter. Pruning branches larger than the shears can properly cut often results in torn, jagged pruning cuts and may damage the plant. Prune stems against a 3/4 to 1 inch diameter in care can be effectively cut with a lopping shear. Lopping shears consist of blades attached to long handles. The long handles

Landscape Lighting

A brief list of suggested plant species for security-lighted areas includes:

- Carpinus japonica
- Caragana arborescens
- Catalpa bignonioides
- Cornus sericea
- Acer ginnala
- Amur corktree
- A. victoriae-amurensis
- Gleditsia triacanthos
- Tilia cordata
- Amur maple
- Acer platanoides
- Red-osier dogwood

Plants to Avoid

Plants sensitive to security-lighting include:

- Acer ginnala
- Amur corktree
- Catalpa bignonioides
- Cornus sericea
- A. victoriae-amurensis
- Amur maple
- A. victoriae-amurensis
- Gleditsia triacanthos
- Tilia cordata
- Red-osier dogwood

These are not all inclusive plant light avoidance species, there hasn’t been any published data in the area of plants and light sensitivity since the mid-70s. With more and more homeowners installing landscaped lighting, it is definitely an area of growing interest. (DJ)
Add a Little Spice (& Herbs) to Your Life!

Flavor and Food Combinations

The following flavor and food combinations, adapted from information provided by the National Heart, Lung and Blood Institute (www.nhlbi.nih.gov), have the added benefit of making meat, poultry, fish and vegetables tasty without adding salt.

- BEEF: Bay leaf, marjoram, nutmeg, onion, pepper, sage, thyme
- LAMB: Curry powder, garlic, rosemary, mint
- PORK: Garlic, onion, sage, pepper, oregano
- VEAL: Bay leaf, curry powder, ginger, marjoram, oregano
- CHICKEN: Ginger, marjoram, oregano, paprika, poultry seasoning, rosemary, sage, tarragon, thyme
- FISH: Curry powder, dill, dry mustard, marjoram, paprika, pepper
- CARROTS: Cinnamon, cloves, dill, ginger, marjoram, nutmeg, rosemary, sage

- CORN: Cumin, curry powder, onion, paprika, parsley
- GREEN BEANS: Dill, curry powder, marjoram, oregano, thyme
- GREENS: Onion, pepper
- POTATOES: Dill, garlic, onion, paprika, parsley, sage
- SUMMER SQUASH: Cloves, curry powder, marjoram, oregano, thyme
- WINTER SQUASH: Cinnamon, ginger, nutmeg, sage
- TOMATOES: Basil, bay leaf, dill, marjoram, onion, oregano, parsley, pepper

The flavor of certain spices and herbs has been associated with different cultures, for example:

- Oregano with Italian cooking
- Cilantro with Mexican cooking
- Ginger with Chinese cooking
- Marjoram with French cooking

see SPICE (& HERBS) on page 11

Carrot-Raisin Bread

Alice Henneman, MS, RD
Extension Educator

February is “Heart Month.” Here’s a recipe from the National Heart, Lung and Blood Institute’s “Stay Young at Heart Program” at www.nhlbi.nih.gov/health/public/heart/other/yath/index.htm that is low in saturated fat and cholesterol, thanks to the small amount of oil and eggs used. The liberal use of spices helps give a sweet flavor without adding a lot of sugar. (See this month’s NEBRILNE article on spices and herbs.)

Carrot-Raisin Bread provides: 99 calories, 3 g total fat, less than 1 g saturated fat, 5 mg cholesterol, 97 mg sodium

Yield: One loaf. Serving Size: 1/2-inch slice. Each serving contains about 150 calories to your diet. A 12-ounce can of soda contains about 80 to 175 calories. If a quantity of soda is consumed, the amount of caffeine can easily be comparable to drinking several cups of coffee. Companies are not required to list the caffeine content on the label. Soft drinks that are caffeine-free usually state this on the label.

Q: Are carbonated drinks harmful?
A: Carbonated drinks are not harmful if consumed in small amounts. In some people, large amounts can cause harm to the stomach and heartburn. Non-carbonated water satisfies thirst more completely.

So, the issue we face is whether to continue to drink soda at our current rate of consumption or should we seek other alternatives. “Soft drinks are a source of calories and little else” states Lisa Harnack, PhD, RD with the University of Minnesota. By the time kids reach the teen years, nearly a fourth are drinking more than 26-ounces of soda per day. Obesity is becoming a huge health concern. The percentage of overweight adolescents is nearly tripled in the past two decades. Osteoporosis is another health issue that occurs among females. When soda replaces juices, important nutrients are lacking.

What Does 65 Pounds of Sugar Have To Do With You?

Mardel Meinke
Extension Assistant

This is the amount of sugar consumed if a person drinks only one can of soda a day for one year. Visualize over 16 four-pound bags of sugar stacked up. Add to this the amount of sugar commonly consumed from other food sources. The amount is staggering! We all know drinking too much soda is probably not good for our health, but few of us consistenly choose a healthier alternative. Here are some facts about soda that may inspire you to make some changes in your family’s choice of beverages.

Q: Does soda contribute to tooth decay?
A: Sugar in soda certainly can contribute to tooth decay especially if the soda is consumed slowly throughout the day. Soda has no dietary benefits and is acidic which can break down tooth enamel.

Q: Is diet soda a better choice?
A: Diet soda contains almost no calories and does not contain sugar which causes tooth decay.

It contains an artificial sweetener that is not metabolized in our system. There are no nutritional benefits from diet soda when it replaces other more healthful beverages.

Q: Is the caffeine content in soft drinks harmful?
A: Consuming beverages that contain some caffeine is not harmful for most people, but consuming larger quantities of caffeinated beverages can be mildly habit-forming. Caffeine can cause hyperactivity and sleeplessness, especially in children. Individuals who are pregnant or breastfeeding could experience headaches or other symptoms if they suddenly stop consuming a large quantity of caffeinated soda. Many soft drinks contain 20 to 70 milligrams of caffeine per 12-ounce can. An 8-ounce brewed coffee contains about 80 to 175 milligrams. If a quantity of soda is consumed, the amount of caffeine and exercise could easily be comparable to drinking several cups of coffee. Companies are not required to list the caffeine content on the label. Soft drinks that are caffeine-free usually state this on the label.

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Help Your Child Do Well in School

There are usually two kinds of problems kids sometimes have in school.

Problems with Their School Work

Kids who find school work hard may not get good grades. There are things parents can do to help. One of the most important things is to help your child have a good attitude towards school. If they feel positive about school and want to go, they will do better in their work. Remember — attitude is at least as important in getting good grades as intelligence.

Here are some things that may help:

- Ask the teacher how you can know what your child’s assignments are so you can be sure he/she gets everything done.
- Be near your child while he/she is doing his/her homework. Ask them questions about it. Try to keep them on the job until they are finished.
- If your child is behind, ask the teacher if he/she can have special help to catch up.
- If your child is having trouble with a certain subject, spend time with him on the subject. Lots of math can be learned in board games, for example. That makes learning fun.

Problems with Behavior

If kids act up, tease other kids, talk back to the teacher or other such problems, they may have lots of problems at school. If they keep doing this, they may have problems all their life. Parents can help children most by setting good examples and expecting good behavior.

Here are some things that may help:

- Make sure your child gets enough sleep. Tired children are often cranky.
- If your child picks on other children, help him/her to increase their feeling of being an O.K. person, and feeling other people are O.K. It is important for your child to feel good about themselves and other people.
- Be sure your child eats breakfast. If necessary, find fast and easy things they can eat on the way to school. Without breakfast, they may be cranky, and school work will be harder. Don’t eat sweets for breakfast. It may make them run down before noon.
- Ask the teacher if they think your child might have Attention Deficit Disorder. If they do, find a doctor who works with children with Attention Deficit Disorder (LJ).

Family Community Education (FCE) Leader Training

The March FCE leader training lesson “Growing Communities of Character at Work” will be presented Tuesday, Feb. 26 at 1 p.m. by LaDeane Jha, Extension Educator. This lesson is designed for adults who are interested in strengthening their job skills and understanding why strong character is so important in the workplace. Those who participate in this program will gain:

- An understanding of why ethical behavior is important at the workplace.
- Hands-on examples of how concepts, such as respect and responsibility, fit their workplace setting.
- Ideas for enhancing their own ethical decision making.

Non-FCE members interested in attending should pre-register by calling Pam at 441-7180 a week before the lesson so materials can be prepared.

The April FCE leader training lesson “Nutrition and Osteoporosis” will be presented Tuesday, March 26 at 1 p.m. Watch the March NEBLINE for details.

FCE Scholarship

A $250 scholarship provided by the Lancaster County FCE Council is available for a graduate of a high school in Lancaster County or a permanent resident of Lancaster County majoring in family and consumer science or a health occupation. This is offered to full-time students beginning their sophomore, junior or senior year of college in the fall of 2002 or who have completed two quarters of study in a vocational school. Applications are due April 1 in the extension office.

FCE Council Meeting

Mark your calendar for March 25, 12:30 p.m (note change in time). Watch the March NEBLINE for details. Clubs hosting this meeting will be 49 yrs and Tuesday Tiners. (LB)

Love Messages

LaDeane R. Jha
Extension Educator

In these days of ever increasing “busyness” many of us forget to send consistent messages of love. February, the “Love Month” seems like a good time to rekindle the skill. All persons, both children and adults need to be reminded they are loved and valued. Sometimes we get busy and forget to send messages of love or we send the messages poorly. Sometimes we send only angry or impatient messages. At times we think we are sending a clear message but the other person does not get it. There are at least three “languages” of love: showing, telling and touching. A person who likes showings may respond well if you do things for them. Give these persons the gift of time, take them for ice cream, work together on a project, buy them a gift.

Gifts from the Heart

Have your child give a gift of his/herself at the next holiday or any time he wants to do something nice for someone else. What you’ll need:

- crayons, pencils, paints or other art supplies
- paper
- packaging/wrapping paper

Your child’s special gift What to do:

1. Talk to your child about gift giving. What does it mean to give something to someone else? 2. Instead of buying a gift, have your child make a gift.

CHARACTER COUNTS! Corner

Respect

Respect means different things to different people. Thus, when we talk about respect, some people may not have the same understanding we have. Generally, when we show regard for the worth of someone or something, i.e. respect for self, respect for others and respect for the environment. One way to clarify what we mean by respect is to teach the actions we think are respectful. For example being polite and courteous means:

1. Consistently modeling the use of “please,” “thank you” and “excuse me.”
2. Looking at people when they are talking to you.
3. Listening to people who are speaking to you. (AA)
Sewing Workshops

Hancock Fabrics will be offering the following sessions on constructing superior quality clothing. All sessions will be held at 6800 P Street. There is no charge, but we ask that you pre-register at 464-3035. A Decorate Your Duds session in May will also be held.

Sunday, March 10, 3-4 p.m. — If you are in Challenging Fabrics, Tailoring, etc., this is for you. Meet with experts to talk about sewing on chiffon, pressing wool, sewing slinky knits and little details that make a good project into a great one. We will follow with a 4-H Rabbit Show Saturday, March 16 at 9 a.m., in the Small Animal Building at the Lancaster Event Center.

4-H Leader Training

Want to learn new and innovative ideas for your 4-H club? Plan to attend the 4-H Leader Training Thursday, March 14, 9:30-11 a.m. or 7 p.m. All 4-H leaders and parents are invited to attend. (TK)
The annual 4-H Celebration will feature the "Cream Social" on Friday, Aug. 2. "Centennial Celebration Ice Cream Social" will highlight the 4-H Centennial with Fair, July 31-Aug. 4, will continue from page 5.

4-H’ers recognized at Achievement Night

On “4-H What’s It All About/Achievement Night,” Feb. 5, several 4-H’ers were recognized for their achievements.

County 4-H Award Winners:
- Environmental Education & Earth Science — Marie Spomer
- Communication & Expressive Arts — Alyssa Fiala
- Plant Science — Nicole Pedersen

Nominated to Represent Lancaster County at District Competition:
- Becky Fiala, Laura Cassel and Marie Spomer

Bryce Lemke was presented the “Outstanding 4-H Member” Award. He is a member of 4-H Council, 4-H Teen Council and 4-H Ambassadors. He has been a 4-H member for 10 years.

Shirley Condon was presented the “Meritorious Service to 4-H” award. She has been a club leader and superintendent (of Household Pets) since 1982.

Jami Rutt and Sean White were presented “I Dare You Leadership” awards for their growth in leadership. Both recently expanded their roles to Jr. Leaders in their clubs.

Wanted: 4-H Alumni To Register

In honor of the Centennial, the state 4-H Office is compiling an alumni directory. Alumni are being asked to complete a registration form found online at http://4h.unl.edu/centennial.htm and return it to their local county extension office or the State 4-H Office. State 4-H will sponsor a 4-H Alumni Reunion on Aug. 31.

Garfield Limited Edition Print

If you like Garfield, mark off Sept. 1-7, on your calendar. In honor of the Centennial, Garfield creator and 4-H alumn Jim Davis is producing 54 original prints to be sold on ebay. Each week, one print will be auctioned off with half of the proceeds going to a particular state. Nebraska’s week is Sept. 1-7.

Want Your Own 4-H Garfield Cookie Jar?

Had your heart set on the 4-H Garfield Cookie Jar door prize at the Centennial Celebration on Feb. 5, but didn’t win it? Don’t get your whiskers in a bunch, get your own jar to fill with cookies to munch! Go to the Web site www.4-hmail.org and click on the Garfield link to find a plethora of 4-H Garfield promotional items for sale!

CENTENNIAL continued from page 5

4-H’ers interested in singing the National Anthem for the game must attend the Saltdogs’ auditions on April 13 (see right).

Tickets are $4 per person for general admission/grass Berm seating. Further information and details for buying tickets will be published in future Neuelines.

Lancaster County Fair to Highlight Centennial

The 2002 Lancaster County Fair, July 31-Aug. 4, will highlight the 4-H Centennial with 4-H alumni displays and other celebration activities.

4-H Teen Council will hold a “Centennial Celebration Ice Cream Social” on Friday, Aug. 2. The annual 4-H Celebration will have a centennial-related theme. Watch future Neuelines for details!

Power of Youth Pledge

The Power of Youth Pledge Campaign is one of 4-H’s gifts to the nation in honor of its Centennial. 4-H participants in all 3,067 counties in America are pledging hours of combined community service and leadership hours.

4-H members can pledge to help an elderly neighbor rake their yard or pledge to organize a statewide project to collect food for the hungry.

Sign up today online at www.4hcentennial.org/powerofyouth/main.asp.

Suggestions for Clubs

- Sponsor a collection of “100’s” for a local shelter or food bank: blankets, canned food items, personal hygiene items like soap, pet supplies, money denominations (pennies, nickels and dimes).
- Compile a history of your 4-H club.
- Compile a list of all leaders of your 4-H club. You could try to obtain addresses and years of involvement.
- Compile a list of all current and former members of your club. Again, you could try to obtain addresses and years of involvement.
- Invite former leaders and members to visit your club meeting.
- Identify past award winners from your club.
- Recognize past award winners at your club’s awards meeting.
- Interview former leaders and participants to find out about 4-H when they were active.
- Create a time capsule.

4-H Club Officer Training

Mark your calendar now for the upcoming 4-H Club Officer Training. All 4-H members are encouraged to attend! Everyone will discover how to conduct a meeting and use parliamentary procedure. 4-H members will also have an opportunity to participate in a mock meeting Sunday, March 3, 6:30-8 p.m. 444 Cherry creek Road, Lincoln, (TKD)K

4-H...The Power of YOUTH

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Neuelines

Salt Dog National Anthem Tryouts April 13

The Lincoln Saltdogs are holding National Anthem auditions on Saturday, April 13 at Haymarket Park from 10 a.m.-2 p.m. for vocally gifted soloists and groups of any age. 4-H’ers who would like to tryout to sing the National Anthem during the 4-H Centennial Theme Saltdogs game on July 12 MUST attend these auditions and request to perform at the 4-H Centennial Theme game.

Space is limited, so register today. You can register in person at Haymarket Park weekdays between 8 a.m.-5 p.m. or through email: jamiem@saltdogs.com (include in the message your name, phone number and names of the person(s) who will be trying out).

Horse Leader Training

There will be a 4-H horse leader training at 8 a.m., Saturday, March 16 at the Lancaster Event Center Building #4. This training is open to any interested parent, leader or assistant leader. We will cover information about 4-H, level testing and will try to leave sufficient time at the end of the training to answer any other general questions you may have about the program.

After attending the training, please stop by the Nebraska Horse Exposition being held at the Lancaster Event Center that day.

For more information, call Ellen at 441-7180. (EK)

Kiwanis Karnival

Karnival time is here! The Kiwanis Karnival is a free family event sponsored by Lincoln Center Kiwanis and the 4-H Council. It is scheduled for Saturday, April 13, 7-9 p.m. at State Fair Park in the Lancaster Building. All 4-H families are invited to attend this fun and free activity.

4-H clubs or families are needed to provide carnival-type game booths for the evening. Each booth will have an area 4’ X 6’ to use. Prizes are provided. Your club or family would like to provide a booth, call the extension office to register by March 29.

There will be bingo for the adults and treats for all. Plan now to attend this fun, family activity. For more information, call Lorene at 441-7180. (LB)
2002 Cattlemen’s Ball To Be Held Near Branched Oak Lake

The 2002 Cattlemen’s Ball of Nebraska will be June 1 at the Benes Cattle Company near Valparaiso, Neb. The Cattlemen’s Ball hosts will be Dan and Kathy Benes along with Dan’s parents, Ermin and Delores Benes and family. The Benes Cattle Company is located 25 miles northwest of Lincoln near Highway 79. The Cattlemen’s Ball is held annually to provide beef in a healthy diet and to showcase rural Nebraska. All of the money raised stays in Nebraska, with 90 percent of the proceeds going to the University of Nebraska Medical Center’s (UNMC) Eppler Cancer Center and 10 percent directed toward health care needs in the community hosting the event. Last year the Cattlemen’s Ball raised $133,000 for the UNMC Eppler Cancer Center.

“The funds from the Nebraska Cattlemen’s Ball Association are very important in our quest for information,” said Kenneth Cowan, M.D., Ph.D., director of the UNMC Eppler Cancer Center. “The money allows us to launch new, groundbreaking research projects, improve treatment options and search for new methods of cancer prevention. We truly appreciate the association’s support in our fight against cancer.”

Top Hand ticket holders ($100) may attend after- noon and evening activities beginning at 1 p.m. Trailboss ticket holders ($300 per couple or $250 each) receive a champagne reception, commemorative gift, Trailboss brunch and preferred seating for the evening dinner and concert.

Invitations are not sent, as the event is completely open to the public. Tickets are limited, and gift certificates are available! For more information about the Cattlemen’s Ball, contact Sheri Dunbar, UNMC Eppler Cancer Center at (402) 559-4401. For tickets, call Greg Walla at 1-800-666-8071 or write Cattlemen’s Ball of Nebraska, P.O. Box 181, Valparaiso, NE 68065.

Nebraska LEAD Program Accepting Applications

The capstone of the second year’s study is a 18-20 day international study/travel seminar to several selected countries in the world.

Applications are currently being accepted for the Nebraska LEAD Group XXII which begins in the Fall of 2002. For application materials and/or further information, call 472-6810 or visit the LEAD Web site at www.iunr.unl.edu/lead. Application deadline is June 15.

Cultural Insight: How Do Muslims View the Elderly?

It is written in the Qur’an (The Muslim Holy book) one should be kind to his/her parents. If either or both of them reach old age, one should not say to them with disrespect or scold them, but should speak to them in terms of honor and kindness. Treat them with humility and ask the mercy for them, for they did care for you when you were a child.

The January NEBRINE article on illegal dumping incorrectly stated $10,000 was spent by Lancaster County on cleaning up illegal dumping. It is actually the City of Lincoln’s Solid Waste Operations Division which pays these costs. The city receives partial reimbursement from Nebraska’s Illegal Dumping Reimbursement Fund. Lancaster County funds the anti-illegal dumping education campaign. (GB)

Sondra Phillips Completes Successful EFNEP Career

Sondra “Sandy” Phillips (above right), EFNEP advisor, will retire Feb. 28, after teaching families how to prepare safe nutritious meals for the past 18 years. She enjoys it when the clients come back and tell her the suggestions she provided worked. She loves sharing recipes and knowledge and passing on the life experience.

The WIC offers a wide variety of teaching opportunities to families who share their cultural experiences. Sandy enjoys learning about foods from other countries such as Iran, Tunisia, Vietnam, South Africa and Mexico from her “NEP” families.

Sandy’s favorite lessons to teach is menu planning. Sandy shares, “I think if you teach people to plan menus and think about what they eat, they not only eat healthier foods, they also save money and time. I get the feeling they have a deep sense of accomplishment because they did something important for their family which is working.”

Sandy has been providing monthly food demonstrations in cooperation with Commodity Foods for the past ten years. She contacts the staff to find out what food they will be getting, then develops educational information which provides recipes, food safety and food preparation tips about the products which they will be receiving. She prepares samples of the items and answers food preparation questions.

Sandy looks forward to spending more time with her husband Gilbert and their nine grandchildren. If you would like to have a personal letter included in a memory book which will be presented to Sandy, please mail it to “Retirement Letters,” 444 Cherryvood Road, Lincoln, NE 68528-1507. (MB)
Pruning Overgrown Apple Trees

Pruning helps to rejuvenate overgrown, neglected apple trees. Most overgrown apple trees are too tall and difficult to maintain. You can prune to reduce tree size. This makes pest control and fruit harvest much easier, especially on standard size apple trees which can grow 30 feet tall or more if left unpruned. Even semi-dwarf apple trees grow 15 to 20 feet high and benefit from proper pruning.

Overgrown apple trees are usually too dense. Prune to thin out the branches. Establishing and maintaining an open branch canopy through pruning improves the tree’s productivity by letting in more sunlight. Open trees usually grow fewer disease and insect problems as well.

To reduce an overgrown tree’s height, remove one or two of the tallest growing limbs. Study the tree’s branching pattern carefully to make sure you do not prune branches that will reduce the tree’s height. Make the cuts where the limbs join the trunk. If you remove even one major limb, limit any other pruning to removing dead and weak branches.

Over prune can stimulate even too much growth and lowers fruit production in the present season and possibly next season as well. Spread out extensive pruning over two or three years. If the tree is fairly short but neglected, the first year you should prune out dead wood, water sprouts, suckers and broken or conflicting branches. Conflicting branches cross or rub against each other, and create a wound over time. Diseases easily enter through the wound. Look at conflicting branches closely and prune out the weaker of the two branches.

Suckers are long, straight shoots that come out of the ground at the base of the trunk. Suckers grow from the tree’s rootstock, the part of the tree that provides the tree’s root system. If allowed to grow, suckers eventually conflict with lower branches. Water sprouts can grow from the trunk and main branches. Like suckers, water sprouts eventually conflict with other branches. Remove suckers and water sprouts several times a year to reduce potential problems. The best time to prune all fruit trees is in late winter through early spring. Remove dead and broken branches whenever you see them. Do not leave sawdust on your pruning wounds. Stubs lead to decay in the remaining branch. Always prune a branch off flush with the branch bark collar. This is the natural swelling that occurs where one branch joins another. Removing the collar makes a larger wound and inhibits the tree’s ability to heal. Look at the area where the two branches join, find the collar and prune flush to the collar. You do not need to paint pruning wounds with tree wound dressing paint. Pruning wounds heal better when left open. When you finish pruning, remove the branches from beneath the tree. (MJF)

GIFTS...HEART

continued from page 5

Does your child have a special talent? Maybe your child would like to sing or write a song for a relative. Is there a chore your child could do? Maybe wash the dishes for a week. Is there a special toy that could be loaned to a sister or brother for a week? 3. Use materials from around the house so little, if any, money is spent. 4. If the gift is an activity or chore, have your child make a card with a note on it, telling what the gift will be. 5. Have your child use imagination in making an inviting package. Perhaps your child could paint a small rock and wrap it in a big box. Or make an envelope out of comics from the Sunday newspaper.

Most young children don’t have money to buy a gift for a friend or relative. You can teach your child that a gift of your effort and attention can mean more than a gift from the store. (LJ)
Strengthening Mother/Daughter Relationships and Preparing Girls for Growing Up Female

A retreat designed for 5th & 6th grade girls and their mothers

Friday, April 5—Saturday, April 6
5 p.m.—5 p.m.
Eastern Nebraska 4-H Center near Gfrared

$675. To insure personal instruction, registration is limited to 25 participants. For more information, contact Extension Educator Gary C. Bergman, or call the Grantmanship Center at (213) 482-9860, or visit The Grantmanship Center Web site at www.tgci.com

Sponsored by University of Nebraska Cooperative Extension

2 Days and 1 Night of Activities!

Indoor • Outdoor • Educational • Fun

Project Adventure • Confidence Building

One-on-One Time • Break-out Sessions

Cost: $100 per pair — includes meals, snacks and lodging. A few scholarships are available for limited resource participants.

To register, call
LaDeene Jha at Lancaster County Extension, 441-7180 or Mary Nelson at Douglas/Sarpy County Extension, 444-7804 or print off registration and mail form online at http://lancaster.unl.edu/earlier

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