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Planning RECREATION for Rural Home and Community

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PLANNING RECREATION FOR RURAL HOME AND COMMUNITY

A Guide for Extension Workers

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RECREATION AND PEOPLE

RECREATION can be anything beyond the normal line of duty that a person does not have to do but does just for the fun or enjoyment of it. It is not just games or active sports, parties or singing, meetings or socials, or hobby handicrafts. It is not merely play or exercise; nor is it a waste of time. It is something that provides relaxation and diversion from the requirements of regular work.

There are many types of recreation, and the amount of relaxation or enjoyment that a person gets from an activity depends a great deal upon himself, and upon his experience, attitude, and appreciation. Yet we are alike underneath, no matter what our age, role, religion, or occupation, or where we live. We all want a certain amount of attention and affection. We all want to mingle with other people, at least to some extent, and to receive some recognition. These are among our basic psychological desires. Let us take a look at the main psychological desires of people; they are fundamental to recreation.

"Man Does Not Live by Bread Alone"

The desire to create.—This does not mean that one wants to write a great poem or paint a masterpiece. The baby with his blocks is getting the satisfaction of creating. The man working out a better way to do a job on the farm gets the satisfaction of creating. Perfection is not important, it is the satisfaction of making something that counts. This satisfaction is ruined sometimes by someone's criticism, or too much help. In working with the people of your community, be careful not to interfere

when you see someone trying to do something that you could do better, or faster. If you do, you may destroy or discourage this urge to accomplish something.

The desire for adventure.—To explore, to try something new, to get away from routine is one of our deepest needs, and one often not satisfied. This is why men risk their lives climbing Mount Everest or exploring the Antarctic, and why city people gather round to watch a building under construction. This urge for adventure is why detective stories and ghost stories are so popular, and why youngsters often get into mischief. But the adventure does not have to be real in the physical sense.

Try to open up avenues of adventure in your work with people. Make simple things exciting by thinking up new twists. Do not be afraid to express feelings. Share your experiences with the people with whom you work, because you open windows when you do, for them and for yourself as well.

The desire to belong, the social urge.—People do not like to live alone. We all want to be needed, to be appreciated, and to be recognized or approved by others. We may be shy or self-conscious, or we may think we can do all right alone, but the need is there.

In planning meetings or programs, make sure no one gets the feeling that he is an outsider. This goes for an educational or other meeting as well as for a recreation meeting. It is easy to concentrate on the "stars" in folk games or in discussion at meetings, and forget the shy person or the awkward boy or girl who pretends he or she does not want to play.

The need for action, movement.—Home agents can point out to members of home demonstration clubs that the child needs to move, to develop his muscles, to use his body, to run, jump, climb, skip. This need does not end with childhood. There is a real satisfaction in bodily movement, and in physical fatigue after action that was exhilarating or pleasant. Look at the faces of dancers after a long square dance. The dancers are breathless, but they also are radiant from the fun of active movement to music.

Farm work may be hard and tiring, but it may not give enough of the right kinds of exercise. One can plow, and chop wood, and do all the other chores, and still want to play a game of softball, or go to a dance or on a coon hunt. No matter how interesting a meeting may be, we all begin to stretch, or squirm, or move around a little before it is through. If you are a wise leader, you will learn many ways to add some movement or action to your meeting, no matter how crowded the group or small the meeting place.

The desire for music.—From the time a person is born to the time he dies, he needs music and rhythm. It is almost instinctive to sing or whistle when we are happy. And when we do, we always keep time, because we respond to rhythm.

Music is a universal language. We do not have to know German to appreciate Beethoven, or French to like Chopin. We do not have to know anything about a person to enjoy singing with him.

In using music in a recreation program, do as you would in planning a dinner or cutting out a dress, start with what you have. People like what they know. Start with that, then help them to learn to like what they do not know. The same principle is often useful in teaching subject matter at an extension meeting. First get folks to tell what they already do, then go on to teach them the new practice.

The desire for drama, or acting parts.—Every day of their lives the people around you take the part of Devoted Husband, Loving Wife, Friendly Neighbor, Efficient Worker, and dozens of other roles. A person enjoys a motion picture because for several hours he has stopped being himself and had fun being someone entirely different. The good actor can set up an imaginary play and then play out his own part accordingly. A good discussion leader or teacher can always take the place of or think about the other fellow and fit his words to

that situation only; otherwise he clutters and confuses.

Have you ever thought of using dramatics as a way of working out questions or problems in a group? It is impersonal, therefore no one's feelings get hurt, but everyone gets the point. Ask folks to take the part of others and discuss the lesson or subject as those other persons would. This not only is fun, but will result in more effective learning.

The desire for personal accomplishment and development.—Everyone wants to improve. The desire may be to improve one's personal appearance, or it may be to make the garden or front yard more attractive. It may be frivolous or serious, but all persons want to grow. As an extension worker, do you recognize this, even when it is not obvious? Do you try to open up new ways to personal growth? And do you show appreciation for the attempts that come to your attention? Are you most interested in bringing about growth in the people with whom you work, or are you most concerned with merely telling them about the subject-matter of your program?

The desire for security.—The most important desire of people at all ages is probably for psychological security, as well as economic security. Psychological security is derived from a variety of sources, including some of the desires already mentioned. Fright or fear, break of a family tie or relationship, unfriendliness or disapproval of associates, reduction in economic well-being, and restricted physical well-being are among the main insecurities that concern people, old and young. Insecurities such as these can be produced by fleeting incidents or longer experiences; and they can have a lasting effect.

People Are Different

"Nobody ever understands me." You have heard many people say this, from small children to old people. Even though we all have the same basic desires, we differ in some respects. Probably the most important difference between people that affects recreation is their age. The age of the people you are serving is something you will need to think about, because it has so much to do with the way you plan, and what you plan.

1- to 3-year-olds.—Individual play is the thing. These children have a very short interest span, so they go from one thing to another. They like to

have someone sing to them and to tell them stories, mostly of things they know about, such as trains, animals, or other children. They like bright colors, pull-toys, blocks, and dolls. They like to play in sand boxes and to swing and slide. Play equipment should be safe, sturdy, and on the large side, because youngsters in this age group have not learned to use the small muscles.

3- to 6-year-olds.—Children of this age do not play much in groups. Cooperative play, such as playing house, begins with this age group. Simple singing games and individual games, such as Pinning the Tail on the Donkey, are enjoyed. But do not expect children from 3 to 6 years old to do anything long at a time. They seem destructive, because they want to see “what makes the wheels go round.” They like to paint and draw. They should be given large sheets of paper and large brushes. Do not expect realism. They will draw what they mean, not what they see. They like mud and clay, or plastieine, but again, do not expect realism. They will play “like” everything—mama, papa, a train, or whatever they see or hear. This dramatic play is very important.

6- to 9-year-olds.—Children of this age group are symbolic in their painting and drawing, but begin to get realistic. They like fairy stories, stories about animals, and stories of other lands. They also

like circle and singing games, tag games, and some of the quiet games that are not too difficult. They will giggle over nothing for hours. They like to dress up in cowboy or Indian outfits, or mother’s old clothes and high heels. They like pets. Children 8 to 10 may tend to worry somewhat; they are beginning to feel an independence, yet have a strong feeling of dependence upon their parents and a concern for their own future, should something happen. Wholesome recreation with playmates and with the family is important.

9- to 12-year-olds.—During the ages of 9 to 12, children enjoy group games and clubs. They love activity, adventure, and excitement. They can develop great interest in birds, animals, and nature projects. They like tales of heroes and adventure. They can learn woodworking and weaving—almost all kinds of arts and crafts, including simple metal and leather work. They are interested in sport and want to play softball, basketball, and football (make it touch football). They like parties, but the boys will stick together, and the girls will stick together and it is hard to get them to mix. Treasure hunts, “wiener” roasts, and picnics are popular, because they do not require much “pairing up.” Be careful when you attempt such activities as square dances and folk games for this age group.

At this age children are very impressionable to



A Berkeley County, W. Va., farm family having some after-supper relaxation with a game of croquet—a good way to build character, pleasant memories, and family unity.

family customs and ideas. By the time a child has reached the age of 10 or 12 years, the main outlines of character and personality are fully formed. This is why proper childhood development is so important. Recreation that builds good relationships and ideals is essential.

12- to 15-year-olds.—At the hard age, 12 to 15 years, youngsters act like 6-year-olds one minute, and adults the next. Their feelings are hurt easily. They are very conservative. They want to dress alike, act alike, and go to the same places. They are apt to be awkward, lack poise, and be very shy and self-conscious. They do not want to concentrate on one thing for very long, but this is a good time to start hobbies. Be careful about recreation activities that require partners; provide for easy partnering without the boys' and girls' having to select, or make the selection easy.

The girls like romantic stories and the boys, stories about leaders and adventure. They will learn to dance, if they are taught separately. They delight in highly organized games, especially sports. The boys like to tease the girls, and the girls to be teased. They find it hard to keep their groups and cliques open to others. Understanding and patience are needed in dealing with this group.

15- to 19-year-olds.—During the "extreme" age, everything is wonderful or everything is grim. The 15- to 19-year-olds are impatient of adult control, but secretly want it. This is the "date" age—the boy-meets-girl age. These young people need plenty of chances to get together for "gab fests," and for dancing or parties. They usually develop strong leaders, and will do almost anything in the way of recreation if the "gang" goes along with the idea.

This is also the time—perhaps it will be the last—when real parental relationships and attachments are needed and can be made. Parents should counsel and support their children at this age, but not dominate them. It is the time when children want security because they are thinking about their future. It is the time when parents should plan some family recreation or things to do together, for youth need their parents, and the parents will soon be missing them.

Young adults.—Generally, older young people are interested in service projects and beginning to be serious about love, their life work, and the state of the world. They like discussion groups, home-making classes, parent education, and working to-

gether for a common cause. They like dancing, singing, and get-togethers of all sorts.

Recreation and social life for youth and young men and women have much greater value in proportion to other activities, than they do for older people. Sometimes this group may seem to care for nothing except mating and social life. But this is natural. All too often workers with youth and young men and women forget that their interests continue to change. The same kind of 4-H work that appeals to the 10- to 13-year-old will not be of much interest to older youth and young adults; neither will the straight educational discussions of farm problems that interest established farmers. The extension agent who works with older youth and young adults must recognize that for a time they are most interested in social life and related educational topics. He must be willing and able to give leadership to youth programs accordingly.

Average adults.—In the average adult group there is a difference between young married couples and family folk. But generally they like programs that provide comradeship and laughter. They do not usually want programs that are too active, but programs must be interesting and relaxing. The average adult wants sociability. Square dancing and social mixers are good. Members of this group also want to learn, and to improve themselves recreationally and in practical knowledge about such things as parent education and farming. They are interested in the welfare of boys and girls, because they usually have some of their own. The general problem in connection with members of this age group is not what kinds of programs to provide, because they like practically all kinds, but to make programs interesting and enjoyable.

Oldsters.—Often the neglected group in a community is made up of the older people. They are likely to be lonely. They need a chance to talk over their experiences, laugh together, and play games with their friends. They like to be useful, and love doing things for other groups. They enjoy music and singing, simple dramatics, old-time games of dancing. They also prefer small informal group or table games that permit much visiting, rather than large, organized social games. They enjoy watching young people.

Recreation for oldsters will become more and more important, because the tendency is toward earlier retirement, and the percentage of older

people in the population will be greater in the future.

Wholesome recreation, which might be any one of a hundred things, helps people to live longer. An older person should never stop doing something. Complete idleness is killing. Encourage the oldsters in your community to have some kind of hobby or activity.

What Recreation Is Depends on the Person

You as an extension worker can point out to rural people that recreation often depends on the possibilities they see in situations, and how these can be turned into constructive action. For example, a packing box thrown on the trash pile might make good kindling, but it also might make several good bird houses, or be used to make shelves for the basement. The children in a family could help to plan the shelves and decide how to use them for their playthings. So instead of just kindling, the packing box would afford several persons fun and growth through creating something and working together.

So much about recreation depends upon how a person thinks or feels, and what he does about it. If he has worked too hard all his life, he may secretly resent seeing other people having fun. If he is very serious-minded, he may be embarrassed when he tries to unbend. The point is that many people may be limited in the things they can do well, but there is no limit to the things in which they can be interested.

Here is a list of the main types:

Appreciation of special things, such as appearance of buildings or yards, fields or livestock, care of the automobile, farm and home mechanics or practices, enjoyment of scenery, and pride in one's own cookery or sewing.

Art and craft hobbies such as dramatics, music, painting, reading, building, collecting, and gardening.

Camping or picnicking with the family, alone, or in special groups.

Community service, such as participation and helping in farm-organization, club, church, civic-group, or other community activity.

Home recreation, such as owning pets, observing family customs, using special practices with children, giving special attention to cookery or decorating, having fun in farm or home work, and engaging in other home activities. Nature lore, such as hiking, studying and collecting specimens of plant or animal life, geology, and astronomy.

Commercial recreation, such as attending events or "movies."

Organized social activities such as folk dancing, games, and discussion.

Informal social activities such as playing cards or other games, visiting in homes or while at work, children's play, and eating out.

Team sports and athletics such as softball, volleyball, and tennis.

Informal sports and athletics such as hunting, fishing, skating, swimming, bowling, and billiards.

Travel—going riding, visiting people and places, and seeing the sights.

Oftentimes two or more types of activities are engaged in at the same time, or combined with nonrecreational activities such as meetings.

SUGGESTED READING

GUIDE TO PLAY ACTIVITIES AT DIFFERENT AGE LEVELS.

3 pp. Natl. Recreation Assoc. MB-820. New York, Natl. Recreation Assoc. 1939.

LEISURE FOR LIVING.

SIDNEY GREENBIE. 228 pp. New York, George W. Stewart. 1940.

19 RECREATION PRINCIPLES.

8 pp. New York, Natl. Recreation Assoc. 1946. Single copies free.

OFF THE JOB LIVING.

G. OTT ROMNEY. 232 pp. New York, A. S. Barnes & Co., Inc. 1945.

PLAY: A CHILD'S WAY OF GROWING UP.

CLARA LAMBERT. 36 pp., illus. New York, Play Schools Assoc. 1947.

PLAY IN EDUCATION.

JOSEPH LEE. 500 pp. New York, Natl. Recreation Assoc. 1942. (Out of print.)

WHAT MEN LIVE BY.

RICHARD C. CABOT. 341 pp. Boston, Houghton Mifflin Co. 1914.

THE FAMILY THAT PLAYS TOGETHER STAYS TOGETHER

Recreation at Home

TODAY there are many magnets that draw people's interests out of the home. And yet our whole national life is built around the home and the family. As a rural leader you will wish to encourage all projects that make the home more attractive and afford the family more fun together, thus giving family life more unity and meaning. Family-centered recreational activities help to keep family life strong.

Teaching Others To Have Fun at Home

What can you, as an extension worker, do about encouraging home play and family fun? First of all, set an example. Practice what you preach.

Word will get around. The Chinese say that a picture is worth a thousand words! So it is with putting recreation into practice in your own community.

Home demonstration agents should include recreational values in their educational programs in homemaking.

Lessons in etiquette done by dramatics—a group of 4-H youngsters demonstrating the right and wrong ways—will count much more than a mere lecture.

Any meeting of young people can include some games, just for fun, and the learning of a few games to try on the family or to play with the small child.

Lessons in woodwork, and in the nature of various woods, can result in developing skills. And, at the same time, they can result in rustic furniture, shelves, corner cupboards, toys, footstools, lamp bases, coasters, and a host of other simple, practical articles that can be used and enjoyed by the whole family.

Meetings about new and improved methods of



Extension workers can encourage farm families to have fun, get relaxation from strain, and build acquaintanceship and cooperation. A farm crew—father, sons, and hired hand—playing horseshoes after dinner.

doing farm work are important, but what each person does with the extra time he gains is also important. If this time is used to strengthen family ties or build appreciations, then you have really accomplished something.

In everything you teach, and in every group you lead, go the second mile. Show how it can all be used to make family living more fun. Do it by discussion, by demonstration, by acting it out, and in all of it, stimulate the enthusiasm and imagination of each person, so that there will be a carry-over.

Work with the local newspaper. The editor may be glad to start a special series of articles with an editorial on the importance of the home, and what it should mean. This can be followed by individual articles giving specific suggestions and directions on how to build an outdoor fireplace and picnic table, a sand box, a playhouse; how to lay out a horseshoe court and the rules of the game; how to make toys from boxes and games from cardboard. Write about games that can be played at the kitchen table, ways of celebrating a birthday, making favors out of natural material, activities for rainy days. Write so that it will sound like fun. Keep all directions very simple. Ask for contributions of readers for new ideas.

Sometime at a meeting of young people, get them to write a paragraph on "What I like best about my home," and "What I like least about my home." Discuss these (the writers to be anonymous, of course), and use them in your meeting with older groups.

Run a contest for the best play yard costing less than \$5. Tie this in with a photographic contest, showing the yard "before" and "after." The local paper will be glad to publish the winners' names.

Give lessons in flower arrangement. Women and teen-age girls enjoy this. If you don't know anything about it, get someone from the garden club to help you. Plan hobby and flower shows; not big ones, but a number of small ones. Then have a big one.

Home agents should emphasize that every family would do well to have a family council periodically for the purpose of planning recreation for each member and for the family as a whole.

If recreation is not planned for, it might be overlooked. Parents need to be conscious of the values of wholesome recreation to healthful living and personality development, and then help their families to obtain this recreation.

The New Look, Outdoors

Home demonstration agents can interest homemakers, first of all, in looking around the outside space of their homes and seeing what is available. The green lawn and flower borders should be saved, but an area can be selected that is big enough and near enough to the house to enable mother to keep an eye on it.

Then some simple equipment should be planned. For preschool children there is nothing finer than a sand box. It need not have a bottom, just four boards for sides, and one across for a seat. The sand should always be kept moist. A cup, a spoon, a bucket, something to pat with, and the small children will play in it for hours.

A sawhorse with a smooth board across it makes a good seesaw but it should be kept fairly low. Seesaws are not highly recommended any more because of the likelihood that children will become injured on them. If one is used, it should be constructed solidly, and the children taught how to use it. A good thick rope tied securely over a tree limb and hanging loose with a big knot on the end makes fine climbing equipment. Other knots at intervals will help the smaller children to enjoy it. If the rope leads to a tree-house, all the better. Burlap bags filled with sawdust or wood shavings make good cushions and can be used in dozens of ways. Several boards across sawhorses make a table for quiet games or picnic lunches.

A playhouse can grow from any big box or packing case. The top can be covered with some waterproof material, a window or two can be cut, and the rest can be left to the children. They will use it as a school, store, ship cabin, fort, and in a dozen other ways. A few logs, boards, and other odds and ends should be provided for the youngsters to use for building material. Such things will stimulate the imagination.

For older youngsters, a barrel hoop or basket against the barn door will do for basketball throwing and some of the basketball games that do not require so many players. A rope stretched 8 feet high between two posts and an open, fairly level space are all that are needed for volleyball.

A horseshoe court will be used by family and visitors. All it requires are two stakes set about 25 feet apart, for children; 30 feet, for women; and 40 feet, for men. The stakes should stand 12 inches above the ground in a pitcher's box that is usually 6 feet square.

Rural families that have a cement porch or barn driveway can paint a shuffleboard court on it. This is an excellent sport for young or old.

For the whole family, a picnic fireplace and table will make fun in all seasons, even wintertime. The fireplace is easy to build of stone, bricks, cement blocks, or whatever is available. They should be put not too far from the house for easy carrying of food, but far enough to be exciting. A place should be picked that has a view and some shade.

Benches and comfortable chairs will encourage outdoor living. Europeans are always surprised to find how we tend to stay indoors instead of taking advantage of the sun and sky.

All the outside equipment can be made pretty as well as fun by painting it. Soft colors, to harmonize with the green and blue of outdoors, look better than bright colors, because people will not get tired of them.

Such things should not be bought. Making them can be a family project. Then they will mean much more. A corner of the barn, or the garage, or the woodshed can be turned into a workshop, and will give more freedom to the youngsters and be less noisy for the family.

A tent, made of a blanket stretched over a rope or wire, will give endless pleasure.

The New Look, Indoors

Indoors, a room for children, regardless of their ages, should have plenty of shelf or cupboard space for toys and play equipment. Hooks on the closet door can hold tennis racquets, bats, baseball gloves, and other sports equipment.

A bulletin board made of cork, burlap, or heavy cardboard will give the youngsters a chance to mount favorite pictures, souvenirs, poems, or stories.

If a side wall is covered with a removable strip of brown paper or newsprint paper, the chances of its being smudged with pencils or crayons will be less.

Beds or cots should be covered with heavy, sturdy material that will stand wear, and not be injured by shoe prints. Rugs should be washable.

Other parts of the home can be used for play. A card table or the dining-room table makes a fine cave or playhouse if it is covered with an old sheet or blanket. Youngsters should be encouraged to put their toys on the lower shelves of bookcases. If

it is finished off, the attic or the basement is ideal for a playroom. If not, the end of the porch or a corner of the living room can be used as a place where the youngsters can have a certain amount of privacy, and feel free to play.

Make Work Fun

Chores can be fun if organized with imagination. Explain to homemakers how they can divide chores on a weekly schedule. Then, there is care of the garden, and of flowers and shrubs. This need not be drudgery. Some play activities could be built around them. Youngsters should be taught about plants, and soil, and trees, and the livestock.

Dishwashing can be fun if it is the time when everyone sings together, or if mother tells a continued story. Making beds is much more fun if the youngster wears a white headdress and pretends she is a Red Cross nurse. Helping to cook will be more fun if the biscuits and cookies are cut into all sorts of shapes to suit various occasions.

Setting the table is fun, if a youngster can vary it, try out new table decorations, and color schemes. Meals are more fun, too, when they are eaten sometimes around the fireplace, sometimes outdoors, sometimes on the porch. Nothing has to be routine or drudgery if love and imagination are in it.

All holidays should be celebrated with special food and decorations. Birthdays should be made very special. In one family, the member having the birthday gives presents to the others, instead of receiving them.

Among the important things that parents pass on to children are pleasant memories and family customs. The reading of a special story on Christmas Eve, the outdoor games, the trips, the singing of a traditional song on a special occasion, the cooking of certain food for a particular day, all are part of family traditions, well remembered all one's life. Some families join hands under the table at the beginning of the meal and sing the blessing.

Arts and crafts run all through family life. Decorating the table, making favors, arranging flowers, decorating the house, making slip covers, shelves, gifts, Christmas cards, curtains—everything that beautifies the home, makes it more cheerful and comfortable—are family projects in which everyone should have a hand, not only in making but in planning.



Home demonstration work teaches the value of family recreation. Another rural family enjoying a house game together—a fine activity for leisure hours.

Doing things together is the secret, and if these things can sometimes be a surprise or sometimes spontaneous, so much the better.

Hospitality, too, is important. Point out to members of homemakers' clubs that every member of the family should feel free to bring his friends home with him, whether unexpected or not, and know that they will be welcomed. The house that welcomes friends will not lose out to outside attractions.

Just Like Home Folks

No matter how pleasant the home, or how much family fun, everyone in the family needs some sort of social life outside the home. Rubbing shoulders with friends and neighbors and meeting new ones are a necessary part of rural life. To really know a person one must meet him in a leisurely way, play games with him, visit with him, sing with him, or swap jokes with him.

This goes for farm families and also for the city folks who have come to the country to live. People in this group are sometimes kept out, or treated as outsiders, no matter how long they may have lived in the area. If through family parties or neighborhood get-togethers, or by just plain greetings, this barrier can be broken down, everyone will gain by it, and the community will be a better place in which to live. Neighborliness cannot be taught, it has to be shown. Situations have to be provided where it can show itself.

But a big party or community social need not necessarily be given in order to get away from home or to get folks together. Rural people are sometimes too busy for that. Small parties at home for children are very meaningful to them. They need not be held too often, but two or three a year should be planned for special occasions. And seasonal socials for the young people should not be forgotten. Let them run these socials themselves.

Add to the pleasure of committee meetings or

other business meetings by holding them in homes, in rotation, of course, with the host family having some refreshments and jolly visiting after the business part of the meetings. Churches and organizations that follow this plan find that it helps to build group unity and leadership, as well as interest in the organization. The plan should work equally well in extension meetings.

Informal Family Activities

A Sunday afternoon drive is always welcome family recreation. But, instead of just riding, the family should go to particular places, such as a park or fish hatchery, maybe take a picnic lunch along, call on relatives or friends for a visit, or just stop along the road to study a stream or some field or to take a little hike in the woods. They could get a neighbor family or some other folks to go along, and split up the families between the automobiles.

Picnics, trips, and similar family activities are always more enjoyable if everyone has a part in the planning. The proposals can be discussed at breakfast or the day before. After the plans have been made, responsibilities can be divided, or little jobs distributed among the family members.

Family activities away from home do not necessarily require large organized gatherings with pro-

grams. Many of the activities outside can be just for the family, and carried on as a family.

When the family goes to the city to shop for fall school clothes or other items, it can plan some family recreation activity on the same trip. A visit can be made to the zoo, the city park, the electric power plant or some factory, the commercial airport, the railroad station, newspaper plant, or a radio station (children are interested in these), or some other point of interest in the city or along the way.

A home should provide a chance for musical development. It is fine if this can mean music lessons for children. But it need not mean this. The main thing is development of music appreciation. Family or home music might mean singing around the piano, singing while working in the kitchen, listening to records or to radio programs, reading about musical selections or persons. Some families can have a little orchestra, quartet, or duet. Music can have recreational value in many ways.

Drama, too, is important, simplified, of course. Dressing up in mother's and dad's old clothes, acting out charades, making paper-doll puppets, all are forms of dramatics. Acting out stories and putting on shows for other youngsters are, too.

Then, there are many other hobbies and interests—pets for example. Fortunate indeed is the



A few simple landscape-gardening extras produce an attractive farmstead. But they also represent creativeness and an interest other than in farm business alone. These make for relaxation and satisfaction in rural living.

child who has a pet or the care of animals at some time in his life. Every youth should develop one or more individual hobbies or interests of some kind, especially as he grows older.

Many persons obtain recreational value from participation in one or more local organizations or from community service of some kind; leading a 4-H Club or serving as officer of a farm organization. There is a host of needs for such service, which offers opportunities to rural people. Such service has maximum recreational value, because it not only produces relaxation from daily routine or daily work, but also because it frees a person from thinking about himself and gets him out with other people. Many a personality has grown finer and many a family become stronger because they have lost themselves in community service. When parents take part in community life, this encourages the young people to do so, and service becomes a part of personal and family philosophy.

So place against loneliness wholesome recreation, fun, happy experiences, and lasting memories—all these can do as much as anything else to make rural homes and family life happy. Happy homes mean well-adjusted children and later success. Happy homes also mean strong communities, and a strong nation.

Home-made happiness costs less, lasts longer, and is worth more than any other kind. Here are the main types of home recreation:

Hobbies, such as block printing, woodwork, music, handicrafts, landscaping and flower gardening, raising of animals, nature collections, creative writing, painting, and wood carving. A workshop in shed, attic, basement, or garage, for example, that the family as a group can use.

Fun, such as Sunday family fellowship, games

around the table at mealtime, song fests, storytelling, reading, family excursions, and outdoor sports around the home.

Home parties and open house for the young people of the family and their friends.

SUGGESTED READING

BOOK OF OUTDOOR FIREPLACES.

19 pp. Rochester, N. Y., R. T. French Co. [n.d.] Free.
FUN TO MAKE AND FUN TO PLAY.

OKLAHOMA EXTENSION SERVICE. 23 pp. Ext. Serv. Cir. No. 503. Stillwater, Okla. Agr. Col. Ext. 1949.

HOME CONSTRUCTION OF PLAYGROUND AND SCHOOL APPARATUS.

C. M. BEDFORD. 49 pp. Regina, Saskatchewan, Canada, The Saskatchewan Recreation Movement. 1945.

HOME GAMES.

COMPILED BY NEVA L. BOYD. 32 pp. Chicago, H. T. Fitz-Simons Co. 1942.

HOME PLAY.

95 pp. New York, Natl. Recreation Assoc. 1945.

HOME PLAYGROUND AND INDOOR PLAYROOM.

9 pp. Natl. Recreation Assoc. MP-73. New York, Natl. Recreation Assoc. 1942.

HOME-MADE PLAY APPARATUS.

11 pp. Natl. Recreation Assoc. MP-277. New York, Natl. Recreation Assoc. 1940.

MAKE IT FOR THE CHILDREN.

PREPARED BY PAGE KIRK. 36 pp. Washington, D. C., Assoc. for Childhood Ed. 1942.

MAKE YOUR OWN GAMES.

7 pp. Natl. Recreation Assoc. MP-332. New York, Natl. Recreation Assoc. 1948. (Mimeographed.)

MAKE YOUR OWN PUZZLES.

7 pp. Natl. Recreation Assoc. MP-333. New York, Natl. Recreation Assoc. 1948.

PICNIC FIREPLACES (reprint from *Park and Recreation Structures*, 1938). 14 pp. U. S. Dept. of Int. Natl. Park Serv., Washington, D. C., Supt. Docs. 1938. 10 cents.

SO YOU'RE GOING TO TAKE A TRIP.

4 pp. Natl. Recreation Assoc. MB-1788. New York, Natl. Recreation Assoc. 1946.

PUTTING LIFE INTO MEETINGS AND ORGANIZATIONS

MEETINGS can be good or not so good. Many are successful; some are not. Perhaps you have attended meetings of all degrees of success. What contributed to their success or failure? How do you decide whether or not a meeting was a good one? Here are some suggestions:

Any meeting worth holding is worth careful planning. Do not waste people's time.

Someone should be personally responsible for each job in connection with the meeting.

Optimism, unaccompanied by effort, bears no fruit.

Give the agenda balance by giving the group opportunity to participate. No one wants only "meat and potatoes," especially if the business part of the meeting is long; neither do they want merely to sit and be entertained.

Know and call people's names. A man's name is the most important word in his language.

A meeting is worthless unless it leads to learning, action, or some other form of accomplishment.

Good meetings build; poor ones tear down.

Do not expect a person to attend your meeting if he got nothing out of your last one.

It Takes a Blueprint, Materials, and Tools

Whether a person is constructing a building, planting a crop, or running a meeting, the same kinds of things are required to do a good job. You need to have (1) an idea of the results desired, (2) materials, and (3) tools and methods.

What is your idea of what your meetings might accomplish or be like? Think of the letters "P-A-C-E," for personality development, accomplishment of aims or purpose, cooperation, and enjoyableness. Every meeting should—

Contribute in some way to the personality and leadership development of the people who attend.

Result in some accomplishment of purposes as planned. This may be educational, business action, sociability, or some other stated objective.

Have something in it that tends to build cooperation and group unity among those in attendance.

Be enjoyable, if people are expected to continue to attend.

There are six things that make a meeting successful:

1. Facts or information.
2. Fun, a chance to laugh.
3. Fellowship.
4. Group activity.
5. Objectives.
6. Participation of all.

Tools and Techniques for Meetings

Numerous recreational tools and techniques can be used to help provide a group with one or more of these means for producing well-rounded meetings or programs.

Group singing will help. It is an excellent way to open a program or meeting. You need not necessarily be the leader. Get someone from the group who can lead. But be sure to ask the person beforehand. He or she need not be an expert. Always start with a song or chorus that people know well, such as Long, Long Trail. People enjoy singing most the songs that they grew up with.

Provide something for early comers, such as a group sing, quiet games at side tables, something to guess or to see on exhibit, or books and bulletins to browse in.

Stunts and other simple acting always create fun and cooperation and leadership. You need not necessarily have a three-act play. Short skits or stunts prepared ahead of time, or charades and pantomimes created on the spot, are entertaining. Act out some song titles, proverbs, slogans, or something related to the theme of the meeting.

An old-fashioned spell-down or quiz contest of some kind is always good for a few minutes "change of scenery" at meetings. Tie it in with the theme of the meeting.

One or two table games, mental games, relays, or the like, during a recreation period or recess are also good.

A simple "mixer" is an excellent way to get people into the spirit of the occasion, and produce informality, group unity, and freedom of expression later. Try a grand march, and put in a few novelties, or a circle folk game. There are some good ones with or without music. By using a little ingenuity, you can work this out, even in a room with stationary seats, by making use of the aisles and other spaces.

Have a joke or story-telling contest. This is a good way to liven up a men's meeting. It can be

used as a recess number. Avoid rowdy remarks, as these never bring any additional persons to meetings and often actually keep some away.

For an idea or visit exchange, divide the audience into small groups by month of birth, residence, or on some other basis, then have them simply visit and swap ideas for 15 minutes. Some method can be used for progression of part of the group, such as asking the right or left half of the circle to move up, or those who talked the most, or those who are young persons.

Have a forum or discussion. This is one of the finest kinds of program, especially for young men and women. They like to talk about many things—the farm and home, community problems, world affairs. Discussion provides an opportunity for everyone to “speak his mind,” and to hear what other people think. It also helps to develop people, and to turn up new leadership and develop group unity. It is always a source of interest and fun. As an educational technique, discussion also helps extension agents to find out people’s interests and keep up with their practices and experiences.

To add showmanship and interest, you might have a take-off of some radio program—a quiz contest or town meeting. Panels are good, if conducted as true panels and not simply several short speeches. Two new types of discussion for educational meetings are becoming popular: (1) The “discussion huddle” or “buzz session,” which has the audience sit in small groups for a few minutes, perhaps simply turning some of the chairs around, and (b) the “discussion drama,” where the audience is divided into sections, and each section is assigned a certain role, then the persons in the section respond to the role. For example, if family life is the topic, persons in one section assume the role of mothers; in another, of fathers; in another, of sons and daughters; and so on. It is fun, and brings out many ideas more effectively than by having the chairman or speaker “tell it all.”

Telling of personal experiences, especially when they relate to the theme or purpose of the meeting, is an excellent educational method, and relaxing or recreational, too. It is following the principle of “starting off where people are.”

Refreshments do wonders for a meeting, even if the meeting is composed entirely of men and the refreshments are simple. They make for informal visiting and cooperation, not only by the eating together but by the serving, clearing-up, and other

work involved. Refreshments add fellowship even to committee meetings. A good way to make them inviting is to have an old-fashioned box social or auction.

Have a central theme for your program, and give it a name, such as Fall Festival, Fall Round-Up, Spring Spree, the You and I in United Nations, Health for Wealth, Building Bridges, or Poultry Practices That Pay. Use the program name in the publicity, as a motif in handling the meeting, or in other ways.

Aim to keep the business part of meetings short, lively, and definite. Much of the work, perhaps, might be done by committees, so that the actual business part of the meeting need not be too long. Lively meetings add to the enjoyment of those who attend and response or support will be greater.

Never try to show something to people that they cannot see. And point out the main things clearly. If your charts are too small, put on a blackboard the essence of what they contain, in letters big enough to be seen and in language simple enough to be understood.

Avoid long, dry talks or speeches. Do not forget to give a speaker the details beforehand as to the kind of group to be addressed and what you want him to talk about.

But do not depend too much on outside talent for talks, songs, or other entertainment. You will be surprised at the talent within your own organization or community, if you just give it some chance to blossom.

Keep to the minimum the “spectator” type of program where people come just to watch or listen and do nothing themselves. Do not provide entertainment only. Participation is important, because so many fine byproducts can result from participation of people themselves, even if it is nothing more than discussion, a little sing, or a grand march during recess.

You might use some showmanship. Often this puts life into meetings. Showmanship is that “something extra” that adds interest or spark and gives meaning and group enjoyment. If you haven’t a flair for it, maybe someone in the group does.

But always be careful not to put someone “on the spot,” either in the discussion or in the fun-making. Shift the blame to yourself for some blunder; accept, yourself, the point of a joke or laugh, so that it does not fall entirely upon someone who might be unduly embarrassed. Some per-

sons may be sensitive about something—and you as leader may not know it.

Start and close meetings on time. Do not kill the enthusiasm of the man who comes first by forcing him to wait for those who come late. You can have some preopeners for early-comers.

You need not be a recreational expert in order to add one or two extras to your meetings. A little courage is the main thing needed. The best way to start is to decide on one or two simple things. Even if you do nothing at first but stand before a group and ask the members to stand and raise their arms, that is something; in fact, it is a lot. Then ask them to stand as high as they can on their toes, reach up as high as they can with their arms, and wiggle their fingers. After you have led a group in this successfully a few times, then, at some later meeting, go another step—decide on one or two simple songs. Practice a little at home, and lead a future meeting in a simple song, only one. From then on you will not need further instructions.

But the extras at a meeting need not necessarily require song leading or other mass leadership. The extras might be simply some good discussion, a guessing contest, a visit exchange or other planned fellowship, a simple mixer, refreshments and visiting, some numbers from the group—a quartet, a “storytell,” instrumental music, a stunt, or a touch of showmanship.

Better yet, set up a program committee or chairman to provide the extras at the meeting, and you need not worry any more about having to be an expert recreational leader yourself. Many a county extension worker has been happily surprised by results after turning over the arrangements for a meeting to a farmer or local committee.

The program committee relieves you, as extension agent, from having to provide the entire program. And it will assure some extras, whereas if it were all left to you, you might be too willing to devote the entire time to straight business or education.

The program-committee idea often turns up new leadership, too. It also adds some self-participation and “we group” feeling, which does not prevail so well when you as professional leader, provide the entire program for the meeting yourself. Let your leadership consist of initiating ideas, helping the program committee or chairman, interpreting the values of the whole affair to the group, and complimenting those who make the meeting a success.

The main thing is to want to liven your group meetings with some extras. And remember, not too many; a little goes a long way.

Numerous special resource persons may be available to you. Ask such persons as—

The recreation specialist, if the extension service in your State has one.

The recreation specialist of an industry or cooperative. Several have such persons on their staffs.

County or city recreation department.

City school, city church, YMCA, or nearby small college.

School principal, teacher of vocational agriculture, or other teacher.

Clergyman or clergyman's wife.

A local former college student, war veteran, or some other local person who might have training or experience. Do not overlook newcomers.

Keep a card file or scrapbook of songs, games, stunts, poems, and other items that you have used and liked. New ones can be added and old ones discarded. In a short time you will have something that can be readily turned to and used without undue advance preparation.

Add Something for Tours and Field Days

Frequently an extension tour or field day is improved by having something extra. Some suggestions follow, but the possibilities are almost unlimited:

A picnic, family or potluck, perhaps with wiener roast or steak-fry.

A community sing under the shade trees or in the barn at noon, or at the end of the tour.

A movie in a barn driveway.

One or two big circle games or mixers for all.

Special numbers, music, drama, or stunts, given by certain members of the group, or by guests.

A debate on an important topic usually of common interest, but not just more on the demonstrations of the day. Bring in the community problem.

Imitation of a radio program.

A stop at some point of interest—an industry, park, institution.

Cake-bake or fried-chicken contest.

Auction sale, box-social sale.

Spell-down or quiz contest on farm and home subjects, county or community history.

Liar's contest, skit, reading, or telling stories.
 Sports hour—softball, horseshoes, croquet, volleyball, badminton.
 Make the tour or field day a family affair. Teach something to the men about the household, and something to the women about farm exhibits or demonstrations.
 At the start, hand out a sheet of paper on which you have summarized the demonstration and teaching points. Then follow up by calling attention to them as the tour progresses.
 Use a public-address system if the crowd is to be large. Nothing is more distracting than to have only the people around the speaker or demonstrator hear what was said.
 Sum up all the demonstrations or teaching points of the day with a movie, slidefilm, or brief talk to the people gathered at the end of the day.

Pointers for Presiders

Presiders at meetings or chairmen of committees should—

- Know the purpose of the committee, and of each meeting.
 - Make purposes and questions clear to members. Carefully make out the agenda, but allow members to add items.
 - See that contact is made with every member between times; it helps to keep the committee alive and working.
 - Distribute assignments among members of the committee. Try to give each member some responsibility.
 - Give leadership to the committee. Think. Plan. Raise points.
 - Give each member ample opportunity to offer suggestions and comments. Meetings should not be dominated or decisions railroaded by the chairman or by other members of the committee.
 - Give respectful consideration to each suggestion or comment offered.
 - See that the committee reports regularly and systematically to its parent group, until the committee is dissolved.
 - Be prompt in beginning and closing.
- Presiders or chairmen of platform programs (lectures, banquets, meetings, other events) should—
- Get essential facts about the people to be introduced. Mispronounced names and garbled facts are annoying.

Be brief in their remarks, introductions, and explanations, but be specific.

Not embarrass persons being introduced by excessive praise, or handicap them by a matter-of-fact introduction. The presider's remarks should prepare the way for the speaker's contribution. So know something about what is to be presented and how it fits into the program. Speak clearly and distinctly enough so that everyone can understand.

Set the keynote. Spark the meeting. Tie things together. Be positive. If order needs to be called, presiders should call it, if more heat or more fresh air is needed, they should see that someone takes care of it.

Presiders or chairmen of recreational meetings, forum periods, and discussions should—

Know the question or purpose of the meeting clearly and state it clearly.

Give a little background if they can.

Start from "where the group is" regarding the question. Ask the group what it is "now doing," or "did do," or "has seen." Another way is to ask for a listing (to put on a blackboard) of "advantages" and "disadvantages," or some such classification.

Try to have a blackboard, and use it. Write down main ideas and questions. This helps people to think clearly.

Restate the questions, so that all can hear.

Be sure to make the discussion real, and not simply a question-and-answer period. Pass questions back to the group. The principal job of the chairman is to get others to express themselves, not to get his own views stated.

Keep main questions sorted out, and the group on the track. Insist on short statements. Allow no one to monopolize the time. If the group is large, divide it into "huddles" to discuss specific questions for a few minutes.

Be careful not to take sides on questions too quickly; it will stifle or warp the discussion.

Remember that persons who have not spoken get precedence over those who have, when they want the floor.

Help the group to look on the meeting as a quest for truth rather than as a debate.

If some action is necessary, bring the group around to the main points and definite decisions. Manage the discussion, do not let it drift.

Organization Programs for the Year

The foregoing paragraphs include suggestions mainly for single meetings or events. But the year's plan is just as important for organizations.

There are many organizations in your county that look to you for counsel and help with their programs. The following suggestions can serve as a guide in your work with them.

A general plan for the year should be made. This should be the job of the executive committee or program committee, but should be presented to the entire group for discussion and approval. Discussion has two aims, to get some good ideas, and to create interest and a desire to help. The year's plan should only be considered as a general guide, as details will have to be adjusted to circumstances that arise during the year. But a plan should be made and the main signposts set out in as much detail as practicable.

During the course of a year, many organizations or communities carry on one to six or more special events or projects that have recreational value. Money-raising is often combined with such events. This is a necessity, but an organization should try not to be so concerned with this angle of the program that recreational and other values are lost to the people who attend. The first concern should be to make the affair worth while and enjoyable. If one is successful at this, the money aspect usually takes care of itself rather easily.

Another thing—if an organization is only for men or women or youth, it should plan to have at least one, and preferably two or three, meetings a year when the other side of the family is featured. Such meetings have educational as well as recreational values. After all, we live as families, so other members of the family not only may be interested in the affairs of the group, but often can help to put over some idea more successfully.

Rural organizations usually carry out one or more of the following program ideas. But if the organization asking you for counsel has not done so, perhaps you would like to suggest one of them. If it already carries one, perhaps you would like to add another one or two ideas to put life into the year's program:

Ladies' night or men's night; annual fair, achievement day, frolic, harvest-home or folk festival; annual "prom" or banquet; historical pageant; family night, or family-community night;

play, operetta, or concert of some kind (every organization should put on at least one event of this nature for itself and one for the community during the year); minstrel show or variety show; hobby show, special hobby groups or projects; excursion or field trip; campfire, moonlight hike, camping week end, or retreat; Fourth of July picnic, or other annual picnic; holiday or seasonal events; and community-service projects. Include some project that helps to build mutual understanding, such as "know-my-neighbor," "build bridges," or "united we play" to enable people to become better acquainted with other peoples and their customs—religious, national, and racial. This might be done by letter exchange, speech or program exchange, officer exchange, joint projects or programs, a study group, or an essay or speaking contest.

The key to world peace and order is better human relations, and in turn, the key to better human relations is better understanding. Each of us has to get it ourselves. There is no short cut; the key cannot be handed out. Every local organization can and should do something to further better human relations and mutual understanding in the community, the nation, and the world.

So, help to make the organizations with which you are associated successful and effective. This means meetings and programs that—

Develop people.

Accomplish stated aims.

Promote cooperation and unity.

Are enjoyable.

SUGGESTED READING

A GUIDE TO GROUP DISCUSSION.

40 pp. Chicago, Coop. League of the U. S. A. 1944.

ACTION SONGS.

10 pp. Natl. Recreation Assoc. MP-325. New York, Natl. Recreation Assoc. 1942. (Mimeographed.)

DISCUSSION LEADERS' GUIDE.

PREPARED BY EXTENSION SERVICE. 16 pp., illus. N. Y. Agr. Col. (Cornell) Ext., Ithaca. 1950. (Multilithed.)

DISCUSSION METHOD AND GROUP PROCESS FOR EXTENSION WORK.

E. J. NIEDERFRANK. U. S. Dept. Agr. 10 pp. Ext. Serv. Cir. No. 452. 1949. (Mimeographed.)

EASY STUNTS.

10 pp. Natl. Recreation Assoc. MP-233. New York, Natl. Recreation Assoc. 1948.

ENTERTAINMENT STUNTS.

5 pp. Natl. Recreation Assoc. MP-170. New York, Natl. Recreation Assoc. 1942. (Mimeographed.)

MENTAL GAMES.

9 pp. Natl. Recreation Assoc. MP-323. New York, Natl. Recreation Assoc. 1942.

SOCIALS WITH ZEST

ORGANIZED SOCIAL RECREATION is more common today than ever. It may take the form of socials; play parties, which generally consist of folk games, folk dancing, and similar activities; recreation meetings; or folk nights. Many organizations hold one or more parties, proms, or socials during the course of a year. Groups whose primary purpose is recreation may hold them weekly. Or, on the other hand, special parties or socials may be held only once or twice a year as feature parts of a year's program.

But organized recreation is most common simply as a part of the regular meetings and events held by organizations of all kinds. It is usually a big part of the programs of young people's groups.

Socials or play parties take many different forms. Some may specialize in square dancing or folk games; others may include a variety of games and other activities. Dances are common in some sections. Community nights often also include sports activities and educational programs.

Ten Rules for a Thousand Occasions

Some socials turn out fine with all those present really enjoying themselves, but doubtless you have attended some that were referred to as "flops." Interest will generally decline if one or two socials do not turn out well. That is why it is important to make every social, or even single game, a good one. Keep the following few things in mind:

Make definite plans. Set the time and place and general type of program. Do not just say "Let's have a barn dance sometime."

Check for conflicts with other meetings.

Provide for leadership—someone who can step up before the group and direct the activities. Every group should aim to have several such persons within its membership. The leader or leaders should be arranged for ahead of time, and informed about the affair and the responsibilities given them.

Plan in terms of people, not things. Women like sentiment, color, and a certain amount of glamour or showmanship. Men want amusement, some activity, and plenty of food. Youth wants plenty of action and sound. Do not forget that a difference of only a year in age

makes a big difference in the likes and actions of young people.

Balance the program. Do not have all entertainment. Have several kinds of games or activities, not just all square dancing or all table games.

Be sure to have some mixers or other numbers that make for the participation of the whole group at the same time.

Spread the jobs. Have as many as possible help with the planning. Sort out all the jobs or things to be attended to; then make sure that some individual, or committee, is made responsible for each one.

Keep the objectives in mind. Perhaps you want to get people acquainted, have some special fun; build cooperation or unity within the group; develop new leadership; teach certain activities; or honor someone. The leader will need to be aware of such aims, and plan toward them.

Give one or more persons other than the leader an opportunity to appear before the group.

Give the program or event a theme. It does not have to be too realistic. Games, special numbers, decorations, and food, all can be geared to a theme. Even old games can be made to seem like new ones when they are dressed up or changed to suit the occasion. Put a new or different idea into the program plan.

Be sure that the affair is not too long. Do not drag things out. Finish with a bang, so that everyone will wish that there had been more.

Committees Plan and Work

Remember that planning and attention to detail pay off. The number of leaders and committees necessary will depend upon the scale of the social or community affair. Sizable affairs will call for several committees. Following are the main things to plan for in almost any kind of recreational event, and some suggestions for committees:

Publicity or invitation and reception may be handled by the same committee. The committee should see that announcement is made far enough in advance to enable people to make plans, then send out reminders just before the event. The re-



Parents and children enjoying a folk game after a 4-H Club meeting.

ception committee should be on hand at least 20 minutes before the hour set to greet the first guests who arrive. If the event is open to all, as many rural socials are, then the publicity committee should do a good job. Make some attractive posters for display in prominent local places. Also make good use of the newspaper columns and fliers inserted in church bulletins, for example. Personal announcements before local groups are always a good form of publicity, as they make possible personal explanation, answering of questions, and sale of tickets at the same time. Announcements before groups can easily be made snappy by giving a short dialog, skit, or stunt using two or three people.

Decorations and arrangements should set the party tone by carrying out the theme to be used. This is done, not by the amount of decorations, but by the simple ideas used. The room should be arranged for the party, with chairs placed the way the game committee needs to have them. Being ready is part of the advance preparation that makes for success.

Entertainment or program is the main responsibility of any social. It should include plans for all the activities to be included. It is well to divide this responsibility. A leader will be needed to keep things moving. Types of activities that a

general play party or social might include are:

Preopener games. As the guests arrive, they should be given something to do other than just sit and become more and more self-conscious.

Get-acquainted games, ice breakers, and mixers.

Try to have one or more musical mixers at some time during the social, if you can.

Group singing.

Active games. Be sure these are appropriate for the group.

Folk or square dancing.

Quiet games. Intersperse quiet games among the others, to use for resting.

Other entertainment may not be necessary, but if it is, it might include stunts or numbers by persons either within the group or from the outside.

A definite closing might be to have people, with joined hands swinging, form a friendship circle and sing a special song.

The refreshment committee should confer with the program committee or with the master of ceremonies, so that the food will be ready at the time it will best fit into the program. If possible, try to relate it to the theme of the program. Also think about the season, and about the culture or traditions of the people.

Clean-up committee work can be made fun, especially for youth groups, since they like to stay a little longer and do not mind this job, especially if it offers some extra refreshments, or extra fun.

The program committee should meet again after the social and talk it all over—what was good, what bad, what worked, what did not work. This will make the next social easier to plan, and more successful.

Several good game books are essential; make up a scrapbook as you go along. Scrapbooks of suggestions for games, stunts, favors, and decorations will mean a constant supply of new ideas.

Holidays, special days, special weeks, and the various seasons, are excellent props for programs. From them you can get ideas for themes, color schemes, decorations, and refreshments for all sorts of special activities, both indoors and out. They give a feeling of celebration and togetherness that goes a long way toward making a program memorable.

Everyone uses Christmas, Thanksgiving, Valentine's Day, and other well-known holidays or events as the themes for recreation programs. But perhaps you have not thought very much about how many of the other holidays can be used in this way. The birthdays of famous men and women, for example, can give you an idea that will blossom out into a full-fledged program if you work on it. Take, for example, January 12, the birthday of Charles Perrault. He wrote many of our favorite fairy stories, including Cinderella and Puss in Boots. They could be told and dramatized by the youngsters. The library could put them on special exhibit. Your club groups could model the characters in clay or plasticine, dramatize the stories in modern life, or make posters for the library to use. They might even use the idea for a costume party, where everyone represents a character from a fairy story.

Or take May Day. Perhaps you have always associated it with a spring festival and Maypole dance. They are fine, particularly if you use new themes, such as Robin Hood and His Merry Men, the Pied Piper of Hamelin, the Legend of Demeter and Persephone, or the Roman Goddess Flora.

Or what about that pleasant custom of a May breakfast? A group of neighbors, a men's club, or your young people's clubs, would enjoy it.

Remember, too, that May 1 is Child Health Day, an excellent theme for all sorts of programs.

Holidays and special days and weeks do not always call for complete programs, however. Sometimes they can be observed simply by adding one item to a regular program to give it a little extra zest. In a regular club meeting, for example, Victor Herbert's birthday, February 1, might be mentioned, and something told about his life and his operettas. The music part of the program could use his songs at that meeting and the club will then have learned something, besides enjoying the meeting.¹

Do More Than Plain Dancing

Almost everyone enjoys dancing, especially young people. But some communities or groups seem to think of nothing to do for social recreation other than modern or round dancing. It is much more fun to have some socials at least that include some activities besides plain dancing. The year's program might include a play, a variety show, a play party, or a general social of some kind. Or perhaps you can mix folk games and square dancing in with modern dancing.

Sometimes youth groups are so fascinated by modern or plain dancing that they think folk games and square dancing are either "sissy" or for old folks. But try using a few at the next dance you have. Don't call them folk games or square dances, but "special" dances. It is a good idea to teach a few simple ones beforehand to some of the youngsters who are leaders in their age-groups and will be attending the dance. Anyway, do not try to force folk games or square dancing on the whole organization all at once. Let it come slowly and naturally. Use a leader or caller who is, first of all, a good teacher.

On the other hand, some communities may prohibit dancing. If the community does not approve, don't worry about it, because you can plan other interesting activities. Be sure to find out, however, whether the disapproval covers all types of dancing. Sometimes just plain dancing is banned.

Many local groups may disapprove of plain dancing, but will sanction folk dancing, square dancing, and folk games. Some of the best collections of recreational records and manuals come from church publishing houses. Write to the publishing house of your denomination for such materials.

¹ A complete list of holidays, or special days, is available from the United States Department of Commerce, Washington 25, D. C.

Folk and Square Dancing—Musical Mixers

Square and folk dances and folk games, sometimes called play-party games, make for good will, laughter, and group cooperation. They are also a means of preserving group culture or traditions and of getting acquainted with the culture of other peoples. They used to be something that a special group would demonstrate at a festival, but now people everywhere take part in them.

Folk games and square dances are so much fun and so basic to group culture, that it would be too bad not to include some in your regular organization program. Start with those that the group knows, and explain their cultural significance as you go along.

Square dancing is a variation of folk dancing, done in sets of four couples formed on a square; folk dancing is largely done in large circles. Square and folk dancing is a grand old American custom that is regaining popularity everywhere. No one is ever too old or too young to enjoy it. In teaching square dancing, be sure to show the group that a good square dancer keeps his feet close to the floor. No one should gallop or hop, if he wants to dance well and to last through the evening.

When square and folk dancing "takes" in your community, make it colorful and gay. The dancers will enjoy it even more if they wear special dress—if the women wear longish, full skirts and the men plaid or western shirts, or a bright bandanna, for instance. You might like to try a costume dance now and then.

It is best not to square dance entirely. Vary it with folk games, grand marches, quiet games during intermission, and perhaps group singing. Such events need not be big affairs that call for a lot of planning, but arrange or do well what planning is necessary. Let different couples act as hosts to arrange name tags and refreshments and take the lead in the intermission games.

Hints for Leaders and Callers

The leader or caller of play-party games is a key figure. Much of the success of socials and other recreation meetings depends upon him. But the main things are not training and skills, they are enthusiasm, love of people, and a spirit of service or helpfulness. With these qualities, leadership ability and skill will come with experience.

The following common-sense rules and suggestions will help any leader to make the social or play party go off smoothly and the people anxious to come back again:

Know the group and the room space available.

Plan a balanced program, as previously suggested. Remember the word "mixers" above all others. Variety is the spice of any program.

But be sure of your procedures, so that you can change from one activity to another without confusion.

Plan an order of events. But be willing to adjust as new conditions arise. A real mark of skill is being able to sense circumstances and work out adaptations.

Be on time, and make sure beforehand about the "props."

Have an appreciation of cultural backgrounds—of the people out there before you—and of the games or dances you will be using.

Be sure to know the basic terms and formations of games and dances to be used, and teach them to the group first.

Teach words and actions of games or dances to small units, and slowly:

1. Get the group in formation. It is quicker and easier to start by asking them to form a circle and then set up the formation by bringing it out of the circle. Do not simply ask people to find their partners and places; this is weak.
2. Have them listen to the music and calls or direction.
3. Demonstrate with one set, if the dance is especially difficult.
4. Have everyone walk through the formation.
5. Tune up and "let'er go," preferably more slowly than normal at first. Remember that fun, not perfection, is the main thing. But nothing is less fun than confusion about what to do.

Go into the first game without hesitation; be strong and self-reliant.

Always start with something that is easy or familiar.

Neither praise nor make disparaging remarks about individual members before the group. But be generous with the "very goods" and "that's fines" to the whole group.

Be open-minded as to the likes and dislikes of persons in the group.

Be sure not to become too much involved with

one separate group or person to the exclusion of others. For example, do not try to teach a beginner everything while the others are standing and waiting.

Notice when people show signs of fatigue or of becoming too warm or thirsty.

Remember that standing to listen to minute instructions is more tiring than dancing or playing the game. So keep the explanations short, and rest after every two or three dances or games. Be sure there are good arrangements for plenty of drinking water.

During intermissions, special announcements, introduction of guests, and business can be handled. It is also good to intersperse quiet games during the intermissions. This helps to make the party more relaxing than dancing and idleness only. Quiet games also add to the enjoyment of those attending who may not care to join in much of the dancing or active games. Guessing games, mental games, table games, stunts, and simple relays are good types of activity for intermission periods. Do not

forget that many of them call for certain special props.

Insist that there be no rowdiness and rough behavior. But do not try to keep the noise and hilarity down, except when you are explaining a game; the more noise the group makes, the more fun it is having.

Smile, clap, show enthusiasm yourself, and make use of humor if you can. Get some fun out of the group, even though you make mistakes on the formations or calling.

Notice the reactions of individual persons and signs of embarrassment.

Be tactful about mixing groups and choosing games for certain persons, because you must make them want to play games, not force them to play.

Be tolerant and patient. Remember that not perfection of the group but fun is the main thing.

Socials that include dances or other musical mixers will require music. A "live" orchestra is the ideal, but far from essential. A record player and good records can be adequate for most occasions.



Young people in an Aroostook County, Maine, community enjoying folk games. Notice the simple but pleasant hall, lent by a local organization. Recreation benefits not only the people engaged in it, but the community as well.

Some excellent records for musical play-party games and dances, with or without calls, are on the market. Records with calls can be used in the beginning. But if you can find a leader who has a bit of experience, it may be better to start with his calling from the beginning. Other leaders can be developed. One of the advantages of having someone do the calling is that it gives opportunity for development of leadership. It is usually more fun that way, too. You will find a public-address system helpful. Every community should have such equipment.

Play-parties are a main form of home-made recreation today, and becoming more popular all the time. But do not have them too often. A few good play parties, say once a month from fall to spring, are better than too many poor ones; but it all depends upon your group and community. The main thing is to have adequate recreation, especially for the youth and young people in your community.

Home Parties

Community and organization parties are not the only kind. Home parties are good, too. In fact, home demonstration agents might like to start by suggesting to homemakers that they have a home party.

Small children like to have their mothers hold a party for them and their small friends. They also like to attend the parties of their friends. Every child should have had at least two or three parties given him by his mother by the time he is 8 or 9 years old. Suggest to mothers that they ask other parents to help them.

But home parties are especially important for the teen-agers. They are easier for mothers, too. The young people should be permitted to run their own parties. But mothers should attend and enjoy home parties; also they should not go out or sit in the kitchen or bedroom all evening. If teen-agers had more home parties, some of our community recreational problems for this age group would disappear. Group recreation in the home is good, for the whole family and for just the young people as well.

Home parties should have lots of informal fun, rather than be "stuffy" gatherings where a few "pals" can dress up to show off or gossip about other people in the community.

Home parties are not hard to give, and do not

require much organization. But they do take careful planning. Remember the following essentials, which will assure the success of any home party for young people: A charming hostess, lots of riotous fun, and plenty of food or snacks to nibble on.

SUGGESTED READING

Dancing

DANCES AND THEIR MANAGEMENT.

5 pp., Natl. Recreation Assoc. MP-313. New York, Natl. Recreation Assoc. 1947. (Mimeographed.)

GOOD MORNING AND OLD AMERICAN DANCE RECORDS.

MR. AND MRS. HENRY FORD. Dearborn, Mich., Henry Ford Estate. 1943.

(A good collection of square dances, with the complete music in printed form.)

HANDY COUNTRY DANCE BOOK.

Includes kits T, 47, 49, and 53. Delaware, Ohio, Coop. Recreation Serv. 1941.

HANDY PLAY PARTY BOOK.

Includes kits G, P, and 54. Delaware, Ohio, Coop. Recreation Serv. 1940.

HONOR YOUR PARTNER.

ED DURLACHER. 286 pp. New York, Devon-Adair Co. 1948.

MUSICAL MIXERS AND SIMPLE SQUARE DANCES.

51 pp. New York, Natl. Recreation Assoc. 1937.

PLAY PARTY GAMES.

INDIANA EXTENSION SERVICE. La Fayette, Purdue Agr. Ext.

THE AMERICAN SQUARE DANCE.

MARGOT MAYO. 11 pp. New York, Sentinel Books. 1943.

THE BARN DANCE RETURNS.

7 pp. New York, Natl. Recreation Assoc. 1937.

THE FOLK DANCER.

Flushing, L. I., N. Y. (A monthly magazine.)

THE WORLD OF FUN SERIES.

Nashville, Tenn., Methodist Pub. Co.

(An album of records and booklet of folk games.)

TWICE 55 GAMES WITH MUSIC.

Boston, C. C. Birchard & Co. 1924.

Parties and Socials

GAME LEADERSHIP.

1 p. Natl. Recreation Assoc. MB-1136. New York, Natl. Recreation Assoc. 1941. (Mimeographed.)

GAMES FOR QUIET HOURS AND SMALL SPACES.

59 pp. New York, Natl. Recreation Assoc. 1944.

HANDBOOK FOR RECREATION LEADERS.

ELLA GARDNER. 121 pp., illus. Fed. Security Agency Children's Bur. Pub. 231. Washington, D. C., Supt. Docs. 1936. 25 cents.

OVER 300 FOLK GAMES, RHYTHM GAMES AND QUIZZES.

C. G. WRIGHT. Tenn. Agr. Col. Ext., Knoxville. 1949. (Mimeographed.)

PARTIES: PLANS AND PROGRAMS.

72 pp. New York, Natl. Recreation Assoc. 1936.

PARTIES PLUS: LET'S PLAN A PARTY.

70 pp. New York, Natl. Recreation Assoc. 1941.

PARTIES WITH PURPOSE.

42 pp. Framingham, Mass., Dennison Paper Craft Serv. 1949.

RURAL RECREATION.

111 pp. New York, Natl. Recreation Assoc. 1946.

SOME LEADERSHIP "Do's."

10 pp. Natl. Recreation Assoc. MP-389. New York, Natl. Recreation Assoc. 1944. (Reprint from Recreation, February 1944.)

SPECIAL DAYS, WEEKS, AND MONTHS IN 1950.

U. S. DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE BUSINESS INFORM. SERV. II and 33 pp. Washington, D. C., Supt. Docs. 15 cents.
(A new publication is available each year.)

THE BOOK OF FESTIVALS.

DOROTHY GLADYS SPICER. New York, Woman's Press. 1937.

THE COKESBURY PARTY BOOK—STUNT BOOK—GAME BOOK.

150 pp., illus. New York, Abingdon-Cokesbury Press. 1948.

THE FUN ENCYCLOPEDIA.

E. O. HARBIN. 1,000 pp., illus. New York, Abingdon-Cokesbury Press.

THE PARTY BOOK.

MARY BREEN. 354 pp. New York, Natl. Recreation Assoc. 1939. (Out of print.)

MUSIC IS A MUST

Everyday Music

MUSIC FESTIVALS and contests have long been part of our rural life. But just as important as the big festivals and programs, or high-class musical concerts, are the common, everyday, garden variety of musical activities. Music can be important—

In the home.—Every home should afford opportunities for at least some degree of musical development or musical enjoyment—for the children and for the parents, too. Many families wish for a piano and piano lessons for their children. Many children take up other musical instruments as they grow older. Our modern schools and churches can be and are being a great force in stimulating musical interest in children.

There are other ways of providing home opportunities for musical enjoyment. Most families today have a radio—over 85 percent of our farm homes do. Think of the added enjoyment to rural living. Think of the opportunity that parents have for teaching good listening. Much musical development can come simply from the radio and the record player.

Every family can and should have at least some songbooks and the hymnal of their church. Encourage the people in your community to read and study these songbooks, and to gather round for some family harmony now and then. Singing aloud out in the barns and fields is a great opportunity not available to the city person. Interest your clubs in studying the lives of favorite artists, in stories about compositions, or in learning about the different musical organizations of our country and the world. Does your home demonstration or 4-H Club group know about the Metropolitan Opera Company, the Cleveland Symphony, the Fiske Jubilee Singers, or the St. Olaf Choir? Or do they know who the great symphony directors of today

are, or about the orchestras and bands and choruses right in your own State or county?

Developing appreciation is educational, and it is recreational as well. Fortunate, indeed, is the child whose parents stimulate interest in him for things musical, and provide opportunities for some kind of musical enjoyment.

In the organization or club.—Music should be a must in the organization or club. So many things can be done—group singing at meetings, musical games, the staging of musical events or programs by the group, minstrel or concert; educational discussions on music; attending musical programs in a body; sponsoring an artist or other musical event; or helping some less fortunate local boy or girl to obtain some musical training. Use the birthday of some musician, or some other musical anniversary, as a theme for a club meeting. Join with some other group in sponsoring a community sing or band concert.

Nothing can bring people closer together faster than singing together. A good leader makes it more fun each time by selecting songs that will interest the group—songs everyone knows, songs everyone should know. There is such a variety: Folk songs, patriotic songs, work songs, action songs, spirituals, hymns, marching songs, national songs.

In the community as a whole.—The different groups working together can do wonders for more and better music in your community or county. See that music has an important place in the community program of your public recreation department. Better yet, the American Music Conference, a private organization, is promoting the idea of county or community music committees to give leadership locally to things musical. Why not set up such a committee in your area, or a subcommittee on music in the over-all community council or recreation council that you may already have.

Helps for Song Leaders

You do not have to be a highly skilled musician to lead singing. Just learn some general principles. Here are a few:

Always start with a song that the crowd knows and likes to sing. Never start by asking the group for a preference. Do this later.

In acknowledging requests, do not hesitate to "hear" the one that you think will go best at that point.

Announce the songs clearly and definitely.

Be sure that the pitch or tone on which the song is to be started is heard.

Get the folks all "set" for the start of the song.

Leave no doubt in the minds of the audience that now is the time you are going to start to sing. Give a sharp decisive movement that will bring everybody in on the first tone, and have a definite close also.

Do not neglect any part of your audience during the leading of a song by giving too much attention to a special group.

Try to include at least one good action song in which the people do something such as clapping hands, smiling, or stamping their feet. One or two rounds are always good.

Try to use a variety of different types of songs—old favorites, spirituals, westerns, also those that fit the culture of the group. For the final song, choose one that will make an appropriate and effective ending.

If the singing occupies only part of a program, consider proportions; do not use more than your share of the program. In singing at a banquet, try to have the songs come between the courses of the meal.

Ways To Make Singing Fun

Think up ways of making singing more and more fun. You can add your own ideas to these:

Hum or whistle tunes, or combine humming and whistling.

Clap the rhythms. Vary this sometimes by using a simple rhythm instrument such as a drum, castanet, or tambourine. (All these are easy to make.)

Introduce tunes with foreign words. *Cielito Lindo* is a good example; also *Vive la Campagne*.

Before singing songs, tell the story or explain the cultural significance back of them insofar as you can, so that you can create a mood or background.

Combine two familiar tunes. This works well with Long, Long Trail and Keep the Home Fires Burning; with Tipperary and Pack Up Your Troubles; and with Spanish Cavalier and Solomon Levi.

Use rounds. You know Three Blind Mice, but how many more rounds do you know?

For variety, use different types of accompaniment. A guitar, a banjo, or accordion, makes a good change, and is particularly good for folk songs and ballads.

Use fun and stunt songs, especially to break the ice or to give a moment's exercise.

Try some of the many musical games, such as Going to Jerusalem or acting out nursery rhymes.

Try making and playing simple musical instruments.

Encourage groups to make up words and tunes about everyday happenings, advertisements, and the like.

Use singing games or musical mixers in your program.

Try dressing a chorus, or any special group, in costume, no matter how simple. It will lend color and excitement.

Try to start a collection of good popular and favorite recordings to play on occasion.

Remember that singing need not be monotonous or boring.

Other Music Activities

Does your area have band concerts in the summer? Does the audience just sit and listen? Wouldn't everyone have more fun if during that concert, there could be a solo or two, a chorus or two, or a time when the audience sings together?

Music fits any number of people. One person can sing or play alone; two can have a duet; three can form a trio. A group of men will have fun with a barber-shop quartette, or several of them.

Couldn't you work it so that a man who plays the violin, the boy who is learning the saxophone, and any other instrumentalists could get together and form a small group that meets regularly? It could be the beginning of a community orchestra.

chorus^{4-H} Club quartettes, farm-organization and other special groups are popular in some States that have State extension recreation specialists.

When music groups develop, plan so that they share their fun with other groups. Let them appear on other groups' programs. It will be fun for them, and will help to spread interest.

The Music Festival

One county had an annual music festival with great variety in its program. The events on the program were:

- A fiddler's contest; each contestant could play two short numbers.
- A "singin' school," made up of old, young, and in-betweens, preferably in costume with the leader as the singing master.
- A string orchestra; there were at least three stringed instruments. When a piano was used, there were three other instruments.
- A square-dance contest; with participants preferably in costume.
- As a finale, all sets danced together while the judges were making their decisions. The

judges also recognized the best square-dance callers.

Rural America has a great musical heritage. Endeavor to do your part to maintain it. Music is the one thing that can be easily included in every community or group event. But special musical projects or events such as festivals, contests, or special music groups, should be found in rural counties, too. You start the ball rolling.

SUGGESTED READING

ACTION SONGS.

10 pp. Natl. Recreation Assoc. MP-325. New York, Natl. Recreation Assoc. 1942.

FORTY APPROACHES TO INFORMAL SINGING.

30 pp. New York, Natl. Recreation Assoc. 1939.

SINGING AMERICA.

Boston, C. C. Birchard & Co., 1940.

STARTING AND DEVELOPING A RHYTHM BAND.

24 pp. New York, Natl. Recreation Assoc. 1937.

THE DITTY BAG.

JANET E. TOBITT. 184 pp. New York, Girl Scouts of the U. S. A. 1946.

(The words and tunes of 177 folk songs from some 30 countries.)

TWENTY POINTS FOR SONG LEADERS.

KENNETH S. CLARK. 4 pp. New York, Natl. Recreation Assoc. 1922.

TWICE 55 PLUS COMMUNITY SONGS, THE NEW BROWN BOOK. Boston, C. C. Birchard & Co. [n. d.]

RING UP THE CURTAIN

IF YOU HAVE THOUGHT of drama only in terms of plays, then you have missed much of the informal activities that can give life and color to every meeting or program.

Ideas for Dramatics in Programs

In your next group meeting, try some simple acting—pantomime, for example, or a skit to emphasize some educational phase. Make a list of different situations, then let each member of the group draw one and act it out without saying a word. Situations might be—

Small boy sent to "wash up."

Sister talking to her boy friend over the telephone.

A puppy meeting a frog for the first time.

Woman telling a choice bit of gossip.

Politician making a speech.

You will find that pantomimes, charades, or similar drama, will be highly amusing to your group. Then take those same situations, or add new ones,

and let each member act out the situation, using not words, but the letters of the alphabet. This will be twice as funny.

Sometimes at your meeting, divide the group and have each section select and act out a word, by dividing it into syllables, acting out each syllable, and then the word as a whole. This is called charades and has been fun for centuries. If you want to make the charade hard, set a time limit.

Try a tableau. Divide your group, and let each section arrange a "picture" illustrating a book title, a song, or a famous picture. Why limit this to Christmas and the Nativity? It is fun at any time.

Try shadow plays—acting behind a sheet—with a light adjusted so that the shadows tell the story.

Try puppetry or marionettes. It is an excellent way to combine handicraft (making and dressing the puppet), story-telling, and drama.

Introduce drama into your parties by making them costume parties, where everyone comes

dressed as a child, a character in a book, a hobo, a gypsy, or a cowboy. The possibilities are endless.

Often an effective job can be done on the spur of the moment, or with a simple plan. Dramatizing an idea or two helps to make educational meetings more lively and effective.

Discussion Drama for Fun and Education

Have you ever thought of stimulating one of your youth groups by getting them to discuss real-life problems through what educators call discussion drama or socio-drama? It is very simple. Let your group decide on a situation that has arisen, or might easily arise. This might be an educational situation taken to teach an object lesson, or a situation similar to this:

Jean Talbot is an 18-year-old girl who was very close to her parents until she overheard them discussing her boy friend, Ted Green, and discovered that they did not care for him at all. Jean is very fond of Ted, who has asked her to marry him when she finishes school next summer. She finds that she must either reconcile her parents to Ted, or else marry him against their wishes.

Let the audience think about this situation to decide how each role should be acted so that the conflict is clear, then act it out. Try the same idea sometimes, using a local situation or a real-problem situation. If you have a meeting on family-life education, for example, let one part of the audience take the part of fathers; another, of mothers; another, of sons; and another, of daughters. Give the group the situation and have them discuss it. From this, answers to problems can be brought out by members of the group themselves, and thus make for more effective teaching than a speech or some other method would.

Planning a Play

Sometimes during your program year, you will probably like to produce some plays. Start off with simple stunts and skits, and old-fashioned melodrama, or short playlets. They will break down self-consciousness. Do the skits well with simple sets, improvised costumes, and some sort of lighting. You will find out which members of the group are best as actors, which are clever at setting the stage, and which fit best into other jobs in play production.

Do not try to force a shy youngster into an acting

part because you think it will be good for the play, may be much happier painting sets for the play, and just as much needed. At the same time, try not to let the precocious, aggressive member of the group monopolize the lead parts.

Let the group, or a committee appointed by the group, select the play after a discussion of the type it wants. You will have to consider the stage and the number of persons you have for the cast.

Select a good play. Do not let royalties frighten you. Usually royalties are small, and sometimes the publisher will give you permission to use the play without royalty, if no admission price is charged or if the money goes to a charitable cause. Do not try to produce a Broadway play. Most of them are much too difficult except for groups with a great deal of training or experience.

Have try-outs for the parts, and be fair in the selection.

Plan to spend 2 or 3 weeks preparing for a simple one-act play and have rehearsals every week. The lines should be memorized as early as possible. It is hard to act a play and struggle to remember a line at the same time.

Emphasize the importance of all the committees. Do not give all the attention and the credit to the actors. You will need several committees:

Property, to collect all furniture and other supplies needed—and to return them in good condition immediately after the play.

Costume, to locate, borrow, collect, or make all costumes.

Sets, to paint and design any back drops and other sets needed and to change the set when necessary.

Make-up, to be in charge of putting the proper make-up on each member of the cast. The more light you use, the more make-up you will need for each character.

Instead of the usual play, why not vary it sometimes by putting on a minstrel show or an operetta; or by imitating a popular radio program? All these are particularly good for large groups where there is plenty of varied talent. Nothing can be more fun preparing for, presenting, and listening to than a minstrel or similar show.

Original Programs

More than half the fun and training of drama will come from originating your own program, in-

cluding the writing of the script and design of the scenery for a play, a minstrel show, a variety show, a take-off of a radio program, or a fair, carnival, or circus.

In one church last year, the small youth group put on an original drama called *Life With Pa and Ma*. Different scenes depicted different stages in the life of the couple put on by different persons, while offside "Pa" and "Ma" set each scene beforehand with a short conversation, and the choir added appropriate musical background to fit the scene.

For the Storyteller

Storytelling or the giving of readings is an important kind of drama.

Even if you have never had any experience, you can tell stories or give readings and do it well, by following a few simple rules:

Choose the story carefully. It must be suitable to the age group. It must have action, not too much description, and it must be one that you yourself like.

Read it carefully, think about it, tell it to yourself. Then read it again and tell it aloud in front of a mirror or to an imaginary audience.

Do not try to memorize it if it is a reading.

When you tell it, keep your voice natural, look into the faces of the audience, ask a question once in a while. Forget yourself and think only about the story and the audience.

Do not drag it out. When you get to the climax, stop!

Choose the right time to tell a story. A campfire or a hot afternoon are good times.

Do not get too large a group. You have to be very expert to hold the attention of more than 30.

Select a story suitable to the age of your audience.

Sit where you will be on a level with your audience.

Tell the story as though you were telling it to each person.

Learn a number of different types of stories—fairy stories, ghost stories, folk tales, stories with humor, hero stories, adventure stories. Try poetry, particularly ballads, and poems with a definite rhythm and theme. Do not try dialect unless you are very good at it.

The sight of a circle of faces, all spellbound, is one of the most thrilling things that can happen to a leader. Don't miss it! A reading or two make excellent numbers to include at group meetings.

SUGGESTED READING

EASY STUNTS.

10 pp. Natl. Recreation Assoc. MP-233. New York, Natl. Recreation Assoc. 1948.

ENTERTAINMENT STUNTS.

5 pp. Natl. Recreation Assoc. MP-170. New York, Natl. Recreation Assoc. 1942.

FAVORITE STORIES OLD AND NEW.

SIDONIE M. GRUENBERG. 372 pp., illus. Garden City, L. I., N. Y., Doubleday & Co. 1942.

FINGER PUPPETS.

10 pp. Natl. Recreation Assoc. MP-322. New York, Natl. Recreation Assoc. 1947.

FOR THE STORYTELLER.

40 pp. New York, Natl. Recreation Assoc. 1948.

PLAY PRODUCTION MADE EASY.

60 pp. New York, Natl. Recreation Assoc. 1933.

SHADOW PUPPETS.

6 pp. Natl. Recreation Assoc. MP-241. New York, Natl. Recreation Assoc. 1947.

SIX MORE DRAMATIC STUNTS.

22 pp. Natl. Recreation Assoc. MP-142. New York, Natl. Recreation Assoc. 1948.

SIX NEW DRAMATIC STUNTS.

37 pp. Natl. Recreation Assoc. MP-168. New York, Natl. Recreation Assoc. 1947.

BUILD YOUR OWN UNIVERSITY WITH A LIBRARY

READING can be one of the great joys for every age group, from the youngster with his Mother Goose to the oldest member of the community. There are books for everyone—on adventure, romance, history, legend, biography, social problems, economics, and nature.

Perhaps your area has an excellent library, used regularly by everyone. Perhaps the local churches have libraries and distribute books after Sunday school each week. This is fine, but in many sections, books do not reach everyone. They may not get onto the side roads.

Sometimes, too, the books available are not the newest or what the people may want, and some may be worn and unattractive. Frequently children's books for different age groups are neglected; also religious books and books on nature lore suitable for different ages.

One of the most helpful things you can do is to find out to what extent books are available in your community. Check first of all with town libraries and find out how they select their books, if they have new books, if they include children's books, and if the libraries are well used. Find out, through talking to your group and to individuals, if they are using books for fun and for education.

If reading is not as important as it should be in your area, explore the possibility of a bookmobile service from the nearest city or county seat. These bookmobiles are libraries on wheels. They have a librarian and are equipped with bookshelves, a desk, and many kinds of books. They do not travel just on the main roads, but into the lanes and back

roads, bringing their service to everyone. Talk with your local librarian about getting one, or write to your State library. Perhaps a bookmobile could carry along some extension bulletins on farming and homemaking.

If a bookmobile does not seem possible, perhaps you can work out some sort of library-deposit station—a country store, a home, a rural school—to which books can come from a nearby or a State library and from which they can be distributed locally.

Another thing: School and church libraries can be used by the communities much more than they are, if a little planning is done about arranging for their use and about building up a small collection of books, or by using the school, church, or other community gathering place as the bookmobile center.

Getting Folks To Read

Perhaps you have found that your area is not a "reading" community. If so, try to think up ways to make reading attractive. Here are a few suggestions; you can add your own ideas:

Have books around where groups can see them and handle them. Busy people do not like to guess about books from a card index. If they have a chance to look through a book, look at a picture or two, read a paragraph or two, they will be much more likely to read the book.

Have the library set up attractive displays featuring certain kinds of books, such as books



This bookmobile is operated by the New Hampshire State Library Commission (Natl. Recreation Assoc.).



One community organization set up a library in a corner of the neighborhood store.

on crafts, nature lore, leadership, or world affairs.

Refer to books or bulletins on whatever subject you are discussing.

Talk about books in your club meetings—those you have read and enjoyed. Your enthusiasm can arouse enthusiasm in others. Have a book summary for one of your club programs.

Try to make books more easily available in your neighborhood, if you do not have a library, especially children's books. The church and school can help.

Make sure that everyone knows when new books are available, and where to go for them.

Arrange for book discussions once in a while.

Use storytelling and dramatics to stimulate an interest in reading the book from which the stories or the plays come.

Make reading sound like fun. It is!

Check-up on your own reading. Do not say "I don't have time to read books." We all have time to do the things we really want to do.

Other Special Projects for Groups

Dress up books.—There are several projects that your group might undertake. One of these is to dress up books. Look over the books, wherever they are located, and see which ones are drab and unattractive in appearance. These should be given new, bright covers—covers that give some idea of the contents. They could be of heavy paper, cloth, plastic, or leather, and be painted, block-printed, spatter-painted, or leather-tooled. You will be surprised at the difference they will make in the popularity of these books.

Collect books.—Another project might be to collect books, cover them attractively, and redistribute them. Look such books over carefully, though, and get rid of big, old, dull tomes that no one would want.

Today, best sellers and classics are available in very inexpensive editions, many at 25 cents. Any group or club could build up an excellent small library at low cost. These paper-backed books do not last so well as bound volumes, of course, but they give just as much pleasure and that is the main thing.

Stress books for children.—Many fine children's books may be obtained for 25 to 50 cents or less. At your next Christmas party perhaps you

can give every youngster an inexpensive book as a present instead of the usual candy.

Library officials are always glad to cooperate on special projects and to work out special loan arrangements or other plans to fit special needs. Ask them to feature children's books now and then. You might follow the example of some churches by putting children's books out on tables for early comers to 4-H meetings to browse through.

A child who learns to enjoy books and reading will be more likely to enjoy them all his life. It will help his speaking and vocabulary, too.

None of these efforts will take the place of real library service, of course. They are fine supplements, but do not let them keep you from working on a bigger plan, and getting the cooperation of all the local and county organizations to make it come true. Any rural community can get library service if it really wants it. Talk about it in your home demonstration club, or farm-organization meeting. Ask your community council to work on getting a library. If you haven't such a council in your community, start one, or set up a community committee to work on a library.

What One Community Did About Reading

A mother of eight children in one community became concerned about their reading of undesirable comic books. She knew other parents had the same problem. She also knew that the first thing to do was get some facts. So she studied some articles that had been appearing on the subject in the newspapers. Then she brought up the question to the committee of a church women's organization to which she belonged. They sought more facts, and talked about the problem with the mayor, police, and school officials, who by this time had also become interested. A survey of the reading situation of the community was made, including the kinds of comic books being sold, library facilities, circulation of children's books, and reading practices of the schools. Highly significant facts were brought out, and the church organization saw the job was beyond them. So they set about to enlist the whole community into a better reading program—the women's club, parent-teacher association, churches, public officials, and other groups. The problem was presented to the mayor and council, with the result that a 13-member committee on more and better reading was appointed.

The positive approach was continued. Summer vacation was at hand, so the committee sought the cooperation of the library and local groups on planning an aggressive summer reading program for children of all ages. Parents volunteered to help the library, which was understaffed. They classified all children's books, arranged displays, made up book lists and distributed them to local groups. Some youths helped with all this. The library bought some new books. Parents helped it to check out books and handle the children. A junior board of review was set up. A reading program was established that offered certificates to those who read 10 or more books during the summer.

Merchants were appealed to, and a subcommittee on standards was set up. Comic books and other small books were appraised. Again the approach was positive. The committee said, "These books you can sell safely, and these are definitely undesirable." The problem was presented to wholesalers, and they assured the committee that no unpleasantness would result for the merchants who turned back the less desirable books. Lists were made up of the good comic books and 25-cent books available in the stores and the attention of both

adults and children was called to these books at meetings of the Boy Scouts, the PTA, and other organizations. In some schoolrooms comic books are permitted and exchanged, rather than forbidden, and the children are being taught and encouraged to judge reading materials.

So, by starting the ball rolling by facing the problem on a community basis, obtaining facts, and using the positive approach, one leader and organization improved the reading situation in the community. The people were made proud of this bit of community action.

SUGGESTED READING

- CHILDREN'S BOOKS . . . FOR SEVENTY-FIVE CENTS OR LESS.
 PREPARED BY MARIAN L. GRIMES. 41 pp. Washington, D. C.,
 Assoc. for Childhood Ed. 1948.
 (Annotated and classified with full information about publishers and prices.)
- CHOOSING YOUR BOOKMOBILE.
 ALS Bul. v. 42, part II, No. 12. Chicago, Amer. Libr.
 Assoc. Nov. 1948.
- RURAL LIBRARY SERVICE.
 U. S. DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE. 32 pp., illus. Farmers'
 Bul. No. 1847. Washington, D. C., Supt. Docs. rev., 1949.
 15 cents.
- RURAL PUBLIC LIBRARY SERVICE.
 12 pp. Chicago, Amer. Libr. Assoc. 1945. Free.

LET'S MAKE IT HANDICRAFTS UNLIMITED

We Are All Handicrafters

ARTS AND CRAFTS deserve a special place in any good recreation program, and they should be a part of many other programs. Making the costumes and sets for a play is handicraft; so are making favors and decorations for a party; making games, puzzles, and equipment for family fun; planning and working on the farm and home landscaping; and drawing and painting.

One of the nicest things about arts and crafts is the fact that they can be enjoyed alone, or with others. A woman can enjoy knitting a sweater, crocheting a dresser set, or making a quilt; but she will enjoy it just as much, if not more, if she makes these things with other women. There are two sides to this enjoyment—creating something useful and creating something beautiful. In working with different kinds of design and materials, the group will develop appreciation, good taste, and a feeling of good craftsmanship. Color and design will become

more real. Crafts are especially good for older people in retirement.

Groups that have had a taste of arts and crafts often can be subdivided into hobby groups, such as those interested in making hobby equipment and furniture and in needlecrafts; those interested in leather or clay work, jewelry, or toy making. Woodworking is a common handicraft hobby.

What You Will Need and Can Do

In developing any craft program, you will need a leader—anyone who knows a special kind of handicraft, and who enjoys it. You will need certain tools, which in many crafts can be supplied by each member of the group, and a room to work in. This room must have light and storage space for tools, unfinished articles, and supplies. For most crafts work such as clay work, pottery, and ceramics, you will need running water.

You can build many of your craft programs around holidays and special days.

Painting and drawing are sometimes neglected because leaders think they have to be artists. Try them just for fun. The Agricultural Extension Service of the University of Wisconsin sponsors a rural artists' project that has enrolled hundreds of rural people to learn to enjoy drawing and painting. Part of this program is put on over the air as a State-wide radio class in cooperation with the schools. District and State artists' shows are held annually.

Let's not lose native crafts entirely. When this country was being settled by our forefathers a knowledge of crafts was a necessity. These explorers and settlers had to live off the land and that meant making almost everything from knives and forks and spoons and kitchen utensils to the houses they lived in. Every man was a woodworker. Every woman could spin and weave and sew and cook. And our ancestors were dependent upon their own handiwork for beautifying their homes. If they wanted colored yarns for their dresses, for instance, the women had to find a way to dye the natural-colored material.

Some examples of their handiwork still exist and are cherished as collector's items or museum pieces. Better still, the craft knowledge that was passed on from parents to children still lingers in many rural communities. But it is fast dying out. There is no finer project for local clubs, or for the whole community, than to preserve this knowledge and put it to work again. Weaving and dyeing with native materials such as leaves and roots and bark; quilting and rug making; making pottery from native clays with glazes made from the ashes of native trees; carpentry and forging; the preparation of special foods all are worth keeping alive.

A Crafts Program

Closely related to the use of native materials for making things is a whole branch of activities called nature crafts. Nature crafts include such things as making bird houses and aquariums and terrariums; Christmas-green decorations; studying the weather with home-made instruments; finger painting leaves; using leaves and nuts to make favors or jewelry and toys; practices or devices for land and wildlife conservation. Nature craft is particularly good for rural areas, for most of the necessary materials are near at hand and free.



These boys have built a model dwelling house. Group planning, getting along with others, constructive play, and accomplishment of something to be proud of result from such a project (Natl. Recreation Assoc.).

These suggestions do not pretend to exhaust the possibilities for arts and crafts. They might serve as a starter. Here are a few hints about running a craft program:

The project may well start with making things that will help to beautify the home and increase the satisfaction of living there. The activities might then branch out to making things that can increase the satisfactions of all the people in the community—beautifying the school and church grounds, building a community playground, setting up an art or painting class, establishing a hobby shop in the community house, school, or church.

It might be smart to set up a community workshop—in the school or in some other convenient building—where anyone who wants to, can come and make things during “open” hours.

Using an exhibit or a craft show as a means of getting people interested in a craft program sometimes is a good idea. There are usually some craftsmen in nearly every community who would be delighted to lend their handiwork for a craft show. You can probably get together a good exhibit of rugs, coverlets, furniture, pottery, tools, quilts, and musical instruments if you inquire around a bit in the community. Family heirlooms that have been handed down from pioneer times should certainly

be included. If there are people in your neighborhood who come from other countries, you can add color and interest to the exhibit by showing some of the things they brought from the "old country."

A craft exhibit or show can be a real occasion. Be sure that everyone in the community is invited to come. Have the exhibit sponsored by one or two local organizations. A meeting can be arranged at an early and convenient date after the exhibit to plan for craft groups or projects for interested persons.

A craft program probably will require some competent instructors to teach beginners how to make things. You usually can find one or more such persons among local craftsmen who will be glad to teach other people their skills. If such help is not obtainable in your community, possibly you may be able to get it from a nearby city or large school, college, or university, or from a specialist whom someone knows about. Perhaps you can interest local people in attending a handicraft training institute that may be held in your section.



Making a mitten to keep hands warm, yes. But also developing physical coordination, creating something to be proud of, and having some relaxation and fun (Natl. Recreation Assoc.).

Sometimes it is better not to call the program handicraft. People will take an interest in toy making, woodworking, drawing, and painting, or home and yard decorating, but be scared away from something called a handicraft program. Name the hobby groups according to their activities.

SUGGESTED READING

CREATIVE ACTIVITIES.

REBECCA RICE. 90 pp., illus. Boston, The Pilgrim Press. 1947.

FUN-TO-MAKE FAVORS.

8 pp. Natl. Recreation Assoc. MP-254. New York, Natl. Recreation Assoc. 1945.

420 HANDICRAFTS ILLUSTRATED IN SIMPLE STEPS.

GLORIA FOREMAN. Oklahoma City, Okla., Foreman Publishing Co.

GET IN THERE AND PAINT.

JOSEPH ALGER. 8 pp. New York, Natl. Recreation Assoc. 1944. (Reprint from Recreation, November 1944.)

INTEGRATING ACTIVITIES.

3 pp. Natl. Recreation Assoc. MB-1801. New York, Natl. Recreation Assoc. 1946. (From Recreation, April 1946.)

MAKE IT YOURSELF.

BERNICE CARLSON. 160 pp. Nashville, Tenn. Abingdon-Cokesbury Press. 1950.

MAKE YOUR OWN GAMES.

7 pp. Natl. Recreation Assoc. MP-332. New York, Natl. Recreation Assoc. 1948.

MAKE YOUR OWN PUZZLES.

7 pp. Natl. Recreation Assoc. MP-333. New York, 1948.

MANUFACTURERS AND DISTRIBUTORS OF CRAFT SUPPLIES AND EQUIPMENT.

10 pp. Natl. Recreation Assoc. MP-238. New York, Natl. Recreation Assoc. 1948.

OUTLINE GUIDE IN ARTS AND CRAFTS ACTIVITIES AT DIFFERENT AGE LEVELS.

6 pp. Natl. Recreation Assoc. MP-258. New York, Natl. Recreation Assoc. 1948.

PARTIES WITH A PURPOSE.

42 pp. Framingham, Mass., Dennison Paper-Craft Serv. 1949.

PARTY FAVORS.

5 pp. New York, Natl. Recreation Assoc. 1941.

PLANNING FOR SUCCESS.

6 pp. Natl. Recreation Assoc. MP-396. New York, Natl. Recreation Assoc. 1948.

RURAL HANDICRAFTS IN THE UNITED STATES.

ALLEN EATON AND LUCINDA CRILE. U. S. Dept. Agr. Misc. Pub. No. 610. IV and 40 pp., illus. Washington, D. C., Supt. Docs. 1947. 20 cents.

WHAT ABOUT WATER COLORS?

CHESTER G. MARCH. 8 pp. New York, Natl. Recreation Assoc. 1944. (Reprint from Recreation, Nov. 1944.)

WHAT TO MAKE.

Chicago, Popular Mechanics. (Published annually.)

YOU CAN DO IT.

ALTHEA BOWMAN. 85 pp., illus. Philadelphia, The Judson Press. 1948.

GO FORTH UNDER THE OPEN SKY

Trip Camping

TRIP CAMPING is an excellent outdoor activity. It is inexpensive, and can mean going a long way, or only a short way. Here are some kinds of camping trips that might be taken: Hiking, wagon or pack, bicycle, boat or canoe, and motor (car or truck). Or it can be fun to camp right in the back yard or some other place on the farm. Tents can be put up and children given some first-hand experience at camping.

Planning and anticipation are fun, too. Be sure that plans are complete. Decide: How long to be gone; where to go; what foods to take and should part of it be bought; what provisions to make for sleeping; what are the special things to look for; when to start; and what kind of clothes will be needed?

The traveling can be filled with adventure as the group enjoys the scenery and persons visit with each other. Through discussion of what they see they share ideas and knowledge. Stops should be made to study or do special things. Figure out some game about the sights, to play as you go along.

Cooking-out is fun if you know how. An experienced camper in the crowd is a real asset, but not essential. Ask friends who have camped out for advice. There are many tricks to outdoor cooking. Sleeping in tents or under the stars is an unusual experience. The most important thing is to be warm enough. Sleeping bags are compact and comfortable.

After you return, evaluate your trip and plan how you will improve the next one. Folks learn by doing.

Campfire Programs

Campfire programs, too, can be enjoyed by everyone. All too often they become limited to special groups such as Boy Scout troops.

The campfire itself is an inspiration, as the group sits in a circle around it. Here is warmth and a place of meeting. Arrange seating so that all can see and hear the program.

If you hold campfires annually, try to develop a few customs that are carried on from year to year. For example—

The opening, the lighting of the fire, and group names; some theme, such as "friendship fire," with

each person's putting in a stick and making a statement or giving a recitation.

The closing might be traditional, with a special song or words by a respected leader. This is an important campfire time.

A campfire program can include activities such as camp songs and songs of the out-of-doors, introductions and recognitions, challenges, musical numbers, stunts and contests, folk dancing, adventure and folk stories, and inspirational talks.

You can work out such programs more easily if you plan them around a theme, such as: Cowboy, hobo, gypsy, pirate, pioneer, Indian, friendship, consecration, or the next year.

Campfire programs should last only about an hour. Do not make them too long.

Picnics

Picnics afford a fine opportunity for families or groups to get together for eating and enjoying the out-of-doors. Of course, there are also indoor picnics, but a better name for these would be a covered-dish supper.

To assure the success of any picnic, provide plenty of food, a good place to eat, good water, sanitation, and plenty of wholesome fun. This requires advance planning and preparation.

Committees are necessary for a large public or community picnic, on arrangements, food, program, and finance. A planned program of games, contests, and even speeches, adds to fellowship and fun.

The plan of an all-day public picnic might run something like this:

Morning.—Team games, horseshoe pitching, volleyball, baseball, or softball, swimming, band music, group singing.

Noon.—Picnic lunch or barbecue, informal visiting, and free time. Announcements. Short speech, if any.

Afternoon.—Stunts, mass games, and novelty races, swimming and a water program.

Evening.—Picnic supper, campfire program. These should be omitted if they make the day too long for the group concerned.

Hiking

Do you just take a group of youngsters on a ramble through the woods once in a while, or do



Group games not only are fun, but offer opportunities to develop wholesome attitudes. This is one way to develop adult leadership in recreational activities.

you really have a planned hike? Maybe you can have a hiking club or riding club in your community. In a small southern city, the hiking club makes a feature of going into rural districts, after arranging ahead of time with the parent-teacher association or a church group to serve supper for the hikers. Then the club members lead games and social activities for the people who have fed them.

Brief descriptions of several different kinds of hikes follow. The possibilities are almost unlimited. First of all, do not forget to make yourself a walking stick.

Nature hike.—A contest on the identification of grasses, trees, flowers, birds, and insects.

Exploring or adventure hike.—A journey leading to many points of interest, the discovery of unusual things in the nooks and byways of the trail. The group may be divided, each taking a different route in search of adventure. All may return

to a final “stamping ground” and exchange accounts of their findings around a glowing council fire.

Progressive-supper hike.—A three-stop hike with different food and recreation at each stop, probably ending at a campfire where songs, stunts, and a popcorn feast bring the jolly journey to a close.

Sunrise hike.—A climb to some high peak to observe the beauties of an early-morning sunrise and have the fun of preparing an early-morning breakfast of eggs, bacon, and hot coffee.

Compass hike.—The course should be carefully laid out in advance, and conducted with a compass.

Camera hike.—Each hiker may bring his camera, take pictures along the way, and choose subjects that are important and characteristic. A picture contest or a picture exchange may then be held.

Lantern hike.—Each hiker carries a lantern and forked stick for this occasion. With lanterns lighted and held high, the group starts on its hike at dusk. The hike might end at some camping ground where singing and games are enjoyed by all. Lanterns or a campfire might furnish the necessary light.

Hobo hike.—Each hiker is to bring a stick and a bandanna, and wear old clothes. On arriving at the starting point, each is labeled with some appropriate name, such as Willie the Bum, or Slowpoke Harry. A king and queen are chosen, and they in turn select the official Dog Chaser, Door Rapper, and Chief Grub Beggar. The group then starts in quest of its hand-outs from homes in the community. Leave packages containing food at certain homes ahead of time, and instruct others to refuse the "hobo."

Robinson Crusoe hike.—Start with a ration of very condensed order and plan to find food on the way, such things as berries, roots, and fish.

Chain hike.—March in couples with girls on the right if on a highway. On whistle every 5 minutes, men move up one partner, and the man in front goes to the rear each time.

Mystery hike.—Leaders carefully chart two or three different routes from point of departure to the goal of the hike. Directions are carefully hidden at several points on the route, which tell, in

turn, where the next directions are to be found. The crowd is divided into two or three groups and each told where the next directions will be found. Finally all the groups arrive by different routes at the same place, where fire, food, and fun are provided.

Here are a few pointers for present or would-be hike leaders:

Every hike should have a definite goal. There must be a combination of exercise with elements of relaxation and pleasure.

The hike should be mapped out before you start, and you should have a fairly thorough knowledge of the territory to be covered. The route should pass by the most interesting and scenic spots. Avoid busy highways and congested areas. Arrangements should be made beforehand when permission to cross property is needed.

Information regarding transportation and communication facilities should be known, in case of emergencies that might arise.

You should know definitely the destination, route, and length of time needed to go and return.

A whistle may come in handy.

See that everyone has a good time and that the rules of a good hiker are observed to the greatest possible extent.



The picnic grounds of a community center in Madison County, Va., afford a pleasant place for family outings.

Set a pace at which all are having the greatest enjoyment and comfort. You should keep close account of members of the group who lag behind. It is often necessary to make frequent stops so that they can catch up. A shady nook or hilltop is always an inviting spot.

Try to arrange the longer trips so that the hardest stretch occurs at the beginning, when energy is undiminished.

Have a knowledge of available water supply.

Parents' permission should be obtained before you conduct hikes for children.

Members of a hiking group, particularly youngsters, should be reminded that they should respect other people's property. It is part of good sportsmanship to leave property unmolested. Gates, fences, and other properties should be left as they were found. Trees and cultivated fields should not be injured, trampled, or robbed. Livestock and wild animals should not be molested. Be sure that all fires

are thoroughly extinguished and picnic grounds left clean.

Wild flowers and rare plants should be left to grow for the enjoyment of others who might pass.

In passing by homes and through villages, hikers should go quickly without disturbing anyone.

The left side of the road is safer. Approaching traffic can be seen and room made for it.

Nature Projects

Just because a person lives in the country does not mean that he knows everything about trees, or flowers, or stars, or animals. Probably you have included a great deal about nature and nature projects in your regular work or recreation programs, and you may be using it in various outdoor projects. Just as a check, look over the projects on the following list, and see if you have missed any:

Tree identification.—Scrapbooks and labeling trees in a nearby park or woods.



4-H Club meeting being held at the back-yard fireplace of one of the members. By combining recreation with their meeting, 4-H members learn project skills and build personality and character.

Nature trails.—Making trails by clearing paths; helping groups to understand ways to conserve plants for others to enjoy. Many wild flowers have become rare because they have been picked.

Study of insects.—Learning which are valuable to the farmer and which are destructive.

Birds.—Building houses, building feeding stations, and conservation. This can be a wonderful year-round project. Studying different kinds of birds will stimulate continuing interest.

Animal life.—Trapping, feeding, living habits, and conservation of animals.

Rocks, minerals, and the earth.—A study of these things will go all the way from jewels to stones and rocks, or even to the local soil types for farming. Build into this project conservation of the soil.

Conservation of wildlife.—This project can be built into numerous other projects or studied separately. It can be combined with the soil and water conservation programs.

Stars.—This study can be thrilling to boys and girls and continue into later life.

Weather Bureau projects.—Build wind gages, make barometers, keep a weather log, study local formations that create weather conditions, forecast the weather.

Make a local guidebook to include a map of the area, the location of trails or special spots, and other pertinent information.

Do not forget hunting and fishing. A good project would be to know the game laws thoroughly and discuss with your group why they are important. A knowledge of the rules and laws of trespassing would be important in such a project.

Every year dozens of hunters are killed through carelessness or lack of knowledge about the working of guns. Why not give some practical training in the care and handling of firearms? Or ask a local police officer to do it?

Numerous recreational hobbies can be built around fishing, such as kinds of fish and their living habits, conservation, fly casting, making fishing flies, study of baits, uses of fish, and cooking of fish. Hunting and fishing are recreation in which hundreds of thousands of people engage annually. Combine them with camping, nature study, photography, and other activities.

SUGGESTED READING

Camping

- CAMPING AND OUTDOOR EXPERIENCE IN THE SCHOOL PROGRAM.
HELEN MACKINTOSH. Fed. Security Agency Off. Ed. Bul. No. 4. 41 pp. Washington, D. C., Supt. Docs. 15 cents.
- FIRELIGHT ENTERTAINMENTS.
MARGARET K. SOIFER. 45 pp. New York, Assoc. Press. 1944.
- THE DAY CAMP BOOK.
126 pp. New York, Girl Scouts, Inc. 1942.
- THE TRIP CAMP BOOK.
72 pp. New York, Girl Scouts, Inc. 1947.

General

- 88 SUCCESSFUL PLAY ACTIVITIES.
94 pp. New York, Natl. Recreation Assoc. 1929.
- RURAL RECREATION.
111 pp. New York, Natl. Recreation Assoc. 1946.

Hiking

- DAY HIKES.
37 pp. New York, Girl Scouts, Inc. 1935.
- HIKING.
13 pp. Natl. Recreation Assoc. MP-85. New York, Natl. Recreation Assoc. 1948.

Hunting and Fishing

- AIMING FOR SPORT IN GROUP RIFLE SHOOTING.
32 pp. New York, Sporting Arms and Ammunition Mfrs. Inst. [n. d.]
- CASTING.
95 pp., illus. Chicago Park Dist. 1940.
- FARM FISHPONDS.
U. S. DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE. 29 pp., illus. Farmers' Bul. No. 1983. Washington, D. C., Supt. Docs. 1947. 10 cents.
- GUIDE TO FLY TYING.
54 pp. Chicago, Chicago Park Dist. 1939.
- HANDBOOK ON SMALL BORE RIFLE SHOOTING.
76 pp. New York, Sporting Arms and Ammunition Mfrs. Inst. 1947.
- HOUSES FOR BIRDS.
U. S. DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR. 24 pp., illus. Fish and Wildlife Serv. Conserv. Bul. No. 14. Washington, D. C., Supt. Docs. 1942. 10 cents.
- IMPROVING THE FARM ENVIRONMENT FOR WILDLIFE.
U. S. DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR. 56 pp., illus. Fish and Wildlife Serv. Conserv. Bul. No. 12. Washington, D. C., Supt. Docs. 1942. 10 cents.
- LOCAL BIRD REFUGES.
U. S. DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR. 17 pp. Fish and Wildlife Serv. Conserv. Bul. No. 17. Washington, D. C., Supt. Docs. 1942. 10 cents.
- MORE FUN WITH YOUR 22 RIFLE.
14 pp. New York, Sporting Arms and Ammunition Mfrs. Inst.

Nature

- ADVENTURING IN NATURE.
96 pp. New York, Natl. Recreation Assoc. 1939.

FUN WITH NATURE.

MARIE BUCKMAN. 52 pp. Madison, Wis., Recreation Leaders' Laboratory Assoc., Wis. Agr. Col.

NATURE GAMES FOR VARIOUS SITUATIONS.

7 pp. Natl. Recreation Assoc. MP-357. New York, Natl. Recreation Assoc. 1947.

NATURE IN RECREATION.

MARGUERITE ICKIS. 114 pp. New York, A. S. Barnes & Co. 1938.

Picnics

PICNIC PROGRAMS.

7 pp. Natl. Recreation Assoc. MP-251. New York, Natl. Recreation Assoc. 1944.

PICNICS.

47 pp. Chicago, Chicago Park Dist. 1939.

THE PICNIC BOOK.

PREPARED BY THE NATIONAL RECREATION ASSOCIATION. 128 pp., illus. New York, A. S. Barnes & Co. 1942. (Out of print.)

SPORTS FOR ALL

SPORTS ACTIVITIES are frequently a part of the program of extension organizations. They are important in field days, and other community or county events, especially those of 4-H Club work and extension work with young men and women. As a county extension agent you may be called upon to assist with extension or other sports programs, or to consider sports in your guidance work on county or community recreation planning.

Some well-known sports that may be engaged in by family, community, or county groups are: Baseball, softball, basketball; horseshoes; swimming, boating; bowling; sledding, skating, skiing; volleyball, badminton, tennis; shuffleboard; and archery and dart-throwing.

Do not forget to consider the girls and women when planning sports programs. All too often they are left out of field-day recreation programs and similar events.

Try to prevent local recreation from becoming dominated by one or two sports that are participated in only by a few persons on highly competitive athletic teams, such as high-school basketball teams. Recreation is broader than sports, and county or community sports programs should be broad enough to include several kinds and be arranged so that many persons can participate.

The exchange tournament or play day described on page 39 is a good way to have general sports activities; so also are intramural sports and teams for different ages. Relay races and similar games are common at picnics or field days. They are especially interesting when comedy numbers, such as a three-legged race between couples, are mixed into the program.

Sports Tournaments

Sports tournaments can be used effectively in your work with young people. In arranging tourna-

ments, the type will depend upon the particular sport, the number of participants, the length of time available, and the purpose to be served.

The elimination tournament is the quickest tournament method. It is valuable for championship meets or when time is limited, but it is not often used for sustained or seasonal programs because the losing group drops out, and you do not want anyone to drop out of a program. You can, of course, use this method along with a "consolation" tournament, in which the losers compete. The elimination tournament is often used in golf, tennis, handball, and other individual sports.

The ladder tournament is more interesting, but it takes more time. In it, the players' names are arranged like rungs on a ladder, one above the other on tags or hooks. The player may challenge the player either one or two rungs ahead of him, and if he wins they exchange places. If he loses, he stays where he is. On the top three to five rungs, a player is allowed to challenge only the person directly above him, because the competition at the top is keen and close. This method is successful in ping-pong, checkers, and other individual games and sports, and can be used over a long period of time.

The round-robin tournament is the one most used for major team games such as basketball, softball, football, and hockey. It involves the organization of teams and leagues, which you will have to brush up on if you have not done much of it. It is the fairest way to arrange such competition because it gives every team a chance to play every other team. It takes time, however, so it usually is planned for a complete season of the sport.

When arranging sports programs, be sure to work out some method of classification, so that competition will be fair. Height, weight, and age or grade in school are the factors usually used.

If you use age, and if the competitive event is



Swimming is fun and healthful, but learning to swim the right way is important to safety. Here a group of young people are learning to respect the water and how to conduct themselves in it. They also are enjoying wholesome play.

very important, insist on birth certificates, but do not do so unless absolutely necessary. Height is never used alone, but is sometimes used along with weight. Height is important in some sports, such as basketball. Weight is particularly important in activities such as football, wrestling, and boxing. If you have plenty of competitors, use 10-pound limits; if only a few, you may have to use 15-pound limits.

The reason for being so careful in classifying players is primarily for the sake of safety and also for fairness. None must be forgotten.

Exchange-tournament or play-day teams are fine, of course, but what about the youngsters who are not good enough to make the grade? A play day is one way to bring everyone into sports. It is a coming together of two or more groups for fun, not for competition. One team or group does not play against another. Instead, groups are all put together, then divided on some arbitrary basis such

as Reds and Blues, or Indians and Pioneers. This provides the necessary competition or stimulus, as it keeps the whole emphasis on play for play's sake, rather than on selfish, competitive winning as such. The games or activities are chosen to fit those who attend and arranged so that everyone can participate, and the program often ends with a big picnic or campfire.

United We Play might be the theme of such a project. The idea is a part of our democratic heritage. Through unity in play people can learn to respect each other and to live together happily. The whole idea of an exchange tournament or play day is to play with, not against.

The All-Sports Festival

An all-sports festival is an important recreational event in some States and localities. Several State extension services sponsor them. County and dis-

strict festivals may be held in season, and the winners go to a State festival. Another way would be to make the district and State festivals free for all. It depends partly on the number of participants and the crowd to be expected in relation to facilities.

The sports festival is something like a track meet, except that the list of events generally includes various kinds of sports, with activities for different age classes. Emphasis may be on the contest angles, but the more that it can be on simple play for fun, the better. Each participant can be rated A, B, or C by judges, without regard to the number of persons winning each rating given.

Music and folk-festival events may be combined with field sports. This makes the event a gala af-

fair that attracts many people. But sometimes it is more desirable to hold a folk festival, with or without rating of participants, perhaps as part of Farm and Home Week at the agricultural college, for example.

Sports festivals, handled on a contest basis, require a great deal of detailed management. Many things need to be attended to, such as time officials, basis for rating, judges, awards, places and equipment, strict classification rules, and other regulations. But do not let all this minimize the fun and other benefits that can come from festivals or field days; all too frequently it does interfere.

Water and Winter Sports

Swimming is one sport in which many people would like to have an opportunity to engage, yet one in which standard facilities are so commonly lacking. Many people would like to have a chance to learn to swim, not only for enjoyment, but also for safety. Many county or local 4-H groups go on swims, and some help to sponsor swimming lessons and water carnivals.

Safety must be the main factor in any swimming program. Make sure that someone will be present who is qualified by American Red Cross standards to be a lifeguard.

Though many rural areas do not have a standard swimming pool in the community or nearby, almost every community has access to some kind of water area within reasonable traveling distance—the “ol’ swimmin’ hole,” a lake, a pond, a river, or an ocean beach. Often, with a bit of community planning and sharing of work, a usable swimming spot can be provided out of such a water area. State requirements for sanitation and health must be observed. Those who manage the swimming spot would set up regulations for safety, of course. A swimming pool requires a piped supply of running water. In Goshen, Mass., an open-country community situated on a small lake, the Ladies’ Aid of the local church organized a workday for fixing up a swimming area along the lake, and the job was easily done. Within a short time, with the aid of several teams of horses pulling dirt scrapers and of many shovels and rakes, a small beach was made for the benefit of the people in the community.

The first thing in an organized water program should be the actual swimming lessons. Then can come the many water games and contests that are



Aiming at a target at a picnic of two 4-H Clubs, Washington County, Md. A farm family can have sports such as this in its own yard, too.

such fun. Swimming meets or water carnivals can be very simple. You will want regular swimming contests at different yardages, and using different strokes or styles. Diving should be included, if the water is deep enough; also life-saving demonstrations. Novelty races such as a watermelon grab and a lighted-candle relay are amusing and interesting. Games such as water polo and water pushball are also exciting. Be sure that the program has something for every age group, even for the very young.

Evening swims are novel and fun. Have automobile headlights focused on the water if the area is not lighted. Keep the swim short, and perhaps follow it with a bonfire or moonlight picnic.

Always use the buddy system when taking a group swimming. The group is divided into pairs and at frequent signals, each pair has to report by clasping hands and raising them so that the leader can see them. This practice will make sure that no one wanders out alone into a dangerous area; it helps the leader not to forget any of the swimmers. Make your swimming regulations strict and be sure that everyone understands them. Allow no horseplay. One drowning, or even near-drowning, can ruin a summer's plans. Be sure that you have provided a lifeguard and that rope is on hand. If the area is large, you should also have a boat ready for any emergency.

Winter-sport opportunities should not be overlooked. A usable skating rink or toboggan slide is easier to build than many people think. Like swimming, it can be done simply by some community planning and sharing of work.

It is possible to make a rink by flooding or spraying a playground area or football field. It is best, if the soil is not too sandy. A grass area can be flooded for freezing, too, without injuring the turf; many communities do this.

Once an area for ice skating is provided, some sort of shelter should be added where people may get warm if some other place is not available nearby. Try to work out some way of lighting the area, because night skating will bring out the adults.

Do not allow ice games such as Crack the Whip, Tag, or speed skating during the regular skating period. Use the rink for ice hockey at a given time. While the rink is being used for regular skating, do not permit the use of hockey sticks or pucks, mix the kinds of skating, or permit races or speed-skating unless you want some bad spills or acci-

dents. If it is possible to provide music, you will find that it helps to prevent rowdyism.

Snow and ice carnivals are becoming more popular. Use committees for program, publicity, officials, prizes, and the like, just as you would in planning a party.

Events such as the following might be included: Speed skating, tobogganing, curling, figure skating, barrel jumping, obstacle races, relay races, and snow-and-ice sculpture.

The election of an ice king and queen gives added glamour. Why not include a masked costume ball with participants on skates, and award prizes for the prettiest costume, the funniest, and for other types decided by the committee.

Winter hiking is also a popular activity. A fine way to learn the trees is by their silhouettes, barks, and buds. It is fun to look for and identify animal tracks, or to follow them. A winter hike should end in some home or cabin; or around a fire, where hot food, songs, and fellowship are enjoyed.

Community or local organizations can do much for people, especially for the children and youth, by getting some winter sport facilities provided. Elaborate, commercialized plans are not necessary.

SUGGESTED READING

Athletics

ATHLETIC ORGANIZATION AND TOURNAMENT METHODS.

9 pp. Natl. Recreation Assoc. MP-377. New York, Natl. Recreation Assoc. 1946.

88 SUCCESSFUL PLAY ACTIVITIES.

94 pp. New York, Natl. Recreation Assoc. 1929.

HANDBOOK FOR RECREATION LEADERS.

ELLA GARDNER. 121 pp. illus. Fed. Security Agency Children's Bur. Pub. 231. Washington, D. C., Supt. Docs. 1936. 25 cents.

PLAY DAYS.

3 pp. Natl. Recreation Assoc. MB-796. New York, Natl. Recreation Assoc. 1948.

RURAL RECREATION.

111 pp. New York, Natl. Recreation Assoc. 1946.

Swimming and Water Sports

AQUATIC GAMES—PAGEANTS—STUNTS.

New York, Hoffman-Harris. 1947.

SWIMMING AND DIVING.

AMERICAN RED CROSS. 271 pp. New York, The Blakiston Co. 1938.

WATER CARNIVAL GAMES AND STUNTS.

87 pp. Chicago, Chicago Park Dist. 1938.

WATER GAMES AND STUNTS.

7 pp. Natl. Recreation Assoc. MP-158. New York, Natl. Recreation Assoc. 1947.



Here a group has stopped, after a hike, to rest at a simple lodge in the Perkinstown winter-sports area, Chequamegon National Forest, Wis. These young people not only are benefiting from outdoor exercise, but are enjoying companionship and recreation (U. S. Dept. Agr. Forest Serv.).

Winter Sports

BETTER HEALTH THROUGH SKIING.

36 pp. Washington, D. C., Natl. Council on Physical Fitness, 1946.

BUILDING AND MAINTAINING A SKATING RINK.

3 pp. Natl. Recreation Assoc. MB-432. New York. 1937.

INTRODUCING THE SNOW ARTIST.

3 pp. Natl. Recreation Assoc. MP-294. New York, Natl. Recreation Assoc. 1940. (Out of print.)

SNOW AND ICE HANDICRAFT.

Chicago, Chicago Park Dist.

WINTER ACTIVITIES.

64 pp. Chicago, Chicago Park Dist. 1937.

CAPITALIZE ON CUSTOMS AND COUNTRYSIDE

THE ONLY NATIVE Americans are the Indians, and archeologists are not too sure even about them. The rest of us or our ancestors came from somewhere else; some a long time ago, and some recently. We brought our arts and crafts, our customs, our food habits, our songs, our dances, and our special holiday traditions. Some of these are so old now that we forget they are not really native. Also customs and activities have developed that stem from the environment and farming of the different regions of this country.

Out of all these customs have grown our holidays and our many ways of celebrating them—the Christmas tree, from Germany; Santa Claus, from Holland; mistletoe, holly, and the Maypole, from England; the Mardi gras, from Italy and France; and St. Patrick's Day, from Ireland, to mention just a few. Out of our immediate environment have come more customs—the barn dance, the clam-bake, the husking bee, the sleigh ride.

We Can Be Proud of Our Heritage

Sometimes, in our eagerness to be good Americans, we try to drop our background and to hide our native heritage. Sometimes, because we get a feeling that it is wrong to be different, we lose pride in our heritage. In an effort to save traditions, local groups may become clannish, rather than sharing their traditions with the community. Then the whole community is the loser, and an opportunity for better understanding and appreciation has been lost.

All too often, rural communities strive to become urban, to attempt city customs and ways of life, and to overlook customs and opportunities that go with their own type of farming or natural surroundings. Some delightful rural patterns of a generation ago are passing. One of the most important jobs you can do is to build up a pride in the countryside and in the traditions and customs of your area. People should not feel that the city has everything to offer, and that country life is dull and uninteresting. If it is dull and uninteresting, it is often because people do not take advantage of the recreational opportunities in local cultural heritages and physical surroundings. Too often the fine things go unnoticed.

The first step, of course, is to learn about the people in your area. Get better acquainted with

groups or families that may have a heritage different from your own—their cooking, their folk games or dances, and their ideals.

Lucia Dagen and Laskiainem in Minnesota

Do you know about St. Lucia and Lucia Day? If you have a group of Swedish people in your area and you do not know about it, you have missed one of the loveliest forms of Christmas celebration. St. Lucia's² name means "bringer of lights," and her day is traditionally December 13. In medieval times, people believed that the night before December 13 was the longest of the year, and with Lucia Day the increase of daylight would begin. In most homes, one of the daughters was selected to be the *Lussibrud* or Lucia Bride, by which name she was addressed all that day. Lucia Day begins with a traditional breakfast. Everyone celebrates with sleigh rides at night from home to home, large groups joining to sing carols, and fishing and hunting by torches. During the evening before, everyone feasts, plays games, and tells stories. Carolers dress in Biblical costumes and go from home to home.

In northern Minnesota, through the St. Louis County school system, this wonderful celebration has become a part of rural life. The *Lussibrud* for the county is chosen by popular vote. Each community has its own. Committees on music, crafts, winter sports, customs and traditions, and dances, all function each year. Sale of special Swedish food, and smörgåsbord helps to pay general expenses, and the event is self-supporting. Decorated Christmas trees surround winter-sports areas, and there are skating races, sliding races, snowshoe races, and cross-country skiing. A place is designated for the Swedish museum of arts and crafts, where a typical Swedish kitchen is displayed with a Swedish stove, broom, spinning wheel, and furniture.

Laskiainem is Finnish, and means "sliding down hill" in many different ways—with skis, sleds, or boughs. It was a winter-sports day, celebrated by a few local Finnish groups in Minnesota. The St. Louis County Board of Education heard about it, found out all about it, and began to promote the day in all the communities. This resulted in a big, county-wide celebration. Toboggan slides, ski slides, sliding on birchbark or cardboard, all done

² St. Lucia was a virgin martyr, put to death in Syracuse in 304 A.D.



Recreational activities need not stop in the wintertime. Here a group of young people enjoy winter sports on facilities maintained by the community and the United States Forest Service. A toboggan slide such as this is easy to build (U. S. Dept. Agr. Forest Serv.).

in a spirit of gaiety, furnished fun for the contestants and for spectators, who came from all over the Arrowhead country. But the sports were not all. Indoors were a program of Finnish folk songs, dramatizations of legends and stories, and exhibitions of native crafts. Of course, the traditional feast, the *voileipa-poyta*, for which authentic Finnish recipes are used, is a huge success. So are the Finnish folk dances in the evening, in which everyone joins.

But it does not have to be county-wide only. Recently, 37 *Laskiainem* celebrations were held in local communities throughout that area. Why? Because a few people recognized what an unusual native tradition it was, and did something about letting other people hear about it. Junior celebrations were held in many of the schools. An essay contest sent every youngster hunting for information about traditions, legends, superstitions, and folklore. Heirlooms, keepsakes, arts and crafts, and pictures were lent for exhibit. Every youngster with Finnish blood was envied, and must have felt very proud of his heritage.

Examples Could Be Multiplied a Hundred Times

In some sections of Louisiana, French-Acadian clubs and local community organizations have been formed that devote part of their programs to the

early handcraft and folk games of settlers in the region. Before this the customs and traditions of these areas had been in danger of dying out, because no one was recording them. With the assistance of extension workers from the State university, about 125 traditional French songs, games, stories, and dances were collected, and people were encouraged to assemble locally to hear broadcasts of these things and follow up with games and dances. Pride and community unity were built up among the people, treasures of the spirit were being preserved. And from them developed many of the local clubs and organizations now found in these parts of the State. We all know, too, about the annual New Orleans Mardi Gras and the colorful preliminary parades and celebrations.

In 1936 the Dauphin County Folk Council, of Pennsylvania, was organized. Each year it takes a special theme and works out a folk festival that shows to everyone all the contributions made to Pennsylvania by various groups and sections of the State. Many different groups take part. Each has a chance to show its native folk songs, dances, music, and crafts including foods. The Easter-egg tree is one interesting Pennsylvania Dutch custom. Imagine a bare tree in the spring with limbs hung with eggs that have been carefully blown and decorated with traditional designs and symbols.

These examples could be multiplied a hundred times. In scattered communities all across the land—New England, the Southern Appalachian Highlands, Corn Belt, Great Plains, Spanish-American Southwest, and the Northwest—the folklore of local areas blossoms in special affairs or is used in some way in regular recreational activities of the community.

A Folk Festival

A folk festival is a local, State, national, or international combination of songs, dances, stories, and demonstrations that all together tell a story of the history and culture of any given place. Such a folk festival will mean lots of work, but it will be colorful and dramatic, and your rural community will

remember it for years. Every local group should have some part on the program.

Planning of a folk festival is important. You will need a good general committee, an active program committee, a publicity committee, and others depending on your program. Set the date as far in advance as possible.

A natural, outdoor setting is best, but try to find a loud speaker. Also, be sure to have an indoor place, in case of rain. The program might include folk music, folk dancing, plays, stories and legends, a handicraft exhibit, and special meals.

Try to get a sponsoring group, either a civic organization, or a committee of representatives from various civic, business, social, and educational groups. Set up a budget, and decide upon the admission fee. Be sure to check with local authorities about tax laws.

Talent should be found and opportunity given to all groups. The theme and interest should come from existing talent. It is better to have a folk-or square-dance program with a local fiddler's group, than to force an international festival on people when talent and natural interest do not already exist.

The chairman must check with each group as to its part on the program. Timing is very important. The place of each part on the program must be decided, and the program built so that there will be variety and a gradual increase in interest. Each group should be familiar with the stage or loca-

tion where the program is to be held. Scenery should be very simple—one back drop or natural setting for all. Costumes should be either originals or authentic reproductions.

The whole community should know of the event, so make the publicity good. Include local news people or agencies on the publicity committee and see that all stories are properly prepared.

A master of ceremonies is almost a "must," because by his comments he ties the events together. Printed or mimeographed programs will add much to the festival and serve as souvenirs. Explanatory notes as to history and background music and dances will be most helpful, so that the audience will understand more of the program.

The National Folk Festival, held during recent years at St. Louis, Mo., is a tremendous and magnificent affair lasting 4 days. Special groups from all over the United States participate. This festival has done much to help various people learn about and appreciate their own culture, as well as that of their neighbors. Motion pictures of the 1949 National Folk Festival were sent to Europe as part of the intercultural-relations program of our Government.

Common Denominators

Did you ever stop to think about why many of our social activities are based on some particular things about people or a place? Some of the im-



Young and old enjoy skating and sliding on a lake rink kept free of snow by a local group (U. S. Dept. Agr. Forest Serv.).

portant common denominators that influence the activities of people everywhere, are listed below. Nothing else gets at our roots more deeply than these things do:

THINGS THAT INFLUENCE PEOPLE	MEANS OF EXPRESSION
History	Food
Nationality	Songs
Religion	Dances and games
Farm work	Literature
Nature	Painting

Look About You

Take a look about you, and into the background and ways of life of your State, or county, or community. Some of the most wholesome and customary social activities of former years were based on local history, local living, or local natural surroundings: Sugaring-off parties in New England; fish and steak fries, clambakes; lute-fish suppers in Scandinavian sections; husking bees and barn dances; harvest-home festivals and family reunions; schoolhouse programs; the county fair and church dinners; popcorn "pops"; possum, coon, fox, and rabbit hunts; seacoast and mountain retreats; campfires; pancake parties on Shrove Tuesday.

Why not revive some of the traditional activities of your community or group? Or think up some new ones to fit present surroundings and ways of life, because building local tradition is important to living and to our democratic way of life.

Some clubs in Utah have pack-horse hikes; some organizations in the Southwest have horseback quadrilles. Special fairs are held in various places. Have you ever attended a trout-fishing party in Colorado?

If you live in the Corn Belt you can have a starlight hike, ending with a big friendship campfire along the windbreak grove behind the farm buildings or in a nearby wood lot or by a local stream or pond. Steak, or roasted wieners, toasted marshmallows, and home-made ice cream, can taste good by a little dale or grove in the deep South or in

the plains country. You may not have mountains, but you will have the sky, sunsets, stars, and native scenery to appreciate.

Oftentimes new activities can be tied in with the study of rocks, birds, animals, and trees, and with the conservation of land and wildlife.

All too often rural groups seem to try to imitate the city in their organization activities. Theater parties, formal proms, and stylish banquets are all right in their places, but even in these you should take advantage of rural surroundings and local culture whenever you can. You will find it very enjoyable. What is more, you will be helping to preserve some of the heritage of your community; you will be building up some appreciation and pride in your own surroundings and way of life.

Every State in the Nation has some thrilling history and some noticeable customs. But its history, and customs, and social activities are based, not on things, but on people—the people who came there, loved it, settled, and carried on to build up a way of life in the natural surroundings of the region and form attachments of their own for them. We of today have our roots in yesterday, and the flowers of tomorrow depend upon how we tend their roots today. So in planning recreational activities and programs, look about you and capitalize on your local culture and countryside.

SUGGESTED READING

BOOK OF FESTIVALS.

DOROTHY GLADYS SPICER. 428 pp. New York, The Woman's Press. 1937.

DANCES OF OUR PIONEERS.

Ohio Agr. Col., Columbus.

GET TOGETHER AMERICANS.

RACHAEL DAVIS-DU BOIS. 182 pp. New York, Harper & Bros. 1943.

THE FOLK-FESTIVAL HANDBOOK.

64 pp. Philadelphia, The Evening Bul. Folk Festival Assoc. 1944.

WINDOWS OPEN TO THE WORLD.

DOROTHY GLADYS SPICER. 127 pp. New York, The Woman's Press. 1946.

(A handbook of projects based on nationality and racial customs. Sections on how to dramatize folk material and how to create a festival; chapters on foreign handicraft exhibit, and on simple recipes for food and favors from nature materials; and a bibliography.)

THE HEART OF A PROGRAM IS ITS LEADERS

THE VOLUNTEER LEADER is at a premium. The upward trend in the development of organizations and agencies puts leaders in great demand and keeps them busy. The success of many rural organizations through the years is due in no small part to the many volunteer leaders that were found and developed. Many of them were unknown as leaders at first.

The problem is really not a shortage of persons who can lead. Rather, we have a problem of discovering them and developing leadership. Leadership is more a matter of opportunity and development, than of numbers of persons and inherent qualities.

Finding Leaders

Much depends upon what one wants a leader for. Being a chairman or president requires one type of leadership, but putting on a method demonstration or having a result demonstration on the farm, handling a meeting, or teaching a handicraft class requires other types. This emphasizes a first principle in finding leaders—have a definite job in mind. Persons have to be asked to do something specifically, not simply to help out. Keep a list of the things for which you need someone's help.

Do not be afraid to ask persons who are seemingly not active or who are untried. All too often the tendency is to think only of the persons who are already too busy with other leadership jobs. If there are some who can do more and want to, that is fine. But generally others probably can do as well, if asked and encouraged. This spreads leadership around, giving other persons an opportunity to develop.

So keep a list of those who might be asked to be leaders, and keep adding to the list as names occur to you. Look around for young men and young women who have returned from college. The woman who wins awards at the flower show probably would enjoy heading a girls' club or project on flower arrangement and gardening. The best bowler in town might be a wonderful person to give a group some lessons in bowling or to set up a bowling league. There is Mrs. Brown. She once taught dramatics in school. Perhaps she would be glad to take charge of a new drama club, coach a play, or form a storytelling club. In one commu-

nity, a garageman whom no one ever thought of as a leader, turned out to be an excellent leader of a handicraft group. It merely took someone to think about asking him and telling him about the opportunity.

Be sure to remember the high-school youth and other young people, especially those who were leaders in their 4-H Club, Boy Scout troupe, or church-youth activities. Many of these young people have had valuable experience and are liked by others. A senior high-school boy, for example, might be very good for a group of small boys who need a softball manager or crafts leader. High-school girls and young women often are good at telling stories, or could lead a junior choir. The young people are your leaders of tomorrow. Do not leave them out of your leadership recruitment. Also include them in planning recreation activities and in recreation training workshops.

Most of all, keep on the lookout for newcomers to the community—the families who move in, or the man or woman who marries into the community. Many of them welcome a chance to become a part of the neighborhood. Oftentimes a person who was thought to be inadequate, has turned out to be a better leader than the one he was asked to replace.

A sizable agency or organization might appoint an officer or set up a standing committee whose job it is to be on the lookout for new leaders and helpers. Such a committee would learn to know people and their special interests.

Actually Getting the Leaders

Ask key people for suggestions as to names of persons who can serve as leaders. Oftentimes the banker, the storekeeper, or the minister has helped the county agent to find new persons for leadership. Key people may not only know other persons to ask, but often have background information that will help in making initial contacts. Their advice will help you to keep your list of prospective leaders long. The more persons you know and have had contact with, the wider will be the base for recruiting leadership. Basic principles in finding leaders are to know people, to have definite jobs in mind, and to think of persons who are not already too busy.

Frequently leaders refuse to serve because they are not asked properly or because the wrong things were looked for by the person or persons making the selection.

Generally one cannot expect potential leaders to have all the characteristics listed in books as desirable leader traits. The main thing is that they be acceptable to the community or group as to character and cooperativeness. Most other desirable characteristics, such as interest, dependability, and skill are developed after the leader gets started and faces the challenges, opportunities, and satisfactions of his task. That is one thing about leadership—it develops or grows in one as one grows with it. A person is not born with leadership, he develops it.

To get and keep a volunteer leader:

Challenge him, or her, with the useful service to be rendered.

Never press for a definite decision on the first approach. One good approach is first to show interest in a person by asking his advice on some matter, nothing more.

Prefer to have selections come from, or be based on, the desire of the people in some way, and see that the prospective leader realizes this, rather than have some official personally beg him to serve. This helps to assure group support, as well as to increase the leader's own interest. Help both the people and the leader to recognize, and keep on recognizing, a feeling of cooperation and responsibility toward each other. "Followership," as well as leadership, is important.

Encourage a group to elect its leader or leaders. The election should be more than simply acclamation after a person has been begged to accept nomination by a committee. Whenever possible, elect a leader from a slate containing two or more candidates.

Find out a person's real objection to becoming a leader or officer, then try to do something about his reasons to make it easier for him to serve. The difficulty may be transportation, care of children, lack of time, or a feeling of inability to handle the job. Give leaders training and help.

Do not ask or expect a new leader to do too much too soon. Invite him in terms of a definite job or responsibility, but do not lay out all the things that have to be done, certainly not on

the first approach. Give him a chance to grow into the job and to apply ideas of his own.

If personal selection is involved, have a person asked by someone whom he knows especially well or respects.

Be able to make the prospective leader see some satisfactions in the leadership job—service rendered, praise or recognition, prestige, new adventure, opportunity to develop, and new friends are only a few of the records of leadership. Make sure that the leadership opportunity you have to offer has such satisfactions in it. No one wants merely to assume more drudgery and chores.

Do not urge a prospective leader to serve if he has real reasons for not wanting to do so. Ask his suggestions for other prospects; ask his advice as to the organization or program involved. You may get him to serve later.

Develop leaders by seeing that many persons have jobs or responsibilities, no matter how small, in the activities of the going organization or program. This develops interest and prepares the ground for inviting them to greater leadership later.

Once a leader is found, he should be given all possible ideas and cooperation. He should not be "bossed." Give him responsibility and let him know you appreciate what he does. Everyone likes to be praised, and should be when he has done something well.

Local Sponsors

Do not neglect the possibility of getting local organizations to sponsor the recreation activities or other projects with which you are concerned. Both the problem of leadership and that of starting a recreation program or project often can be solved, if one or more local organizations will sponsor such program or activity.

Sponsorship has three important benefits. It helps to—

1. Solve the leadership problem for that activity.
2. Solve the money problem, because the local group can either take the responsibility for finances itself, or give leadership to community arrangements for finances.
3. Increase the interest of all the members of the sponsoring organization in the project, and also increase community-wide interest.

Sponsorship might take forms such as the following:

Home demonstration club and agricultural leaders sponsoring a young farmers' and homemakers' organization.

An older 4-H Club group sponsoring 4-H events such as tours for younger 4-H members.

A young men and women's group sponsoring a recreation-leaders' training conference.

Volunteer firemen's association sponsoring baseball and softball league for older men.

Rotary Club sponsoring community play day or furnishing judges for field days.

Women's club or parent-teacher association agreeing to send chaperones for youth recreation groups.

School board sponsoring Friday-night dances.

Farmers' cooperative sponsoring a monthly barn dance.

Churches sponsoring a 2-week camp or campfire program.

Training Recreation Leaders

You will find that many people who are asked to accept a leadership job do not feel sure of their ability to handle it. This is why some of them decline to accept. Also, many of those who do accept may not have confidence in their ability and may like to improve themselves. Thus, both present and prospective leaders should be encouraged to attend leadership-training workshops or meetings. More training for volunteer leaders is the key to more and better leadership, and more and better leadership is the key to more and better recreation in rural America.

What is taught in a recreation leadership-training workshop generally depends on how the abilities developed in the course will be used, or on what the leaders want. If one of the big needs in all the local organizations is for people who can lead in games and folk dancing and who can plan parties, socials, or other special events, your workshop can be limited to what is called, "social" recreation. Invite every organization in your county to send one or more representatives. From the various groups, you will certainly be able to find a few people who are good at special activities such as singing games, quiet games, mixers, active games, tournaments, stunts, or simple square dancing. Use them for your secondary or assistant instructors.

Workshops for recreation training should be open to anyone who is interested, as well as to specially invited leaders. They should be held at a time and place convenient to everyone. Keep them short—1 to 2 or 3 days. Keep them fun. Make them practical by letting everyone in the courses get actual practice in conducting or leading the activities. That is the way they can best learn to lead.

A simple social recreation training workshop might include—

A brief talk on recreation in general, why it is important, how it can be used in the home, in the local clubs and organizations, for the church, in the school, and in the community. It might also include instruction and practice in song leading, get-acquainted games, and singing games.

Folk games, square dancing, and contests.

Running sports and contest events.

Party or special-event planning.

Simple dramatics, stunts, skits, and storytelling.

The leaders attending the workshop might well be asked to use the knowledge they are gaining by putting on a party, community night, or other social event.

Out of such a training course could come a "party team" for your community or county—several people on whom local organizations and churches could call when they want to have a party or program of some kind. This "team" could go to any event at the scheduled time and take charge of a program. This would be an excellent service for the leaders, and good training as well.

The people attending a county or district training institute might go back to their own groups or local areas and organize a simple training program to develop more local leaders within their own organization, community, or county.

If a summer playground program or training for camps and for vacation church schools is important in addition to social recreation, then a recreation-training workshop might include instruction and practice in a wider range of activities, such as singing games, running games, relays, special events, storytelling, simple dramatics, holiday programs, music, swimming, sports for girls and boys, community nights, hot or rainy-day activities, arts and crafts, hiking, safety, picnics, camping, parades, conservation, wildlife study, and nature lore.

Sometimes it is wise to try to get outside help in holding a recreation-training workshop. Specialists are available from several sources, and an outsider may arouse more interest and enthusiasm than a local group can.

Perhaps a county or community civic group, county farm organization, county rural-life council, the chamber of commerce, or a combination of groups might be willing to finance and sponsor a recreation-training workshop.

But whether you have a local training workshop or not, be sure to watch for any training institutes that are being held in nearby towns or cities. When you hear of one, try to arrange to send one or more persons from your community or organization.

RECREATION THE COMMUNITY WAY

"THIS COMMUNITY has too many things going on," is a remark often heard across rural America. Yet at the same time certain county- or community-wide needs may go unmet for a long time, because each single group is so interested in its own particular program.

Most local organizations have useful work to do in the community or county, and all have its interests and needs at heart. Each has something special to offer; each makes a contribution. But there can and should be teamwork and coordination of effort on things of community-wide concern, including recreation. This does not mean that activities need to be taken away from any group. The teamwork way is simply planning together for improvement, with the county or community as a whole in mind.

Kinds of Teamwork or Community Organization

Generally, getting things done for the community as a whole requires some kind of organization machinery for "hitching up" the parts of a community as a team. This is especially true for large undertakings such as developing a recreational program.

Brief descriptions of several types of community organization follow. Which is best depends upon local conditions and upon what is to be done. Many organizations of such types are working today throughout the Nation.

A community calendar committee.—You know

Another form of training is to provide plenty of recreation bulletins and books for the use of local people. Every school, church, library, and county extension office should have at least one or two copies of a variety of recreation aids.

SUGGESTED READING

RECREATION LEADERSHIP—A COMMUNITY NECESSITY.

13 pp. New York, Natl. Recreation Assoc. 1944.

SOME LEADERSHIP "Do's."

10 pp. Natl. Recreation Assoc. MP-389. New York, Natl.

Recreation Assoc. 1944. (Reprint from Recreation, February 1944.)

TRAINING VOLUNTEERS FOR RECREATION SERVICE.

28 pp. New York, Natl. Recreation Assoc. 1946.

TRAINING YOUR PLAYGROUND LEADERS.

66 pp. New York, Natl. Recreation Assoc. 1946.

who the leaders are in your community—the ones in the farm organizations, the civic clubs, the school, the church, and other groups. The first step is to get them together informally, perhaps at a home some evening, to talk over the idea of a community calendar and to work out a simple outline. You or someone else can serve as temporary chairman. It will be impossible to complete a calendar at the first meeting, because the idea will be new and those present will not be able to speak officially for their groups. But each can go back to discuss the matter with his group or agency. Each group should then be asked to designate someone to serve on the community-calendar committee. It may or may not be the persons who first came to the preliminary meeting. Make sure that all main organizations and agencies of the area are represented.

A community calendar is not hard to prepare. Most groups have regular meeting times, and many of them may not conflict. The main function of the calendar is (1) to present information all together so that all the people in the community will know about it, and (2) to schedule the extra events so that they do not overlap. Some dates may have to be cleared with certain organizations before the calendar committee can come to a definite conclusion. Big events that will take in the whole community, should take preference over small ones. A community-wide picnic or celebration, for example, should not conflict with the annual church picnic; nor should the community Christmas pro-

gram conflict with the Christmas parties planned by different organizations for their own members. Do not forget to include county or district events that draw people from your community, as you would not want your community events to compete with these larger ones. Be sure to show the places of meetings as well as dates, so as to avoid conflict in the use of halls and other facilities.

It is impossible to iron out all conflicts of dates; but this does not matter so long as not too many of the same persons are involved, or the meetings are not scheduled for the same hall or room.

There are two types of community calendar:

1. *The single annual calendar.*—This lists all regular meeting times and places, including as many special and general community events as are known at the time of printing.
2. *The monthly calendar.*—This may show not only the regular meetings but also special events and meetings of groups or committees that develop on short notice.

Probably the first type is more practical and useful. It takes more care and time to prepare, but is only a once-a-year job. The second is simple and can include many current committee meetings or events, but it cannot present dates far enough in advance.

The Durham, N. H., community prepares its annual calendar in booklet form, including such items as:

A general community calendar showing school terms, dates of main events, and main regular meetings.

A list of all organizations and clubs, with a schedule of the yearly program of each, and the names of officers.

The names and telephone numbers of professional persons—the doctor, dentist, lawyer, minister, school head.

How to reach the fire chief, police, and road supervisor.

Fire-alarm signals.

Signals for no school.

Open hours of stores, bank, theater, post office, library, and railroad station.

Schedule of church services.

Bus and railroad schedules.

It is important to have the community calendar widely distributed. This means that some kind of publication is necessary. But local business firms

and organizations probably will be glad to help, or its publishing might be a function of a businessmen's club. Some communities have also erected one or more attractive bulletin boards at prominent places, with sliding alphabet letters and numbers. This bulletin board is posted monthly. Another way would be to have a calendar merely of dates and places, and printed on cardboard with a hole at the top so that it can be hung in the kitchen or office.

The community-calendar idea, in whatever form, does much to prevent duplication of dates, activities, and work of leaders. It will also serve to build cooperation among the different organizations and agencies of the community or county and make for greater service to the area as a whole. The community-calendar committee can grow into some kind of community council or planning group.

A county or community council.—The representatives of local agencies and organizations can do more than simply schedule events for a community calendar. A beginning can be made in developing a full-fledged community council or recreation council, all ready to plan programs, not just list them.

The function of a county or community council is to look at community-wide activities and develop cooperative action to get things done for the best interests of the whole community or county. It prevents duplication not only in dates, but in programs and leadership work as well, and gets things done that the single organizations cannot do by themselves. The council should be made up of a representative from all the main groups in the area.

The community council is desirable for correlating organizations for almost all sizes of communities, from those with towns or villages of 500 to cities of 5,000 to 10,000 or somewhat larger. Standing subcommittees or special subcommittees may be set up within the council to handle certain current problems or projects, usually as part of action by the whole community council, or preliminary to it.

A recreation council or committee.—This is a specialized council for handling recreational problems only, compared to the more general community council just mentioned. A recreation council may be organized on a county or community basis. It may be the outgrowth of a community council, or it may be started first and developed into the

over-all community council. It is better for larger communities than for small towns.

A recreation council—

Studies recreational and social needs, and determines whether clubs for boys and girls, a playground, social activities for the teen-age group or the young married people, or other opportunities, are most required.

Checks available facilities, including those of the schoolhouse, the church, and the farm-organization hall, groves for picnics, and swimming places.

Finds out what is already going on in order to determine whether activities might be expanded, supplemented, or at least not duplicated.

Plans an over-all recreation program for the year and correlates the activities of various organizations on it, if necessary.

Plans to provide additional facilities by such activities as improving the school property for community use, or building a community park or swimming pool.

Plans to raise necessary funds through local tax appropriations, benefits, subscriptions, and membership campaigns, for operating a program for building facilities.

Mobilizes the cooperation of the agricultural extension service, county organizations, churches, schools, and other resources.

Makes plans to discover persons who can develop hobby groups, lead folk games or dances, direct a band, organize sports and athletics, lead playground activities, teach swimming, or otherwise serve as volunteer leaders. It plans for employment of professional leadership, maybe starting with a school teacher during the summertime.

A recreational subcommittee of an over-all county or community council.—This was suggested on page 51 under a county or community council, but is listed here to set apart the different types of community organization. The recreation subcommittee does the same things that the separate recreation council already described does for larger places, but generally in the name of the over-all community council itself. The scope of these activities is much less for small communities than for large towns and cities, where a separate recreation council might be more suitable.

A community council may have subcommittees

for purposes other than recreation, such as one on 4-H Club work, one on education and the schools, one on roads, and one on health. The over-all council and subcommittees are made up of representatives of various organizations and groups in the county or community, just as the separate recreation council is.

A recreation association.—A recreation association is an organized group in itself, with a paid membership fee and with officers and a treasury of its own. Besides having membership dues, it may raise money from donations and admission fees for special programs the association might sponsor.

An association of this kind gives leadership to improving recreation, not so much by joint planning between groups, as by introducing ideas and conducting events on its own initiative. One of its projects might be making and publishing a community calendar. Another might be to sponsor a weekly summer band concert by the school band, or a community fair, or a concert by an outside artist. It might start a drive to get a community park built.

A recreation association functions, not merely as a community planning committee, but as another community organization for the special purpose of improving the recreational opportunities of the community.

A community club or organization.—In this type of organization, all the people of a community form themselves into a single organization, with officers, regular meetings, and a variety of activities for recreation, education, and community improvement. This works especially well for very small communities and neighborhoods that do not have much else in the way of organization. It has become popular in the South, especially in Tennessee and Louisiana, where the agricultural extension service has been promoting and assisting this idea for some years.

Which of these types of recreation organization is best for your community depends upon what your community already has and upon its size—village and countryside together. Generally, the more simple and informal the set-up, the better it will function. The calendar committee is a good starting point. After that the over-all community council, with subcommittees as needed, is probably the best for most rural communities and for towns up to 2,500 in population, as well as for many of larger size.

One advantage of the over-all council is that communities might become over-organized if they had separate councils for recreation, health, and other programs. The recreation council and recreation association are probably more suitable for large towns and cities than for small rural communities. Another thing in favor of the over-all community council is that usually recreation, health, and other problems cannot be dealt with unless all phases of the community are considered together, including the finances of local government. Recreation has to be developed as a part of total community planning. The single community organization or community club, or a community program committee is best for very small communities that are not organized to any extent.

It is important not to have the community organization too complicated at the start; the simpler the better, especially for communities and counties with small towns. Also, no attempt should be made to perfect the organization before some community problem or project is tackled. Organization best succeeds when it grows out of doing things, not when it is set up just for organization's sake.

Profit From Others

Profit by the experiences of many recreation councils in other town and small city communities. The following suggestions will help to keep you on the right track:

Start in a limited way, keeping firmly in mind, however, the conception of a rich total program.

Do not encourage the building of a community house or other structure until you have made sure that available facilities in school buildings, churches, or halls are unsuitable. Also before recommending a new building, be sure that the community can finance both its erection and operation.

Bear in mind that areas for organized games and sports usually belong on public-school properties or adjacent to them, or in a nearby park. This is because the school is a natural local center for the people it serves.



The farm people and townspeople of Milton, Tenn., build themselves a community house.

If a new school is in prospect, remember that it may well serve the recreational and social needs of the community. It could include a gymnasium or social hall, a stage, a kitchen, and other practical facilities. The property should be large enough to include ample outdoor recreational areas.

Be constantly on the alert for competent local talent as leaders. Good prospects are to be found among college graduates, former employed playground leaders, older 4-H Club members, former Boy Scouts and Girl Scouts, individuals who have passed Red Cross life-saving tests, hobbyists in such fields as crafts, music, or nature study, school teachers, clergymen, and sport enthusiasts.

Plan for adequate financing of recreation. Some local governments make provision for this in their budgets, if the programs are for the general public and needed by it. Community chests and special campaigns can help. Frequently, however, donations in equipment and supplies may be obtained from generous firms, or from other groups or individuals.

Help volunteer leaders to obtain some training and other aids. Encourage them to attend recreational training institutes that may be held in nearby cities or other places.

Also encourage the local or county library to make available, and promote the use of, books on recreation activities of various kinds.

In developing a program, think about stimulating home recreation, sponsor holiday celebrations, serve cultural as well as physical needs, think in terms of seasonal planning, bring young people together in appropriate activities, and encourage hobbies through instruction and exhibits. Consider all the people, not just the young-age groups; also plan for the entire year.

Keep your central recreation organization simple. Do not create a cumbersome, inflexible constitution and organization. Organize as the need arises, meet when necessary, keep on as informal a basis as practicable, but have positive action and get things done.

Start in a limited way and plan with people from the beginning. Nothing will kill recreation faster than to try to force it upon people before they want it. Recreation cannot be imposed upon your community. It has to develop slowly, as people sense a need for it and want it for themselves or their children.

Your council, or leaders, may find it wise to list all the things that would help to make your area richer in recreation, and then select a few from the list to work on first. In one community, such a listing included—

1. School programs in creative arts for (a) grade and (b) high-school pupils, and (c) adults.
2. Art exhibits and workshops.
3. Community theater and home-talent plays.
4. Better movies.
5. Interchurch social programs.
6. Community music programs—orchestras, bands, musical education, choruses, civic-concert series.
7. Public-library services for all, with uses extended through groups by means of reading programs.
8. Art of talking with others—discussion of current events, storytelling, conversation.
9. Physical activities—sports, playground programs, and physical education.
10. Parks and picnic areas.
11. Family recreation in homes.
12. Neighborly social activities.
13. Hobbies and crafts.
14. Youth-organization programs.
15. Appreciation of historical backgrounds.
16. Community use of school facilities.

17. Cooperative planning through community councils.

18. Training for the recreation chairmen or leaders in local groups.

19. Survey of community resources and needs for leisure-time activities.

In studying such a list, you and your council may decide that until you have worked on a survey of the sort recommended in item 19 of the foregoing list, you cannot do a good job on the others. Even if you had all the leaders you needed for all the activities you would like to see started, you could not do much until you found out the answers to two big questions—Where? and What?

And since you know that programs do not run themselves, you will have to find the answers to another important question also—Who?

Study Your Community

Any kind of community planning for recreation will immediately call for some main kinds of facts as a basis for planning. The community council, recreation council, or other planning leaders, will want answers to three general questions:

What does the community now have in facilities and activities?

What do the people need and want?

What additional facilities and activities are required?

To answer these questions, local leaders probably should make some kind of survey to obtain specific facts about a number of things. The survey should be a community project with several of the groups having a part. A brief survey questionnaire for recording facts can easily be developed. Another way to obtain information is by discussing community concerns with different groups at one or more of their meetings.

Some Standards as a Basis for Planning

A basic standard to keep in mind is 1 acre of recreation area for each 100 population. The National Park Service suggests the following standards:

COMMUNITY POPULATION (town and countryside)	PARK AREA 1 acre to every—
Under 1,000	40 people
1,000 to 2,500.....	50 people
2,500 to 5,000.....	60 people
5,000 to 8,000.....	75 people

Another standard is that a playground in a small rural district should have at least 2 acres, and that a good location for it is adjoining the elementary school, if this would not cause children to cross a railroad track or streets or roads with heavy traffic. For larger districts or consolidated schools, the playground should be at least $3\frac{1}{4}$ acres. The National Council on Schoolhouse Construction recommends that the total area of the school grounds for any school be not less than 5 acres, with an additional acre for each 100 pupils.

Desirable outdoor recreation spaces for consolidated school and community need not all be at the schoolhouse. They might be—

- A corner for preschool children.

- Apparatus areas for older children.

- One or two open spaces for informal play and group games.

- An area for court games such as tennis, handball, volleyball, shuffleboard, and horseshoes.

- A sports field area for two or three softball diamonds, football, and mass games.

- A lawn area for croquet, archery, and lawn bowling.

- A shaded area for storytelling, crafts, dramatics, quiet games.

- A shelter house, if the playground is not near the school.

- Landscape features with flowers.

As a rule, the playground should be fenced and its facilities lighted for evening use.

Desirable indoor recreation spaces for a consolidated school and community also need not all be at the schoolhouse. They might be—

- A gymnasium with lockers and showers.

- An auditorium or assembly hall, preferably with removable seats.

- A game room for table tennis, darts, checkers, billiards.

- A social recreation room for youth.

- A lounge room for quiet games and reading.

- An indoor playroom for small children.

- A workshop or room that can be used for arts and crafts.

- A clubroom or parlor.

- A kitchen and serving space.

Desirable general park facilities are:

- General field sports and playground areas not otherwise available.

- An outdoor swimming pool.

- An outdoor theater or band shell.

- A winter-sports area and skating rink where climate is suitable.

- A recreation building or covered play shed.

- An area for day camping.

- Outdoor fireplaces, picnic tables, and drinking water.

- Trees, shrubs, and flowers, or scenic spots.

- A parking area.

- A large park area where there might be hiking trails, shelters, week-end camping or picnic facilities, comfort stations, and possibly a small wildlife sanctuary or fish hatchery.

Not all these outdoor and indoor playground and park facilities can or should be provided in every community; much depends upon the population of the area to be served, the size and type of school system, and nearness to other places. But rural people should have reasonable access to most of these facilities, if not on a community basis, then at least in every county or two.

This is why adequate recreation planning, like planning for health facilities and other public services, often has to be not only community-wide, but even county-wide, or on a district basis. All this takes leadership and organization. But these can be developed if someone will start the ball rolling.

The Lighted Schoolhouse

Consolidation of schools and of churches has been a trend in rural America in recent years. Many people are glad, because it means better schools for children and better churches. But many neighborhoods feel a sense of loss when their local schoolhouse or church is absorbed into a larger and more distant one, especially if they have been accustomed to using their neighborhood school or church for local meetings and for recreational purposes.

But this trend need not lessen rural recreation and sociability. It can be turned into more and better recreation if people are alert to possibilities. For example:

The former country schoolhouse or church, instead of being sold or abandoned, can be turned over to the neighborhood or some organization and made into a recreation hall. The consolidated school building, with its large playgrounds, gymnasium, and auditorium or other meeting rooms, can become a community center of the new, larger variety.

The consolidated school also can be the center of specialized recreational activities for adults of the community, in out-of-school hours or seasons. Some schools open part of their shops and other facilities for special handicraft and hobby activities.

The school and church are natural meeting places for the average community or group. They are often the two buildings in the community with the greatest seating or room capacity. Whether the school be old-fashioned and small, or of the beautiful, new, consolidated type, it has rooms, lights, and heat—three important items—even though the seats sometimes may be a handicap for certain adult activities.

Perhaps you have had trouble getting the use of the school building for community purposes in after-school hours. It is easy to understand why. Light and heat cost money; so does janitor service. School budgets are usually limited, and every cent counts. Damage is always a possibility; also, no teacher wants her room disturbed, chairs or books out of order, chalk work erased from the blackboard, and trash on the floor. All these are reasons why boards of education are often loath to throw schools open for out-of-school hours or community uses.

Yet it must be remembered that schools belong to the community, not to the school board or the

superintendent. Difficulties can generally be overcome, if they are faced squarely and arrangements worked out with a cooperative attitude. Encourage representative persons in your community to discuss the matter carefully with the school board. If use of the school facilities is granted, the space and equipment to be used should be selected carefully, and understandings about them made clear. Responsible leadership should be guaranteed.

In many communities schools and churches represent big investments that stand idle a large part of the year. They should be used more fully for the benefit of the community or group.

More Steps in Getting Recreation

Previous sections of this bulletin have dealt with studying and organizing the community, and with studying standards. But where there is much to do, these are only half the story to developing community recreation facilities or programs. In such cases, it is important to go slowly, and plan for the community as a whole, with all organizations and agencies working together.

Next comes the task of listing needs, and making recommendations as to priority. The most important features of your program and the ones that can be had easiest should come first. The others may have to be long-range plans. It will help if



One community in the South fixed up the playground at the schoolhouse and plans to use it

the community or county estimates the cost of recommended changes or additions. The first question you will be asked is, What will it cost?

The next important step is to publicize all this; get the information and proposals before everyone. Work it into a simple, attractive report, not too long and not too wordy. Make it mean something personal to every man and woman who reads it. Talk about it in every local group meeting. Make an exhibit for local store windows. Work out attractive models for display. Get all the newspaper publicity you can. Talk about it over local radio stations. Newspaper and radio people, if any, should be represented on your community council or recreation council.

Then, when everyone knows about it, try to get all the local groups and influential leaders to back the program decided upon. Then, and only then, should it come up in town meeting or be presented to local governing officials. No recommendations are likely to get favorable action from the people or governing bodies, unless they are constructive in tone and reasonable in scope, and unless they have the approval of the people behind the idea. Do not ask for too much at one time, or too soon. Let plans grow slowly, but soundly. The people must believe in any new program to make it succeed. Teamwork helps to produce that backing; also, joint planning of all groups.



when school is not in session.

Communities Are Doing It

This dream of a recreation program for everyone the community way—will it work? It not only will work, it has worked. It is working today. Let's take some actual examples of communities that have achieved a community recreation program. There is no set pattern. These examples may suggest ideas to you:

EXAMPLE 1.—In Adams County, Ind., two large towns had their own tax-supported recreation programs, but the rural people who made up the vast majority of the county's population did not feel a part of these programs. A farm organization became interested and decided to do something. It called in State extension recreation specialists for consultation. A county-wide committee was formed, with the help of the county extension agents, to discuss the situation thoroughly and recommend a plan. The committee suggested the establishment of a county-wide recreation program, with a paid director, to be supported by funds appropriated by the county board of township trustees. The plan was talked about in local groups and at a county meeting of all organizations, which passed a resolution asking the county township trustees for such a program.

Here are the results:

4-H Clubs were helped in planning recreation for their meetings. Special assistance was given to rural churches and civic groups. The county agent took the recreation director to farm meetings, where he explained the new county program for localities and obtained suggestions from the meetings.

Small community playgrounds were established at schoolhouses.

Abandoned schoolhouses were made into community centers.

Several softball diamonds with lights were established in various rural parts of the county.

Central school facilities—the shops, the gymnasium, and the library—were made available for community use.

A home demonstration club chorus and a county band were started.

Leadership-training institutes were held.

A township advisory committee was set up in each township.

A similar program was worked out in Wabash County, Ind., but here a county board of parks and recreation was established to supervise the program, instead of the township trustee and advisory committee plan adopted in Adams County. Over in Allen County, Ind., the county officials did not support a recreation program, so one was set up in the county department of schools. A county school-recreation supervisor was employed who helps to bring recreation not only to the schools but to other community organizations and activities. He works closely with the county extension agents.

EXAMPLE 2.—The Rockvale, Tenn., community, which is all open country except for a small crossroads hamlet of 100 persons, organized itself into the Rockvale Community

Organization under the direct leadership of the county extension agents. This organization has officers and regular monthly meetings for all in the community. The first community-improvement project embarked upon, after the community had entered the Nashville Chamber of Commerce Community Improvement Contest, was to develop a community recreation program. Many persons put their shoulders to the wheel. They decided to build a number of recreation facilities on the school grounds—tennis courts, shuffleboard deck, tetherball pole, volleyball court, and basketball pole. In another area on the grounds they erected equipment for small children—sand boxes, seesaws, slides, and a small merry-go-round. Electric lights were installed for night playing, and now a “community recreation night” is held every 2 weeks for all families and all ages. Tables for cards and other informal games are set up for older people in the small school gymnasium, and refreshments are on sale by various local groups. The whole project has meant hard work, as the people themselves built and installed most of the facilities. But the project is meaning a lot for many of the folks in this open-country community, especially the youth and young families.

EXAMPLE 3.—At Wilton, Maine—village population 2,200—a community-wide recreation program was set up under the leadership of an alert minister, who mobilized other church people, home demonstration groups, 4-H Clubs, and civic organizations. The object was to check increasing juvenile delinquency. A community recreation council was formed, projects were started, money was raised, and a good deal of volunteer labor was used. All parts of the community joined in the effort, and many recreational activities were carried on during the day and evening. But it worked. And besides providing recreation and checking delinquency, it also greatly increased the interest of the people, especially youth, in their churches and other organizations.

EXAMPLE 4.—In Mapleton, Iowa—population 2,000—a recreation association was formed, with county extension groups, civic clubs, local business firms, and individual persons joining on a paid-membership basis. The association has regular business meetings where its activities are planned for better recreation in the county and town community. It sponsors several events annually. It started the move to have the school shops open in the evening for the use of adult craft hobbyists. It initiated the development of a summer recreation program and the building of a swimming pool and community park facilities. It helped to finance swimming instruction and other activities. The association is one of the most active and popular organizations in the community. Both town and country people support it and participate in the activities.

It's a Continuing Job

Once your community has worked out its own pattern, and a recreation program is in full swing, do not think you can sit back and relax. You can't! The community council or recreation council will have to be alert every minute. You will have to

make sure—and keep on making sure—that the area is getting value for its money. Here are some of the things on which you will want to keep busy:

You will have to keep on interpreting recreation to the people, and stimulating interest in all the activities and developments.

Most of all, if you are wise, you will keep evaluating what you have:

Does it meet the needs and desires of the community as discovered by the survey?

Does it come up to the accepted standards of what a good program should be doing?

Does it contribute to good health and to safety?

Are the people in the programs happy and having a good time?

Are the activities so planned that they come when everyone can attend, or just a small group?

Are all the local organizations joining in, and giving their help and support? Is it the people's program?

Pointers in Building Your Program

Building your community recreation program will take time, energy, organization, and planning. The main things to remember are:

Know your community.

Plan with the people from the beginning.

Pool resources—leadership, facilities, and funds.

Keep informed on legislation relating to recreation.

Find enough leadership to start.

Start with what you have.

Have a well-drawn-up budget for recreation.

Make the program community-wide and year-round.

Keep the interest and good will of the community.

Plan for the future.

The results will be worth all your effort.

SUGGESTED READING

A GUIDE TO COMMUNITY COORDINATION.

28 pp. Los Angeles, Calif. Coordinating Councils. 1941.

A PRACTICAL METHOD FOR CO-ORDINATING RECREATION IN SMALL COMMUNITIES.

MANITOBA DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND PUBLIC WELFARE. 8 pp. Winnipeg, Canada. 1947.

FUNDAMENTALS IN COMMUNITY RECREATION.

12 pp. New York, Natl. Recreation Assoc. 1947.

GUIDE TO FORMATION OF RECREATION COUNCILS.

27 pp. Regina, Saskatchewan, Canada, Saskatchewan Recreation Movement. [n. d.]

GUIDE TO THE ESTABLISHMENT OF COMMUNITY COORDINATING COUNCILS.

27 pp. Atlanta, Ga., Georgia Citizens' Council. 1947.

IS YOUR COMMUNITY "ON THE BALL"?

COLORADO A. & M. COLLEGE. 8 pp. Fort Collins, Colo. Agr. Col. 1947.

NEIGHBORHOOD ACTIVITIES IN COUNTRY COMMUNITIES.

ALFRED C. ARVOLD. 79 pp. Fargo, N. Dak. Agr. Col., State College Station. 1940. Free.

ORGANIZING A COMMUNITY COUNCIL.

2 pp. Supt. Pub. Instr. Bul. No. 330. Lansing, Mich. 1944.

PLANNING FOR RECREATION AREAS AND FACILITIES IN SMALL TOWNS AND CITIES.

J. LEE BROWN. 51 pp., illus. Fed. Security Agency.

Washington, D. C., Supt. Docs. 1945. 20 cents.

PLAYGROUND LAYOUT AND EQUIPMENT.

3 pp. Natl. Recreation Assoc. MB-30. New York, Natl. Recreation Assoc. 1947.

RECREATION—A PROBLEM OF GRASS ROOTS.

29 pp. New York, Natl. Recreation Assoc. 1948.

RECREATION IN SMALL COMMUNITIES.

5 pp. Natl. Recreation Assoc. MB-152. New York, Natl. Recreation Assoc. 1948.

RECREATION LEADERSHIP—A COMMUNITY NECESSITY.

13 pp. New York, Natl. Recreation Assoc. 1944.

STANDARDS FOR NEIGHBORHOOD RECREATION AREAS AND FACILITIES.

16 pp. New York, Natl. Recreation Assoc. 1943.

THESE THINGS WE TRIED.

JESS AND JEAN OGDEN. 432 pp. Charlottesville, Univ. Va. Press. 1948.

TOMORROW'S COMMUNITY.

IOWA STATE COLLEGE OF AGRICULTURE AND MECHANIC ARTS. Ames, Iowa State Col. 1940.

THE TOWN TAKES A JOB.

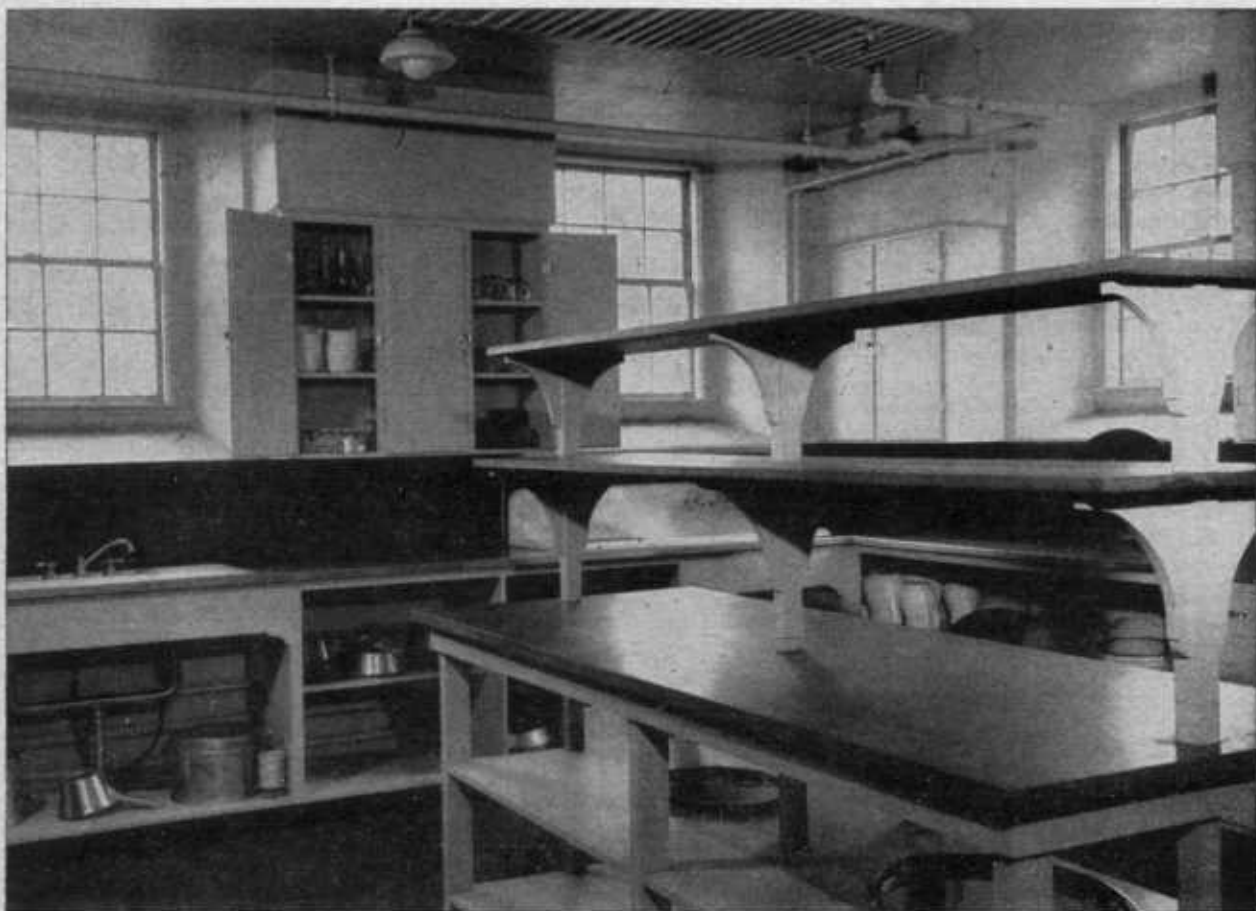
29 pp. New York, Natl. Recreation Assoc. 1946.

WHAT CAN WE DO IN OUR TOWN?

11 pp. Natl. Recreation Assoc. MP-157. New York, Natl. Recreation Assoc. 1947.

WHAT IS INCLUDED IN A LOCAL YEAR-ROUND RECREATION PROGRAM.

5 pp. Natl. Recreation Assoc. MB-105. New York, Natl. Recreation Assoc. 1931.



A kitchen of adequate size and well-equipped in a church or community hall can add substantially to the recreational life of any locality.

SOURCES OF INFORMATION

NEXT TO KNOWING the answer to a question is knowing where to go to find it. The extension recreation specialist, if your State employs one, is a good source of information. The National Recreation Association also may be able to help you. The association maintains both a field service and a correspondence service for the entire country in almost every phase of recreation.

The names and addresses of other agencies that are good sources of information are listed below:

National Private Organizations

American Association for Health, Physical Education, and Recreation, 1201 Sixteenth Street NW., Washington 6, D. C.

American Camping Association, 343 South Dearborn Street, Chicago 4, Ill.

American Federation of Arts, 1262 New Hampshire Avenue NW., Washington 6, D. C.

American Library Association, 50 East Huron Street, Chicago 11, Ill.

American Music Conference, 332 South Michigan Avenue, Chicago 4, Ill.

American National Red Cross, Seventeenth and D Streets NW., Washington 13, D. C.

American Nature Association, 1214 Sixteenth Street NW., Washington 6, D. C.

American Youth Hostels, 6 East Thirty-ninth Street, New York 16, N. Y.

Association for Childhood Education, 1200 Fifteenth Street NW., Washington 5, D. C.

Athletic Institute, 209 South State Street, Chicago 4, Ill.

Boy Scouts of America, 2 Park Avenue, New York 16, N. Y.

Boys' Clubs of America, 381 Fourth Avenue, New York 16, N. Y.

Camp Fire Girls, 16 East 48th St., New York 17, N. Y.

Cooperative Recreation Service, Delaware, Ohio.

Girl Scouts of the United States of America, 155 East Forty-fourth Street, New York 17, N. Y.

Methodist Church, Board of Education, 810 Broadway, Nashville 2, Tenn.

National Board of Y.W.C.A.'s, 600 Lexington Avenue, New York 22, N. Y.

National Catholic Rural Life Conference, 3801 Grand Avenue, Des Moines 12, Iowa.

National Congress of Parents and Teachers, 600 South Michigan Avenue, Chicago 5, Ill.

National Council of Y.M.C.A.'s, 291 Broadway, New York 7, N. Y.

National Education Association, 1201 Sixteenth Street NW., Washington 6, D. C.

National Jewish Welfare Board, 145 East Thirty-second Street, New York 16, N. Y.

National Recreation Association, 315 Fourth Avenue, New York 10, N. Y.

National Safety Council, 425 North Michigan Avenue, Chicago 11, Ill.

United Christian Youth Movement, 203 North Wabash Avenue, Chicago 1, Ill.

The national headquarters of your own church.

State-Government Agencies

Many services are available from State agencies if you know where to look for them. The State college of agriculture and the State university have departments where you can ask for help. They may be able to furnish speakers or printed materials, or to give you advice.

A number of State extension services employ recreation specialists. One of the main responsibilities of these specialists is to give assistance in developing recreation programs.

Other State agencies that may be helpful have names that vary from State to State. But you may be reminded of them by mention of their fields of interest: Park, forest, fish and game, and conservation agencies usually have areas of land that are available for groups to visit and enjoy. These agencies may also have films, printed materials, and even speakers to assist you in your program plans. Highway departments publish interesting maps and frequently administer roadside parks that are heavily used by rural groups. Many State libraries operate bookmobiles and other types of traveling libraries that serve people when other library facilities are not available—even at camp sometimes. State departments of education or instruction have many services helpful to leaders. Several States have youth commissions. A few States have recreation commissions. You may get some help from your State planning board, if you have one.

Remember to be specific when writing for assistance. This is particularly important when you write to State agencies that have large programs. Express your questions clearly. If you do not find what you are looking for in one agency, try another. If you know where to ask, you can get a great deal of help from your State government.

Federal-Government Agencies

Many agencies of the Federal Government have programs that relate to various aspects of recreation. Some of the publications of these agencies are listed in this bulletin under "suggested reading" at the end of each section.

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Extension workers can help—

INDIVIDUALS:

- Develop some activity or interest outside their regular work.
- Know and appreciate the values of the recreational things they do.
- Appreciate the recreational activities of others.

FAMILIES:

- Do some things together, at home and away from home.
- Plan together first.
- Provide outdoor and indoor recreation facilities and materials at home.
- Develop some special family customs and traditions.
- Help children to have constructive recreation activities and habits for home and beyond.

ORGANIZATIONS OR GROUPS:

- Include some recreation or fun activity at every meeting.
- Have one or two special activities during the year.
- Spread leadership and other responsibilities.
- Get some of the leaders to recreation leadership-training institutes.
- Cooperate with other groups to help advance recreation for the community as a whole.

COMMUNITIES:

- Set up a community council or other plan for community teamwork.
- Analyze the recreation needs and resources of the community and find out what is now being done; then build from this.
- Plan to provide adequate recreation for all ages, but especially for youth and young people.
- Have a good community building or other meeting place available for community use.
- Have at least one or two special community-wide events annually that include recreation and community life.