

# *From the Heart. . .*

## *. . . Life Skills for Today*

*By Sharon L. Benedict MS, ACC*



### ***Recreation—Good for What Ails You!*** **(Topic of the Month: Recreation/Entertainment)**

What does recreation mean to you? Right now, before you read this article, get a pencil and paper out. Write down five ways you define recreation for yourself. Then number these five from the least (1) to the most expensive (5). Mark on the side of each how many times you do each recreation per year (or in units of years).

How does the list reflect the way you relax and wind down? Or is the list telling you that you are still on that fast train to a destination you are not quite sure of yet? And are you more exhausted and stressed when you get home than when you set off on that great vacation or night out on the town? This also goes for those who find themselves on the potato couch every night in front the TV or computer.

So, let's look at some simpler recreation to help you slow the train down or actually get off the couch—doing some definite good for what ails you.

1.     **“LAUGHTER** is an instant vacation” and most of the time won't cost you a cent! Try ways to laugh about life and yourself as you gain a calmer and clearer perspective about those opportunities and challenges facing you. You will help your body enhance blood flow, boost your immune response, rebalance your blood sugar levels and improve your relaxation and sleep. Find a place in time to share laughter together with

those you love—at the dinner table, playing board games, a classic funny movie, just talking and passing the day together.

2. **WALKING**—how easy can that be! With the appropriate mindset or attitude, walking can be a great stress reliever, quiet your thoughts, focus your energies, and boost your natural endorphins. Set a routine to walk alone as well as with a friend or spouse.

3. **DANCING** to your favorite music can do more to soften a conflict, recharge your creativity, and clear your mind than any movement. Dancing also is definitely aerobic and heart healthy; and definitely just plain fun moving and grooving alone or with others. Take dancing lessons to learn the oldest and greatest moves and the latest new grooves. You won't regret it!

4. **CREATIVE ARTS/CRAFTS**—get connected! Not only routinely visit your local galleries, museum, plays, and concerts, take some classes. Whether you choose the performing arts of music, dance, drama or comedy, visual or literary arts, creative crafts, get connected. Learn how the arts can nurture your body and soul, and give you a profound appreciation for the unlimited imagination and creative genius of those artists & craftsmen in your neighborhood and around the nation.

5. **COOKING CUISINE**—good for your appetite and health! One of the most wonderful and satisfying activities is the flooding fragrances of great food right in your own home. Not only good for your palette but also for your health—just as long as you choose those healthy ingredients and recipes! So, get connected with people, books, and classes. You will not only change the way you eat but also your life for the better.

6. **GARDENING**—no matter the size of your patch of soil, dig into that earth and plant a garden to soothe your soul sores and put food on the table. As you bring in those flowers, herbs, and vegetables you lovingly tended, your home will shine with a sense of wholeness and hospitality every guest will cherish.

7. **OUTDOORS BEYOND YOUR DOORS**—take day outings near home to places you have always wanted to see but never took the time. Check out historic markers along the road, historic museums, hike the hillsides and mountains, bike them. You will come home appreciating your own abode and community where you live and raise your children. You will then actually build stronger roots in your community and for your family.

Recreation can mean just about anything to a person, depending on what interest and forms of activity foster relaxation and enjoyment. Yet, are any of these recreational activities listed here on your list of five? If not, I encourage you to consider giving one or more a try. Before you make world traveling plans, get in the groove with the simpler recreational pleasures of life. The every day stresses and concerns will become much lighter and easier to handle. You will then have the needed energy and motivation to plan your bigger recreational adventures.

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## ***On The Road—Story Telling Time*** **(Topic of the Month: Recreation/Entertainment)**

Throughout our daughters young years, we would always go camping in the Texas hill country and travel to the four corner states during the late summer months. The girls were always excited about seeing new and familiar places. We rented a pop-up trailer with all the conveniences of course.

I remember one summer we went camping close to home at Choke Canyon, Texas. We brought a newly hatched duck from our animal menagerie that wasn't doing well. We set up comfortable warm bedding with a light for it and watched it carefully throughout the night. The next morning we decided to see if it could walk. So, we took "Goldie" outside. Naturally, when Goldie saw my daughter Kelly's tennis shoes, it immediately started following her everywhere, chirping merrily along. That was one of Kelly's most favorite vacation times as Goldie became one of her closest pets. And it was definitely NOT designated as the chosen entrée for Roasted Duck with sage, onion & apple stuffing!

Over the years, we have had many camping adventures in the Arizona & New Mexico deserts, Colorado aspen tree line mountain tops, and California's beautiful ocean side. With every vacation their father made up a story or two along the way to

keep the girls from getting bored to tears on the long hours getting from one spot to the next.

John asked each of us to think of one word each, and he would weave a story around them. One story in particular the girls never forgot. The words we gave him were “strawberry”, “dragon”, and “garden patch”. What an imagination he had. The hours flew by! And we wanted to keep giving him three words for another story to create. Even today, we all keep encouraging him to write his children’s stories down for all to read. Hopefully, one day you just may see them on your bookstore shelf.

So, whenever your kids in the back seat gang up on you and decide to throw a fit or try to jump out the car window if you don’t stop soon, weave a story or two or three. For many of you today, you may have a DVD TV/player in your car to keep them zombied. How about using this precious time where you can actually interact together? Have them create a story themselves from words you all choose. I guarantee the hours will feel like minutes when you arrive at your next vacation destination. But for longer trips, by all means have an assortment of activities and distractions, as offered by FamilyFun.com (check them out for details, <http://familyfun.go.com/family-travel/road-trips/feature/famf48cargames/>):

- Books on tapes for the road
- Car-ride food treats (healthy of course!),
- Getting to know you games ( e.g. *Two Truths & One Lie*—taking turns, the first person tells the group three statements about himself or herself. Two are true and one is a lie. Everyone tries to guess which one is the lie; *Mad, Sad, Glad*—take turns describing something that made you mad, sad and glad

during the day; *Personal Adventures*—take turns sharing the memorable events of your lives, scariest, funniest, best, worst, most embarrassing, most proud of; *What If*—take turns answering hypothetical questions)

- Laugh out loud—in the privacy of your own car, you can laugh as loud as you want or shout out the answers to questions.
- The car next door—invent stories about people in the car next to yours. What do you think they do for work? What's their favorite food? Where do they go on vacation? Get into lots of details
- Buzz—this is a team effort to try to reach 100 without making a mistake.
- Alphabet words—starting with A, find words on signs that begin with each alphabet letter.
- Where do you do it?—one person mimics a sound, and everyone tries to guess where this sound is performed.
- Building words—take turns saying letters and build words together.
- I spy—someone says "I spy with my little eye something green." Whoever guesses correctly goes next.
- Scavenger hunt in the car/find it on the road—compete against each other or work together as a team to spot all items on a list.
- Tray top games—crazy creatures created out of paper, one minute of words
- Ultimate travel activity bag—bring a bag of goodies along such as colored pipe cleaners for creating different creatures, pencils, papers, kazoos, deck of cards, stickers, some of your child's toys

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## ***Down Home Entertainment Right in Your Backyard!*** **(Topic of the Month: Recreation/Entertainment)**

Since this month's topic is *Recreation/Entertainment*, I just couldn't write without telling you about one of the great entertainment events right here in our beautiful hill country this very weekend starting today. I know this may sound like a commercial but the heart and soul put into this event just can't be passed up. And I mean **ENTERTAINMENT** with all caps flashing!

It's the ***Boerne Festival of Art & Music 2007*** starting today, October 19 through the 21st ([www.ciboloarts.org](http://www.ciboloarts.org)). Although Cibolo Arts Council has put on this fund raising event for the past three years, this year is particularly extraordinary. This nonprofit organization puts their heart's passion into supporting the arts in all its forms and media. They also have brought together some of the most proactive nonprofit organizations making Boerne and the hill country a very special place to live.

This flagship event is produced in collaboration with the Boerne Area Artists Association and brings together an array of other nonprofits that are the backbone of our community. These are just a sample of the nonprofits that will have a booth throughout the weekend:

- Ag Heritage Museum (<http://www.agmuseum.org>)

- Boerne Community Theatre (<http://www.boernetheatre.org>)
- Christian Women's Job Corp (<http://cwjckendallcounty.org>)
- Hill Country Animal League (<http://www.petfinder.com/shelters/TX474.html>)
- Hill Country Mission for Health (<http://missionforhealth.org>)
- Majestic Ranch Arts Foundation (<http://www.mraf.org>)

This is a first for connecting with all these great organizations in one event. Be sure to say thank you to the Cibolo Arts Council and the Boerne Area Artists Association by not only attending but contributing! You will find lots of ways to contribute starting with a CAC wristband for only \$10.

You can even support the Sam Champion Monument Fund (<http://www.samchampionmonumentfund.com/>) for the phenomenal statue to be placed at Boerne's new high school. They will also have a booth, and you can buy a brick for \$100 with your name on it that will surround the monument.

Throughout this event, you will experience a superior collection of fine artists and musicians in and around the historic setting of Boerne's Main Plaza. Tonight as part of their ***Pre-Festival Celebration*** from 6:30-10:30 pm, there will be a ***Red Hot Chili Fest Gala and Art Auction***, opening with cocktails and red attire for all. Music for the evening will be with Patrice Pike. Then comes the great food with gourmet chili tasting, accompanied by Tweaked Texas Tastes.

After you are satisfied with the great drinks, food, and music, a ***Live Art Auction*** will then begin. This gives you a perfect chance to support the Cibolo Arts Council and the many significant alliances they serve throughout our community—while going home with an art treasure of your own. The Art Show and Music will



continue until 10:30 pm. Yet, the fun is just beginning as you go home to rest and get ready for Saturday's breakout from 10:00 am to 6:00 pm.

Starting at 10 am, Saturday, come to the ***Invitational Art Show in Ye Kendall Halle***. This intimate show will feature the work of 26 artists in a variety of media. The show is free and open to the public. So how can you pass this up?! Artists themselves will be on hand to answer questions and show off their work. Many of the artists are members of the Boerne Area Artists Association and will be showcasing their latest works.

Then watch the food galore come your way from 1:00 to 11:00 pm with the ***Charity Chili Cook-Off*** on Main Plaza. Chili Tasting costs only \$15 and benefits all participating Boerne area nonprofits. Many of these participating local 501(c)(3) service organizations will compete for a \$1,000 prize from the arts council. So be sure to come out and support these organizations.

Along with this food fest, music will be resound throughout the day into the evening until 11:00 pm. First, you will hear—

 Two Hoots and a Holler (on Main Stage in Plaza) 1:00-2:00 pm

 The Mike Vanderberg Experience (on Small Stage) 2:00-2:30 pm

 Bethany Jacobs (on Main Stage in Plaza) 2:30-3:30 pm

 The Mike Vanderberg Experience (on Small Stage) 3:30-4:00 pm

 Mystic Sister (on Main Stage in Plaza) 4:00-5:00 pm

 The Mike Vanderberg Experience (on Small Stage) 5:00-5:30 pm

🎵 Flounders Without Eyes (on Main Stage in Plaza) 5:30-7:00 pm

🎵 The Mike Vanderberg Experience (on Small Stage) 7:00-7:30 pm

🎵 Patrice Pike (on Main Stage in Plaza) 7:30-9:00 pm

🎵 The Derailers (on Main Stage in Plaza) 9:30-11:00 pm

Sunday brings you another chance to visit the ***Invitational Art Show*** at the Ye Kendall Halle along with great food offered at the ***Jazz Brunch on the Ye Kendall Inn Courtyard*** from 11:00 am to 2:00 pm. What a great ending to a fun-filled weekend with listening to beautiful Jazz music while having Brunch on the Courtyard.

As a creative arts coach as well as a certified life/wellness coach, I will throw in an added bonus for those who attend this weekend. If you are the first three persons who each donate \$100 or more to Cibolo Arts Council during this event—just email me, confirm your donation receipt, and you will get a free one-hour coaching consult session as my thank you for supporting this very worthy organization. See you there throughout the weekend—and remember, be *In Red* attire!

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## ***Art, Antiques, & Animals—Having fun while preserving the quality of your community*** (Topic of the Month: Recreation/Entertainment)

Within your own small town community, look around to see what you may be missing. What do you find? I bet you will come up with more than just a walk in the park or going to Sonic. For Boerne, Texas, and the surrounding hill country, the holiday season is upon us; and plans for lighting up main street with holiday colors, parades, and songs are well on their way.

When I first moved to Boerne over three years ago, I instantly connected with the world of art, antiques from crystal to cars, and animals. These are three great ways to seek out having some fun—holding onto to your budget, of course! I'm sure for anyone who has visited the hill country and, particularly, Boerne, you will see an art gallery and antique store on just about every corner. And it's getting better everyday in quantity **and** quality—the best combination for growing a community's gems of activity.

Having fun in your own backyard is as simple as going to your local chamber of commerce and visitors/convention center websites to find gems you didn't know existed. In Boerne, for art, just visit the Boerne Area Artists Association and Cibolo

Arts Council websites for the latest and greatest of galleries, art work, and artist studios to visit. Then move onto to antiques and old stuff in all its form—from some of the finer antique shops, historical farm equipment on display at the Agricultural Heritage Center & Museum, to the annual vintage autos that show up on the Main Plaza each year. In fact, the 15th Annual Key to the Hills Antique Show is upon us this weekend. So, check it out.

Let's not leave out the flora and fauna all around us. The hill country has a unique and valuable ecosystem needing to be enjoyed and preserved in all its diversity. Look around you and know that the rivers and countryside hold our region's history and legacy with every hill side and valley. Right in your our own backyard are vistas above on every trail, and below ground with the delight of caves calling you. From the many varieties of birds, bats, and bobcats, the fauna is also calling you. So, spend some time walking the trails, listening to the soft whistling native grasses and the life that makes your world beautiful.

Our beautiful region of the world is bringing many to our countryside to enjoy what we love so much. So, while we watch the hillsides continue to be developed into homes and businesses, let us never forget the essential quality of life needing protection that accompanies this growth. Let us welcome them with a solid and encompassing vision of the balance we seek—to accommodate this growth and preserve our flora, fauna, rivers, and countryside. Begin to get out there and experience the calm and wonder of nature's gift to us right here. Then start proactively supporting those with a passion and vision to merge our heritage with our fast approaching life in the hill country.

By all means, start with the Cibolo Nature Center whose incredible legacy to Boerne and the Texas Hill Country is only beginning to be felt and given a place of honor in our community's history going back to the early 1800s. The vision and support it offers goes far beyond just being a nice place to take a walk. The heart and soul of CNC is to leave a legacy to not only Boerne but all of Texas...a gem to preserve and treasure with each and every acre. If you don't know much about this gem of the hill country, it's time to find out about this heritage being gifted to each and every one of us.

The way others view our community is not only reflected in the way we work and live our daily lives but also the way we have fun. The overall environment we offer as well as the way we seek recreation and entertainment really says it all about our community. This is what visitors and our own residents see—what is most important to our way of life. So, as you get out and have some fun with art, antiques, and animals during this upcoming holiday season, do say a thank you to those who offer these gems and find a special way to support their commitment to your very own community.