

**Upcoming Geary County Extension Programs**  
\*\*Requires pre-registration. Call 238-4161 to pre-register\*\*

**July**  
20-24 — Geary County Free Fair, exhibits accepted from active 4-H members and community members alike; fun for the entire family; stop by the Extension Office to pick up the 4-H Fair Book or the Open Class Fair book for more details.

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**Ask the Agent**

**Q**—I can't seem to keep my kids off the internet this summer. I am concerned about the sites they might be visiting. What can I do to protect them and safeguard our system?

**A**— I have this same challenge at home with my elementary-aged children! Being aware of and knowledgeable about technology is important for parents. Reduce the risks your children face by setting rules for computer and Internet use... including the amount spent on the computer of time and the types of sites they can go to. How do you decide what you need to do? Fight fire with fire and access information on the web to help. Learn more about the benefits, risks, and suggested boundaries. There are a lot of great websites parents can explore to help them formulate the rules they want to place on technology use in their home. These same sites provide insight on the reasons it is important to have these rules and boundaries.

Here are a few good sites to begin with:  
[www.parentfurther.com](http://www.parentfurther.com)  
[www.getnetwise.org](http://www.getnetwise.org)  
[www.safekids.org](http://www.safekids.org)

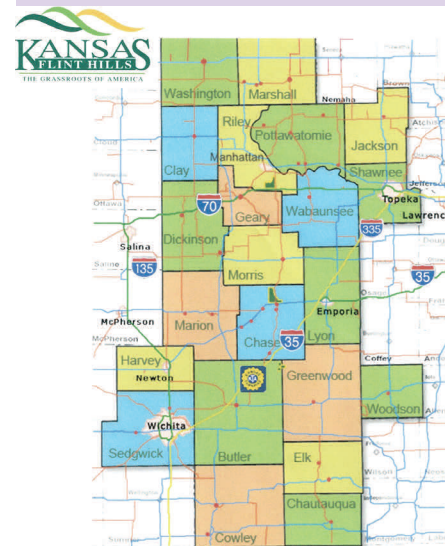
**The Flint Hills Barn Quilt Trail**

I recently had the privilege of tour part of our beautiful Flint Hills to see a wide variety of Barn Quilt blocks that are registered as part of the Flint Hills Barn Quilt Trail. In a 6-hour trip, Geary County EEU members and their friends, along with myself, covered 4 counties and traveled nearly 160 miles. Connie Larson, co-founder of the Flint Hills Barn Quilt Trail initiative joined us – providing the purpose, background, and interesting facts about the places, people, and barn blocks we viewed.



The Flint Hills Barn Quilt Trail was modeled off of a project that originated in Adams County, Ohio. Donna Sue Groves set out to honor her mother by hanging a painted quilt block on her barn. Instead of containing her idea to a single barn, she expanded the heart-felt project to the community. Twenty quilt blocks were displayed along a driving route to promote travel and tourism to the area. This began the barn quilt tour movement that is now spreading across the nation. In partnership with the American Quilt Trail, the Flint Hills Trail promotes the beautiful landscape of this area along and encourages visitors to explore our small communities nestled among the hills. Kansas Flint Hills Quilt Trail is part of the Kansas Flint Hills Tourism Coalition whose mission is to increase the economic base of the region and the state through the promotion and marketing of the Kansas Flint Hills.

Barn Quilt 101 classes are being offered throughout the area to keep the momentum of this effort going. You can go to the Trail's website to get more information <http://ksflinthillsquilttrail.blogspot.com> where you will find dates and times for upcoming classes. You will also find a "How To" tab on the website where you can download the instructions for creating your own barn quilt. Once your barn quilt is completed, you can register it on the website and they will add it to the tour map posted on the website.



You can choose to use an existing quilt block pattern or create your own design. Everyone I have talked to that has participated in a class or completed a block on their own has told me it's "addictive." If you have a passion for the Flint Hills, quilting, folk art, or just having fun—this is a great project for you to consider. You can even enter a completed quilt block in the open class fair! It would be yet another way to share the project with the public and raise interest in the Trail.

## Talking Tech with Teens

Technology is changing the fiber of our families and thus, our culture. In a 2010 Pew Internet and American Life Project survey, 93% of teens age 12 – 17 use the Internet compared with 79% of adults. With the evolution of social networking sites such as Facebook, gaming sites, and instant messaging combined with the 24/7 access through cell phone, the amount of time teens spend online has continued to rise. Additionally, teens are more willing to explore new technologies, access the Internet from a variety of locations, and stay online longer than their parents. These characteristics underline the importance of why parents should monitor their teens' online activities. We address this need by recognizing some of the facts about teen technology use.

What are the benefits and risks that face teens? Teenagers view the Internet as a place to "hang out." According to the Pew survey, the top five Internet activities engage in are: using social media sites, accessing current even news and information, purchasing products, sharing artwork, photos, videos, and stories; and finding information on health, dieting, or physical fitness. There are many risks associated with teens having an online presence including bullying and harassment, inappropriate relationships, victimization (usually stemming from an online relationship), financial risk,

and pornography. The Kaiser Family Foundation found that 79% of 15-17 year olds have accidentally accessed pornography on the Internet.

How can parents of teens work beside their adolescent to ensure their productive and safe use of technology? Learning the technology themselves is the first line of defense. They need to be able to use the "language" of technology to better communicate with their teen. Parents need to set boundaries for their teens. These boundaries should include the amount time teens spend online (regardless of where or how they access it) and the amount and type of information teens are allowed to share about themselves or the family. Parents can also remind their teen to use secure settings and require them to share passwords so they can monitor activity. Locate home computers in common area where they are accessible to everyone. As much controversy as it may cause, parents should not allow teens to have their cell phones nearby when they are sleeping. I have friends that have all the charging stations on the kitchen countertop and everyone in the family is required to "check in" their phone before they go to bed. Keeping our youth safe is every parent's #1 priority. These actions will give you a head start on helping teens stay safe with technology. *Source: <http://www.extension.umn.edu/family/>; "Teens & the Internet"*

## Canning—The Bottom Dollar

I really enjoy canning (when I have time, at least!) One reason I like it is because I feel like it is a great way to use the resources we have on our farm. I also like it because it saves me money on me annual food bill. However, much like farming, unless you "inherit" some of the equipment and grow your own produce, it is hard to make it cash flow. In addition to the produce, other costs related to canning include:

- \*Cost of the canner (pressure and/or water bath);
- \*Cost of canning equipment such as a jar lifter, jar funnel, and colanders;
- \*Cost of purchasing jars, lids (flats), and rings;
- \*Cost of water used in processing and the fuel used to heat the water
- \*Added ingredients such as sugar, vinegar, spices, and pectin.

The most expensive piece of equipment you will need is the pressure canner. Depending on the size and quality the price can range from \$100 - \$150. Keep in mind that this is typically a one-time investment. The next most expensive piece of equipment is the large water-bath canner. These can cost from \$35 – \$60 depending on size and

quality. Jars range in cost from \$8 - \$20 per case.

Home canning is a trade-off. When you can at home, you know exactly what goes in to each jar, you preserve the nutrients without added preservatives and you control product quality. However, you need to maintain the quality of your equipment, have ample storage space, and recognize the time it takes for canning.

As a rule, canning is less expensive than freezing because you have to consider the cost of the freezer and the electricity used throughout the year to keep the food frozen. However, freezing keeps food more like fresh produce and is a relatively simple process. Another home preservation method you may want to consider is drying. Drying food does not require expensive equipment and the need little space or energy for storage. You can dry many foods in your oven, or purchase a commercial dehydrator that may cost between \$30 - \$300 dollars.

The Geary County Extension office has a wide variety of resources you can get that will help you with any of these types of food preservation. Our office provides a free pressure canner checks throughout the year, as well.

# Healthy Habits

## Swapping Out Sugar!

Most of the sugar you consume probably comes from some form of a sweetened beverage. Did you drink a soda, punch, flavored water, sports drink, coffee drink, or other sweetened beverage yesterday? Check the label. Chances are you will find corn syrup, sugar, sucrose, cane sugar, or cane syrup listed as an ingredient. Not only does this supply a constant source of food for the plaque bacteria growing on your teeth (which may lead to cavities), new research shows that our bodies don't quite calculate the calories from beverages the same as those from food. So this may be one of the biggest contributors to excess calories and weight gain.

*Source: <http://www.extension.org/>; "Reduce Added Sugars—soda and Sweetened Beverages"*

Instead of...	Try...
Regular Soda	<b>Substituting!</b> Diet or Sugar Free Soda. If you are getting your soda from a fountain, start by mixing diet and regular together to adjust your tastes. Continue to alter the ratio for a few weeks until it is entirely sugar free. <b>Shrinking!</b> If you just can't make the change to diet, at least reduce the size of your cup.
Flavored Coffees	<b>Swapping!</b> Sugar Free or Unflavored Coffees. Order sugar free syrups instead. <b>Shrinking!</b> Ask for fewer flavored pumps/shots in your drink.
Flavored Waters	<b>Sneaking In!</b> Water. Flavored bottle waters usually contain sugar, fructose, or corn syrup. Instead make your own flavored water by placing a few slices of fruit in a glass with plain water and ice. You will sneak in some vitamins and minerals, while losing the added calories and sugar.
Sports Drinks	<b>Swapping!</b> Milk. Research has shown that milk may be more effective for exercise recuperation than sports drinks.
Punches	<b>Swapping!</b> Juice. Grab a pouch or box labeled "100% juice," not "fruit flavored" or "fruit drink." The kids won't taste the difference.

## Connecting with Kids

This past month, Susie Bilderback our Geary County Extension Program Assistant for the Family Nutrition Program provided nutrition/cooking lessons at the Geary County Health Department to county residents and their children. Kids love to spend time in the kitchen and love to snack during the hot and busy days of summer. Here's a recipe that your whole family can enjoy!

**Apple Smiles**—A Snack that Keeps You Grinning!

### Ingredients:

- ◆ 1 medium red apple, cored & sliced
- ◆ 3 to 4 tablespoons peanut butter
- ◆ 32 miniature marshmallows

### Directions:

1. Wash, core and cut apple in half. Cut each half into 8 slices.
2. Spread peanut butter on one side of each apple slice.
3. Place 3 or 4 mini-marshmallows on top of the peanut butter on one apple slice. Top with another and press together to make one smile.

1. Continue assembling remaining apple slices. *Helpful Hints:* For this snack, choose a crunchy, red apple for the lips and cut each half into 8 slices. To make sure the "teeth" stay in place, use plenty of peanut butter to stick the marshmallows to the apple "lips." Don't focus too much on the end result or the mess. It doesn't matter if the apple has missing or crooked teeth! The important thing is to laugh and have fun.

*Safety Tip:* Young children may need adult supervision when coring and slicing the apple. Or, an adult can do this task while kids spread peanut butter on each apple slice.

Take time this summer to check out the Kids a Cookin' website for more fun recipes you can make with your kids.

