

## I Can Park in my Garage

As I sat down to write my monthly column, indecision struck. What do I want to write about? There are so many possibilities.

School will be back in session soon so I should write about getting your kids to bed 15 minutes earlier each week to transition them into their proper “school night” bed time. Remember, school-aged children (1st through 5th grades) need 10-11 hours but usually are lucky to get 9.5 hours and teens need between 8.5-9.5 hours but usually only get 6-8.

I could also remind parents to take your kids to the Back to School Fair at the Benson Center on Tuesday, August 11 from 3-7pm. You’ll get health screenings, safety information and free school supplies from the Mid-Day Optimist Club and Henry County CHART.

But, writing about back-to-school seems so predictable that I’d rather share the fact that I have a clean, uncluttered garage and organized sewing supplies thanks to a new family tradition. Each summer, my sister from St. Charles and I visit each other for one week. While she is here, I select the projects to work on and this year, it was my garage, sewing items and basement organizing. My garage was filled with furniture and boxes we had inherited after the death of my parents and my in-laws. Four years has passed and I felt we could finally go through the items to make decisions. Often, the emotional tie to things is just too strong to make decisions following a loved-one’s death. But time had allowed grieving and a separation from the passing.

The Samaritan Center received a rocking chair, a trunk and a van-load of clothes and household items. (I was torn between keeping the items for our Spring rummage sale at the church but I just couldn’t bear to have the things around cluttering up my life.) What a sense of cleansing and feeling of accomplishment I felt! With a clean, uncluttered garage, I can also call the termite inspector for my annual inspection.

But, what would you learn about Extension if I just share a personal story? Perhaps you would learn that family relationships are strengthened by traditions. Though my tradition of “trading weeks” only began three years ago, my sister and I look forward to seeing each other, eating comfort foods from childhood and accomplishing otherwise menial and often dreaded tasks. The tasks are more fun when you are with someone you enjoy. By the way, we also found time for antiquing, watching HGTV and just talking.

My indecision continued as I thought about mentioning that Mike Alden, the Athletic Director for MU was passing through Clinton and stopped in to give us MU posters and game date cards. If you would like an MU poster of football, soccer or volleyball, we have two of each to giveaway on a first come, first serve basis. We have plenty of game date cards. Give us a call or come by.

Then I thought about sharing some new research about relationships and the affect of living together prior to marriage. No, better save that one, I need to read more about the research.

Then I thought about writing about what Extension does. So many of you have no idea what Extension is or what we offer or actually provide. Our weekly Extension column so graciously provided by the *Clinton Daily Democrat* helps a lot but still, many of you are in the dark. That’s not your fault, it is ours. Some think Extension is about the county fair. Some think Extension is 4-H. Some think Extension is agriculture. For others, Extension means canner pressure gauge testing and canning instructions. And some think Extension is about soil testing. All of you would be correct...plus more.

Finally, I’ve made a decision! I’ll tell you about Extension another time. If you want to learn more on your own, check us out online at [extension.missouri.edu](http://extension.missouri.edu). Thanks for reading.