

FAMILY TIMES

A Home-school Newsletter for New Testament Christians
Edited by Bev & Dave Hewitt and Karen & Dave Pratte

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March-May, 1999

A PENNEY SAVED AND A STITCH IN TIME

by Janet Metzger

This will be a regular feature in *Family Times* to offer tips and encouragement for learning to be good stewards of our time and money.

1. Simplify.

This can be individualized to meet your family needs. Sometimes all you really need to do is look for ways to simplify to save a few minutes here and a few minutes there. For me, one of the easiest places to simplify is at mealtime. The older my children get, the more I have them help in the kitchen, whether unloading the dishwasher, setting or clearing the table, or preparing simple meals. I love to make home-made rolls to go with our meals, but some nights it's quicker to pop in some brown and serve rolls.

I usually buy ground chuck when it is on sale in the family packs. It can be cooked (with chopped onion if desired), drained and stored either in quart freezer bags or stackable containers that I purchase at Dollar General. It really speeds up meal preparation to pull out a pound of already cooked burger from the freezer. It defrosts quickly in the microwave. For my family it is economical and can be used with so many different recipes: chili, nachos, Hamburger Helper, casseroles, spaghetti, tacos, Mexican dishes...

2. Always check your cash register receipt, or in fast-food restaurants that don't give a receipt, approximate the total in your head. We have saved so much money this way.

Often in stores I will buy an item that was advertised on sale, but it will ring up the regular price. Most cashiers are helpful in correcting the mistake, if it is brought to their attention in a kind way. When overcharged at restaurants, again most cashiers will take care of the problem if you simply ask them to check if you were charged the sale price, or your coupon was deducted, or whatever.

3. You don't have to volunteer for everything! This may just be plain common sense for some folks, but it took my ten-year-old son to point this one out to me.

I hope that some of you will find these tips helpful. Be sure to recycle any time or money you save and use it to glorify the Giver of all good things. If you have any time or money-saving advice that you would care to share, please send them to me at metzger@kih.net (or send to *Family Times*), and with your permission they will be used in future articles.

HOME SCHOOLERS PASS THE TEST

The following is quoted from Family Research Council's *Ed Facts*, 10/23/98:

The American College Test (ACT) reports that home schoolers had a higher average composite score than other students who took the ACT during the 1997-98 school year. The 2,610 home school students who took the test had an overall average of 22.8 on the four-subject test, while the national average for all students was 21.0. Home schoolers scored higher on the English, Reading, and Science Reasoning portions of the test, and lagged only slightly on the Math subject area (20.5 as compared to a national average of 20.8).

By Mark Mayberry

Introduction:

Parents who home school their children should strive to instill a love of learning in the hearts of their children. If such efforts are successful, we will train our children in the art of self-education, which will lead to a lifetime of learning. Ensuring that our children have direct contact with the best books is often the most effective way to achieve this goal. Thus, at the 1999 Home School Meeting, held during the Florida College Lectures, we focused on Language Arts.

Reading Literature:

In our discussion of language arts, let us start with reading materials. First, we should help our children develop a taste for good literature. Since reading is such an essential part of a well-rounded education, we should be wise and discerning in our choice of books. Life is too short to be spent on books that are dull and lifeless. Rather, we should expose our children to books that come alive when they are opened. What is a living book? Living books are well-written books. They excite the imagination, stir the intellect, and delight the mind. Living books are doorways to new and different worlds. When surrounded by such books, a child becomes a willing participant in one of the most effective forms of education.

Fine literature offers insights into human nature and experience. Knowledge about people and places, events and ideas, causes and effects are all absorbed as a child reads. This is true whether the book is a charming story, an engaging biography, an exciting history (these are not contradictory terms), a book showing the paintings of great artists, or a practical how-to guide on raising a vegetable garden. As a child is exposed to good literature, his overall language arts skills are enhanced: vocabulary is increased, spelling skills are improved, and repeated exposure to various examples of good writing helps the reader learn how to put his or her own thoughts into an effective written form.

Even more significantly, moral and ethical and spiritual values are communicated through good books. When a child identifies with a character in a book who demonstrates courage or faith or integrity or tenacity, such values are reinforced in the child's own life. When the effects of dishonesty, cruelty, carelessness, or hypocrisy are observed in the course of a story, the consequences of selfishness and sin are learned with lasting effectiveness.

The wise man Solomon once said, "Of the making of books, there is no end." The biggest problem in selecting good literature is in knowing where to start. David Pratte has published an excellent resource in this regard called *The FAMILY READING BOOKLIST*. It offers good suggestions for wholesome books that would be appropriate for your children and family. This 26-page booklet is divided into two parts: The first is an alphabetical listing of books that are generally wholesome. In the second section, the book list is sorted by authors.

BOOKS CHILDREN LOVE by Elizabeth Wilson is another excellent guide to the best of children's literature. It sorts books by subject and level, and offers a brief summary of each book. For example, it offers suggestions in the following categories: Animals, Art and Architecture, Bible/Spiritual Teaching, Biographies, Crafts and Hobbies, Geography and History, Handicaps and Special Problems, Horticulture, Humor, Language, Literature, Math, Music and other subjects. In the Literature section, the books are grouped in three levels: Level I covers preschool through grade 2, Level II covers grades 3-4, and Level III covers grades 5, 6 and up. Each of these categories is further broken down into the following sub-headings: Fables, Folk Tales and Fairy Tales, Fantasies, Modern Realistic Stories, and Historical Realistic Stories.

Another useful guide is entitled *TEACHING CHILDREN: A CURRICULUM GUIDE TO WHAT CHILDREN NEED TO KNOW AT EACH LEVEL THROUGH SIXTH GRADE*, by Diane Lopez. This book offers two types of recommended book lists: one is a list of assorted books for children to read themselves, and the other is a list of books for adults to read out loud to their children.

We especially like the *CORE KNOWLEDGE SERIES* edited by E. D. Hirsch, Jr. This set of books begins with "What Your Kindergartner Needs to Know" and proceeds from Grades One to Six. The Core Knowledge Series is an attempt to define, in a coherent and sequential way, a body of widely used knowledge that is taken for granted by competent writers and speakers in the United States. A good understanding of this body of core knowledge provides a solid foundation for a child's future educational success. However, because the CK series comes from a secular perspective, Shereilyn occasionally skips certain selections that she feels are inappropriate.

In the area of language arts, CK offers numerous poetry selections, excerpts from various classic literature, and also an assortment of sayings, phrases, and proverbs that have become a part of the English language.

For younger children, we recommend the PATHWAY READING SERIES that is published by a Mennonite group. They have wholesome stories, with appropriate level vocabulary. Each book comes with a workbook that teaches vocabulary, phonics rules and reading comprehension.

Poetry:

Home educators should attempt to cultivate an appreciation of poetry. This priority will take us past merely studying, criticizing, and dissecting poems, and instead focuses on the enjoyment of poetry. Choose good poetry that is suitable to the age of your children. Start with simple poems within your child's range of imagination, but remember to choose that which is noble and avoid that which is twaddle. Also, it is often best to avoid being too pushy regarding tastes in poetry. You can't make a child like a particular poem. However, magic often happens if you just leave the child and the poem alone together.

Sherelyn uses poems from the CORE KNOWLEDGE SERIES. She also uses TEACHING CHILDREN: A CURRICULUM GUIDE. This book has specific poetry selections listed according to grade level. These can be used for pleasure reading and /or for memorization.

Composition:

In early grades, Sherelyn approaches composition in a more casual manner. In our opinion, it is not necessary to wear yourself out teaching or drilling young children in the rules of composition. They will eventually be able to write well if they are surrounded by good books.

Ryan, our youngest son, is in first grade. His composition basically involves copying good literature. Nathan, who is now in 7th grade, uses SWITCHED-ON-SCHOOLHOUSE, which is a computerized version of the Alpha-Omega Workbook Series that begins at the 5th grade level. This series is designed for older students, and has formal and informal writing assignments. Other subjects often provide opportunities for using one's composition skills. I often ask Nathan to write reports on the subjects we are studying in history.

Handwriting:

Both boys have used the ITALIC HANDWRITING SERIES by Barbara Getty and Inga Dubay. It begins by working through the alphabet, but as children progress, it groups letters that have a similar form/shape. This course provides an easy transition from basic italic to cursive italic. We have been very pleased with the results. Nathan's writing used to be small, cramped and sloppy. Now people often compliment his handwriting, and are impressed with its neatness and beauty.

Spelling

Sherelyn uses LEARNING LANGUAGE ARTS THROUGH LITERATURE for Ryan and SOS for Nathan. Nathan has lists of words he must learn how to spell and define. Ryan does not. Instead, at his level, spelling is incorporated into the daily lessons through dictation and learning phonics rules that apply to spelling.

Grammar:

LLATL is an integrated approach to all language arts subjects. It gradually introduces grammar in the lessons. There is no specific grammar subject, per se. Dictation lessons are used to illustrate the components of good grammar. Grammar skills are often best taught through everyday reading, writing, and thinking.

Alpha-Omega and SOS both cover grammar thoroughly. When Nathan was in 5th grade, Sherelyn also began using EASY GRAMMAR to supplement grammar instruction. If SOS had been used instead of LLATL, Easy Grammar may not have been necessary.

Conclusion

These are some of the tools that we have found useful in teaching language arts. Other home schoolers have used different approaches with equally successful results. The problem that home schoolers face in teaching language arts is not a lack of resources, but an over-abundance of such. The biggest challenge is deciding which course of study to choose.

TELL A FRIEND ABOUT FAMILY TIMES

ANNUAL HOME - SCHOOL WORKSHOP DURING FC LECTURES

by Dave Pratte

Again this year Mark Mayberry and I conducted a workshop for home schoolers during the annual lectures at Florida College. The discussion focused on teaching language arts.

Again this year we had a good group attend. We estimated 60-70 people dropped in at one time or another. We appreciated very much Mark and Sherelyn Mayberry's help in the meeting, and we enjoyed again having the opportunity to meet and spend time with some of you on our mailing list and on Hslist.

Two specific developments need to be mentioned. Due to changes in federal law, Florida College announced at the meeting that they are now completely dropping the GED requirement for all home schoolers. In the past the college had required the GED for those who were applying for federal financial aid. As described in another article in this issue of *Family Times*, that requirement has now been dropped by the federal government, so FC has also dropped it. FC no longer requires any home-schooled student to take the GED for any purpose whatever! This new policy should be spelled out in future college catalogs.

Another interesting development was an offer made by Doug Northcutt, who is the Chairman of the new Education Department at FC. The college has plans to establish a four-year degree program for teachers. Their goal is to train teachers that not only know how to teach but also respect God and Biblical standards.

The suggestion Doug made was that he would be willing, at some future time, to coordinate seminars in which FC teachers would encourage and assist home schoolers in improving their teaching of various subjects. After the meeting I was able to discuss this briefly with Doug. He and I were schoolmates, and he had discussed home schooling with me briefly even before he was hired by FC. He is very sympathetic to home schooling and has always impressed me as having serious respect for home schoolers.

We briefly discussed the possibility that the college might want to conduct such seminars in conjunction with their annual lectureship. We might combine it in some way with the annual workshops that I and others have been conducting during the lectures. While all these discussions are extremely preliminary and tentative, Doug was quite open to the idea, though other arrangements may prove to be more beneficial.

I emphasized to Doug, and he in turn emphasized to me, that home schoolers are a unique breed. We would not be the same kind of people they would be teaching in their regular education classes at FC. In fact, we often maintain, shall we say, an "arm's-length" relationship with the education establishment. We teach in an entirely different environment from the classroom and have largely developed unique curricula and teaching techniques. We are independent thinkers and are often willing to experiment with entirely new ideas. As a result, we would not respond well to any attempt to "tell us how to teach our kids," as though we don't know how, but the professionals do know how.

Doug not only responded with understanding and appreciation of these ideas, but emphasized several times that the idea would not be to in any way try to pressure home schoolers or talk down to them as though the "professionals" have all the answers. Instead the idea would be simply to assist and encourage home schoolers, offering ideas that we can accept or not as we choose.

My own reaction is that, if all can be worked out well, it may be an excellent idea for the benefit of home schoolers. But what may end up being just as important, or even more important, is that it may be an excellent opportunity for Christians who home school to establish a truly beneficial give-and-take relationship with other Christians who are trying to make a difference in education. Not only may we learn some helpful ideas from FC teachers, but we in turn may have some good ideas to offer them. They will have no strings attached to us, and we will have no strings attached to them, yet we may mutually benefit one another.

All in all, I thought it was a fascinating idea. No one is at this point committed to anything, nor are our ideas definite or well formed. However, we are in the exploratory stage. Nothing definite can be set up for at least a year, since this next year will be a major time commitment for Doug as he gets FC's education program started.

I told Doug that I would mention these ideas to home schoolers in *Family Times* and get your reaction. So, I would appreciate any thoughts, reactions, or input you might have. At this point, please send your ideas to me, and I will try to summarize them to Doug as we have opportunity. Send your thoughts to Dave Pratte, dave@gospelway.com or write 841 Hillandale Dr., Antioch, IL 60002.

REVIEW OF: THE RAINBOW (A JUNIOR-HIGH SCIENCE CURRICULUM)

Reviewer: Mark Bingham (Gadsden TN)

“True science—always.” That’s the claim on the cover of a new science curriculum, *The Rainbow*. Its author, Durell Dobbins, is a scientist (with a Ph.D. in microbiology from the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill), a New Testament Christian, and a home-schooling father. His curriculum offers substantial science, simply presented, on the junior-high level. It is designed to provide two years of science, with two lessons and one laboratory activity per week. My two sons of junior-high age often prefer to do more.

During the first year, students explore rudiments of physics and chemistry. The second year begins with biology and moves on to a section of “applications”—in fields such as geology, astronomy, meteorology, and environmental science.

These strike me as the special strengths of *The Rainbow*:

1. The text itself offers systematic, sound, and thorough explanations in a non-threatening style. Here’s a sample, drawn from the physics section’s explanation of potential and kinetic energy: Have you ever noticed that things always go from up to down, toward the pull of gravity? When you finish an apple and throw the core out in the back yard, what happens to it after two weeks? Does it turn into a new apple? No—it turns into a rotten apple core. Can you strike a burnt match stick and get a fresh match? No—only the reverse works. These examples may not seem alike, but they are. They are situations that have gone from a higher state of organization to a lower one. If you built a house with building blocks, and your little brother threw a shoe at it, would it be more organized or less organized after the collision? If your little brother is like ours, it would be less organized. This is one of the great laws of nature. In our universe, all things tend to become less organized over time. The more time we allow, the less organized they tend to become. Little brothers tend to speed up this process of disorganization. It may not be obvious at first, but over time it will become more and more obvious that organization is related to the amount of energy that is stored up in a system (the part of the universe we are considering). Stored energy is called potential energy. The fresh apple has a lot of energy stored in it, as does the fresh match. There is energy stored up in a ball that is up high on a shelf, and in a charged battery. This stored (potential) energy tends to be released. This is why batteries tend to run down, balls up on shelves tend to fall, matches tend to burn once they have been struck, and apples tend to rot.

2. Because of the style of presentation, students can work with as much independence as parents wish.

3. The author flavors his text with humor. (That’s right, serious science with a sense of humor!) Consider, for example, these lesson headings: “Falling Up” (for the lesson from which the potential energy discussion quoted above was taken), “Count Your Many Protons” (for a lesson on understanding atomic differences between different elements), and “I Wouldn’t Say You’re a Dog, but You’re Still Ugly!” (one of the lessons on classifying mammals).

4. The text also carries a strong flavor of reverence—the attitude of a heart deeply struck by wonder at God’s hand in things, the attitude which can stimulate a child’s (or adult’s) scientific curiosity. The text discusses modern scientific theories—as theories—giving careful attention to ways in which they diverge from biblical explanations.

5. In addition to the text, the curriculum package offers a laboratory manual and a complete set of laboratory supplies, that the student of science may be fully equipped to perform the kinds of scientific demonstrations parents will wish their teachers had offered them—using not only the traditional microscope and chemicals, but also some less traditional supplies: a baseball, marbles, and a Slinky. It is literally true that the lab supplies include everything the child needs for his or her lab work except for a gallon of distilled water.

As I’ve mentioned, *The Rainbow* is designed to cover two years. A single textbook covers both years’ material. The laboratory manual and some of the supplies must be ordered separately for each year. The cost will strike many home schoolers as high (though Dr. Dobbins tells me that the program’s first-year success has enabled him to lower the price). The first-year program now costs \$250 (including shipping and handling). This package includes the full two-year text, as well as the first-year lab manual, the first-year teacher’s helper, and lab equipment and supplies. The second year’s program (including a lab manual, teacher’s helper, equipment, and supplies) costs \$120. Imagine the time, trouble, and expense of assembling each lab exercise, then multiply that by 30 to provide lab exercises for an entire year, and you’ll begin to develop an appropriate perspective on the price.

Two more cost factors bear mentioning:

1. Dr. Dobbins is now working on *The Spectrum*, a complete high school science program for home schoolers. He plans to utilize the durable laboratory equipment from *The Rainbow*, so that students who move into the high-school program will have less equipment to purchase. *The Rainbow* can thus become an investment toward high-school supplies as well.

2. Customers who mention that they are *Family Times* subscribers receive a 15% discount on the program.

The Rainbow offers rich and solid content which appeals strongly to the child's curiosity; it offers a convenient and comprehensive package which appeals strongly to the parent's peace of mind; and it offers "true science—always." Beat that if you can.

For information about *The Rainbow*, or to place an order, contact Durell Dobbins. E-mail: dcdobbins@aol.com; telephone: 1-800-831-3570; U.S. mail: 328 Shady Lane, Alvaton, KY 42122

Disclaimer: Though I have no personal financial stake in the success of *The Rainbow*, I want to acknowledge that I had a hand, hardly perceptible, in its making; I did some editing of the text, which, by the way, was so well-written before my tinkering with it that I can claim hardly any credit. My recommendation of the program comes, then, not only from observing my children's excitement, but also from my own poring over the text.

THE TERRY BARNES FAMILY

Written by Mary Lee Barnes, 6004 Brenner Drive, Jackson, MS 39211-2801, 601-991-9821
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Terry is a Manufacturing Engineer, Manager, in Puckett, Mississippi. I worked as a Critical Care Registered Nurse for 13 years. I also have a Master of Science in Teaching, and have taught at high school level, and at Middle Tennessee State University in Murfreesboro, TN.

We were in our 30's when we married. I was told there was a good possibility that I would never be able to conceive, because of a surgery (to remove abnormal cells) I had had in my early 30's. Nine months and three weeks after our wedding, our wonderful son, Taylor, was born. Surprise!

Terry and I had decided, by Taylor's second birthday, that we would home school. I can't say how much I appreciate Terry's support in this decision. I am blessed to have a husband who understands how much more important is our son's soul than is a second income. We don't have a school name, a mission statement, or an opening ceremony, as some of you have mentioned. I think those would be good things to have, but we just don't put that much effort into our home school. We home school because we feel it is best for Taylor spiritually, mentally, emotionally, physically, and, yes, socially.

We joined the local support group in Murfreesboro, TN, when Taylor was four. I felt that by doing so, we would have a year or two to become acquainted with different curriculums and methods of teaching (before we actually had to use any of them). We attended curriculum fairs, and other home-schooling events to acclimate ourselves with home schooling. I feel this was a great help to us in instilling confidence in our decision.

A few months prior to Taylor's beginning kindergarten, we found that we would be moving to Jackson, MS. As much as I would prefer to be in Middle TN, MS is a great place in which to home school. MS has no teacher requirements, nor required testing. We do have to file a certificate of enrollment and a list of our curriculum, each year with the local school attendance officer. As far as I know, no home schooling families have been bothered by any government authorities over any matters in MS. Even though MS has not created problems for home schoolers, we believe prudence to be the better part of valor, and we are members of HSLDA.

The move was very hard on Taylor and myself. We eagerly looked to the local home school group for support. We were sorely disappointed. We were members for one year, and then felt it best to distance ourselves from the group. Every event seemed to integrate a religious ceremony. Leaders were required to sign a "statement of faith". We felt that we should not be associated with the group.

We do not have much support in Jackson. The members of the church at Clinton Boulevard are spread over a distance of quite a few miles. There is one other very small congregation, 25 miles away from us. Other than that, there are no other congregations within about 50 miles from our house. Only one other family at Clinton Boulevard home schools (two girls), and they are planning on moving. There are very few children at Clinton Boulevard - not one other boy anywhere close to Taylor's age.

We don't use a particular curriculum. From Sam's I bought two curriculum workbooks for each year through grade six, and The Core Knowledge Series, edited by E. D. Hirsch, Jr., through grade six. These books are the basis of our school year. Total cost each year, \$25.00. I supplement with books bought at used curriculum fairs, yard sales, libraries, etc. We read the Bible, daily, and discuss each verse as we go. Taylor loves studying the Bible this way. We have a large home library with many reference books. Taylor also enjoys reading series books such as, The American Adventure, The Happy Hollisters, The Boxcar Children, and many others.

We have a very relaxed school. I try to make Taylor's school experience very different from a public school experience. We share lots of laughs and hugs. We have absolutely no schedule and no routine. (I realize this is much easier with an only child, than it would be with more children.) I also live in a state which does not require me to have a set number of days and hours spent schooling.

Taylor was not eager to learn to read. I tried not to push him. We did struggle through phonics. I reminded myself, sometimes daily, of studies which indicate that boys learn to read around the age of eight. Sure enough, a few months prior to Taylor's eighth birthday, he began reading. He reads extremely well. He has been reading a college level textbook on programming computers. Taylor is now eight and one half.

We also use a lot of computer programs. Contrary to what some believe, we have been very pleased with most of the computer programs that Taylor has used. I feel that Taylor has benefited greatly from using the computer.

I tested Taylor in September with a computer achievement/IQ/skills test. Taylor had never had a test of any type prior to this. He had no test savvy, and I didn't think to try to explain to him how to take a test. He didn't know, for example, that he could skip a question and go back to it later. He also felt great pressure in being confined to a time limit, which caused him to hurry needlessly, and to make unnecessary mistakes. In spite of this, Taylor tested almost three grade levels above the third grade. Taylor completed his third-grade material in the four weeks in September, and started on his fourth-grade material in October. Taylor plans to finish his fourth-grade work in December, and start on his fifth-grade work in January, 1999.

One of the sisters at Clinton Boulevard is a first grade teacher. We drive 30 minutes every Tuesday to Pearl Elementary School, where she teaches. Taylor reads to her first grade class for about 30 minutes. He loves doing this, and the children seem to love hearing the books he has chosen to read for them. I believe opportunities such as this are wonderful for Taylor's development.

The best and most exciting event of our life, lately, has been Taylor's baptism. Taylor, for years, has expressed concern to me over people who are not New Testament Christians. We have discussed God's plan for man many times throughout the years. Taylor's questions became much more personal and pointed over the summer. I felt that he would be telling me that he wanted to be baptized. I prayed fervently about how I should handle the situation.

Taylor wanted to visit his grandparents in TN during the first few weeks in August. I let him go though I was hesitant to do so. I knew he was close to making a decision about wanting to be baptized, and I wanted to be with him when he made that decision. My parents called me and told me that Taylor was asking more and more questions, and was increasingly worried about his soul's state. Terry and I talked to Taylor via telephone many times over the next few days. My parents talked to Taylor, and answered his questions. On August 17, 1998, Taylor called and told me he wanted to be baptized. Terry and I felt that he was ready by the statements he made, and the way he answered questions. We chartered a jet, and flew to Murfreesboro, TN. There, at the Compton Road church, at 11:30 PM, Terry baptized Taylor.

What a joyous occasion! At midnight, the three of us were flying back to Jackson, MS. Even though we were in a chartered jet, flying above lots of towns ablaze with lights, Taylor went to sleep almost as soon as we took off. He had had many nights of sleepless hours worrying about his soul - now he was able to sleep in peace.

The next morning, Taylor expressed a desire to find a work that he could do for the Lord. We discussed several ways he could be of service. Taylor helps "usher" at services (opens the door and greets people arriving), he straightens the songbooks, and collects the trash left on the pews and the floor. He has also led a song at each of our singing practices since his baptism. Taylor gave a three-minute talk to extend the invitation on the first Wednesday night in October. He did an excellent job, and the members

at Clinton Boulevard were very supportive of his efforts. I am very pleased with his desire to be a worker for the Lord.

I am very thankful we made the decision to home school. I have been blessed to be Taylor's teacher from birth to the present. I have been able to instruct Taylor in God's way from the moment Taylor arises, until he goes to sleep at night. What an awesome responsibility, and what a blessed privilege to have this wonderful heart and mind to guide! I give thanks to God for giving me this wonderful creation. One day, Taylor said to me, "Mom, when I grow up, I want to be a teacher just like you." I didn't know if he meant a school teacher, as I had been in my younger days, or a home-school teacher. So, I asked him which one he meant. He said, "No, Mom, I mean a Bible teacher, just like you."

I pray that we will continue in the manner that we are going. I pray that all of you have the wonderful experiences with your children that I am having with Taylor. And, I pray that one of you is rearing a wonderful little daughter for my wonderful little son.

CHANGES IN FEDERAL FINANCIAL AID REQUIREMENTS

The following consists of excerpts from a message sent to us by HSLDA.

... Until recently, home schoolers have been required by federal law to obtain a General Equivalency Diploma (GED) in order to be eligible for this financial aid, because home schoolers were not considered to have an "accredited" diploma.

During the 105th Congress, HSLDA worked to change this unfair requirement. The Higher Education Act Amendments of 1998 (Public Law No. 105-244), enacted in early October 1998, included a new exception for home school graduates. ... Here is what the law now says:

(d) Students who are not high school graduates. In order for a student who does not have a certificate of graduation from a school providing secondary education, or the recognized equivalent of such certificate, to be eligible for any assistance ... the student shall meet one of the following standards:

... (3) The student has completed a secondary school education in a home school setting that is treated as a home school or private school under State law." [Pub. L. No. 105-244 Section 483, amending 20 U.S.C. Section 1091(d)].

... Thus, as long as a home school meets the state's compulsory attendance requirements, whether under the state's private school provision or under the state's home school provision, the home school will satisfy the new student eligibility requirement for financial aid.

This requirement is always fulfilled during the college admissions process when a student supplies a college with a transcript and other evidence of meeting the credit hour requirements for the completion of a high school education.

If you need assistance in persuading local college admissions officers to adopt home school friendly policies, we have prepared a "College Admissions Officer Packet." It explains these recent federal changes, enabling home schoolers to receive federal financial aid without having to obtain a GED. To order a packet, please call HSLDA's National Center for Home Education at (540) 338-7600.

EDITORIAL COMMENTS

This issue contains some fascinating and thoroughly enjoyable material ... in my humble opinion! We truly want to express appreciation to all who contributed material to make it possible. As always, we thank Mark Mayberry for his usual excellent contribution. In addition we welcome Janet Metzger as a regular contributor, and we encourage you to send her any suggestions you have for her column. This column was entirely her suggestion, and we appreciate so much her spirit of volunteerism! The family profile by Mary Lee Barnes and the curriculum review by Mark Bingham are also excellent, and we thank them for their contributions.

Again in this issue we did not have room for the next installment of our material on raising children. At least one of our readers has said she is saving those articles, so at least for her sake we will try to return to that series in our next issue ... unless somebody sends us something really good to print. ☺ Also, our next issue should include our annual list of State Contacts and our Hospitality list, for those who have signed up for it. If your name is not yet on those lists and you would like for it to be, please contact us.

HAPPY HOME SCHOOLING!