



Pat Bordman

Experiences build minds



Belle Isle offers a variety of activities for children to enjoy. (Photo by Pat Bordman)

Just as the sense of taste requires time to mature and exposure to a variety of foods, so a child's mind has needs. But, rather than rich desserts, rich experiences are necessary to build a full mind.

Without numerous and often repeated experiences, children see events in isolation. There can be no comparison, no attempt to draw on past mind pictures.

A child forms mental slots, categories for the experiences he faces. Without these categories, he is at the mercy of a fleeting memory.

As the experience range increases, subtle alterations can be made in the categories. New categories can be formed.

Not all plants growing out of the ground are trees. Some plants are flowers. Some are weeds. Some are trees. Not all trees are green. Some trees have leaves, some have needles.

Refining to fit the situation, the child may recognize that something is sweet,

but be unable to identify that it is a lollipop or a marshmallow. Experience is the key.

One of the richest outings is a trip to Belle Isle. The variety of activities on the island fill the intellectual palate of even the most gluttonous mind.

The experience starts with the car trip over the bridge. Go to the canoe rental area where \$3 for the first two hours will provide slow meandering around the island. Take along a picnic lunch and stop the canoe where there is a good river view.

To finish this restful day, stroll through the new Belle Isle Zoo. Cost is \$1.50 per adult and 50 cents for children 6-12. There is an elephant ride for \$1. Zoo hours are 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. Monday through Saturday, and 9 a.m. to 6 p.m. Sunday. Canoe rental is 10-5 daily.

There is much more on the island, but this introduction should exhaust the most voracious appetite. Give your child his just deserts.

the lively needle

Mary Kay Davis

Wrapping up a tough project

"Acapulco, Sunset" is finished. If you haven't been in my dining room during the past six months, you haven't a clue as to what I mean but to my husband, that sentence means survival.

It all began when I took a design course which included, as all design courses must, lots of assignments. Most of these were run of the mill but one turned out to be intriguing.

The class ended on a Thursday and two days later we took off to visit a daughter in Mexico. I took along some yarns, and the class assignment sketch.

The needlepoint developed on planes and in hotels. The harbor at sunset was sensational and I knew just what to do with the sketch. Unfortunately, inspiration lasted only as long as we were in Mexico. We came home to Michigan-in-the-winter and that's where problems developed.

It's hard to remember a Pacific sunset when you're in a Michigan snowstorm. The design developed several terminal ills, any one of which would have been enough to sink it.

When I have design dilemmas, I take down the pattern opposite my dining room chair and hang the problem child on the wall. That way I can't forget about it and sometimes my subconscious comes up with a remedy.

My subconscious totally ignored "Acapulco, Sunset." It just sat there, mistakes hanging out and yarn hanging down.

My husband got edgy. "When are you

going to get rid of that blasted needlepoint? It wrecks my appetite." Any time he didn't feel like eating meatloaf, "Acapulco, Sunset" got the blame.

Then I discovered creative problem solving. It sounds like an eastern religion, but isn't. Over the past 20 years, a body of literature has been written for businesses by those who study how creative people create.

Supposedly, if you understand how creatively works, you can make your employees more productive. I'm not sure that I buy this, but the books are fascinating. They're full of games to play when solving problems of all types. "Acapulco, Sunset" became my guinea pig.

To my surprise, some of the games worked. Slowly the "Acapulco Sunset" problems became obvious. Once I'd identified them, fixing them was duck soup.

The bones of contention finally disappeared and I buried the last of them on Wednesday. "Acapulco, Sunset" looks beautifully inevitable. More important to our marriage, it's out of the dining room. Michael is happy again and I may even attempt another meatloaf this week.

If you're interested in exploring creative problem solving for yourself, read "Conceptual Blockbusting" by Adams and/or "The Universal Traveler" by Koberg and Bagnall. They're available in paperback and in most public libraries.

consumer mailbag

How can I sort out all of the nutrition information floating around? Not all of it can be true and there are so many conflicting reports.

Barbara K. Troy

Consumers face an ever increasing flood of information on food and nutrition from varied sources. It is often difficult to distinguish between what may be accurate and helpful and what is simply advertising in disguise.

The following are guidelines to help you in your search for "fact" over "fiction" as outlined in a pamphlet published by The Interagency Nutrition Alliance of Oakland County.

- Who is presenting the information? A reputable source usually has an educational background in nutrition or a related science.

- Are there experiments or reliable evidence to support the claim?
- Why is this nutritional product being sold or advice being given? Who stands to gain from the nutritional claim?

- Are the statements factual, sensational or exaggerated? If quick cures or easy answers to problems are promised, beware!

- Where can you get additional information on the subject?

How can I use bulgur wheat? I would like some ideas to use it by.

Evelyn M. Birmingham

Bulgur wheat, which traces back to Biblical times, seems to have made a comeback. This is good news since grains supply us with important vitamins, minerals, fiber and protein and only small amounts of fat.

Use bulgur in place of rice. Add to soups and stews. Mix into meatloaf and combine with minced garlic, finely chopped onion and parsley to use as a stuffing for mushrooms.

Bulgur Pilaf

1/2 cup chopped onion
One cup bulgur wheat
Two cups boiling vegetable or chicken stock
Two tablespoons butter or margarine

Saute onion in butter. Add bulgur stirring constantly until bulgur is brown. Add stock, cover pan and simmer until all liquid is absorbed, 15-20 minutes.

Consumer Mailbag answers your questions on consumer and environmental issues. Address questions to Concern, Inc., Detroit 1, Northfield Plaza, Troy 48068.

volunteers

The Oakland County Volunteer Bureau, a program of the Volunteer Action Center of United Community Services, has weekly listings of volunteer opportunities. Further information about these and other volunteer needs at over 200 agencies may be obtained by calling the bureau at 642-7272. Any non-profit organization needing volunteer assistance may also call the bureau.

POSTER CREATOR Put your creative talents to use as the Poster Creator for Farmington Community Center. This volunteer position calls for an individual at least 16-years-old with graphic, print and artistic ability to design posters for special events. Some of the material will be "camera ready." The time commitment asked is two to three hours per week for three months.

HOSPITAL VOLUNTEER Pontiac Osteopathic Hospital has openings for Red Cross Volunteers 18 and older. The time commitment is four hours per week. Areas of involvement include staffing the information desk, patient escort, mail delivery and errands. A uniform is required for this position.

OFFICE VOLUNTEER The Furniture Resource Center in Pontiac helps provide essential home furnishings to those in need. They need office volunteers to answer the telephone, handle referrals from agencies and help clients who are picking up furniture. The commitment is at least one-half day per month for the summer. No previous experience or training is required, just a desire to help in this volunteer-based organization.

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