



Boys, Boats & Box Traps.....	1	A Recipe.....	7
Miss Manners.....	3	Mail Bag.....	8
Joy.....	4	Thoughts from the Sleep Deprived	9
The Wilds of Creation: House “Wren- ovation”.....	6	Pancakes & Scrambled Eggs.....	10

Boys, Boats & Box Traps

The house is quiet. The logs breathe a sigh of relief. Or was that me? It is the first morning in the honey colored log house that sheltered the second half of my childhood; now known exclusively as “Grammy’s House”. We arrived yesterday on the four o’clock ferry after an eight hour drive. As we approached the dock Gabe summed up the state of the children: “Mom, sometimes I just get this electrical shock feeling in my insides.... its like, I’m so excited that I just want to run, and run, and run...” He’s not the only one. Gramps, equally excited was found hiding along the road back to the house, “Its a GRAMPSY MUSHROOM!” shouts Ezra. Gramps does this for every arrival, rain, sleet, snow or sun, he’ll be hiding by the path somewhere. Sometimes they find him, sometimes they don’t.

For both Gramps and children the highlight of this trip is definitely the new row boat. Built by Gramps himself over many a long winter afternoon with CBC droning in the background, now painted nautical blue and white with shiny brass oar locks, waiting in the side yard. I can’t tell who is more excited. “CAN WE ROW IT RIGHT NOW?!” Shout Hannah and Gabe in unison. Of course. Gramps has been waiting sixty years for this moment. Or so it seems. But first it must be moved the hundred yards or so down to the dock. Gramps, referring to the ancient Egyptians, shows the children how to move the round bumpers from back to front beneath the boat as they roll it down the hill and through the forest of weeds higher than their heads. Half way there, Gabe stops, pants and says, sagely, “Gramps, I think we should park the boat next to

REFORM IN EDUCATION AND LIVING INSTRUCTION FOR THE YOUNG

the water from now on.” Within ten minutes they had the rowing basics down and had been emancipated into the canals with the boat herself as their teacher.

This morning, they were up at 6:42 a.m. Gabe ate two plums, declared himself full and made a run for the door with his foam cup full of worms in one hand and his life jacket in the other. Not so fast. Gramps insisted on Rice Krispies and juice, as well as his sister before he left the house. 6:59: out the door, two kids, two fishing poles, two life jackets, two oars, and worried worms under an ominous grey sky. Being eight and ten, we poured tea and left them to their own devices under the tutelage of their new mistress, the boat. Then came the rain. In sheets, for a good twenty minutes. we peered out the windows, laughed, laid out a bar of soap for a joke and drank more tea. Surely they would be back soon. A half an hour passed before they made their appearance. Dripping wet, squishing in their shoes. Hannah emerged from the path first, “Well, THAT was an adventure!” she proclaimed. Gabe came next. “Mom. It rained” “Really? Is that why you’re all wet?” Ezra: “Did you fall in the bay Gabe?” “No, Ez, it rained so hard we couldn’t see. Hannah was crying. I was crying. We called and called for Grampsy and Mom. We were all the way out in the bay by the cows in that field! No one came, so we had to suck it up and row home. Can we ride our bikes now?” Grammy: “Don’t you want to dry off first?” Gabe: “Nope. We’re only wet. Come on Han, let’s go!” Grammy, “Wait for me, I’ll get my bike.” Off they went, water flying off the ends of Hannah’s braids as they rounded the corner and headed for the road at the end of the 1/4 mile driveway.

Meanwhile, Gramps packed up the little boys and the box trap containing a “chickmunk” caught over night and headed for the village. They are on a mission for boat gas, coffee, and candy if I know Gramps. The “chickmunk” is destined for an unsuspecting neighbor’s sugar maple forest at the other end of the island. He and his friends have been nesting in Grammy’s car engine and causing all manner of expensive damage. Gramps and the boys are on a mission to trap them all this week and drop them off at Mr. Connell’s. “Let’s not tell Mr. Connell, okay boys?” Says Gramps, as he loads the box trap into the back of his van, “It will be a surprise.” Boy’s giggle. Gramps winks and they too disappear around the bend in the drive.

What’s that I hear faintly from inside the house? Oh yes, it is my empty tea cup calling me. All this and its only 8:46 a.m.

Miss Manners

Every trip to Wolfe Island brings with it a parade of old friends. Today was spent in the company of the Zwiers family, Daddy, Mama & little Kennedy arrived on an early morning ferry and stayed into the evening. Mama Zwiers and I were friends in high school and have kept in touch over the years. They piled out of their little car bearing cards (hand made by the two year old little girl) chocolate chip cookies and a stack of car activity pages for our kids on the ride home. They are thoughtful folks.

Spending the day with my friend was a joy. We held down deck chairs while the children played and I beat her at a game of scrabble while her husband took carving lessons from my Dad in the garage. Fun was had by all. However, the thing that I appreciated most was watching their little blond haired, blue eyed daughter bounce through her day. She is their first child (#2 is due in October) and yet she shared like a veteran sibling with not one, “mine!” uttered all day long. She said please, and thank you, and not just for her snack, but when she asked Elisha to stop chasing her around the living room. She took her shoes off at the door. She ate her lunch at the kids table without supervision and not one word of instruction from her parents. At dinner she sat in her chair and had better manners than my eight year old! When dessert was served her eyes sparkled and she announced, “Rice cream, my favorite!” When Daddy said “No rice cream, you didn’t eat your dinner.” She didn’t throw a fit. She didn’t pout. Her food was not thrown. She cheerfully kept plugging away at her corn on the cob and salad. She never did get her “rice cream.” She politely thanked my parents before she left and hugged me “happy



birthday” even though it isn’t my birthday. In this whole long day I didn’t hear her parents raise their voices once. Nor did I hear Kennedy raise hers. She is well on her way to being a delightful young lady and a wonderful big sister.

Her example was an encouragement to me. It reminded me of why we keep on keeping on with our children. Why we insist on manners at home, kindness and love toward siblings and as quiet a life as possible with four kids. We want our children to be a blessing. We want our kids to leave joy in their wake and be an encouragement to other kids and to other parents; just like Kennedy Zwiers. We want our kids to have good manners because other people matter and how we carry ourselves in their presence matters.

I hope Mama and Daddy Zwiers don’t mind me bragging so shamelessly on their child and on their excellent training, I’m quite sure they wouldn’t point it out themselves, but they deserve the credit and we can all use the encouragement of excellence in a young family as well as the reminder of what is possible with a child as young as two.

Joy

I love summer vacation. Each season has its pros and cons, and I enjoy them all, but truly, summer is my favorite. There is nothing like sleeping in ('til 8:00) most mornings and having the last rays of sun tuck in behind the mountains no earlier than nine at night. Summer brings long beach days with good friends, fresh garden produce, lots of travel and adventure for our family.

One of the best things about travel, for us, is seeing how other people live. Experiencing a little slice of life through their eyes and having the privilege of peeking into family life under someone else's roof. This trip has included visits with four families, in addition to Grammy & Gramps, and it has been wonderful. Each family has blessed us in a different way. Each family has caused me to look at life a little differently; and each family has caused me to reflect with a grateful heart on the good gifts God has given me in my own family life.

I was considering these things this morning while we sat in the park, burning the half an hour between the ferry boat docking and the commencement of Sunday services at my parents' church. Grammy took us to a lovely little park with a bronze statue of two little children playing leap frog. The girl was on top, leaping over her little brother with her pig tails flying in the breeze. Delightful. The inscription on the plaque next to the statue caught my eye, I cannot remember the exact quote, but the gist of it is as follows: It is not blood that binds the hearts of family members, but the joy they take in one another and sharing life together. How true. Someone I respect greatly says that what a child needs most is for his parents to simply delight in who he is, that no amount of discipline or instruction will come to more than a hill of beans if the child doesn't grow in the sunshine of true joy at his mere existence. This quote seems to embody that thought, doesn't it?

What is joy within a family? Does having joy mean that every day is a party and we aren't allowed to cry? Does joy mean faking it for family and friends when we do cry? Does joy mean that I as Mom have to be happy every minute of every day? Do my children? If we fail in this (as we inevitably will) does that mean that we do not have joy in our family? Of course not. Joy is not, primarily, an emotion. Sure, sometimes we feel joyful, and that is a joy! But even on the days we do not, we can still choose joy. Every morning when I wake I have two choices: 1. Act out of the tired groggy way I feel: "You kids be quiet and go play. I need tea. I need quiet. Unless you're bringing me the first in the manner of the second, take a hike! or 2. Choose joy. I can smile. That muscular movement can be produced on demand, regardless of emotional state. I can choose my words: "Good morning children. How did you sleep? Why don't you sit quietly and eat. I'll fix some tea and read a chapter of our book to you." Choosing joy is not a matter of

REFORM IN EDUCATION AND LIVING INSTRUCTION FOR THE YOUNG

denying how you feel and hiding behind a facade. It is a matter of focus. I am still tired. I still need my tea. I still need some quiet, but, my children are gifts and blessings, they are people too and they have needs and wants this morning. Choosing joy this morning means seeing them as a delight and communicating that to them instead of seeing them as an albatross around my selfish neck and communicating that. As unfair as it may seem, we mother's are largely responsible for the climate in our homes. If we purpose to choose joy, then everyone tends to join us. If we are grumpy mean and selfish, the kids are too. I don't like it. That's more responsibility than I want after a sleepless night with barfing boys. Nonetheless, it is true. Time and again this fact has made itself apparent to me in the most humbling of ways. However, knowing it and acting upon it are two totally different things, aren't they.

You may not know this about me, but I am a horribly selfish person at my core. I want my tea in the morning before ANYTHING else and I want someone else to pour the cream and sugar in it and deliver it to me in bed. I want a bubble bath after breakfast every day. I want someone else to do laundry. I do not want to explain that math lesson for the sixth time or apply consequences for the same offense fifteen times in one day for the four year old. I just don't. I love my family. I chose this life, but every time we spend a week at the Four Seasons I secretly wish to stay there forever in unrealistic luxury with smiling men delivering gourmet lunches with orchids on top of the rice. Don't we all? Really? Maybe you don't. It is likely that I'm the most selfish person I know and other mother's don't struggle with this. On the outside, they don't seem to... but I wonder.

Choosing joy will be one of those life long projects for me. Of this I am sure. It takes daily effort for me to see the good in people first, to celebrate the diversity within my own family instead of trying to "fix" people. I have to purpose to extend grace to my husband, my children, the driver in front of me in traffic, the bank clerk and the unbearably incompetent staff at the Burger King in Troy, New York. It has occurred to me, over the years, that joy within a family finds its roots in grace. Grace allows people to be human, meets them where they REALLY are instead of where we wish they were. Grace loves and accepts the person and looks for the positive even when there are behaviors that need to change. If we extend grace, living with joy becomes so much easier. This summer cultivating even more joy is one of my projects. I want my children to grow up surrounded by deep, abiding joy. Not the crazy slap happy silliness that the world calls joy, but the solid unfading joy that comes from a life lived in grateful praise to the God who created the universe. The kind of joy that shines the light of Christ into a dark world. The sort of joy that results in 3 John 4: "I have no greater joy than to hear that my children walk in truth.

The Wilds of Creation: House “Wren-ovation”

by Judy Daley

Early this spring I hung a wooden bird house outside on my deck to dry, that was freshly hand painted. Little did I know that someone deep in the woods was keeping an eye on it. Recently, standing at the kitchen sink, elbows deep in dishes, I noticed a dark streak of light zip past the window. I stopped a moment and waited to see if I could see it again. Sure enough, the streak of dark brown color zipped back past the window in the opposite direction. I stood in silence wondering what it could be. It wasn't too long before it happened again, only this time it stopped atop the roof of the bird house, which was painted to look like a miniature church. I could not believe my eyes! It was a tiny bird! The little bird was identified as a house wren. I was over-joyed because I had been trying for years to get them to nest in my yard!

He was not much bigger than a humming bird, brown in color with white specks throughout part of his body. He could sing like no other bird. As he stood atop the bird house roof he would stretch his tiny neck outward and upward singing his little heart out for a mate to come join him. When he was not singing, he would hop all around the deck where my plants were just beginning to grow. He checked every inch of the deck, probably for security purposes. If he had only known that he was about to take up residency on the property of a retired prison guard and his animal adoring wife. We would do all we could to

keep him safe and happy without becoming involved in his life directly. After all, that is what hanging a bird house is all about in the first place.

Days passed by with much of the tiny birds actions being similar to the day before. He would sing from different areas on the deck and bird house. Then I saw him with a small piece of straw in his bill. With his feet he held tight to the peg just outside of the hole in the house trying to figure out how to get the straw into the hole. He pushed against the straw, trying hard to press it through the hole, but it would not budge. Again and again he would press the straw length-wise against the hole, but it would not to in. He had not learned to turn it on it's end yet, which told me he was probably a youngster. His antics was worth watching. The poor little bird dropped several pieces in his endless attempts at making the nest. Each time it fell to the ground he would fly down, retrieve it and try again. Purely by accident, the straw made it into the hole at one point. As if filled with glee, the tiny wren gathered more pieces of straw and grasses. He was mastering house building now and seemed quite proud of it.

Each time he would reach the door way, he would think about the process of getting the nesting matterial inside the hole. It took DAYS before he got the hang of it. but then he filled the house with all sorts of woodland bits

REFORM IN EDUCATION AND LIVING INSTRUCTION FOR THE YOUNG

and pieces. When he was finished filling the hole, he once again sat atop the house to sing and sing and sing. It had been weeks since he first showed up and still not a female Wren in sight.

The first week in July, as he sung his sweet song into the misty morning sky, a female answered his call. It was the moment I had waited for! I stopped what I was doing to observe. The female flew to the perch, stopped to inspect the inside but would not go in. The male tried to encourage her to inspect the handiwork inside but she refused. She flew off to the tree near by and perched there. He flew to join her in the tree but she refused his immediate company. Upon return to his abode, he began to renovate. He pulled some pieces of straw out of the hole, letting them fall to the ground. Then he hopped inside

A Recipe

by Jessica Montalvo

Chocolate Raspberry Brownies

1 1/2 c. sugar

3/4 c. unsweetened cocoa

2 eggs

10 oz jar unsweetened all fruit raspberry preserves

1 tsp. vanilla

1/2 tsp. salt

1/2 tsp. baking soda

1/4 tsp. almond extract

where he stayed for several moments out of my sight. He then peeked out of the hole as if to say, "don't worry, I'll fix it just the way you like it", and began pushing several other pieces of materials back out the door. The female flew back over to re-inspect his work. But still, she refused him. The male Wren did not seem phased by her rejection. He worked for her even harder. As he worked on the interior re-decorating, she flew away from the area all together. I wondered if she had abandoned him, but a few days later she returned. This time she inspected the inside of the bird house and seemed to approve of the Wren-ovations! It would appear we have a couple who will be raising a new family soon.

Wrens nest in Northeast America in mid July. I can hardly wait to see the babies in August!

1 c. flour

Preheat oven to 325F. Lightly grease and flour a 9x12" pan. Combine sugar and cocoa using whisk until blended. With a blender, pour in eggs and preserves and mix well. Add vanilla, salt and extract. beat briefly to mix. Combine flour and baking soda. Slowly add while blending. Do not over mix!

Bake 30-35 minutes until a toothpick in the center comes out clean

Mail Bag

Hi Jen!

I said I would contribute to the newsletter when I saw you in March at the Indianapolis convention... it it really July already?! Don't forget, you promised to edit what I wrote so it wouldn't be obvious that I am a product of a public school education!

Summer Activity Idea:

Spray bottles: I just picked up two for .99 each at a craft store. They are easier to fill than squirt guns, easier for little hands to use and the water last longer than most squirt guns.

THANK YOU!

A special thank you to **Deb Gardner** for sending us the "Miller" books. I hope you received my thank you note sent this spring. But such a generous and loving act deserves a public thank you also. We appreciate your wonderful act of kindness!

Funny Story

I looked out the screen door a few weeks ago to find two large (four plus feet long!) snakes mating on the back deck. I called the kids over to see them. I had extra that day, so four faces were pushed up against the screen. My son Paul (4) said, "Look, they are hugging. They must be friends!" A few minutes later they started flopping and jerking around. Paul says, "Uh-oh... they are fighting. They must be brother and sister!"

Thanks again for a great service and ministry. Enjoy the rest of the summer.

Julie Helmers, Indiana.

Thanks Julie... and I didn't edit a bit! Don't apologize for your education. We're all still learning!

Thoughts from the Sleep Deprived

by Stephanie Payton

In light of the stomach virus that I seem to have contracted rather quickly from my daughter, I have dug into my archives to share an old article with you. Today is my precious Lucas' fifth birthday. In three more months we will celebrate the third year since his homecoming. His story still wreaks havoc on my heart. May it touch a special place in yours, as well.

Thoughts from the Sleep- Deprived

Well, here it is, the final hour. This article has been “written” at least five different times. Thanks to computer technology, those drafts were all easily deleted with the mere press of a button. Never to be retrieved. At least not by someone with the miniscule knowledge of computers that I possess.

With each of those drafts, I have taken you down many roads. We have visited the shopping mall, and the sights and sounds of the season. I have taken you to Siberia, Russia, to experience the Kemerovo region's fall season. I have allowed you to take a peek at a part of my marital relationship that few get to see. I have written a “Top 10” list for your enjoyment. It's probably just as well that I deleted the fifth draft, for now I cannot even remember what it was about. Worthy reading material, indeed.

Many of you realize that we brought our recently adopted son home from Russia just four weeks ago. Eugeny Vladimirovich Guryev became known as Lucas Eugeny Payton on October 13, 2003. Lucas is 28 months old, and joins his sisters, ages 6.5, 4.5, and 3. It has been a month full of wonderful experiences, some expected and some unexpected. It has also been a month full of jumbled thoughts, with disintegrating thread (yes, there is such a thing) attempting to hold them together. Upon closer examination, there can only be one reason for this. Okay, one reason that I'm willing to accept: SLEEP DEPRIVATION.

Imagine a two year old being plopped down into your home and being told that this is his new family. As you can imagine, there are many issues at this point of feeling safe and secure. These issues lead to restless/disturbed sleep on Lucas's part. And disturbed sleep on Lucas's part leads to disturbed sleep for his newly and wonderfully enthralled parents. Any prayers you might feel led to send up regarding this matter would be greatly appreciated!

This past month has been an amazing journey. Adding a fourth, especially when that fourth is two years old, has been quite interesting! And the fact that this two year old is a boy adds even more excitement to the equation. We have had a month of highs and lows. Over-the-top

Pancakes & Scrambled Eggs

by J.P. Montalvo

The summer building project is underway at the Montalvo residence. Construction has recently begun on a new garage that will be occupying a large portion of the backyard. When I left at lunch the backyard was unchanged from the way it had looked the previous two weeks and when I returned half of the backyard was excavated. If anyone has boys, eight foot high piles of dirt with a four foot deep trench dug in the ground is almost too good to be true. Well this night dad and Nathan headed out to see exactly how much dirt would stick to one little boy. As we began to climb the "dirt hill" Nathan asked me if I would hold his hand and climb the hill with him. Initially this seemed like a normal and not all that profound request. However, this was a God moment for Dad. I realized how important it will be for my children to know that I will not just stand by and cheer them on as they try and climb some of life's hills but that I will get down in the dirt and show them how to climb the hill. I think of my life and the people who have made the biggest impact. These are the people that took me by the hand and walked with me at times when I was looking at a hill that seemed more like Mt. Everest than an eight foot high pile of dirt. I want my children to know that Dad will not just encourage from a distance but I will take a hold of their hand and teach them how to climb hills.

After I had helped Nathan up the hill, he no longer needed or wanted my help but was happy to run up and slide down the hill until he was covered with dirt head to toe. The rest of our play time consisted of running, jumping, rolling and otherwise engulfing ourselves in the fun of deep ditches and big piles of dirt. I do not know who had more fun but after our pancake breakfast the Montalvo men will be back out in the yard seeing what new mountains, real or imagined, are there to be conquered.

Our Product List is Growing!
Check Out The Cool New Kits To Create With Your Kids!

Time for Twos (begin with 2-3 yr. olds)

Thinking with Threes (begin with 3-4 yr. olds)

Years One, through Six (consecutively following TW3)

A Kaleidoscope of Days

(a collection of stories based on our family's experiences...fun!)

Growing in Grace

(articles on aspects of parenthood)

Table Talk

(a set of over 100 discussion starter cards)

Newsletter Volumes 1-5

(burned on CD)

Latin Quiz Program on CD (for use with Yr. 2+)

Home Organization System

A binder system & CD ROM to help you get it all in order!

Chore Cards Training System

Meal Rotation Cards and Life Skills Training for Kids

Wooden Bird House Kit

Paint Your Own Snake Kit

I Can Sew: Bonnet Kit

Be Creative: Leather Scraps Grab Bag (a million uses!)

Build Your Own Rubber Band Powered Car Kit

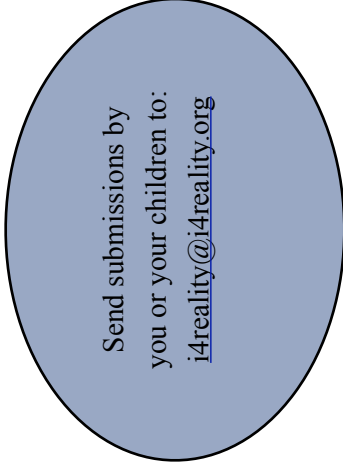
Build Your Own Sailboat Kit

Discover! Excavate A Mayan Temple Kit

Deluxe Wooden Sword & Shield Set... ready to paint or swashbuckle!

Please Contact us for further information or a catalog.

The Institute for R.E.A.L.I.T.Y.
Fern Hill
531 NH Route 3A
Hill, NH 03243



First Last
Home Street
Home City, Home State Home ZIP

Visit us online at:
www.i4reality.org