

TAKING TIME

by Rebecca Escott

Extension Home Economist



January Marriage Resolutions

If the holidays were a time for friends and family togetherness, I suggest that you resolve to make January the month to become reacquainted with your spouse. In busy families, it is easy for husbands and wives to grow out of touch with each other. This happens as the hectic schedules rob them of valuable time together.

Time is what this article is about. Time and commitment. At some point, 90 to 95 percent of the population will marry. Over one-third of those marriages will end in divorce. One of our goals in Cooperative Extension is to support individuals as they take steps to build strong families and marriage relationships.

Several researchers have done studies related to the characteristics of strong marriages. Dr. Jerry M. Lewis cites closeness and commitment as two or several key elements found in healthy marriages. These elements include two adults sharing basic values, interests, and social relations. The adults also express a belief that their relationship is the most important. Although they value relationships with children, parents, friends, and siblings, these are all secondary in importance. That's commitment.

If your marriage due for an annual check-up? Marriages lose that sense of closeness and commitment when two people hold few goals or interests in common. Problems also occur as spouses fail to adjust to changes in one another after the wedding. Dr. Catherine Surra, Utah State University, commented that routines and patterns evolve in relationships, but without care, they can become ruts. "A husband may not try anything new sexually because he 'knows' his wife doesn't enjoy experimenting with sex. A wife may not bother to even ask her husband about going out to dinner on Saturday night because she 'knows' how he would respond."

January is a great month to break some of the patterns you've fallen into with your spouse. Adding some spontaneity and humor may really jump-start your relationship. Some researchers have documented a trend that marital satisfaction declines during the fifth year and stays somewhat lower until children leave home. But this is not an inevitable situation. Shared leisure time is very important to the health of marriages especially during critical times of adjustment. I've listed a few ideas that you can consider. These are ways to warm up your marriage — even during the cold, gray months of winter. (Who says

Attend Pennsylvania Dutch Festival

LANCASTER (Lancaster Co.) — The Pennsylvania Dutch Convention & Visitors Bureau is pleased to announce the first-ever "Pennsylvania Dutch Food Festival: A Celebration of Food in Lancaster County," to be held throughout Lancaster County, Pennsylvania from February 15-20.

The "Pennsylvania Dutch Food Festival" will highlight the many ways that food adds fun to a visit to Lancaster County any time of the year. Planned activities include a chicken pot-pie cook-off, tours of food producing plants and farmers markets, a tour of bed and breakfast inns and farm bed and breakfast inns serving local dishes, participation by area restaurants serving their versions of local specialties (featuring locally-produced foods) and a community pot pie dinner to benefit the Bird-in-Hand Fire Company and the Clinic for Special Children.

Besides having a cuisine of its

own, Lancaster County is synonymous with quality foods. It is among the top producing farm counties in the nation. Additionally, Lancaster County is the home of many quality food production companies, many whom offer tours of their facilities to the public year-round.

A complete brochure, detailing the "Pennsylvania Dutch Food Festival," will be available in mid-December, 1992.

For more information, contact Mary Rankin, Public Relations Specialist at the PA Dutch Convention & Visitors Bureau in Lancaster County, (717) 299-8901, ext. 726.

YOUR marital satisfaction has to decline?)

♥ Give a small gift to your spouse on an ordinary day.

♥ Choose one of the roles your spouse normally does, but does not enjoy, and perform that responsibility for him or her.

♥ Arrange some couple time away from home and children.

♥ Write a love letter to your spouse. Send it registered mail for an added sense of importance.

♥ Read an article or book about strengthening marriages and talk about the ideas with your spouse.

♥ Praise each other daily.

♥ Join a co-ed intramural sports league or walking group. If sports aren't for you, try a dinner club, card group, or theater get-together.

♥ Read aloud to each other after the kids go to bed instead of watching TV or doing laundry.

♥ Tell others how much you love your spouse. Try writing a letter to your in-laws to thank them for raising such a special person.

January is a time for resolutions. Resolving to recommit yourself to your marriage relationship is a resolution that will pay dividends all year long!

Cattlemen Seek Queen

STATE COLLEGE (Centre Co.) — Applications for the 1993 Cattlemen's Queen are currently being accepted by the Pennsylvania Cattlemen's Association. PCA will be selecting a queen and one alternate during the 1993 PA Beef EXPO, March 25, 26, 27, and 28.

The queen contest is open to any interested female, ages 18 to 23. Contestants must have a working knowledge or have displayed abilities to work with cattle at the on-farm level of the cattle industry.

The Cattlemen's Queen will be crowned at the annual awards banquet, Thursday, March 25. She will represent the Pennsylvania Cattlemen's Association and the beef industry at various events throughout the state.

The Pennsylvania Beef Council will also be selecting "Beef Industry Representatives" for 1993. Serving as the Cattlemen's Queen would not interfere with that individual's opportunity to serve as a Beef Industry Representative.

Applications are available by contacting Sue Clair, chairman of the Queen Program Committee, 568 Rock Road, State College, PA 16801, or by calling Mrs. Clair (814) 238-1233.

Learn-At-Home

WILLIAMSPORT (Lycoming Co.) — Penn State Cooperative Extension has developed a Learn-At-Home Child Care Kit. The kit includes two booklets: 101 Plus Ways To Keep Kids Busy; 101 Ways To Care For Kids; a child care provider checklist as well as a health and safety checklist. The booklets include art activities, toy suggestions, game ideas, stories, snacks, play ideas, and safety tips.

If you are a caregiver and would like to receive this packet of information call 1-800-452-9108.

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