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Mim

Life is a funny thing. One moment the house is quiet, the hearts are quiet, there is no disturbance other than the colony of mice that live in the knee wall of the office scurrying around stealing almonds and M&Ms; licking peanut butter off of the traps like it is the local all you can eat buffet. Then, one phone call changes the history of the world... or at least of our corner of it. So it was with last Saturday night.

My aunt says that she died peacefully, while Stacey was singing “I come to the garden alone.” She was 94, and arguably the most colorful member of our family... which is saying something in our gene pool. Marianne Louise Sutherland was a flapper in the 20s. She has pictures of more men in her scrap-books than anyone still living can identify. She married young, divorced quickly, joined the Marine Corps, lived homeless for much

of my Dad’s first year of life in cars and chicken coops, then married my grandfather and lived happily ever after. More or less. I held her marriage certificate in my hands this weekend and laughed with my cousin about the date. 1945, whited out and penned in as 1943. My Dad’s favorite joke is that he’s 18 month’s premature. They say I’m just like her.

I know she never expected to see me graduate from high school. What a blessing that just two weeks ago she held four great grandchildren on the edge of her hospital bed and kissed their pink cheeks one last time. I think she knew she was saying goodbye. I knew I was. My dear husband drove ten hours out of the way to give us that moment. For that I am grateful.

I flew out of Boston’s Logan airport on September 11th on a ticket purchased less than 18

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hours in advance. CNN blared from every airport monitor; as I boarded the plane I could hear the bell being rung at ground zero in New York as they read the names of people who had walked the jet way where I stood five years ago. My husband hugged me goodbye and let me go without a word. Ezra hollered, "When you see Mim in her pretty box, tell her I'll see her next time..."

Last year I spent my birthday in North Carolina with Mim and my two fabulous aunts and their four Newfoundland dogs. After two joy filled days in their mountain top home I gently tucked my grandmother into the front seat of my grey rental car, folding her wrinkles in around her. With two more hugs and a honk of my horn, we left the barking dogs and the middle generation behind.

The rain washed the car in heavy silver sheets as we descended the mountain. Mim rode quietly and I watched her out of the corner of my eye. "I can't see a damned thing..." she said. "Don't worry Mim, I can see the road... Hey Mim?" "Yep." "If you could tell my children one thing about life, what would it be?" She didn't hesitate for a second; as if she'd been waiting for this question all her life. Her armful of silver bangles clanged as she shook her claw like hands in the air before her life worn face and said, "Be honest with yourself. Do everything you can and do your best. Always do your best. But above all, be honest." The rattling of her bangles faded to silence and the rain continued to fall.

This was my grandmother. Her legacy in a nutshell. For better, and sometimes for worse, she lived by those words.

We waked her in the same room as my grandfather and her mother. She lay in state in her marine auxiliary uniform under a blanket of red and yellow flowers with "Semper Fi" in gold on the ribbon. She grand-parented like a marine too.

I stood at her casket, tucked the letter I had written her, pictures from my children and a tiny bottle of Kahlua into her pocket (the only thing I knew for sure she'd want in the after-life) patted her cold, stiff self and for one swirling, surreal moment it was as if the clocks whirled forward and I lay there looking up at Hannah's daughter burying me. Tempus Fugit. My Mimmy was gone.

My Dad gave a good eulogy. So did Patti & Dick who drove in from Canada to bury his own mother's friend. Only Dick's made me cry. The Albanian priest gave a service that made even a confirmed protestant like myself consider the Catholic liturgy in a new light. We stood by the grave as old men who never knew her thanked her for her service, doffed their caps and fired a salute in her honor. I saved the shell casings for my boys. They played taps and one last tear made its way down my cheek before I took my favorite cousin's arm and we laid her to rest by my grandfather's side. May we be faithful stewards of the legacy she has left us.

Mail Bag

Free Museum Day, Nation Wide!!

Dear Jenn,

On September 30, 2006, for one day only, museums across the country will join the Smithsonian Institution in its long-standing tradition of offering free admission to visitors

Please visit this site for a listing of participating museums across the country. Enjoy!

<http://smithsonianmag.com/museumday/>

N.P. New Hampshire

Dear Jenn,

Paul and I started *Year One* two weeks ago and we're having a great time. Lots of little discoveries, for example, he could only count on his fingers up to his age (4), but the "Yellow is the Sun" song in the abacus book has been fun to learn 5-10 with. Muffin match and the other games and tips in Happy Phonics have been fun too. He's also getting more disciplined to sit and work on the Explode the Code pages. It's just been a good time discovering new things together. I've forgotten how much I just do automatically that he's just beginning to learn.

I'm already planning ahead mentally about what I'll do different with Anna's preschool to transition more easily into *Year One*. I've also had fun organizing the days and weeks (I'm up to Feb.) so that day to day there's very little preparation.

Believe it or not, all is going very smoothly, even with a five week old baby in the house!

Thanks for all your help and advice the past two years.

Sincerely,

J.H. Indiana

J.H. Thank you for your encouraging note! It is lovely to hear that you are enjoying *Year One* and are having fun learning with your children. It is always an encouragement to me to get letters like yours!

j

It's July 31. Do You Know Where Your Ice Skates Are?

by Lois Wood

I know, it sounds crazy, but I know EX-
ACTLY where ours are.....I cannot how-
ever locate our air conditioner, and quite
frankly I would rather have that due to the
fact that the humidity is 70%, and it's 100°
in the shade!!! I guess I'd better explain, we
just moved from Laconia to Franklin - about
15 miles away (no small feat for a family of
7!). We found 6 gorgeous acres - plenty of
room for the boys to swing through the trees!
It's funny how a move redefines what is
really necessary, and how much stuff is just
"extra." It has a way of bringing into focus
what is truly important.

They say that the kitchen is the heart of the
home, and I find that to be true. It was the
last room to be packed, and the first to be un-
packed. It is the gathering place, where we
feed body and soul. Our new home capital-
izes on this feeling. It is an "open concept"
where the eat-in kitchen is open to the living
room. I love it! Our guests can relax while
we visit, and I whip up some tasty morsel.

There are certain things that just make you
feel "home." Beyond the basics of getting
everyone's bed put together and finding the
bare minimum pots, pans, etc. For me there
was a particular joy in finding my teapot
within the first day or so...there's something
comforting knowing that the teapot is on the
stove, ready and waiting.

We've already had a number of guests, our
first ones were before we even found our
dishes. BBQ belongs on paper plates anyway,
and if we all wait until we have it "all to-
gether" before we practice hospitality, it will
never happen!

It has been interesting watching the children's
reaction to the move. They LOVE all the
room to run. Most days, as soon as the chores
are done, they take to the woods, and I don't
see them until hunger or thirst drives them in.
They're either at Rock Fort, the junk pile, or
the tire swing (made by Jeremiah from an old
tire found in the junk pile, and hung with the
old rope salvaged when we re-strung the
clothesline). Jillian is often found picking
blackberries. Jonathan (who broke his leg
right before Father's Day) is still in a cast, but
the Dr. has given him a walking boot, and has
cleared him for some weight bearing. He has
discovered that this gives him the freedom to
roam through the woods, ride his bike, skate-
board and even rollerblade! Who knew that if
you took the liner out of your roller blades
your cast would fit?!? Jordan is of course fol-
lowing Jeremiah wherever he goes, and en-
joying all the outside adventures. James is
discovering the joy of the lawn while I hang
clothes on the line, and making engine noises
while his siblings push him around the lawn
in the little car.

The amazing thing is that other than the outside toys mentioned, their toys are all still packed, and have seldom been mentioned. They're busy soaking up summer and enjoying each other. Even when inside they are finding creative ways to play. For instance, they have discovered that the magic of having forced air heat is that all of the floor registers are connected somehow and work like a "telephone"! As we unpacked they made a castle in the basement of all the boxes, complete with windows. And more than just mere holes cut in the cardboard, they made real windows by covering the holes with clear box sealing tape. I may never unpack the toys!!

I still don't have it all together for school, and to be honest I might not ever this year. But somehow the basics will get done, and the children will learn because of my efforts.....or perhaps in spite of them! This summer has reminded me to take life one day at a time, and while I must prepare for the future, I must still take it day by day.



The Wood Children: front: Jeremiah, Jordan, James, Jillian. back: Jonathan (of broken legged roller blading fame!)

PS 119:105 Your word is a lamp to my feet and a light for my path.

This verse has been refreshment for my soul. Especially when I am surrounded by boxes and don't know what to do next. I take a step back and seek my Saviors' will. He always gives me that lamp to my feet and light for my path.

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The Wilds of Creation

The Butterfly Place

by Judy Daley

Blue Morpho

There is a place filled with fluttering beauty like no other place I've seen before. The atmosphere was bright, sunny and very warm. It was a place which brought a smile to my heart.

Inside the large atrium room (glass walls and ceiling up to 27 feet high) was a perfect paradise built especially for butterflies. In this protected environment the butterflies are free to hatch from their eggs without fear of being eaten by predators.

When they hatch it is from a single tiny egg, which is attached to a leaf. At this point they are very tiny caterpillars. Their main task is to eat and grow into BIG caterpillars. In as little as a few short weeks they become full size. When maturity occurs, the caterpillar begins spinning silken fibers, or thread. This will become the cocoon housing the caterpillar inside.

The cocoon hangs upside down on a twig and looks exactly like a dead leaf or twig! Some co-

oons are more rounded (like the Monarch, but still hang down appearing well camouflaged. Unless you were trained to find a cocoon, they go undetected.

Once inside the cocoon the caterpillar begins to undergo a fabulous transformation. The body is changing from a plump rounded eating machine into a winged creature of delicate beauty. Just before the next stage of its life the cocoon has changed in appearance as well. It is now called a chrysalis!

The chrysalis is semi-transparent, allowing us to see the slight movement of the insect inside. It pushes and turns as it struggles to break through the walls. In a matter of literally seconds the butterfly cracks through the wall. Immediately it begins walking around on the chrysalis and up onto the twig stretching itself out and drying off. The legs quickly unfold, and the unrecognizable wings are barely seen at this first moment of birth. Within several minutes the butterfly has unfolded its body and is drying its wings in

the heat of the atrium. The air has to be 80* or the butterfly's will not fly. The atrium is a constant 80* warm. When the butterfly is dry it lifts its wings backwards, then down a few times before taking flight, joining the other "flying flowers" in the great-room. They may never eat again, I'm told, and their life consists only of finding a mate. Butterflies only live a week or two so finding that special mate must be swift.

It was stunning to see so many bold, iridescent colors along with different wing patterns of the different species of butterfly at one time. Dozens of them seemed weightless as they fluttered around my head. Their wings were delicate and intricately designed. They reminded me of artwork painted on rice paper. How beautiful! It felt as though I was in a "garden of living flowers" in some fantasy story in a children's book. This was an experience I would like to return to with young students. I'm sure it would fascinate them!

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 Seven (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!)

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

Please Contact us for further information or a catalog.

Modesty of the Heart: Part 2

by Stephanie Payton

I walked in, as I had hundreds of times before in my life. My three girls were with me, giddy with excitement. The sights, sounds, and smells were all intoxicating to them. In an age of strip malls and internet shopping, they had only been there a handful of times. We came this time with goals and a purpose. Basics. That's all I was looking for. Shoes, jeans, a few skirts. I decided that, for this one time, it made sense to make the drive to get it all at one place. Sounds simple, right? I quickly found out that nothing is simple when one enters, on a very busy Saturday afternoon, the local MALL.

In all seriousness, my heart broke as we entered the fray of shoppers. And let me tell you, it did feel like a fight. People were scurrying here and there, shopping bags swinging and hitting the next unsuspecting shopper. Toes were being stepped on with great frequency, as people changed directions or veered toward a shop out of their way. The largest population of shoppers was female. Their dress was appalling. Body parts hanging out for casual observation, it was obvious that the stores were out of the necessary sizes to clothe these young women. Along with the body language came the language of the clothing itself. These are just a few of the shirts I read:

“Girls rule, boys are stupid!”,

“It's all about me”,

“Boy Toy” (available in toddler sizes),

“Spoiled Rotten”,

“I love the 80's” (turn, run, and hide as fast as you can!),

“It's all about me” (oh, did I mention that already?).

And if the words were not enough to slay a brave soul, the styles were. Skinny-legged jeans. Long tunic tops, worn slightly off the shoulder. Tops cinched with wide belts. Is anyone else having flashbacks yet?

We live in a sex-saturated culture. One can not even go to the grocery store without being assaulted by sensual images and words. One of our local retail stores is redecorating. Is it just a coincidence that the women's lingerie is now right next to the young boys' clothing? I think not. I can no longer take my 5-year old little guy to look for clothes without eyeing skimpy underwear in the process. The world starts saturating them at an early age. Without the help of the Lord, our young men do not stand a chance.

I wish I could say this was only a problem of “the world.” 'Tis not true, though. I walked into the church to worship my Lord this past Sunday. There are far too many young

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women there whose bodies I know far too much about. Are they naïve? Has no one told them what kind of thinking their dress encourages? Is it just me? Is there something about this I do not understand? I have so many questions, and I really want to know the answers. I look at these young women, and I wonder when the parents gave up. I am horribly saddened. And disappointed. Not so much by the young women, but by those who have cared so little about them that they failed to teach them how precious their bodies are.

I understand the world and their fixation on the body. When people do not have a hope, and when their souls are undernourished spiritually, they focus on their bodies in an attempt to find meaning and purpose. But I sit aghast by the families experiencing this in the church. These girls wield their young, budding sexuality like a sword. Their bodies shout, “Come, look at me!”, even though their mouths never form the words. It truly has, in their own minds, become “all about me.” As a nurse, I fear the day when all these young people grow up and are responsible for taking care of us elderly. A generation raised thinking “it’s all about me”—I don’t anticipate much compassion toward “all of us” unless the Lord intervenes.

In this age of mentorship and accountability, we have failed our young people in this area. It is frightening, to see what the future holds for my young children. They face a whole different culture from the one in which I grew

up. Their challenges will be a world apart from my own. This is only one area of attack, and maybe I place too much emphasis on it. It just disturbs me, at my girls’ ages, that I have to spend so much time looking for clothing that does not make them look like hoochie-mamas. I expected to deal with it in the teenage years, but not in these early innocent ones. They are supposed to look beautiful and pure, exemplifying the best things about being a girl.

I don’t have all the answers. I certainly wish I did. I do believe it starts early. I believe there is a window of time we have to instill in them a proper perspective of how God views them. In the end, it is not even all about the clothing. The clothing simply points to the cracks in the heart.

I ask my friends to hold us accountable. If my girls look anything other than sweet and innocent, I give you permission to tell me! And I pray for women who will continue to build relationships with my girls, acting as another voice reinforcing modesty of the heart. The externals become non-issues when their hearts are turned toward the Lord.

When it is all said and done, at the end of the day, I once again realize that the only hope of raising godly children is “all about me.” That’s right, it is all about me throwing myself before the gracious and merciful throne of God. It is in HIS hands that I must rest. And it is before Him that I maintain hope.

Introducing: Dianne Schenk!

Wife to Walter. Mother to Bethany. Teacher by gifting and training. Dianne is the newest member of our team at The Institute for R.E.A.L.I.T.Y. She has graciously agreed to take over much of the day to day running of our business, including: packing and shipping orders, product production, newsletter compilation, e-mail & moderator of our new Yahoo group! I, for one, am blessed to have her! If you have questions, comments, or notes of welcome for Dianne, please e-mail her at dianne_schenk@i4reality.org



P.S. On a personal note, THANK YOU Dianne for all of your help: cooking, cleaning, laundry, schooling of the kids, running errands, music lessons etc. while I was gone to the funeral. There are no words suitable: Thank you. j

Do You Yahoo?

Our Yahoo Group is now operating!

Please join us on-line

for discussion on home/educational life

ask questions, share answers, learn together!

<http://groups.yahoo.com/group/institute4reality>

The Weasel Farm

With three boys, there is never a dull moment. Some days I pray for a dull moment: “Please God, just one... just a little one... could I please have just one very dull moment?” The answer? Always, a resounding, “NO.” Sigh.

Phase two of the remodeling project began today. Mr. Kohn arrived with his big black truck, long white trailer and traditional loud honking as he drove up the hill. The boys are ecstatic. I could just barely get them to stay in their seats for school (a roll and a half of duct tape seemed to help) and they were done in record time. Ezra was the first one out the door. He talked Mr. Ben’s ear off as Mr. Ben, with the skills of a master child trainer, patiently let the little man help to dismantle the deck. Ben pulled the nails, Ez hauled off boards three times his length, one at a time, and stacked them in a pile. Not bad for four. Elisha was next. He hauled boards and moved old insulation for a while, but eventually gave up and rode his bike down the hill faster than I am comfortable with. At least he wears his helmet! Gabe was last. Science held him up. He helped Mr. Kohn last year with the first phase of construction and was proud to receive fifty cents an hour for his efforts. Mr. Kohn promptly put him to work moving boards with nails in them, the siding that had been ripped off of the house, and picking up the bent, rusty nails. Where was I? Frying mushrooms for the men for an afternoon snack. Hannah brought in a whole basket full. Then, through the hole where my kitchen window was this morning, I hear a yelp and one of the men say, “Ya’ok Gabe?” No crying. No yell. Just a little squeak and no more. I assumed all was well, until, a few minutes later, here comes Gabe, up the basement stairs. “What’s the matter Gabe?” “Oh, I put a nail in my foot... it’s okay, but it won’t stop bleeding.” I look up from the pan of mushrooms to see blood running down his foot and little spots where he’s hobbled across the carpet. After a quick call to the pediatrician to confirm that he’s up to date on his tetanus shots I am cleaning him up: “Well Gabe, I guess that’s it for you for working outside today.” “But MOM, WHY?!” He asks. I’m incredulous. The nail went through half an inch of hard rubber soled shoe and nearly a quarter of an inch into his foot. “Why?!” “I’ll just put a sock over it Mom, it’s fine,” he assures me.

As I am writing this in the school room, I can hear him out there with Mr. Ben, tearing the siding off of the other side of the house. No worse for the wear. Boys.

Education in Unexpected Places

The school year has begun. At our house, we are solidly into week three, a routine is beginning to take hold, thankfully. I love the summer, but by late August I begin to long for the patterns of the school year where the days march along in an orderly manner without *too* many surprises. Mornings are for “school,” which means book work, and afternoons are for real life. This afternoon that means mushroom hunting, sand pile playing, construction work, cycling on the hill, reading, and castle construction. It has been a good day.

Home schoolers are an interesting lot. As different as the multi-colored leaves painting the forest outside my window. We have all opted out of the public & private systems for our own reasons, presumably because we disagree on some level, or know we can do better. And yet, what is the first question home schoolers ask one another? “What do you do for school?” Meaning, “What pre-fab curriculum do you use to make it look like the school we’re all trying to escape.” It cracks me up. Of course we ask. We want to know. We want to compare notes on our kids’ progress. We’re always looking for the “bigger, better, faster” program, the instant fix to all of our home schooling woes. We’ve opted out of the school setting because we don’t like it, but we measure our success by that same old yard stick that we thought we threw out. We all do it. I do it. We have a school room. We do book work every day. We are far from “un-schoolers”. The kids are quite success-

ful on that level. If this is education, we’re right on track. However, this isn’t really education. At least it isn’t ALL of education, or even the best part of education. This is the part we must all suffer through to get to the really good stuff. We “do school” faithfully four mornings a week. This satisfies the state and the grandparents. But what does everyone (including me) really look forward to? Afternoons, Wednesdays (our non school day) and weekends. Are we not schooling at these times? Of course we aren’t! And at the same time, it is during these times that some of the best learning happens. Some examples:

Last Friday night stepping over toys, balls and nine kids who were excited to see one another, I look down on the deck of my friend’s house to see a little yellow and black striped critter ooching his way across the board between my feet. “Jeremiah!” I yell to my friend’s oldest, “Go get a jar, I’ve got something for you!” A monarch caterpillar. A little fellow who is in danger of extinction in our area as the weather patters appear to be warming and changing. Jeremiah’s mom was thrilled, she’d been looking for one of these for *years* and here I’d picked one right off of their deck. Within a couple of days they found a few more, read up on what to feed them (milkweed, at least 20 leaves per caterpillar) and watched them make their chrysalis’ in quart jars. They brought us one as a “Thank you” for finding the first one. We’re drawing his development in our nature note-

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books. Currently, he is a lovely blue green pod hanging from the tissue over the top of the jar.

Labor Day weekend, cycling 85 miles over Martha's Vineyard: Lessons learned:

Do not leave a fully loaded bike standing in the bike rack on a ferry, it will tip over and bend the rim.

If your rim bends, you can hammer it back out to make it to a bike shop.

Map skills are easier to pick up if you are actually going somewhere and your ability to arrive depends on you deciphering the red and blue lines on the bike path signs.

There is more than one way to live life. This lesson, thanks to about fifteen different people with at least four different languages between them and one lovely little Indonesian boy named Eno who stayed at the youth hostel with us.

Wild Concord grapes are much more sour than Grampsie's cultivated ones.

Not everyone cycles 85 miles in a weekend with four kids and calls it "fun". This was unbelievable to our children. Why wouldn't they?

In the grocery store:

An eight and ten year old can do most of the grocery shopping for a family of six. Why should they? Math skills: multiplication, division, addition & subtraction, fractions, percentages. Life skills: menu planning, nutrition lessons, manners practice (do NOT run over any old ladies, or your cart privileges WILL be revoked) budgeting, working together, following directions (among *many* others)

Other "education" that has not involved books or occurred during "school time":

Sewing jammy pants for everyone for winter: Hannah can cut the pattern & follow the directions to sew them.

Mushroom hunting: Hannah brought a whole load in after lunch today, we taught the men working here about how to find and cook them. They said that tomorrow they want another lesson on which ones are edible vs. poisonous (education isn't just for the kids!)

Log splitting: gratis a Mr. Wood, the boys took a turn with an axe and a maul splitting some of last year's maple.

Geography: riding our bikes all over New England this summer, map skills. China: via several interesting videos on life, animals & travel in China. Hannah has taken it upon herself to create a huge diorama of a Chinese village in preparation for our China Day celebration. She's spent hours on it with no prompting from me. Trip planning: As we

anticipate our big cycle trip in a year or so the children are eagerly researching all things Europe & Western Asia, more map skills, and culture studies.

“That’s great,” you say. “Good for your kids, but that does nothing for me. Get to the point.” Okay. I will. The point: If you think school is defined by your curriculum and books, you’re missing the best part. Does all of this extra learning take time? Of course it does. Some days more than others. Some of it is my time, some of it is theirs. Living a rich educational life with children is all about time. We find the time to do the things in life that we really want to. Why not find time for this?

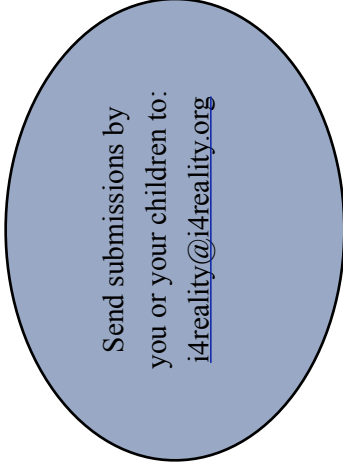
In addition to time, it takes resources. For kids to get their creative learning juices flowing you have to provide them with some grist for the mill. What? Books (not the schoolish sort). Books like, How to Build Tree Houses, Huts & Forts, or art books, or Treasure Hunt books (thank you Grandma!) For us, this takes the form of a rotating book shelf of interesting books on weird stuff, and a whole lot of art supplies and books near the craft table down in the school room.

In addition to time and resources, it takes interest: interest on the part of the parent. Kids are born interested. I found a banana slug on my friend’s pumpkin plant and pulled it off to show her four year old the breathing pore in the side of his head. All three of us were en-

thralled, watching him leave a little slime trail across my hand and watching his little “horns” as Jordan called them, come out and disappear. Maybe banana slugs aren’t your thing, but they certainly will be your kid’s thing at some point. We must be willing, as parents, to put down all of the “important” things that we are doing (like writing this article) to look at castles built out of cards, to explain the finer points of rock climbing to the four year old or watch the six year old with a bent towards art & music stand in the side yard with a man’s pair of work gloves on and direct a Celtic hymn that Mr. Ben is listening to (loud!) as he works. If we aren’t interested (or if we don’t take the time to really work at being interested) they will quit bringing us their discoveries and very soon, they will lose interest too.

It occurs to me, every so often, that childhood is passing through my fingers like water disappearing with low tide. I blinked and one turned ten. I’m going to blink again and have an empty nest. One more blink and I hope to have about twenty grandchildren and get to play and learn all over again. What is more worthy of my time, resources and interest than this? I don’t want to do all of the books and miss the real joie de vivre that is living life with little people... not just having kids and raising them one way or another, but really living with them. For us, this is real live education.

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