

# TAKING TIME

by Rebecca Wolf

Extension Home Economist



## "Treat" Yourself To Some Time Alone

"Trick or Treat"... the children's calls will be heard throughout our neighborhoods this weekend and next week. What will you get as an autumn treat? May I suggest that you treat yourself to an hour or two of solitude?

Why take time to be alone? Removing yourself from an everyday routine or from a particularly stressful situation can give you a refreshing perspective. You know, that child that had you pulling your hair out really is quite adorable most of the time. Have you forgotten the pleasure your artwork, garden, walk through the back fields, or morning exercise brings you?

Our society is stressed-- pushed to the limit in many ways. With the federal budget crunch, Middle East Crisis, and unstable economy families are burdened with many

questions, feelings of instability, and honest fear. Each year 8 million Americans develop ulcers. Stress in our country's work force costs companies \$75-\$90 billion per year.

Stress increases a person's adrenalin, blood pressure, breathing and heart rates. It increases the amount of cholesterol released into the blood system. Physicians report that more people suffer from stress-related health problems than from the common cold!

Being alone gives a person time to think, time to rest, time to pamper himself or herself, time to perhaps even heal wounds. For a few moments you are able to focus on your needs, your interests. Writing a letter to a lifetime friend can't be done with children in tow or while rushing to a meeting. This activity and many others is best done in solitude.

Women, considering current statistics, can expect to spend at

least some time alone -- either being single, divorced, or widowed. Would you know how to deal with that silence? Too often adults, especially parents, neglect personal interests in order to maintain a home and nurture children. Unless those interests are taken off the shelf, polished, and exercised from time to time, they will disappear.

Time alone is perfect for doing just that. It's a brief look at, reminder of personal "loves".

The time away makes you stronger, more capable of facing the challenges of being an employee, parent, spouse, volunteer, or friend. Occasional time alone also makes you less vulnerable to the inevitable stress of living in the '90s.

So how does this "treat" of time alone fit into a person's busy schedule?

Mark the time on your calendar. If others ask you to do something, tell them you have a previously scheduled appointment (with someone very important--yourself!). Don't bump it. Take a "mental health day" off when you're feeling particularly stressed.

Here are some ideas for that "alone time";

Hide out at a library.

Enjoy your own company at a movie, concert, or restaurant.

Treat yourself to a facial, manicure, massage, or sauna.

Take an afternoon to look at old photographs, letters, or diaries.

Cry.

Laugh.

Dig out your children's baby books or your wedding souvenirs.

Work a crossword or jigsaw puzzle.

Rent a comedy video.

Write a letter to a friend.

Read a novel.

Watch the sunset (or sunrise) from a porch swing.

Enjoy a long, slow cup of gourmet coffee or herbal tea.

October is a time for treats. Children will knock on your door with smiles and homemade costumes. Share a hug and a treat with them. But when the festivities subside, treat yourself to some precious time alone.

## Singles In Agriculture

JOYCE BUYP

York Co. Correspondent

AIRVILLE (York Co.)—

Although rural single people may have wrestled with the problem for years, it was in the mid 1980s that a midwestern farmer brought the sensitive issue to the attention of the agricultural community.

That single -- as in unmarried -- farmer lamented in a letter to the FARM JOURNAL magazine the lack of eligible women in his sparsely-populated part of the country. An overwhelming number of responses to his letter eventually resulted in the formation of a non-profit rural organization, Singles in Agriculture.

"Today the group includes more than 800 members from across the country, although the heaviest concentration is in the Midwest," says Mike Stewart. The Airville dairyman is helping the

Singles group with a membership drive in the eastern states. Pennsylvania, he adds, initially had the fifth largest state membership.

"This is not a dating service," emphasizes Stewart.

"Singles in Agriculture is for people active in agriculture, interested in agriculture, or with an ag background," he explains.

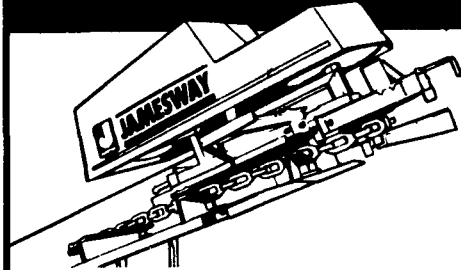
Events focus on group activities, planned at inexpensive sites such as 4-H or church campgrounds. Aimed at being affordable, activities include programs like the summer campout, held recently in Kansas, and the upcoming November 15 through 18 Hobo Campout, to be hosted at 4-H camp at Belleville, OH.

Singles in Agriculture moves to the East Coast for its next major summer camping event, planned for July 1991 in southcentral New York state.

Membership is open to interested individuals, age 18 and up, for a fee of \$20 annually. For an additional \$15, a member may sign up for the membership directory, a listing of names and addresses published quarterly.

For further information, contact Singles in Agriculture, 5297 Illinois Route 73 South, Pearl City, IL 61062, or Michael Stewart, Box 115A, Route 1, Airville, PA 17302.

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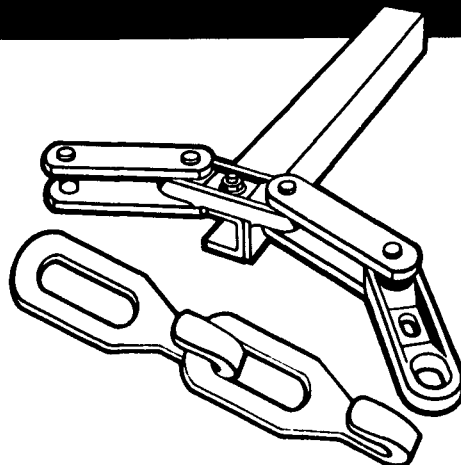
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