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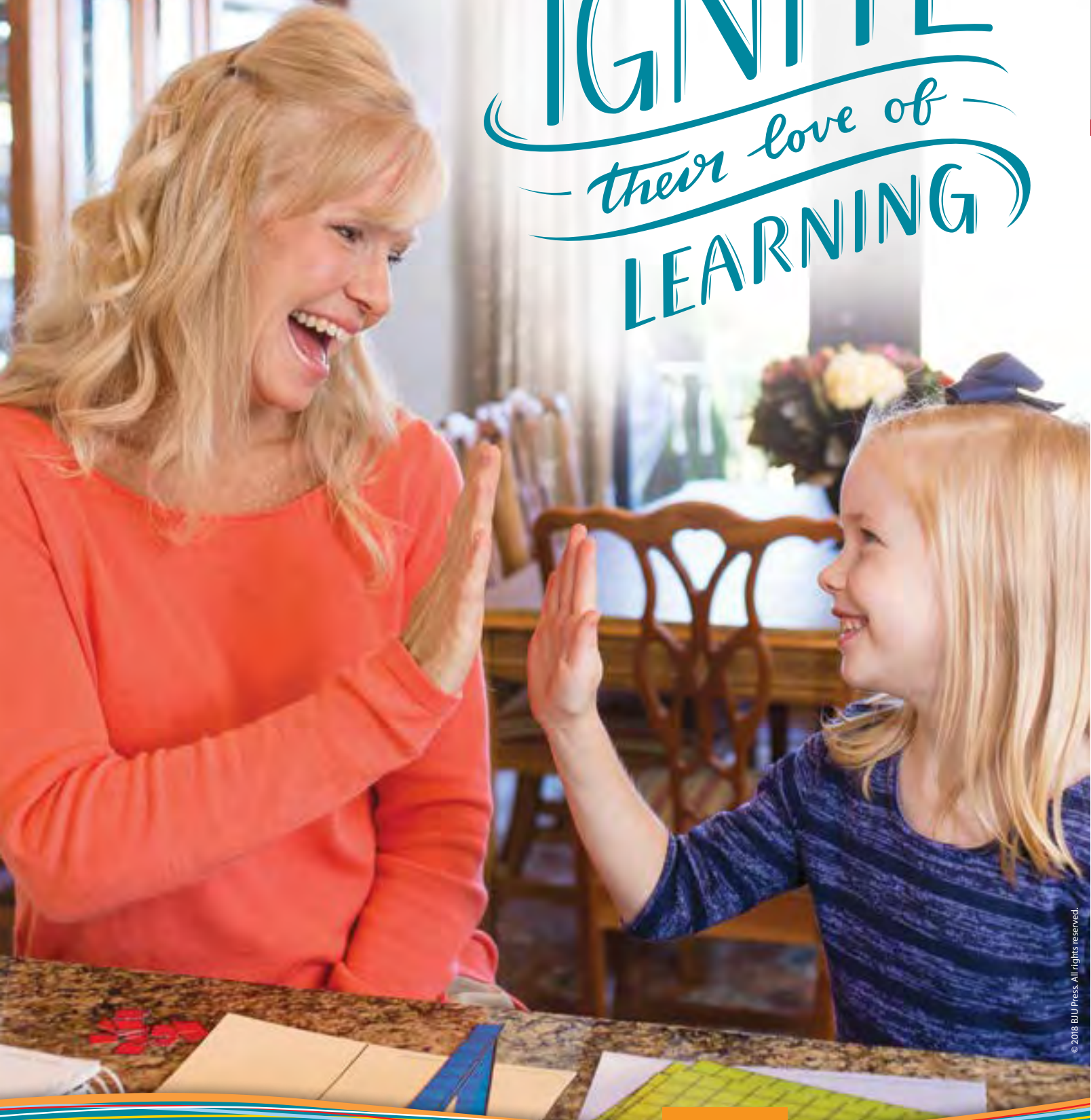
TEXAS
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SUMMER 2018 ★ VOLUME 22 ★ ISSUE 3

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The articles in this magazine reflect the freedom of home educators in Texas to choose from a wide variety of homeschool philosophies and teaching methods. Opinions and attitudes expressed in articles do not necessarily reflect the beliefs of the Texas Home School Coalition Association. THSC does not endorse or advocate any one method or philosophy. The board encourages all home educators to seek God's will in determining what is best for them, their schools and their students. Publication of advertisements does not signify endorsement of items or services offered.



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Publications Manager | Donna Schillinger

Managing Editor | Shannon Kingsbury

Contributors | Christina Belbas, Nathan Bryant, Mollin Luxeder, Anna McFarland, Maxine Mitchell, Laura Yates

Advertising | sales@thsc.org

Graphic Design | Lisa Rahon lisarahon.myportfolio.com

Texas Home School Coalition
PO Box 6747, Lubbock, TX 79493 staff@thsc.org
(p) 806.744.4441 (f) 806.744.4446 THSC.org



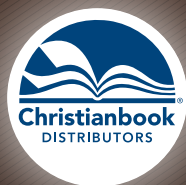
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The summer is a wonderful and much-needed lull from the busy rhythms of the school year. Hopefully, you attended one of our Called to Teach THSC Conventions in May and were able to purchase your 2018-19 school year curriculum in our Exhibit Hall.

Others of you may have graduated your last homeschool student in May and may be looking forward to the fall with mixed feelings. If that describes you, "Life After Homeschooling: Tips for a Smooth Transition," on page 40 was written with you in mind.

Even when all your kids have become homeschooling alumni, we hope you will still consider yourself a homeschooling family. You are certainly part of our family—a group with a common goal of *Keeping Texas Families Free*.

As one big family, we experienced significant victory during the primary and runoff elections this past spring. Throughout the state, dozens of pro-family candidates beat their opponents with your help. During

the spring elections, liberal unions and education groups targeted pro-homeschooling candidates. However, the homeschool community answered the call to action by volunteering and voting for pro-family and pro-homeschooling candidates. Consequently, establishment Republicans didn't gain any new seats in the Texas legislature.

Defending conservative seats during the primary election was formidable, and we are not out of the woods yet. Liberal special interest groups are preparing to do battle in the November election by funding Democrats to either defeat conservatives or at least cause them to break the bank defending their seats.

Nationwide, those opposing liberty are becoming more organized, and Texas is on their hit list. Groups such as RunForSomething.net are supporting liberal candidates to run for offices at every level of government. Now is not the time to be complacent or sit idly by. The conservative movement needs you and your family to act today. As we saw in the case of our good friend State Rep. Briscoe Cain, some elections can be won with as few as 30 votes. Homeschool families can make a difference, and you can be that difference.

Homeschooling moms, dads, alumni and students, we need your boots on the ground to get pro-family candidates elected in November. One of the most effective ways of earning votes is by campaign volunteers calling, knocking on doors and working the polls. Please visit THSC.org/OperationMobilize to get plugged into a local campaign. THSC has endorsed candidates all over the state.

Whether it's back to school or time to embark on a new adventure, I hope THSC will be a part of your future this fall. But for now, enjoy the summer. ■

Inside This Issue . . .

A good fit for rooftops or homes with a privacy fence, your kids can get up close and personal, experiencing firsthand the process by which bees produce honey and then they can eat that honey on their biscuits!

Sarah Thomsen p. 14

As I reflected on the oil change experience, I became anxious about all we had not yet taught our kids—things that weren't in the textbooks.

Brian D. Shepherd p. 18

Kristen reflects on how growing up in a home-schooled family helped her and Bethany to find the courage to pursue this ministry, in addition to "being willing to be unique, being willing to stand out, being willing to be different."

Mollin Luxeder p. 28

The all-encompassing job of homeschooling sharpens a variety of skills and traits valued in the workplace and your resume should adequately express this.

Kathryn Streeter p. 45

Reader Comments

"After 25 years of homeschooling, our fourth and last child just started college this past fall. It was a (mostly) glorious adventure and I wanted to thank you for standing by us with the "Home Educator [Quarterly]" magazine. I was encouraged, informed and strengthened by the information included and the

fact that the Texas Home School Coalition was watching our backs."

The Clayton Family

"I never believed that my vote counted before, but after reading THSC publications and articles, I will now be voting and watching your site."

Kimberly B.

"I contacted my local office for the Department of Motor Vehicles and they would not help me find the verification of enrollment for my homeschooled student to apply for a permit. I called Texas Home School Coalition, and they were able to show me how to find the document!"

Brooke P.

Editor's Note:

Visit THSC.org/Homeschool-Drivers-Ed-Texas

Praise for Called to Teach THSC Homeschool Conventions

"This is my fourth year attending THSC conference and I always leave encouraged with a new amount of applicable knowledge to add to our homeschool experience."



"I will continue to attend THSC Convention yearly because it is always encouraging and uplifting. I love getting my hands on all styles of curriculum in one place. Being surrounded by like-minded people is just more confirmation that we are on the best path God has intended for our family."

"The Conventions allow for fellowship of other homeschoolers. My kids love to be around others who are homeschooled. My husband likes the hands-on approach of knowing what we are getting in our curriculum. I love the socializing and

getting to know the people who I get my teaching from. Did I mention the support? Fellowship allows for such great support and that is what the Convention has for our family."

"I enjoy the fact that THSC offers kids/teens convention at an affordable rate. It makes it easier for parents to shop around without the little ones."

"Called to Teach is a definite must for every homeschool parent! With experienced speakers who are so encouraging and informative, you will gain much-needed wisdom. Do not neglect this tool that can be used to guide your homeschoolers in the right directions. Whether researching curriculum or in need of encouragement, you will get it all here."



"Each year I attend the Convention to speak with vendors on how best to utilize the programs that I've purchased and to add to what I'm currently using. Each year I come away with more than I bargained for. This year, for the first time, I took my 10-year-old daughter with me. We were blessed from the time we walked through the door. The time we shared together, the speakers that poured into us, the vendors that caught our attention, the spark they put in her eye for subjects that she's currently struggling with, and the personal connection from our experience at Encouragement by Chocolate—that evening was priceless. Thank you for creating a venue that truly does meet the needs of those who attend." ■



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City House, Country Mouse

Homesteading in the City

By Sarah Thomsen

I lived in the city for most of my childhood. Chasing ducks and chickens, eating sour-dough bread, and making cheese were nonetheless part of growing up in our little house on a quarter acre.

Have you always wanted to live a more self-sustaining life and teach your kids homesteading skills, but never thought it possible in your urban home? Let's explore the options.

Gardening

Whether you live on a half-acre plot or have next to no land, you can grow an assortment of herbs, veggies and fruits; save money for your family; and enjoy the rewards of eating homegrown food. Your family can choose from a variety of different gardening techniques, such as:

“Back to Eden” Gardening

We first tried this method on our quarter-acre plot in the middle of the city. The small garden with the quaint fence Daddy built surrounding it provided us with some fresh veggies and an opportunity for us kids to get our hands in the dirt. We rarely needed to water due to the water-retaining properties of the wood chips. Check out the free Back to Eden documentary online (BackToEdenFilm.com) to learn more about this method of gardening.

Container Gardening

With this method you don’t need a traditional garden at all. We planted tomatoes in buckets on our porch, and when it froze outside we brought them indoors, creating a transportable garden!

Square Foot Gardening

Our friends gardened this way and their backyard housed several raised-bed gardens bursting with herbs and veggies. Using a grid, you divide the garden into square feet with the potential to produce more fruits, veggies and herbs than single row gardens. Visit SquareFootGardening.org for a more detailed explanation.

Microgreens

These only take about one to three weeks from seed to table. You can grow microgreens in a container on your windowsill or grow large batches in trays as I did when I sold them at a farmers market. We have enjoyed many meals with these tiny greens laden with flavor and nutrition. Learn more with these books available through Amazon: “Microgreens: How to Grow Nature’s Own Superfood” by Fionna Hill or “Microgreen Garden: Indoor Grower’s Guide to Gourmet Greens” by Mark Mathew Braunstein. Seeds can be purchased online at TrueLeafMarket.com and Baker Creek Heirloom Seeds (RareSeeds.com).



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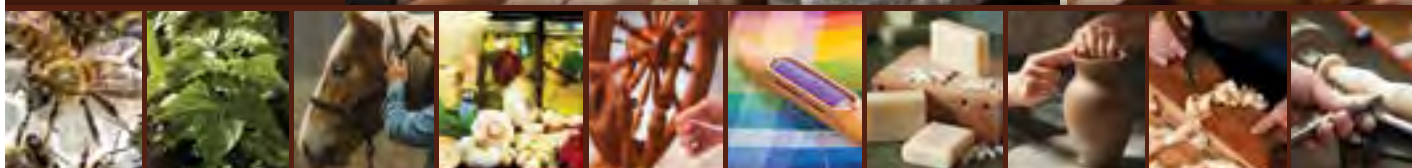
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Photo by Abigail Thomsen

Baking and Cooking from Scratch

As a little girl, I remember eating Mom's freshly-made sour-dough bread and sipping chicken broth out of our ceramic tea cups. On several occasions, we stocked our freezer with grass-fed beef bones, steaks and hamburger from a cow share. My mom's "Nourishing Traditions" (also available on Amazon) cookbook was well worn.

To ready your own home bakery, buy grains in bulk, fill buckets with them, and grind them yourself. (Kitchen Aid offers a milling attachment for their popular stand mixers.) Make your own biscuit, pancake and seasoning mixes as opposed to buying ones from the store. Use grass-fed beef bones or leftover chicken carcasses to make nutritious broth for your family's meals. Find local sources of grass-fed meat, eggs and dairy at EatWild.com.

Farm Animals in the City

Yes, you can own farm animals in a city!

Chickens

When you think of raising farm animals in the city, chickens may be the first thing that comes to mind. Kids love them, the hens are relatively quiet, and they pay rent with eggs. As little youngsters, we got five Barred Rock chickens, choosing this breed because they continue laying eggs in the winter, averaging around 200 eggs per chicken per year. They lived in the shingle-roofed coop my big sis and I helped build and were our beloved pets.

Ducks

My siblings loved their feathery friends. They were great playmates, entertaining and fun to carry around. In our city backyard, the ducks swam in a kiddie pool and they loved it when it rained, splashing in puddles and getting muddy!

Depending on the breed, ducks can produce more eggs each year than chickens. Duck eggs are larger, have a thicker shell that keeps them fresher longer, have a higher fat and vitamin D content, and make for fluffier baked goods. If your city's ordinances allow keeping chickens or ducks, either feathery friend can be a worthwhile investment.

Explore more about raising chickens and ducks at BackyardChickens.com. Amazon also carries books on this topic, such as "Homemade Living: Keeping Chickens with Ashley English: All You Need to Know to Care for a Happy, Healthy Flock" by Ashley English or "Duck Eggs Daily: Raising Happy, Healthy Ducks...Naturally" by Lisa Steele.

Duck eggs are larger, have a thicker shell that keeps them fresher longer, have a higher fat and vitamin D content, and make for fluffier baked goods.



Photo by Sarah Thomsen



Photo by Abigail Thomsen


Cheesemaking

When I was six years old, I watched a dairy farmer make cheese and felt the curds squeak between my teeth as I ate them. Then at age 12, I chose cheesemaking as a school project. I learned from the book "Home Dairy with Ashley English: All You Need to Know to Make Cheese, Yogurt, Butter & More" to make mozzarella, paneer, queso blanco and ricotta. Cheesemaking can be simple!

Visit CulturesforHealth.com to find cheesemaking ingredients and supplies.


Canning

On a sunny afternoon, two of my sisters and I visited our neighbor's country home to learn how to can pickles. We prepared the ingredients, simmered, filled, wiped, boiled and more. After a few hours, we left with numerous jars of canned pickles, waiting to seal with their signature "pops" of the lids.



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Of course, you don't have to live in the country to have a stash of homemade strawberry jelly or pickles sitting on your pantry shelves. Canning supplies are sold in grocery stores and online. For the fruits and veggies you don't have to have an overflowing garden; you can get them from your local farmer's market or the grocery store, or search your area for a you-pick-em fruit grower.

For a guide to canning fruits and veggies, visit FreshPreserving.com and its Canning 101 section.

Meat Rabbits

Rabbits seem easy enough to take care of, multiply fast, and could provide a relatively inexpensive new meat for an urban family. The butchering is some of the easiest to do, and rabbit waste makes excellent fertilizer for a garden. Since they require little space and have a quiet nature, rabbits are ideal for raising in urban homesteads.

Search "The Guide to Raising and Breeding Rabbits for Meat" on MotherEarthNews.com for more information on rabbit raising.

Keeping Bees

Other than the initial startup cost and groundwork, the bees do most of the

work of beekeeping. A good fit for rooftops or homes with a privacy fence, your kids can get up close and personal, experiencing firsthand the process by which bees produce honey and then they can eat that honey on their biscuits! Start at the beekeeping page on OutdoorPlace.org or buy "Keeping Bees with Ashley English: All You Need to Know to Tend Hives, Harvest Honey and More" from Amazon. On YouTube, user Walls Bee Man regularly posts videos on urban beekeeping.

Soapmaking

You know those soaps you could just sit and smell all day? No need to pay top dollar for them if you can make them! Make basic soaps for everyday use or fancy soaps for giving away. Only three ingredients are needed to go through the saponification process: fat or oil of some kind, water and lye. You can add in extra ingredients such as ground coffee beans, oatmeal, essential oils, natural dyes and spices for scent and color. Lye can be safely handled with the proper precautions, but if you don't want to handle it, you could make soap using the "melt and pour" method. Additionally, try making your own lotions, chapstick, salves and other body care products with resources like WellnessMama.com.

Additional Resources

"Homesteading for Beginners: Volume Four" is a gold mine for anyone interested in home-centered gardening, farming and crafting. In addition to soapmaking, this affordable six-DVD set available through Amazon also includes guides for gardening, canning, raising rabbits and more.

We were never "super" homesteaders in the city, and even now that we've moved to the country, we still aren't. But regardless of our skill levels, we have fun and inevitably learn a lot about history, science, nutrition, economics and more as we experiment with heritage skills. With a little creativity, you can have fun with your kids and reap the benefits of a homesteading life wherever you live. ■



Sarah Thomsen lives on her family's small Texas homestead and is the second oldest of eight children. She loves Jesus, her family, and making music with others. Visit her family's website at: HomeschoolBuilt.com.



CLUBS, EVENTS AND CLASSES FOR THE COUNTRY MOUSE IN YOU

Texas 4-H

Take part in projects with rabbits, poultry, plants, gardening, food and nutrition, and have the opportunity to exhibit in your county's fair.

Texas4-H.org

Texas Beekeepers Association

Meet with beekeepers near you to become educated about bees and their care.

TexasBeekeepers.org

Quilter Guilds and Shows

Meet with quilters, hear guest speakers, take part in show-and-tells and more. Check to see what the quilting guild near you offers to its members.

QuiltGuilds.com/texas.htm

Homestead Fair

Come to Waco in November for two days of exposure to the homesteading way of life with demonstrations, seminars, make-it-yourself projects in beekeeping, cheesemaking, breadmaking, gardening and more activities. Kids also enjoy hay rides, a petting pen and more.

HomesteadFair.com

Mother Earth News Fair

Attend workshops on subjects such as cheesemaking, soapmaking and chickens. Walk through a huge exhibit hall and be exposed to homesteading hacks and self-sustaining products. Take part in hands-on workshops and more in this winter/early spring event in Belton.

MotherEarthNewsFair.com

Ploughshare Institute for Sustainable Culture

This website offers free video courses on canning and preserving, beekeeping basics, gardening, cheesemaking and more. Or if you live near Waco, register for an in-person class. Classes may be from a half-day to 12 days long.

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Want Backyard Chickens But Your City Says No?

Here's a Way to Change City Regulations!

by Barry Klein

It can be disheartening when a city or county regulation gets in the way of our hopes and dreams, especially with something as benign as raising chickens or ducks, operating a lemonade stand or baking specialty cakes at home for commercial sale. Does your dream have to die? Not necessarily.

Here is a path to changing restrictive ordinances:

- Approach local officeholders to request a change in the law. If you are met with indifference, the next step is to form a coalition.
- Write a resolution that can be adopted by local groups such as political clubs and civic associations. Also write a short article explaining the problem. Try to get the article published in a local paper.
- Change the law yourself! You can do this if you live in a Texas city with a population of 5,000 or more, so long as it has adopted a charter which makes it “home rule.”
- In the more than 350 Texas home rule cities, you can circulate a petition to force a charter amendment referendum. Typically, only five percent of registered voters must sign the petition. A team of six can collect over 100 signatures per day. Even if you just collect signatures on weekends, you can gather over 800 signatures in a month. In most cities with a population under 25,000, that is enough to put a proposition on the ballot.
- Texas law allows 180 days (six months) to complete a petition drive. You have plenty of time to finish a drive in larger cities. You may also pay for voter mailings or hire people to collect signatures. This is necessary in the four largest cities of Texas, where at least 20,000 signatures must be collected.
- You may collect email addresses and phone numbers on your petition. Petition organizers may use this contact information to request donations, recruit volunteers and get out the vote—not only for your proposition, but also for city council races.
- Citizen-initiated charter amendments have been used to remove fluoride from city water; limit growth in city spending; ban red light cameras; kill needless capital projects; and, in three Texas cities, have stopped attempts to impose zoning restrictions.

When rebuffed, take the law into your own hands—and change it! ■

Barry Klein is president of the Houston Property Rights Association. He has 35 years of experience as a civic activist, including participation in 27 petition drives. Contact Barry at 713-224-4144 to receive information about state rules and guidelines for citizen-initiated charter amendments.

Photo by Abigail Thomsen



3 Ways to Balance Teaching Special Needs and Typically-Developing Students

By Mary Winfield

Every home educator has so much to juggle, but homeschooling a student with special needs alongside typically-developing siblings is much more of a challenge. While some struggles may never go away, there are some ways to get a better flow going in your homeschool day while still meeting the academic and personal needs of all your children.

Create a Schedule and Set Expectations

When students (especially special needs students) know what to expect, they are more likely to reach their goals for the day. Plan when you are going to work with each student and what you will be working on. This will help the students know when they need to focus on their work with you, and will help you focus on working with them rather than worrying about the next lesson.

Additionally, prepare self-driven activities for your students to complete while you work with others. Format the activities the best way for your special needs learner. Watch Autism

Adventures “Binder Schedule Video” on YouTube for additional ideas.

Give Siblings Teaching Responsibilities

The great thing about having students with different interests and learning at different levels is that they can help you teach! Use the strengths of one student to assist with the struggles of another. This helps you manage several students at once, allows the “substitute teacher” to feel important, and helps foster a culture of learning and support within your family. This type of teaching can also help students with special needs learn to interact appropriately in social situations and improve their overall communication. Because students have a wide variety of strengths and interests, you can usually find a topic for each sibling to teach—not just to the special needs learner, but to the whole class.

Use Lessons That Work on Multiple Levels

It is possible to structure lessons to teach students on multiple levels at the same time. For example, if you take a simple science experiment, you can engage one student at a lower level, teach the basic scientific method and record data with a middle learner, and then delve into the chemical properties with an advanced student. This works for a variety of subjects. There needs to be some one-on-one guidance, but the basic lesson can be taught to the kids as a group.

Taking a little bit of time to plan out your day, helping your students become the teachers in some subjects, and making lessons work for the whole family are time- and energy-saving techniques that benefit both teacher and students. ■

Mary Winfield worked in special education before deciding to homeschool her own children (one with special needs). On top of homeschooling and motherhood, she is a freelance writer, works with SPED Homeschool and blogs about special needs homeschooling at GrowingAsTheyGrow.com.

Teach Them Life Skills While There's Still Time

By *Brian D. Shepherd*

Shortly before my children graduated from our homeschool, I took my daughter to have the oil changed in her 2005 Chevrolet Cobalt. As we sat in the lounge, I talked her through what the mechanics were doing. I predicted that an employee would come into the lounge in a few minutes and tell her that she also needed to change her air filter or windshield wiper blades, and that sometimes it is a good idea to do just that, but other times it is not.

As if on cue, a man came into the lounge with the air filter and told us that she might want to change it since it was a little dirty. She looked at me as if I had set this up, not fully believing that I had predicted it so accurately. I politely told the man that the air filter did not seem dirty enough to change it. After he left, I explained to my daughter that the employees are trained to try to upsell additional products or services, but that she could save money by buying an air filter and replacing it herself like I had learned to do.

As I reflected on the oil change experience, I became anxious about all we had not yet taught our kids—things that weren't in the textbooks. If my wife and I were to teach our children everything that we wanted them to know, they wouldn't graduate until age 45! But since graduation was approaching, I decided to require a new course for our homeschool: Epistemology 101, a course designed to help differentiate truth from opinion. I reasoned this skill would be applicable to everything from deciding whether a mechanic was shooting straight to discerning the truth behind worldviews.





As I developed lesson plans in epistemology, I started thinking about life skills that would help my children. As a father, I saw a last-chance opportunity to share wisdom while they were still under my authority and were required to engage with the subject matter in order to graduate.

More ideas came to me as time passed, and I added them to the curriculum. We completed some of the topics in one day, while others took two or three weeks. We went through the entire program in about five months, spending up to 45 minutes on a topic on average per day. My hands-on time was approximately 10 minutes per day for discussion, plus the prep time.

I couldn't dedicate long daily stretches to homeschooling, but I felt great about teaching this class, which I believed was highly practical for successful adulthood.

Dad, if you haven't claimed a subject area in your homeschool yet, check out my epistemology course and maybe it will spur some ideas of your own. Or feel free to use it as written! Note: All books listed are available at Amazon.com.

Biblical logic. Read selected chapters from "Biblical Logic in Theory & Practice" by Joel McDurmon, "The Ultimate Proof of Creation" by Dr. Jason Lisle, and my own book, "Proving the Age of the Earth."

Understanding Scripture as inspired by God. Read selected chapters from "Defending the King James Bible" by Dr. D.A. Waite, "Forever Settled" by Dr. Jack Moorman, and "Proving the Age of the Earth."

The problem with public schools. Read excerpts from "The Harsh Truth About Public Schools" by Bruce Shortt,

"Crimes of the Educators" by Samuel Blumenfeld and Alex Newman, "None Dare Call It Education" by John A. Stormer, and "The Deliberate Dumbing Down of America" by Charlotte Iserbyt.

The dangers of illegal narcotics and other addictive chemicals, drugs and alcohol. Visit ProjectKnow.com.

The risks of sexually transmitted diseases and the biblical view of sex and marriage. See internet resources like Probe.org (search "Safe Sex and the Facts - A Christian Perspective"). Discuss (my wife handled the discussion with my daughter).

The dangers of depending on smartphones excessively. Internet article: "No, You're Probably Not Addicted to Your Smartphone, but You Might Use it Too Much" by Mikaela Shannon.



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The importance of basic hygiene, including washing hands and household cleaning. See internet articles.

Household maintenance such as plumbing. See “100 Home Repairs You Can Do Yourself” at FamilyHandyman.com.

General automobile maintenance. Discuss tire wear, oil-change frequency, brakes, tuneups, the spare tire, lights, watching the gas gauge, jump-starting a car, and the importance of an ice scraper. Refer to the owner’s manual for your vehicle and check out do-it-yourself (DIY) videos on YouTube (such as the Scotty Kilmer channel).

Changing oil on an automobile. Take a field trip, or teach how to DIY.

The importance of automobile insurance. See internet articles, discuss Texas law regarding liability insurance and

have a phone conversation with your insurance agent. Also see internet articles for statistics on accidents and fatalities related to teen drivers.

Homeowners and renters insurance. See internet articles, discuss, and talk with your insurance agent.

Dad, if you haven’t claimed a subject area in your homeschool yet, check out my epistemology course and maybe it will spur some ideas of your own.

Online Exclusive: Sure they’re smart, but are they ready for life? See 50 life skills your student needs to know in their first year on their own at THSC.org/life-skills.

Budgeting. Visit OneCentAtATime.com. Set up an investment account with a local financial advisor.

Debit and credit card issues. Read “Use Your Credit Cards Wisely” at MappingYourFuture.org.

Tax returns (*eyes were glazed over on this one*). The best time to teach this is at tax time. For sample forms, visit IRS.gov.

Opening a checking account. Visit the local bank.

Sharpening a knife with a whetstone or a grinder. Model and practice.

Firearms safety and experience at a shooting range. Have multiple discussions, take a field trip to a shooting range, and visit NSSF.org and click on “Safety.”



Interviewing for a job. Role play, see internet articles and watch internet videos.

Vaccinations. Read excerpts from “Dissolving Illusions,” by Dr. Suzanne Humphries and Roman Bystryanyk. Also see internet articles.

Setting five-year goals. Discuss and visit Fire-UpToday.com/Goal-Setting-Toolkit. ■



Brian Shepherd is a former homeschool dad (his children both graduated in November 2017), Sunday school teacher, certified financial planner and lifetime member of THSC. He lives in Garland with his wife, Phyllis. Brian has a bachelor of science in chemistry from Texas A&M University and a master's in Christian education and biblical apologetics from Institute for Creation Research. He has one published book: “Proving the Age of the Earth” (2017). Email him at TheShepherdFlock@gmail.com.

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The Dangerous Ideology That Ended a U.K. Toddler's Life

By Stephen Howsley

Family freedoms once again entered the spotlight with the sad story of Alfie Evans, an almost two-year-old toddler from Liverpool, England, who suffered from an unidentified neurological degenerative disorder. Doctors and hospital staff who “treated” Alfie decided to remove him from life support without the consent and against the wishes of Alfie’s parents.

While this might seem like an extreme example of family rights being usurped, it is real and it is happening just a few time zones away. And if you think that this mindset could never jump the pond, you should know that similar situations have occurred right here in Texas. Medical professionals have placed do-not-resuscitate (DNR) orders in patients’ files, requiring that treatment be ended against the wishes of patients’ families.

THSC objects to DNR orders being placed in patients’ files without consent. We believe that families should have the ultimate right to make decisions about the well-being of their loved ones.

THSC has fought in several past state legislative sessions to ban hos-



pitals and doctors from placing DNR orders in a patient’s files without family consent. Working closely with our friends at Texas Right to Life, we defended legislation to restore family freedoms in regards to making end-of-life decisions.

While THSC is primarily focused on homeschooling and education issues during the legislative session, our team constantly seeks ways to advance family freedoms in all areas of the law. Each legislative session, THSC reviews thousands of bills to ensure that family freedoms are protected, and where possible, expanded.

Our right to homeschool is based on the foundation of family freedoms, and any threat to these freedoms also endangers our choice of how to educate our children and our ability to defend our children’s lives when they need us most.

Won’t you stand with us today and in 2019 at the Texas Legislature in advocating for family freedoms? Visit THSC.org/Political-Action to learn how THSC is *Keeping Texas Families Free*. ■

Stephen Howsley serves as public policy analyst for Texas Home School Coalition.

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Standing Tall, Standing Out **The Baird Family Answering God's Call**

By Mollin Luxeder

Meet the Bairds, a family large in number, ambition and stature. With eight children—Michael, Kristen, Bethany, Stephen, Ellissa, Timothy, Rebekah and Suzanna (and almost all of them over six feet tall)—the Bairds seemed destined to stand out.

From left: Michael Sr., Heidi, Michael Jr. and his wife Jamie, Zack and Kristen Clark, Bethany, Stephen, Ellissa, Timothy, Rebekah, and Suzanna.

Photo by Baird Family



Heidi and Michael Sr.

Photo by Baird Family

- Timothy turned his passion for film into a media business, MershonMedia
- For the past two years, Rebekah has been writing on “Hello Modesty,” a fashion blog
- Suzanna created her own art business, Venturesome Arts
- Kristen and Bethany teamed up to start their own ministry, GirlDefined.

The Bairs truly love being together, making fun little videos as a family and acting out adventures outside. They have developed deep relationships which have been the foundation of Kristen’s and Bethany’s collaboration in ministry.

Whether at home or while working at The Store at FEAST (a popular homeschool bookstore), contact with people of different ages and personalities (versus spending all day with same-age peers) has made them comfortable with public presentations and promoting their ministry.

GirlDefined

Founded in 2014, GirlDefined was born of Kristen’s and Bethany’s passion for ministry and longing to encourage young women with the timeless truths of God’s word regarding beauty, love, relationships and a girl’s purpose.

Parents Michael and Heidi were among the pioneers of the homeschooling movement in Texas during the late 1980s, daring to be different despite homeschooling’s tenuous legal standing with the landmark *Leeper* case still in adjudication at that time.

But they were determined to disciple their children, to shape their characters and to raise them to be godly men and women. They saw homeschooling as the best way to accomplish that. “Our parents started it out of the heart,” says Kristen.

Bethany adds, “God was really leading them in this direction.”

Impact of Homeschooling

Michael Baird Sr. owned his own business and frequently involved his kids in its operation. Through working with their father, the children learned some valuable life skills and gained great work experience. Blessed with an entrepreneurial mindset like their father, many of the Baird kids have taken their own interests to the next level, turning them into businesses or simply sharing them with others.

Bethany Baird and Kristen Clark.



Photo by GirlDefined Ministries

Kristen says, “Our mission is helping modern girls live out God’s design as women.”

Kristen reflects on how growing up in a homeschooled family helped her and Bethany to find the courage to pursue this ministry, in addition to “being willing to be unique, being willing to stand out, being willing to be different.”

“When you homeschool, you’re doing it because you want to do things differently,” Bethany says. “Our entire ministry is extremely countercultural.”

The sisters can point to other aspects of their homeschool experience that proved beneficial in their current

work, such as taking initiative and self-managing.

Additionally, the tight-knit Baird family (all of whom still live in San Antonio) supports GirlDefined by creating videos and other design work, organizing conferences and managing the business.

“We would not be here today without our family—our greatest supporters over the years,” says Bethany. “We are so blessed to have a family that is so talented and willing to jump in and give of their talents.”

Homeschooling gave the Baird children much more than an education.

Having learned that their identity is found in Christ, Kristen and Bethany had the confidence to launch a ministry. Homeschooling afforded the Bairds the opportunity to pursue their passions and share their talents with others while developing deep relationships with each other. ■



Mollin Luxeder is a homeschool graduate and the oldest of seven children. She enjoys spending time with family, traveling, reading, writing, history and soccer.

From left: Ellissa, Kristen (Clark), Bethany, Rebekah and Suzanna.





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Bethany Baird & Kristen Clark.



Photo by Baird Family

GirlDefined

GirlDefined strives to help young girls live out God's design for women. Bethany Baird and Kristen Baird Clark—founders, sisters and lifelong best friends—blog, vlog, speak and mentor on the topics of feminism, femininity, guys, relationships, gender, culture, fashion and more. In addition to having published several books and devotional products, GirlDefined hosts an annual conference in San Antonio. To learn more about this year's conference, Love Defined, August 3-4, 2018, visit GirlDefined.com. ■

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TELESCOPES & EYEBEAMS: THREE INVESTIGATIONS INTO VISUAL PERCEPTION

By Kyle Holton



The background of the page is a composite image. The top half shows a view of Earth from space, with swirling white and blue clouds and a bright sun on the left. The bottom half shows a flock of birds flying against a sunset sky with orange and yellow clouds. A dark, silhouetted horizon line is at the very bottom.

We take for granted our capacity to see the world. But how does that actually happen? When we look out our windows and see a brilliant sunset with all its colors, a full harvest moon or the fuzzy, cosmic clouds of the Milky Way, can we trust that what we see is an exact representation of the external world? How do our minds make sense of the constant flux of images that pass through our eyes? Does vision extend outside of our eyes, or do images enter into our heads via our eyes?

The world of human perception is wide-ranging and fascinating. From ancient photons of interstellar space to the mechanics of the eye to optical illusions, there are numerous lessons and units that will offer an interesting hook for all types of learners.

Many interesting questions about vision and perception remain. For example, why do we often feel the stares of others, even when our backs are turned? Further, though the eye works like a lens, this doesn't explain our visual understanding of the world around us. Our eyes may provide the data to look at a tree, but how do we know it is a tree? Vision is a mystery that science is only beginning to fully understand. Getting a close-up look at this subject makes for a great unit study or research topic. Here are three ways to peer into the fascinating world of vision.

History of Vision: From Eyebeams and Lasers to Lenses and Telescopes

Any comic book fan knows that every superhero exhibits some superhuman feat. From super strength to flight powers, the heroes of Marvel or DC Comics are the stuff of fantasy, and many of them had special eye powers. From Cyclops to Superman, these heroes could use their eyes to cut through steel or suspend objects.

Such fantastical skills actually reflect extramission, the dominant paradigm in the ancient world for how vision works. Our modern description of the eye as a lens, called intromission, was not accepted until the work of Johannes Kepler in the 1600s. (See “Extramission vs. Intromission” sidebar.)

Key Investigative Questions

- How did our understanding of the eye help create the telescope?
- What role do paradigms play in the development of scientific understanding?

- How does the extramission hypothesis still influence modern cultural ideas?

Suggested Resources

- Cultural beliefs about vision provide a wonderful entry into the world of optics. Check out the various resources of comic book heroes with optic superpowers. Students may also find beliefs about the “evil eye” to be an interesting introduction to the extramission theory of vision. BBC and Live Science have done in-depth reports on cultural beliefs regarding the evil eye—excellent resources for a research project.
- For a wonderful overview of the history from extramission to intromission paradigms of vision (see sidebar), check out the entertaining, educational video on VRV.co called “The Science of Seeing.”
- Stanford’s Early Science Lab, Web. Stanford.edu, also provides a brief page detailing the “History of the Eye.”
- ScienceNetLinks.com has a unit on the anatomy of the telescope called

“Looking Into Space” which is part of a larger unit on optics that contains a wealth of information, activities and experiments.

Philosophy of Vision: Do We See With Our Eyes or With Our Minds?

Investigating the history of the eye expands our understanding of visual perception. Although the cultural beliefs about the evil eye may seem bizarre, extramission allows us to see how some people may operate under a different paradigm of visual perception. Indeed, vision is a powerful sense that we trust to make sense of our lives. But can we trust everything we see?

Imagine having to wear glasses that made everything you see upside down. Would you be able to drive a car? Eat a bowl of cereal? In a now-famous experiment, Professor Theodor Erismann used glasses that inverted the visual landscape upside down to test how we make sense of the world. After 10 days of wearing the glasses, his subject, Ivo Kohler, began to see the world right-side up.

Extramission vs. Intromission

It may seem odd to ask, but do we see inside our heads or do we grasp images outside of our heads? The history of understanding vision is a fascinating exploration that spans philosophy and science. From Plato to Kepler, the paradigms for how we understand vision have revolved around two opposing theories: intromission and extramission.

Thinkers like Plato suggested that a kind of “visual fire” emanated out of our eyes and touched the world around us. This visual fire grasped the forms of mountains

and trees allowing us to see them through these external rays. Plato’s position has come to be known as the extramission hypothesis.

Other thinkers questioned the extramission idea. For example, if our eyes emanate rays, this theory didn’t explain why we can’t see in the dark. Through the investigations of scientists like Ibn al-Haytham, many began to see the eye as a lens that captured light from the external world. This paradigm, the intromission hypothesis, is our modern view of visual perception.

Key Investigative Question

The experiment raised key questions about our visual experience of the world: When we look at the world, are we seeing an objective, realistic representation, or are we seeing a world altered by our own physical and cultural filters?

Suggested Resources

- Watch a 12-minute silent film on YouTube documenting the upside down glasses experiment. Search “Erismann and Kohler: Inversion Goggles” and see the comments where one viewer translated the German film captions to English. For a more modern video and discussion of the experiment, check out Good Mythical Morning’s video “Upside Down Glasses Challenge,” also on YouTube.
- Would you like to run the Erismann experiment yourself? Making inversion goggles is surprisingly easy. All you really need are a handful of Legos, a few rubber bands and two right-angle prisms. Google “How to Turn the World Upside Down Popular Science Video”).

Can You Believe Your Eyes? Educational Fun with Optical Illusions

The world of optical illusions also provides a unique way to engage this topic. Why is it so easy to trick our eyes? For example, take our experience with color. Is the sky blue because it is blue, or because we call it blue?

Key Investigative Questions

- Can we be confident that our visual perception is in agreement with everyone else’s?
- What physiological aspects of the eye result in optical illusions?



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Suggested Resources

- The University of Washington (tinyurl.com/ybwvbav5) has assembled an excellent curriculum for exploring the biology of optical illusions. The resource offers activities, investigative questions, optical illusion examples and assignments.
- A few years ago, the infamous “blue and black or white and gold” dress photo went viral. People disagreed with the color scheme of the dress, causing hours of debate and confusion. In his article “Lessons from ‘The Dress’: The Ambiguity of Visual Perception,” Dr. Pascal Wallisch explored the problem of visual perception and how our visual sense is more than just an optic machine.

- For further exploration in color, check out the popular podcast by RadioLab on Colors. The program explores the biology of color but finds surprising mysteries along the way. For instance, it may surprise you to realize that the animal with the most color receptors lives at the bottom of the ocean in darkness.
- Finally, for older students who want to ask deep philosophical questions (even diving into quantum theory), consider reading, “The Sense of Being Stared At” by Rupert Sheldrake. Although trained from the elite schools of Harvard and Cambridge, Dr. Sheldrake is a controversial scientist who thinks the extramission hypothesis isn’t completely wrong. A chapter

from his book (which is provided on his website Sheldrake.org in the article “Sense of Being Stared At”) gives a wonderful overview of the history of vision, but also delves into the philosophical problems of human perception. In particular, check out the last section of the chapter where Sheldrake explores possible modern developments in quantum theory that may help support the veracity of a modified extramission theory. ■



Kyle Holton is a writer, educator and father of three kids. He is a member of the Liberated Learners network in New England and works with self-directed learners at the Beacon Center.



Indeed, vision is a powerful sense that we trust to make sense of our lives. But can we trust everything we see?



SPACE EXPLORATION IN TEXAS

Did you know that Texas will host a new launch site from the private company SpaceX, which is owned by Tesla's Elon Musk? The site, Boca Chica, should be operational sometime later this year. It's quite possible that Boca Chica will help out with future Mars exploration. Read more about the development of the launch site at Teslarati.com (search "SpaceX Confirms Plan to Activate South Texas Launch Site in Late 2018").

Want to see light from stars hundreds of light-years away? The McDonald Observatory in west Texas presents multiple opportunities to do so. From tours of the large research telescopes to star parties to solar viewing tours, the McDonald Observatory offers a chance to interact with the cutting edge of optics and astronomy. McDonaldObservatory.org also provides numerous resources for further investigation into telescopes and general astronomy. ■

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Book Review

Space: God's Majestic Handiwork

by Shannon Kingsbury

"Space: God's Majestic Handiwork" is the newest book in Institute for Creation Research's (ICR) Science for Kids series. It is a great resource for younger students to learn how the heavens reflect a divine Creator! The book constantly weaves in reminders that God created space while presenting facts that refute evolution. Additionally, there are fun details about astronauts and their projects.

"Space" begins by explaining some incredible things about the universe and introducing readers to the Big Bang theory in contrast to biblical teaching.

In the section titled "Our Solar System" are details about our sun, moon and all the planets in our solar system, including each planet's special attribute which refutes the universe existing for millions of years and the Big Bang theory. All the information is presented in a clear and memorable fashion.

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Several pages are devoted to magnetic fields and stars (including the Star of Bethlehem), along with brief profiles on famous astronomers. This leads to explanations of asteroids, galaxies, black holes, comets and eclipses.

From there, the book dives into the history of NASA and its projects from Mercury to the International Space Station to the Hubble Space Telescope and space probes.

The final pages of the book discuss astronauts and their adventures. What is it like to be in space? How does one go about becoming an astronaut? There is also a brief profile on Christian astronaut Jeffrey Williams.

"Space" also examines the search for extraterrestrial intelligence.

The book closes by reminding us that God's power is clearly displayed in space, but the entire universe is under the curse of sin. Clearly, one of the purposes of "Space: God's Majestic Handiwork" is to direct readers to a realization of truth by way of learning about our universe. ■

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Relationships 101

by Roxanne Parks

One subject that appears in every homeschool classroom (whether you realize you're teaching it or not) is Relationships 101. We're also all teachers of Society 101, People Skills 101 and Manners 101—in addition to others. Whether we intentionally teach them or not, our children will learn these things by our examples.

We often focus on making sure that our students learn academics, but it's entirely possible and all too common that young adults graduate high school with heads full of knowledge, yet have no idea how to navigate relationships.

Relationships 101 is a prerequisite to a happy life. You might have trouble finding a company that offers this course curriculum, so here are a few lesson plans learned from years of my own experience.

WE ARE ALL SINNERS

This is a huge dilemma better known as the "human condition." No one can escape this. That is why the lesson of grace is so important.

When homeschooling my children, I found myself drowning in an unrealistic standard that I couldn't meet. The resulting stress wreaked havoc in our home. My "must-do, must-do, must-do" list elicited endless feelings of failure. I needed a big dose of God's grace so that I could extend it to those around me. God's grace provided the calming power our family and home needed.

KNOW THAT EVERYONE IS UNIQUELY GIFTED

According to a famous saying floating around the internet, we shouldn't judge

fish on their tree-climbing skills. This applies to children as much as fish.

In my homeschool, I tried cramming my creative child into mathematical and logical pedagogy. I could not understand his inability to understand. So I decided to *study* this kid. What were his gifts? My mantra became: "Seek first to understand, then to be understood." Under this new approach, we began celebrating his strengths—which certainly did not include math. He is now a successful photographer working in the mission field. I'm glad that he survived our math wars!

Once we nurture an environment where our children can blossom in their own skills, we can watch in anticipation and awe at what God does. Not what we do, but what God does.

FOCUS ON THAT WHICH IS PRAISEWORTHY

It is easy to see what is wrong in any scenario. However, the Bible tells us in Philippians 4:8 to focus on that which is pure, noble and praiseworthy. Our obedience to this lesson is imperative to relational success. Since the enemy is attempting to steal, kill and destroy, we naturally find ourselves in a world of negativity. We see how things are going wrong, what can't be done—and we notice the sins of others. But living that way is depressing and prevents us from having an abundant life. Focusing on the praiseworthy is a game-changer! It takes discipline, but learning this valuable lesson will be a blessing to your marriage, family and soul.

INVEST IN BUILDING GOOD RELATIONSHIPS

We were all born to parents we didn't choose, in places we didn't choose, and at a point in time we didn't choose. But God knew, and He makes no mistakes! Relationships, especially difficult ones, are the perfect ground for sanctification. God can use our closest relationships to mold us into better people—if we are willing to be molded. We cannot change our family, but we can choose whether or not we treat them in a mature manner.

Our children may or may not remember what we teach them, but ingrained in their hearts is whether or not we sought a deep, loving relationship with them.

THE GREATEST OF THESE IS LOVE

"Love is patient, love is kind. It does not envy, it does not boast, it is not proud. It does not dishonor others, it is not self-seeking, it is not easily angered, it keeps no record of wrongs. Love does not delight in evil but rejoices with the truth. It always protects, always trusts, always hopes, always perseveres." (1 Corinthians 13:4-7 NIV)

1 Corinthians 13 is also a beautiful picture of how Christ loves us. He embodies love. As we comprehend and embrace His love for us, it will spill over into our relationships. Show the nature of Christ in you by being patient, kind, etc. This is truly Relationships 101 at its best—love. Let's yield our control-freak natures to the loving nature of our Father God. We can spend a lifetime sharpening this iron and helping our family members sharpen it as well.

Relationships 101 class doesn't end when the bell rings at 3 p.m. Working

on your God-given relationships will provide a far greater return than any academic subject. A life well-lived is deeply rooted in loving relationships! ■



Roxanne Parks is president and founder of Winter Summit Ministries. Public speaker and author of "Are You Enough? Encouragement for the Overwhelmed and

Exhausted Homeschool Mom," Roxanne's greatest joy is to build, encourage and speak life-giving truths into the hearts of women.

Bright Future for Homeschool Student Publishers and Award-Winning Writer

Eleven members of Creative Homeschoolers of Eagle Pass recently became published authors through a free national student publishing program, StudentTreasures.com. As part of the publishing process, students planned, wrote and illustrated their own book: "Adventures with the Time Machine." The authors are: Jaden C., Donald I., Joaquin C., Zadok F.,

Cristian M., Francheska M., Olivia T., Phoebe B., Ammie G., Billy G. and Autumn H.


Extra kudos to Donald who participated in the 2018 Creative Arts Contest of the Southwest Texas Junior College, winning first place in the literary category for the six- to eight-year-old age group.



Photo Courtesy of Creative Homeschoolers

"Adventures with the Time Machine" authors celebrate their book launch at a red carpet event last June.





LIFE AFTER HOMESCHOOLING TIPS FOR A SMOOTH TRANSITION TO YOUR NEXT BIG THING

BY KATHRYN STREETER

Though there will be long days when parents struggle to see the light at the end of the homeschooling tunnel, most will be rattled by the change as kids graduate or enroll in another school.

Photo by Jerry Kiesewetter on Unsplash



Photo by Leon Bliss on Unsplash

Homeschooling parent and blogger Annie Kate Aarnoutse (AnnieKatesHomeschoolReviews.com) addressed this tension after encountering a former homeschooling parent who battled depression when the kids left. “Looking forward, seeing the end of this most beautiful calling fast approaching, the future looked frighteningly bleak. I could understand her hopelessness and her helplessness,” she wrote.

Some, in fact, regard the Home-school Empty Nest Syndrome (HENS) as a more intense strain of the empty-nest syndrome. The good news is, HENS isn’t permanently disabling.

Allison Cheston’s Fox News article “Empty Nest? How to Thrive in a New Career After the Kids Leave Home” tells the stories of several empty-nest homeschooling parents. Some became university professors and continued

teaching, others started their own businesses, and one mom even joined the military. Homeschooling parents have a wide variety of ways to reinvent, repurpose and reinvigorate after the kids graduate.

Aarnoutse discovered that those who transition well have filled their time with meaningful work and perceive this change of season positively. As you’re helping your child prepare to launch into the next thing, use these action-oriented ideas to be ready to transition into a career.

THOSE WHO’VE GONE BEFORE YOU

With a trusted friend, articulate why you want to re-enter the workplace. Is your motive financial? Is it to get out and engage with others? Do you wish to return to the career you had before homeschooling, or do something else?

Do you prefer full time or part time? Answer these questions to bring focus to your path. (ModernMom.com “11 Tips for Stay-At-Home Moms Who Want to Go Back to Work” may be helpful as well.)

Supplement these conversations with online threads where you can discover what other empty nesters are doing. Reading others’ stories will no doubt provide words of encouragement about what is possible, what to avoid, and how best to thrive.

FACE TIME MATTERS, SO GET OUT AND NETWORK

Some estimates say as much as 80 percent of jobs are not listed online but are instead filled through word-of-mouth. Dialoguing with friends offers organic networking, but do also seek out formal opportunities to build contacts.

WORTH YOUR WHILE

For Parents Who Will Soon Face an Empty Nest
SherriSeligson.com/The-Homeschool-Empty-Nest

Forum for Empty Nesters Seeking to Fill Their Time

Go to Talk.CollegeConfidential.com and search “How Do Empty Nest Moms Spend Their Day?”

Forum for Empty Nesters on Best Ways to Fill Time

Visit ThePioneerWoman.com and search “Community Question: 16 Years of Homeschooling. Now What?”

For Parents Who Want to Homeschool and Work Full Time

Visit AlphaMom.com/Parenting and search “Career-minded Parents Can Homeschool Too!”

For Empty Nesters Wanting to Relaunch Their Careers
iRelaunch.com

For Parents Seeking Support in the Transition to Empty Nesting
GrownAndFlown.com

For Resume Prep

“The Stay-at-Home Mom Resume: Transferable Knowledge, Skills & Abilities” (Search this article at LinkedIn.com.)

Services like ResumeGenius.com format your resume for you with information you provide. But their templates are somewhat generic. For smart designs, try “The 41 Best Resume Templates Ever” in the Job Search section at TheMuse.com.

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Identify your interests and connect with other like-minded individuals through volunteering, apprenticeships, weekend seminars or evening lectures. These low-risk commitments will help you assess whether you're looking in the right direction.

DIVINE YOUR DIRECTION

If you're not sure about your direction, look online at job sites like [Indeed.com](#) and [SimplyHired.com](#). A little searching may unexpectedly connect a passion to a form of employment. Even if all you want to do is hold babies—there's a career for that! (Visit [BabyBlueandPink.com/Doula-Training](#).)

Consider returning to work before your child is done homeschooling. With a little research you'll discover lists like the Huffington Post's "100 Best Jobs for Moms," which can help you identify a variety of jobs. Some jobs (such as selling arts and crafts on [Etsy.com](#)) can

even be run out of your home. Let your interests guide you and lay a foundation for more robust work once your last child has graduated.

BRING YOUR SKILLS UP TO SPEED

The premier resource for back-to-work help is [iRelaunch.com](#), said Mary Dell Harrington and Lisa Heffernan, co-founders of the nationally acclaimed organization Grown and Flown ([GrownandFlown.com](#)) which boasts an energetic, 58,000+ member Facebook group.

Other organizations offering online education designed to strengthen or refresh your skills in Excel, Photoshop, Microsoft Outlook and basic branding (for example) include:

Skillshare.com: Join and have over 10,000 online classes available to you.

Udemy.com: Online classes in topics ranging from music and languages to IT.

Lynda.com: Available for free through some library systems, or use the free month trial to brush up on skills in business, design, photography and more.

Toastmasters International: Your go-to organization to help strengthen your public speaking skills. ([ToastMasters.org](#))

RETURN TO COLLEGE WITH FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE

If you plan to return to college to finish a degree or get a new one, don't overlook scholarships available to midlife women.

ScholarshipsForWomen.net is a website devoted to helping connect women with financial support.

ScholarshipsAndGrants.us provides information on a variety of options on their "Scholarships for Women Over 40" page.

WeirdScholarships.net offers a listing of scholarships available to women over 40.

REFRESH YOUR RESUME

If you're heading back to the work world, your resume needs to tell your story in a succinct, enticing way. This little document holds outsized importance, so invest time into framing a cohesive structure which includes your ongoing education, freelance or contract work, and volunteer activities such as church committees or non-profit service.

The all-encompassing job of homeschooling sharpens a variety of skills and traits valued in the workplace and your resume should adequately express this. Transferable knowledge, skills and abilities of a stay-at-home mom may include critical thinking, problem solving and time management among others.

Articles such as Forbes.com's "Stay-At-Home Parent? How To Kill It On Your Comeback Resume" and Monster.com's "Resume Tips for Full-Time Parents Returning to Work" will get you off to a good start. If you're at an impasse, though, hire a resume wizard via a company such as Indeed.com to pull together a beautiful product.

PREPARE FOR YOUR INTERVIEW

Once you've scheduled an interview, take time to school yourself on today's interview protocol and on current office dress by searching Monster.com for relevant articles. Connect with your local Dress For Success (DressForSuccess.org) if needed. With locations in six cities across Texas, this non-profit organization is committed to helping women obtain the perfect dress attire as well as offering tips and guidance for interviewing and getting back into the work world.

Take charge of your life after homeschooling by beginning to plan now with the numerous resources available to help homeschooling moms segue to other life pursuits after closing the book on the last homeschooling chapter.



Photo by Ellyot on Unsplash

Now Available for Purchase

Pearls for His Girls:



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By Janice Utterback

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Along with parenting advice, Janice (mother of 4 girls and former missionary) offers courage for mothers who need a resource to turn to when facing problems and controversy.

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www.janiceutterback.com

For more information and practical tips, please visit:
www.raisingdaughtersoftheking.com



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VETERAN EMPTY-NESTER AND PSYCHOLOGIST ON HANDLING THE EMOTIONS OF THIS LIFE TRANSITION

Clinical psychologist Dr. Margaret Rutherford and author of *“Marriage Is Not For Chickens”* and forthcoming book *“Perfectly Hidden Depression”* also blogged for two years about the turmoil she felt when her nest emptied. Her personal experience adds weight to her advice as a professional psychologist.

Anticipatory Grieving

Allow yourself to begin visualizing in advance what it will be like without kids around. Don't live in the future, but try to accept the change before it happens.

Relish

At the same time, take delight in where you are. Do this by compartmentalizing: Give yourself distinct moments when you allow yourself to “go there” and anticipate the grief, while mainly staying in the moment and relishing what's happening in real time.

Wean Yourself From the Kids, and the Kids From You

I see 30 patients per week. If I suddenly stopped, that would feel bizarre! Similarly, homeschooling parents have given exponentially of their time and energy. Take baby-steps, offering greater and greater independence in small doses. This cooperative parenting is important for you, too. You're training yourself to be let go and to not be needed.

Redirect This Fount of Industriousness

Reach forward into your own future using your industry, creativity and perseverance—all traits of a homeschooling parent. It's not too unlike retirement or other massive transitions where you have to live in both present and future mode as things rapidly change around you.

It's the end of an era and you should feel immensely proud. After all, you

readied your child for launching into the adult world! You can't redo parenting, so it's essential to let go of griefs and regrets and instead to embrace the change which offers release from these sabotaging emotions.

Be Smart

For the kids' sake, resist being in constant contact after they leave. There is a subset of parents who have lived *through* their kids, and both sides suffer in the empty nest years. The kids will have to learn how to negotiate peer pressure and tough decisions. Likewise, Mom will have to live without knowing everything that's going on in their lives.

Some kinds of griefs will last a fairly long time, and our culture isn't comfortable with that. You may be encouraged

to “snap out of it!” but it's okay to be sad sometimes. Writing “NestAche” was cathartic, but one day I couldn't write it anymore. I was through it. Balance your sadness with a drive to rebuild. Focus on what's good in your life. ■

Dr. Margaret Rutherford talks about the empty nest (and many other topics) on her popular podcast SelfWork (DrMargaretRutherford.com) and writes, among other places, at HuffingtonPost.com.



Kathryn Streeter's writing has appeared in publications including “The Washington Post,” “The Week” and “Austin American-Statesman.” Find her on Twitter: @streeterkathryn.

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 **THSC Gala**
Oct. 13 at The Woodlands. THSC.org/gala



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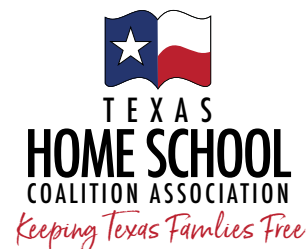
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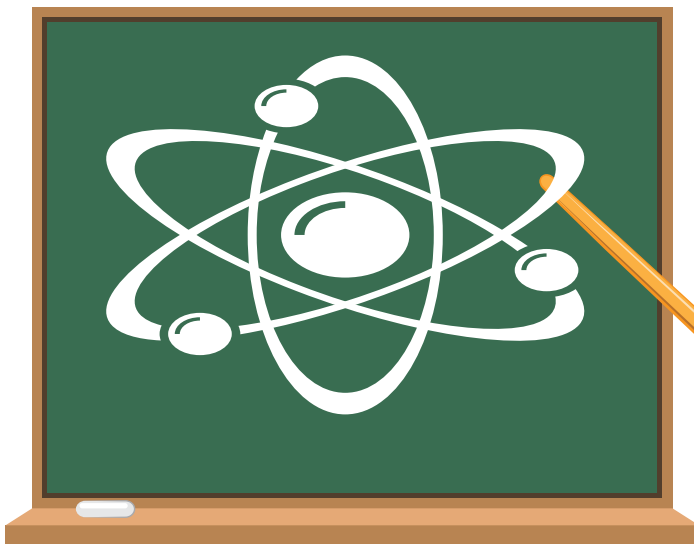


The Texas Home School Coalition (THSC) is a 501(c)(3) educational organization that is supported by tax-deductible donations. THSC is dedicated to serving the homeschool community; it promotes home education in Texas by educating the public, the homeschool community, and officials about homeschooling.

THSC Association, a 501(c)(4) advocacy organization, is dedicated to *Keeping Texas Families Free*. It is supported by membership fees and donations that are not tax-deductible. THSC Association membership benefits include legal assistance, as well as a long list of other offerings and discounts.

The work of the THSC PAC (Political Action Committee)—endorsing and supporting pro-homeschooling candidates—is supported by donations that are not tax-deductible.

See THSC.org for more information.



"Bohr Model of the Atom"

*with Professor Varney,
Mastermind of Machinery*

by Nikki Varney

Small but mighty. Everything in the universe is made of tiny units called atoms. Most of the theory and discovery at the atomic and subatomic (even smaller than atoms) level has taken place in the last century. Some of the important advancements include these scientists' discoveries:

- J.J. Thomson discovered atoms are made of equal parts of positively and negatively charged particles that result in a neutral atom.
- Ernest Rutherford discovered that an atom is mostly empty space with a small, dense, positively-charged nucleus or center.
- James Chadwick discovered the neutron, an uncharged particle in the nucleus that contributes to the mass of the atom.
- Niels Bohr discovered that electrons travel in energy levels around the nucleus. Each energy level is like a rung of the ladder. Electrons can jump from one energy level to another but cannot exist in between levels.

We now understand that the energy levels are more complicated than the

model suggested by Bohr, but since his model still gives us a fundamental understanding of atomic structure, it's helpful to build this model when learning about atoms. Have you ever built a model of an atom? If not, whoooo wants to build an atom?

BEFORE WE BUILD

Use the periodic table to choose an element to build. May I suggest elements 3-20? High school students may want the challenge of making a larger atom for which the electron configuration gets more complicated. Watch "The Electron: Crash Course Chemistry #5" on YouTube for a whirlwind tour of electron configuration.

Determine the number of protons. Hint: It's the atomic number. (For instance, element 15 has 15 protons.) You'll need a single pom-pom for each proton.

For an atom to be neutral, it has to have the same number of negatively-charged electrons as positively-charged protons. You'll need a bead for each electron.



We'll Need These Materials:

*1-inch craft pom-poms in
two different colors*

Pipe cleaners

Small plastic beads

Thread

Hot glue

*Periodic table
(can be online)*

Energy Level	Number of Pipe Cleaners	Maximum Number of Electrons
1	2	2
2	3	8
3	4	up to 8 (for this project)
4	5	up to 2 (for this project)

Round the atomic mass of your element to the nearest whole number, then subtract the number of protons from it. The answer is the number of neutrons. Use the other color of pom-pom to represent the neutrons.

MAKING THE BOHR MODEL MOBILE

Nucleus: Use hot glue to connect the proton and neutron pom-poms into a ball. Evenly distribute each color of pom throughout the nucleus to represent how protons repel each other.

Energy Levels: The number of

energy levels corresponds to the row of the periodic table on which your chosen element is found. For example, aluminum is in the third row of the periodic table, so it has three energy levels. See the chart above for the maximum number of electrons (beads) to put on each energy level (a ring made of pipe cleaners), working from the first energy level outward. In our example, aluminum has 13 electrons, so the first energy level (made of two pipe cleaners tied together at both ends to form a ring) would hold two beads. The second energy level (ring made of three pipe cleaners) would have eight electrons (beads). The third energy level (made of four pipe cleaners) would hold the remaining three electron beads.

Electrons repel each other so keep them evenly spaced on the energy levels (a.k.a. pipe cleaner rings). A dab of glue may be needed so they don't move.

Starting with some extra thread at the top so you can hang your model, tie thread around each energy level in one spot, moving from the outside in.

Secure the thread to the nucleus as well. Energy levels should be equally spaced.

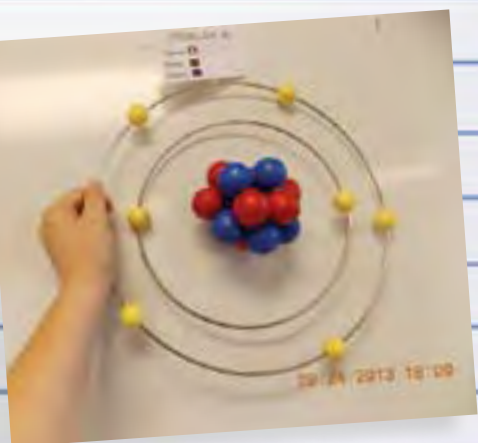
THINK ABOUT IT

What is the significance of using larger pom-poms for protons and neutrons but smaller beads for electrons? (Hint: Why are only protons and neutrons counted in the mass of the atom?)

We now understand that the location of electrons is much more complicated. According to the Crash Course Chemistry video that you watched at the beginning of this project, how is the Bohr model different than the model under modern atomic theory?

Can you guess why the electrons orbit the nucleus and don't just spin away? For the answer, watch "Electromagnetism: The Glue of the Universe" on YouTube.

Positively-charged protons repel each other, so what holds them together? For the answer, watch "Bozeman Science: Strong Nuclear Force" on YouTube. ■



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The More We Know, the More Things Stay the Same

By Donna Schillinger

I recently finished “Willpower: Rediscovering the Greatest Human Strength” by Roy F. Baumeister and John Tierney. The book is essentially a survey of psychological research on our ability to resist temptation. If you’re not a fan of psychology in general, you may still be interested in this book. If nothing else, you’ll get a good laugh at the extremes to which academia goes to prove common sense.

It’s actually a very gratifying read for Christian homeschooling parents. Modern psychology has finally “proven” that being raised in a religious, two-parent household provides the best protection against a range of social ills—including sexual and substance addictions, weight gain, and habitually blowing your paycheck. Bodies of research on religion and parental oversight confirm that Christian homeschoolers are poised to raise the next generation of leaders.

The authors conclude that faith and religious practice is a predictor of positive social behavior and longevity: Religious people are less likely than others to develop unhealthy habits, more likely to engage in self-care behaviors (like taking vitamins and going to the dentist), and more likely to have social support. They also have better self-control and live longer (p. 179).

While the book didn’t specifically mention homeschooling, considerable ink was dedicated to the benefits of

two-parent households and close parental monitoring, which homeschooling facilitates. This was the authors’ stunning assessment: “The passage of decades has not erased the value of parental monitoring.” (Duh.)

Specifically, they noted that parental monitoring reduces illegal drug use and juvenile delinquency and improves outcomes for children with Type 1 diabetes.

**Bodies
of research
on religion
and parental
oversight confirm
that Christian
homeschoolers
are poised to
raise the next
generation
of leaders.**

“The more that children are being monitored, the more opportunities they have to build self-control. ... Anything that forces children to exercise their self-control muscle can be helpful: taking music lessons, memorizing poems, saying prayers, minding their table manners, avoiding the use of profanity, writing thank-you notes” (p. 210).

Finally, it seems that psychologists have closed the case on self-esteem. A review of relevant research revealed that most children naturally have high self-esteem (no need to take special measures to build it), but it does not translate into success. Self-esteem levels have not been proven to be causative factors in success or failure. Two clear benefits of self-esteem are increased initiative and a general sense of well-being, but, “On the whole, benefits of self-esteem accrue to the self while its costs are borne by others, who must deal with side effects like arrogance and conceit” (p. 192).

If you have disdained the field of psychology in the past, consider that maybe it has been in an awkward adolescent stage that has made it hard to love—that phase where it believes it has all the answers. If the results reported in “Willpower” are any indication, the field may be maturing—having finally come to the well-researched realization that there is no better formula for raising healthy children than that based on the same time-honored values that drive us to homeschool.

It turns out that the more we know, the more things stay the same.

Carry on. ■

Donna Schillinger serves as publications manager at Texas Home School Coalition.



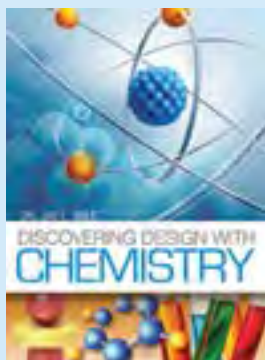
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