Hello neighbor

Don Janssen
Extension Educator

In days gone by, the city was the city and country was the country. When you got to the city limits of many communities you would see fields of crops or pasture used by a farmer to support his or her family and others throughout the world. When in the country, you would find one, but no more than two farmsteads, per section of ground. In some areas of the country you could travel several miles without seeing a farmstead.

Well, not so today. More and more people are selling their urban homes and moving to the country. Of the 9,526 residential parcels of land in Lancaster County outside of Lincoln, 29 percent are acreages. In fact, there are more acreages than farm residential sites.

A 1997 Time Magazine cover article documented the reasons people are moving to the country; escape from the city, the rural character, cheaper housing and opportunity to work at home. It also explained the conflicts and challenges they are working through.

Many new residents are finding life in the country, with all its benefits, also brings some new challenges. Long-time rural residents, including farmers, are also facing new challenges, which seem to have arrived with their new neighbors. The different expectations and lifestyles of newcomers and longtime residents can sometimes prompt complaints and lead to conflicts.

Some common complaints of farmers include increased amounts of trash and litter in fields and pastures, unleashed dogs disrupting or even killing livestock, trespassing and the liability that can be incurred and the amount of increased vandalism to buildings, fences and equipment.

For the non-farm neighbor, most of the complaints concern that many of these conflicts can be worked through and some can be avoided all together. Farmers, non-farm residents and the community at large all have a role to play in maintaining good relationships. Everyone can enjoy the benefits of rural life if the stakeholders are willing to come together to deal with common problems.

Everyone can use a number of strategies to head off potential conflict and build strong ties with their neighbors. Everyday farmers and researchers learn more about controlling odors, dust, insects, weeds and noises. Farmers should take advantage of these technological advances if at all possible. If non-farm residents have a problem with something a farmer is doing, they should go directly to the farmer. It is important to bear in mind that the way a farmer is approached can determine how he or she might respond.

The community wishing to minimize conflict should rely less on lawsuits, right-to-farm laws and zoning ordinances and work more formally with farmers and other local residents to mitigate or mediate conflict.

For communities, farmers and non-farmers, working through conflict involves finding common ground and shared interests. In the case of rural-urban conflict, one of the shared interests is the desire of farmers and non-farmers, new residents and long-time residents, to enjoy life in the country. As urbanites and suburbanites continue to move to rural areas and farmers and other long-time residents continue to have more new neighbors, cultivating relationships and building bridges will be vital to working through the rural/urban conflict.

The different expectations and challenges, which seem to have arrived with their new neighbors. There are certainly many others. The good news is that many of these conflicts can be worked through and some can be avoided all together. Farmers, non-farm residents and the community at large all have a role to play in maintaining good relationships. Everyone can enjoy the benefits of rural life if the stakeholders are willing to come together to deal with common problems.

Everyone can use a number of strategies to head off potential conflict and build strong ties with their neighbors. Everyday farmers and researchers learn more about controlling odors, dust, insects, weeds and noises. Farmers should take advantage of these technological advances if at all possible. If non-farm residents have a problem with something a farmer is doing, they should go directly to the farmer. It is important to bear in mind that the way a farmer is approached can determine how he or she might respond. The community wishing to minimize conflict should rely less on lawsuits, right-to-farm laws and zoning ordinances and work more formally with farmers and other local residents to mitigate or mediate conflict.

For communities, farmers and non-farmers, working through conflict involves finding common ground and shared interests. In the case of rural-urban conflict, one of the shared interests is the desire of farmers and non-farmers, new residents and long-time residents, to enjoy life in the country. As urbanites and suburbanites continue to move to rural areas and farmers and other long-time residents continue to have more new neighbors, cultivating relationships and building bridges will be vital to working through the rural/urban conflict.
Holiday safety

The holiday season is here. If you are like me, you are excited about the holidays and have already started or maybe finished decorating the house and yard! Many of you put your Christmas tree up right after Thanksgiving. This year you may have decided to have a real Christmas tree. Be sure to select a fresh tree if you do. If you cut the tree yourself, you know the tree is fresh. But if you do not cut your own tree, be sure to ask when the tree was cut and check it closely for dry needles. Dry greenery and Christmas trees can be a real fire hazard this time of year in your home.

Cyclamen care

Cool temperatures and bright light is the prescription for success with cyclamen. Place this flowering plant in a east window. A daytime temperature of 60 to 65 degrees Fahrenheit and a nighttime minimum temperature of 50 degrees Fahrenheit should keep it blooming well into the next year. The white, red or pink flowers grow tall with nodding stems above the rosette of heart-shaped, blue-green to dark green leaves. The foliage is marked with white veins and light green splashes.

Water the cyclamen whenever the soil begins to feel dry and try to keep the soil around the roots moist at all times. Water with lukewarm water and be careful to keep it off the foliage and crown as the plant is very susceptible to crown rot.

Fertilize the plant with a houseplant fertilizer using one-half the recommended strength every two weeks while it is flowering. When the soil seems to appear and the leaves turn brown, reduce the frequency and amount of watering and place it in a cool spot.

After flowering, let it rest until warm spring weather arrives. Repot in a mixture of equal parts houseplant potting soil and peat moss, with half the crown above the soil. Place in a sunny window or in a protected spot outdoors where it will be shaded during the brightest part of the day. (MIM)

Houseplant problems

Living plants of various kinds are a popular addition to the decor of many homes, restaurants and other businesses places. Green and flowering plants serve as accents and also help soften hard architectural lines and wall surfaces. They improve quality of living.

Although less harsh in many respects, the average indoor environment presents some unique problems for normal plant growth. Light intensities in homes tend to be low, especially during fall and winter. Low light results in small leaves, pale color, long spindly stems, and flower failure. Lowered atmospheric humidity from the heating of homes causes rapid loss of moisture from plant surfaces, the soil surface and the outside surface of porous clay pots. There are a number of other stress inducing factors that may cause problems. Most people over water their houseplants by maintaining the soil constantly wet. This can cause root rots that impede plant growth and moisture loss. A plant may outgrow the pot so that its top is out of balance with the amount of soil in which the plant is growing. Such plants quickly exhaust the moisture of water present in the soil and must be watered more frequently. Constant watering sometimes compacts the soil and reduces air space, which deprives the roots of adequate oxygen. This can reduce root development and root growth. The soil may become “channeled” so that water drains too rapidly and fails to thoroughly wet all of the soil in the container. Determining the cause of some house plant problems may be difficult and require skilled laboratory diagnostic procedures. Other problems are relatively simple to diagnose. Described below are some of the more common disorders and diseases, their possible causes and suggested corrective measures.

Leaf spots are quite variable in appearance, depending upon the cause. Spots caused by injury from direct sunlight on shade requiring plants usually are large with regular margins. Each spot may involve the entire portion of the exposed leaf. The injured area appears bleached, gradually turning tan to brown and eventually collapsing. Leaf spots resulting from chemical injury or exposure to temperature change due to droplets of cold water usually are small. They generally are yellowish at first with regular margins conforming with the shape and size of the drops of chemical solution or water that caused the injury. A number of leaf spot diseases are caused by fungi and bacteria. Symptoms usually are small, water soaked spots, gradually enlarging and turning brown. There also may be considerable yellowing around the margins of the spots. These diseases rarely develop under the dry atmospheric conditions prevalent in most houses. They are most common on plants recently brought into the state from southern propagating areas. East facing windows are especially prone to development of the feeding injury caused by sap sucking insects, such as aphids, scale and mealybug. Plant surfaces in the vicinity of these insects often are covered by a glistening, sticky honeydew. To control leaf spot you can:

- remove and destroy affected leaves, avoid spraying water on the foliage, provide adequate air circulation. If insects are involved, correctly identify the pest causing the problem. Control sap-sucking insects by washing leaves, petioles and stems with a damp cloth or treating with a commercially prepared pyrethrin spray for house plants. Rubbing alcohol also may be applied to insects, such as mealybugs, with cotton swabs. Systemic insecticides will also control sucking insects.

Yellowing leaves is often caused by nutrient deficiency, especially nitrogen, but also may occur as a result of a sudden reduction of light intensity. Difenbienia, dracena and rubber plant are especially susceptible, as are larger pot-bound specimens of other plants.

Applications of nitrogen fertilizer may reverse the development of this condition when deficiency exists. Be cautious about fertilizing plants during the winter months. Plants growing under low light intensities easily are injured by

continued on page 11

1999 December/January Garden Calendar

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sunday</th>
<th>Monday</th>
<th>Tuesday</th>
<th>Wednesday</th>
<th>Thursday</th>
<th>Friday</th>
<th>Saturday</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>26</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>31</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>32</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>37</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>38</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>43</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Many of us need reminders. That is the purpose of this calendar. Check the calendar each month and follow the recommendations if they are necessary in your landscape situation. (MIM)
Dealing with woodpecker damage to houses

Barb Ogg, Extension Educator
Sonja Cochran, Extension Associate

Woodpeckers are among the most recognized birds and are interesting to watch. They are beneficial to the natural environment, but they become a nuisance when they damage houses. Woodpeckers have a strong pointed bill, used for chipping and digging into tree trunks for wood, and they can easily carve nests in cavities that they chisel deep into a large branch or tree. Several species of woodpeckers are found in Nebraska, including hairy woodpecker, downy woodpecker, red-headed woodpecker, red-bellied woodpecker and the northern flicker. The yellow-bellied sapsucker overwinters in southern Nebraska, but is relatively uncommon.

Damage results when woodpeckers “hammer” on houses, peek holes in search of insect or excavate a roosting or breeding cavity. In forested areas, these activities are on trees. A high percentage of homes are “hammered” by woodpeckers have natural cedar siding. To a woodpecker, the natural texture and sinuous size of the house make these houses seem like a “super tree,” a huge tree that has no bark.

During courtship activities in the spring, male woodpeckers advertise their territories by “drumming” on homes repeatedly hammering on the side of an object, like a dead tree or limb. Unfortunately, woodpeckers sometimes choose man-made objects that amplify the sound, such as wood siding, rain gutters and downspouts. Feeding: Wood from trees is one of the major sources of insects, and woodpeckers use food. Wood in utility poles, fence posts and wood siding is also recognized by woodpeckers as a source of insects, especially if insects hide in cracks in the wood.

Nesting/Roosting: Woodpeckers that use a building for feeding and drumming may also drill a hole in an attempt to excavate a winter roost or nesting cavity. Woodpeckers will hammer completely through the siding and may attempt another nesting hole until the birds find a suitable location. We have heard of reports of this activity from late summer and early fall into the spring.

Control: The key to successful woodpecker control is to take action as soon as you notice the bird damaging the house to stop the behavior before it becomes a habit. If the woodpecker seems to be searching for insects, you can take actions to control the insects. Cut woodpecker nesting cavity. Woodpeckers are migratory, non-game birds protected by the Federal Migratory Bird Treaty Act and the Nebraska Game and Parks Commission. This means that killing protected birds or destroying eggs is against federal and/or state laws. Killing birds can only be done with a permit obtained by the Nebraska Game and Parks Commission. To find out how to get a permit, contact the Game and Parks Commission at 402-471-0641.

The feeders should be protected from strong winds, preferably near shrubbery or conifers. Recycle your Christmas tree by propoting it up by the feeder to give the birds added shelter. With several feeders in your backyard, more birds will have an opportunity to feed at the same time.

Once you’re started feeding birds, don’t stop.那样 by the spring. Some birds develop feeding patterns and interruptions in the food supply may cause them to abandon feeders. There are many excellent books on bird feeding and feeding. Stop the control to do your yard and check out the wonderful field guides and other resources on birds, what a great gift idea for bird and wildlife lovers!

The University of Nebraska also offers the following exception publication:

- Shelves, Houses and Feeders for Backyard Enthusiasts
- Winter Feed for Birds and Other Animals (RP338, $0.00). This popular book is a must for backyard enthusiasts. You’ll get plans and information on constructing bird and mammal houses, shelves, a


Backyard habitat

Habitat restoration is important for birds and other wildlife due to our commercial and residential invasion on their natural areas. Humans are very good at building places to live and work, but we tend to not give much thought into creating habitat places where we can live in harmony with other living creatures.

You can restore and create natural areas for birds and wildlife to thrive. Creating your own backyard habitat is easy. All you need to do is make sure you have the four basic elements.

- Food: Plant shrubs and trees that produce seeds, fruits and nuts. You can provide nectar for hummingbirds when they migrate through the area. Plant flowers that attract butterflies and other insects. Use supplemental feeders that offer seed or suet.
- Water: Water is important in your backyard. You can several containers to collect and store different sources of water. Use a bird-bath, or place a shallow water dish at ground level. Backyard ponds are increasingly popular and offer aquatic habitat for many different birds and animals. In winter, purchase a small heater especially designed to keep your birdbath from freezing during cold Nebraska days.
- Shelter: Make your backyard place that critters will want to stay instead of just visit.

Are you feeding birds?

Find a bird feeder that is ideal for the kinds of birds you want to see in your backyard. Then select the types of food that these birds like best. Here are some suggestions for several backyard birds and their favorite foods.

- goldfinches—Niger thistle seeds, broken sunflower hearts and oil-type sunflower seeds.
- northern cardinals—Sunflower seeds of all types, safflower, cracked corn, millet, other seeds, unsalted nut meats and raisins.
- black-capped chickadees—Oil-type sunflower seeds, cracked unsalted nut meats, safflower and sunflower seeds.
- gray juncos—Red or white proso millet, finely cracked corn, oil-type sunflower seed and unsalted nut meats.
- house finches—Suet, cracked corn, wheat, milo and other seeds.
- northern sparrows—Red or white proso millet, oil-type sunflower seeds, cracked corn and some safflower.
- woodpeckers—Suet, unsalted nut meats, sunflower seeds and cracked corn. Most of these foods can be purchased at a local nursery and/or a specific bird suppliers store. Be sure that the seeds are of high quality and are fresh. Old seeds will be avoided or just scattered on the ground. Lastly, remember to provide a water area for your fine feathered friends. Happy Birding! (ALH)

Recycling is for the birds

Sonja Cochran
Extension Associate

“Chick-a-dee-dee-dee... the song of the Black-capped Chickadee. Who hasn’t heard its cheery voice in the cold of winter? These feathered acrobats are among the friendliest birds in the neighborhood. Our winter landscape is lightened by cardinals, American goldfinch, blue jays, juncos, nuthatches and, of course, downy woodpeckers who are frequent visitors of backyard feeding stations. Feeding station can be simple and inexpensive to make. Scrap lumber, tin cans, plastic soda bottles, milk jugs and cardboard and duct tape sets are easy to find. All it takes is a little creativity and knowledge about the birds you’re trying to attract. Many birds we enjoy at our feeders have specific seed preferences or prefer suet.

The feeder should be protected from strong winds, preferably near shrubbery or conifers. Recycle your Christmas tree by propoting it up by the feeder to give the birds added shelter. With several feeders in your backyard, more birds will have an opportunity to feed at the same time.

Environmental Focus

By Sonja Cochran

The Nebraska Game and Parks Commission. To find out more information on birds, their habits and distribution in Nebraska, you can obtain a copy of the Nebraska Game and Parks Commission’s book, Backyard Birds of Nebraska, by calling 402-471-0641.

December 1999

The NeBRINE

Page 3

continued on page 11

Soni Cochran
Extension Associate

Feeding stations can be another way to help birds and other wildlife. Y ou’ll get plans and other resources on birds, what a great field guides and other

locations.

- Bluebirds, purple martin, woodpeckers, owls and even squirrels compete for nest sites and cavity shelters. Plant evergreens, deciduous trees and shrubs. Provide nest boxes for birds and wildlife to raise their young.

This winter would be a terrific time to put together some nest boxes in preparation for the coming spring. The extension office has many publications on providing backyard habitat, building nest boxes and tips on successful bird feeding. (SC)
Storage methods to reduce hay losses

As you bring in your round bales for winter storage and feeding, store them to minimize weather losses. Hay stored outside will be damaged by rain, snow, wind and ice this fall and winter. The average round bale loses about one-fourth of its original nutrients during storage, but these losses can be reduced to only 10 or 15 percent. Now, I’m sure all of you are better than average, but just in case, let’s look at some ways to reduce spoilage by storing hay a little differently this year.

For instance, do you usually line up bales so the twine sides touch each other? Or stack your bales? If so, extra spoilage will occur where these bales touch, because rain, snow and ice will gather in these spots instead of running off. Round bales butt end-to-end, cigarette-like, usually have less spoilage.

Does snow get trapped around your bales? Round bales rarely get any sun so it’s slow to dry. This year, line bales up north-and-south to get fewer drifts and to dry more quickly because the sun and our prevailing winds will hit both sides of the bales.

Most important is the bottom of your bales. Always put bales on high, well-drained ground so water drains from them. If necessary, use crushed rock, railroad ties, or even pallets to keep the bottoms dry. This will also reduce problems getting to your hay or getting it moved due to snow drifts or mud. Just a little pre-planning can save hay and frustrations.

Source: Dr. Bruce Anderson, Forage Specialist, UNL (TD)

Biosolids cuts production costs and improves yields

Now that harvest activities are over, are you thinking about ways to improve production and cut production costs? You can reduce your out-of-pocket fertilizer costs, improve poor soil and probably see a yield increase next year by using municipal biosolids. This material is high in organic matter and has all nutrients that are needed by crops to grow. And, the city of Lincoln is paying up to $6.25 per cubic yard for application. If you don’t have spreading equipment, you can rent a spreader from the city for a reasonable cost.

Cooperators must have a loader and be able to apply the materials in a timely way. New and continuing biosolids cooperators must sign a signed paperwork to the extension office for biosolids delivery in 2000, by January 15. Contact Barb Ogg or Dave Smith at the Lancaster County Extension Office for more information about this program. Call 441-7180. (BPO)

Changes to waste management regulations. Inspection deadline nears.

Nebraska DEQ

Regulations on manure management are listed in Title 130 by the Nebraska Department of Environmental Quality (NDQE). Changes were mandated by LB1209 and LB1487 in the last two sessions of the Nebraska Legislature. The Division of Environmental Quality’s Environmental Quality Council met in September 1999 and approved changes in Title 130 proposed by NDQE in response to the legislative requirements. One of the important changes is to exempt existing livestock production operations with a capacity of 300 animal units or less from the reporting and permitting requirements. For exempt operations, a DEQ inspection must be requested by January 1, 2000. One animal unit is equivalent to one feedlot steer or heifer and to 2.5 swine weighing 55 pounds or more.

However, any livestock operation with less than 300 animal units is not exempt from inspection and the permitting process, if there has been a confirmed discharge of livestock wastes into waters of the state or the NDQE has determined that because of conditions at the operation, there is a high potential for discharge into waters of the state, in which case the owner would be notified by certified mail that the operation is subject to the regulations in the Livestock Waste Management Act.

Any person who has not requested an inspection for a livestock operation after January 1, 2000, except an exempt operation, may be subject to a fine of $100 for every occurrence for failure to request free inspection in compliance with the Livestock Waste Management Act in August and December, 1998 respectively. (TD)

Crop Protection Clinics

Each year the University of Nebraska Crop Protection Clinics feature practical, economical and environmentally sound management strategies for insect, plant, disease and weed problems in crops. Information presented at individual meetings will vary by location. Clinics scheduled for southeast Nebraska are to be held at these locations on the following dates: Lincoln, January 5; Auburn, January 6; Fremont, January 9; and York, January 11. The list of topics to be presented at the January 4 Lincoln Crop Protection Clinic includes:

- Low/reduced cost weed management strategies
- Biology and management of Soybean Cyst Nematode
- Seed treatments
- Herbicide resistant crops, “Benefits and Risks”
- Corn disease outlook
- GMO acceptance/issues
- Rootworm resistance
- New products and the 2000 Weed Management Guide
- Weed management decisions
- Bi corn/GMO
- Label jeopardy
- Recertification wrap-up

For all meetings, registration begins at 8 a.m., with sessions continuing from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. The $20 registration fee includes proceedings, publications, refreshments and the noon meal. Advanced registration is not required; however, saves standing in line. (WS)
Water pipes

Frozen water pipes aren’t life threatening; however, frozen or broken water pipes do cause damage to homes in winter. If water lines in the walls are properly insulated, they can freeze and rupture. (A 1/8 inch crack in a pipe can run 350 gallons of water a day, soaking floors, rugs and furniture.) To prevent the mess and aggravation frozen water pipes cause, protect your home or apartment by following the simple steps below.

Before cold weather:
- Locate and insulate pipes most susceptible to freezing—typically those near outer walls, in crawl spaces or in the attic. Insulation made especially for this purpose is available.
- Wrap pipes with heat tape (UL approved).
- Seal any leaks that allow cold air inside where pipes are located.
- Disconnect garden hoses and shut off and drain water from pipes leading to outside faucets. This reduces the chance of freezing in the short span of pipes just inside the house.
- When it’s cold:
  - Let hot and cold water trickle at night from a faucet on one or two outside walls.
  - Open cabinet doors to allow more heat to get to uninsulated water pipes under a sink or appliance near an outer wall.
- Make sure heat is left on and no lower than 55 de-

- If you plan to be away:
  - Have someone check your house daily to make sure the heat is still on to prevent freezing or damage to pipes that are to stay off the water system (except indoor sprinkler systems).
  - If pipes freeze:
    - Make sure you and your family know how to shut off the water, in case pipes burst. Stopping the flow of water can minimize the damage to your home. Call a plumber and contact your insurance agent.
  - Never try to thaw a pipe with an open flame or torch.
  - Always be careful of the potential for electric shock in and around standing water. (DJ)

Planting designs with wildlife in mind

Windbreaks are planted to protect farmsteads, livestock, roads or crops. The additional goal of providing wildlife benefits can be added without compromising the primary purpose. In developing a plan, select a design, plant materials and location that meet your specific windbreak needs, but include factors that benefit wildlife.

Below are some designs with tips on improving them for wildlife.

Overall guidelines:
- Choose trees and shrubs that have wildlife benefits, but that are adapted to the local climate, generally, native species are the best bet because they are adapted and familiar to wildlife. (See Box 149th, Overbrook, KS 66524. Phone number: 785-665-7643.)
- Include a variety of trees and shrubs in the windbreak. This gives a more natural landscape appearance, improves wildlife benefits for more species and reduces the chances of disease or insect pest problems.
- Where appropriate, select a site that connects to a larger habitat block such as a river corridor, wood lot, wetland, woody draw or similar area.
- Consider planting a windbreak that forms a protective cover from the cold air with unbroken gaps. (A 1/8 inch crack in a pipe can run 350 gallons of water a day, soaking floors, rugs and furniture.) To prevent the mess and aggravation frozen water pipes cause, protect your home or apartment by following the simple steps below.

Windbreaks are commonly used further south in areas such as the Texas panhandle. In general, greater width provides better wildlife benefits. An ample ground cover layer, availability of food resources and connections with larger blocks of protective cover are also critical factors in winter survival for pheasants, quail and other wildlife. If an established windbreak fills with snow or otherwise does not offer adequate winter habitat, consider adding the needed plants to improve it. Below are some design tips for a five-row windbreak.

- On the windward side, often the north or west side, use two rows of evergreen trees such as eastern redcedar, Rocky Mountain juniper or other native conifer species. Spruce and fir are recommended for more northern sites. Stagger the trees in the two rows so that all spaces are better occupied.
- For the middle row (or middle two rows), use tall deciduous trees such as those listed in NebGuide G84-671 or EC91-1771. A variety of deciduous trees mixed through these rows provides more benefits to more wildlife species.
- Add a row of tall shrubs and a row of short shrubs on the leeward side. Planting a variety of shrub species with high wildlife values is the best approach. (DJ)

Conferences of interest
- Nebraska Turfgrass Conference, January 10-12, Holiday Inn, 72nd & Grover, Omaha. Contact: Don Ellerbee, Nebraska Turfgrass Foundation, 402-463-5418, http://turfgrass.org/
- Nebraska Nurseryman’s Conference, January in Omaha, contact: Nebraska Nursery & Landscape Association, 1210 Frederick Ave, St. Joseph, MO 64506, phone: 816-233-1481, FAX. (816) 233-4774, e-mail: western@pennyexpress.net – Sarah Woody Bibens, Executive Secretary
- Great Plains Regional Vegetable Conference, January 7-8 at the Ramada Inn, St. Joseph, MO. Contact: Horticulature Department, UNL, 377 Plant Sciences, Lincoln, NE 68583-0724. Phone: 402-472-8616.
- Nebraska Sustainable Agriculture Society Annual Meeting, February 26 at the Leadership Center in Aurora. Contact: NSAS, PO. Box 736 Hartington, NE 68739. Phone: 402-254-2289 or in Lincoln at 402-471-0017 (DJ)

Tractor safety tips (part 12)

Tractors are one of the most important pieces of equipment on a farm, yet they are also among the most dangerous. More deaths are caused by tractors than by any other type of farm accident. It is, therefore, imperative that tractor owners routinely check their tractors and keep in mind the following safety guidelines:

Always shut off the tractor and engage the parking brake or put the transmission in park before going off. Doing this will minimize the chance of being run over or entangled in running machinery (i.e. PTO shafts and towed powered machinery). If there are other people around, keep them at a safe distance and in sight. Remove the key.

Never allow an extra rider on equipment. If there is only one seat on the tractor, then the only person that should be on the tractor is the operator. Many children and adults are killed by being run over by tractors or equipment. The extra rider can be knocked off, forced off or fall off.

Tractors and other equipment that are not designed to travel at more than 25 miles per hour, must display a Slow Moving Vehicle (SMV) sign. This sign must be placed not less than two feet nor more than six feet above the ground with the point directed upward and placed at the rear of the tractor or equipment. If the SMV is faded, replace it. Many accidents occur every year when motorists run into the rear of slow moving equipment. An additional method to protect the operator and any passengers is to turn on flashing four-way amber lights. This gives motorists an indication that the equipment is traveling 25 MPH or less. (DJ)

Learn at your convenience—24 hours a day, 7 days a week—

NUFACTS (audio) Information Center
NUFACTS audio message center offers fast, convenient information. In the Lincoln area call 441-7188; for the rest of Nebraska call 1-800-832-5441. When directed, enter the 3-digit number of the message you wish to hear.

Acreage & Small Farm Insights Web Site
Visit our Internet web site at: http://www.inr.unl.edu/ or land/lodge/accreage/index.htm to learn about Extension programs, publications and links to other acreage and small farm information.

“Part-time Farming” video

“Part-time Farming” will help develop your country environment and improve your quality of life. Just one hour of “Part-time Farming” provides tips that will save you costly mistakes and time. Call 402-441-7180 to order your copy.
It’s not the potato’s fault

Many people think potatoes are fattening. Actually, potatoes are low in fat and are an excellent source of vitamin C and a good source of potassium, phosphorus and iron. The potato skin is a good source of dietary fiber.

A medium to large (8-ounce) baked potato contains:
- Calories: 247
- Carbohydrate: 57 grams
- Fat: 0.2 grams
- Vitamin C: 26 milligrams
- Sodium: 18 milligrams

Compare figures for a baked potato with other potato dishes below. It’s not the potato’s fault that we often add a lot of fat to them when we fix them.

Meal-in-one Baked Potato
1. Scrub and prick a large baking potato such as a Russet Burbank.
2. Microwave or bake the potato until done.
3. Choose two or three toppings from the list below:
   - Yogurt or low-fat sour cream
   - Cooked, chopped broccoli or cauliflower and shredded cheese
   - Chili (from a can) and yogurt
   - Refried beans and salsa
   - Cooked chicken topped with mushroom soup (thinned slightly with milk)
   - Crumbled, cooked ground beef patty and green peas topped with mushroom or other soup
   - Canned vegetable soup (un diluted) with a slice of cheese

Source: HELP recipes, Healthy Eating for Life Program, Cooperative Extension Service, Kansas State University, Manhattan.

Gift ideas defend against bacteria

Meat thermometers.
“Every kitchen should have one,” Larson says. He recom-
mands you purchase an instant-
read thin probe thermometer with either a dial or digital face. The advantages of these ther-

mometers are they can be used in a variety of foods—roasts,
casseroles, as well as thin meats like burgers and chops.

continued on page 11

Life’s little luxuries for 100 calories or less

Looking at the Food Guide Pyramid, many of the foods that fit these trends probably are at the tip in the “Fats, Oils &
Sweets” category. Does the “Uses the “star” on the tree?
Looking at the Food Guide Pyramid, many of the foods that fit these trends probably are at the tip in the “Fats, Oils &
Sweets” category. Does the “Uses the “star” on the tree?
continued on page 11

continued on page 12

Focus on Food

Alice Henneman, RD, LDN, Extension Educator

Q: What’s the best way to freeze cookies?
A: Prepare cookies and bake as usual. (NOTE: Meringue-based cookies and cookies containing beaten egg whites, such as maca-
rooms, don’t freeze well. Also, fragile cookies don’t freeze well.) Cool thoroughly. Place cookies on a wire cooling rack to allow air
to circulate around them to promote faster cooling. Place in a rigid freezer container to keep them from breaking. Place moisture-
proof, moisture-vapor resistant freezer wrapping between layers.

Rigid freezer containers include plastic, glass and ceramic containers labeled suitable for freezing. Milk and cottage cheese
carriers aren’t moisture-vapor resistant enough for freezing. When using glass and ceramic containers, use only those designed
for freezing. Other types of glass and ceramics may break in the freezer.

Too much air in a container can lower the quality of a food. If you don’t have enough cookies to fill the container, you might place
the separated layers of cookies inside a large plastic freezer bag or surround them with freezer wrapping within the container.
Thaw in wrapping at room temperature.

Jean's Journal
Jean Wheelock
FCE Council Chair

Happy Holidays!

The season to be sharing. So many of us have been blessed with much and during this season, people are very generous to others. As rich as our country is, there are many who won’t have a warm meal or a place to sleep that is warm and safe. We have several organizations that help those who need it, so as we begin to think of what we can do for our own families, let us not forget our neighbors.

My two year term as FCE chair has been completed and I’m very proud of the clubs who have helped make a difference in our community. Congratulations to our new officers, Clarice Steffins, chair, Lynn Bush, vice-chair, Marcene Polivka, secretary and Joy Kruse, treasurer, as they carry our ideals and programs into the new century.

Please join us for an exciting council meeting January 24, 2000 at 1 p.m. It has been a pleasure to serve and may we have much goodness and kindness in our world.

Happy New Year & Century

What children want during the holidays

Chances are your children have a long list of gifts they’d like to receive during the holidays. Are you frustrated because they don’t seem to understand the spirit of the season? Maybe they just need some coaching. According to Jo Robinson and Jean Coppock Staeheli in their book Unplug the Christmas Machine, children really want four things during the holiday season.

1. Relaxed and loving time with the family. During the holiday season, lives become crowded with program practices, shopping trips, and parties. Even when parents are at home, they are often busy with holiday chores, plans, and money worries. Lots of gifts and attention when the holiday arrives won’t make up for your absence now. “Children,” say the authors, “want love in a steady, constant way.” They advise setting firm priorities so you can give your children the attention they need. Consider turning down some social invitations to spend more time with your family.

2. Realistic expectations about gifts. Children who think only about gifts at this time of year can feel terribly let down when the holidays are over. Their new toys can’t possibly be as good as those they thought they would be all they thought they would be after they’ve waited for them for months. Robinson and Staeheli suggest making other parts of the holiday as exciting as opening presents.

“Children,” say the authors, “want and need their parents to want and need them.” Robinson and Staeheli believe that as powerful as commercials are, a parent’s influence can be more powerful. They suggest watching an hour of television with your children and having them tell “Commercial!” each time a new one appears on the screen. Then talk about what you have seen. Help your children learn that the purpose of advertising is to sell products.

3. An even paced holiday season. Because stores start opening presents. “That way,” say Robinson and Staeheli, “gifts start taking their place among the holidays. They advise children the difference between commercials and regular television programs.

As parents, most of us are painfully aware of all the things we don’t control—like the content of television, movies and music; the values of peer groups; and the impact of highly publicized bad examples. It’s easy to feel powerless. It’s easy to feel powerless. But it’s a mistake and an abdication of responsibility to underestimate the impact we have and how much more we can do.

Michael Josephson, relates that a study of National Merit Finalists revealed that an unusually high proportion of these high achievers had two major characteristics in their home: first, there were lots of books and a great emphasis on reading; and second, there was a family tradition of eating dinner together regularly. It makes sense. Filling our house with books not only emphasizes the importance of reading, it is also a way to surround our children with opportunities and examples that build their minds and character. Eating dinner together is about being involved, spending real, serious time in a family setting, guiding the way our children think and behave. These things don’t happen by accident. We have to adjust our schedules to our family duties and consciously create an environment that nurtures and supports our highest values. Sure there are exceptions, but generally our children will value what we value. And since none of us is perfect, we have to be self-conscious about emphasizing our best not our weakest characteristics. What we say to and in front of our kids is terribly important. And so is what we do. Everything sends a message. What we read or watch on TV. How we handle our relationshships. How we deal with anger and frustration. What attitudes we convey about drinking, drugs and sex. All of these send a strong message to children—is it one we want them to receive and replicate?

Adapted from a Michael Josephson Radio Broadcast from September, 1999. (LJ)
4-H Bulletin Board

• Sunday, January 9—Teen Council meeting 3-5 p.m. All teens interested in joining 4-H Teen Council are invited to attend or call Tracy at 441-7180. (TK)
• 4-H Ambassadors, 2 p.m.
• January 18—Speech VIPS, 7 p.m.
• February 8—Achievement Night, 7 p.m.
• February 12—4-H officer training workshop, 9:30-11 a.m.
• February 13—Speech Workshop, 6:30 p.m.

Character Counts! training
Become trained to use the Character Counts! curriculum or just come to find out more about this exciting program on January 18, 2000 from 8:30 to 11:30 a.m. All educators, interested adults or teens are invited to attend. Cost is $5 per person. To register, call 441-7180—registration is limited to 40, so call early. Payment may be made the day of the workshop. If you have questions, call LaWane. (LJ)

Chapelle’s are named volunteers of the month
Gordon and Ellen Chapelle were named City/County Volunteers of the month. Each month the Lancaster County Retired & Senior Volunteer Program along with the Volunteer Services Division of the Lincoln Area Agency on Aging recognize individuals that have given many hours of volunteer service. The Chapelle’s were recognized at this months County Commissioners meeting. They were thanked for volunteering with the 4-H program for over 30 years. They received a cash award, a balloon bouquet and will have their names engraved on a plaque that will be on display at the City/County building. If you see the Chapelle’s, congratulate them on their award and thank them for all their dedicated years of service to the Lancaster County 4-H program! (DK)

Join the 4-H Speech VIPS
We are looking for new speech VIPS members. If you would like to help organize and conduct the Lancaster County 4-H speaking contest, call Deanna or Tracy at 441-7180. (DK/TK)

All aboard!
Tickets are still available to board the 2002 CWF bus! If you are a teenager and would like to learn about government, travel the east coast and meet new friends, the Lancaster County Citizenship Washington Focus program is for you. Our next meeting will be Tuesday, January 11 at 7 p.m. For more detailed information about the CWF program, contact Deanna at 441-7180. (DK)

Lancaster County Born and Raised beef
As you pick out those special market animals, keep in mind the Lancaster County Born and Raised contest that is held each year at the county fair to help promote Lancaster County beef.

The Lancaster County Born and Raised contest is open to all market beef born and raised in Lancaster County. This calf can be one from your own herd or one you bought from someone else in the county.

If the calf is purchased from a cattle breeder, all you have to do is have a copy of the bill of sale showing the origin of the calf. If the calf was home raised, a written statement that the calf was born and raised in Lancaster County needs to be turned in, signed by a parent or guardian.

Entries for this contest are taken at check in at county fair. If you have any questions, call the extension office. (DK)

Lancaster County Meats for Consumer Team
Members of the Lancaster County 4-H Meat Judging Team had the opportunity to work with local grocery store meat departments. During the day, the team had a chance to learn about safe handling techniques for meat. They also were taught how to identify fresh meat by color and texture. The team also attended two workshops that helped them to identify meat cuts. If you need help picking out some good steaks or chops, give a member of the team a call!

The program will be offered again this year. If you would like to become a member of the meats learning program, contact Deanna at 441-7180. (DK)
As we welcome the New Year, it seems appropriate to review the goals of the 4-H horse project for both the exhibitor and the parent; for those currently in the project and those considering joining. The primary aim of this project is to develop confident, caring individuals of good character who are connected to their communities. Through the horse project, you will develop leadership, initiative, self-reliance and sportsmanship. While working with your project animal, you will experience pride, responsibility and the respect of your mount. You will also develop a greater love for animals. Horse project members appreciate horseback riding as a beautiful and wholesome form of recreation. You will acquire skills in horsemanship, patience and understanding in handling horses and/or ponies. You will develop safety precautions to prevent injuries to yourself, your mount and others. Participation in the horse project will help prepare you for citizen ship responsibilities as you work together in groups and support community horse projects and activities. To become a good horseman or horsewoman, you will need to train both your horse and yourself. There are no short cuts. Becoming a true ‘horseman’ means learning all you can about horses and then using what you know every time you ride. If you work and continue learning, your reward will be a well-trained horse. Riding a finely trained horse is something you will never forget. Work with your club members and your leader. Being a good horseman is an honor you can enjoy, but you will not achieve this goal without hard work and patience. Don’t get discouraged. You are developing into a better person and helping make your club stronger with each new experience and achievement.

FYI
• The new Nebraska 4-H Horse Project Member Manual is available at the extension office.
• New 4-H Horse Show and Judging Guides will be out sometime around the first of the year and will replace the current guides.
• Horsin’ Around Horse Clinic is scheduled for February 12 and 13, 2000. Information and flyers will be available around the first of the year. Call Ellen if interested. (EK)

Lancaster Extension Education Center • 444 Cherrycreek Road, Suite A, Lincoln
Presented by Lancaster County 4-H Teen Council and sponsored by University of Nebraska Cooperative Extension in Lancaster County

4-H & Youth

4-H Goes Under the Sea with youth!

5th and 6th grade 4-H Lock-In

January 14, 8 p.m. - January 15, 8 a.m.

$10 per child

call Tracy at 441-7180 if you have questions

Bring your toothbrush, toothpaste, sleeping bag, pillow, active wear, sleepwear (sweats) and a friend interested in 4-H!

Lancaster Extension Education Center • 444 Cherrycreek Road, Suite A, Lincoln
Presented by Lancaster County 4-H Teen Council and sponsored by University of Nebraska Cooperative Extension in Lancaster County

4-H Lock-In Registration Form

Name of participant(s): ____________________________

Address: ________________________________________

City/State/Zip ____________________________

Phone: ________________________________________

Parent/Guardian: _____________________________

Special Needs/Other Information: ____________________________

Age: ________

Return registration to: Tracy Kulm
University of Nebraska Cooperative Extension in Lancaster County
444 Cherrycreek Road, Suite A
Lincoln, NE 68528-1507

Registrations due by January 7, 2000

Free baby chickens!

Beginning in February, baby chickens hatched in the School Enrichment Embryology project will be available to anyone living on an acreage or farm, or to youth involved in the 4-H poultry project. Chicks will be available on or around February 18, March 24 and again May 19.

If you’re interested in receiving some of the free chicks, call 441-7180 and ask for Ellen. (EK)
Holiday safety check

Holiday tree lights offer a bright, colorful array to a room. But those little bulbs can be a danger to a child. The time of the year is almost upon us when we need to use extra precautions in ensuring the safety of our homes.

Young children are unaware of dangers surrounding them. It is the responsibility of the parent to protect little ones. Iowa State University Extension offers several tips on home safety.

Babies are curious about everything. They explore by climbing, touching and pulling things down that they are not tall enough to see. Help prevent those little people from getting hurt by keeping holiday tree lights, lamps that can tip over, uncovered electrical outlets and matches out of their reach.

A parent should watch out for hazards all around the home. Parents have learned from experience where dangers are. Young children have not had this experience. Hazards in the home

continued on page 12

Magazine telephone scams

Tips for buying toys

1. Choose toys with care. Keep in mind the child’s age, interests and skill level.
2. Look for quality design and construction in all toys for all ages.
3. Make sure that all directions or instructions are clear—to you, and when appropriate, to the child. Plastic wrappings on toys should be discarded at once before they become deadly playthings.
4. Be a label reader. Look for and heed age recommendations, such as “Not recommended for children under three.”

Learning about our world: celebrating Kwanzaa

December brings holidays for many people in our country. A relatively new celebration is Kwanzaa, an African-American holiday beginning on December 26 and lasting seven days. In 1966, Dr. Maulana Karenga, a professor at California State University at Long Beach, planned a celebration to help African Americans be proud of their past and build stronger families. He felt many African Americans needed to know more about their heritage.

In planning this holiday, Dr. Karenga studied many groups of Africans. He found that each group there was a harvest or “first fruits” celebration. Kwanza is a Swahili word meaning “the first.” Dr. Karenga added the last “a” because there were seven children who each wanted to hold a letter during the celebration. During the African celebrations, people created songs, danced, sang and ate food together. Dr. Karenga also found that most African groups were guided by seven principles, called Nguzo (principles) Saba (seven). He incorporated these principles into the holiday.

The seven principles of Kwanzaa (seven) are:

1. Umoja - Unity
2. Kujichagulia - Self-determination
3. Ujima - Cooperative economics
4. Nia - Purpose
5. Kuumba - Creativity
6. Imani - Faith
7. Ndikulo - Judicious leadership

The Kwanzaa holiday is celebrated by many African Americans. People place a candle holder (kinara) with seven candles (mishumaa saba) on a straw mat (mkeka) on a table. The center candle is black, symbolic of the color of the African American people; three red candles symbolize their struggles, and three green candles symbolize their hopes. Also on the table the family places a basket of fruit and vegetables, an ear of corn for each child, a cup and gifts to be opened on December 31.

Also on the table the family places a basket of fruit and vegetables, an ear of corn for each child, a cup and gifts to be opened on December 31. Each day a Kwanzaa candle is lit, and one of the seven principles (Nguzo Saba) is the theme for the gathering.

December 26 is Umoja - being joined together.
December 27 is Kujichagulia - being self-reliant.
December 28 is Ujima - helping one another.
December 29 is Kuumba - creating.
December 30 is Nia - having a purpose or goal.
December 31 is Ujamaa - creating.

During the celebration, there is a feast in which people eat callaloo greens for prosperity and black-eyed peas for good luck, along with cornbread, fried chicken, baked catfish, sweet potato pie, peach cobbler, rice pudding, and carrot cake. The cup is filled with water or juice and passed around in memory of ancestors. “Harambee!” which means “Let’s pull together!” is said many times throughout the celebration.

Dr. Karenga celebrated the first Kwanzaa with a few friends. Now millions of African Americans look forward to the
**Magazine telephone scams continued from page 10**

When you receive a telephone sales presentation regarding magazines:

• Ask callers for their name, and the name, address and phone number of the company they represent.
• Ask what the total cost of the subscription package will be. Then determine if this is a "bargain" price.
• Ask that a written copy of the sales terms and cancellation provisions be mailed to you before you agree to buy anything.
• Don’t give your bank account or credit card number over the phone for "verification" or “computer purposes.” You may fear you have been charged for magazine subscriptions you did not agree to purchase.
• If you receive a bill for magazines you did not order, or if your bank account has been debited or your credit card charged for magazines you did not agree to purchase, contact: The Office of Attorney General Don Stenberg
Consumer Protection Division
2115 State Capitol Building
Lincoln, NE 68509
(402) 441-2082
Consumer Protection Line
1-800-727-6432 (GB)

**Life’s little luxuries for 100 calories or less continued from page 6**

Or, might we adopt the viewpoint that the person who described the "Fats, Oils & Sweets" grouping as “the star on the top of your tree.” Let’s think about the star on the top of your tree. It’s decorated with care. It complements the other decorations. It’s often the most costly ornament and the quantity is limited.

You can purchase your foods from the tip of the Pyramid like that star. Select them wisely and fit them into your overall dietary plan. Then enjoy them as you enjoy the twinkle of the star from the top of your tree.

**Little luxuries**

Here are nine sample pleasure-filled indulgences found in a tour of local stores— all at 100 calories or less. Have fun coming up with your own list of little luxuries! 1. Tangerine-flavored olive oil, 3/4 tablespoon = 90 calories, 10.5 grams fat. 2. Blackberry salad dressing, 2 tablespoons = 100 calories, 7 grams fat. 3. Spiced cranberry raspberry gourmet preserves, 1 tablespoon = 50 calories, 0 grams fat. 4. Hazelnut spread, 1 tablespoon = 80 calories, 4.5 grams fat. 5. Lindt hazelnut truffle Swiss milk chocolate bar, 2 blocks = 100 calories, 7.6 grams fat. 6. Premium hot chocolate mix, 3 tablespoons = 90 calories, 1.5 grams fat. 7. Apple cinnamon gourmet syrup, 2 tablespoons = 90 calories, 0 grams fat. 8. Smokey mozzarella bread spread, 1 tablespoon = 100 calories, 11 grams fat. 9. Double chocolate crisps cookies, 1 cookie = 90 calories, 5 grams fat.

Picking your pleasures

**Houseplant problems continued from page 2**

To control wilting; check drainage, look for root rot, check for conditions promoting unusually rapid loss of water, alter watering schedule. Proper care of your houseplants will insure that you will be able to enjoy your plants for years to come. (MIM)

**Holiday safety continued from page 2**

After the meal is over and never leave an unattended candle burning.

When decorating landscape trees and the exterior of the house, be careful. Make sure you have a sturdy ladder and someone to help hold the ladder when you are stringing lights in high places. Please have a safe holiday season. (MIM)

**Recycling is for the birds continued from page 3**

A variety of feeders and a special section on building feeders and houses from recycled materials.

In addition, the extension office has available many of the University of Nebraska NebGuides and in-house fact sheets on enhancing wildlife that you can pick up for free (up to ten different guides). These same free materials are available via the internet by using our Environment and Natural Resources website at http://www.lanco.unl.edu/enviro

**What children want during the holidays continued from page 7**

After the meal is over and never leave an unattended candle burning.

When decorating landscape trees and the exterior of the house, be careful. Make sure you have a sturdy ladder and someone to help hold the ladder when you are stringing lights in high places. Please have a safe holiday season. (MIM)

**Gift ideas defend against bacteria continued from page 6**

• Paper towels and holders. Using soiled cloth kitchen towels can spread harmful bacteria to otherwise clean cooking surfaces and utensils. To avoid this, use paper towels once and throw away. Paper towels and holders are a good choice for gifts,” Larson says. Cost: $2 for plastic towel holders to $30 or more for carved wooden holders. Paper towels cost about $1 per roll.
• Hand soap and holders. Washing your hands frequently before and during food preparation is the best and easiest way to prevent foodborne illness. "To remind home chefs to wash their hands, buy a decorative liquid soap container or bar soap holder and fill with your choice of soaps,” Cost: $2 each and up for plastic containers: $5 and up for ceramic holders; $1 and up for soap.
• Other thermometers. It’s a good idea to check temps in the refrigerator and freezer periodically. Refrigerator temps should be 40 degrees or less and freezer temps should be zero degrees or less. You can buy these specialty thermometers at hardware and kitchen furnishings shops. Cost $3 and up.

Adapted with permission from “Top 10 Gift Ideas Defend Against Bacteria,” The Department of Agriculture, Trade and Consumer Protection, The Division of Food Safety, Madison, WI. (AH)

**Strong families have members who give of themselves**

During the holiday season, people often believe that the only gift they can give is something expensive or store bought. It is not necessary to spend money to give someone a meaningful gift. A handmade gift can be a surprise. Once a month can be more meaningful than a gift you buy. Remember, the best gifts come from the heart. Here are some holiday gifts to make:

• Use your hobby skills, such as painting or woodwork ing, to make unique holiday gifts.
• Give a package of coupons redeemable for chores you’ll do during the year: wash the car, clean the garage, cut the grass, vacuum the house, iron the clothes. There are many chores to choose from!
• Write a letter to each family member. Include things you appreciate about that person, fun memories shared together, and shared jokes. Type the letters, make covers for them, and wrap them as gifts. They’ll still be treasured when

store-bought gifts are long forgotten.
• Put together a photograph album with pictures of family activities from year to year. This is an ideal gift for a grandparent or a grown child who has left home.

Suggested family activities:

1. Address and mail holiday greeting cards.
2. Work together on gift ideas.
3. Visit a friend or a relative who lives alone or in a nursing home.
4. Adopt a family through your church or other local organization. As a family, shop, wrap, and deliver gifts for them. (LJ)

**Miscellaneous**

2. Work together on gift ideas.
3. Visit a friend or a relative who lives alone or in a nursing home.
4. Adopt a family through your church or other local organization. As a family, shop, wrap, and deliver gifts for them. (LJ)

**What children want during the holidays continued from page 7**

Past holidays together. Robinson and Staeheli say that most families have more traditions than they realize and that even simple traditions will do. They advise asking your children which activities mean the most to them. Then, be sure to do them every year.

Give your children these four gifts and you’ll give yourself a lovely present as well. You’ll spend more time doing the things that really matter and less frenzied time at the mall and the toy store.

Adapted from the National Network for Child Care—NNCC. Part of CYFERNET, the National Extension Service Children and Youth and Family Educational Research Network. (LJ)
December 24
Office Closed

December 31
Office Closed

January 5
4-H Council Meeting .......................................................... 7 p.m.

January 9
4-H Ambassador Meeting ....................................................... 2 p.m.
4-H Teen Council ................................................................. 3–5 p.m.

January 11
CWF Meeting ....................................................................... 7 p.m.

January 13
Extension Board Meeting ....................................................... 10 a.m.

Alternatives to eating alone

Do you live by yourself and get tired of eating alone? Yet, do you feel uncomfortable always calling up friends to go out to eat? Here are some creative ways to have companions for dinner from Kansas State University Cooperative Extension Service.

1. Have a progressive dinner party. Call two or three friends. Ask each one to prepare one menu item and you prepare one also. Then go to each home to eat the item they prepared. If you like, come up with a theme for your progressive dinner party complete with decorations.

2. Check the newspaper for brown-bag seminars. Many organizations have lunch-and-learn programs on a regular basis. If you find one that you like, check if they will be offering more in the future.

3. Join a service organization that meets weekly for a meal and a meeting. Many organizations will let you attend a few meetings to learn more about them before you commit to joining.

4. Start a dinner club. Ask several acquaintances or friends to share dinner on a weekly, bimonthly, monthly or whatever time you wish. Rotate the place from home to home. Maybe even have a menu planning party to get started with ideas and plan the first two or three dinners. Also, bring recipes to share.

5. Here’s an idea that I’d like to add. If you and your friends enjoy reading, you might start a book club. Meet monthly in your favorite restaurant (or rotate to several restaurants). Dice and discuss your favorite book at the same time. You can read a book a month. Or break a longer book into several sections and discuss over several months.

6. If you prefer to be with people when eating and everyone is busy, ask yourself these questions or try these ideas:

   a. Is there a church social today that I forgot about?
   b. Is there a community center where I can drop in?
   c. Is there a restaurant I feel comfortable going to by myself?
   d. Make a sack lunch and eat sitting on a park bench watching the children play.
   e. Go to a mall and eat in the food court.

Learning about our world: celebrating Kwanzaa

continued from page 10

last week of December as a time for learning, feeling proud, sharing, fun and joy. In one of his books Dr. Karenga says, “May the year’s end meet us laughing and stronger.” If you would like to share more information on Kwanzaa with your children and their families, look for “KWANZAA” by Deborah M. Newton Choclate or “KWANZAA” by Dorothy Rhodes Freeman and Dianne M. MacMillan in your children’s library. Perhaps there is an African-American art show, a puppet show, or play about this celebration in your area. Prepare one of the foods for a snack. Many of these activities will help our children learn about and understand the many people in our world. (LJ)

Holiday safety check

continued from page 10

could be breakable glass, marbles and other tiny toys, plastic bags, plastic toys that break with sharp edges and scissors and other sewing items. Is your house and family safe? Here are some helpful tips to find if the family is safe:

1. Are electrical sockets covered and furniture placed so that little fingers cannot reach them?

2. Does the family buckle up during every car ride?