

From the Heart...

...Lifeskills for Today's Family
By Sharon L. Benedict MS



How do adults play?, part 1

(published in Boerne Star, Friday, Oct 7, 2016)

Throughout the previous month we learned how children played from the early 20th century into the 21st century. Children always found a way to play no matter their circumstances. Whether it was with a toy, game, or just their imagination, creativity abounded with siblings, friends, and strangers alike.

Can we adults say the same? Or are we too wrapped up in our “to do” list at work and home? Do we routinely say, “I just don’t have the time.” Well, maybe it’s time to make a change and let the kid in you free for awhile.

Wonder how adults played throughout the 20th century? I am really curious how we size up today with our ancestors of the early 20th century. Let’s journey down our own leisure time memory lane to see how our ole time toys and games reflected the play signs of the time.

One other question to ask is “How were we, as adults, also influenced by the toys, games, and play provided for us as children?” Just like the children of the 20th century, adults were significantly impacted by the exploding technologies and inventions coming their way. From the first air conditioner invented by William Carrier in 1902, then the airplane Kitty Hawk along with the Model T by Henry Ford, this was just the

beginning within the first decade. From these few, people became more mobile and leisure together with travel became the destination for many.

According to the National Endowment for the Humanities (NEH) course offered for teachers (<https://edsitement.neh.gov/launchpad-having-fun-economics-leisure>) titled, *Launchpad: Having Fun: The Economics of Leisure* (created October 18, 2010), “By 1900, there were more than 29 million people in the American workforce including men, women, and children. Americans worked an average of 59 hours per week and usually received Saturday afternoons and Sundays off. Many companies provided unpaid leave to their employees. How do you think Americans might have spent their leisure time a century ago?” Some examples of the first decade of the 20th century were bike riding, carriage rides, football teams, bathers in the surf like in Atlantic City, even a roller coaster, Loop the Loop in Coney Island, fishing in the Adirondacks, and May Pole Dancing in Central Park, New York.

In another course offered by the NEH, *Having Fun: Leisure and Entertainment at the Turn of the Twentieth Century* [<https://edsitement.neh.gov/lesson-plan/having-fun-leisure-and-entertainment-turn-twentieth-century#sect-thelesson>], source: “*The People at Play*,” *World's Work* (1902)], “In a time of profound social and cultural change, the increasingly mechanized urban environment left many feeling anxious. The construction of parks in urban areas, the recommendation of physical exercise as a way to ward off stress, and the rise of spectator sports became part of the leisure landscape in the United States. Vaudeville, dance halls, and motion pictures became popular, while new modes of travel allowed Americans to escape to mountain and seaside resorts.”

Although many of the early century's mode of leisure, games, and toys for adults continued into the 20th and today, such as card playing, weekend band concerts in the local park, buggy rides into town by our more rural folk, and more, the new inventions and their innovative applications started our nation on an adventurous leisure path that never before existed.

One creative venue actually accelerated all the many ways adults began to play in the early 20th century and beyond. In the next article, this venue will give you something to sing about . . . hint, hint!

--

Sharon L. Benedict, is a speaker, author, and weaver, and loving it! She is available for speaking engagements, free-lance writing, and will even weave you a one-of-kind creation, just for you. Sharon also welcomes your questions and comments and can be contacted at seekreachachieve@gvtc.com. Visit her website at www.celebratingyourjourney.com.

From the Heart...

...Lifeskills for Today's Family

By Sharon L. Benedict MS



How do adults play?, part 2

(published in Boerne Star, Friday, Oct 14, 2016)

As we cruise through how adults played in the early 20th century, we find that many of the leisure activities, games, and toys have continued in the 20th and 21st century, such as card playing, weekend band concerts in the local park, buggy rides into town by our more rural folk, and more. These early new inventions and innovative applications started our nation on an adventurous leisure path that never before existed.

Throughout our nation, families began to travel more frequently on those new contraptions like the automobile and aero plane; then came the movies and radio. One creative venue actually accelerated all the many ways adults began to play and sing about. And it wasn't only the exploding sports scene that transformed how we played but the songs about sports and past time activities.

According to *Songs of Sports and Pasttimes* (Online Text. Retrieved from the Library of Congress, <https://www.loc.gov/item/ihas.200197829/>) "American popular song emerged in the same era that American leisure culture began to develop, and sports such as baseball and football began to take on their present, distinctly American forms. As transportation improved, professional entertainers and traveling shows and circuses became regular visitors throughout the country. Transportation itself also became a form of recreation. In many cases, the songs themselves directed the activity. In 1915,

Conway's Band recorded a medley of children's game songs, many quite old and some still familiar nearly a hundred years later. Adults had their own musical games in the form of dances that included musical commands from callers and singers that forced them to change direction or partners.”

Let us also not forget that the growing popularity of movies propelled songwriting to new levels. Here's a few examples sung by The Peerless Quartet: *Since Mother Goes to the Movie Shows* (hear song: <https://www.loc.gov/item/jukebox.4261>) and *Take Your Girlie to the Movies* (<https://www.loc.gov/item/jukebox.7170>).

Now when it come to sports, who hasn't heard the classic 1908 song, *Take me out to the ball game!* written by Jack Norworth with music by Albert Von Tilzer. You may not have heard their names but surely the song! Norworth wrote the lyrics on a scrap piece of paper on a train ride to Manhattan, New York. Then he handed the lyrics to Albert Von Tilzer who composed the music that was published by the York Music Company and within the same year a hit record was birthed. Here's another baseball song you may not have known, *The Baseball Rag* (<https://www.loc.gov/item/jukebox.3332>).

Now let's venture with a few song about trains and cars that took families to the beach and got them sailing. Songs popped up like *Come Take a Swim in My Ocean* (<https://www.loc.gov/item/jukebox.1695>). The American Quartet popularized *Sailing Down the Chesapeake Bay* in 1912 (<https://www.loc.gov/item/jukebox.3356>).

Now when it comes to a subway, Walter Van Brunt brought us *Subway Glide* (<https://www.loc.gov/item/jukebox.2690>). Now let's get off the ground as the “aeroplane” was coming of age in the early 20th century. Although not too many initially would be

able to take a fun ride in a plane, by 1909, the Haydn Quartet sang *Up in My Aeroplane* (<http://www.loc.gov/jukebox/recordings/detail/id/1696/>). Then the next year, came *Come Josephine, In My Flying Machine* (<https://www.loc.gov/item/jukebox.2093>).

I bet there is just about a song for any sport or leisure time activity known to mankind. Whether the song is about a the movies, buggy ride, sailing, flying, roller skating, all the way to hot rods and surfing, these songs through the generations chronicled our history and heritage of innovation, invention, and just having good ole fashioned fun. In the next article, according to some leisure time per capita is still the same today as it was in 1900, although work and school hours are a different story. Let's have a look next issue.

--

Sharon L. Benedict, is a speaker, author, and weaver, and loving it! She is available for speaking engagements, free-lance writing, and will even weave you a one-of-kind creation, just for you. Sharon also welcomes your questions and comments and can be contacted at seekreachachieve@gvtc.com. Visit her website at www.celebratingyourjourney.com.

From the Heart...

...Lifeskills for Today's Family
By Sharon L. Benedict MS



How do adults play?, part 3

(published in Boerne Star, Friday, Oct 21, 2016)

With the many innovations and inventions in the 20th century, deciding how to “play” exploded across our nation. And no matter the sport or leisure time activity chosen there was undoubtedly a song written and song about it.

You would then assume that leisure time per capita for the late 20th century and into the 21st century kept exponentially rising. From the 1930s to the 1990s, experts declare leisure did in fact substantially increase. Yet, according to a few other experts, leisure time per capita basically remains the same today as it was in 1900. It seems it all depends on how you measure “per capita.”

According to Valerie A. Ramey in her 2006 working paper, *A Century Of Work And Leisure*, (www.nber.org/papers/w12264) published by the National Bureau of Economic Research, what changed was how we used our time at work and school. Let's have a look and how it all “plays” out.

Although standard measures of hours worked suggest leisure time did increase, her paper shows something a little different. In Ramey's paper a comprehensive per capita measure of non-leisure hours was developed “. . . that includes market work, home production, commuting and schooling for the last 105 years . . . The new measures reveal a number of interesting 20th Century trends. First, 70 percent of the

decline in hours worked has been offset by an increase in hours spent in school.

Second, contrary to conventional wisdom, average hours spent in home production are actually slightly higher now than they were in the early part of the 20th Century."

One key reason why Ramey's conclusion are different, and possibly more accurate, is that virtually most all other data excludes government workers, children, and adults over the age of 65 in their calculations. Ramey's report more clearly reflect what was going on throughout the 20th century, since many children worked on farms and factories in the early part of the 20th century, as did adults age 65 and older. As the years moved on, traditional hours worked may have gone down but were replaced by more education hours and home responsibilities. In addition, there with public education and expanding public sector, the number of government employees increased considerably.

Adding all that up, gives us a clearer ratio of work to leisure that tells us that 20th century leisure time didn't go up much at all. In addition, Ramey defines "leisure" as ". . . activities that give direct enjoyment . . . The activities with the highest enjoyment scores (sex, playing sports, etc.) are ones that one would generally classify as leisure." While others have some classified as work (i.e. Home Production), leisure activities for Ramey include talking to, playing with, and reading to children as high enjoyment activities.

From 1900 to 1965, these enjoyable activities were not a routine part of family life. Yet as the years moved on, they became increasingly important way time was spent. Historical studies generally include in home production planning, purchasing, care of family members, general cleaning, care of the house and grounds, preparing and clearing away food, making, mending, and laundry of clothing and other household

textiles. Home production as work also includes “. . . basic child care plus time spent in homework help, teaching, and meeting with teachers.” The trends later in the 20th century show “. . . average annual market hours per capita have only fallen by about 140 hours, rather than 550 hours. School hours, on the other hand, have increased by 100 hours.” Per capita home production hours are only slightly higher, 67 hours annually, than in 1900.

When it comes to leisure, Ramey includes personal care in her calculations, believing it gives “substantial enjoyment.” And while others do not include sleep time in any calculation, Ramey works from a 24 hours, 365 days per year model. While some of us may not consider these leisure time, here’s the one on the top of the list: Sex!

Guess what is next? Yep, it’s Playing Sports! Then comes Fishing, Art, Music, going to Bars/lounges, Play with kids/hug/kiss, Talk/read to Kids, Sleep, Church, Attend Movies, Pet care, Classes, Read, Walk, Work Break, Meals Out, Visit, Talk with Family, Lunch Break, Meal at Home, TV, Read Paper, Knit/Sew, Recreational Trip, Hobbies, Exercise, Meetings, Doctor, Dentist, Bathe. I can surely understand about Sex and Sports being on the top, but can you believe Doctor and Dentist is on the list (albeit the lower part of the list) of leisure activities!

So, what floats your “fun” boat? And let’s not go the “X-rated” route here, ok? How would you order Ramey’s Leisure list here? Anything you find fun that’s not on the list? For myself, I would add shopping, wouldn’t you? Or maybe not if you are of the male gender, unless it was for a new car or workshop gadget, right?

Wherever you find fun may it ward off the stress of life, bring you joy and laughter, and strengthen the love and care you have for your family. In the next article

or two before November 8 elections, I just may be going a little political on you. I will strive to be polite as I move into the next month's lifeskill, *Reflections*.

--

Sharon L. Benedict, is a speaker, author, and weaver, and loving it! She is available for speaking engagements, free-lance writing, and will even weave you a one-of-kind creation, just for you. Sharon also welcomes your questions and comments and can be contacted at seekreachachieve@gvtc.com. Visit her website at www.celebratingyourjourney.com.

From the Heart...

...Lifeskills for Today's Family

By Sharon L. Benedict MS



Is being politely political even possible? Part 1

(published in Boerne Star, Friday, Oct 28, 2016)

As early voting continues this week and next, how have your conversations been with your family and neighbors? Have those front yard talks stayed polite or heated up a little? Maybe for many of us we tend to vent more on Facebook or some other social network because it simply seems “safer” to do so.

For most of us we more likely look for someone who agrees with us rather than talk with or challenge someone in the opposite camp. Yet, you wouldn't think so with some of the “tweets” you read this week, even from the candidates. Even our media is having a heyday with the rants and raves happening just about every hour on the hour. So, where do we find some sanity in the midst of it all?

How about starting with shifting what you see, hear, and read, particularly from the media and social networks from both camps. Maybe it's time to do your own research not only on what the candidates and platforms support and check out some of the voting guides out there. You can even print out a sample ballot to use in your research on each candidate. This research exercise needs to be broadened beyond the presidential candidates to the many federal, state, and local ones vying for your vote.

Here are some resources that may prove helpful no matter what your political persuasion. You may be saying at this point, “I just don't have the time to do the

research.” A friend just told me that if I don’t take the time to make a conscious, informed decision by researching candidates, I will have absolutely nothing to complain about in future years. That is a sobering thought.

In part 2 next week, once you have done your research, let’s take a really close look at the values and voice we hold dear. How do they match up to the candidates and platform? Why are we so surprised by the moral crisis in our nation?

RESOURCE LINKS:

- Vote 411, League of Women Voters (research/compare candidates), <http://www.vote411.org/>
- Inside Gov (use filters for targeting candidates and issue), <http://presidential-candidates.insidegov.com/>
- Christian Coalition 2016 Voter Guide, <http://www.cc.org/voterguides>
- Kendall County Republican Party, <http://www.kendallgoptx.com/>, <http://www.kendallgoptx.com/2016-republican-candidates.html>
- Texas Democratic Party, www.txdemocrats.org
Kendall County Democratic Party (scroll to Kendall County), <http://www.txdemocrats.org/party/counties>
- Libertarian Party of Texas, www.lptexas.org
- Green Party of Texas, www.txgreens.org
- Texas Tea Party, www.texasteaparty.org; www.texasteapartypatriots.org
- Kendall County General Election Information (including link to Sample Ballot to actually mark who you want to vote for and use as a reference for researching each

candidate and bring it with you when you vote):

http://www.co.kendall.tx.us/default.aspx?Kendall_County/Elections.Current

- Hill Country Voters Guide,

<http://www.hillcountryportal.com/hillcountryvotersguide.html#COORD>

- Early voting (Kendall County, Tx):

<http://tools.cira.state.tx.us/users/0079/docs/Elections/Current%20Elections/EARLY%20VOTING.pdf>

--

Sharon L. Benedict, is a speaker, author, and weaver, and loving it! She is available for speaking engagements, free-lance writing, and will even weave you a one-of-kind creation, just for you. Sharon also welcomes your questions and comments and can be contacted at seekreachachieve@gvtc.com. Visit her website at www.celebratingyourjourney.com.