

Clark County Family Childcare Association Newsletter

Printed June 2011

Meeting Times

Association meetings are held on the

First Tuesday of each month

Social time is 5:30 to 6:30 p.m.

Meetings begin at 6:30 p.m.

STARS classes begin at 8 p.m.

Meetings are held at Pied Piper Pizza

12300 N.E. Fourth Plain Blvd. Vancouver 98682

Upcoming Events

June 14th Providers in the Park

June 21st Board Meeting

July 5th Regular Meeting

STARS training: "The Art of the Interview"



Dear Providers,



In the 10 years that I have worked with the Clark county Family Child Care Association, I have seen many devoted child care providers take their turn at the "big table."

At our June 7th, meeting two more brand new board members and two incumbents accepted

positions to serve on the Executive Board for the next two years.

For this transition, Wendy Patterson moved from the chair of Vice President up to the President chair. Wendy had prior commitments and was sworn in before the meeting so Melba chaired this meeting. Our outgoing President Melba Halgren will continue to serve CCFCCA as our SEIU Representative and as a valuable writer for this newsletter.

The Vice President position has been taken over by Cindy Perez. You can read more about Cindy in this newsletter to see why we are so proud of her and extremely pleased to have her join our newly seated executive board. Nancy Lycklama has been devotedly serving CCFCCA for a number of years. She has been worth her weight in gold as our trusted treasurer. As to our by-laws, a provider is only allowed to serve two consecutive terms in any board position so this time around, Nancy has very graciously consented to taking on the job of secretary for the next two years. A brand new face at the "big table" is that of our own Lari Piel. Lari has been a CCFCCA member for a number of years and has served on several special committees for events like: Provider Appreciation Day, The Holiday Bazaar and the Christmas Party celebration. We are happy to have Lari take on the responsibility of Treasurer.

While the Executive Board leads the team that runs the association, they do not work alone. The power behind the board is a group of hard working Providers that hold the "committee" positions. These ladies are the behind the scenes volunteers that do the very important jobs of: STARS coordinator, Leasa Ripplinger, the Welcome Committee, Sandi Brinley and Carol Chandler, Newsletter Editor, Judy Peters, Historians, Tina VanBuskirk and Peggy Corcoran, SEIU representative, Melba Halgren and the very important job of consultant, Deborah Rosser.



Lari Melba Cindy Nancy

The Clark County Family Child Care Association has been serving local Child Care Providers for nearly 40 years and during all of those years many hard working Providers have taken their turn at the helm to keep this valuable organization active. A great big THANK YOU goes out to each and every person that has helped to keep CCFCCA a thriving Association.

By Judy Peters

June Meeting Report

By Melba Halgren

Our first summer CCFCCA meeting was a real delight. The theme for the evening was "Summer Fun." Tables were covered with red-checked tablecloths. The center of the room was decorated with a picnic basket, camp chairs and summer toys on large beach towels.



This evening was a special event for CCFCCA. Our new executive board members were sworn in by our own legal beagle Deborah Rosser. Our new president, Wendy Patterson, new Vice President, Cindy Perez, new Secretary, Nancy Lycklama and new Treasurer, Lari Piel were all presented with beautiful bouquets of rainbow colored carnations. Our past executive board members were also honored with thank-you cards and bouquets of flowers. An added bonus was the homemade, very delicious large cupcakes brought to the meeting by Debra Gault. The cupcakes were prepared by Debra's daughter Mindy and helped made the evening festive, especially for our birthday lady Tsai Spring.



Tsai had a great evening. Not only did we sing happy birthday to her, but she also received a scented reed diffuser as a birthday gift. Then Tsai's raffle tickets won her two extra prizes. She selected a red camp chair and then a green camp chair. She was a very happy "camper" over all the attention. The other raffle winners were Judy Peters (winning a blue

camp chair) and Melba Halgren (winning a red camp chair). Denise Hertz was the lucky provider who had a flower taped under her chair and was rewarded with a gift bag full of S'mores ingredients. Nancy Dickerson won the bonus prize of a beautiful scone.

The lucky winner of the 50/50 raffle of \$20.50 was Leasa Ripplinger.

The business part of our meeting was very productive. Union Rep. Melba Halgren gave a report on the June 4th Steering Council meeting in Seattle. The SEIU 925 news is included in this June CCFCCA newsletter, so don't miss finding out the latest things our union is doing for all of us. Leasa Ripplinger announced that our July STARS Training will be on the "Taking charge of your Interview" and August STARS will be on "Policies & Procedures" facilitated by Deborah Rosser. Sandi Brinley reported on our new batch of Discovery kits and the 11 new Signing Time DVD's added to our Professional Lending Library. We are also enjoying the variety of books brought in to our meeting each month by member Debra Gault, which include self-help books, and fun reading novels and magazines.

Nancy Lycklama gave a report on our very successful May Provider Appreciation Event, which was a Tea Party attended by 28 providers. Judy Peters turned in a check for \$113.60 from our Who's Song & Larry's Fundraiser. We are still considering whether to have a yard sale this year.

Under new business, CCFCCA members choose to focus our community contributions this year to helping struggling families at Christmas time. We also decided to have another Self-Defense class in the fall.



CCFCCA is offering a special invitation to all providers in Clark County to join us on June 14th for a "Providers in the Park" event at Ester Short Park around 6:00 p.m. by the big clock tower. We will hold one on the second Tuesday of each month during the summer. Bring your camp chair, snacks and join us in some fun conversations with fellow providers and friends.

We Are Very Proud

By Deborah Rosser



Washington State's Department of Early Learning and Thrive by Five developed Washington State's voluntary Quality Rating and Improvement System (QRIS) for licensed childcare businesses; *Seeds to Success* (Seeds)

In 2009-2010 Cindy Perez participated in the Seeds modified field test. In 2010-2011, DEL and *Thrive by Five* conducted the second year of the

field test of *Seeds to Success* in five sites across Washington State: Clark, Kitsap, Spokane, White Center, and East Yakima to include 86 participants. The licensees participated in a painstaking investigational assessment of the Seeds model. Our very own Cindy was among the participants in the second year as well.

During the 2010-2011 field tests, a research team from the *Childcare Quality and Early Learning Center* at the University of Washington was contracted to gather and scrutinize data from the participants in the five location/sites and to give a "Seeds Rating" based on this collected data. Seeds Ratings consist of a number ranging from 1 to 5 that signify quality across the four standard areas: Curriculum and Learning Environment, Professional Development and Training, Leadership and Management Practices and Family and Community Partnerships.

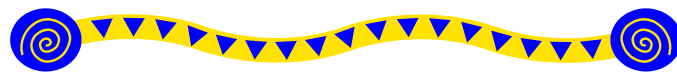
The results were announced on Monday, June 6th. Out of the 86 participants, which included 49 centers and 37 Family Childcare homes, Vancouver's Cindy Perez was the only Provider in the state to receive the highest rating of 5 seeds.

This is outstanding! Congratulations Cindy! Those of us that know you already knew how exceptional you are.

Among the ratings, none of the participants received a 4 seed rating; nine participants received a 3 seed rating; twenty-three participants received a 2 seed, with forty two participants receiving a 1 seed.

The Department of Early Learning can be proud that they have an exceptional licensed Provider providing care to Washington State's working families. We are

confident that Cindy's extraordinary skills and talents can be used to mentor other licensed Providers not only here in Vancouver but across the State.



"A Closer Look"

We are sorry to report that CCFCCA member, Kesha Fisher will not be able to continue writing our "A Closer Look" articles for a while.

Kesha is a gifted writer and has done CCFCCA a great service by offering her writing skills each month in this article.

We wish Kesha the best as she continues running her home daycare business, raising her family and taking classes at Clark College.

Because of her busy schedule, Kesha is one of our many rarely seen members that have not been able to join us at our monthly meetings.

Thankfully she is connected by way of our [cprovidersupport](#) on line support group.



Happy Birthday to You....



June Birthdays:

Melissa Milhorn	6/1
Christiana Martin	6/22
Cathy Engelquist	6/22
Amy Fullerton	6/25
Tsai Hsia Spring	6/30

July Birthdays:

Denise Hertz	7/14
Alexandra Batman	7/17
Wendy Patterson	7/29

June STARS Training

“Outdoor Activities with Children”

By Melba Halgren



Ruth Laabs, from Clark College, is passionate about the benefits of getting children involved in outside activities. Ruth has a fun personality and made the training lively and interesting. She firmly believes that children need a sense of adventure in their play and *lots* of outside time. She advocates using things from nature in play and the “*less plastic the better.*” Here are some fun ideas she shared with providers:

* “Adventure Packs” are backpacks full of things like tree pieces, nature explorer catalogs, books such as “Roxaboxen”; charts of butterflies, birds or bugs; magnifying glass; binoculars; package of seeds; clipboard, journal and pencil; homemade kaleidoscope; a small rug to sit on; and some items found in nature. The child checks out the backpack and is responsible for the contents. Let the adventure begin as the child explores the backyard, park or woods.

* Give children opportunities to take some risks. Ruth encourages tree and rock climbing in her natural setting at Clark College. Logs can be an adventure because they roll; rock and kids can balance on them. Logs can be used as a place to sit, or as a table. Cool bugs live underneath to discover too.

* “Mud Kitchen” is fun for kids. Let the kids feel the sensation of mud. Let them get their feet in it and squish mud between their toes. Children love making mud pies and other creations out of mud.

Mud is different than sand. Comparing sand & water and dirt & water can be a good science project.

* Have a variety of fun things outside for kids to explore and play. Parachutes are great. If you don’t have one, use an old sheet, cut out a circle, and put handles on if you want. Kids like to hide under them. Balloons are also exciting to play with outside. You can put numbers or letters on them. This can turn into an educational adventure. Blow bubbles outside. Chasing bubbles is an adventure!

* Discover the wonder of books *outside*. Ruth likes to leave books outside for kids to find and read. She has even laminated the book “Roxaboxen” and keeps it outside. Other books she recommends are: “Bubble Homes & Fish Farts,” “Simple Science Fun,” “Do You Doodle,” “I Love Dirt” by Jennifer Ward, “Last Child in the Woods” by Richard Louv, and “Green Crafts for Children.”

* Other fun things to do for kids: Put “animal tracks” in the backyard and let the kids search for tracks. Give each child a paper sack to fill with green things they find outside. Make a paper bag “journal”. Put plastic dinosaurs or forest animals (deer, owl, beaver, etc.) outside and let kids search for them (like a treasure hunt). When kids disagree, play “rock/paper/scissors” to resolve an issue. *Kids just need time to discover.* Outside.



Congratulations!



Congratulations to Grandma Hannele LaFrance On the birth of granddaughter, Brielle Katarina Davies (Parents, Richard and Sanni) Brielle was born April 13, 2011. Brielle was 8 pounds

13 ounces and 21inches.

SEIU 925 NEWS



PUBLIC FORUM: On Wednesday, June 15th, there will be a public forum on the new WAC's at the ESD-112 building at 6:30 p.m. Be prepared with your concerns about the latest draft of the new WAC's. To read the new WAC's, go to the DEL website at:

<http://www.del.wa.gov/publications/laws/doc/FamilyHomePreparedRules0411.pdf>

You can make comments at:

<http://apps.del.wa.gov/PolicyProposalComment/Detail.aspx> or you can E-mail Rules@del.wa.gov

FIGHT FOR A FAIR ECONOMY: This is a national movement that SEIU is a part of. SEIU's goal is to grow our union bigger, stronger and more powerful to fight for a fair economy. We need to be organized and take back our economy. The wealthiest Americans are not paying their fair share of taxes and continue to benefit from huge tax loopholes. Unions are under attack all over our country. Wisconsin is just one example of the concerted effort to destroy unions. Union membership was 30% of all workers in 1967. Today union membership is only 7%. SEIU is joining hands with lots of other organizations nationally to demand change.

ELECTRONIC NOTEPADS: Licensors are now using these notepads to do their monitoring visits. These notepads can actually work in your favor. They can be used to monitor licensors too. The licensors time is recorded and licensors are tracked. The electronic records make it easy to see how long it has been since your last visit. Licensors should no longer be measuring things or looking in closets, but just writing up obvious infractions like a knife left out on the counter. There is a box where providers can click to ask for a supervisory review and that goes right to the supervisor's desk. The provider's signature on each page "locks" the page so that licensors cannot go back and make changes. Be sure that your licensor has an electric notepad and printer when she comes out. Providers should get a copy of everything. If the licensor does not have a printer,

you may ask her to come back with a printer. This electronic notepad should not be feared. Visits should now be accomplished in a shorter amount of time.

SEIU IS NO LONGER ENDORSING THE NEW WAC's: According to our contract with the state, DEL was required to negotiate with SEIU over the creation of the new WAC's. When the last draft was completed, SEIU members of the Negotiated Rule Making Team discovered that many WAC's had been changed after-the-fact. There were about 20 WAC's that we could not live with. More negotiations followed with many of them being tweaked. There are still 6 that we absolutely cannot live with. Check out my SEIU News article in the CCFCCA May 2011 newsletter at ccfccaweb.org to read about these 6 WAC's and make comments on the DEL website listed above.

OTHER BITS & PIECES OF NEWS:

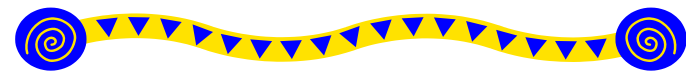
- Licensing fees are going up from \$24 to \$30.
- Basic Health program is currently closed. There are 150,000 people on the waiting list.
- The old "Benchmarks" are now called "Washington State Guidelines" and must be completed by December of this year.
- SEIU Victories include: Non-expiring License, Illegal Child Care, Traveling Criminal Background Checks (card goes with the assistant)
- Chase Bank is making money on poor families who are on state assistance when they use the new EBT "cards" to buy groceries. Every time the card is used, Chase Bank takes out 85 cents per transaction. These are hidden fees that many families may not be aware of. SEIU Steering Council members participated in a rally against Chase Bank on Saturday, June 4th in Seattle. We were part of 1500 people protesting against Chase.
- Repetitive FLICA's automatically triggers an investigation.
- Betty Hyde is on the bandwagon requiring providers to have a GED or High School education to be a licensed provider. This is a real problem with Somalian providers because many do not know how to read in their own language and this may be used against them to disqualify them to do licensed care.

Continued on the next page.....

SEIU 925 NEWS continued...

- Dental insurance is available to anyone through Dental Health Services. Monthly premiums are very affordable. It will cost \$17.75 for one person, \$35 for subscriber plus one, \$47.50 for subscriber plus two, and \$62 for subscriber plus three or more. Orthodontics is included under this insurance. Call Elaine M. Hetterly at 1-253-833-9121 for more information.
- "The State will contribute 7% more to our health care through the union."
- The new 2011-2013 SEIU contract will go into effect on July 1st. The actual contracts have not been printed yet. A summary of the benefits will be available at the June 9th regional union meeting at Round Table Pizza. Or you can review the contract on the SEIU925 website at SEIU925.org
- Non-standard bonus hours will start up again on July 1st.
- Special needs authorization will follow the child around –up to the 18-months of authorization.
- Regarding the End of Date Reminder: If you were not notified with a reminder, you will be given an additional 10 days of payment.
- There are new Health Insurance Options available. Visit the SEIU website if you are unable to attend a regional union meeting where this information is available.

We are stronger together,
--Melba Halgren, 27-year provider, SEIU Lead
Activist for SW Washington



June Dental News

- Give your child a great start in life by making sure all baby teeth are healthy. If you need help finding a dentist call Kathy at Clark County Public Health 360.397.8000 X 7371.
- www.parenthelp123.org is a website to connect your family to state-sponsored health insurance (that covers medical, dental and vision), food programs and resources in your community. It is a great resource!

Check This Out!!!

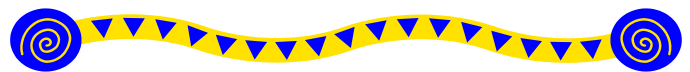
This year, July has 5 Fridays, 5 Saturdays and 5 Sundays. This happens once every 823 years.

This is called money bags.

Kinda interesting - read on!!!

This year we're going to experience four unusual dates.

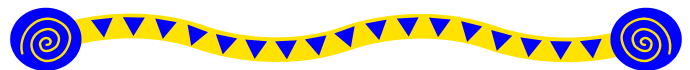
1/1/11, 1/11/11, 11/1/11, 11/11/11 and that's not all...
Take the last two digits of the year in which you were born - now add the age you will be this year,
The results will be 111 for everyone in the whole world. This is the year of the Money!!



Book Drop Bins

Waste Connections has partnered with Reading Tree to help support literacy by reusing unwanted books. Drop boxes for used books have recently been placed at all three of the local transfer stations (see below for location info.) Now, when a community member is visiting one of the transfer stations to bring in other materials, they can also donate books. Each station has an area for recyclable items-books are just the latest in the long list of items that are accepted. Depending on quality, the books will be reused or recycled, instead of clogging a landfill.

- Central Transfer Station: 11034 NE 117th Ave. Vancouver, WA 98662
360-256-8492
- West Van Materials Recovery Center: 6601 NW Old Lower River Rd. Vancouver, WA. 360-737-1727
- Washougal Transfer Station: 4020 South Grant Street, Washougal, WA 98671
360-835-2500



First Lady Unveils Let's Move! Child Care to Ensure Healthy Start for Youngest Children



Mrs. Obama announces public and private commitments to meet highest standards for nutrition, physical activity and screen time

After visiting children at CentroNía, a bilingual child care center in Washington, D.C.,

First Lady Michelle Obama unveiled *Let's Move! Child Care*, a new effort to work with child care providers to help our youngest children get off to a healthy start. The First Lady released a checklist that providers and parents can use as a tool to encourage healthy eating and physical activity and limit screen time for young children. In addition, the First Lady announced that the Department of Defense, the General Services Administration and Bright Horizons have committed to these practices – a step that will positively impact approximately 280,000 children in 1,600 child care centers nationwide. Mrs. Obama was joined by Health and Human Services Secretary).

“Everyone is going to see that these small changes can make a big difference. If our kids get into the habit of getting up and playing, if their palates warm up to veggies at an early age, and if they’re not glued to a TV screen all day, they’re on their way to healthy habits for life” Mrs. Obama said. “That’s why I’m so excited about *Let's Move! Child Care* – because I know that childcare facilities and home-based providers can be a real building block for an entire generation of healthy kids.”

Obesity rates among preschoolers ages 2 to 5 have doubled in the past four decades, and one in five children are overweight or obese by the time they reach their 6th birthday. This health crisis begins at an early age: over half of obese children first become overweight at or before age 2. As the Childhood Obesity Task Force noted, child care centers and informal care represent a tremendous opportunity to prevent obesity, because 60 percent of children under 5 are in some form child care, spending an average of 29 hours per week in that care.

Furthermore, parents and communities are looking for improvements in child care standards. A 2008 survey by NACCRRRA reported that 93 percent of parents thought existing health and safety standards

for child care should be improved. And last week, the Partnership for a Healthier America announced commitments from mayors around the country to work with their local childcare providers and after-school programs to improve standards for nutrition and physical activity and to limit screen time within child care settings.

The First Lady encouraged day care facilities and home-based providers to commit to the *Let's Move! Child Care Check List* to encourage healthy eating and physical activity and limit screen time for our youngest children. The check list includes:

- **Physical Activity:** Provide 1-2 hours of physical activity throughout the day, including outside play when possible.
- **Screen Time:** No screen time for children less than 2 years of age. For children age 2 and older, strive to limit screen time to no more than 30 minutes per week during child care, and work with parents and caregivers to ensure children have no more than 1-2 hours of quality screen time per day, the amount recommended by the American Academy of Pediatrics.
- **Food:** Serve fruits or vegetables at every meal; eat meals family-style when possible, and no fried foods.
- **Beverages:** Provide access to water during meals and throughout the day, and do not serve sugary drinks. For children age two and older, serve low-fat (1%) or non-fat milk, and no more than one 4-6 ounce serving of 100% juice per day.
- **Infant feeding:** For mothers who want to continue breastfeeding, provide their milk to their infants and welcome them to breastfeed during the child care day; and support all new parents in their decisions about infant feeding.

To best support providers who choose to meet these practices, Nemours is leading an effort to provide free, comprehensive resources and tools in a newly developed website, and the National Association of Child Care Resource and Referral Agencies is committed to providing technical assistance to providers. Providers and parents can go to HealthyKidsHealthyFuture.org for these free tools and resources and to share success stories.

Free Summer Movies

Since 1991 Regal Entertainment Group has been providing the FREE Family Film Festival to select communities as a summer activity. Locally the Cascade Park Cascade 16 hosts the East side of Vancouver and the West side is hosted by the Hazel Dell area Cinema 99.

Each Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday at 10AM there is a G rated and PG rated movie that you can get into for free. The seating for each movie is based upon availability so you might want to get there early. That's right, three days per week during the summer you can take your kiddos to a show for FREE.

To see the full schedules of films playing at each location, go to <http://clarkcountyrealestateguide.com/2010/06/day-134-free-family-film-festival/>



Cascade Stadium 16
1101 SE 160th Avenue
Vancouver, WA 98683



Cinema 99 Stadium 11
9010 NE Hwy 99
Vancouver, WA 98665
360-571-0984



Weekend Warriors: Work Out Less, Live Longer?

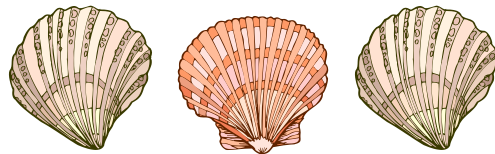
By Jennifer Gruenemay, ACE-Certified, Special to Lifescript
Published June 12, 2011

No time for exercise during the week? You're not alone. Millions of adults are stretched for time and can only spare a few precious moments to exercise during the week. And that makes weekends the perfect time to catch up on fitness. We call those people "Weekend Warriors."

Although fitness experts recommend exercising at least 30 minutes each day, research suggests that those who burn a lot of calories on the weekends and not during the week are still much better off than those who do not exercise at all. Burning just 1,000 calories in 1-2 exercise sessions a week (or weekend)

can increase your chance of living for at least 10 years longer than sedentary individuals by 60%.

In other words, don't adopt an "all or none" attitude! Some is better than none, and fitting it in on the weekends is just fine.



And there'll be a Test

The ability to recall facts is an essential school skill. Consider these four ideas for boosting memory.

PLAY THE SHELL GAME. Place a ball under one of three shells (cups, hats, or bowls) and then ask your child to follow the one holding the ball as you quickly shuffle them around. Other brain strengthening games include Simon Says and Concentration.

LET THEM DOODLE. Studies show that doodling while listening to a lesson can help concentration and make facts easier to recall. The simple activity of doodling may cut down on daydreaming without affecting performance on the main task.

BE INQUISITIVE. Research shows that discussing previous events helps hone a child's recall ability. When she returns from a friend's birthday party, you might ask questions like, "Who was there?" and "What did you eat?" You can also query her after reading a story, watching a movie, and so on.

SET IT TO SONG. Music is a pre-language learning tool, and studies show that it can be a powerful memory booster. It starts early when we learn the alphabet song, but anything a child needs to absorb and remember can be set to music—it just takes creativity!

June Gardening Tips



This is still a time for planting — vegetables, annuals, even trees and shrubs — but it is also importantly the time to **WATCH WATERING!** We

are seeing lots of example of heat stress coming our way and are hearing stories of dry, wilting plants. To help with the acclimation to warmer weather, remember the following:

- Water deeply, less-frequently, rather than a daily spot-watering that won't get water down to the deeper roots (A soaker hose or drip system makes this much easier and affordable).
- Water early in the morning, rather than in the heat of the day or in the evening.
- Water at ground level. Watering from overhead risks leaf-burn from midday sun on wet leaves.
- Mulch plants to help the soil hold in moisture and keep it more evenly available to the plants.

Perennials, Annuals, and Vegetables

Clean out containers of spent bulbs and early spring annuals and repot with a fresh supply of all-summer annuals. The selection at the nursery is at its peak,



everything from annual vines to unusual tropical plants to the traditional favorites. Mix and match for a season of color! (Try adding some Osmocote timed-release fertilizer in with the potting soil for a long season of feeding.)

Sunflowers will start to shoot up, now that we've had some warm weather. If you didn't get around to planting by seed this year, we have an assortment of varieties now on hand in starts, so it's not too late to be sure to have these favorites in your garden.

Watch out for premature flower stalks appearing in your garlic! Uneven watering is often the culprit, which seems especially easy to occur when the temperature fluctuates as much as it has recently. Break off those stems (they're lighter in color and have an inverted teardrop shaped bud on the top), and try feeding with a liquid fertilizer higher in



nitrogen like Ellie's or Fish Town. Sometimes this works and you can leave the plants in the ground for a few more weeks' growth. **BUT...** check the stems of the plants near the soil level; if they are starting to feel hard or woody, it will probably be best to go ahead and harvest ahead of schedule and not risk losing the whole crop, as the flower extracts its food energy from the bulb.

Fertilize and mulch tomatoes; also prune them for good air circulation, to help prevent those unwanted funguses and blights. Water them regularly and evenly; uneven watering is one of the causes of blossom drop (remember not to water overhead at the heat of the day, to avoid leaf burn).

This month is the time to start thinking about planting beans. Look for our heirloom varieties for something a little different.

It is also time to think about starting another succession planting of greens — lettuce, spinach, chard, arugula — this will help maintain a supply of these delectable through the fresh-eating season.

Happy Gardening!

Precious Cargo

4 simple ideas to increase the peace in the car



A few days before you head out, ask each family member to choose two or three favorite songs. Combine all of them into a playlist and burn your own road trip soundtrack.

Bring a sandwich-building kit. Pack a cooler with a variety of sandwich filling, bread, spreads, and sliced veggies. Brake at rest stops to put together and enjoy your meals. It's a cheap and fresh option and most rest stops have grassy areas where kids can run around and stretch their legs.

Hang a shoe organizer on the back of the passenger seat and insert your child's books, stuffed animals, games and art supplies into the pockets. It's handy for kids to have everything within arm's reach.

To avoid the infamous "Are we there yet?" give each child a map with your route highlights. Along the way, they can match up the town names with the road signs you pass. That way they'll always know exactly where you are and how much farther you have to go.

Community Events

Wednesday, June 15, 8:30 - 10:30pm. Night Hike at Ridgefield National Wildlife Refuge, Carty Unit. A trail which is familiar by day becomes a whole new experience at night! Our trail guides will lead you on an adventure in which owls hooting, coyotes howling, bats flying, and strange rustlings in the brush are wonderful surprises. Bring flashlight, bug repellent, binoculars, and dress for the weather. Please register at jill_peoples@fws.gov or call 360-887-3883.

Tuesday, June 21, Food & Film: Series on Water "Blue Gold," 6-9pm, Unitarian Universalist Church of Vancouver, 4505 E 18th Street. For more information email blake.jones@clark.wa.gov or call 360-397-2121

Saturday, June 25, 9am - 6pm & Sunday, June 26, 10am - 4 pm. Recycled Arts Festival. Esther

Short Park, W. 8th St & Columbia St. Vancouver, Washington 98660. Is it trash or is it art? Visit the hippest, most eco-conscious festival in SW Washington! See the creations of over 90 artists, listen to an eclectic mix of music and savor fresh produce from Vancouver Farmer's Market. There will be something for the entire family so plan to spend the day. For more information contact sally.fisher@clark.wa.gov or call 360-397-2121 ext. 4352.

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