



Barb's Home Notes & Quotes

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November/December 2011

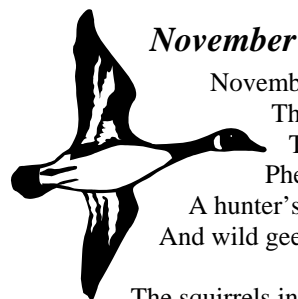
Dear Homemaker:

Happy Autumn! The colors of the trees have been dazzling this year! I hope you have enjoyed the many pleasures of this beautiful season, including some goodies made with apples and pumpkin.

May you have a wonderful autumn, a blessed Thanksgiving, and a Merry Christmas!

Sincerely,

Barbara A. Brahm
Extension Educator – Family and Consumer Sciences
OSU Extension Hancock Co., Maumee Valley EERA



November

November marks the falling leaves,
The fodder cut and bound in sheaves,
The acorns falling to the ground,
Pheasants making "caution" sounds,
A hunter's moon across the sky
And wild geese up flying high.

The squirrels in the leafy towers,
All snug against November showers,
When rain turns to sleet and sleet turns snow –
That is the way the seasons go.
With winter weather on the way,
There still remains Thanksgiving Day.

November saves the best till last,
It is our nation's famed repast,
And fields and woods and leaf and tree
All join in the festivity.

By Minnie Klemme

New Extension Staff

We want to welcome Cassie Turner, our new 4-H Educator who arrived October 1. She grew up not far away in Auglaize County and has been a 4-H Extension Educator in Meigs County for 6 years. She specializes in preparing youth for the workforce.

Ed Lentz, Ph.D. Extension Educator Agriculture & Natural Resources will start November 1, replacing Gary Wilson who retired on August 31. Ed has been working in Seneca Co. and his specialization is agronomic crops.

November is Family Month

So just what is a family . . .

A family is a deeply rooted tree with branches of differing strengths, all receiving nourishment from an infinite source.

A family is where character is formed, values are learned, ethics are created, and society is preserved.

A family is where all members contribute and share, cooperate and work, and accept their responsibilities toward the good of the group.

A family is where holidays are celebrated with feasting, birthdays acknowledged with gifts, and thoughts of days gone by kept alive with fond remembrances.

A family is where each can find solace and comfort in grief, pleasures and laughter in joy, and kindness and encouragement in daily living . . .

A family is a haven of rest, a sanctuary of peace, and most of all, a harbor of love.

By Manny Feldman, Marriage & Family Counselor



Thanksgiving

There's an almost Christmas feeling
 In the happy time of year
 When the turkey gains full stature
 As a messenger of cheer;
 When plans for making merry
 Have a Yuletide flavor rare
 That spreads joy throughout our valley,
 When Thanksgiving's in the air.

Now each shop and store is crowded
 With eager folk who price
 Cakes and pies and turkey fixings
 Rich with condiments and spice,
 And small boys dream of puddings
 As they count the hours away
 Till they gather round the table
 On a glad Thanksgiving Day.

Now's the time for helping neighbors
 That their tables, too, may bear
 All the bounties of God's goodness
 That are ample everywhere.
 May the day be crowned with glory
 When, with everyone in place,
 Heads bow low around the table
 In a fervent prayer of grace.

~ Brian F. King

Managing the "Rush" at Holiday Time

This time of year can get really busy.

Here are some tips to help manage your time.

1. The secret of getting holiday tasks done on time is good planning.
2. Have a special notebook for the holidays. Divide it into job categories: cards, gifts, shopping, entertainment, decorations, etc. Itemize job steps, make notes, write down ideas & details.
3. Use the "Gotta, Oughta, Wanna, Forget It" approach.
4. Recognize time robbers like careless habits, poor tools, work methods, equipment arrangement:
 - Reduce the amount of time to do a task, especially routine jobs or jobs you dislike.
 - Decide when you are most productive and do as much work as possible during that time.
 - Offer yourself an incentive to help get a job done.
 - Don't waste odds and ends of time – use them for "mini-jobs", planning, or extending holiday greetings to friends.
5. Develop a holiday calendar – list activities, events and time commitments of all family members.

Try adapting the following holiday schedule to meet your needs:

October, November, early December – complete majority of Christmas shopping to take advantage of sales and have better selection.

Thanksgiving – December 10 - make and freeze holiday goodies. Plan menus, etc. for all holiday entertaining. Place orders for special foods, flowers, and special delivered gifts.

December 5 – 10 – Decorate your home

December 13 – Safety check the house. Look for items troublesome to little folks, check extension cords and reduce potential circuit overloads.

December 14 – Get other family members to help on certain jobs. You will find that it will pay off if you give them responsibilities they are capable of handling and if you take the time to show them how to get started. Get yourself organized to the point that if someone offers to help, you have just the appropriate things in mind for them to do.

December 15 – make this your last day for mailing cards.

December 16 – Give your house a good cleaning and then forget about any more special housecleaning. Nobody will notice if you didn't do it. Besides, the house will need a thorough cleaning after the holidays. From this day on, let routine jobs slide and concentrate on CHRISTMAS.

December 17 – Time out for a special family activity. Relax and enjoy yourself.

December 18 – Revise your schedule and check on the progress of others in the family.

Manage the "Rush" at holiday time continued . . .

December 19 – People change. Break a tradition and start a new one. Christmas gets better every year if we do what the family enjoys rather than doing the same things over again.

December 20 – a second chance to catch up. Anything goes as long as it gets the remaining jobs done.

December 21 – Finish wrapping all packages.

December 22 – Deliver gifts to friends and neighbors.

December 23 – PUT IT ALL TOGETHER.

December 24 – No cause to feel guilty or rushed. Everything is done!

December 25 – Christmas is here! Relax, enjoy yourself and your family and experience the "peace that was meant to be" at this most joyous time of the year.

Coping with Holiday Hazards ***– A Plan of Action***

1. What are the things about the holidays you find most stressful or depressing? Be specific.
 - a.
 - b.
 - c.
 - d.
 - e.
 - f.
2. Are there any of the things you have listed above that you can do away with or stop altogether? If so, which items? Draw a single straight line through these items – then vow not to do them this year. (Remember: if it does not bring you pleasure or if it is not meaningful for your family, it can be done away with.)
3. Are there any of these things you can delegate to someone else? If so, write the letter for the ones that can be delegated. Beside each letter, write the name of the person(s) to whom it can be delegated, and when you will talk to the person about taking on this responsibility.
4. What are ways your family can help you to eliminate some of these "stress producers?" Write some of your ideas down (be specific). The next step is to plan a time to talk with your family about these things. A family meeting may be in order.



Ways to Avoid "Holiday Hazards"



- Decide what is really important to you and your family.
- Examine your family traditions.
- Decide early where you will spend the holidays and inform the rest of the family.
- Do not take responsibility for everyone else's holiday happiness.
- Start early and pace yourself.
- Take on only tasks that you choose.
- Get all competition out of your holiday activities.
- Vow to do things with your children that you both like.
- Do not reinforce "greedy, whiny" behavior of children (or other adults).
- Refuse to allow yourself to be lonely.
- Make a budget and stick to it.
- Cut down on the number of gifts you give.
- Make a list early of all the gifts you plan to buy.
- Start your shopping early.
- Keep a family holiday calendar.
- Buy cooking supplies a couple of months before the holidays.
- Avoid your self-defeating habits.
- Try to introduce periods of quiet, alone time into the ritual of family togetherness.
- Live in the present.
- Learn to say no.
- Be able to laugh at yourself.
- Give yourself a pat on the back for the things you do well.

Excerpted from a handout prepared by Kathryn Beckham, Ph.D. & former OSU Extension Family Life Specialist

Three Basic Management Techniques for Christmas

UTILIZE:

Make use of all your assets. Everything you have is an asset. Each person has a long list of assets, such as certain skills and talents, money, material possessions, etc.

MAXIMIZE:

Use each asset or resource to its fullest extent. For example, in what ways could the family garden be used other than to feed your family? Would a jar of canned tomatoes, pickle relish or raspberry jam be a suitable gift?

ECONOMIZE:

Whenever possible, spend less or use less. Within the act of economizing, we can reallocate resources. Changing some expensive habits can lead to economizing, for example, utilizing less expensive cuts of meat instead of buying the most expensive cut.

Put Action in Your Lifestyle



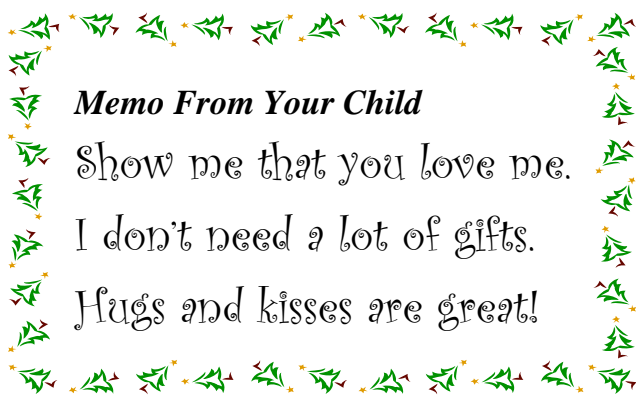
Like sound eating habits, regular physical activity is part of a healthful lifestyle. Apply the same principles – variety, balance, and moderation – to both your food choices and your physical activities. Always check with your healthcare provider before beginning any rigorous physical activity program.

Variety – Enjoy many different activities to move different muscles including your heart: perhaps power walking for your heart and leg muscles, gardening for your arm muscles, and sit ups for abdominal muscles.

Balance – Because different activities have different benefits, balance your physical activity pattern. For overall fitness, choose activities that build cardiovascular endurance (aerobic activities), muscular strength, bone strength, and flexibility.

Moderation – Move enough to keep fit, without overdoing. You don't need a heavy workout. To reduce health risks, at least 30 minutes of moderate physical activity most and preferably all days of the week will do for reducing health risks. To lose or maintain weight, step up to 60 minutes on most days!

Source: *Complete Food and Nutrition Guide, Third Edition*



Memo From Your Child

Show me that you love me.

I don't need a lot of gifts.

Hugs and kisses are great!

Holiday Fun

I'm a Little Turkey

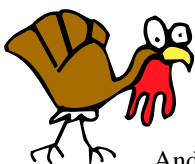
(sung to the tune of "I'm a little teapot")

I'm a little turkey, fluffy and brown.

My wings flip-flop when I turn around.

I have lots of feathers on my back,

And a big orange beak that goes "click clack"!



More Holiday Fun . . .

Sparkling Peppermint Play Dough

(Makes 12 portions)

- 2 cups water
- 2 cups flour
- 1 cup salt
- 4 teaspoons cream of tartar
- 4 Tablespoons oil
- 4 Tablespoons peppermint extract

Combine all ingredients in a heavy saucepan. Cook over medium heat, stirring constantly with a wooden spoon until mixture thickens and pulls away from the sides of the pan. Form dough into a ball, place on waxed paper and allow to cool. Let the children enjoy this multi-sensory activity.

November Fun . . .

- Make your own Thanksgiving centerpiece
- Make a leaf rubbing
- Learn Native American sign language
- Make Pilgrim & Indian stick puppets using popsicle sticks
- Create seeded placemats to use for Thanksgiving
- Read about the Mayflower or the first Thanksgiving
- Make a collage or book of all you are thankful for
- Make pumpkin bread or pumpkin ice cream
- Share a quality you appreciate about each family member
- Make & take autumn treats to a nursing home
- Thank a veteran for their efforts
- Play "turkey, turkey, gobble" instead of "duck, duck, goose".
- Trace your hands and make turkeys
- Read "Twas the Night before Thanksgiving" by Dav Pilkey

December Fun . . .

- Go Christmas caroling
- Make a gingerbread house
- Make Christmas cards
- Make ornaments
- Make bracelets with red & green beads or pipe cleaners
- Bake Christmas cookies and take some to a shut in
- Make red & green paper chains
- String popcorn for your Christmas tree
- Go for a drive to look at Christmas lights
- Make homemade gift tags
- Make gift wrap by sponge painting on colored paper



Telling Children “No” at Christmas

If a child wants something that's simply too expensive or that parents feel is inappropriate, it's OK to say no, even at Christmas, says Carol Ford Arkin, Family Life Specialist.



“If you can't afford the newest version of video games or you don't believe that video games are good for your children, then don't feel pressured to buy it just because your child wants it,” Arkin says. “Give the child other choices, and try to find some common ground.”

When a child is dead-set on a gift that a parent knows won't be under the tree on Christmas morning, it's important to make that clear ahead of time. Arkin says, “Trust your child to accept that they can't have everything they want. It's OK for kids to be disappointed, but try not to let that happen on Christmas day. Decide ahead of time, and don't let your child think they might get something that you know they won't.”

One option is to discuss costly items after the holidays. For example, if a child wants a pair of expensive basketball shoes, parents might decide to put some money toward them and have the child make up the difference from an allowance or by doing extra chores. That's not always practical to do for Christmas, but it might be a way for a child to earn something that parents think is extravagant.

“It's natural for parents to want to give children what they want for Christmas,” Arkin says. “Giving is part of what parenting is all about, and it's hard to see a child disappointed, especially at Christmas time.”

But it's equally important for parents to base gift-giving decisions on their finances and their values.

On the other extreme, don't fall into the trap of buying something for your child just because you enjoyed it when you were young. “Just because you really liked your Lincoln Logs doesn't mean your child will,” says Arkin. “If you buy them, and they don't go over big, no one will be happy. You have to know your children and their interests to find a gift they'll enjoy.”

Sometimes children ask for the impossible during the holidays – to see a deceased grandparent, or for estranged parents to reunite.

“It's hard for a parent when a child asks for ‘daddy to come back and live with us’ for Christmas” Arkin says. “But try not to make them feel bad for wanting something like that. It's important to affirm their feelings, but make it clear that it's not going to happen. Try to frame things positively by saying ‘I know it's hard for you, but let's plan together’ . . . what we can do to make this a happy time for us.”

Most parents strive to protect their children from hurt and disappointment, but they shouldn't go overboard.

“This is a good time of year to help children learn to handle certain things and cope with disappointments” Arkin says. “In a way, that's a gift that could help the child cope with bigger things later in life.”

Low Cholesterol Egg Nog

*Calories: 96 per ½ cup Cholesterol: 4mg. per ½ cup
Yield: 3 cups*

½ cup egg substitute
2 teaspoons sugar
1 can (13 oz.) evaporated skim milk
¾ cup skim milk
1 teaspoon vanilla
1 teaspoon rum flavoring (optional)
Ground nutmeg

Whip egg substitute and sugar together and combine with two types of milk and flavoring. Mix well. Chill overnight. Dust with nutmeg before serving.

Source: The New American Diet – William Connor, M.D. and Sonja Connor, R.D. Simon and Schuster. N.Y., 1986

Holiday Egg Nog

*Calories: 135 per ½ cup Cholesterol: 120 mg. per ½ cup
Yield: 2 quarts*

1 quart two percent milk (1% could be substituted)
6 eggs
¼ teaspoon salt
½ cup sugar
1 teaspoon vanilla
1 cup whipping cream, whipped
Ground nutmeg

Heat milk in large saucepan until hot (do not boil or scald). While milk is heating, beat together eggs and salt in a large bowl, gradually adding the sugar. Gradually add the hot milk mixture to the egg mixture. Transfer the mixture back to the large saucepan and cook on medium-low heat. Stir constantly with a whisk until the mixture thickens and just coats a spoon. Thermometer should register 160° F. Stir in vanilla. Cool quickly by setting pan in a bowl of ice or cold water and stirring for about 10 minutes. Cover and refrigerate until thoroughly chilled, several hours or overnight. Pour into a bowl or pitcher. Fold in whipped cream and dust with ground nutmeg.

Where has this year gone?

By Karen McDougall, Family Nutrition Program Assistant

The holidays are coming, but DON'T get all stressed out . . . especially when it comes to cooking! Unfortunately, we can make the holidays more stressful than they need to be. My thought is "Life is too short . . . just deal with it." For our family, this means that we choose to make healthy changes, but we also want satisfying meals that taste good.

How about some basic tips from USDA's Choose My Plate? If we divide our plate into quarters we'll see just four main components to our meal. When we think this way and keep it simple . . . cooking will be less stressful.

Let's start with "**vary your vegetables**". Each vegetable and fruit has different vitamins and minerals that help prevent many health issues. There are so many colorful vegetables to choose from that providing variety should be easy. Perhaps for Christmas choose all red and green vegetables and see if anyone notices.

"**Focus on fruits**" . . . keep a variety on hand for breakfast, lunch, dinner, and snacks. Apples, pumpkin, and oranges are seasonal holiday favorites. Why not make a fruit salad using kiwi, strawberries, bananas and pineapple? If you have any left, enjoy a fruit smoothie as a late night snack.

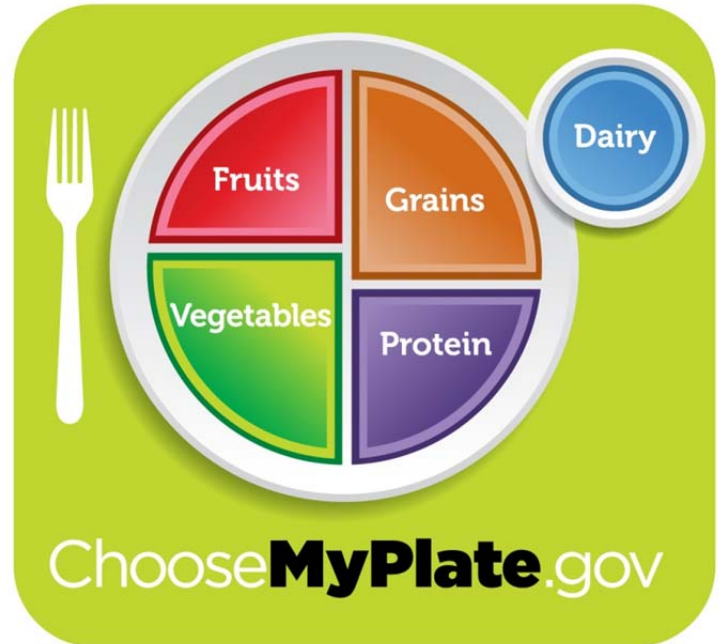
Our grain challenge is to "**make ½ of our grains whole**". It's great that today's consumer has such a wide variety of 'whole grain' products available for purchase. Why not serve a whole grain cold cereal with your fruit salad. If you're interested in cooking, here are two great "tried and true" recipes. To make them even more "healthful", consider substituting some whole wheat flour for white flour if you have that available.

Oatmeal Pancakes/Waffles

- 1 ½ cup flour, (OPTION: use 1 cup white flour & ½ cup whole wheat flour)
- 1 Tbsp. baking powder
- ½ tsp. salt (optional)
- 1 ½ cups low-fat milk
- 2 Tbsp. brown sugar
- 1 cup quick cooking rolled oats
- ½ tsp. cinnamon
- 2 eggs, slightly beaten
- 6 Tbsp. melted butter or margarine

In a large bowl, stir together dry ingredients. In a separate bowl, combine milk, eggs, butter and brown sugar. Add dry ingredients and blend only until moistened. Pour onto a heated and oiled (vegetable spray) waffle iron; bake 4-5 minutes or until steaming stops. (If using a skillet or griddle – spray pan first, make pancakes the size you want, when bubbling is finished, turn pancakes.) Top with fruit, yogurt, syrup or honey.

These are wonderful! Add bacon or sausage, a bowl of fruit (adds fiber to your diet), and a glass of low-fat milk for a simple but tasty meal.



Cranberry Pumpkin Muffins

Preheat oven to 400° F.

- 2 cups flour
- ¾ cup sugar
- 3 tsp. baking powder
- ½ tsp. salt
- ½ tsp. cinnamon
- ¾ tsp. allspice

Sift together dry ingredients (listed above) and set aside.

- 1/3 cup vegetable oil
- 2 large eggs
- ¾ cup canned pumpkin
- 2 cups fresh or frozen chopped cranberries



Beat oil, eggs, and pumpkin together until well blended. Add the wet ingredients (pumpkin mixture) to the dry ingredients all at once. Stir until moistened. Fold in chopped cranberries. Spoon the batter into lined muffin cups. Bake 15-30 minutes.

Source: Adapted from Pumpkin Post/Banana Beat authored by University of Massachusetts Extension Nutrition Education Program

Consider your protein options . . . during the holidays we often think of turkey, ham and roasts for our family gatherings, but there's no reason to limit ourselves or obligate our finances & time to these meats. Why not try beans, nuts or fish?

Consider your protein options continued . . .

Beans do not have to be boring, and here's a great combination salad that is a proven crowd-pleaser! For even more fun (and less stress) . . . recruit guests or family members to help prepare the salad ingredients. Many hands make short work, and you'll all be sitting down to share this flavorful salad within minutes.

Chessa's Tex Mex Salad

1 can (19 oz.) kidney beans drained and rinsed
 1 can (16 oz.) chick pea, drained and rinsed
 1 can (8 oz.) corn, drained and rinsed
 ½ red onion, chopped
 1 cucumber, peeled, seeded and chopped
 1 tomato, chopped
 1 green pepper, chopped
 1 cup baked tortilla chips, smashed
 Lettuce, shredded
 Fat-free Catalina salad dressing

Mix all ingredients except tortilla chips. Toss with salad dressing and sprinkle with chips.

Source: Nutrition Council of Greater Cincinnati
 available on-line at <http://www.nutritioncouncil.org>

So I do hope that you won't let this holiday season stress you out! If at all possible, just plan ahead so that required simple ingredients are in your cupboard. Don't wait until the last minute to figure out what you're going to fix for family get-togethers or holiday guests. Select dishes that are healthy, quick, and colorful (such as those shared here) and allow yourself to enjoy fellowship and great foods throughout the upcoming holiday season!

Happy "stress free" Holidays!!!



Keep the Holidays Electrically Safe

Why let an electrical accident ruin your holiday season? Take a little extra care by following these simple safety tips, and get your holiday decorating off to a safe start.

What you need to know about Christmas tree lights.



Those strands of holiday lights look innocent enough, but when you plug too many into the same outlet, you run the risk of overloading a circuit. Signs of an overloaded circuit are lights that flicker or dim; a TV screen that shrinks in size; an outlet or switch that feels warm to the touch. Another is a tripped circuit breaker or a blown fuse.

Before you begin to decorate, it's a good idea to check out the condition of each light strand. If you find broken or cracked sockets, loose connections or frayed or cut insulation, it's best to discard that strand and buy a new one.

When shopping for lights or other electrical decorations, make sure they have the UL safety-approved label. And don't purchase outdoor lights for indoor use. They usually burn hotter than indoor lights.

Here are some other important safety tips:

- Unplug tree lights when you're not home, and when you go to bed.
- Never use electric lights on a metallic tree.
- For outside decorations, use only lights rated for outdoor use.
- Make sure outdoor lights and all electrical decorations are plugged into a Ground Fault Circuit Interrupter receptacle, preferably with a weatherproof cover.

What you need to know about extension cords

Extension cords can be overloaded just as easily as your house wiring, so don't plug more than three strands of lights into one extension cord, check to see if the cord is warm to the touch. If it is, unplug some of the decorations. Better yet, use an extension cord with thicker wires.

Here are additional tips:

- Don't run extension cords under rugs or carpets
- Keep extension cords out of the reach of infants
- Never use indoor extension cords outside. (They are not designed to withstand outdoor conditions)
- Only use extension cords that have UL label
- Use one long extension cord rather than linking several shorter cords together

According to the U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission, more than 1,200 people end up at the emergency room for an injury related to holiday lights every year. Another 6,000 are injured by holiday décor and trees.

Source: Leviton Institute

Put Your Garden to Bed for Winter

By Marilyn Beltz, Program Coordinator OSU Extension
Master Gardener Volunteers of Hancock Co.



The leaves are falling rapidly, temps are gradually falling and one would have to think fall is upon us. Now is a good time to put your gardens to bed for the winter.

When cleaning off your gardens, it is a good practice to send tomato vines and all garden waste to the trash. Don't put these in your compost bin because you don't want to harbor bacteria and other diseases that might give you problems in next year's garden. It's also a good time to cut back perennials, or divide and move them to other places, in your landscape.

You can start to plant spring bulbs now. This can be done until the ground freezes. Plant daffodils first (they need a little more time to establish). Plant tulips when the soil temps drop. You will be rewarded next spring for the work now.

Garden tools should be cleaned and sharpened before storage.

When all is done, set back and enjoy a cup of hot chocolate and celebrate a job well done. Happy Harvest!

Somewhere in My Memory (Theme song from Home Alone 2)



Candles in the window
Shadows painting the ceiling
Gazing at the fire glow
Feeling that gingerbread feeling

Precious moments
Special people
Happy faces
I can see

Somewhere in my memory
Christmas joys all around me
Living in my memory
All of the music, all of the magic
All of the family home with me.

~ words by Leslie Bricusse, music by John T. Williams

*May the blessing of the holiday season be
with you and those you love now and
throughout the New Year!*

Utilizing Layaway this Holiday Season

By Melanie Gerlach, Program Coordinator,
Financial Literacy & Hancock County Saves

The Holiday shopping season is well underway and most Americans will use credit to make their purchases. Before you make all your purchases on credit, you might want to see if the stores you shop at have a layaway program. Layaway is a way to buy an item without paying the entire cost at once. Instead of taking the item home and then repaying the debt on a regular schedule (like most credit card purchases), you make regular payments to the seller and once the purchase is completely paid for, you take the items home.



Most stores had done away with their layaway programs because of a decline in demand. However, Wal-Mart, Sears and Kmart recently restored the service due to the economy and increased constraints on consumer credit. It is important to note that different stores have different terms and conditions. **Be sure to read the fine print!**

Some stores may also charge a small fee for using layaway because the store must "lay" the item "away" in storage until the payments are completed. If the customer fails to make all the payments, the items will be returned to stock and the customer's money is returned minus a fee.

Layaway is a great alternative to finance your big holiday purchase. Unlike credit card purchases, you will not incur any finance charges . . . especially if you are not paying off your credit cards at the end of each month. Next time you are doing some holiday shopping, be sure to ask a sales associate if they have a layaway program. It could save you from racking up a huge credit card bill.

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