



AGRABILITY CHIT CHAT

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TIS THE SEASON TO BE JOLLY

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CARM'S COMMENTS: Carmen Schacht

The holiday season is upon us. I hope all of you enjoy being with friends and family. At this time of year we like to think that peace and joy will come to all people. Take time to enjoy the special music, bright light displays, and the sounds of the season that we can only see and hear during this time of the year. May each of you enjoy the season in whatever way is best for you. May the New Year be one of much fulfillment and happiness in every way! (CS)

HOLIDAY TRADITIONS AND MORE!

- Carmen Schacht, AgrAbility Peer Support Coordinator

When I was much younger, we always went to Grandma's house for Christmas. One of the things Grandma always made was Swedish Tea Rings, so I thought I would share the recipe with you. Enjoy!

Swedish Tea Rings

Take your favorite sweet dough or store bought dough and roll it out into the 11 x 17 or smaller rectangle. Spread with melted butter and sprinkle with cinnamon and sugar. Roll it up and make into a ring. Cut the edges with a pair of scissors from the outside to the inside about 2 inches into the middle. Let rise. Bake at 350 degrees for about 30 minutes. When it is done baking, frost and decorate with maraschino cherries and pecans.

-Marcy Thomas, AgrAbility Program Specialist

For the past 6 years my husband, Kent, my mother-in-law, and I have gone caroling with our church on the Saturday before Christmas. We have all come to enjoy this time spent with other members and children of our church as we make our way around to the shut-ins in the small town of Rhodes. When weather permits we walk the 2-mile radius of the town to each of the homes on our list. If the weather is cold and snowy we all crowd into vehicles and drive. The people that we visit either come to the door or invite us in for warmth as we sing our two carols and end with "We Wish You a Merry Christmas." The delight and love dances in their eyes, for often we are the only family they have for a brief moment at the holidays. Of course over the last several years we have lost a few of our listeners, but also

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gained a couple as well. Whenever we have lost a listener we still sing one song as we walk by their home in remembrance of them.

The evening doesn't end there. After we have made our way through our list of people and our list of carols we head back to the church where those who are unable to make the trip have been busy elves cooking chili, making hot chocolate, and baking goodies. We all sit around the tables eating, laughing, and feeling good about the gifts of singing we have just given. After all, tis the season!

I encourage each of you to remember those that are without family members for the holidays. Invite them over for dinner, take them a plate of goodies and tell them you were thinking about them, or gather your own group of singers and go caroling. Remember it isn't how good you sound, just that you make a cheerful noise! Happy Holidays!

Making Personalized Gift Tags

If you love to personalize your gifts, this is a fun and easy way to do it.

Supplies:

Medium satin ornament balls
3-dimensional gold or silver fabric paint or craft glue
Loose gold or silver glitter
Scissors
Fine ribbon or string

Directions:

If you decide to use the loose glitter, be careful as it may become messy.

1. Paint the name onto the satin ball with any design you decide.
2. Sprinkle loose glitter onto wet paint or glue.
3. Allow to dry.
4. When completely dry, thread ribbon or string through the hole of the satin ball.

Use this afterwards as a tree ornament or decoration.

-Ellen Minnihan, Human Development and Family Studies Extension Secretary
When I was growing up, my mother always served my grandma's strawberry shortcake and bacon for breakfast on Christmas morning. I remember that my father particularly loved this treat.

Grandma's Shortcake

2 C. flour
1/4 C. sugar
1/2 t. salt
3 t. baking powder
1/3 C. butter or margarine
3/4 C. milk
1 egg, beaten

Mix first four ingredients. Cut in butter or margarine. Add milk and egg. Mix and bake in greased 8" round pan for 15 minutes at 450 degrees. Cut shortcake into wedges and top with strawberries and ice cream or cool whip if desired. Enjoy!

-Caezilia Loibl, visiting scholar from Germany
Weihnachten (Holy Night)
Christmas in rural Lower Bavaria, Germany, where my parents run a hop plant farm, is full of catholic tradition. It begins with sounding the trumpets at our church in Puerkwang on Christmas Eve. Late in the afternoon the trumpeters initiate Christmas in performing old carols at the cemetery, which surrounds the church. As Christmas Eve is a day of fasting in catholic tradition, we eat little during the day and only a sandwich before we dress for Christmas ceremony in the family. Around 6 p.m. we gather around the Christmas tree. My father reads slowly and reverential the holy story of Saint Mathew from our family bible. We add prayers and intercessions for our family and friends and our late grandparents and relatives. Then the distribution of the family

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presents starts under the big Christmas tree. The more little we children were, the taller the tree had to be. Then we stay awake until midnight. We look at our Christmas gifts, we talk, and we try to stretch the time until midnight. Then we leave for the Christmas mass, the so-called Mette, over the hill to the brightly illuminated church. People enveloped in thick coats flock from all sides to the church. In our old, middle age, cold church, founded by the noble family of Kessel on top of the hill, [vis-à-vis](#) their castle, a manger is placed, and the wooden-carved baroque farmers and shepherds kneel before the child in the cradle. In the church farmers kneel like 2000 years ago during the birth of Christ in the benches and sing Christmas carols. Then the children enter the church's nave, almost 20 of them, to play their nativity play. Every year directly after the Mette, we invite relatives to our farm. We welcome them in our wooden-lined living room. Across the fireside we sit on a long table chattering and heating up. The table is set ceremonially with the family silver, the best china, and crystal glasses. The traditional dishes for the churchgoers are served: sausages, smoked pork chop, sauerkraut, potatoes, and beer, Christmas cakes and cookies, Riesling wine. Later in the night: Champagne. When my siblings and I were little, we stayed after the meal for a while with the adults in the living room, and then we had to go to bed. We were drowsy, but too proud to admit it and wanted to savor and enjoy the long allowance to stay up, our longest night of the year, until it the night ran out.

This is Christmas in my family. It seems to me as if it is as long ago as my childhood.

TOP TEN HOLIDAY TIPS

Do the holidays leave you feeling stressed and needing a vacation? Iowa State University Extension has several holiday topics of interest. Here are our top 10

favorite holiday tips that may help you gain peace and comfort.

10. A happy holiday is not full of expensive gifts or price tags.
9. Online shopping can make buying gifts much easier for those who live in remote areas or have difficulty getting out to the stores.
8. Keep light strings and other electrical decorations out of children's reach.
7. Scotch and red pine trees tend to retain their needles longer than white pines.
6. A carbon monoxide alarm is a gift of life. Does every house in your family have one?
5. Slow down and give your children a minimum of 10 minutes of uninterrupted attention. Give them a role to be involved with for the holidays.
4. When traveling with children, have each child pack one bag (a backpack or a school bag). Let them pack what they want, but they must be responsible for carrying and keeping track of the contents.
3. Consider new ways to keep the traditions that mean the most to everyone.
2. For caregivers, invite guests to the home of the care receiver so that he or she will be comfortable and not have to be taken out.
1. Humor has a healing impact for families. Laugh at yourself, chuckle about a funny story from the past or read a joke.

If you would like to read the articles on each individual tip, see www.extension.iastate.edu/General/holiday/

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TIDBITS

Iowa State University Engineering students made a little girl very happy this year, when they finished building a tricycle designed specifically for her. The eight-year-old girl has limited use of her limbs, the physical effects of meningitis, which she contracted as an infant, and now has the independence to ride her bike alongside her brother. The features of the new tricycle include drive sprockets that gear the system down so that it is not as hard to pedal the bike. In addition, it has adjustable pedals and an adjustable seat, with Velcro straps to help keep her feet in place.

The value of farmland in the state of Iowa reached its second highest figure since 1941, according to Iowa State University Extension farm economist, Mike Duffy. The average value of an acre is now worth \$2,083 in most counties across the state. In all 99 counties, there was an 8.2 percent increase in value from 2001. The adjusting 2002 figure for inflation puts it more in line with values that prevailed before the strong run-up in prices at the end of the 1970s. The highest value in an individual county was \$3,379 per acre in Scott County in east central Iowa, while the lowest value in an individual county was \$823 per acre in Decatur County in south central Iowa. To read more about the value of land in Iowa see

www.extension.iastate.edu/newsrel/2002/dec02/dec0214.html

ANNOUNCEMENTS

-With the cold days of winter gradually making their way to the state of Iowa heating bills could be difficult to pay. The Iowa Home Energy Assistance Program has been established to help qualifying low-income homeowners and renters pay for a portion of their heating costs. Contact your local community action agency for more details and where to apply or contact:

LIHEAP

Iowa Department of Human Rights
Capitol Complex
Des Moines, IA 50319

- Commercial manure applicator training is scheduled for January 7, 2003, and will be via satellite downlink. The workshop will provide the required three hours of annual training and will cover multiple topics. Due to program rules changes, all current certified commercial manure applicator licenses will expire on December 31, 2002. If you have questions about the status of your certification or where you can attend the satellite downlink program contact your local ISU Extension county office or on the web at

<http://extension.agron.iastate.edu/immag/macc.html>

QUOTE OF THE MONTH:

"A holiday gives one a chance to look backward and forward, to reset oneself by an inner compass." – May Sarton

***From all of us at Iowa AgrAbility,
Happy Holidays!!***

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IOWA AGRABILITY - A joint effort of ISU Extension and the Farm Family Rehabilitation Management (FaRM) Program of Easter Seals Iowa. The program can help farm family members with a disability stay in farming.

This newsletter from the Iowa AgrAbility Project will be sent monthly to AgrAbility families and other interested individuals. Please send comments and suggestions to:

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Iowa AgrAbility Project

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