

KIDS! CLIP AND KEEP YOUR KIDS KORNER COLUMNS IN A THREE-RING BINDER AND YOU'LL HAVE A NOTEBOOK CHOCK FULL OF FUN IDEAS AND ACTIVITIES FOR THE FUTURE!

# 'Outside

## The Joys of Being an 'Outsider'

Story and artwork by Anne M. Dellinger, Contributing Columnist

*Once upon a time, several decades ago, kids spent most of their childhood days outdoors.*

*Maybe you have heard this story before. It begins with your parents recalling their fond, youthful memories of heading out the door to a treehouse in the backyard, riding a bike to a city park or exploring along a stream. And, depending on the storyteller, they may have stayed out until dark!*

**Outside** was where they spent hours with other kids, inventing and creating their own fun by using their imaginations and whatever resources were available.

**Outside** was where they grew lean and strong, while learning to share and cooperate.

**Outside** was where they wanted to be ... after school, on weekends and during summer break.

**B**ut that was years ago, in another century. Lifestyles have changed, as they always do, and things happen differently now for many reasons.

Today, your free play time has become more organized and managed, less spontaneous and it often occurs indoors.

On the upside, you and your friends now have tons of opportunities to amuse yourselves and learn new skills by joining established, supervised groups.

To name a few, there are:



The downside to having oodles of options is the temptation to overschedule yourself. With so many choices, before you realize it, you can "put too much on your plate" (meaning, taking on more than you can manage).

That is when parents often step in with these wise reminders:



- There are only so many hours of free play time available in a day.
- For everything you get to do, you will have to *give up* something else.

If you stay mindful of these facts, a good thing will happen. You will learn to pick and choose structured activities that are fun, rewarding and so not to consume all your free time. After all, every busy schedule needs some wiggle room for stepping outdoors to ... er, just wiggle. Or, walk, run, jump,

kick and yell ... whatever it takes to shake off the stresses of the day. Your mind and body will thank you and you will feel really good.



### Making time to be an "Outsider"

If you truly want to experience some happy-go-lucky, feel-good moments reminiscent of your parents' childhoods, then find time to ...



Recent studies have shown that children benefit greatly when they connect regularly with the natural world. Outsider kids ...

- feel empowered with fresh energy and enthusiasm,
- have less aggression,
- have enriched imaginations and better attention spans,
- show improvement in classroom performance.

Who knew that outdoor play could be so healthy? It is doubtful that your parents, as children, ever heard about these health benefits. For them, choosing to be outdoors was an easy no-brainer because that was where the best fun happened.

BUT ... modern-day screen time entertainment was not part of their growing-up years. If today's fascinating electronic devices had been in their homes, they just might have been tempted to stay inside more often.

You probably already know how easily free time can turn into screen time. Surveys show that the average American child spends between 5-7 hours a day in front of an electronic screen (this includes TV, computer, phone, hand-held devices, etc.) and less than 30 minutes in unstructured outdoor play.

Wow ... a whole lot of children may be needing a little nature boost, soon.

The National Wildlife Federation already has a plan in place for persuading *insider* kids to trade some screen time for green time. It's called **The Green Hour Program** and offers a collection of *wild nature* ideas to explore during every season of the year. The activities can be completed in 15- or 30-minute segments, with the goal being to stay outdoors for an entire hour each day. Hopefully, once kids start reconnecting more often with the natural world, they will want to be outside oftener and for longer periods.

What about you? Are you ready to poke around in nature, today, for 30-60 minutes? If you are, first invite a friend or two to help you complete the **Search for Fall** activity shown below. Then go make some crazy, fun memories together. When finished, visit [thegreenhour.org](http://thegreenhour.org) and choose another Fall activity from The Green Hour and plan your next outing, soon.

Childhood memories are just waiting to happen out there. The adventurous moments you are creating and living now, will become the amazing stories you will share with your own children one day. Aren't you glad you are a cool **outsider**?

### Search for Fall

Consider keeping a Nature Notebook where you can record this project and future activities. Copy this list and check off each as you find the signs of the new season. Draw or describe your favorite findings. Add any other nature items you discover that are not listed.

- acorns
- other fallen nuts
- plants shedding leaves
- ripe berries
- squirrels collecting nuts
- yellowing cornstalks
- cooler temperatures
- leaves changing colors
- shorter days
- ripe apples
- maple "helicopter" seeds
- birds gathering for migration



## CALLING ALL SUPER SLEUTHS



Hay Seed has given City Slicker an outdoor, autumn challenge — find a tree that grows these three different shaped leaves ... a football shape, a mitten shape and a ghost shape.

You can help City Slicker with this task, while also taking a chance to win a **\$25 Amazon email gift card**, by doing the following:

1. Find the three colored leaves hidden in the magazine and give the page number.
2. What is the name of the tree?
3. Have you ever seen this tree and collected its leaves?

Enter online at [co-opliving.com/super-sleuth](http://co-opliving.com/super-sleuth) or send answers with name and address and phone number to:

Cooperative Living Super Sleuth  
P.O. Box 2340  
Glen Allen, VA 23058-2340

*The Kids Korner submissions are for children under the age of 16.*

## AUGUST ISSUE SUPER SLEUTHS

The August Super Sleuth was about a well-known brand of blue jeans. For a chance to win a \$25 Amazon e-mail gift card, kids were asked: to identify the jeans brand, find the pocket and give the page number and if they have ever worn this brand.

The correct answers are:

- Wrangler
- Page 34
- Yes, I have.

Our winner is Dylan.

*Congratulations, Dylan!*



