

The Communicator

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September 2005

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University of Idaho
Extension

School of Family & Consumer Sciences

School Sponsors Cook's Tour to Italy

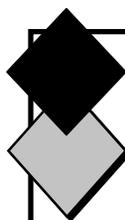
In June 2005 the University of Idaho and the School of Family and Consumer Sciences sponsored a ten-day Cook's Tour to Northern Italy. We flew from Amsterdam to Bologna on June 20 and then drove to the Alighieri estate, a beautiful villa in the Valpolicella vineyards just outside Verona.



Twenty generations of Dante relatives have lived here. Anyone could write poetry in this setting; we had spacious accommodations in a tranquil setting. The refurbished La Foresteria once housed the families who farmed the estate.

On Tuesday, June 21 we cooked with Antonia and Lili who specialize in recipes typically prepared in Italian families. After a relaxing luncheon in the garden and a tour of the estate, we were back in the kitchen to prepare our evening meal of crudité with caviar of aubergine, frittata, strata of zucchini, saltimbocca alla romana, and Veronese polenta cookies. Dinner al fresco of course.

The next day we ventured into Verona to walk off calories and see some sights. Our tour guide spoke very good English and had a background in art history. His explanation and understanding of the art in and on La Basilica de San Zeno was amazing. He pointed out the difference in imperial and papal roof architecture in the surrounding castles and local buildings. Those Italians painted murals everywhere, even on the building walls facing the piazza. We lunched in Verona and some of us toured the Arena with the stage set for a performance of



Director
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"Aida." By late afternoon we were back on the bus and off to the Ferron Rice Farm where Chef Gabriele demonstrated how to prepare risotto ten different ways. In his restaurant Pila Vecia we enjoyed another beautiful evening with friends around the table.



On Thursday we drove to the scenic mill village of Borghetto for a stroll, pictures, and shopping. We ate lunch at the nearby LaBorsa restaurant renowned for its tortellini, delicate little pasta "purses" filled with meat, spinaci, or other delicacies. Another exquisite meal of Italian specialties. Home again for our last night in Serego Alighieri.

On Friday morning we're packed and ready for our second lodging destination in Chianti, Le Piazze.

We stop midmorning in Modena for a tour of the Parmigiano Reggiano production facility. Amazing storage, retrieval, and monitoring system for each round of cheese valued at about \$350. We sample and buy. Then we're off to taste balsamic vinegar at the Milpighi processing facility. We are offered 7, 12, and 25-year-old balsamic vinegar. Afterwards we lunched at the Milpighi restaurant; each course is laced with balsamic vinegar. Ever had balsamic vinegar on vanilla gelato? To die for – really!



Home to Le Piazze, a restored Tuscan farmhouse in the gorgeous Chianti hills. Again, our accommodations are more than adequate with access to an outdoor pool and lovely gardens. Another delicious dinner prepared for us and served on the outdoor patio.



On Saturday we took in the picturesque Greve market. We visited the market stalls for jewelry, leather goods, biking shirts, and other Italian specialties. The group gathered for the “real thing” pizza before heading home to relax and a dip in the pool. We're guests for a barbeque at Le Piazze this evening: melone con prosciutto, grilled meats and vegetables, mixed green salad and Italian traditional desserts. We're offered cantucci (almond biscotti) for dipping in Vin Santo, a sweet dessert wine along with Torta della Nonna, (Grandmother's cake) a traditional Tuscan dessert made with a thick pastry crust filled with custard.

The next day we're off to Villa Cennina to cook with Gianluca and Serena. We'll prepare pasta, chicken, roast potatoes, panzanella, and lemon sorbetto. Panzanella is a simple Tuscan salad. We sliced Italian bread, soaked the slices in water and squeezed them dry. I'm convinced that this can only be done with Italian bread. This was mixed with juicy diced tomatoes, thinly-sliced sweet onion, fresh basil leaves, minced garlic, cucumbers, salt, pepper, vinegar, and olive oil. We feast on our dishes outdoors under the trees in the warm Tuscan sun.



In the late afternoon we toured Siena with Donatella. We walked through the narrow streets to the Duomo. Siena is notable for its extremely well preserved urban center as many of the buildings have not changed since medieval times. The Piazza Del Campo, once the site of a Roman forum, early on became the city's central market place. Its spoke-like paving pattern was commissioned in

1349 by Siena's then ruling body, the Council of Nine, to symbolize their power and the nine folds of the Madonna's cloak.

On Monday we drove into the Tuscan hilltown of San Gimignano. Once the seat of a small Etruscan village of the Hellenistic period (200-300 BC) it began its life as a town in the 10th century. The town increased in wealth and developed greatly during the Middle Ages thanks to the "Via Francigena" the trading and pilgrim's route that crossed it. Such prosperity led to the flourishing of works of art to adorn the churches and monasteries. We climbed trails to the towers in order to get a better view of the surrounding countryside. We take time to shop and lunch before heading to our last cooking class.



The School will plan to offer another Cook's Tour of Northern Italy in May 2007. Think about grabbing an apron and coming along!



On our last day we cooked with Matia at Osteria di Passignano. We prepared a pecorino cheese flan, pasta with fresh tomato sauce, baked chicken, green bean bundles, and zucchini (sponge cake filled with chocolate ganache). We return to Le Piazze to change clothes and are back at the restaurant for our last dinner together. Buon Appetito! We become maestro/as de la cocina as Matia awards certificates to us.



Lindsey Shirley Fills FCS Educator Position

Lindsey Shirley has accepted the temporary position of FCS Educator in the School. Most recently, Lindsey has been teaching at Sacajawea Junior High School in Lewiston. Lindsey comes to us with a BS in Family and Consumer Sciences Education from Iowa State and an MS in Family Education from the University of Minnesota. She is currently enrolled in the FCS Leadership Academy at Iowa State University and has completed all of the coursework for a doctoral degree in FCS Education with the exception of her dissertation. We are delighted to have her join the faculty this year.

Twenty-fifth Anniversary Celebration of the MRDS Series

The FCS Alumni Board and the Margaret Ritchie Distinguished Speaker Committee have been busy planning the 2005 Speaker Series and annual FCS Alumni Brunch. In celebration of the twenty-fifth anniversary of the MRDS Series, the focus of this year's events will be the lady in red herself, Margaret Ritchie. In preparation for the events, we have created a video of Margaret Ritchie's career with photos, quotes and interviews from former students, colleagues and friends as well as events of significance during Miss Ritchie's career at the UI.

Our twenty-fifth anniversary speaker will be Virginia Vincenti, past AAFCS president and professor of Family and Consumer Sciences at the University of Wyoming, Laramie. She received her BS in Home Economics with secondary teacher certification and a minor in chemistry from Mansfield University of Pennsylvania, MS and PhD in Home Economics Education with a minor in Individual and Family Studies from the Pennsylvania State University. Dr. Vincenti's scholarship has focused on the history and philosophy of home economics/family and consumer sciences.

We hope you will be able to join us for this exciting event. If you are unable to attend the MRDS Speaker Series and Brunch, but would like a copy of the video produced for this event please contact Kari Zagelow at kariz@uidaho.edu.

We are honored to celebrate this amazing professional leader, teacher, mentor, and former Director of the School who influenced so many lives and professional careers. Plan to join us on September 16 and/or 17 to share memories of Margaret Ritchie.



September is Food Safety Education Month

This year's theme is "Keep Hands Clean with Good Hygiene."

September is the eleventh annual National Food Safety Education MonthSM sponsored by the National Restaurant Association Educational Foundation's (NRAEF) International Food Safety Council (IFSC). Over the years emphasis has shifted from consumer education toward restaurant and food-service professional education.

The NRAEF has created 5 sets of training posters and activities around the theme of personal hygiene that are available at <http://www.nraef.org/nfsem>. An example is shown below.

Food Safety

September 2005



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Keep Hands Clean with Good Hygiene September 2005 Week 1

Proper Handwashing

You should follow these six steps to wash your hands properly:

Washing your hands properly is one of the most important things you can do to keep microorganisms from contaminating food.

You should wash your hands before you start work and after the following activities:

- Using the restroom
- Handling raw meat, fish, or poultry
- Touching your face, hair, or body
- Sneezing, coughing, or using a tissue
- Spitting, eating, drinking, or chewing gum or tobacco
- Handling chemicals that might affect the safety of the food
- Taking out trash
- Cleaning tables or buying drycleaning
- Touching clothing or aprons
- Touching anything else that may contaminate hands



Week 1: Proper Handwashing

page 1

National Food Safety Education Month

Home Food Preservation Research: Food Quality in Weighted and Dial Gauge Canners

Consumers have two choices when purchasing a pressure canner: weighted gauge or dial gauge.

Weighted gauge pressure canners are more convenient and, in my opinion, a safer choice for consumers because the weight used to control pressure does not require annual checks for accuracy. However, weighted gauge canners offer only processing options of 5, 10, or 15 pounds pressure.

Dial gauges must be checked for accuracy each year or if the gauge is dropped. The gauge should be replaced if it reads incorrectly by more than 0.9 pound in either direction (for example, at 11 pounds the acceptable range is 10.1 to 11.9). With dial gauge canners, the user can adjust the processing pressure in smaller increments than with weighted gauge canners. In spite of the inconvenience of yearly checks, many home food preservers say they prefer dial gauge pressure canners because they can avoid over-processing and achieve higher quality food, since the pressure (and therefore temperature in the canner) can be controlled more precisely.

Key words: food safety, food service, handwashing.

Research Conducted. Katie Forsmann, UI dietetics student working with me this summer, and I conducted an experiment in July and August 2005 to determine whether there are differences in quality of food canned in dial or weighted gauge canners. We investigated the quality of sliced carrots canned in both weighted gauge and dial gauge pressure canners.

Method. Carrots (11 pounds per batch) were peeled, sliced, heated for hot packing and mixed thoroughly to obtain a uniform sampling. Hot carrots were packed into 16 pint jars and every other jar was loaded into either a dial gauge (Presto, 23 quart, stock #01781) or weighted gauge pressure canner (Mirro, 22 quart). After 10 minutes of venting, canned carrots were processed at 15 pounds (weighted gauge) or 13 pounds (dial gauge) for 25 minutes. This experiment was replicated a total of three times.

Coded canned carrot samples (2 treatments x 3 batches) were evaluated by a sensory panel (21 faculty, staff, and students in CALS). A difference test* was used to assess whether panelists could identify a difference between carrots canned in the two canners. Panelists were also asked to identify the attribute used to identify the difference between samples and to identify which sample they preferred. The sensory panel was designed to obtain 84 judgments about the samples. The texture of carrots from the two-canner types was also measured using a Texture Technologies Corp TA-XT2 Texture Analyzer outfitted with a 5-blade Kramer shear cell.

Results. Forty-four percent of the panelists' judgments correctly distinguished a difference between carrots canned in a dial gauge and weighted gauge canner; this is statistically significant at the 0.05 percent level (33% would correctly select the odd sample by chance). Many panelists commented that it was a difficult task to differentiate between the samples. Panelists selected flavor (48%), texture (26%), and appearance (16%) as the attributes by which they differentiated the samples. Sixty-two percent of panelists' judgments preferred the carrots canned in the dial gauge canner. The instrumental measurement of texture indicated that carrots canned in the two canner types were similar in

texture; an average of 6.13kg of force was required to shear samples of carrots from each treatment.

Summary. For canned carrots, use of a dial gauge canner at 13 pounds of pressure may result in a slightly superior product than use of a weighted gauge canner at 15 pounds.

*Triangle test presents panelists with three samples, two alike and one different, and asks them to identify the odd sample.

Key words: food preservation, research.



Food Safety PowerPoint Slides from University of Nebraska Extension

For those who do not read the University of Nebraska Cooperative Extension (Lancaster County) *Food Reflections* newsletter, I would like to draw your attention to another great food safety resource from this source. Alice Henneman, Extension Educator, and Joyce Jensen, Registered Environmental Health Sanitarian, have prepared a 99-slide PowerPoint presentation, "Foodborne Illness Can Cause More than a Stomach Ache." It is based on the MyPyramid "key recommendations" for food safety and other USDA and FDA consumer food safety information. It contains very detailed recommendations. It can be downloaded at <http://lanaster.unl.edu/food/mypyramid-foodsafety.htm>.

Source: University of Nebraska Cooperative Extension in Lancaster County, <http://lanaster.unl.edu/food/mypyramid-foodsafety.htm>.

Key words: food safety, resources.

Go to College? Get a Job? **How Young African Americans, Hispanics, Asian Americans, and Whites Make Decisions About What to Do After High School**

A new national survey of young adults age 18 to 25 from the nonprofit, nonpartisan opinion research organization Public Agenda finds that the vast majority of today's young adults—be they African American, Hispanic or Latino, Asian American or White—strongly believe in the value of higher education. Most of the young adults surveyed in *Life After High School: Young People Talk about Their Hopes and Prospects* report that their parents inspired the goal of going to college and most had a teacher in high school who took a strong personal interest in them and encouraged them to go on to college.

But the study raises serious questions about the shortage of high school counselors and the economic pressures and trade-offs many young adults face, especially those from minority backgrounds. It also portrays the uncertain, hit-or-miss career path experienced by many young people who enter the work force without a 2-year or 4-year college or technical degree.

Money plays a big role in decisions about where—or whether—to go to college. Nearly half of young people who don't continue their education after high school cite lack of money, the wish to earn money or having other responsibilities as reasons why they don't go. *Life After High School* also shows that while money is not a factor in college selection for most young white Americans (60%), it is for most young African Americans and Hispanics. Six in 10 of both groups say that they would have attended a different college if money was not an issue. About half (51%) of young Asian Americans say this as well.

The survey raises troubling concerns about the prospects for young workers without college degrees. Compared to those who have a 2- or 4-year degree, these less-educated workers fell into their jobs more by chance than by choice and far fewer think of their job as a career. Young people with no degree are substantially less likely than those who have a degree to say their parents urged them to go to college.

Family Development

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According to Public Agenda President Ruth A. Wooden, "*Life After High School* shows that most young people have absorbed the 'go to college, get more education' message. We've been successful in inspiring a goal. Whether they're getting the nuts-and-bolts, real-life help and guidance they need to reach that goal, to actually succeed in graduating from college, is another matter. "

High Hopes

Across racial and ethnic lines, young Americans see going to college as a positive thing to do. 3 in 4 (74%) young adults agree that college "helps prepare you for the real world." 77 percent of African Americans, 81 percent of Hispanics, 85 percent of Asian Americans and 81 percent of whites said that "people respect you more when they know you've graduated from college."

These findings counter the belief of some that large numbers of minority youth denigrate academic success. Only 7 percent of young African Americans and 3 percent of young Hispanics surveyed say that graduating from college is something their circle of friends looks down on.

But the survey confirms what national data show - going to college is still not commonplace for most African Americans and Hispanics. The African Americans and Hispanics (10% each) surveyed were less likely to have earned a Bachelor degree

than their Asian American (28%) and white (18%) peers.

Substantial numbers believe their high school teachers and classes should have done a lot more to prepare them for college level work (51% African American, 42% Hispanic, 44% Asian American and 37% white). But they also hold themselves accountable for poor preparation. 69 percent of African Americans, 75 percent of Hispanics, 70 percent of Asian Americans and 65 percent of whites admit that they themselves "could have paid a lot more attention and worked harder" in high school.

Not Enough Counselors, Not Enough Time

Parents seem to be prime movers for getting kids to go to college. About 6 in 10 said that their parents strongly expected them to go to college (61% of African Americans, 59% of Hispanics, 86% of Asian Americans and 63% of whites). Majorities of all groups point to a parent as the one person who has been the most important influence on their decisions on issues like work and college.

In terms of inspiration, teachers, coaches and other adult mentors also come in for some high marks. 74 percent of African Americans, 69 percent of Hispanics, 63 percent of Asian Americans and 76 percent of whites said they had a high school teacher who took a personal interest in them and encouraged them to go to college. Similar majorities said they had a teacher or coach who really inspired them to do their best.

As for high school counselors, the young people across all demographic groups surveyed indicated that counseling resources were stretched thin, with 53 percent saying there were not enough counselors in their high school. About half (52%) said their school counselors usually made an effort to get to know them, while 47 percent said they usually felt like "just another face in the crowd."

Money—And Lack Thereof

Life After High School found clear differences between the views of African Americans and Hispanics on one hand and Asian Americans and whites on the other regarding the ability to pay for higher education. Most African Americans (54%) and Hispanics (53%) believe that lack of money keeps people who should be in college from going. In con-

trast, most Asian Americans (54%) and whites (59%) believe the vast majority of qualified people who want to go to college can find a way to pay for it.

The study also found strong evidence that because of money concerns, certain minority groups are more likely to compromise on the college they choose. Nearly 6 in 10 African Americans (59%) and Hispanics (58%) say they would have chosen a different school were it not for money worries. 51 percent of Asians said they would have gone to a different school if money were not an issue. Most whites (60%) said they did not have to make this compromise.

Adrift Without a Degree

Almost 9 in 10 (89%) agreed that "college is not for everyone," and a solid majority (57%) agreed that "earning money instead of sitting in a classroom" can be an advantage.

But *Life After High School* raises serious questions about the future of young adults with no college degree. Compared to those with either a 2- or 4-year degree, this group is less happy with their work situation and less focused on planning a future. Just 1 in 5 of these less-educated young adults said they love their job, compared with 42 percent of those with degrees. 7 in 10 with limited education said they are in their current job more by chance than by design, compared to 50 percent of young workers with degrees.

Lack of parental encouragement seems to play a big role. By a 20 point margin, young workers with less education are less likely than the more educated to say their parents strongly expected them to go to college (42% vs. 62%). By a 19-point margin they are less likely to point to a parent as their number one source of guidance (50% vs. 69%).

Those without college degrees are more likely to say they could have worked harder in school (81% of the less educated said this compared to 60% with degrees). While conventional wisdom may hold that those without college degrees didn't have mentors in high school, majorities said they did, in fact, have a high school teacher or coach who took an interest and inspired them.

A Different Demographic Fault Line: Men and Women

This research suggests that young women have internalized the worth of post-secondary education more than young men have. Young men are more likely to say they didn't attend or complete college because they "had enough of school" (32% vs. 22% of young women), and were more likely to say they didn't complete additional education because they preferred to work and make money (56% vs. 42%). In contrast, 7 in 10 (69%) young women who went to college said they "really enjoy being in school," whereas a significantly smaller majority of young men (58%) who went to college said the same thing.

Summary: Hopes, Inspiration and Trade-offs

Perhaps the most heartening message from *Life After High School* is that the vast majority of today's young adults—across racial and ethnic lines—believe that higher education is a way to earn both society's respect and insure the career advancement and financial security they yearn for.

According to the young adults themselves, parents are the most important adults who inspire them to get a higher education. Pointedly, those young people who don't continue on after high school are much less likely to say their parents expected them to go to college or that their parents are their most important source of guidance.

The findings indicate that African American and Hispanic young people are far more likely than their white peers to say they had to compromise on their choice of college due to financial constraints.

Finally, the report states "few would deny that many individuals shape constructive, honorable and satisfying lives without higher education, and there is a useful debate about whether all young people need or will even tolerate more schooling after high school. Even so, it is worth asking how comfortable we are with the haphazard, let-the-chips-fall-where-they-may career path so many young people who aren't in college seem to be pursuing."

Methodology

The findings in *Life After High School: Young People Talk about Their Hopes and Prospects* are

based on telephone interviews with a national random sample of 1,000 young adults aged 18 to 25. Interviews were also conducted with targeted samples of Asian American, African American and Hispanic young adults to ensure sample sizes of 200 in each of these groups. The survey was preceded by five focus groups.

Full text of this study (including the full questionnaire and responses) is available free of charge in PDF format at www.publicagenda.org.

Source: Copyright© 2005 Public Agenda. Printed with Permission. http://www.publicagenda.org/press/press_release_detail.cfm?list=61, February 9, 2005.

Key words: young adults, employment, higher education, college.

Study Shows Broad Challenges for Young Adults Leaving Foster Care

Young people making the transition from foster care to adulthood face formidable challenges and often struggle to stay in school, find stable housing, support themselves financially and secure medical services, according to a study by the Chapin Hall Center for Children at the University of Chicago.

The study, the largest and most comprehensive examination in nearly two decades of young adults leaving foster care, found that the problems were even more pronounced for youth who are forced to leave the child welfare system when they turn 18.

Federal and state policies regulate the age at which youth must leave the child welfare system; states vary widely in the services they offer to youth older than 18.

Researchers interviewed 736 foster youth ages 17 and 18 from Illinois, Wisconsin and Iowa and 603 of them again at age 19. The sequential interviews allowed researchers to contrast the problems of youth who remained in the system with those who left at the age of 18. Researchers plan a third round of interviews with study participants when they turn 21.

Researchers found that some of the young adults interviewed were in stable situations and moving forward with their education or employed in promis-

ing jobs. However, nearly a third of young adults in the study were neither working nor in school, a figure that was more than twice that of a comparable group of peers their age.

Remaining in care after the age of 18 increased the likelihood that the young adults would continue their education or be employed. Those who left care at the age of 18 were nearly three times more likely than a national sample of their peers to be disconnected from work or school.

"Many youth making the transition to adulthood from foster care are having a hard time of it and many are unable even to provide basic necessities or support themselves. But the research is showing that many are benefiting by being allowed to remain in care and take advantage of crucial supports already in place even after they turn 18," said Mark Courtney, one of the study's authors and director of Chapin Hall.

The study assessed a variety of issues confronting young adults leaving foster care. In looking at the entire group of young adults interviewed, the study found:

- More than a third of the young adults in the study had neither a high school diploma nor a GED, compared to about 10 percent of their peers. Those who were enrolled in school were far more likely to still be in high school, not in college.
- Young adults in the study were far less likely to be employed than their same-age peers and far more likely to be earning less than \$10,000 a year.
- Teens in the study were twice as likely as their 19-year-old peers to be unable to pay their rent or mortgage and were twice as likely to be unable to pay a utility bill. They were four times as likely to be evicted.
- Only 46 percent of the young adults in the study had a savings or checking account, compared to 82 percent of their peers nationally.
- Nearly half of the women in the study received housing assistance or economic support through programs such as Food Stamps and Temporary Assistance for Needy Families.

- Nearly half of the women in the study had been pregnant at least once by the age of about 19, compared to only 20 percent of their peers. Nearly a third of females had at least one living child.
- A third of the youth suffered from a diagnosable mental illness, substance abuse, or substance dependence and many—more than twice the national sample—received counseling for their emotional and psychological problems.
- Thirty percent of the males and 11 percent of the females who aged out of the system had been incarcerated at least once in the two years after their initial interview for the study.

The study found that the population of young adults who had left the child welfare systems at the age of 18 faced deeper challenges than those who remained in care.

Among the findings:

- Those who left care at the age of 18 were nearly three times more likely than a national sample of their peers to be disconnected from work or school.
- Those who left care, lacking medical insurance and concerned about the high cost of care, were less likely to receive medical and psychological services than those who remained in the child welfare system.
- About 14 percent of the youth who left care had been homeless at some point since discharge from the child welfare system and about a third changed their living arrangements twice or more.
- A third of those who left the child welfare system had returned to live with their biological parents or other relatives, even though they had been removed from their homes when placed in the child welfare system.

"The results make clear that far more attention must be paid to these youth as they transition out of foster care and into adulthood," Dr. Courtney said. "Policy makers need to rethink how crucial services are being provided."

Source: To access the full report www.chapinhall.org.

Key words: children at risk, young adults.

Whole-grain White Bread

The 2005 Dietary Guidelines recommend that at least half of Americans' grain intake come from whole-grain products. Unfortunately it's estimated that 40 percent of Americans eat no whole grains at all.

Two food companies, Wonder Bread and Sara Lee, have launched two new whole-grain bread products to try and entice Americans to increase their whole-grain consumption. Wonder Bread, the nation's No. 1 bread brand, has developed bread made from an albino wheat variety that doesn't have the harsh taste of whole-wheat flour milled from red wheat's.

This new bread has the same spongy texture and similar taste as Wonder Bread but it's a shade or two browner because it's made from 100 percent whole wheat and it has three times the fiber. Chief marketing officer Jacques Roizen stated "It still has the taste and texture of white bread but the benefits of whole grain." The loaves should be in most US markets by the end of 2005. The name of the new loaf is called White Bread Fans 100 percent Whole Grain.

Sara Lee is taking a different approach. Their bread called, Soft and Smooth Whole Grain White, contains 30 percent whole wheat flour and 70 percent enriched flour. This new Sara Lee bread was released into the market in mid July 2005.

Both companies admit the key to having their product sell is the nation's kids. If the kids like it, then the product will most likely be successful. In the past, kids have not liked whole-grain breads due to their taste, texture, and appearance.

There is a lot at stake for the \$5 billion bread industry. Two years ago they were hit hard when the low-carbohydrate diets were popular.

Source: www.bakingbusiness.com, June 30, 2005.

Key words: grain, fiber.

Nutrition Education

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Nutrition Information Affects Food Choices of Teenagers

Can providing nutrition information to high school students affect their food choices? According to researcher Martha Conklin, when high schools posted nutritional information at the cafeteria counter, the students were more likely to select the healthier option at lunchtime.

Schools are not required to post nutrition information though many schools may mail the information home to parents or post it on a website. In this study, the nutrition information was provided on a limited number of food items: cheese pizza, pepperoni pizza, hamburger, cheeseburger, bacon cheeseburgers, and veggie burgers.

The nutrition information provided on these foods included: serving size, calories, total saturated fat, cholesterol, sodium, total carbohydrate, dietary fiber, protein, vitamins A and C, calcium and iron. The study showed that the fiber, Vitamin A, C, iron, and sodium content did not influence student choices but calorie and fat levels appeared to make an impact.

For six weeks, researchers studied eating habits of high school students from six high schools at lunchtime. Students were not encouraged by teachers or cafeteria workers to make a healthier food choice and there were no changes in food preparation. The result was that there was an increase in health-

ier items that were chosen. There was an increase in healthier choices such as hamburgers, veggie burgers, and plain cheese pizza and a decrease in sales of pepperoni pizza, cheeseburgers, and bacon cheeseburgers.

Researcher Conklin stated, “The reason why we think this worked is because we were empowering a student with knowledge. We didn’t make any statements about the food whatsoever. We just put some information out there to see what they would do with it.”

Source: *Journal of Child Nutrition and Management*, Spring 2005.

Key words: youth, nutrition.

Ronald McDonald Promotes Physical Activity

Ronald McDonald has gotten a makeover. Recent television commercials have shown him wearing a more form-fitting version of his trademark yellow jumpsuit and promoting physical activity. He encourages kids to get up off the couch and join him in kicking a soccer ball, juggling fruits and vegetables, and riding a skateboard with basketball star Yao Ming.

The commercials do not include images of typical McDonald’s foods such as hamburgers and fries. Jeff Carl, vice president of global marketing, stated “We felt it was more appropriate to expand the discussion to all foods at this point.”

It will be interesting to see if consumers will order more salads, yogurt parfaits, apple slices and fewer milkshakes, apple pies, and French fries.

Source: http://www.mcdonalds.com/corp/values/balance/physical_activity.html.

Key word: exercise.

Phospholipids—A Fat In the Bloodstream Linked to Heart Problems

Most individuals know that elevated cholesterol levels increase the risk of having a heart attack. However, other factors may be involved since cho-

lesterol levels are normal in many heart attack victims.

Research reported in the July 7, 2005 issue of *The New England Journal of Medicine* shows that oxidized phospholipids, a type of fat in the bloodstream, may trigger the steps that result in clogged arteries.

Approximately 500 subjects were tested for clogged arteries. The results showed that those who were 60 years old or younger and had high levels of oxidized phospholipids were three times more likely to have blockages than those who had lower levels of oxidized phospholipids. Also, those who had high levels of oxidized phospholipids and high cholesterol were at even greater risk.

Source: *New England Journal of Medicine*, July 7, 2005, pg. 46-57.

Key words: cholesterol, heart disease, fat.

Health Warning On Soft Drinks?

A US consumer group, Center for Science in the Public Interest (CSPI), has sent a petition to the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) asking them to put a cigarette style warning on soft drinks to alert consumers that drinking too much of the sugary beverages can make them fat and cause other health problems.

CSPI refer to soft drinks as “liquid candy” and they feel that parents and health officials should promote these beverages as an occasional treat. Studies show that teenage boys consume about 3 cans of soda per day while teenage girls consume more than 2 cans per day. One twelve-ounce can of regular soda contains approximately ten teaspoons of sugar.

Some suggested warnings include: “To help protect your waistline and your teeth, consider switching to diet sodas or water” and “Drinking too many (non-diet) soft drinks contributes to weight gain.”

The American Beverage Association’s response is that soft drinks can be part of a healthy diet and help keep people hydrated.

Source: <http://www.cspinet.org/new/200507131.html>.

Key word: soda.

Saving Money at the Gas Pump

The nationwide average price of self-serve regular gasoline is setting record highs. The high price of gas may be draining your bank accounts. What to do?

If you're using a credit card to pay for gas and you can't pay that charge off by the time your credit card statement comes due, park your car; take public transportation, if available; carpool; or cut down on your driving. If you don't, your gas can end up costing a lot more. For example, if you charge \$70 of gas a week on your credit card that carries an 18 percent interest rate at the end of the month you've charged \$280. But if you can only afford to make the minimum 3 percent payment on that debt, it will take you 37 months to pay off your debt. In that time you will pay \$85.88 in interest. And that's just for a month of fill-ups!

If it's difficult to reduce your gasoline consumption, at least heed the advice of experts.

- Stop speeding. The faster you drive, the more gas you use. Each 5 mph over 60 is equivalent to paying an extra 10 cents per gallon for gas.
- Keep your tires inflated to the recommended tire pressures. If you need new tires, switch to a comparable, but low rolling resistance tire.
- Avoid idling for any extended length of time.
- Perform regular oil changes, air filter changes, and tune-ups.
- Combine trips to travel the shortest distance.
- Use cruise control and overdrive on the highway as appropriate.
- Consider a hybrid vehicle the next time you are in the market for a new or used car.

Source: Adapted from Castelli, B.T., August 19, 2005, Gas Prices: Saving at the Pump, *The Washington Post*; Singletary, M., September 4, 2005, Use Creative Ways to Reduce Gas Consumption, *The Washington Post*.

Key words: savings, vehicles.

Family Economics

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Medicare Part D: Prescription Drug Plans in Idaho

Every one of the more than 194,000 Medicare beneficiaries in the state of Idaho can choose to enroll in the voluntary Medicare prescription drug coverage beginning on November 15. While Medicare's negotiations for these plan choices are not yet finalized, it is clear that a range of drug plans will be competing aggressively to serve Medicare beneficiaries. By choosing the plan that best meets their needs, beneficiaries in Idaho can take advantage of options that include lower premiums and additional benefits. All plans must meet Medicare's standards for access to medically necessary drugs and convenient pharmacies.

Prescription Drug Plans and Premiums

Approximately 19 organizations will offer stand-alone prescription drug plans throughout Idaho in 2006. The monthly premium, which is the amount of money that the Prescription Drug Plan will cost each month, can vary between plans depending on the type and level of coverage offered. Of the

stand-alone Prescription Drug Plans available in Idaho, about 3 plans will have monthly premiums under \$20, about 2 plans will have monthly premiums between \$20 and \$25, about 5 plans will have monthly premiums between \$25 and \$30, and about 15 plans will have premiums between \$30 and \$35.

Benefit Options

Many of the available plan options have zero deductibles or deductibles lower than the \$250 deductible in the “standard” Medicare benefit. Plans with no deductibles provide help with drug costs starting with the first dollar that a beneficiary spends.

Many of the plan options are “enhanced” plans that offer additional benefits beyond Medicare’s standard drug coverage. Some of these enhanced plans have monthly premiums of less than \$30. An example of an enhanced benefit that will be available in Idaho includes coverage for generic drugs in the coverage gap.

Access to Needed Drug Treatments

All of the prescription drug plans in Idaho and Utah, regardless of their premium and other benefits, must meet Medicare’s standards for access to drugs that Medicare beneficiaries need. This includes coverage of essentially all drugs in six categories of treatments (drugs for mental illnesses including antidepressants, antipsychotics, and anti-convulsants; drugs for HIV/AIDS; drugs for cancer; and drugs affecting the immune system) and coverage of medically necessary treatments in all other categories of prescription drugs.

All of the prescription drug plans in Idaho will meet Medicare’s standards for access to pharmacies—including convenient neighborhood pharmacies, pharmacies serving all beneficiaries in long-term care facilities, and pharmacies providing home infusion treatments. Most of the Prescription Drug Plans in Idaho will also offer the option of using mail-order prescription services.

Zero-Premium Prescription Drug Plans for Beneficiaries with Limited Means

Medicare beneficiaries with limited means who qualify for the full low-income subsidy in Idaho will be able to choose plans from approximately 11 organizations that will have a zero premium.

Medicare and Medicaid dual-eligible beneficiaries in Idaho who do not select a Prescription Drug Plan will be automatically enrolled into one of these plans by November, so that they do not miss a day of coverage. These beneficiaries can switch plans at any time, before or after January 1.

Beneficiaries who enroll in the low-income subsidy will be automatically enrolled in one of these zero-premium prescription drug plans in spring 2006, if they do not choose a plan on their own.

Medicare Advantage Prescription Drug Plans

More than 70 percent of eligible beneficiaries in Idaho will have access to a Medicare Advantage plan offering prescription drug coverage.

Many of these Medicare Advantage plans will offer additional coverage beyond the standard Medicare benefit, including low or no deductibles and additional coverage.

Many of these Medicare Advantage plans will provide this coverage for a prescription drug premium of \$20 or even less. Note that the overall premium for Medicare Advantage plans is for both health care and prescription drug coverage and will likely be higher than the drug premium by itself.

The prescription drug plans offered by Medicare Advantage Plans generally must meet the same requirements for access to medically necessary drugs and pharmacies as the stand-alone prescription drug plans.

Source: Katz, Ashley G., August 31, 2005, Medicare Rx Drug Coverage News & Events Newsletter: Idaho, Center for Medicare and Medicaid Services, Seattle office.

Key words: health care, health insurance.

Marriage, Credit Scores, and You

A credit score is a number lenders and others use to determine if you will make your credit payments on time. Your credit scores are based on information in your credit reports. Credit scores affect whether you can get credit and what you pay for credit cards, auto loans, mortgages, and other kinds of credit. For most kinds of credit scores, a higher number means you are more likely to be approved and pay a lower interest rate on new credit.

How does marriage affect your credit scores?

Not much, unless you want it to. The three credit bureaus, Equifax, Experian and TransUnion, do not combine your separate credit histories when you marry. Your individual accounts remain your own. However, jointly held accounts, or accounts for which one spouse is an authorized user on the other's account, will appear on both your credit reports.

When you apply for credit together (for example, for a home loan that you'll need both incomes to support), both of your credit scores and reports will be reviewed by lenders when you apply. But even in that case, your credit histories are considered separately. This can be helpful when one spouse's credit scores are low, because the other spouse's higher scores can often offset some of the negative impact on a joint application. Your best bet is for you and your spouse to check your credit scores and credit reports before applying for any joint loan. Check your credit reports carefully for incomplete or inaccurate information. Now is the best time to deal with inaccuracies.

You can also help improve your spouse's credit standing by sharing positive credit history information. How? Make your spouse a joint account holder or authorized user on credit accounts for which you have always made your payments on time. Shoring up your spouses' credit history in this way may help when you apply for loans as a couple later in your married life.

Although your credit reports do not merge, marriage tends to make individual credit management twice as important due to the need for larger loans and their tendency to require both of your credit histories to qualify. Talk about credit management

with your partner now and make credit wisdom a priority in your new lives together. Later, looking back at a life shared in health, wealth, and happiness, you'll be glad you did.

Source: Fair Issac Corporation, June 7, 2005, Credit Health Newsletter, Fair Issac Corporation, Minneapolis, MN and the FICO website, http://www.myfico.com/Downloads/Files/myFICO_CFA_percent20pamphlet.pdf.

Key words: credit, financial education.

Airlines Aim to Steer Traffic to Their Web Sites

After ditching meals, pillows, and blankets to save money, airlines have come upon another way to cut costs and actually improve one area of service. In the past few days, two major carriers—Delta Air Lines and AirTran Airways—have unveiled new websites aimed at making business travelers' online experience easier. By attracting more travelers to their websites to book flights, airlines are able to cut the costs of ticket distribution. It costs the carriers more to sell their tickets through their own reservation agents or through travel agents than it does to sell them on their websites.

America West Airlines began testing its new website in June. United Airlines said it plans to unveil a more user-friendly site in the next 12 to 18 months. US Airways executives acknowledged last summer that the airline's website was antiquated and announced plans to unveil a new site this year. A US Airways spokeswoman said the new design was scheduled for launch in December but has been postponed because of the carrier's plan to merge with America West.

Travelers using the new websites can perform some of the same actions available to reservation agents. For example, Delta's site allows travelers to change their flight itinerary and check flights on many of its code-share partners. Passengers who book a flight on Delta's website now have 24 hours to cancel the reservation—something that used to be limited to tickets purchased.

Delta's website redesign is its first in five years. The airline sells about 24 percent of its tickets online, up from 18 percent last year. Delta, which lost \$382

million in the second quarter, hopes to increase website sales to 28 percent by the end of the year.

The website redesigns are also aimed at steering traffic away from general travel sites such as Orbitz, Expedia, and Travelocity. "The airlines have lost their pricing power. Without a good website, they have no chance of economically surviving," said an industry analyst.

Source: Alexander, Keith L., August 2, 2005; Airlines Aim to Steer Traffic to Their Web Sites. *The Washington Post*, Page D01. Accessed 8/04/05 from <http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2005/08/02/AR2005080200636.html?referrer=email>.

Key words: travel, savings.

Welcome a New Extension Family Economics Educator

Rupert native, Lyle Hansen, joined UI Extension in Jerome County during May. He earned his bachelor's degree in family and consumer sciences at Utah State University in 2001 and his master's degree in family financial planning at Kansas State University in 2004.

Hansen completed a financial counseling internship at Utah State University's Family Life Center and has worked both as a manager for US Bank in Ogden, Utah, and as a financial representative for American General Financial Services in Bountiful, Utah. He will provide leadership in family economics education in Jerome County and south-central Idaho.

During his first year, Hansen will be focusing on Identity Theft, Money on the Bookshelf (parent and child financial literacy education) and Long-Term Care Insurance. He will teach the Long Term Care Insurance section of southern Idaho Long Term Care workshops. Hansen is teaching financial education topics through HeadStart, the Jerome Senior Citizens Center, and the Jerome Library. He developed a brochure to market University of Idaho Extension programs and workshops that he will offer to local groups. Welcome, Lyle!

Healy Launches Legally Secure Your Financial Future Seminars to Standing Room Only

Ada County Extension educator, Beverly Healy, offered *Legally Secure Your Financial Future: Organize, Communicate, Prepare* seminars in Boise during June to eighty registrants. The new legal education program will be offered in other counties this fall. The seminar attendance is attributed to the timeliness of the topic and to successful marketing: a feature article in *The Idaho Statesman*, word of mouth endorsement by the Executive Director of the Better Way Coalition at a May Advance Directive meeting, promotion at April and May Long Term Care Workshops, and Ada County Extension direct mail marketing to participants of previous later life programs. The seminar series includes information about organizing important papers, legal goal setting, communicating final wishes, Advance Directives, wills, probate, estate plans and property ownership. A chaplain from St. Alphonsus Regional Medical Center and two Boise attorneys team-taught the seminars with Healy.

Key word: financial education.

Advance Directive Video

Extension family economics specialist, Marilyn Bischoff; educator, Beverly Healy; and faculty from the CALS Educational Communications Department are making a streaming video to educate individuals and families how to communicate with loved ones about Advance Directives (living will and durable power of attorney for health care). The streaming video will become part of a consumer *Legally Secure Your Financial Future: Organize, Communicate, and Prepare* eXtension website. The site will provide legal resources to assist individuals and families plan and prepare for end-of-life issues. The project is funded by eXtension through a sub-contract with Clemson University.

Materials for educators to teach *Legally Secure Your Financial Future* (LSYFF) can be accessed at www.csrees.usda.gov/fsll, click on "Tools for Educators," then "Program Toolkit" and scroll down to LSYFF. Contact Marilyn for Idaho-specific resources for several sections of the curriculum.