

TAKING TIME

by Rebecca Escott

Extension Home Economist



It's Okay When It's Not the Same

These past few weeks I've heard people sometimes defiantly, sometimes regretfully, saying that they're not going to decorate a tree this year, send cards, host the usual party. One friend was desperately trying to find someone who knew how to make an ethnic recipe that only her Mom had made. This year the family would be celebrating without their mother, but they wanted the day to be "just the way it used to be."

We do ourselves a disservice if we must recreate a perfect holiday each year. Even I made some decisions this past week about just how many batches of cookies I needed to make to share with neighbors. Did I really have to do the cut-outs? And do two adults have to hang and fill stockings?

This morning you may have gotten up and wandered around your home thinking about former Christmas celebrations that per-

haps seemed more magical. Today, I want to say to you, "It's okay when things aren't the same as they used to be." Even those of you who have houses filled with children's laughter and chaos may be longing for a different kind of holiday experience.

Each day we make choices about how we spend our time. And the choices you made this year I'm sure were different than the choices you'll make next year or that you made last year. That's normal. But today is a time not to worry or regret the choices. Today is a time to enjoy the day JUST AS IT IS.

Here are some things that you may be able to enjoy today.

Enjoy a phone call from a grandchild.

Enjoy a walk outside.

Enjoy listening to a special holiday recording.

Enjoy watching children play with abandon.

Enjoy a few moments of relief

from the activity by stepping outside.

Enjoy lingering conversation with one or two friends over a cup of coffee.

Enjoy a good book.

Enjoy looking around a room that's filled with people and activity. (Remember it's not always this way.)

Enjoy a football game or movie. Enjoy a piece of homemade pie. Enjoy looking through family photo albums or re-reading greeting cards.

Enjoy sitting in front of a blazing fireplace or glittering tree with young children.

Enjoy picking up the paper and empty boxes. Remind yourself that there is a floor at the bottom of this mess.

Enjoy a "whisper hour" when everyone in the house must whisper. Set the timer.

Enjoy a home filled with pot-pourri or scents of candles.

Enjoy knowing that you haven't traveled all over the state exhausting yourself.

Enjoy sleeping in and not having to "clock-in" at work.

Enjoy visiting your very own stable.

Instead of waiting for a perfect, storybook celebration, say "It's okay that things aren't the way they used to be." Take some time to enjoy the day just as it is. And consider fulfilling some of your holiday expectations during January.

Maryland Teens Win Awards At 4-H Congress

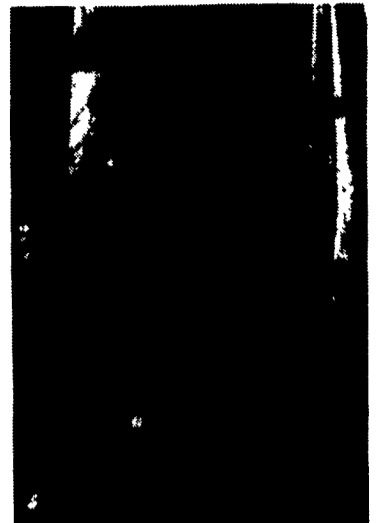
COLLEGE PARK, Md. — Six Maryland teens — five of them from Carroll County — received national awards for their work in various project areas at the 1993 National 4-H Congress in Chicago recently.

Among them was Ginger Hull of Westminster, one of 12 4-H members nationwide to receive the presidential tray award — 4-H's highest honor.

Hull was recognized for her citizenship activities, which include volunteer work with the Kids on the Block puppet troupe and 4-H's handicapped riding program. She also serves as junior leader for a 4-H club whose members have special needs.

Hull's parents flew to Chicago to see her receive the award. Her older sister, Heather, a 1992 presidential tray award recipient, also was on hand, serving as one of six National 4-H youth advisors for the 1993 Congress.

Other national winners from Carroll County were Melanie Soper of Westminster for achievement, Gabriel Zepp of Westminster for beef, Jenny Brothers, also of Westminster, for clothing and Marti Fair of Manchester for veterinary science. Shannon Harrison, a Howard County 4-H member who lives in Burkittsville (Fre-



Ginger Hull, in the dress that earned her top honors at the 1993 Maryland State Fair 4-H fashion revue, was one of 12 4-H members nationwide to receive the presidential tray award at the National 4-H Congress in Chicago. Hull, who lives in Westminster (Carroll County), also was recognized for her citizenship work.

derick County), was recognized for her work in the agriculture careers project area. All six winners received scholarships of \$1,000 or \$1,500 from corporate donors.

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