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Building Communities Begins at Home

The Sport of Motherhood Newsletter

October 2006

October has already touched the leaves of all trees here with gold. Ghouls and ghosts are getting ready to celebrate Halloween. This month's TV show showcases one community in the Bay Area that created a wonderful tradition out of building a haunted house.

Sport of Motherhood is growing fast! This month, we are announcing three new addition to our team.

Sarah Claytor is our new *Managing Editor*. Sarah is from Maine. She is a mom of three and an educator. When she isn't chauffeuring her children to school and soccer events, she can be found sailing, gardening or writing. Sarah will cover the New England area. Please [contact Sarah](#) with a story, to find out more about our programs in your area, or to host a parenting bootcamp in your community.

Susan Kraft, a popular Bay Area artist and patron of the arts, and a long-time Sport of Motherhood member, is joining our team as the *Art Gallery Director*. Susan chooses the art for each show and can help you purchase any piece. [Click here for Susan's bio](#).

Carl Yorke, a Bay Area film professional, educator, and a creative genius at large is joining us as a *Producer*. Carl will help us take the show to new heights.

And last, but not least, we are very pleased to share our news: **Two** of The Sport of Motherhood TV shows are the finalists for the [WAVE](#) (Western Access Video Excellence) Awards. Winners will be announced later this month. *Keep your fingers crossed!*

October TV Show "Haunted House Fever: Contagious To Community": Tuesdays at 3:30 pm, Channel 15 in Mountain View, Los Altos and Cupertino, and Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday and Saturday on Channel 30 in Palo Alto, East Palo Alto, Menlo Park, Atherton, Woodside and Stanford. [Click here for complete TV schedule](#).

Our October sponsors are [Surreel Elements](#) and [Adventure Sail](#). Scroll down for special offers only for Sport of Motherhood!

Our monthly column for entrepreneurs "I Love What I Do, But How Do I Make Money?" addresses different aspects of running a business and managing a family. This month's focus is on [understanding your competition as a tool for successful business strategies](#).

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Haunted House Fever



Follow your passion and others will join. Your enthusiasm catches on. Organizers and helpers all play an important role in the event. The result: you bring people together and foster community spirit.

Our October TV Show "Haunted House Fever: Contagious to Community" showcases one community and its annual haunted house. Dave Scheiman and Allen Hall, two dads who LOVE Halloween, brought their ghoulish passion to a local elementary school for the past seven Halloweens. With the support of the School Principal, Judith Barranti, the PTA and parents, kids, teachers, and community members, the Haunted House became a gift to the community. Kids and adults work together, learn new things and have a ball.

Building a Haunted House is like creating and participating in a school-wide board game. Filled with brainteasers and conundrums such as knowing material capabilities, transportability factors and height requirements, you can find endless challenges and opportunities for creativity. Once you get started though, you may have trouble passing by houses being torn down or garage sales. Tammi Hall, wife of one of the Ghoul Plotters,

Seasons of Motherhood



by Genevieve Hutcheson Butcher

Fall is here and once again I am full of conflicting new emotions. I just cannot believe how fast my children are growing up.

My son, our oldest, is already in 5th grade. Right now he wants to talk to me, and enjoys my attention. In just 2 or 3 years peers will probably become the priority, he will push back for his independence. But for now, I keep our weekly board game night and hope that he will come back to me if just to play board games.

My oldest daughter just entered 3rd grade. She looks and walks like

an older kid now. Confident, athletic . . . where is my little girl? She and her older brother have a great rapport. I often just watch, listen, and laugh. There is already new lingo and songs unfamiliar to me that weave in and out of their conversations; I'm aware of how much outside influence there is in their lives.

My 3rd child just started Kindergarten, and is finally with her brother and sister at the elementary school. She happily asserts her break from me. She will absolutely NOT hold my hand at school. I understand, but feel a bit sad about it.

My youngest just started pre- school. She tries so hard to keep up with her siblings. On the first day of school, she told me to "go away, Mom." She was fine. A big girl. I laughed. Good for her. But her 2nd day of school, she was not as sure of herself. She seemed so little again. It will take a little time to adjust.

My babies are growing up. I love how they play together and how my husband can now play tennis with the three older ones. I love that we can do the family bike ride with three on bikes and only one in the carrier. I love my new free time because I too have grown alongside my kids.

As I go about my day, I carry all of these emotions with me.

I identify my feelings and allow them to bubble up so that I understand this particular season of motherhood. I allow myself just a little sadness for the days gone, and I look forward to new experiences and exciting new days, with my grown-up children. And there is so much learning for me again – how to be a mom of a pre-teen, then teen-kids. How to be a friend and a parent at the same time. And, most importantly, how to keep and nurture this golden thread of love that keeps us together and will connect us wherever they go.

Safe Internet Searching for Kids & Parents

By Daniel Russell

Searching the Internet can be amazing-- you can discover entirely new worlds of information about things you'd never dreamed. At the same time, it can be a startling experience for kids and parents when you run across explicit content in the course of your searches. While there isn't any way to make your searches 100% kid-friendly, there are a couple of things you can do to make things more comfortable.



If you use [Google](#), you should turn on SafeSearch. It's easy to do and will keep the vast majority of sexually explicit images and language out of your Google searches. To activate it, go to the [Google home page](#). Look to the right of the Search button and you'll see a link to "Preferences." It's in a small font; look carefully.

If you click on the "Preferences" link you'll go to the Preferences page. About half-way down the page there's a section labeled "Safe Search Filtering" which determines how much Google will filter your results for explicit content. Click on the round button that says "Use Strict Filtering."

Once you do this, be sure to click the "Save Preferences" button on the bottom right of the page. If you don't do this, Google won't save your preference to have the results filtered, and you'll be right back where you started!

The process is basically the same for Yahoo-- look for preferences and do the same couple of steps.

laughs about the treasures that "appear in our garage all year long" such as the latest dumpy chandelier or closet door.

Just a little Internet Research can flesh out your ideas. Allen and Dave recommend keywords such as "Haunted House Foam" or "Haunted House Polystyrene" to keep the search on the "lighter side."

I am wowed by what you can do with some boards, some chicken wire, cans of spray insulation and some paint. Voila! The Haunted House crew created huge knobby trees. Cut a hole inside and a kid with a painted face pops his head through the hole – you have a human tree.

On the show a few of the kids demonstrated how to create the dungeon wall. Using a soldering tool, they drew grooved lines on sheets of polystyrene, which is attached to a material similar to plywood using door skin. Then, with a heat gun, they melted the material to give it texture. Next came cheesecloth dipped in a mixture of Elmer's Glue, water and a bit of flour (3:1 for glue to water). That is put over the polystyrene and let dry overnight. Without the cheesecloth, the paint won't stick. The last step is painting the surface. All of this is supervised of course. To see the step-by-step demo, [click here](#) to take a look at the show.

Are you interested in throwing a bit of fun into your community? Would you like to bring some hidden talents out in your community while getting to know your neighbors or spending time with your kids? Perhaps a small Haunted House can do just the trick. It does not need to be as elaborate as this one – but who knows? Maybe it too will take on a life of its own.

Do you have a different passion or interest that you'd like to share? Write to me at

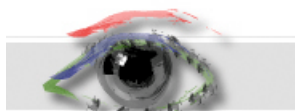
Note that you'll have to do this for each account that you use to do a web search. So if your kids each have their own account on a home computer, be sure to login as each kid and set the SafeSearch to "Use Strict Filtering."

You might also want to set Strict Filtering on your account as well, especially if you find yourself doing searches with your kids while logged in as yourself. What might be a slight annoyance for you could become the stuff of family legend if you find something salacious when helping out with Billy's homework, with Billy looking over your shoulder.

And of course, once your kids get to the age where they can download their own applications, they'll be able to circumvent all this by setting up their own accounts or downloading their own browser software. But that's another story for another age group.

Daniel M. Russell is a senior research scientist at Google in the area Of search quality and user experience. He has worked with IBM, Xerox Parc and in Apple's Advanced Technology Group and has taught at both Stanford and Santa Clara Universities. He enjoys word play, music, and long distance running, becoming disgruntled when all three can't be in one day. For more information on Dan's upcoming classes at the Museum of American Heritage, [click here](#).

I Love What I Do But How Do I Make Money?



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Love The Competition by Daniella Russo

Before you begin spending money on advertising, web site design, storefront, and printed materials, carefully research your competition. How do they reach their customers? Where do they advertise? Is it working for them? What is their pricing model? How successful are they? Ask. Then, ask again. Do not be shy. Much can be gleaned from a casual conversation.

A very common mistake by many entrepreneurs is to ignore the competition. Often, competition is defined as a full match between products and services. This is not always so. The product may not be exactly like yours, the service may differ - but does it fulfill the same need? It is possible they have a better match between market needs and product or service, than you. Be brutally honest, bravely examine all competitive products and learn all you can about them. Regardless of what you find out, the path to success always starts at deep understanding of your competition.

Find The Competition. Start with your target customers. Do they currently purchase this product or service? Where? How? Who is the vendor? Make a list. Include online purchases, as well as neighborhood stores. If a vendor does not exist, how do your target customers satisfy their need? If you are lucky to find a real market need without an existing solution, and if you have figured out how to fulfill that need, you have arrived! Every entrepreneur dreams of that and very few are so lucky.

[Click here to continue reading](#)

A Smoother Life For Mom

by **Lori Krolik**

As I write this the summer days are getting shorter and fall is looming ahead. Many moms feel the demands on their time increasing with kids' soccer schedules, homework, and social obligations. Yet there



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Quick Links

[Watch Our Halloween Show](#)

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are things we can all do to make our lives

run a little more smoothly and maybe even find time for enjoyable activities like a massage, getting together with friends, or sitting down and reading a book.

· **Create To-Do Lists** – Get everything out of your head and put it in list form. You can make a hand-written list, or use a computerized format like Microsoft Outlook Task List. Either way, be sure to include everything from the most mundane, "Buy soccer cleats for Sam" to the more complex, "Plan ski trip for December 20-28." Check your list daily and you'll be amazed what you accomplish.

· **Make Appointments with Yourself to Accomplish Tasks** – If cleaning out your closet has been on your to-do list forever but you never seem to get to it, make an appointment with yourself to get it done. Block out time on your calendar and set a time limit to get it done. Try to reward yourself once you have checked it off your list.

· **Identify Your Best Planning Time** – You need time to look at the week ahead and schedule when you're going to get things done. Maybe it is Sunday evening, or maybe it is getting up a half hour early on Monday morning; either way looking ahead will save you time down the line. You might even find extra time to fit in a longer workout or walk with a friend.

· **Assign A Home For Things That Tend To Clutter Your House** – It's logical to have closets for shoes and drawers for clothes, but what about the rest of the stuff in your house? Try to have a designated space (even better a labeled one) for like items. Just to name a few: toys should be together in bins, magazines and catalogues should be placed in magazine holders near a spot where you are likely to read them, and bills in a container waiting to be paid. This way you'll know where everything is located, and you won't waste time looking for things.

· **Keep Extras on Hand** – When buying non-perishable items don't just pick up one of something. Keep a few on hand so you won't have to go to the store at the last minute or as often. This tip works great for things like kitchen pantry items, cosmetics, and dental care items.

If you feel overwhelmed trying to implement all of the above, cut yourself some slack, and just commit to one of the recommendations. Remember, putting in a little time now to implement a new time management strategy may seem daunting, but down the line you might just be able to enjoy that massage.

Lori Krolik is the owner of More Time for You based in Palo Alto, California. She has been helping people get organized and manage their time for over 10 years. To learn more about Lori and her company, please visit her website, www.moretimeforyou.net.

Choices Start With Food

By **Jennifer Chernak**

Eating healthy is not child's play – not so for two girls who have been packing their own healthy school meals for the past seven years. Bonnie Stys, a mother of two teenage girls, began training them to make healthy "good" choices as soon as they could talk and barely walk!

As a pharmacist, Bonnie understood the effects of marketing on human consumption. She witnessed the direct correlation between presentation and response – human behavior is formed through recognition of what society tells us is good or bad. For example, sweets, sugared cereal, cookies and other treats are often used as a reward and come in colorful packages. Healthy foods get the short shift when a parent says, "eat your peas and then you can have dessert."

Bonnie made a commitment to use her knowledge to make changes in her family's diet. By filling her home with bowls of vegetables and fruits, she exposed her children to the natural beauty, color and shape of whole foods. She replaced the words "dessert and treat" at home, with "healthy" and "unhealthy" soon after her girls could say "yes" and "no", "hot" and cold."

Bonnie often sat her babies on the floor, counter, or in the sink and handed them freshly washed fruit for play. At times, washing fruit became a playtime activity. Pieces of frozen fruit replaced traditional plastic teething toys. Small bowls of frozen vegetables helped her girls develop their fine motor skills. Frozen mixed vegetables also allowed them to learn to sort and differentiate color.

When her girls entered preschool, Bonnie took her approach to the next level and involved her children with lunch preparations. She rearranged her refrigerator placing lunch items on the bottom shelf within a child's reach. Using cards that



Our Halloween Show, Palo Alto Community Media Center, October 2006



The Art Experience, Palo Alto



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pictured different food groups and dividing space in the refrigerator into the corresponding three lunch components -- drink, snack, and power food (sandwich, pasta, etc) -- Bonnie's children gathered lunch items of their choice as a standard pre-bedtime activity.

Soon, Bonnie led a grass-roots effort to change snack time at her preschool. She offered parent workshops and volunteered her time to talk with students about healthy foods.

Currently Bonnie works part-time as a pharmacist and plans to start a consulting business that follows her passion of teaching children to make good choices. Bonnie's daughters are now in middle school and continue to pack their own lunches.

Jennifer Chernak lives in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania with her husband and two daughters. Jennifer is an artist and a writer. Her experience includes years of teaching learning strategies and fine art at the middle school level.

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