

## COMMUNICATION CONNECTION

### HAPPY NEW YEAR KATHRYN KILPATRICK

As you ring in 2001 you may be filled with anticipation of the New Year and perhaps contemplating some resolutions that would help to make the quality of your life a little better. Here are some things to consider doing during the winter months ahead.

January an excellent time to clean out the old and here are just a few ideas.

- Redo that address book. Especially after the holiday exchanges of cards, you probably have some address changes to make. Treat yourself to a new address book and update those records. If you have a computer, you may want to put your addresses there also.
- How about going through your collection of books or magazines? Are there some that you would like to pass on to someone special? Maybe there are some that could be taken to a local senior facility for others to enjoy during the dreary or snowy days of winter.
- What a great time to clean out the drawers, a closet, the basement or attic! Undoubtedly you will come across a memento from the past. Make sure you share its story with someone.
- If you have some clothes that you have not worn, consider taking them to Goodwill or some other organization. If you have a few items that are in excellent condition, take them to a consignment shop and donate the proceeds to your favorite charity.
- Go through your old photos and organize them in an album. Instead of just putting them on a page, include a few sentences about what is happening and/or who is in the picture. You might want to have another copy of the picture made and send it to one of the people in the picture as a surprise with a little story about remember when.

It feels so good when we organize and clean out some of the old. How about doing something special for just you? Here are a few things you might enjoy.

- Start a journal. Write down things you saw or did that day or something you appreciate. Reflect on something that comes to mind from the past or a piece of wisdom you would like to pass along to your grandchildren. Some people enjoy keeping journals from year to year and looking back every once in awhile.

- Pick up a new game. Learn how to play it and teach someone else.
- On a dreary day or after you have been cooped up in the house for awhile, take a trip to a museum with a friend or spend the afternoon enjoying the books in the library or a bookstore.
- Browse the seed catalogs and decide what you might like to plant (herbs, vegetables or flowers) when springtime rolls around.
- Take a drawing, cooking or woodworking class, or maybe an exercise class would appeal to you. Ask a friend to join you then go out to eat.

How about creating some random acts of kindness. Pick one little thing to do each week for someone else and see how much brighter those winter days will seem!!

- Volunteer to do something to help a school, church or other worthy cause. You do not have to spend a lot of hours. Perhaps you could go with a friend and help with a mailing or filing at an office, deliver meals or stay with a shut-in so that the caregiver can get a chance to do a few errands or take a break.
- If you have a grandchild that lives out of town, send her or him a care package of things to do on a rainy or snowy day. Include a disposable camera to take pictures and send some back for you to enjoy!
- Surprise someone you have not spoken to in a long time and call to share a nice chat!
- If you cook, make some food for someone that may live alone then join him or her for the meal. If you do not cook, pick up a few favorite items instead.
- Rent some favorite old movies and visit a friend who is less able to get out in the colder weather. Watch the movies together and bring some snacks along to enjoy!

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### SPRING

Kathryn Kilpatrick

As springtime approaches, what are some of the things you are looking forward to enjoying? Have you ever been to a maple syrup festival or a pancake breakfast? Are you one of those people who feel motivated to start your spring-cleaning or begin some yard cleanup on one of those warm and sunny days? Which of the first signs of spring seem to delight you the most? Maybe it is the appearance of that first crocus or the first robin. It is wonderful to see the landscape become transformed with the colors of spring whether it is the forsythia, tulips or daffodils. What springtime memories come to mind as you begin to enjoy the warmer and longer days? Perhaps there are some things on the list below that you might find interesting to try on your own or call a friend to join you.

- Celebrate St Patrick's Day by wearing something green. Take it a step further and bring someone a funny card or make a cake using green food coloring in the icing.
- Make corn beef and cabbage on St Patrick's Day and invite some friends to share the meal with you.
- See how many things you can name that are the color green.
- Sort through those winter clothes you hardly wore at all. Maybe it is time to donate some you no longer want or that do not fit.
- Have some fun and pull an innocent little prank on April Fool's Day.
- Check out the spring training schedule. Follow your favorite team or player and wear their team baseball cap. Get a group of friends or family together to watch the opening game. Don't forget the peanuts and maybe even get some hot dogs for the occasion!
- Clean up the yard of a neighbor who is not able to easily get outside and maybe brighten it by planting some tulips.
- Open up the windows on one of those warm sunny days and air out the house. If you feel ambitious, clean out some drawers or relax and just sit outside for awhile, enjoying the warmer temperatures.
- Pick up some flowers for the house and get an extra bunch to take to a friend who could use some cheering up or cannot get out.

- Wash off the outdoor furniture. Maybe you would like to go shopping for a new wind chime and hang it outside to enjoy on those breezy days.
- Look through seed catalogs and pick out some things to order for your garden.
- Find a favorite cookbook and select some recipes you would like try when the fresh fruits and vegetables are in season.
- Go window shopping for some spring clothes or look through a catalog and order something new.
- Put out a bucket and measure the amount of rain you have during one of those rainy weeks in April that brings us those May flowers.
- Take a grandchild to the park on a sunny and warm day so they can play on the swings or feed the ducks.
- When the rainy days are getting to you, treat yourself to an afternoon matinee or a visit to a museum.
- Take some pictures of the signs of spring that you are enjoying, have extra prints made and include one in a card or note you send to a friend that you have not contacted in a long time.

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### SUMMER

#### KATHRYN KILPATRICK

Summer is often a favorite time of the year and some people may spend more time in their backyards, on front porches or patios. The sights, sounds and smells of the season surround you. Take a few minutes to go outside and listen to the birds chirp, the children play and the neighbors mow their lawn. Smell the fragrance from the flowers and food cooking on the grill. What are some of the sights and sounds that remind you of summers gone by?

Summer is also an opportunity to spend more time with the grandchildren. Here are a few ideas of things you might want to do with them when they are visiting. Sharing those precious moments create memories that are special for all involved. If you do not have family in the area, remember that friends and neighbors would appreciate the time you might spend with their children. Activities are everywhere. Take some of these ideas, modify them and add more of your own. Do not forget to share them with others. These are excerpts from an upcoming new product - *Time Well Spent* by Kathy Kilpatrick and Jennifer Brush. Things to do might include:

- Catch fireflies in a jar then let them go.
- Soak your feet together with a child in a child's plastic pool. Sip some lemonade.
- Read them stories or offer to read stories to children at the local library.
- Pick strawberries and make jam or shortcake.
- Gaze at the stars and find the Big and Little Dipper.
- Take a trip to the park or the zoo. Pack a picnic lunch.
- Visit a pond or a lake. Skip stones across the water.
- Go to a country fair.
- On a rainy day rent some movies to watch.
- Find a common interest and take a class together.
- Take a nap under a shade tree.
- Buy Popsicle's or make your own and experiment with different flavors.

- Decorate a baseball cap for them to wear. Get one for yourself.
- Write the addresses on postcards for them to take to camp. Do not forget to put postage on them and wait for their notes to you when they go away!
- Have a squirt gun fight.
- Go window-shopping at the mall on a rainy day.
- Go to a movie.
- Help them shop for back to school supplies later in the summer.
- Listen to music at an outdoor concert.
- Eat lunch out but order dessert first.
- Visit some garage sales together.
- Take them to an antique store and tell some stories about the things that you remember when you were growing up.
- Go to an ethnic festival and try some new foods.
- Shell peas or snap beans and cook some for dinner.
- Write messages in the sand when you are at the beach.
- Put a flag out for the 4<sup>th</sup> of July and line your sidewalk with smaller flags.
- Watch the fireworks and see if you can guess the colors in the next set of fireworks.
- Decorate a hand fan for those hot summer days.

Often it is the little things that make the biggest difference! Buy one of the disposable cameras and take snapshots having some fun together. Have duplicate pictures made and put them in an album for each of you to enjoy.

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### FALL

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When summer ends and fall begins, the children are back in school and it is a busy time for sports lovers. In many parts of the country the weather begins to change. In some areas the changes are subtle, but in Ohio the brilliant display of colors – red, orange and yellow – are quite the attraction by the middle of October. There are so many fall activities that are fun to do. Here are some things you might consider.

- Visit an apple orchard in the area.. Pick some apples. Try a new type of apple you have never tasted. Sample the cider and bring some home. Try a new or favorite recipe with the apples such as a pie, cobbler, cake, pancakes, sauce or some candied apples. What is your favorite apple dish?
- Pick out 2 pumpkins and bring them home to either carve or draw a face on with permanent markers. Take one to a friend and bring along some of the cider and share the apple dessert. Recall a costume you have worn on Halloween.
- Invite some friends over to watch the baseball playoffs and the World Series. Which team would you want to win and how many games do you think it will take?
- Attend a football game at one of the local high schools, maybe the homecoming game. Recall the sports you were involved in or enjoyed watching when you were in school.
- Plant some bulbs for spring – daffodils, tulips or crocus. What are some of the favorite things you look forward to seeing after the last snowfall?
- Buy a mask that you can wear when you are answering your door for the kids when they go trick - or - treating. Name some of the favorite treats you have received or share a story about a prank that you have played on Halloween!
- Go to a craft show and see if you can get an early start on your holiday shopping. What hobby you have enjoyed through the years?
- Go for a ride in the country and admire the fall foliage. Take along a camera, snap some pictures and frame one of your favorites. Where have you seen some of the best foliage? Take a friend along and pack a picnic lunch.

- Collect nuts and shell them. Use the nuts to add to a favorite cookie recipe. Take some cookies to someone who is not able to get out of the house very often.
- Decorate some trick-or-treat bags for the children to use on Halloween. Fill them with special treats that are not candy.
- Go through your closet and donate some of the summer clothes you are no longer wearing to a worthy cause. Tell a story about a time that you remember wearing one of those items.
- Get out the mittens, sweaters, boots and snow shovels for the months ahead. What is the date of the earliest snowfall you can recall?

See how many of these fall words you can unscramble:

Hint: They all appeared in this article.

- NPIKPMU
- ALSVEE
- CLOSOH
- DCIER
- WETESAR
- OSUTCEM

**Answers:** PUMPKIN  
LEAVES  
SCHOOL  
CIDER  
SWEATER  
COSTUME

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### THANKSGIVING KATHRYN KILPATRICK

In the spirit of the Thanksgiving season, our thoughts turn to sharing time with friends and family and reflecting on the many things for which we are grateful. The events of September 11 have led to an outpouring of patriotism including displays of flags and signs everywhere saying "God Bless America."

Take a few moments and reflect on some of the ways you have seen some positive displays of the American spirit in these last few months and share them with each other. Here were a few of my thoughts.

**G**enerosity and then more generosity

**O**utpouring of compassion

**D**isplays of community support

**B**ravery

**L**ocal fundraisers

**E**nduring values

**S**ongs that make you proud to be an American

**S**tories of heroism

**A**merican flags

**M**any people gathering to pray

**E**xamples of cooperation

**R**ed Cross Blood drives

**I**nternational support

**C**hurch services

A spirit of togetherness

As we gather this holiday season, take a few minutes to reflect on some of the things for which you are grateful. Here are a few of the things on my list.

Times when I can just relax

Health and happiness

A beautiful sunrise or sunset

New work opportunities

Kindness of people

Family gatherings

Understanding friends

Love and liberty

May your Thanksgiving be filled with special memories of times spent with loved ones. If you know someone who does not have family in the area, extend a hand of friendship and community and invite them to share in your plans for that day.

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