

Kids Korner

4-H Youth Gets Taste Of Culinary Career

NEWARK, Del. — Nick Argo began a promising career in food preparation as a young child in his grandmother's kitchen.

"My grandmother used to look after me when my mom was working," he recalls, "and she let me help with the cooking."

Seventeen-year-old Argo learned a lot about preparing food since the days of licking Grandma's spoon. The Milford native is well on his way to achieving his goal of becoming a chef and restaurateur. Last August, he attended the 1996 National 4-H Food and Nutrition Career Exploration Program in Chevy Chase, Md., where he joined 36 other youths from across the nation to get a taste of careers in the culinary arts. Part of the National 4-H Council Workforce Preparation Program, the event was sponsored by food industry giants including Tyson Foods and Fleischmann's Yeast.

At the week-long program, the Milford resident worked alongside chefs, discussed food issues with government and business representatives, learned about food distribution, visited culinary arts colleges and Pentagon restaurants and toured the cities of Washington and Baltimore.

"I learned a lot and had a great time," says Argo.

He particularly enjoyed the cooking classes, where he learned how to prepare elegant fruit tarts and cheese puffs. One of the highlights was a bread-baking seminary, in which the students were charged with creating their own bread and marketing pitch to go with it. His group came up with a cranberry oatmeal bread that won the prize.

It's not surprising that Argo could whip up a bread from scratch. As an 8-year-old, he prepared a pumpkin roll completely on his own for the 4-H Favorite Foods Contest. A member of the Houston Cardinals 4-H Club for nine years, he has taught food preparation at day camps and has won ribbons for his pumpkin roll, cinnamon buns and salami pepper loaf. At home he likes preparing Chinese food and baking bread. He estimates he has spent more than 6,000 hours in food preparation.

"For the past four or five years, he's been able to do anything he wants in the kitchen," says his mother, Carol Argo. "He's way out of my league."

When not in the kitchen, Argo helps on his grandfather's farm. He has participated in sheep and

beef 4-H projects, and has shown cattle at the Delaware State Fair. After graduation, he hopes to work for a large hotel and eventually start his own restaurant.

The food and nutrition workshop Argo took part in last summer is only one of a variety of programs offered through the National 4-H Workforce Preparation initiative. All are based on the Secretary of Labor's Commission on Achieving Necessary Skills (SCANS) competencies and foundation skills, which include working in teams, using resources and understanding technology.

"In all our programs we emphasize the skills that young adults will need to succeed in today's work environment," says Sheila Chaconas, project director for workforce preparation at National 4-H Council. "We're helping children of all ages to think about careers and develop workforce readiness."

Applications are now being accepted for the 1997 National Food and Nutrition Career Exploration Program. Contact your local Cooperative Extension office for additional information. In Kent County, call 697-4000; in Sussex County, 856-7303; and in New Castle County, 831-2667.



Aspiring chef and restaurateur Nick Argo cooks a special dinner at home after taking part in a food and nutrition career exploration program at National 4-H Council.

Smart Stuff

WITH TWIG WALKINGSTICK

Why is carbon monoxide dangerous?

Because when you breathe the gas, it can make you really sick

First, some chemistry cues Carbon monoxide is a poisonous gas made when one carbon molecule attaches to one oxygen molecule

Carbon monoxide is a byproduct of burning fuels with carbon For example, cars, some furnaces and fireplaces use carbon-containing gasoline, natural gas and wood

Normally, carbon monoxide binds with oxygen in the air and makes carbon dioxide (That's why it's not a big deal outside) But if your furnace or fireplace isn't working right, or if the car is left on inside the garage, carbon monoxide builds up because there's not enough oxygen to neutralize it in the enclosed area

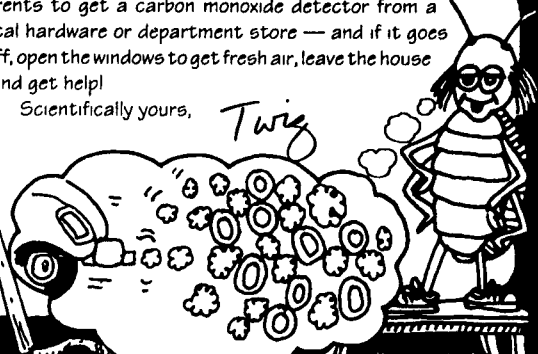
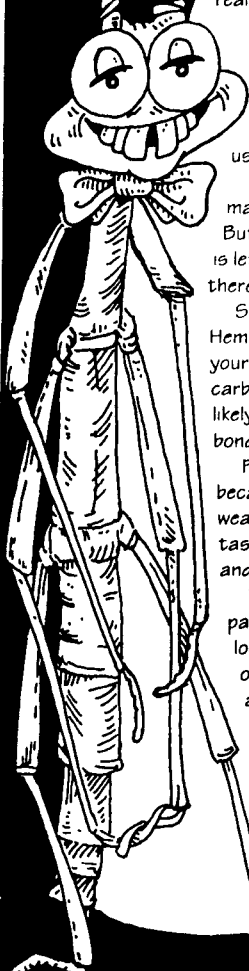
So here's the problem Your body needs oxygen to work right Hemoglobin, a special part of your blood, picks up the oxygen in your lungs and carries it all over your body But when there's carbon monoxide in the air, your hemoglobin is 200 times more likely to latch onto it instead of the oxygen Once hemoglobin bonds to carbon monoxide, it can't carry oxygen

People don't realize they're breathing carbon monoxide gas because the symptoms are the same as the flu — headaches, weakness, nausea and fainting — and because they can't taste, smell or see the gas People sometimes go into comas and even die from severe cases of poisoning

To prevent carbon monoxide poisoning, ask your parents to get a carbon monoxide detector from a local hardware or department store — and if it goes off, open the windows to get fresh air, leave the house and get help!

Scientifically yours,

Twig



OHIO STATE UNIVERSITY COLLEGE OF FOOD, AGRICULTURAL AND ENVIRONMENTAL SCIENCES

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How To Raise A Nature-Loving Child

(NAPS) — "Why do animals go extinct?" "Can polluted water be cleaned?" "Why do salmon return to where they were hatched?"

These are but a few of the questions children have asked *Ranger Rick*, one of the country's most popular children's magazines.

This year the magazine celebrates 30 years of opening young people's eyes to the wonders of nature and the world around them.

What's the secret to their success? "Mix a child's natural curiosity with the amazing variety of wildlife and wild places around them, throw in some fun and facts, and before you know it you've got a child who's wild about nature," says Editor Gerry Bishop.

Along with the adventures of Ranger Rick, a charming, inquisitive raccoon, and his friends (Scarlett Fox, Boomer Badger, Punky Porcupine, etc.), the magazine uses colorful nature photos and stories to grab and hold a child's interest.

Published by the National Wildlife Federation, *Ranger Rick* has received countless letters from former readers who say they were inspired and entertained by the magazine, often to the point of shaping career choices.

Fairfield University herpetologist Gregory Watkins-Colwell was one such child. "*Ranger Rick* was probably why I became a biologist," he writes. "In fact, I first read the word herpetologist in *Ranger Rick*. I was 8 at the time. I've been a herpetologist ever

since."

Terry Dukerschein was already grown when reading *Ranger Rick* to his children got him "hooked up to the environmental side of biology." Today he's doing long-term environmental monitoring projects on the Mississippi River.

What would it take to make a nature lover out of your child? Try these tips:

- Turn off the TV
- Take your child on a nature

walk

- Put up a birdfeeder
- Go camping
- Plant a backyard wildlife habitat
- Encourage wonder
- Go fishing
- Go on a bug hunt
- Get to know your local nature center

•Read *Ranger Rick* together. A subscription is only \$15 and can be ordered by calling 1-800-588-1650.

Eggceptional Egg Hunt

LANCASTER (Lancaster Co.) — On Sunday, March 23, Hands-on-House, Children's Museum of Lancaster will hold their annual Eggceptional Egg Hunt.

This museum event is a perennial Palm Sunday favorite. Families are invited to visit the museum during the hours of 11 a.m.-5 p.m. to learn about the variety of animals that come from eggs.

This year will feature papa pandemonium as we pay special attention to animal fathers. Did you know that frogs make fabulous fathers? Play catch with a father seahorse and do the twist with a father toad. Learn why a father frog gives piggy back rides. Explore the land down under for a mammal that lays eggs. Swim with the fishes as we go hunting for shark eggs.

Children will search and collect colored eggs, as well as search for clues about different kinds of ani-

mals eggs. This year's egg hunt will have children searching for shark eggs, dinosaur eggs, swan eggs, geese eggs, slug eggs, platypus eggs, spider eggs, turtle eggs, birds nests, frog eggs, butterfly eggs and more.

The majority of the activities are inside and all Eggceptional Egg Hunt activities will occur rain or shine. All activities are included with regular museum admission of \$4 each for adults and regular \$4 admission plus \$1 "eggstra" per child to participate. The museum's usual two floors of exhibit fun will be open for exploring during the Eggceptional Egg Hunt. The optional egg hunts will run continuously and participants may arrive anytime between 11 a.m. and 4 p.m. Families should plan to spend one to one and one-half hours at the museum for this special event.