Shine a Light
By: Sandra Gay, Stewart County

An old kerosene lantern sets on the hearth in the family room of my home. Its sole purpose of being there is adornment—a subtle reminder of the past. It must be periodically dusted because it is never used.

The lantern’s reason for existence has changed. It once hung on the back porch of my childhood home. It was always filled with kerosene and the glass globe was likely smoked from frequent use.

In its day of constant use, my father would grab the lantern and a match when he had to make a trip outside after dark. He may have been going to check on a sow with newborn pigs or investigating the chicken house that had become noisy from some disturbance. The tobacco barn might have needed attention or he may have forgotten to water the horse. Sometimes, after a late weather report on a winter night, he would decide to drain the water from the car and tractor radiators or wrap pipes at the water pump. I would often watch from the window as the light bobbed up and down and then became still when Daddy reached his destination.

When I was older, my sister and I would light the lantern on a winter night to finish our outdoor chores. We loved watching the funny dancing shadows made by our legs as we walked, swinging the lantern between us. Whatever the reason for lighting the lantern, it served the same purpose: To pierce the darkness.

Young children and youth need a light to guide them and illuminate the positive directions in their lives. They depend on those older than they are to light the lantern and walk before them. The adults furnishing the light are not limited to parents. All adults have the potential of lighting the way for all ages of children, simply by being a good role model. Young children and youth need this from all of us. Never neglect to strike the match and carry the light.

Asthma Awareness at Home
By: Rachel Hubbard, Lanier County

Americans spend about 90% of their time indoors, so it is important to be aware of the quality of the air you breathe inside your home. The National Academy of Sciences Institute of Medicine found that exposure to secondhand smoke and indoor allergens such as dust mites, animal dander, cockroaches and mold can aggravate asthma symptoms. For preschool children, exposure to dust mites and secondhand smoke can cause asthma.

By taking a few simple steps you can reduce your exposure to common indoor environmental asthma triggers. Listed below are a few simple steps you can take.

1. Reduce exposure to dust mites by covering mattresses and pillows with dust proof or allergen-impermeable covers.
2. Wash your bedding weekly in hot water.
3. Dust mites can be found in stuffed toys. Wash them often and keep them out of sleeping areas.
4. Vacuum carpets, rugs and furniture two to three times per week to reduce dust and pet dander.
5. Do not allow smoking inside your home.
6. Control mold by controlling moisture in your home.
7. When you see mold, clean the surface and dry it completely.
8. Maintain low indoor humidity, ideally between 30 and 50 percent relative humidity.
9. To reduce cockroach and similar pests, eliminate clutter and store food in airtight containers.
10. Use baits for roaches and eliminate the use of pesticide sprays.

Work with your doctor to determine what environmental factors affect your asthma and develop a plan to manage those potential triggers.
If you are planning an outdoor picnic, it is time to think about how to stay safe and healthy on your warm weather outings. Cases of foodborne illness normally rise during the summer because harmful bacteria that may be present in foods grow faster in the warm temperatures. And since bacteria also need moisture to flourish, warm, humid summer weather is just a picnic for them!

To keep your picnicking safe from foodborne illness, follow these four simple steps:

CLEAN: Wash hands and surfaces often. Unwashed and surfaces are the perfect way for bacteria to make their way into the food. Often at a picnic or campground, hand-washing facilities are not readily available. In those cases where there is no water available, pack clean, wet, disposable cloths or moist towelettes and paper towels for cleaning hands and surfaces. Plan the menu carefully so that you don’t have raw meats and poultry chopped on surfaces like cutting boards that can’t be cleaned without soap and water and plenty of it.

SEPARATE: Don’t Cross-Contaminate. When packing the cooler for an outing, it is best to take one cooler for raw meats, poultry, fish and eggs, and a separate cooler for ready-to-eat foods. If only one cooler is used, it is essential to wrap raw meat and poultry very securely to prevent juices from coming in contact with ready-to-eat food. If serving a food that will be marinated, marinate it in the refrigerator before you leave home or in the cooler with ice, not out at room temperature or outdoors on the table. Use clean plates and utensils with the safely cooked food, not the ones with raw meat juices on them.

COOK: Cook to proper temperatures. Food is safely cooked when it reaches the safe internal temperature needed to kill harmful bacteria that cause foodborne illness. Take along a food thermometer. Meat and poultry cooked on a grill often browns very fast on the outside, so be sure that they are cooked thoroughly. Cook hamburger and other ground meats (veal, lamb, and pork) to an internal temperature of 160°F. Cook meat and poultry completely at the picnic site. Partial cooking of food ahead of time allows bacteria to multiply to the point that subsequent cooking cannot destroy them.

CHILL: Refrigerate promptly. Holding food at the wrong temperature is a prime cause of foodborne illness. Never leave food in the danger zone" (40°F-140°F) for more than 2 hours or one hour in temperatures above 90°F. Cold foods like luncheon meats, cooked meats, chicken and potato or pasta salads should be kept in an insulated cooler with lots of ice or frozen gel packs. Keep the cooler in the coolest part of the car, and place in the shade or shelter, out of the sun, whenever possible. Chill cold drinks in a separate cooler so that the cooler with perishable foods is not constantly being opened.

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**ESTATE PLANNING BASICS**

By: Wayne Coachman, Early County

Get the estate planning basics covered and you’ll reduce some of the burden on your loved ones when the time comes. Because let’s face it, we’re all going to die someday.

Estate planning doesn’t have to be expensive either. If you’re in the U.S., your state’s probate court almost certainly has information on requirements specific to your state — things like whether or not a handwritten will is admissible, how many people have to witness a will, etc. Of course, it’s always a good idea to consult an attorney that specializes in estate planning to make sure that you haven’t forgotten anything or to have the plan itself created.

Don’t put off estate planning because you think your estate is so small that it won’t matter. Think of estate planning as a gift you can give the people who loved you that are left behind. Don’t leave them with a headache and uncertainty about what you would have wanted.

**At a bare minimum, you’ll want to get these items taken care of:**
- Create a will and let the executor know where to find important documents
- Create a health care directive
- Name a guardian for your minor children, if you have any, after making sure the potential guardian is willing to serve
- Get adequate life insurance if you have dependents (term insurance is usually inexpensive)

Be sure your beneficiaries on accounts and insurance are up-to-date

**You may also want to consider doing one or more of the following things:**
- Creating a trust, if it would be beneficial in your situation
- Setting up a durable power of attorney
- Stating your final wishes (Are you an organ donor? Do you want your body to be buried, cremated, donated to science, etc. or are you ok with any of the above?)

Creating a plan for what will happen to your business, if you’re a sole proprietor

Once you’ve gotten your estate plan in place, review it once a year to be sure that none of your preferences have changed and to update any information that’s gotten outdated. One day your loved ones will look back gratefully on the preparation you did — and they might even be inspired to get their own estates in order as a result. Contact your local UGA Cooperative Extension Office for more information on Estate Planning.
Summer’s Bounty by: Suzanne Williams, Dougherty County

Summer is here and we are lucky to be sitting smack in the middle of some of the best produce grown in the country! Are you taking advantage of this bonanza? Fresh butterbeans, green beans, corn on the cob, tomato sandwiches? Yummy, and all this good stuff is not only good to you, but good for you.

Let’s look at some of the health benefits of some of these fresh fruits and veggies that are showing up all over South Georgia at pick-your-own farms, roadside stands, home gardens and local groceries.

Let’s start with cantaloupes. A one cup serving of cantaloupe has around 100% of your recommended daily allowances for vitamins A and C. Both of these vitamins help the body fight infections, fight damage to our cells by free radicals that often cause cancer, and folks, all that at 56 calories per cup. Eating of foods higher in Vitamin A, also known as beta-carotenes, have been linked to lower incidences of cataract development.

The blueberry farms are about to open, and who doesn’t enjoy a good blueberry muffin or a handful in your cereal. The lowly blueberry is known as a strong antioxidant or cancer preventative due to its phytonutrient content. Blueberries help prevent cancer and strengthen our veins and cardiovascular system. They are also high in fiber and can aid digestion.

Next I’m going to make you feel better about those 2 ears of fresh corn-on-the cob you ate recently. Corn is a good source of carbohydrates, Vitamins B1 and B5, and also is considered a good source of antioxidants (cancer preventatives) through its ferulic acid and phenolic. Just remember to go easy on the butter, and an ear of corn comes in at about 75 calories.

Butterbeans are a childhood favorite of mine, and in fact, I just placed about 15 packs in my freezer last week straight from the family garden. I can’t say I appreciated all those early morning calls to hit the garden, but as an adult, I can appreciate all the work that went into those packs of peas, butterbeans, and corn in the freezer. A lot of people look at the butterbean as more of a starch, but it actually is considered as one of the fiber “all-stars” and helps regulate blood sugar levels.

They are more calorie dense at 216 calories per cup, but in moderation, these fiber super heroes can make you “heart healthy” and bring back memories of childhood summers in south Georgia. One serving of butterbeans can provide about ½ of your daily fiber needs and 1/3 of your protein needs. So hit the Farmers Market and “get you some”.

Last, but certainly not least, is the famous tomato. It’s grown in many back yards and gardens throughout the state. These nutrient powerhouses are high in vitamin A, Vitamin C, potassium and iron. Tomatoes contain high levels of lycopene and are considered one of the best cancer preventative foods in the world. Believe it or not, ketchup is high in this anti-oxidant and one of the best sources for kids. What kid doesn’t like ketchup? So take advantage of nature’s bounty and load up on these healthy treats and treat your body to something good and good for you.

Canning Green Beans
(Snap, Wax or Italian)

Select tender, crisp pods. Remove and discard diseased and rusty pods. Wash beans and trim ends. Break or cut into 1 inch pieces or leave whole.

- **Hot Pack**– Cover beans with boiling water; boil 5 minutes. Pack hot beans into hot jars, leaving 1 inch headspace. Add 1/2 teaspoon salt to pints; 1 teaspoon to quarts; if desired. Fill jar to 1 inch from top with boiling hot cooking liquid. Remove air bubbles. Wipe jar rims. Adjust lids and process as directed below.

- **Raw Pack**– Pack beans tightly into hot jars, leaving 1 inch headspace. Add 1/2 teaspoon salt to pints; 1 teaspoon to quarts, if desired. Fill jar to 1 inch from top with boiling water. Remove air bubbles. Wipe jar rims. Adjust lids and process as directed below.

Process in a Dial Gauge Pressure Canner at 11 pounds pressure Or in a Weighted Gauge Pressure Canner at 10 pounds pressure:

- Pints..........................................................20 minutes
- Quarts..........................................................25 minutes

Source: So Easy to Preserve: If you would like to purchase a copy of this book, please contact your local Extension Agent.
Dear Friends,

The Balancing Act is a quarterly publication sent to you by Family and Consumer Sciences Agents serving all Southwest Georgia. All information in this newsletter is written by Specialists at the University of Georgia and FACS agents, and is backed by research from the University of Georgia and the U.S. Department of Agriculture.

This newsletter brings you the latest information, please contact the agent in your county.

Thank you,

Peggy Bledsoe       Houston County       (478) 987-2028
Roxie Booker        Dougherty County     (229) 263-4103
Wayne Coachman      Early County         (229) 723-3072
Sylvia Davis        Baker County         (229) 734-3015
Sandra Gay          Stewart County       (229) 838-4908
Rachel Hubbard      Lanier County        (229) 482-3895
Joan Mason          Sumter County        (229) 924-4476
Andrea Scarrow      Colquitt County      (229) 616-7455
Suzanne Williams    Dougherty County     (229) 436-7216