



Dear Homemakers,

Welcome to our Winter Fallon/Carter County Homemaker's Newsletter. I hope you all had a wonderful holiday season with family and friends.

As I am getting ready to mail this out we are again in a weather storm watch. Looks like more snow! Maybe you'll have some time at home to check out the new farm family financial course offered on-line, or maybe plant a terrarium, or stir up a batch of whole-wheat pancakes.

**WISHING YOU ALL A NEW YEAR OF HAPPINESS & PEACE!**

*If there is light in the soul,  
There will be beauty in the person.  
If there is beauty in the person,  
There will be harmony in the house.  
If there is harmony in the house,  
There will be order in the nation.  
If there is order in the nation,  
There will be peace in the world.*

*Chinese Proverb*

Lana Buerkle  
Program Assistant

Nico Cantalupo  
Fallon/Carter County Extension Agent

**In This Issue:**

- Improving Your Brain Power
- Couple Communication
- Fall Council Minutes
- Investing For Farm Families
- Stain Removal
- Plant A Terrarium
- Enjoying Whole Grains

**Contact Us**

MSU Extension,  
Fallon/Carter County  
P.O. Box 850  
Baker, MT 59313

(406) 778-7110

[falloncarter1@montana.edu](mailto:falloncarter1@montana.edu)

[www.falloncounty.net/  
extensiondw/index.html](http://www.falloncounty.net/extensiondw/index.html)

[www.msuextension.org](http://www.msuextension.org)

[www.montana4h.org](http://www.montana4h.org)

## TIPS FOR A HAPPY NEW YEAR!

*Mayo Clinic*

We set goals for weight loss, fitness programs and financial success—but what about goals for happiness? Use these ideas for setting goals to increase your personal happiness this year.

☺ **Decide to be happy now.** It sounds simple, but choosing to pursue happiness is a powerful first step in reaching your goal.

☺ **Make a happiness list.** Write down the things that make you happy at home, at work and with your family—and work them into your life.

☺ **Strengthen relationships.** Family and friends can provide support and enhance your social life.

☺ **Make others happy.** Volunteer for a cause you believe in.

☺ **Monitor your self-talk.** Turn negative self-talk (your internal stream of thoughts) into something positive. Instead of thinking, “I’ll never be able to finish this project,” for instance, think, “I’m going to try my best to finish this project.”

☺ **Have fun.** Every day, spend some time doing things you enjoy.

☺ **Be healthy.** Exercise regularly, get enough sleep and eat a balanced diet.

☺ **Forgive yourself and others.** Let go of past hurts and anger.

☺ **Live in the moment.** Instead of worrying about the past or the future, enjoy what you’re doing today.

☺ **Keep a gratitude journal.** Write down at least three things you are thankful for each day.

☺ **Practice relaxation.** Try meditation, yoga or deep breathing to reduce your stress and anxiety.

## IMPROVING YOUR BRAIN POWER



### ONE CUP A DAY

A cup of blueberries a day protects the brain’s memory-storing cells. Spoon some onto your morning oatmeal.

### WHOLE BRAINED

Analytical left-brainers can activate their right brain by sketching and tracing. Intuitive right-brainers can work their left half with word jumbles.

### ART SMARTS

Others might think your mind is elsewhere if you sketch during a meeting, but studies show that doodling keeps you focused during mundane activities. So go ahead, release your inner Picasso.

### BE A PROBLEM SOLVER

Boost your brain power with puzzles and word games. Carry the daily crossword or a pocket-size Sudoku with you to fill time in long lines or the waiting room. Timed games force you to think quickly and be flexible. Try [gamesforthebrain.com](http://gamesforthebrain.com)

### WAKE-UP CALL

Coffee can do more than jump-start your day. Researches found that caffeinated coffee (or the tea equivalent) can temporarily sharpen your memory.

### A CLICK A DAY

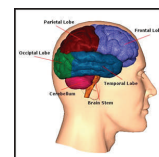
Spend 20 minutes each day navigating the Net to engage centers of the brain that control decision-making and complex reasoning.

### ROAD LESS TRAVELED

Take your brain off autopilot and try a new route to the grocery store. Minor switch-ups in your routine are like mental crosstraining.

### NAMES

When you meet someone for the first time, repeat her name as soon as possible in a conversation.



*“I’ve learned that people will forget what you said, people will forget what you did, but people will never forget how you made them feel.”*

*Maya Angelou*

# **COUPLE RELATIONSHIPS:** **COMMUNICATION & CONFLICT RESOLUTION**

MSU MontGuide 200917HR

There are gender differences in what we say. Women talk more about their feelings and concerns while men stick to more impersonal topics. Women speak more hesitantly. They often end with a question to gain approval. For example: "It's hot today, isn't it?" Men are more likely to be direct such as "It's hot today."

Women tend to be more expressive in their talk. Men are more matter of fact and want to make a statement to get something done. This can cause a breakdown in communication between men and women. Men want to take action while women seek to make sure the other person's feelings and thoughts have been expressed before taking action. For example a women might say, "What do you want to do about dinner tonight," means more than, "What is for dinner." She may be trying to see if he wants to eat out. Men on the other hand would be more likely to say, "Let's go to a movie tonight," being more direct in what they want. A woman hearing this statement may feel that she hasn't been consulted about the couple's plans for the evening.

Understanding that men and women in general have different styles of communication can help men and women better understand one another. Men need to remember that women often want to connect with the other person when talking and women need to recognize that men may be more direct.



## ***Resolving Conflicts***

Here are some miscommunication problems:

- ◇ Not focusing on the problem that we need to address. Some people try to change the subject so that they don't have to focus on the problem. Others may try and bring in all of the problems the couple ever had to avoid the original issue.
- ◇ Not listening to our spouse or partner causes problems. Interrupting your spouse or partner is one way to tell the person you are not listening.
- ◇ Assuming our spouse or partner can read our mind. We can't read minds. The other person will not know how we feel unless we let him or her know.
- ◇ Finding fault with everything our spouse or partner brings up as a solution is not helpful. This is called "yes, butting" where one person can't find anything to agree on.
- ◇ Competing with your spouse to try and make your problem seem worse does not help when there is conflict.
- ◇ Displaying a negative attitude does not help when there is conflict. This includes:
  - Mocking or insulting the other person
  - Being defensive
  - Withdrawing from the conversation
  - Being aggressive or belligerent

Some good strategies to use when there is a conflict include:

- ~ Using active listening skills ("I" statements, acknowledge the other person's feelings, check to make sure what you heard is what the other person is saying, focus on the topic of the conflict)
- ~ Saying what we mean
- ~ Being polite and staying cool
- ~ Offering respect and validation
- ~ Asking yourself whether or not the issue is important enough for a conflict (sometimes we argue over small issues that can be resolved by agreeing to disagree)

Try using the strategies the next time you and your spouse have a disagreement. Some of the ideas such as "I" statements may feel awkward at first. Keep practicing and they will become more natural to you. Remember that conflict happens in all relationships, it is how the conflict is handled that is the key.

*Our office has a copy of the complete MontGuide with more information on this subject.  
Please stop by or give a call if you would like one.*

## FALL COUNCIL MINUTES

The Fall Council meeting of the Fallon Carter Homemakers was called to order by Sharon Higgins, president. The Albion 400 Club hosted the day, with a theme of “Passing the Torch”. Madge Pilster gave the Welcome and Invocation. Following the Pledge to the American Flag, Nico Cantalupo gave a very informative talk on Multigenerational Traits. Gay Arpan read a moving poem entitled “Changing of the Guard” by Jim Hamilton of Decker, Montana.

Roll call was answered by paying dues. Following is the roll:

Adventurers had no members present.

Baker Homecraft has 10 members; one was present.

Diligent Doers has 15 members; seven were present.

Homemakers Heritage has 17 members; six were present.

Willard homemakers has 15 members; one was present.

Lana Buerkle reported that anyone can receive the Homemaker newsletters. Those interested in adding someone to the list may contact the Extension Office. She also asked for club list updates. Lana also brought a variety of informational pamphlets for the attendees to take home. Among information shared at the meeting was information on supporting our troops through cards and letters.

A thank you from Will Sparks was read. Will was a recipient of the Homemakers’ Scholarship. The Treasurer’s report was given and accepted. The Scholarship fund was reported in the amount of \$989.11.

Kathy Stieg gave a report on the Kay Hanley Memorial Angels for 2009. The Angel for Needlework at the Carter County Fair was received by Jane Teigen. The angel for Culinary at the Fallon County Fair was received by Alice Kay Schweigert. Alice Kay donated her Angel back, to be used another year. Thank you Alice. Discussion was held concerning the needlework awards at the Carter County Fair. There is an overall Quilt Award given in memory of Gussie Richards. Val Johnston moved that if the Overall Needlework and the Overall Quilting awards, at the Carter County Fair, go to the same person, the Kay Hanley Angel Award shall go to the Reserve Champion Needlework recipient. Rosina Owen seconded the motion; motion carried.

Discussion was held on changing the time of Spring Council. The date was left to the discretion of the Host Clubs. The business meeting was adjourned.

Ronda Hendrickson provided musical entertainment for the meeting.

Linda Lanning showed some of her collection of Quilted Projects, explaining some of the patterns she has made. She also provided an interesting centerpiece made from a canner kettle insert, glass jars, and votive holders entwined with fall leaves. Barb Patch gave an interesting talk on furniture restoration and refinishing. She brought several items for display.

Time was given throughout the day for the Silent Auction, with benefits going to the Scholarship Fund. Door prizes were given throughout the day. They were received as follows: Teresa Tauck—Albion 400, Alzada Cookbook, Sharon Higgins—Homemakers Heritage, Gift Jar; Lana Buerkle—Homemakers Heritage, Gift jar; Eileen Garman—Diligent Doers, Box of Gifts; Val Johnston—Diligent Doers, Basket of Vegetables; Mary Lawrence—Willard Homemakers, Scarecrow; Jennifer Peabody—Baker Homecraft, Bowl of Gifts.

A delicious meal was served by the Albion 400 Club. The Spring Council meeting will be hosted by the Willard Homemakers.

Kathy Stieg, Secretary



### INVESTING FOR FARM FAMILIES COURSE



“You can learn to secure your farm’s future and protect your family’s legacy by enrolling now in an online course just for farm families,” said Barbara O’Neill, Extension specialist in Financial Resource Management at Rutgers Cooperative Extension. “Investing for Farm Families provides the information you need to make strategic decisions while weaving together farm and personal investments.”

The 8-lesson course helps farm families plan for a financially stable future that meets their long-term needs. Developed by a team of Extension educators

from several states, farm families can work at their own pace while taking the course.

“You can learn to increase your future financial security, identify investment strategies, know asset allocation basics, evaluate investment production alternatives to agriculture business risks, and invest for retirement and farm succession planning,” said O’Neill.

For more information or to enroll in the course, go to [www.extension.org/pages/InvestingforFarmFamilies](http://www.extension.org/pages/InvestingforFarmFamilies).

## What are the most important points in stain removal?

Iowa State University Extension

- ~ Take care of stains promptly. Fresh stains are much easier to remove than those more than 24 hours old.
- ~ Blot up any excess liquid with a clean white cloth or paper towel. Remove excess solids by gentle scraping or chipping with a dull knife or metal spatula. With some solids, such as heavy amounts of surface mud, removal may be easier after the stain has dried. Brush off the excess before the clothing is submerged for washing.
- ~ Avoid rubbing the stained area with a linty terry towel or a dark-colored cloth. You may complicate the problem.
- ~ Never rub a fresh stain with bar soap. Soap sets many stains.
- ~ Check laundry for stains before washing. Many stains need pretreatment.
- ~ Inspect wet laundry before drying to be sure a stain has been removed. If a stain is still evident, do not dryer dry. The heat of drying makes the stain more permanent.
- ~ Before starting on the stain, test stain removal agents on a seam or hidden area of the garment to be sure they do not affect the color or finish of the fabric.
- ~ Avoid excessive rubbing unless the fabric is tough and durable. Rubbing can spread the stain and damage the fiber, finish, or color of the fabric. However, gentle to vigorous rubbing and agitation under running water helps remove dried food, protein, or oil stains from shirts or jean-weight fabrics made of cotton or cotton/polyester blends.
- ~ Do not iron or press stained fabrics until the stain is completely removed. Heat sets most stains.
- ~ Wash heavily stained items separately. Soil and stains can be redeposited on cleaner clothing during laundering if, a) too little detergent is used, b) water temperature is too low, c) washing time is too long, or d) the washer is loaded with too many clothes.
- ~ Avoid using hot water on stains of unknown origin. Hot water can set protein stains like milk, egg, or blood.
- ~ Use the water temperature recommended on stain removal products and detergents. Hot water should be between 120 and 140 degrees, warm water between 85 and 105 degrees, and cold water between 65 and 75 degrees. Water below 60 degrees is too cold for detergents to be helpful.



### Protein stains

Soak in cold water; rub fabric against itself under running water to dislodge stain. Launder in warm water with heavy-duty detergent. If stain remains, soak an additional half-hour, then rewash. If hot water is used first, it cooks the protein, causing coagulation between the fibers in the yarns of the fabric, making the stains more difficult to remove.

Baby food	Blood	Cream	Feces	Ice cream
Baby formula	Cheese sauce	Egg	Gelatin	Mud

### Oil-based stains

Stain-removal pretreatment products help remove oil stains. Stain sticks are convenient for collar soil. Solvent-based stain removal agents are especially effective for stains that are more than two days old or that have been set by dryer heat. If stain removal pretreatment products are unavailable, apply heavy-duty liquid detergent, or powdered detergent mixed with water to make a runny paste, to the stain. Work the detergent into the stain. Wash the garment in hot water using the recommended amount of detergent for a regular laundry load. Rinse and inspect before drying. Repeat this treatment if removal is incomplete.

Automotive oil	Butter/margarine	Collar greasy rings	Face cream/lotion	Salad dressing
Bacon fat	Car door grease	Cooking fats/oils	Mayonnaise	



## LIVING WITH PATTERN

Patterns can be intimidating. Here are a few tips for keeping it livable.

### SURROUND WITH SOLIDS

If you use large planes of solid color, then you have the freedom to use pattern in splashes in different parts of the room. For instance, if you have a highly patterned curtain, your sofa and rug might be a solid.

BLEND IT IN Bold patterns aren't jarring when the colors are the same or similar to others in the room.

BE STRATEGIC Putting a large-scale pattern on the floor lessens its impact (especially if it's a similar color to the floor and/or furniture), since a rug isn't at eye level and is partially concealed by the furniture. Curtains are also a safe bet: When open, the pattern recedes into the folds.

---

## 10-MINUTE HOUSE CLEANING

Don't spend all day cleaning. Home economist Deborah Taylor-Hough tells how to get it all done in 10 minutes.

Set a timer for 10 minutes and have the kids race to pick up as much as they can before the alarm goes off.

Run a load of non-dishes in the dishwasher when it isn't quite full. Clean things like stove burners, vases, candlesticks and even children's plastic toys contained in a mesh bag.

To keep bathroom mirrors from fogging up, rub them with dish soap and let them dry. It will take vigorous rubbing to work the soap in, but it should prevent fog from forming for up to two weeks.

Clean the dust off stuffed animals by running them through the dryer on fluff cycle with a dryer sheet.

Time's Up Cleaning Strategy: Take just five minutes a day to tidy up each room. This technique is not to be used as a substitute for deep cleaning, but it will keep the clutter under control.

Vacuum first and then dust, so the vacuum won't kick dust back into the air and onto your furniture.



## PLANT A BEAUTIFUL TERRARIUM

*Midwest Living*

Add charming touches of green to your home with easy-to-grow terrariums. Surrounded by glass, plants almost go on autopilot—they'll get the moisture they need even in dry rooms. You can create a terrarium with inexpensive, everyday objects, such as a vase or an old fishbowl sealed with a glass plate.



1. Select plants for your terrarium. Dwarf and slow-growing plants that thrive in warm, moist air work best. Plants with different heights, shapes and textures add interest.
2. Gather ornamental accessories. Small pebbles can resemble rocks and boulders; small branches and moss give your garden a natural look.
3. Choose a clear container large enough to hold the plants you want to enclose. Wash it thoroughly.
4. Put down a layer of drainage material, such as pea gravel. Depending on the size of your container, you'll need about a half-inch to 3 inches of pea gravel.
5. Sprinkle with fine charcoal (generally available at garden centers), which absorbs gasses and chemicals.
6. Layer 2 to 6 inches of a sterile peat-based potting mix over the base.
7. Gently tap plants out of their pots. Trim rampant roots to encourage plants to grow more slowly and to more easily fit into the shallow, restricted root zone in the container.
8. Place plants in holes and press soil gently around the roots. Use long-handled tools if necessary to avoid damaging other plants. Start in the middle and work outward.
9. Add finishing touches such as moss and rocks.
10. Mist with water to settle the roots and clean the plant. The soil should be moist but not soggy. Cover your terrarium. (You can also leave your terrarium open, but it will need more frequent misting.)
11. Put your terrarium where it will get enough light to satisfy the plants' needs, but keep it out of direct sun, which will overheat the garden.
12. Check moisture levels periodically, and mist if your terrarium needs water. Plants should not dry out, but they also shouldn't be overwatered. If spots of mold or mildew appear, your garden has too much moisture; remove or partially open the lid for two or three days to improve air circulation.
13. Prune plants to keep them from overgrowing their neighbors. Remove dead plants and ENJOY!

## EASY WAYS TO ENJOY WHOLE GRAINS

*Whole Grain Council*

### Make Easy Substitutions:

- ◇ Substitute half the white flour with whole wheat flour in your regular recipes for cookies, muffins, quick breads and pancakes. Or be bold and add up to 20% of another whole grain flour such as sorghum.
- ◇ Replace one third of the flour in a recipe with quick oats or old-fashioned oats.
- ◇ Add half a cup of cooked bulgur, wild rice, or barley to bread stuffing.
- ◇ Add half a cup of cooked wheat berries, wild rice, brown rice, sorghum or barley to your favorite canned or home-made soup.
- ◇ Use whole corn meal for corn cakes, corn breads and corn muffins.
- ◇ Add three-quarters of a cup of uncooked oats for each pound of ground beef when you make meatballs, burgers or meatloaf.
- ◇ Stir a handful of oats in your yogurt, for quick crunch with no cooking necessary.
- ◇ Make risottos, pilafs and other rice-like dishes with whole grains such as barley, brown rice, bulgur, millet, quinoa or sorghum.
- ◇ Buy whole grain pasta, or one of the blends that's part whole-grain, part white.
- ◇ Try whole grain breads.



## HEART-SHAPED WHOLE-WHEAT PANCAKES / STRAWBERRY SAUCE

### Ingredients

- 3/4 cup all-purpose flour
- 3/4 cup whole-wheat flour
- 1 1/2 teaspoons baking powder
- 1/2 teaspoon baking soda
- 1/4 teaspoon salt
- 2 large eggs
- 1 cup lowfat buttermilk
- 1/2 cup nonfat milk
- 1 tablespoon honey
- 1/4 teaspoon vanilla extract

### Directions

Pre-heat oven to 200 degrees F.

In a medium bowl, whisk together the dry ingredients (flour through salt). In another medium bowl, beat together the eggs, nonfat milk, buttermilk, honey and vanilla.

Preheat a large nonstick griddle or skillet over a medium-low flame. Stir the wet ingredients into the dry ingredients, mixing only enough to combine them. The batter will be somewhat lumpy. Using a 1/3 cup measuring cup pour the batter onto the griddle. Flip the pancake when the top is bubbling and it is golden brown on the bottom. Then cook until the other side is golden brown. Hold on an oven proof plate in the oven until the entire batch is ready. When all the pancakes are ready, cut them into heart shapes with a heart shaped cookie cutter. Ladle about 1/3 cup of the strawberry sauce onto each plate, place pancakes on top and sprinkle with confectioners' sugar if desired.

### Strawberry Sauce:

- 16 oz. strawberries, fresh or frozen (unsweetened, thawed)
  - 1 teaspoon lemon juice
  - 2 tablespoons maple syrup
- Puree strawberries in to a chunky puree. Heat them in a small saucepan over a low flame, until they are just warm. Stir in lemon juice and maple syrup.
- Yield: 4 servings (2—5-inch pancakes & 1/3 cup sauce)



*Sounds like something fun to try for  
Valentine's Day!*

The Hazel Padden-Sara Kerr-Minneclair Hoff Memorial Scholarship application has been sent to Carter County, Baker & Plevna High Schools. Please encourage graduating seniors to apply.

-----

The Southeastern Montana Winter Ag Series will be held on Wednesday, January 27, 2010. This program will begin in Ekalaka at the Parish Hall at 11:00am and at 3:30pm in Baker at The Tavern. Please call our office at 778-7110 if you have any questions.

-----

MSU Extension has revised several MontGuides on home-canning, drying and freezing fruits and vegetables. Please stop in or call the office for copies of these if interested.

## TIPS FOR GREAT PICTURES

### 1. Look your subject in the eye

Direct eye contact can be as engaging in a picture as it is in real life. When taking a picture of someone, hold the camera at the person's eye level to unleash the power of those magnetic gazes and mesmerizing smiles. For children, that means stooping to their level.



### 2. Use a plain background

A plain background shows off the subject you are photographing. When you look through the camera viewfinder, force yourself to study the area surrounding your subject.

### 3. Use flash outdoors

Bright sun can create unattractive deep facial shadows. Eliminate the shadows by using your flash to lighten the face. When taking people pictures on sunny days, turn your flash on. On cloudy days, use the camera's fill-flash mode if it has one. The flash will brighten up people's faces and make them stand out.

### 4. Move in close

If your subject is smaller than a car, take a step or two closer before taking the picture and zoom in on your subject. Your goal is to fill the picture area with the subject you are photographing. Up close you can reveal telling details, like a sprinkle of freckles or an arched eyebrow. But don't get too close or your pictures will be blurry. The closest focusing distance for most cameras is about three feet, or about one step away from your camera. If you get closer than the closest focusing distance of your camera your pictures will be blurry.

### 5. Move it from the middle

Center-stage is a great place for a performer to be. However, the middle of your picture is not the best place for your subject. Bring your picture to life by simply moving your subject away from the middle of your picture. Start by playing tick-tack-toe with subject position. Now place your important subject at one of the intersections of lines. You'll need to lock the focus if you have an auto-focus camera because most of them focus on whatever is in the center of the viewfinder. If you don't want a blurred picture, you'll need to first lock the focus with the subject in the middle and then recompose the picture so the subject is away from the middle. Usually you can lock the focus in three steps. First, center the subject and press and hold the shutter button halfway down. Second, reposition your camera (while still holding the shutter button) so the subject is away from the center. And third, finish by pressing the shutter button all the way down to take the picture.

## TIDBITS

To avoid sampling rich ingredients while cooking, bake sweets early in the morning.

To make iron scorches disappear from fabrics, rub an ice cube over them.

To know if your Royal Icing is the perfect consistency, drag a butter knife through it while you count to 10. If the surface smoothes in 5-10 seconds, it's just right. Longer? Too thick. Shorter? Too runny.

Wrap your washed lettuce in a paper towel when storing it in the refrigerator to prevent rust.



Flavored coffee: Before brewing, add to the grounds 1 to 2 teaspoons ground cinnamon.

When whipping egg whites, add a pinch of salt to help hold more air in the whites so they're fluffier. For extra high meringue, add a small amount of baking powder.

For extra crispy French fries, let raw cut potatoes stand in cold water for 30 minutes before frying.

To keep a carton of cottage cheese from spoiling before you use it up, turn the carton upside down when you put it into the refrigerator.

## **What Our CATS Teach Us**

Remember to play.

Stretch often—with the whole body.

Never lose your ability to be excited by something new.

When someone does something nice for you, remember to purr.



## **What Our DOGS Teach Us**

Take plenty of walks and naps.

Drink lots of water.

Don't think too much.

Never bite the hand that feeds you.

Bark when you feel like it.

Don't let people make you dress up.

Chase your tail—who says you can't amuse yourself?

Stop to smell the roses—and the grass, and the trees...

Make friends with everyone in the neighborhood.

Don't go for a run without your ID.

Make the people you love feel welcome when they come home.

Wag your tail a lot (e.g. smile and laugh) - it's good exercise for your body and soul.

Every now and then, stand out in the rain.



