

PARENTING

Bishops issue cyberspace checklist

By Catholic News Service

Nancy Brink-O'Connor of Hornell generally knows what her kids are doing when they decide to go on the Internet, and it's not to look for pornography or hate sites.

She can keep an eye on her kids' computer use because the family computer is located in the same room as the washer and dryer, and she frequently walks through the area.

But Brink-O'Connor said she doesn't police her kids too closely because she trusts them to steer clear of harmful Internet sites.

"I think the most important thing that we've taught them is good decision-making," she said of her three children, Kate, 20, Kevin, 17, and Kerry, 14. "Maybe it sounds idealistic, but as far as I can tell with my kids, they don't search these (harmful) sites out."

Kerry recently graduated from St. Anne's School where Joan Coleman is librarian/computer teacher. Coleman said she encourages school parents to keep tabs on their children's Internet use. Each year, she sends home a list of Web-use rules that she also posts in the school.

"Never give anybody your true name and address," the rules state. "Never meet anybody you've met in one of the chat rooms. Never give them any details of your life."

Coleman urges parents to keep to themselves the password they use to access the Internet.

"That way the only time the children can be on the Internet is when the parents are right there," Coleman said.

Brink-O'Connor is a little more liberal, saying she and her husband, Jerry, allow their children to go online by themselves. She stressed that she encourages her kids to use the Internet purposefully, and not to merely surf all over the place. For example, she said her son Kerry regular visits sites that pertain to his interest in playing the guitar.

It's this kind of thoughtful parent/child interaction about cyberspace the U.S. bishops want to encourage. At their June meeting, the bishops adopted "Your Family in Cyberspace," a 2,500-word statement on exercising parental responsibility over children's use of the Internet.

Reflecting on the abundance of valuable material that coexists with pornography and hate sites on the Internet, the statement says going online with a computer "can be a little like visiting the best theme park in the world and coming across a toxic waste dump."

It explains such basic computer-communications as "Internet," "e-mail" and "chat room" in simple language, and highlights things parents should know in order to teach their children responsible computer use.

"Our purpose is not Internet avoidance, but Internet literacy," said Bishop Robert N. Lynch, head of the Diocese of St. Petersburg, Fla., and chairman of the U.S. bishops' Communications Committee.

With a tip of the miter to the National Coalition for the Protection of Children and Families, the bishops relied heavily on its action guide, "Protecting Your Family in Cyberspace," to offer parents a 16-point checklist of "safe Internet use tips."

The checklist says:

- Take the time to become educated about the Internet — it's an investment in the safety and health of your children.
- Select an Internet service provider

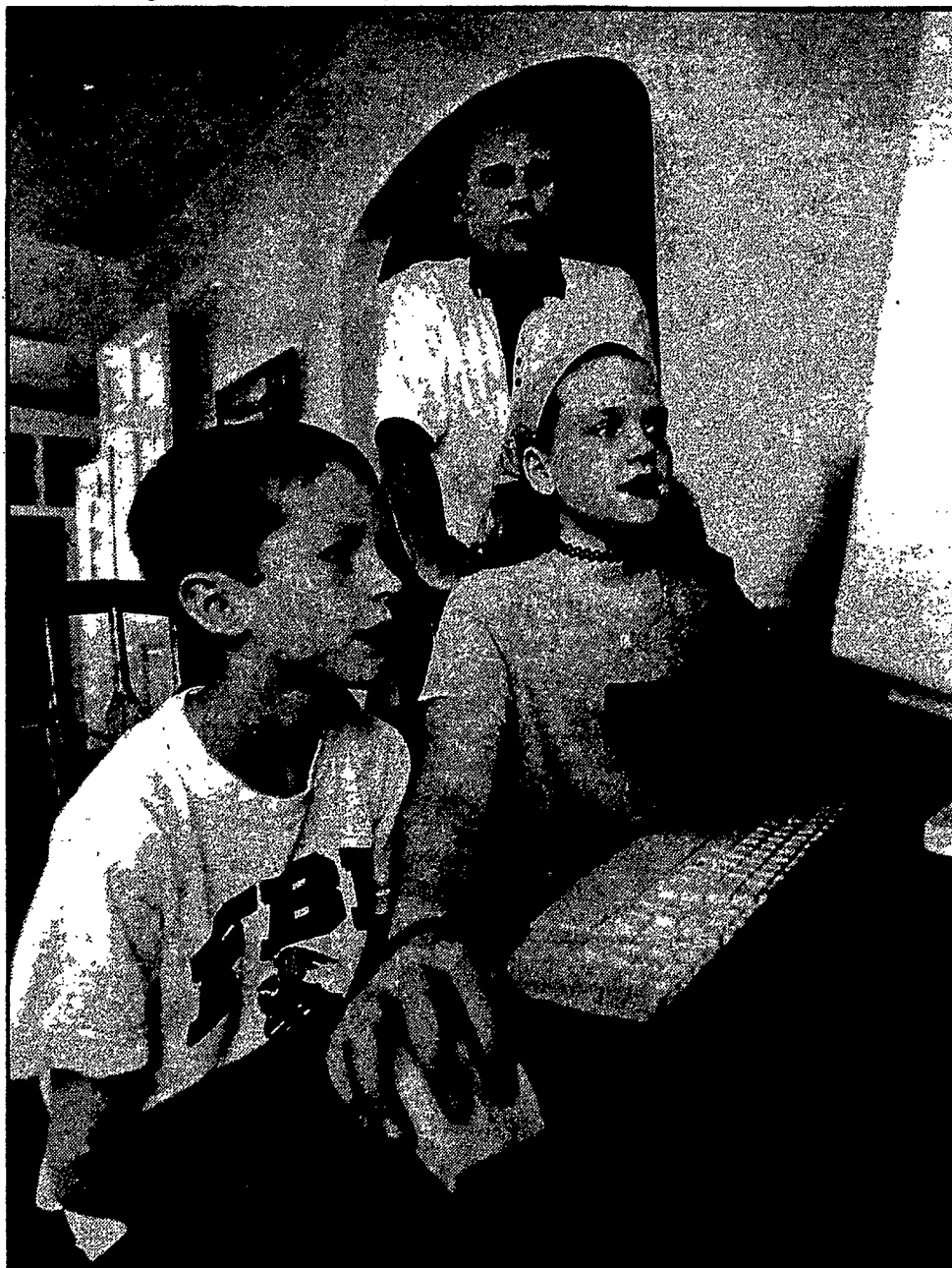


Photo illustration by Andrea Dixon/Staff photographer

Chlp Lacure watches two of his children, Jay and Margo, surf the net at their home in Greece.

(ISP) that provides the option of ISP-filtered access.

- Put any computer with Internet access in a public area of the house — not in a bedroom or den.

- Spend time on the Internet with your child, even if you are only an interested learner — you may be surprised by how much you enjoy it.

- Encourage your children to think about what they find on the Internet and to ask you if, for instance, they find 'Catholic' information that doesn't sound like what they've learned about the church at home or in school.

- Focus on the good sites available.

- Guide your children in how to use e-mail responsibly. It's a fun and useful part of the Internet, if used properly.

- Encourage your children to bring anything questionable to your attention and praise them for bringing problems to you.

- Caution your children never to give personal information — such as name, address, or telephone number — to anyone on the Internet without your permission, and never to send their pictures.

- Tell your children not to fill out questionnaires they find on the Internet without your permission.

- Do not permit face-to-face meetings with people they meet on the Internet, unless there's a good reason to do so and you or someone you trust is present.

- Don't overreact if your children bring something inappropriate to your attention,

or they will be intimidated and not do so again.

- Don't miss the significance of hidden disks — usage of pornographic or hate-filled material tends to be secretive.

- Remind your children that these rules apply whenever they use computers at locations outside the home, such as libraries.

- Above all, communicate. The best protection is good relationships and a healthy Christian family life in which family members talk and pray together.

At a press conference after the bishops approved the document, Bishop Lynch said the statement would be posted on the Web site of the bishops' conference — it's there at www.nccbuscc.org/comm/cyberspace.htm — and that he hoped it would appear "in whole or in part in the diocesan press" as well as in other formats.

Contains reporting by Courier Staff Writer Rob Cullivan.

Family Events

© AUG. 19-20 — Historical reenactment: "Professor Amos Eaton and Cookie"; history of the Erie Canal; presented by Rochester Museum & Science Center Players; Waterford (Troy) canal festival; 15-minute performances 11 a.m., noon, 1, 2, 3 p.m.; free; for information call Vicki 716/271-4552, ext. 311.

© SUN, AUG. 20 — Teddy bear picnic: games, clowns, food, entertainment; Sonnenberg Gardens, 151 Charlotte St., Canandaigua; 11 a.m.-4 p.m.; adults \$8.50, seniors \$7.50, children 6-16 \$3.50, kids 10 and under admitted free with teddy bear; 716/394-4922.

© AUG. 25, SEP. 1, 8, 15 — Fun Family Fridays: Strong Museum, One Manhattan Sq., Rochester; 10 a.m.-8 p.m.; \$6 adults, \$5 seniors/students, \$4 children 3-17, under 3 free; 716/263-2702.

© WED, AUG. 30 — Entry deadline: youth essay contest: "How St. Francis of Assisi Has Influenced My Life"; for ages 8-17; sponsored by Blessed Kateri Tekakwitha Secular Franciscan Regional Council; essay should be one to two pages long handwritten or typed; cash prizes; send entry to Bill Geary SFO, PO Box 70, Vernon Center, NY 13477; include name, address, phone number, age and parish.

© SEP. 9, 10 — Grandparents' Day: free ice-cream treat for grandparents, accompanied by a grandchild; gift craft activity; Strong Museum, One Manhattan Sq., Rochester; Sat. 10 a.m.-5 p.m., Sun. noon-5 p.m.; \$6 adults, \$5 seniors/students, \$4 children 3-17, under 3 free; 716/263-2702.

© SAT, SEP. 16 — Harvest Fest: to benefit Sonnenberg Children's Garden; pumpkin painting, creative vegetable creatures for children; horticulture programs for adults; Sonnenberg Gardens, 151 Charlotte St., Canandaigua; 10 a.m.-1 p.m.; 716/394-4922.

© SAT, SEP. 30 — Presentation: "A Circle of Friends"; revive Rochester's involvement in the Underground Railroad before the Civil War; presented by Rochester Museum & Science Center and The Friends of Mt. Hope Cemetery; Mt. Hope Cemetery North Gate House, 791 Mt. Hope Ave. opposite Robinson Dr., Rochester; 10-11:30 a.m.; also Oct. 21; \$10 adults, \$5 children 3-18; for reservations call 716/271-4552, ext. 342.

Kids' Chronicle

Answers from page 12:

1. Genesis OT, 2. Acts NT, 3. Joshua OT, 4. Jude NT,
5. 1 Corinthians NT, 6. 1 Chronicles OT, 7. Revelation NT,
8. Ezekiel OT, 9. Job OT, 10. Romans NT

HEALING RETREAT

LED BY FATHER RICHARD MCALEAR, OMI
Celebration of Eucharist & Prayers for Healing
Day of Spiritual Renewal and
Teaching on the Jubilee.

FRIDAY, SEPTEMBER 8, 2000 AT 7:30 PM
Celebration of Eucharist and Prayers for Healing
St. John of Rochester Church:
8 Wickford Way, Fairport, New York

SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 9, 2000
10-11:30 am, Teaching and Sharing
1:30-4 pm Teaching, Sharing and Prayer
Celebration of Eucharist 4:30 pm
St. Louis Church, Reddington Hall

BRING BROWN BAG LUNCH; BEVERAGES PROVIDED
REGISTRATION FEE: \$10.00 (TAX DEDUCTIBLE)
PAYABLE TO: OBLATE HEALING MINISTRY



St. Louis Church
60 S. Main Street Pittsford, NY 14534
Interpreted for the hearing impaired upon request
Ann 381-8577; Carol 381-8227



ADDITIONAL LITURGIES

Monday, Sept. 11, 7pm
ST. MARK'S, 54 Kuhn Rd.
Tuesday, Sept. 12, 7 pm
IMMACULATE CONCEPTION,
445 Fredrick Douglas Circle
Thurs., Sept. 14, 7 pm
ST. PATRICK'S CHURCH
46 Stanley St., Mt. Morris