

# Fun for little ones during the summer

With the thermometer pushing 100 degrees here in East Texas, it seems the little ones are gravitating back indoors to the air-conditioning.

Longer daylight hours are keeping little ones awake and ready for action until well after dinner time.

What's a parent to do? Summertime can mean a house full of your children's cousins or visits from grandchildren.

If summer at your house brings with it the laughter and energy of little ones, here's a handy list to keep taped inside your pantry door for summertime boredom emergencies.

■ Even with all the rain we've had this summer, it is still a great time to pick blueberries at one of the near-by farms.

Buy extra, so your little ones can share them with your neighbors.

Ring the neighbors' doorbells with a surprise is the perfect way to entertain children and bless the neighbors at the same time!

■ Pull that old typewriter off the top shelf of the closet and explain that before computers, people actually used these antique machines. Then set the kiddoes to work with lots of typing paper.

■ Make cardboard box cottages out of big corrugated boxes.

Add spool door knobs, paper rolls for gutters, and construction paper or magazine pages for tile roofs.

Make a garage, a barn for the stuffed animals, and a store next door until you have a whole village.

Turn the children lose and let them be creative.

Your biggest problem will be how to tell them that their masterpiece probably won't be permanent.

Getting rid of this cottage collection will be the perfect excuse to make another one next time they visit.

■ Let them "paint" your house with a paint brush and a bucket of water.

■ Tell stories into a tape recorder, so they can play them again and again.

Tell family stories about when their parents were little or make up fictional stories with important truths included.

If the kids are just visiting, send them home with a walkman and the tapes you made just for them.

■ Every small child loves a picnic and the heat is a good excuse to make things even more interesting by changing up your routine.

For example, plan an indoors picnic in a neighbor's garden room or plan a breakfast picnic outside in the cool of the day.

Let the children help you grocery shop and prepare the easy food, like peanut butter on celery or fresh fruit.

Buy store bought cookies and let them decorate with store bought icing and sprinkles.

■ Visit a nursing home. Take some of your fresh blueberries, your decorator cookies, or plan ahead with a song that your little ones enjoy singing.

Yes, it is hard work to tow little ones to the nursing home, but it reaps lots of rewards for everybody.

■ Play "Full Contact Spoons."

This is a version of the old card game, Spoons, with the added benefit of being a per-



CATHY KAFRVE  
Bullard Banner News

fect excuse to tickle, hug, wrestle, and giggle a bunch.

Also, try "Full Body Ping Pong" which requires no table or paddles, just ping pong balls and a lot of energy.

■ Give them each a dollar and take them to a dollar store, one of those stores where everything in the store costs one dollar only.

Let them buy whatever catches their fancy; you may find you are as entertained as they are.

This will only work when they are very small because children soon discover that they would rather have more money, but isn't it fun while it lasts?

■ Be a swinger. Don't let the lack of a tree branch keep you from enjoying those plastic swings for little ones.

Put large eye hooks in every doorway, in the garage, or on the porch, so that little ones can swing wherever you are working.

Buy a swing for each child and hang as many eye hooks as it takes to keep everyone moving.

Finally, plan ahead by filling a basket with the following items and keeping it on a shelf near this list.

Here's what to collect around your house or at the store for your kid-friendly basket:

■ Indoor table stuff- Include a box of 64 crayons, a pad of construction paper, washable markers, and stickers.

■ Indoor game stuff- Include plastic spoons, new decks of cards, ping pong balls, and a new easy puzzle.

■ Creative stuff- Include empty thread spools, scraps of elastic and ribbon,

■ Outdoor stuff- Include paint brushes, tennis balls for throwing against a wall, and toy trucks.

■ Stuff for you- Post this list. Toss in new cassette tapes and coupons for ice cream cones. Buy one of those "World's Best..." medals because if you can entertain children and love every minute of it, then you deserve a medal!

With little ones, every minute feels like an hour and every year feels like a minute.

Summer is absolutely the best thing ever invented because it allows you a few unscheduled minutes to enjoy them, that is, IF you can keep them busy and happy.

A few minutes of planning ahead can make those unstructured treasures of time perfectly delightful.

If you are interested in another list of ideas for small children or if you have a good idea you would like to share, please let us know at my email address, [features@Bullardnews.com](mailto:features@Bullardnews.com) or call us here at the Banner.

If you have older kiddoes, check back with us in this column because that list is on its way, too.

■ Cathy Primer Krafve, AKA Checklist Charlie, lives in East Texas with her children who are growing up too fast and the future grandfather of her future grandchildren.

# CARTOON



# COLUMN

## Mom navigates family through wheelchair

My cousin Marietta was eager to have me go through the Heritage Museum in the city of Brooksville, Fla., where they spend their winters.

One of the rooms in the Victorian mansion had been a physician's office and displayed an old wooden wheelchair.

I stopped in front of it and got a big smile on my face. This chair was older but quite similar to the one my mother had used in the early 1950's when she had three operations.

Right after the polio epidemic, our itinerant peddler, Gitano told Mom his daughter Maria was having surgery to help her walk better. Through his weekly updates, Mom followed the little girl's progress until a ray of light shined into her own life.

My mother had scarlet fever and diphtheria when she was 11. Now in her 40's, her ankle muscles were weakening and she was falling often.

Armed with hope and optimism, my mother and father visited Dr. E. J. Berkheiser in his Michigan Avenue office.

Mom explained to the well-known doctor that when she recovered from the diseases, her hand muscles were weak and her ankles were dropped.

"I feel like a ballerina standing on my toes all the time," was the way she described her affliction.

Lately, even the most insignificant items, like a raisin that had dropped on the kitchen floor, or a slightly elevated portion of the sidewalk, was enough to send her to her knees.

Was it just a matter of time before she really hurt herself? Was she destined to spend her later life in a wheelchair, she asked?

The skilled surgeon listened with compassion and explained, while Mom was older than most of his patients, he would do his best to stabilize her feet.

He could shorten the ligaments to permanently secure her ankles in position. He would operate first on the right foot and, when that healed, he would operate on the left foot.

In spring of 1953 Mom entered Presbyterian Hospital on Congress Street for her first operation.

Grandma Providenza, now remarried, was living across the street from us in her own home. The previous winter, she had suffered a stroke.

While Grandma was capable of looking after us, she wasn't physically able to cook or do household chores.

My brother John was 10 and I was 14 years old--old enough, we felt, to help out.

After more than a week in the hospital, Mom came home in a thick white plaster cast from her knees down to her toes.

Daddy rented a brand new, varnished oak wheelchair with woven caning on the back and seat.

ANTOINETTE JACKSON



Mangia!  
Mangia!

While it was state of the art in 1953, it was huge and unmanageable by today's standards. As quickly as she could, Mom learned how to navigate the clumsy vehicle around her kitchen.

Johnny and I pitched in and took over the household chores.

To motivate him to do his share, I separated our household duties and put my little brother's list on the refrigerator. Johnny set the table. He and I did dishes. Johnny kept his room picked up and clean.

He mowed the lawn in the summer, raked the leaves in the fall and shoveled snow in the wintertime.

When my brother finished something on the list, he got a checkmark beside the chore.

On Friday, Daddy looked at the list and added a bonus to Johnny's allowance based on what he did.

At dinnertime, Mom pulled up to the table, and from her wheelchair, step-by-step we worked as a team to prepare meals.

She would slice the vegetables. I would bring them to the sink and wash them. I filled pans with water and carried them to the stove. Mom measured out the pasta and I put it in the pan.

Under Mom's direction, I helped with meals, shopping and keeping the house clean. I was becoming quite the little cook and homemaker.

At the same time Johnny was learning responsibility and becoming a big a help to Daddy.

Mom tried to do more and more from her chair. It was almost comical to see her washing the kitchen floor with the Fuller brush mop propped between her arm and the wheel.

Square by square Mom maneuvered over the red and white tiles until the whole floor was done.

Just about the time she became mobile again, it was time for another operation.

Over the course of three years, Mom had three surgeries, one on the left leg and two on the right. In between, she managed to have her gall bladder removed.

When the ordeal was over, my mother could walk steady. And, thanks to Dr. Burkheiser, Mom was never again in a wheelchair.

While the antique wheelchair in the muse-

um triggered fond memories, there was still something I was ready to work out with my cousin's help.

As a junior in college, my marriage and family class professor, Dr. Floyd Anderson, assigned an autobiography.

In the section where I recounted the years of helping my mother get back on her feet, Dr. Anderson wrote, in the margin "martyr complex."

Though I got a good grade on the paper, his comment always bothered me.

When we got together later, I asked my cousin what she remembered about that time in my life.

"Mar, you were there. Did I resent it? Did I act like a martyr?" I asked.

"No, not at all," Marietta answered. "I didn't see any of that."

"I saw it as a positive learning experience for both Johnny and me," I replied.

Marietta agreed.

As for Professor Anderson, while he may have had a doctorate in marriage and family studies, he didn't know squat about Italian families.

### Mom's Pasta with Broccoli

This is by far my favorite pasta dish. Garlic and olive oil are the perfect compliment to the broccoli's strong flavors.

1 pound bunch fresh broccoli (or 10 oz. frozen)

- 1 1/2 cups boiling water
- 1 teaspoon salt
- 12 ounces linguini cooked to al dente
- 4 tablespoons extra virgin olive oil
- 3 cloves garlic

Bring the water to boil in a large pan. Peel and cut broccoli stems into bite-sized pieces. Add the stems to boiling salted water and cook for 5 minutes. Cut florets into approximate bite-sized pieces, add to pan and simmer uncovered for about 8 minutes, until just tender.

While the broccoli is cooking, in a separate pot, cook the pasta to al dente according package directions. (Mom always broke long pasta into three parts before adding it to the boiling water.)

While the broccoli and pasta are cooking, lightly brown the garlic in the olive oil and set aside to cool.


Drain the pasta, reserving about a cup of the cooking water.

Add the pasta to the pan with broccoli. Stir in olive oil and garlic mixture and cook together for about a minute. If too dry, add some of the pasta water.

Serve with freshly grated Romano cheese.

Serves 4

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