

Mom's Moments

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Volume 3, Issue 4

Info Corner...

New Deeper website

Find the latest issue of the Deeper newsletter, many faith resources and more: www.deepermoments.wordpress.com

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A Note from Anna

As Valentine's Day approaches I am reminded about the importance of pouring into my loved ones—be it family or friends, and how easily this crucial aspect of my life gets forgotten. Staying connected is key even though it can require a lot of effort at times. It is easy for me to become isolated since I'm an introvert at heart! But I have some wonderful people in my life who make me laugh and enjoy the same activities that I do.

I hope you have the same kind of people in your life—if not read our *January 2008* issue on our website for ideas on getting connected!

Special Note: This past year has been a long journey of letting go of the "extras" in my life and bringing my priorities back into focus and balance. Some things were easy to release, and others I held onto with all my might. Recently I made a decision that was very hard for me. Over the next few months, my role at Mom's Moments will change from newsletter editor to writing contributor. I will no longer be putting together the newsletters, but I will definitely continue to write - I can't help myself! So I look forward to writing for Mom's Moments and in my new blog. Feel free to follow the blog and subscribe to receive new postings via email - the technology is really advancing in the blog world!

www.annasklar.wordpress.com

Happy Valentine's Day!

Heart and Home

Special stories, reflections or traditions from your family

My 6 year old daughter said something pretty special on our way home from school back in September. As I reminded her of a play date she would have the next day, she cried and said she didn't want to go. I was perplexed as she was all too eager about it earlier in the week. Her reason, in her words: "I wanted to play with Emma (her 3 year old sister). I just miss being at home!"

Those words warmed my heart. They articulated what I marvelled at all summer... for the first time, she discovered that her younger sister was a great playmate. Last June, I was already dreading hearing more often what had become her week-end refrain: "I HAVE NOBODY TO PLAY WITH!!" Instead, with the end of school and the arrival of summer and of yet another sister, she soon became quite content playing with Emma and discovering the new baby. Sure my girls fight and have their moments (don't we all!??), and Julia did end up going on that play date after a morning of playing/fighting with her sister... regardless, it has been such a joy to see them truly become great friends over the past months. We had a great quiet family Christmas holiday at home with much playtime in their forts and another sickly week with everyone home last month. Now we miss Julia when she's away at school and look forward to more playtime on the weekends! I pray that as they grow up, they would continue to seek each other out as friends. I know that my sister remains my best friend today. It's pretty special. I wish that for my 3 girls. - **Mélanie Heffern**

Helping Hand - Cash for Kids Coupons

Share your ideas for reaching out to those in need

"Held throughout the month of February, Cash for Kids is the biggest in-store coupon campaign in Canada involving more than 50 brands, more than 1000 grocery stores and 30 million coupons."



Look for the **Cash For Hungry Kids** coupons in your local grocery store from **January 30 - February 26, 2009**.

For more info visit: www.groceryfoundation.com



Tips for Teaching Children to Care for the Environment

There are many things we want to teach our children as they are growing up. One of these is to care about the environment just like we do. The easiest way for our young ones to learn about "green" passion is to teach kids simple things that they themselves can do.

- **Recycling** ~ An easy start is to recycle cans, bottles, plastics and papers. This will help with reducing the amount of garbage produced.
- **Conservation** ~ Show kids how to conserve water and energy: taking showers instead of baths, turning off lights, computers, and other appliances when not in use.
- **Sharing** ~ Kids can recycle their gently-used toys and clothing by giving them away to families in need rather than throwing them out.

Here are some online resources for more information on teaching "green" habits to your kids: www.ecokids.ca, www.ontario.ca/e-zone, www.earthday.ca

-**Lauren Raymond, Sudbury, ON**

A Deeper Moment - Inspirational thoughts from the Bible

"And so we know and rely on the love God has for us. God is love. Whoever lives in love lives in God, and God in him." - 1 John 4:16

This time of year brings a celebration of the loved ones in our lives. We reflect a bit more than usual on the meaning of love and we try to find ways to tell those we love how we feel about them. There is a real focus on romantic love on Valentine's Day, but I wish it weren't that way. This special day could be so much more... and has the potential to make anyone feel loved, regardless of whether or not there's a man in their lives.

I get excited by what the Bible says in this verse - GOD is love. Oh good, because if it depended on my efforts alone, I'm afraid Josh and the boys would NOT be feeling the love some days! My kind of love often depends on my mood, how much sleep I got the night before, and whether or not there is chocolate in the house. When my kind of love is unreliable, it is so good to know that there is a greater, deeper

love that we can know and rely on. And it seems that if I take a quick moment in my day to ask God for more of His kind of love in my life, the results are amazing - at the end of the day my kids feel happy and accepted, my husband is secure, and I am confident.

The famous "love" passage in 1 Corinthians 13 says love is patient, kind, keeps no record of wrongs, etc. It's great to know that God's kind of love exists, that we can have it in our lives, and we can share it with others.

How can we get to know more about the love of God and rely on it in our lives? The Bible is full of information about God's character, His people and His love for us. Open it up, take a few moments to read it, and get to know more about the source of love. The book of John in the New Testament is a great place to start! The new issue of the **Deeper** newsletter contains a great article on different translations of the Bible, and which you might enjoy more.

By Anna Sklar

Ordinary people have the power to change other people's lives. The power is found in connection, that profound meeting when the truest part of one soul meets the emptiest recesses in another and finds something there, when life passes from one to the other. When that happens, the giver is left more full than before and the receiver less terrified, eventually eager to experience even deeper, more mutual connection.

- Larry Crabb, Connecting, 2005

Health Nut - Getting Kids Active in the Winter!

Health-related topics, exercises or nutrition facts that promote wellness in a nutshell!!



Winter is here and those of us with children know what that means... stir crazy kids with boundless amounts of energy waiting to be spent! But it's cold out, there's a winter storm brewing and they (and probably you) are just about ready to climb the wall!

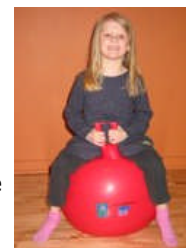
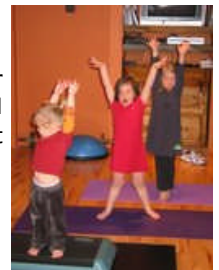
Even being snowed-in for a few days with the kids can be lots of fun. There are so many ways to get them moving. Try the following:

1. Put on a dance DVD on where the kids learn to dance and move to awesome tunes
2. Put on any music CD and dance around with your kids
3. Play hide and seek in your home
4. Play tag in a safe area of the house
5. Create a circuit in a part of your house which will include having your children jump over things, crawl under things and jump up and down
6. Practice yoga as a family
7. Stationary bike with video games which gets your child to peddle as he/she races against the "computer" (Smartcycle or Wii)
8. Play Twister or Hullabaloo with your children

If you can get somewhere, try swimming at a public pool, taking the kids to some sort of gym like Cosmic Adventure, gymnastics, dance, hockey, ringette, indoor basketball, soccer, etc.

If weather permits, get out there! Dress up warmly and go build a snow man, make snow angels, go skating on an outdoor skating rink, go for a nice hike in a trail near your home, try your hand at snowshoeing, x-country or downhill skiing, have a scavenger hunt outside finding things out in nature, go horseback riding, etc. The ideas are endless. All we need to do as parents is not be lazy and get involved. Everyone will benefit!

-Caroline Deschamps (PHC-NP, PTS, PFS) is a nurse practitioner & personal trainer specializing in pre/post-natal fitness in Ottawa, Ontario. **Read about Physical Activity Guidelines for Children & Youth**, in the May 2007 issue of MM on our website (www.momsmoments.ca/pdfs/)!



The Craft Nook - Valentine's Heart Candle Gift Idea

Send us your fun and creative ideas for the family

Set a special atmosphere at the dinner table for your family, and enjoy the glow of this home-decorated heart candle.

What You Need:

White card stock
Scissors
Craft wire
Beads (optional)
Large candle
Pink patterned papers

This & more can be found at the Better Homes and Gardens website: www.bhg.com.

Instructions:

1. Cut strips of different pink patterned papers and adhere them to same-size strips of white card stock.
2. Die-cut, punch, or freehand-cut two sizes of hearts from the patterned papers. Poke tiny holes in some of the hearts to allow wire to be threaded through them.
3. Join the hearts by running wire through the holes and also by wrapping the wire around the hearts, measuring the candle circumference as you go. If you wish, slide beads onto the wire as you twist and bend it into curls and loops.



My Love Story

Encourage others by sharing your times of joy, sorrow, triumph or struggle

Anna: Thanks for sharing your story, Leah! Can you start by telling us how you met your husband, Steve?

Leah: Steve and I first met while he was in Bible college and I was still in high school. We both had a part time job at Thrifty's in Cambridge, ON. He was definitely cute back then :) and we got along great. However, I was "too cool" for him!!! I was busy making decisions for myself instead of allowing God to lead me to where He wanted me to be.... which in turn led me down a path I don't ever want to go back to.

Anna: So what was "life after Thrifty's" like?

Leah: I faced many trials over the next couple of years; some that were brought on by decisions I had made and others that I had no control over. I did not always depend on God to deliver me through the trials.

In times of my near-absent relationship with God, He chose to bless me. I have the honour of being the mother of three of the cutest, smart-



est little girls EVER... Averi, Mackenzie, and Kennedy. It has been through raising them that God has become more real to me than ever before. He's picked me up out of heartache and made me beautiful.

It has now been over four years since I hit my ultimate low and knew that I could not make it on my own. I sat crying one night and prayed that I would feel loved. For the first time in a long time, I let God completely take control of my life. I started reading His Word and became involved in a church and committed to a small group. During this time, I had someone very close to me tell me, "If I could take away your heartache, I wouldn't. Give it all to God and He will get you through it".

Anna: So how did God bring you and Steve together?

Leah: After 7 years of having no connection with Steve, only vivid memories of our glances to each other across a mound of unfolded t-shirts at Thrifty's, (LOL) we literally crossed each other's path in the hallway of my church. There is no doubt in my mind that it was a God-moment. Needless to say it quickly became imperative to look into a long-distance phone plan...LOL.

Anna: How did you handle living far away from Steve?

Leah: Being 4.5 hours away from each other had its disadvantages for sure but it also had its advantages. We made communication key in our

relationship....and even though some things are hard to discuss, things are always so much better when we're able to talk through them.

Anna: You were married to Steve in June 2008 - what do you remember most about that day?

Leah: My mom and I had planned for months the events of the "Big" day... what food would be on which platter, where the flowers would go, how many candles we needed. But sometimes it's great when the unexpected is done or said. When we left the church after the ceremony, Steve pulled the car over to the side of the road. I will never forget the look on his face or the words that he said. He said with excitement, "We're married!!! You're my wife! And you are SO beautiful." It may sound simple, but it meant so much to me.

Anna: So what's it like after seven months of wedded bliss?

Leah: Amazing! Steve and I have continued to make communication key in our marriage. We both love God and desire to be Christ-like and are raising the girls to know Jesus. We laugh together all the time and have tons of fun as a family.

Anna: Thank you for sharing with us Leah! Your story really shows that God loves to give us second chances... and third chances... and as many as we need to come back to His plan for our lives. There's such great hope in that truth!

- With Leah Walters, Lively, ON

Good Eats - Chili for a Crowd

½ cup	best-quality olive oil
1¾ pounds	yellow onions, coarsely chopped
2 pounds	sweet Italian sausage meat, removed from casings
8 pounds	beef chuck, ground
1½ tbsp	freshly ground black pepper
2 cans	tomato paste (12 ounces each)
3 tbsp	minced fresh garlic
3 ounces	ground cumin seed
4 ounces	plain chili powder
½ cup	prepared Dijon-style mustard
4 tbsp	each of dried basil & dried oregano
6 pounds	canned Italian plum tomatoes, drained (about 5 cans, each 2 lbs, 3 ozs before draining)
½ cup	Burgundy wine
¼ cup	lemon juice
½ cup	chopped fresh dill
½ cup	chopped Italian parsley
3 cans	dark red kidney beans, 16 ounces each, drained
4 cans	pitted black olives, 5½ ounces each, drained

- Submitted by Rasa Sharkey, Sudbury, ON

1. Heat olive oil in a very large soup kettle. Add onions and cook over low heat, covered, until tender and translucent, about 10 minutes.
2. Crumble the sausage meat and ground chuck into the kettle and cook over medium-high heat, stirring often, until meats are well browned. Spoon out as much excess fat as possible.
3. Over low heat stir in black pepper, tomato paste, garlic, cumin seed, chili powder, mustard, basil and oregano.
4. Add drained tomatoes, Burgundy, lemon juice, dill, parsley and drained kidney beans. Stir well and simmer, uncovered, for another 15 minutes.
5. Taste and correct seasoning. Add olives, simmer for another 5 minutes to heat through, and serve immediately.

Makes 35 to 40 portions, From the Silver Palate Cookbook



Made for Each Other

Sheila Wray Gregoire is a national speaker and the author of four books. She lives in Ontario where she homeschools her two daughters and knits. Preferably simultaneously.



Two of Sheila's books:

To Love, Honor and Vacuum:

"When you feel more like a maid than a wife and a mother. If you feel taken for granted and exhausted, learn how to transform your family into a place where everybody contributes and everybody grows closer to God!"

Honey, I Don't Have a Headache Tonight:

"Help for women who want to feel more in the mood. It's 10 p.m. He wants to start snuggling. You want to start snoring. If you want to break this impasse, **Honey** can help!"

Read more from Sheila from her blog:

www.tolovehonorandvacuum.blogspot.com

And her main website:

www.sheilawraygregoire.com

Sheila is also hosting a big online blog party on February 4 for **Honey, I Don't Have a Headache Tonight**. She'll be doing a blog scavenger hunt, and other online activities.

In my marriage, I wreck the cars. Keith wrecks the laundry, but that doesn't cost nearly as much. Of course, Keith recently backed into a tree and shattered our van's windshield, but since this was his one and only infraction in our whole marriage, we viewed it as an aberration rather than a pattern. Then, when he went to buy a new car this fall, he bought a standard. I can't drive a standard. So I can't drive his car. I'm still trying to figure out if there's some hidden meaning there.

Keith and I have other differences, too. Keith has the "all the lights in the house must be turned off if not needed" gene. I'm missing that one. His idea of a relaxing afternoon is to do absolutely nothing. I like taking energetic bike rides. He likes war movies. I like Jane Austen. We're a strange pair.

And yet, what most often occurs to me is how alike we've become.

I tend to be on the shy side. Today I make my living speaking at women's events and retreats, often in front of large groups, which doesn't bother me in the least. But parties, where I have to talk to one on one, are stressful. It's not natural for me.

It's not natural for Keith, on the other hand, to shut up. And as we've been married, he's taken me to so many parties that I've begun to open up. But he's also

started to quiet down. Had we not married, he might have been even more gregarious, and I may have become more introspective.

Or take food. I crave sweets, but not fat or salt. Keith, on the other hand, once drank a cup of bacon grease because someone dared him. If Keith hadn't married me, he'd likely be a lot heavier than he is right now. And I'd probably still never know how wonderful real butter makes everything taste.

I've always loved to travel, and even before we were married I had seen a lot of the world, self-funding many summer missions trips. My touristy adventures, though, were largely confined to museums and tourist attractions. Keith, on the other hand, likes to get to know people. Over our years together we've ventured further abroad, most recently to Kenya. Within five minutes he knew our driver's life story. The porter in our final hotel told him all about his education. People to whom I would never normally talk Keith finds a way to draw out, and I'm gradually learning, too. If I had my initial instincts, we would have seen the world, but only from a distance. And if Keith had his, we never would have seen it at all.

Over the last sixteen years we have changed. I am not the same person who walked down

that aisle, and he isn't the same one who was waiting for me. I loved him dearly then, but I love him much more deeply now. Just by being with each other, we change each other.

And isn't that how marriage is supposed to be? If marriage is supposed to reflect Christ's relationship with the church, then it has to have an impact on us. After all, God predestined us to be transformed into Christ's likeness (Romans 8:29). As we walk with Him, we start to reflect Him, or at least we should. So shouldn't that be what marriage does to us, too? As we walk together, we start to reflect each other. And I think that's a beautiful thing.

But it should also be a warning to those of us thinking this Valentine's Day that there is that one perfect person waiting for us out there, that one person that God made just especially for you to complete you. I don't think that's the Christian view of marriage. It borders on selfishness, doesn't it? It says marriage is all about me getting what I need, not marriage is all about God making me into the person He wants me to be.

I don't think marriage is a matter of finding the perfect person as much as it is becoming the perfect couple. And the more time you spend together, the more you just might find that you're *becoming* made for each other, after all.