

FEATURES 6 History at its Best! 5 Ways to Spruce up History Amy Puetz 8 Help Your Children Connect the Information Skeleton Sue August 10 Fighting the Good Fight Mark Moore 13 The ABCs of Looking Back (Your Year-End Evaluation) Susan Chrisman 14 What's Driving Your Homeschool? Stephaney Mitchell 16 Three Things You Need to Know About Work Ionathan Brush 18 School District Excludes Qualified Evaluator Dee Black 20 Graduation 22 A Day at the Park Kevin Shank CONTENTS

EVERY ISSUE

19 Convention Corner
Nada Rothgaber

4 Side by Side with Carl & Belinda LeFever

12 The Prayer Closet: Why Do You Homeschool? Deanna Rabe

Cover Image: Excitement for the Patch the Pirate Children's Program at the 2015 CHAP Convention was apparent by the pirate costumes donned by some. Image courtesy of Photos By Deb.

The CHAP Magazine

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On Board with CHAP

"...you may forget that you are at every moment totally dependent on God."—C. S. Lewis, Mere Christianity

On the other side of the 2015 CHAP Convention, the Convention Committee, the CHAP Board and CHAP staff always take time to reflect on all that God has accomplished through the efforts of volunteers that faithfully serve CHAP each year. Many invite folks to come alongside them to the Convention—to come out and be a part of the excitement. Oftentimes questions like, "Will the Convention be overwhelming?" are asked, although the answer really depends upon your perspective.

The sheer number of individuals and families that gather under one roof to explore home education options and home-based discipleship is inspiring. The numerous topics covered by competent, subject-expert speakers address many areas crucial to home educating families. Demonstrations and a plethora of well-stocked vendors give opportunity to put your hands on curriculum and helps that might have otherwise been ordered without preview.

Interestingly, we do not initially consider the spiritual impact of the Convention as we get lost in all of the preparation and details, such as checking off our lists and filling our boxes, but did you realize that your support of the CHAP Convention is impacting lives for eternity and affecting our world?

It is amazing how God uses the humble homeschooling mom, dad, or simply the topic of homeschooling to reach others for Christ. Though we feel unworthy, nevertheless we are available. Phil and Stephaney Mitchell manage the CHAP Booth during the Convention. Stephaney has shared

multiple stories of people approaching the booth to discuss homeschooling and the conversation shifts to the fact that they are seeking truth. Individuals privately share that they need guidance on larger foundational issues. The unifying love of Christ and God's manifold grace lead the volunteers as they pray for these people who are seeking godly counsel. Opportunities to share the Gospel and the love of Jesus abound for volunteers.

You never know who is touched and what impact you may be having by being a part of the CHAP Convention. Our chairman Bruce Eagleson noted that Farm Show security personnel told him they have newfound "hope for America" as they observe the families and Convention attendees each year. A vendor mentioned that a college professor visited the Convention just trying to figure out why home educated students do so well. We hope he learned much more throughout his experience. We have had attendees from various world religions in our presence. There are countless other stories.

Did you realize that CHAP hosts a prayer booth at the Convention? The Convention Committee and CHAP Board have recently been forwarded the prayer requests of those who have asked for prayer during the Convention. There are many physical, medical, and spiritual concerns. This ministry of prayer is a continuing reminder of the importance of the CHAP community interceding for one another. We will continue to pray and seek God's perfect will throughout the year on behalf of these homeschooling families.

We all have a part of encouraging one another, and our witness and presence

at the CHAP Convention can plant seeds and change lives. God can use anyone, at any given moment. At a public venue like the CHAP Convention, we are a witness to all God can do. Our prayer is that the love of Jesus would be evident to all that we minister to as representatives of CHAP. We are grateful for the Christian Homeschool Association of Pennsylvania, an organization with a mission to bring glory to God.

The road of homeschooling is the narrow path, and in a manner of speaking we are all fellow sojourners, imperfect at best, that rely on the unbounded grace of God while we support each other, educate our children, disciple our families, and impact the world at large simply by being available and doing what God has called us to do.

2 Corinthians 4:16-18 states, "Therefore we do not lose heart. Though outwardly we are wasting away, yet inwardly we are being renewed day by day. For our light and momentary troubles are achieving for us an eternal glory that far outweighs them all. So we fix our eyes not on what is seen, but on what is unseen, since what is seen is temporary, but what is unseen is eternal."

Thank you to Stephaney Mitchell for the inspiration for this article.

Patrick and Maria Pietrak have been married for twenty-five years. Their four children range from twenty-something to mid teens. As a family, they experienced educational options of private, public, and cyber charter schools for a season prior to discovering privately funded, home based discipleship in 2003. This model transformed their family life. Patrick and Maria currently serve on the CHAP Board.

Side Dy Side in Pennsylvania

Parents: Carl & Belinda LeFever Children: Lewis (class of 1999), Rebecca (class of 2006), Elizabeth (class of 2010), Emily (class of 2011), Caleb (class of 2015), Jared (10th grade) Hometown: Lancaster, PA

Tell us a little bit about your family dynamics.

Our family dynamics have changed over the years as our family has grown. The early homeschooling years were filled with juggling babies and toddlers while trying to explain a math lesson to a confused nine year old. At present my biggest hurdle is keeping my two high school aged

boys from spontaneously wrestling in the kitchen while doing their history and economics. Can someone explain to me how this happens?

How long have you been homeschooling?

We are in our 22nd year of homeschooling.

What was one of the main reasons you chose to homeschool?

We started homeschooling because our oldest son was struggling in sixth grade. He was having trouble reading and was

at a second grade level. Despite having him on medication to treat ADD and having a special teacher support panel to discuss his learning needs, he just didn't seem to improve.

We were naturally concerned and requested prayer from our Wednesday night class at church. Our pastor's family was the only family we knew at the time that homeschooled. He took us aside and suggested that we consider homeschooling and told us to pray

> It wasn't until we had a meeting with the public school psychologist to discuss a series of test results that the Lord confirmed in our hearts what direction we were to take. The school psychologist explained that our son would probably excel even without medication in a one-to-one teaching environment, but that of course was not possible in the public school setting. It was as if a light bulb came on. I said,

> > (Left to right) Elizabeth, Carl, Grandmom, Will Hanlon, Rebecca Hanlon, Belinda, Poppy, Nanny, Michael Keeney, Emily Keeney, Caleb, Jared, Cannon (grandson), Lewis & wife Angie.

"I know how he can have a one-to-one learning experience. I can homeschool him." She quickly explained how that wouldn't be a good idea and how that wasn't what she was suggesting, but it was too late.

In what activities does your family participate?

We have been part of a support group/co-op for most of our homeschooling years. We like a supplemental co-op approach compared to a rigorous academic co-op. We also enjoy going on field trips. Every family vacation destination includes something educa-

What have been your most helpful resources?

HSLDA (Home School Legal Defense Association) has been a great help when it comes to dealing with questions and problems that arise. They have written letters on our behalf and have given advice in a quick and professional manner every time we've needed them.

CHAP (Christian Homeschool Association of Pennsylvania) was a wonderful help in our first years of homeschooling. I remember the first time we attended a CHAP Convention. My husband and I were blown away with all the options and resources available. The special speakers were very encouraging and beneficial to us as we continued to homeschool through high school.

CHALC (Coalition of Homeschoolers Across Lancaster County) was a welcome addition to the local information available in Lancaster County. I started to work for CHALC in December 2002 as the editor of their newsletter The Scrawls. One of the things CHALC does with excellence is their annual homeschool graduation ceremony. All

of my older children have participated in the graduation ceremony. It is a wonderful way to celebrate the completion of high school.

What educational philosophy/curriculum do you follow?

There are so many more options to choose from now than what we had when we first started to homeschool. Online classes and computer programs make learning higher level subjects so much easier. Our family likes to follow an interest led style of education. We pray about each child and allow God to lead us in finding our children's individual interests and talents. We then allow them to explore those interests for their education.

Our oldest daughter, who is a newspaper reporter, was paid for two articles she wrote that were published in magazines while she was still in high school. Our second daughter developed an interest in anatomy and physiology in her senior year and went on to nursing college. Our youngest daughter, the gardener, was accepted into Longwood Garden's high school internship program during the summer between 11th and 12th grade and then a few months later was hired as a seasonal employee. She was our only child to ask for a Latin program for her homeschool studies, as the botanical names of plants are in Latin.

This style of learning also means that if you have a son who likes to build things you adjust to having a 17-foot trebuchet in your backyard and strange looks from your neighbors.

What has been one of the highlights for you in homeschooling your children?

I was afraid when we first started homeschooling - afraid of failure and of doing more harm than good. As a mom. I had to learn to trust God. This homeschool journey has been one of trust. I was a high school drop-out and didn't earn my GED until after I was married. This was not only a learning journey for the children but also for me. I had to trust that God could do great things despite my lack of education. Trust for God to provide the money needed for books and supplies. Trust that God will direct us in each child's life. I've personally grown in my walk with the Lord which is definitely a highlight.

What was one of the funniest things to happen during a homeschool day?

I found all the kids in the back room doing an old Richard Simmons Sweatin' to the Oldies workout video for physical education. I have a photo of that. I plan on showing it to all my grandchildren someday.

What advice would you give to someone who has just begun homeschooling?

Surround yourself with homeschooling friends: families that are in this for the long haul and moms that aren't going to give up easily. Find a support group where the moms have a time to interact with each other, even if it's just to laugh. I love making the moms in my co-op laugh. Knowing that others have done this homeschooling thing (successfully!) will be a great encouragement, as well as knowing that others share the same struggles (like learning difficulties) and are praying for each other. Don't give up; everyone has the occasional mental meltdown when you can't find a library book or the public school can't find your evaluations! The things that matter the most in life are often the hardest. Stick with it, you can do this.

Compiled by Jillian Spittle



When many people hear the word history, they often groan with dismay.

After all who cares about all those boring dates and seemingly unimportant facts? Why do teachers torture children by making them memorize all those details? The truth is that history—real history—is exciting! What exactly is history anyway? According to the new Webster dictionary it is, "The branch of knowledge that deals systematically with the recording, analyzing, and explaining of past events." But the original 1828 Noah Webster Dictionary says, "History and story are the same word differently written."

Did you notice that? Our modern idea of history is systematic recording, and the old definition is a story. Well if history was presented in story form it would certainly be more interesting. Perhaps that is why historical fiction is so popular. If we had a choice between a 400 page dry history book and an exciting 250 page story, most of us would choose to read the shorter, more interesting book. The down side of historical fiction is that often fact and fiction are so intertwined, it is hard to tell what is true and what is not.

Nearly everyone would agree the story of Washington and his ragged army crossing the ice choked Delaware River is exciting. On a cold, stormy Christmas night Washington made a daring attack on the town of Trenton. He and his men made a dangerous trip across the partly frozen Delaware River before they began marching toward Trenton. When they arrived at Trenton, only one group—led by Washington himself—had made it across the river, and they were hours late because of the storm. Miraculously the storm had covered their noise. Nothing daunted Washington, he ordered the men to surprise the Hessian soldiers stationed at Trenton. In less than forty-five minutes, the Continental Army had conquered the enemy. Washington's victory at Trenton was a turning point of the American Revolution. After that victory the United States began winning more battles, and they eventually defeated the British.

Yes, that story is exciting! But when we simply have children memorize that "on December 26, 1776, Washington defeated the Hessians at Trenton," we strip all the drama and excitement out of the event. Yes, the date is significant, but understanding the actions of brave humans and seeing God's providential protection are what makes it important.

Here are 5 practical ways to liven up history for your children:

- 1. Look for the story behind the event. How did the weather affect the events? Did something miraculous occur?
- 2. Find out about the people who made the event happen. They were humans just like us. What made them tick? Why did they do what they did? Were there personality conflicts?
- 3. Get a visual whenever possible. Pictures, art, and movies help bring the event alive.
- 4. Prepare foods that would have been eaten during that era. Public libraries usually have historical cookbooks.
- 5. Do something hands on. Make a diorama, draw a picture, reenact battle scenes with little plastic soldiers, dress up in a historical costume, or sing a song.

History is exciting! Learning about it should be enjoyable too!

Do you want exciting history with accurate facts presented in an interesting way? Heroes and Heroines of the Past: American History by homeschool graduate Amy Puetz incorporates all five senses to bring history to life for elementary age children. Puetz is a self-taught historian and servant of Jesus Christ. www.AmyPuetz.com

Help Your Children Connect the Information Skeleton

I've read a lot of homeschool magazines and books over the last several years. A lot of the things I've read have long been forgotten. There is one idea however that has stuck with me. I would even venture to say that it has become somewhat central in a lot of my homeschooling decisions. I don't remember where I read it, but it was in an article by Mary Pride. She said that her blueprint for homeschooling was to create a sort of information "skeleton" and then keep adding on to it until it was a living thing instead of just bare bones. In other words, link new material to things your kids already know.

This made sense to me. Think about how hard it is to memorize a series of seemingly random numbers or letters. Not only is it difficult, but it's also hard to motivate yourself to persevere since the exercise seems pointless. Now what if someone showed me a pattern in the

series of numbers

or taught me

phonics rules so that the series of letters was now a word. All of a sudden the excessive memory work and futility of the task disappear.

As homeschooling families we have the perfect circumstances for this sort of connecting framework. Since we are with our children almost all the time, we can be aware of what they're learning, observing, and experiencing, thus making it so much easier to form these connections.

I don't have a formal plan for implementing this kind of framework. I'm hoping it will become sort of second nature as I see it happen successfully time and time again. Here are

some of the simple connections we have made without much strategic planning.

When my young son started asking repeatedly, "How long until..." and "How much longer..." instead of just answering

his question, I showed him how to count by fives on the clock. Because I caught him at a time when his need to know was strong, he practically taught himself to tell time.

> After a trip to Wheaton Village (a glass museum, glassmaking demonstrations, and home of Ken Leap's stained glass exhibits), I chose a fiction book from the library about a glassmaker, The Glass Phoenix (some objectionable language). Reading about one chapter a day, it took us about two weeks to finish, but it was definitely worth it. Jack also chose a "stained glass" kit from AC Moore when he received his \$5 birthday coupon that same month. Here's how that "information skeleton" was fleshed out. The bare bones aspect was the information presented at Wheaton Village. Seeing Ken Leap both at Wheaton Village and at church every Sunday made the whole world of glassmaking relevant and not so far removed.

> > In reading our novel about glassmaking in New England, many new pieces of information were added to the skeleton.

Our story dealt with the tension between those who cling to the traditional ways and those who will do just about anything in the name of progress. My son also got an introduction to the many implications of the Industrial Revolution and how an artist might feel when a machine replaces him. He even got a glimpse of the potential for conflict between management and labor and how delicate the give and take can be. In working on his own stained glass project, Jack could appreciate how patient an artist must be if he wants to create a masterpiece. Because all these topics were linked to the glassmaking information from Wheaton Village, this body of information is now much more than bare bones.

You might be thinking that you would never have time to put something like this together. The amazing thing is that this all fell together accidentally. My husband is the one who suggested and those characters

have really come alive for

her. Just a couple of days before our field trip, her mother had the wherewithal to read the chapter from the Little House Series that was all about ice harvesting. This made the whole field trip relevant to her since it was all about people she knew.

One other simple connection we use regularly is in the discipline of practicing penmanship. As often as possible, we stray from the workbook page to write thank you notes instead. This helps our son Jack see how neat penmanship can be useful and of course, we can never have too many lessons about gratefulness and how to express it.

I'm not advocating throwing out the textbooks, and the idea of child centered learning or always catering to a child's interests

What I think I'm looking for is a more subtle form of connecting information.

going to Wheaton Village. There was no plan other than to have something to do on his day off. He happened to mention our plans to Ken (the stained glass artist from our church) who then made an effort to take extra time with us when we were there. Receiving the coupon from AC Moore was a mere coincidence. The only planning I did was the five minutes browsing through the card catalog at the library to find a good book. We didn't even spend extra time reading this book. We just always have a couple of chapter books in progress, so it made sense to choose one with a connection.

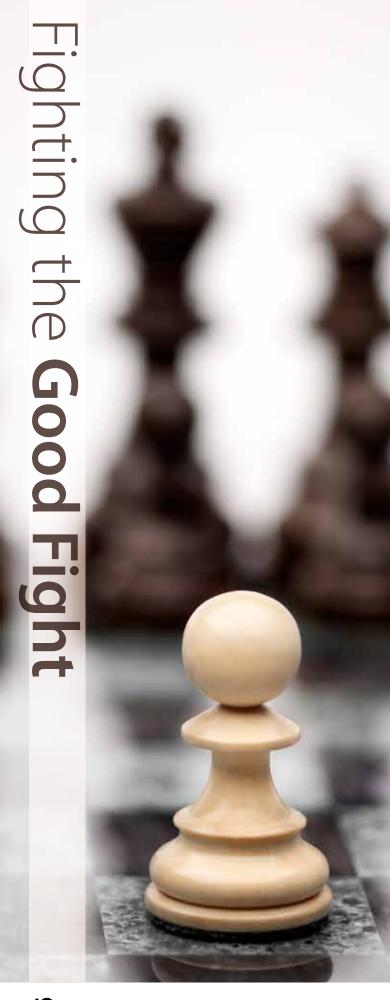
For those of us who have visited Howell Farm (a living history farm in Mercer County, New Jersey) to learn about ice harvesting, we couldn't help but be impressed with the following scenario. We were gathered outside the icehouse listening to a woman explain the process of getting huge chunks of ice from the pond into the icehouse. She asked, "Why do you think there is all this sawdust on the ice chunk?" Before I could even begin to think about why this might be, a little four year old girl immediately piped up, "To keep the ice chunks from sticking together!"

How could she know this? It was new information for the rest of us. However this little girl often lives in the world of the Ingalls family from the Little House Series. She loves those books makes me shudder. What I think I'm looking for is a more subtle form of connecting information. Instead of throwing out the textbooks, try skipping around a little bit. If you're planning a vacation, find the chapter that deals with the history of that particular place. Find some "living books" that will immerse you in the subject. (According to Charlotte Mason, a living book is a book written by someone who has a passion for that particular topic.)

Slow down in your studies to locate things on a map or find more information in the encyclopedia. Board games and computer games are great connectors and can reinforce basic skills a lot less painfully than drilling with flash cards. Make the connections in whatever way works for your child and flesh out the information skeleton.

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Mark & Sue August of Medford, NJ, are now retired homeschooling parents. They have, however, stayed active in their local church's homeschool group. Sue heads up a small group of retired homeschool moms who serve in a Titus 2 capacity coming alongside younger moms. Mark continues to teach high school math and science courses in the Sovereign Grace Church Homeschool Co-op.



The other day I had to brake at an intersection that didn't use to have a stop sign. It went from a 2-way to a 4-way stop. I thought it was dumb and an inconvenience. Most likely an accident had happened there. Maybe somebody was injured so the township made it a 4-way stop to prevent anyone else from being hurt. I pondered that this type of thinking seems to take away the responsibility from the one who caused the accident and spreads around the responsibility to everyone else. Now the rest of us have to carry the burden and the loss of freedom for his irresponsibility. I certainly don't want anybody to get hurt. And, if I need to be inconvenienced, I can live with it. What I'm talking about goes much deeper. It almost seems socialistic at heart.

Is the "good" of the many over the individual really what matters? What about personal responsibility? Public safety is the new battleground. Government seems bent on protecting us from ourselves. Many have already given into the "nanny" state and have allowed government to replace the role of God in their lives. Maybe this is not a new concept as Benjamin Franklin once said, "People willing to trade their freedom for temporary security deserve neither and will lose both." The truth is freedom always involves risk. God takes a risk with us. He allows us to make choices. Yet with that freedom comes responsibility. We must accept the consequences those choices may bring.

Sadly this fight has moved way beyond stop signs. Lately CHAP has been opposing several bills that promote the "good" of society at the expense of parental rights. Two have dealt with lowering the compulsory age of school children from 8 to 6 years old and mandatory provision of pre-kindergarten for 3 to 5 year olds by the school districts. Lawmakers still think the earlier kids start school the better, even though the evidence does not support this. Imagine! Government officials believe taking young children away from their loving, nurturing parents and putting them in an educational institution is actually better for them.

The other two bills were aimed at forced vaccinations. They wanted to take away philosophical or moral exemptions, while making it harder to opt out for religious reasons. The premise is that too many parents are not vaccinating their children, so it puts all children at risk, even though the National CDC website shows that a high percentage of kids are adequately vaccinated. This is what's called "herd immunity." Some lawmakers even proclaimed that if some children suffered vaccine injury, it was for the good of the whole. The reality is that vaccines can be harmful. So where there is risk, there needs to be choice.

We are very thankful to those who made calls, visited their legislators, and came out during the CHAP HELP (Home Education Lobby Program) Day in April at the State Capitol. As a result of your participation we were able to stop these four bills. One Senate resolution got through concerning a study on vaccine percentages in Pennsylvania, so we expect this issue to surface again next year.

Like a hamster running on a wheel, bad legislation keeps coming around and around. While we were busy passing HB1013 - the new homeschool bill that grants us more freedom by removing the double evaluation by the school superintendent -another bill quietly passed the Senate unanimously and passed the House with a 175 to 18 majority. Although not intended to affect homeschoolers, this bill has now become Act 153, requiring background checks for anybody involved in teaching or caring for children. This new law may become a greater problem for homeschoolers than previously thought. Legislators are telling us that they were assured by legal counsel that this would not affect homeschool co-ops and loosely affiliated organizations, yet the language in the bill mandates everyone who instructs children to have a "criminal record check" from the State Police, as well as a "child abuse report" from the PA Department of Public Welfare.

This mess is all an unintended consequence of rushing through legislation without considering the ripple effect, and they all voted for it - everyone in the Senate and in the House of Representatives. If you are not familiar with this bill, you will be soon. If you are a Sunday School teacher, a nursery worker, part of a homeschool coop or support group, volunteer with AWANA clubs, VBS, or Little League you will need to submit to a background check. If you are a teenager who wants to do summer missionary

work with kids and receives any financial support or if you have not resided in Pennsylvania for ten years, you will both have to go a step further and get an FBI fingerprint background check. Where does it end? Will grandma need a background check to babysit her own grandchildren?

These types of bills will keep coming, and sometimes it is overwhelming. Thomas Jefferson was right when he said, "The price of freedom is eternal vigilance." We can not afford to be complacent or fall prey to exchanging our freedom for a false sense of security. CHAP is currently looking into the best way to fight, challenge, or change Act 153. As we talk with lawmakers, their proposed solution is to provide "free" background checks for everyone. That's just not acceptable! And, it will only increase our taxes.

One thing is for certain, as we work on this problem we will need your help. The motivation for this law sounds good - after all isn't protecting children a good thing? As my wife and I were discussing what we should do, our nine year old daughter who was listening said, "Excuse me, Daddy, it sounds like you really don't care about children!" Wow! This was interesting be-

Find more facts and statistics about the above mentioned bills and other legislative matters at chaplegislative action. blogspot.com

There are efforts to amend Act 153 which makes individual compliance perspectives vary. There will be changes from the original law, which are yet to be determined. At a bare minimum, we seek an exemption for situations when parents remain on-site with their children. Please call your legislators about this.

If you are interested in helping CHAP with legislation, send an email chaphelpdayregister@gmail.com and include your name, email and street address.

cause this was the same accusation that legislators had toward any of their colleagues who might vote against this bill.

I said to my daughter, "You know, Honey, if you can do what you want to do everyday, you'll probably eat lots of candy, play

> outside all the time, and never do school." She hung her head and said, "Yeah, that's right." You see it's not about what grandma, your neighbor, or the government thinks is best for our children. It is the parents' God given responsibility!

For the record, I am not against background checks. My wife and I have been through the whole ordeal when we adopted our child. Passing this law probably makes legislators feel good about themselves, especially in light of the Sandusky scandal. The truth

is that even with a background check completed there may be privacy laws which restrict the sharing of that information. Plus, if lawmakers had been more discerning, they would have realized that they completely overlooked the fact that those who had committed these acts were public educators who already had background checks.

Freedom always involves risk, and the state cannot guarantee safety. We need not be fearful, but we must stand up and do what God calls us to do. The key is allowing parents to retain the right to do what is best for their own children. God gave each child parents, and those parents are given responsibility before Him. If they shirk that responsibility they will face the consequences before God and before the law of man. We should strengthen the laws against those who hurt others' children, not make everyone suspect. Remember, your rights come from God. Don't allow the state to take them away with the stroke of a pen.

Mark Moore and his wife Corie served together on the CHAP Advisory Board during the last legislative session to pass HB1013. They stepped down to free up more time for their family while still coordinating CHAP's legislative efforts. They pray for the Lord to call others to help them to protect the God-given right of parents to homeschool. Mark and Corie still homeschool their 9 and 16 year old children.



With the school year behind us and summer here, I am enjoying my break from the routine of school at our home. Homeschooling has been a major part of my life for 20 years, and really it has become a lifestyle for our family. With three children graduated and three more to go, I will be at this for about eight more years.

I think summer is a good time to refresh ourselves and to evaluate how our school year went. What were the highlights, what were some problem areas? What changes might we need to make? We might even ask ourselves, "Why do we homeschool?"

As we go from year to year, I find myself more certain about why we homeschool and more confident that the way we approach homeschooling works for our family. For us it can be summed up in one word: Discipleship.

I am convinced more than ever in the value of time spent with my kids every day. We can never get time back, but the time you invest in your kids is of lasting value.

Of course you could choose to focus purely on academics, worried that you might leave a "hole" in your child's education. You could choose to place great value on sports activities, volunteering, co-ops, choirs and music lessons. None of these things are wrong in and of themselves. Too often though, they become the main focus, and as I see parents rushing all around, not wanting their children to miss out on anything, I think they have missed the best thing about homeschooling.

Walking alongside my kids daily, in good attitudes and bad, allows us to have time to learn to appreciate each other. It allows us to learn to extend grace to one another, to enjoy and serve each other. We have to work through challenges with one another and forgive one another. My husband and I have the privilege to share with them the Word of God and to share our own struggles and point them to Jesus.

Discipleship will likely look different from home to home, which is a good thing as each family is unique, but friends, I pray you'll see the importance of reaching your children's hearts. If your home is filled with strife and disobedience, pray and ask God to show you what you can do to change this. Learning can't take place in a home filled with rebellion.

God gave each one of us the very children He wanted us to have, for us to educate and raise for His glory. What a shame it would be if my children could recite Shakespeare but not Scripture! I encourage you to seek the Lord and ask Him to show you how to approach discipleship in your family.

When our children are grown we will never regret the relationships we built with them through homeschooling. In fact, I believe that though our children will no longer live in our homes, we will have joy in seeing them thrive as adults with their own families. We will have the privilege of seeing the things we invested in them being lived out as they now invest those things in others!

I can't think of anything we could do that would be of more importance than that, can you?

Deanna and Tim Rabe have been home educators for 20 years. They were involved in co-op leadership for many years, served on their county homeschool board, and have been long time CHAP Convention volunteers. A delight to Deanna's heart is in mentoring and encouraging home educating moms. She has six children, three who are homeschool graduates, and three who are still being homeschooled.



As you've checked off the last "school" days of this year are you looking forward to planning for next year? This expanded year-end evaluation will assist you in assessing what your children accomplished during the past year, what steps they should take next in their education, and how you will guide them toward those goals in the coming year.

Acknowledge the Achievements (What did they learn?)

- What did we learn about God, His attributes, and His Word? What Scripture did we study? What Scripture did we memorize?
- 2. What life skills did each child develop? What habits leading to character formation or skills enable responsible living?
- 3. What were the unplanned learning experiences we encountered this year? What lessons were learned through these experiences?
- 4. What did I learn about each child individually? When was I delighted or challenged with each one?
- 5. List the academic progress of each child. Compare what the child could

do at the beginning of the year with what he did at the end of the year.

Boost with Belief

(What successes can be celebrated?)

- 1. What was a crowning moment for each child?
- 2. What specific progress did each child make in emotional, physical, and spiritual development in addition to the successes listed in #5?
- 3. What was really good about this year? What worked? (e.g. we settled into a routine, the two-year-old took long naps, everyone enjoyed history together)
- 4. How can we celebrate their success? Do NOT compare them with each other, but rather celebrate each one's progress and growth.

Chart the Course

(What changes should be made?)

- Was our schedule too busy? What should be done to give each family member time to be?
- 2. What curriculum changes need to be considered? What did not work? In what areas did I see weaknesses academically?

- 3. What was our greatest challenge this year? Will this challenge carry into next year? If it will, how should I prepare?
- 4. What have I learned about myself? What do I need to change as parent/teacher in my approach next year? Attitude? Expectations? Workload? Style? Behavior? Heart? Priorities? Time Management? Do I give myself time to be their mom?
- 5. Was there anything I really hoped to do this year that did not happen? Why not? Should it become a priority for next year?
- 6. What other changes should we consider?

Susan Chrisman—wife, mother, grandmama, twenty-five year homeschool veteran, researcher, speaker, and ardent pursuer of God. Susan guides women to a deeper relationship with God, building trust, hoosting faith, and inspiring hope. She challenges parents to become lifelong learners and shows them how to instill in their children a love of learning. She teaches how to prepare children for learning, foster their curiosity, and inspire them through relationship. Learn more about academic preparation, homeschooling, and Bible studies for women at www.susanchrisman.com.

What's Driving Your Homeschool?

Driving practice, work experience, and college decisions are where my husband and I are today with our young adults, but it seems like just yesterday when we were at the very beginning of our homeschool**ing journey.** Early on we wondered at times, "What are we doing?" "Where are we going?" And, "Can we get through doing this homeschooling thing right?" Enter the Lord's providence and a dear lady named Sandy who graciously invited me over for lunch and patiently listened to all my concerns and questions.

I don't remember much that she shared that day. What I do remember though is feeling encouraged, empowered, and enlightened as she matter-of-factly stated, "Steph, what you need is an overarching, guiding vision for your home-education program. Go home, talk about it with your husband, pray, and write it down."

Learning from her wisdom and obtaining guidance from God's Word, we came up with The Four C's: Christ-like Character, Clear and Effective Communication Skills, Critical Thinking Ability, and Cost Counting Consideration. Having this vision statement has helped guide our thoughts and actions as we have navigated through all the overwhelming information and educational philosophies out there. It has also helped us narrow our curriculum choices.

Christ-like Character

Theoretically

Our first priority was to share Jesus Christ with our children in every way

possible, and pray that they would come to know their Creator as their Savior and Lord at an early age. Not only are we commanded to instruct our children in the things of the Lord (Deut. 6:4-7, Ps. 78, and the principles of I Peter 5:2-3), but we also desire to see our children free to serve the King of Kings in their unique calling, unencumbered from the world and the bondage of sin (Romans 6, Galatians 5:1).

From the whole counsel of Scripture we know that all Creation will bring God glory even if a person does not believe Him, but that God does desire each of us to know Him and love Him (John 17:1-3, II Peter 3:9b). Since our actions speak louder than words, we want our children to exhibit Christ-like character throughout their lives – even when they're away from us – in order to point others to Christ (Matt. 5:14-16, Phil. 2:12-16).

Practically

While we certainly did not do this perfectly, we made a commitment to regularly attend a solid Bible-believing, preaching church and to teach our children Scripture at home. Additionally the Lord provided us with curriculum that centered on godly character. Phil's cousins, fellow homeschoolers, introduced us to the book *Teach Them Diligently* by Lou Priolo. Ultimately this goal was only attempted by depending on God's grace, and it will only be accomplished by God's grace.

Clear and Effective Communication

Theoretically

Pilate asked, "What is truth?" Nothing has changed over the past couple thousand years. Humanity is still asking that question, especially now in our Western world where relativism is rampant. Once our children know the One who is "The Truth" we want them to be able to effectively communicate that truth, speaking the truth in love face to face and in writing. We're told in 1 Peter 3:15 (KJV), "But sanctify the Lord God in your hearts: and be ready always to give an answer to every man that asketh you a reason of the hope that is in you, with meekness and fear."

Practically

We chose curriculum in which the style and mechanics of writing was a main emphasis. Reading, reading, reading is also a key. Looking back I wish we would have provided more public speaking opportunities than what our diploma program required, but we did find a youth group where individual thoughts were not only welcomed, but strongly encouraged. Our children were also blessed to have been a part of our church's mission teams that went out into major U.S. cities to share the Gospel.

Critical Thinking

Theoretically

Once our children know the truth and can speak the truth, we want them to be able to discern truth from error. Our pluralistic society provides many competing "truths"; however, Satan's deception is not only growing in the world, but it's also growing in the Church. To the untrained mind, humanistic or pagan philosophy, which has been multiplying in the Church and coming in various forms, can appear to be quasi-Christian.

We want our children to spot truth from cleverly devised schemes whether they take the form of false teaching, flattery, or marketing tactics. Lastly we want them to be able to discern truth from faulty conclusions. I Thessalonians 5:21 (KJV) commands us to "Prove all things; hold fast that which is good."

Practically

We had plenty of discussion times at home. We looked for opportunities to listen and respond to various ideas found in print, on video, or in person. We accomplished this both formally by attending lectures and watching DVDs and informally by being involved in international ministry here in the capital of Pennsylvania, or just observing and listening to those around us while waiting in line at the grocery store. Curriculum wise, we taught inductive Bible study early on. Since God's Word is truth (John 17:17), that must be the plumb line for all man's thoughts. We also incorporated logic courses as they became older.

Cost Counting Considerations

Both figuratively and literally, we want our children to learn "cost counting". Literally we want them to be able to

compute quickly and accurately. Figuratively and more importantly, we want them to be able to count the cost. Being able to think about or gain counsel on the ramifications of decisions they make while moving from childhood to adultsin-training will be important in their success as full-fledged adults.

Practically

Of course allowing our children the room to make some mistakes is crucial in this area. What a difficult thing for us as parents to do, but they wouldn't have learned to walk as toddlers had we run to catch them every time it looked as though they would fall. We are still in the process of watching our adultsin-training learn how to walk as soon to be, full-fledged adults, and praying constantly for God's wisdom to help us slow down and take time to evaluate their actions and respond appropriately. We have to have a teaching moment (or long discussion) if the poor decision was made due to having new freedom or inexperience, whereas, consequences are called for in cases of direct rebellion.

What's driving you? What is your vision statement for your family? The GPS (God's Positioning System) is the Bible. I pray that we as couples who have decided to disciple our children through home-based, parent-directed education will be daily in God's Word, allowing the Lord Jesus Christ to be our vision. Take some time today and meditate

on Proverbs 16, and listen to the 8th century hymn "Be Thou My Vision," but also keep in mind this: doing everything that we can to the best of our ability is what God wants us to do (Ecclesiastes 9:10), but all the best laid plans (and even mostly completed plans) do not ensure a good outcome. We need to plan as though it all depends on us (in the human sense it does) but pray like it all depends on God, because it does!

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By God's grace Phil and Steph have been married for twenty years. With mixed emotions they are nearing the end of their homeschool time with their last son, so they happily volunteer with CHAP to help newer homeschool families who are just starting on their journey.





Things You **Need** to Know **About Work**

We live in an interesting time that is often filled with contradictions.

Take for example our cultural and social attitude and relationship with work.

Keep Your Job

A sense of unease, uncertainty, and worry permeates the world of work at a macro level. Those who are about to enter the workforce fear that they won't be able to get a job, many who are out of work face that exact reality, and those who are working fear that they may lose their job. Nobody feels very certain or secure, and those who have work hear the message that they should be relieved to be working at all, no matter what they do.

Get a Better Job

While at the macro level it seems like you should hold on to your job no matter what, at the micro level there is a strong message of contradiction. This message says, at a personal level, that this is a time of amazing opportunity and nobody should settle for work that does less than pay exceptionally well and fulfills you at a deep and soul satisfying level.



Do Neither!

The practical result of these two messages is often paralysis.

Young people seeking to get in the work force are pessimistic about their chances of getting a job, but are unwilling to settle for anything less than an occupation that does meaningful "world changing" work that is so exciting it propels them out of bed in the morning.

Older workers who have a job are often scared to seek new opportunities, feeling like they must be thankful to have any work. At the same time they are dissatisfied, sure that there must be a better, more satisfying work than what they are doing.

What Everyone Should Know About

Personally I have been blessed to be able to do work that is satisfying, interesting, and I think makes a difference in the world. However I have also needed to do work that is dull, seemingly pointless, and unsatisfying.

Professionally I have worked with hundreds and perhaps thousands of young people who are working to prepare themselves for meaningful work and who are learning to navigate the professional world. I have also worked with more than a few older workers who are making that big career adjustment and are looking for new work that is more deeply satisfying.

Based on those experiences here are three things I wish everyone, and especially young people, knew about work:

What Are You Working For?

1. The end matters more than the means. Assuming that the job you are doing is neither illegal or immoral then what you are working for is always far more important than what kind of work you are doing, no matter how difficult, dangerous, or dull that work may be.

It is far more important for young workers to be doing anything, no matter how different from what they picture, than to be doing nothing. Any job offers opportunities for mastery (see below), and builds experience, contacts, and confidence that will lead to the next and better

Older workers, specifically older workers with families, should never forget that the most important outcome of their work is provision. Work that enables you to provide food for your family, a safe place for them to live, and the necessary resources to learn is by definition honorable, important, and ultimately world changing work.

Be Brave Enough to Change

2. Never be afraid to change jobs or careers if the risk is right. In a slow economy and an uncertain world the first reaction is typically to hold on to what you have. This attitude can prevent younger workers from essential advancement and keep older workers from fully using the gifts and skills they have been given.

How do you know if the risk is right? Here are some key questions: Does this new position help me move closer to where I want to ultimately go? What is the worst thing that can happen? Will that worst thing merely cause hardship for me and for my family that we can recover from, or will it endanger me or my family?

A few years ago at a crucial point in my career I was agonizing over a decision and was paralyzed and afraid to move forward with a change. My wife finally bluntly forced the point: "What's the worst thing that can happen? The job doesn't work out and we lose the house and have to live with Mom and Dad for a while? Big deal. I don't care about money anyway, I like Mom's cooking, and it would only be temporary until you found something else and started again. What are you worried about?"

All of those outcomes were far worse than anything I had imagined, but her point was that even at its very worst, failure would only mean hardship, some embarrassment, and some inconvenience. We wouldn't be homeless and endangered. With the risk revealed to be manageable (and the security of having the support of my wife) I was able to move forward and found better work and more success than I had ever experienced

Become an Expert

3. Seek to gain mastery in some area with every job you ever hold. This is perhaps

What **Are You Working For?** Become an **Expert**

the most important attitude to maximizing your work experience and working towards meaningful, fulfilling, and rewarding work.

Here's the cold, hard truth: Very, very, very few (if any) people spend their entire working life doing something they love every day. You will need to work at a job that is less than exciting, fulfilling, and wonderful. Even when you find exciting, fulfilling, and wonderful work, you will need to do certain tasks and jobs in that work that are less than exciting, fulfilling, and wonderful. In those times, committing to seeking mastery in some aspect of what you are doing makes all the difference.

Seeking mastery means that in every job, every task, and every experience you have, you commit to look for one aspect, one skill, or one process that you can master that will help you achieve your bigger goals in life. Working a manual labor job? Commit to mastering the discipline of arriving on time, mustering your energy to work at 100% all day, and stay until the work is finished. You may not dig ditches the rest of your life, but the discipline and commitment learned on that job will pay dividends for a lifetime.

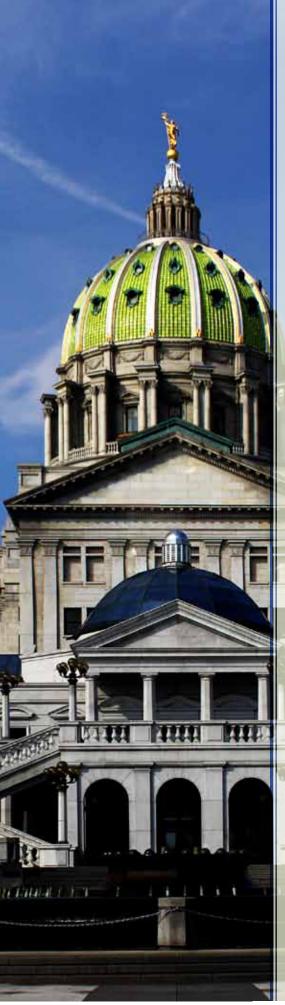
Working at a fast food restaurant? Commit to mastering the nuances of outstanding customer service, doing everything with a smile, always being polite, practicing that the customer is always right, striving to make sure your customers have a great experience and leave a little happier than when they came in, and being quick and efficient in delivering the service they are expecting and more. You will move on from asking, "Do you want fries with that?" And, you will find there isn't an industry or company on the planet who doesn't want employees who can deliver great service and a great experience to their clients and customers.

Buckle Down and Get It Done!

Sure it is a tough market out there. Yes, you will need to do work that feels like, well, work. No, you won't likely leave home and find your dream job, or even know what your dream job is by the time vou are thirty or even older. Don't be surprised; that is the way life works. It is the hardships and trials in life that help us to grow the most.

Focus on the end and the bigger goal. Don't be afraid to change and do something different if the risk factor is right. Commit to mastering something in every experience. Practice these things, and you will find yourself doing work that makes a difference and that you are passionate about in less time than you think.

Jonathan Brush is a homeschool graduate and homeschool dad of six. Ionathan's career in traditional and non-traditional higher education has allowed him to work with thousands of students and adults, helping them find meaningful and fulfilling work. He is currently the Executive Director of Student Life for CollegePlus. Ionathan Brush was a speaker at the 2015 CHAP Convention.



School District Excludes Qualified Evaluator

In March Home School Legal Defense Association assisted two member families whose year-end evaluator had been deemed unqualified by the Millcreek Township School District. The school district had compiled a list of evaluators it considered acceptable and excluded an evaluator who contended she was qualified. State law requires that each home education program be examined by a qualified evaluator to determine whether each student is receiving an "appropriate education" as that term is defined in the law.

According to the applicable statute, persons who may evaluate a home education program include "a licensed clinical or school psychologist or a teacher certified by the Commonwealth or by a nonpublic school teacher or administrator." The nonpublic school teacher or administrator must have at least two years of teaching experience in a Pennsylvania public or nonpublic school within the last 10 years. Additionally the nonpublic school teacher or administrator and the certified teacher must have two years grading experience at the elementary level to evaluate elementary students or at the secondary level to evaluate secondary students. The certified teacher does not have to be certified at the elementary level in order to conduct elementary level evaluations or at the secondary level in order to conduct secondary level evaluations.

Fully Qualified

The evaluator who had been excluded from the school district's list was a state-certified teacher. As such, she was qualified to serve as an evaluator at both the elementary and secondary levels based on her experience in teaching her own children as a private tutor. HSLDA Senior Counsel Dewitt Black explained this to the school district in a letter asserting that the evaluator was entitled to be on the list of recognized evaluators.

This case is indicative of a shift in the approach that school districts seem to be taking toward evaluators since Pennsylvania's homeschool law was amended in October 2014. Since public school superintendents are no longer permitted to review a student's records at the end of the school year to determine whether an appropriate education is occurring, school districts appear to be giving closer scrutiny to evaluators who now have the last say-so on the student's progress. Except in cases where persons not meeting the statutory qualifications seek to serve as evaluators, state law does not require that evaluators submit their qualifications to school districts for approval. To do so as a matter of routine would create a burdensome precedent. On the other hand, in situations where the school district has a reasonable basis to question an evaluator's qualifications, HSLDA recommends that the evaluator address the issue by providing information to verify that the evaluator is in fact qualified.

Senior Counsel Dee Black answers questions and assists members with legal issues in Pennsylvania. Dee Black has practiced law for 41 years, serving Pennsylvania families for the past 24 years as Senior Counsel with Home School Legal Defense Association. Dee and his wife Ricci have four children, all of whom were homeschooled.

Protect Your Family

If you aren't yet a member of HSLDA, consider joining today! HSLDA's work benefits homeschooolers in the United States and around the world. www.hslda.org



2015 CHAP Convention was Electrifying!

- The Million Volt Man, Dean Ortner, survived his electrifying experiment.
- The vendor aisles were always crowded.
- Attendance increased over previous years.
- The speakers and panels spoke on a variety of topics which blessed the thousands of homeschoolers attending the Convention.
- Thousands of homeschoolers found bargains in the Used Curriculum Sale and at the vendor booths.
- If you missed the opportunity to purchase your recordings of the speaker sessions at the Convention, they are still available on the Alliance Recording website. Go to www.AllianceRecordings.com and click on the PA Convention in the right column.

After one whole year of planning, the CHAP Convention has come and gone for another year. I realized this was the 20th CHAP Convention I have been involved in helping to plan and the 26th one that I have attended. My, oh my.... that makes me feel old! Some things are still the same as years ago, but other things have changed. I saw homeschool moms armed with their lists of items they wanted to check and purchase. Many said they found their items to be cheaper than they could find them online. I saw moms and dads sitting in sessions with their smart phones downloading the recording of the previous sessions causing MP3 sales to surge. Pennsylvania is truly in the 21st century electronic age!

Of course there are always challenges along the pathway of life, but God was and is faithful and allowed the Convention

to be a success. The CHAP Convention Team hopes and prays the Convention was a success for you. Whether attending a Speaker Session or a Vendor Workshop, shopping the Used Curriculum Sale, purchasing MP3's at the Recording Booth (or while you were in a session), participating in the Teen Track or Children's Program, volunteering, or just plain fellowshipping, our prayer is that you came away encouraged, refreshed, and focused on the Lord.

Thank you to the thousands of attendees (attendance was up over the last two years), over 200 vendors, the young entrepreneurs, the talented speakers, and over 300 volunteers who made the 2015 Convention possible. CHAP could not have done this without this super large team of dedicated volunteers who are already fast at work on preparations for the 2016 CHAP Convention.

Maybe God is whispering in your ear that you should join our team either doing some volunteer work year-round or as part of the Convention Team. We do have openings, and we are praying for you to hear the call. We'd love to have you join us! Send an email to me at NadaCHAP@gmail.com and let me know your interests and how you'd like to serve.

If you were not able to attend the Convention this year, be sure to mark your calendar now for the 30th Annual CHAP Convention on May 13-14, 2016. Don't miss this opportunity to be inspired and to come together with thousands of fellow homeschoolers who are also seeking to raise their children in a Christ-centered, home-based, discipleship environment. Please note the Convention is NOT on Mother's Day weekend in 2016. We hope to see you there!

Nada Rothgaber, Convention Coordinator



The Christian Homeschool Associate of Pennsylvania (CHAP) would like to congratulate the Graduates of our Fifth Annual CHAP Graduation Ceremony. What a great honor it was for CHAP to aide in commemorating such a momentous occasion in each of your lives. This is an important milestone in the lives of the 27 young men and women.

A special thank you to Reilly Shaver for singing, Stephanie Hamilton for your speech, and Cameron Crider for your trumpet performance. We were all blessed by your courage and performance. CHAP would like to wish each graduate success and blessings on their future endeavors. May the Lord Jesus be the light that leads you in your life.



First Row: Beau McCarver, Matthew Coates, Benjamin Hornberger, Danielle Shover, Erika Olson, Adam Novak, Quinn Barnett, Matthew Schultz

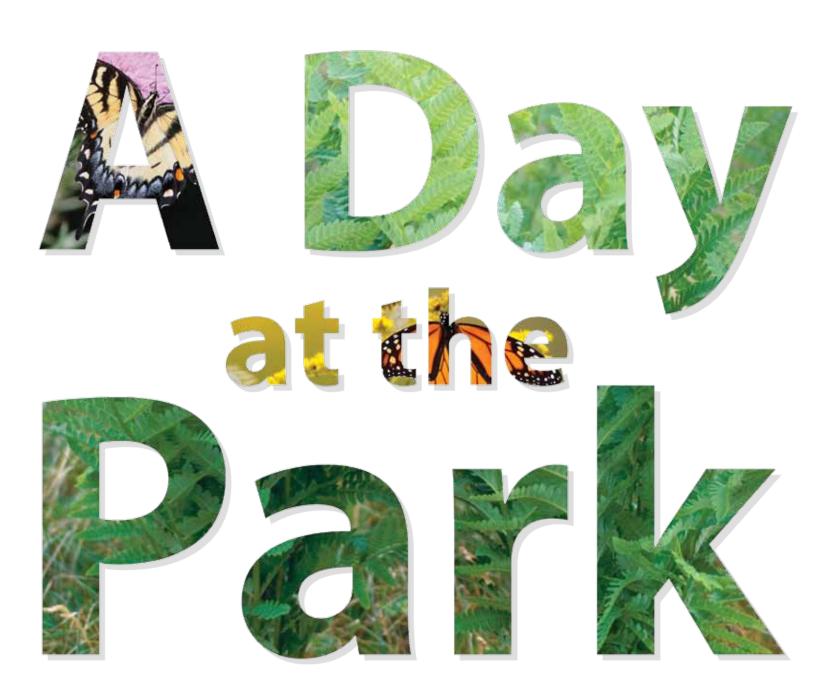
Second Row: Rachael Kepko, Venera Alexis Beebe, Callie Sonderman, Anneliese Lawson, Alicia King, Shilynn Crone, Alyssa Strenkoski, Jessie-Marie Heath Stephanie Hamilton, Kimberly Finley

Third Row: Cameron Crider, Josiah Pare, Isaiah Bolden, Christiaan Merkel, William Jacob Pierce, Daniel Beachell, Levi Hartman, Reilly Shaver.









The tiny fawn was curled in a tight ball right at the base of a clump of interrupted ferns. We had just stumbled onto this white-tailed fawn, almost by accident, in the Big Meadows of the Shenandoah National Park.

Our family had come early this particular morning, and we were in the meadows hoping to find fawns to observe and photograph. When fog moved in, blocking our view of the roadway and our car, we decided we ought to head back. After all, in the large flat meadow we could get turned around. It was in this fog that Mother suddenly pointed

and exclaimed, "There is a fawn right in front of me!"

Carefully I positioned the camera and got a few shots of the fawn peacefully resting in its little "nest." After the photos when we were about to resume heading for the car, the fog lifted. We discovered we had not been walking toward the car when Mother found the fawn. Had we walked in the direction we had intended, we never would have come upon this fawn.

This experience happened before I was married. Now my wife and I like to take

our children to the Shenandoah National Park to look for fawns, and June is a good month to be there. Having just been born in late May or early June, the fawns are still very small and adorable. We choose going to the Shenandoah National Park because there the animals are protected, and this significantly increases our chances of finding wildlife to watch that do not flee the moment we discover them.

"A day at the park" may seem like a small thing, and we parents might even think of reasons why there isn't time to make the trip at all. However taking the family to a park for a day can become a memorable event the family will treasure long after any sacrifice made has been forgotten.

Careful preparations for the trip can go a long way toward making the day pleasant and successful, while a lack of preparation might make some memories that are only humorous down the road when looking back. One thing I've learned about the Shenandoah National Park is that a jacket may feel good early in the morning no matter how hot you expect the day to become. Expect too, that dew will have the vegetation dripping wet. Protective foot gear and clothing will be welcome.

Insect repellent, sun screen, bottled water and juices, and food should get added to the list. If planning to picnic, consider anything you will need for that endeavor—a tabletop grill, utensils, tablecloth, garbage bags, the list goes on. What I do is keep a trip checklist in our computer. When planning a trip, I print off a copy and checkmark the items I want to take this particular time. A second checkmark beside the item means that item is packed in the car. The list can also have blanks at the end where you can write down the customized items you want to take this time.

Our trip list has several sections. The picnic supplies are only one section of the list. Camera equipment comprises another. Remember to include gear like binoculars and field guides.

Field guides can help you identify the flowers you find, the birds you see, the trees, snakes, and lizards. By jotting down notes that include the identity of the things you see, your writing about the trip will become alive for the ones that read your story.

Last summer the boys and I found a pair of mourning doves building a nest in the fork of a large tree. Later I wished I had paid attention to the kind of tree. On the next trip we learned the doves were building their nest in a sycamore tree. Any caption accompanying the photo or story about the experience will come to life with this information included.

Include a compass with your hiking gear. If the fog settles in and you need to know the direction, pulling out a compass may keep you from going the wrong way. Some basic first aid supplies are also good to have along, not that you hope you need them.

Remember all the family members. If your family includes a small child,

you may need a carrier, stroller, sipper cup, and diapers.

Did anyone remember to pack the salt?

Kevin Shank with his wife Bethany homeschool their children in the foothills of the Shenandoah Mountains in Virginia. They are the owners and editors of Nature Friend magazine.

Nature Friend magazine has been helping families explore the wonders of God's creation since 1983. In the Study Guide edition, Kevin regularly shares photography lessons, and children send their photos for critiquing. Other regular features teach art and creative writing using nature as a springboard. You are invited to visit the Nature Friend magazine website at www.naturefriendmagazine.com





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