

TAKING TIME

by Rebecca Escott
Extension Home Economist



continued with a list of fail-safe ways for kids to stay in touch with the older generation — listen to their music, watch one of their favorite movies with them, try saying "Please" and "Thank You." The speaker continued with a few other suggestions. Wow!

I reflected on how we always blame the other generation for being either old-fashioned or radical and off the wall. Staying in touch takes both groups — parents and teens — making efforts to come together.

That coming together may not be glorious, immediate bonding. The biggest hurdle may be accepting the fact that "hanging out" together time is not wasted time even though there may be little or no dialogue. Don't force conversation. Let your teen initiate as she wants. Remember Crary's point about 90 percent dead time for ten percent pay off.

Here are a few suggestions to help parents stay in touch with their children.

Encourage your children to invite friends to your home. This is a good way to welcome teens. Be excited about knowing their friends. When your daughter men-

tions working with or running into a friend from school, ask her to show you that person's picture in a school yearbook.

Suggest that your son select a cassette tape to play on a family road trip. Often lyrics are printed inside the tape covers. This can help you follow the message if the words get lost in the rhythm for you. Remember, you can control the volume. Measure your questions or comments carefully before speaking. Silence is often a good thing.

Ask your child for a suggestion on a new hairstyle, pair of earrings or shorts. Ask your spouse out for a date and have your teen suggest a movie to see.

Ask them for ideas for munchies for a picnic or party. They may suggest a new variety of chips or

have a neat idea for microwaved snacks.

Staying in touch with your teens also means staying in touch with other parents. Adults may be able to circumvent a struggle with teens by communicating in advance. Pick up the phone and discuss an overnight party and the details with other parents. Agree on rules, spending money, curfews, etc. Reasonable pacts with other parents help lessen the pressure to bend a standard because "everyone else's parents said it was okay."

Continue to work at spending time together so that during a time of need, your teen will consider you understanding and approachable. Your 90 percent dead time will be worth it when that sharing occurs. It's truly an investment in their lives.

In Touch With Teens

Summer time is an interesting time for parents and teens. Teens are out of school, and summer schedules bring new routines — part-time jobs, evening picnics, movies, trips to the lake or amusement park.

These new routines often make parents feel insecure. It's a challenge to stay in touch with teenagers. Elizabeth Crary, parent educator, described the family dilemma this way, "Most parents of teens want their children to be able to talk with them, but with most of these children, there has to be 90 percent 'dead time' for the ten percent that's going to work . . . so

you have to be around a lot, and listening a lot, and putting up with a lot of chaos, in order to be available for the three or four minutes where they're willing to share with you."

That's an important investment of time. Crary comments, "You can't get to the end without going through the middle." Several months ago, I heard a public service announcement that made a lasting impression on me. It was a cute twist on the age-old message of generations staying in touch. The speaker began, "KIDS, Want to know how to stay in touch with your parents? Stay tuned for a few quick tips . . ." The message con-

Ice Cream Safari At Zoo

Adventurers of all ages can embark on an "Ice Cream Safari" at the Erie Zoo in honor of National Ice Cream Month.

The safari, part of a statewide "Pennsylvanians Scream for Ice Cream," campaign, will run from

11 a.m. until 3 p.m. on Wednesday, July 21. Events such as the safari promote the state's large ice cream industry, which is ranked second in the nation for total production.

Visitors to the event must carry a passport to travel through various dairy ports-of-call including frozen yogurt sampling and ice cream novelties. Visitors will learn the art of homemade ice cream making, and, for the kids, tin can ice cream making. The final stop will be an ice cream sundae bar where participants can create their own sundaes.

In addition, local media celebrities will compete in a media ice cream making contest at 1:00 p.m. in the Zoo's pavilion. Media representatives will be creating and churning their own original ice cream recipes.

The "Safari" is sponsored by Pennsylvania's Dairy Farmers, the Pennsylvania Dairy Promotion Program, Mid East United Dairy Industry Association/F.O. 36 Agency, and the Erie Zoo. Additional co-sponsors include Dairy Foods of Erie, Meadow Brook Dairy, and the Joy Cone Company.

July is National Ice Cream Month and the festivals are celebrating Pennsylvania's significant contribution to the United States' dairy industry. Ice cream is an excellent treat packed with calcium, protein, and riboflavin.

Everyone is encouraged to travel through the "Safari" and learn more about ice cream.

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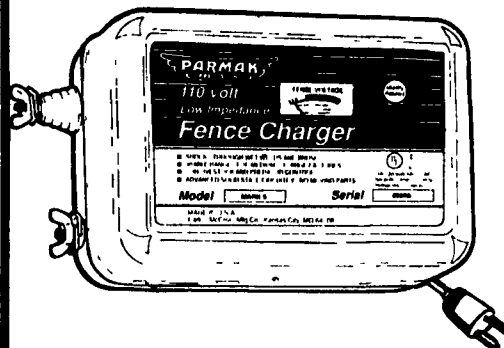
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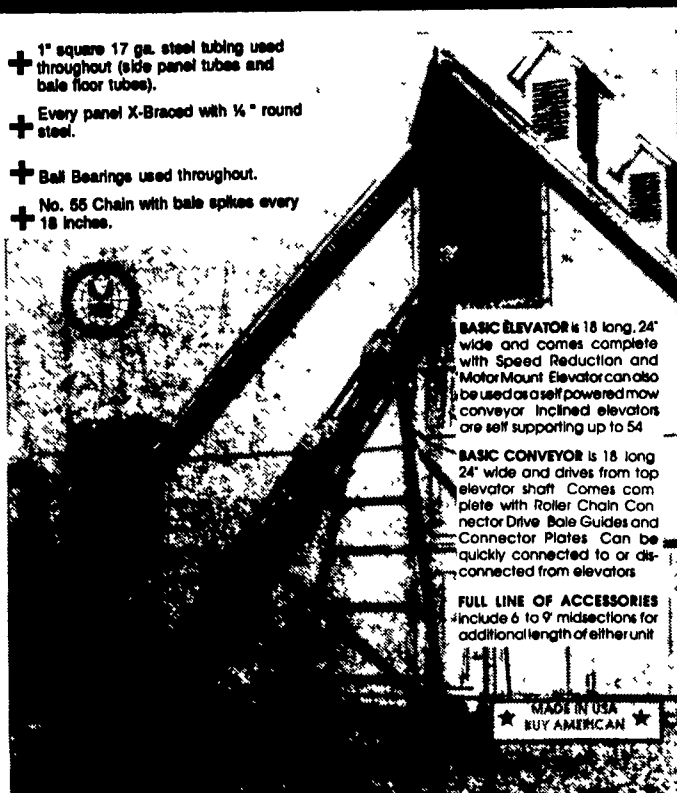
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