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Twas the Night Before Christmas

By Clement C. Moore

'Twas the night before Christmas, when all through the house Not a creature was stirring, not even a mouse; The stockings were hung by the chimney with care In hopes that St. Nicholas soon would be there; The children were nestled all snug in their beds, While visions of sugar-plums danced in their heads; And mamma in her kerchief, and I in my cap, Had just settled our brains for a long winter's nap, When out on the lawn there arose such a clatter, I sprang from the bed to see what was the matter. Away to the window I flew like a flash, Tore open the shutters and threw up the sash. The moon on the breast of the new-fallen snow Gave the lustre of mid-day to objects below, When, what to my wondering eyes should appear, But a miniature sleigh, and eight tiny reindeer, With a little old driver, so lively and quick, I knew in a moment it must be St. Nick. More rapid than eagles his coursers they came, And he whistled, and shouted, and called them by name: "Now, Dasher! now, Dancer! now, Prancer and Vixen! On, Comet! on, Cupid! on, Donder and Blitzen! To the top of the porch! to the top of the wall! Now dash away! dash away! dash away all!" As dry leaves that before the wild hurricane fly, When they meet with an obstacle, mount to the sky; So up to the house-top the coursers they flew, With the sleigh full of Toys, and St. Nicholas too. As dry leaves that before the wild hurricane fly, When they meet with an obstacle, mount to the sky; So up to the house-top the coursers they flew, With the sleigh full of Toys, and St. Nicholas too. And then, in a twinkling, I heard on the roof The prancing and pawing of each little hoof. As I drew in my head, and was turning around, Down the chimney St. Nicholas came with a bound. He was dressed all in fur, from his head to his foot, And his clothes were all tarnished with ashes and soot; A bundle of Toys he had flung on his back, And he looked like a peddler just opening his pack. His eyes--how they twinkled! his dimples how merry! His cheeks were like roses, his nose like a cherry! His droll little mouth was drawn up like a bow, And the beard of his chin was as white as the snow; The stump of a pipe he held tight in his teeth, And the smoke it encircled his head like a wreath; He had a broad face and a little round belly, That shook when he laughed, like a bowlful of jelly. He was chubby and plump, a right jolly old elf, And I laughed when I saw him, in spite of myself; A wink of his eye and a twist of his head, Soon gave me to know I had nothing to dread; He spoke not a word, but went straight to his work, And filled all the stockings; then turned with a jerk, And laying his finger aside of his nose, And giving a nod, up the chimney he rose; He sprang to his sleigh, to his team gave a whistle, And away they all flew like the down of a thistle. But I heard him exclaim, ere he drove out of sight, "Happy Christmas to all, and to all a good-night."

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"Teddy Bear Tea" af the carnival of Lights Pavilion

ress in your holiday best and take your favorite Dteddy to tea! The Discovery Museum Science and Space Center is presenting a "Teddy Bear Tea" at the Carnival of lights pavilion, Saturday, December 5, at 1, 2:30 and 4 p.m. There will be a Three Bears play, an interactive sing-along and other activities, tea-time refreshments, and a special visitor – or two! Each tea party guest will also receive a 10" teddy bear to take home.

The Carnival of Lights Pavilion is located at St. Rose of Lima Park, 7th and K Street, Sacramento. Ticket prices are \$12 for guests 12 and under, \$15 for teens and adults. Tickets include admission

to the Carnival. To purchase tickets, call (916) 575-3942, or visit the special events page at www.TheDiscovery.org. The Discovery

Museum Science and Space Center, 3615 Auburn Boulevard,



Sacramento, is open Tuesday through Friday, noon to 4:30, and Saturday and Sunday, 10 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.

Byers Gymnastics December Events

Winfer Camp

December 28 through 31. 9 a.m. to 12 p.m. \$85 for 4 days (or \$25 per day) Fun Camp: ages 6 to 13 Kinder Camp: ages 4 to 6



Beagle Pups Available 530-635-0748





December Specials

Package 1: Add a class for only \$20 (Active members only)

Package 2: December Parents Night Out + Leotard just \$40 (no sibling discount)

Package 3: Parents Participation Class for only \$20 (new member only. Reg/Ins. fees waived for December)

Byers Gymnastics Center is located at 2009 Opportunity Drive, Roseville. For more information, call (916) 781-2939 or visit www.ByersGym.com.









See puppies at

sugarbabiesmaltese.com

sugarbabiesmaltese@yahoo.com

510-209-7222



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Explorit offers plenty for children who've not yet entered kindergarten. Now the museum is open on Tuesday mornings especially for tots under age 5.

Explorif fo kick off Toddler Tuesdays

E xplorit Science Center is now open on Tuesday mornings – a great time for the under-age-5 set and parents or child-care providers to visit the hands-on museum in Davis.

Tuesday-morning activities will be held on the museum's first floor. On most weekdays, visiting groups from elementary schools explore the exhibition on the second floor. The first floor contains the Gumerlock Gallery, home of the longterm exhibition "Move It! Science in Action," as well as a Wet Lab, Microscope Nook and Discovery Room.

Visitors are invited to bring a picnic lunch to eat on the museum's covered patio. Regular admission applies: \$4 general, free for members and ages 3 and under.

Explorit was founded in 1982 to provide hands-on science activities to families. It is located at 2801 Second St., Davis. For more information visit www.explorit.org or call (530) 756-0191.



celebrate "Christmas Memories" in Period Style at the Governor's Mansion

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Experience lavishly re-created period decor, entertaining live holiday music and captivating storytellers during two special "Christmas Memories" events at the Governor's Mansion State Historic Park (SHP) on Saturday, December 5 and Saturday, December 12 from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. both days.

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Surrounded by docents in period costume, Mansion visitors will be transported back in time to the very place where thirteen of California's early governors and their families lived, spent Christmas seasons and shared holiday traditions. In fact, then-Governor Edmund G. Brown and his family were the last first-family to celebrate Christmas in the stately Mansion.

In addition to the period decor and activities, Mr. and Mrs. Claus will make special visits to the Mansion to meet with the little ones and be available for photographs. For a nominal fee of \$3, a professional photographer will be available for visitors interested in holiday photographs with elaborately decorated and festive backgrounds.

Admission for the special "Christmas Memories" events is \$6 for adults; \$4 for youths ages 6 to 17 and free to children 5 and under. For more information about "Christmas Memories" or other Mansion events and activities can be obtained by calling (916) 323-3047 or visiting www.parks.ca.gov/governorsmansion. About the Governor's Mansion State Historic Park Beginning with Governor George Pardee and his wife Helen in 1903, the stately Governor's Mansion State Historic Park served as the home of 13 California governors and their families until 1967, when then-Governor Ronald Reagan and wife Nancy became the last to live there. Operated by California State Parks with financial assistance from the non-profit California State Historic Governor's Mansion Foundation, the Governor's Mansion is located at the corner of H and 16th Streets in Sacramento and is open Tuesdays through Sundays from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. (except on Thanksgiving, Christmas, and New Year's Day). Guided tours are offered on-the-hour from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. Regular admission is \$5 adults, \$3 youths ages 6 to 17, children ages 5 and under free. For more information, call (916) 323-3047 or visit www. parks.ca.gov/governorsmansion.

zard Annual old Town country christmas

Saturday, December 12, from 6 p.m. to 9 p.m. the whole community is invited to share in the holiday fun in Old Town Auburn. Crafters and artists will have their wares on sale for that special one-of-a-kind Christmas gift. Great food and entertainment, pictures with Santa. Shops and restaurants open. Holiday Open House in all shops!

Bright Horizons Free Children's Concert Join Us Thursday, December 10, 2009 5:30 p.m. - 7:30 p.m. Award Winning Francie Dillon Bright Horizons at Arden 2201 Harvard St. Sacramento, CA 95815 916-641-8961 www.brighthorizons.com/arden CA License #343603088/343603086 Save the Date December 10, 2009 Nurturing children 6 weeks to 6 years old ILY SOLUTIONS Teachers have over 50 years of combined experience e and Early Education

Offering an exceptional school-readiness program

www.brighthorizons.com

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CALIFORNIA KIDS! Family Fun Guide • DECEMBER 2009

Discovery Museum Science and Space Cenfer activities

The Discovery Museum Science and Space Center will be open Monday, December 28, Tuesday December 29, and Wednesday, December 30, from 10 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. The Museum will be closed Thursday, December 31, at 2 p.m.

Snowflake flurry

December 5 and 6 - 12:30 p.m. to 3 p.m. Welcome in the winter season by learning about snowflakes. Fun facts are displayed for you to learn and share with your family around the holidays. Kids 12 and under design a snowflake wreath to take home as a souvenir. A day at the museum is a fun way to stay warm and dry!

Terrific Tangrams

December 12 and 13 - 12:30 to 3 p.m. Enjoy festive color and shape fun by making holiday tangrams to take as souvenirs. There are three challenges for our guests to complete, including a gold candle, red Santa and green tree. Do not forget all the other offerings at the museum, including the Got Trees? exhibit, Fly Me to the Moon! exhibit, live animals presentations at noon and 2 p.m. and planetarium shows at 1 and 3 p.m. (for ages 4 and older). Bring a camera!

Remarkable Reindeer

December 19 and 20 - 12:30 to 3 p.m. Description: Everyone recognizes the reindeer as the animal of the holiday season, but how much do you really know about them? Visit the Discovery Museum this weekend and learn all about these amazing mammals. An outdoor Reindeer Ramble makes for a fun scavenger hunt the entire family can learn from. Once completed, turn it in for a little treat! Children 12 years old and under can make a reindeer craft to take home, commemorating the most famous reindeer of all.

Tree-rific Necklaces

December 26 and 27 - 12:30 to 3 p.m. Relax after the holiday madness by visiting the Discovery Museum Science and Space Center. Guests 12 and under make a beaded tree cookie necklace. You learn all about forests and the animals that live in them in our Got Trees? exhibit, which is open for one more week. Play and explore in our cabin, giant bird nest and forest smell station. Creature features, with our live animals, are at noon and 2 p.m.

Tree-rific Necklaces

December 28, 29 and 30 - 12:30 to 3 p.m. Relax after the holiday madness by visiting the Discovery Museum Science and Space Center. Guests 12 and under make a beaded tree cookie necklace. You learn all about forests and the animals that live in them in our Got Trees? exhibit, which is open for one more week. Play and explore in our cabin, giant bird nest and forest smell station.

Discovery Museum Science and Space Center is located at 3615 Auburn Boulevard, Sacramento. Admision is: \$6 adults (18+), \$5 seniors (60+), \$5 teens (13-17), \$4 children (4-12), \$0 children (3 and under) Ages appropriate for 4 to 12 years old. For more information, call (916) 575-3942 or visit www.thediscovery.org.

Make a wreath For the birds, too

This one is a colorful decoration for your feathery friends! Hang it outdoors, out of the rain, near your window so you can watch the birds enjoy their decorative treat.

You will need:

Newspapers Cardboard or poster board A cup of Fruit Loops

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- A cup of Cheerios
- A cup of peanuts in their shells
- Glue (white glue works fine)
- A length of ribbon to hang wreath from tree

Calif*rnia Kids!

You will need to:

Spread newspapers out to protect your work area Cut a wreath shape out of the cardboard (about 12 inches wide)

Glue Fruit Loops, Cheerios, and peanuts on the wreath

Poke a hole in the top, loop a ribbon through it and hang your wreath.

Happy Holiday Hunt!

Rey kids! It's that exciting time of the year again, time for holiday activities and winter break. Better dust off the sled; take time to make your "wish list" for shopping, and OH BOY! can't wait for all those delicious holiday cookies and pies! To help you get in the holiday spirit, we've put together a word search just for you. How many words can you find? Look carefully, words can appear vertically, horizontally, diagonally, backward, and upside–down.

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	Excitement	North Pole				
Candy Canes	Family	Presents				
Choir Chrisfmas Trees Colored Lights	Garlands	Reindeer				
	Hanukkah	Santa claus				
	Holiday	Sled				
Cookies	Holly	Surprises Tinsel				
Decorations	Jolly					
Delicious Foods	Ū	Tors				

HAKE IT YOURSELF!

cup and Ball Santa craft

hat a delightful Santa! Made using simple craft cupboard materials, this Christmas craft is sure to delight kids of all ages!

You will need:

Polystyrene ball, Paper cup, Pink paint, Red paint, Red and white felt, Small red pompom, White pompom, Wiggle eyes, Red, black and pink craft foam, Pink pen, Glue

Instructions:

Paint the ball pink and the cup red and leave to dry.Glue the ball to the bottom of the cup.

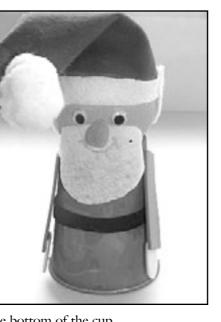
Cut two arms from red foam and two hands from pink. Glue one hand to the end of each arm and the other ends of the arms to the body.

Cut a strip of black foam and glue it around the middle of the cup as a belt.

Make a hat by rolling some fed felt into a cone. Glue the edge of the cone and glue the hat to the top of the ball. Cut a band of white felt and glue it around the edge of the hat. Add a pompom at the end of the hat.

Cut a beard from white felt and glue to the front of the face. Add a red pompom nose.

Finally, add two eyes and draw on a mouth.



Wooden Spoon Angel

This pretty wooden spoon angel is an easy Christmas craft for kids. She makes a great puppet and looks pretty on the top of the Christmas tree, too.

You will need:

Wooden spoon, Pink paint, White and pink felt, Yellow wool, Wiggle eyes, Gold card, Gold pipe cleaner (chenille stem), Pink pen, Glue, Sticky tape

Instructions:

Paint the spoon pink and leave to dry.

Make the dress by cutting a quarter circle of white felt. Roll into a cone around the spoon. Glue around the neck and up the back of the cone to secure.

Cut two arms from white foam and two hands from pink. Glue one hand to the end of each arm and the other ends of the arms to the body. Glue on some wool as hair.

Make a halo by twisting a pipe cleaner into shape and taping it to the back of the head.

Cut wings from gold card and glue them them to the angel's back. Finally, add two eyes and draw on a face.

Paper plate Rudolph

sn't this Rudolph The Red-Nosed Reindeer handsome? He makes a lovely Christmas display and is an easy Christmas craft for all ages.

You will need:

A small paper plate, A large paper plate, Brown paint, Brown card, Red pompom, 2 large wiggle eyes, Brown pipe cleaners (chenille stems), Glue.

Instructions:

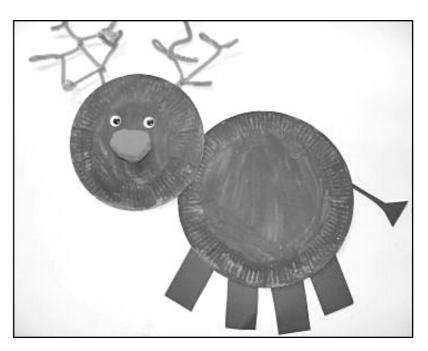
Paint the plates brown and leave to dry.

Glue the plates together along the rim. The small plate is the head, the large is the body.

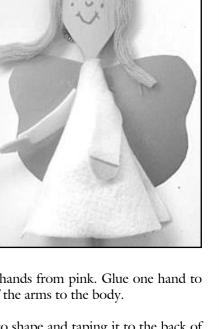
Cut four rectangles of card and glue these along the back of the large plate to form the legs.

On the small plate, glue a red pompom nose and the two eyes and draw on a mouth.

Finally twist some pipe cleaners into antler shapes (we used 3 pipe cleaners for each antler) and stick to the top of the head.



Crafts courtesy of: www.Activity Village.co.uk - Keeping Kids Busy



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Meet Bandit, the resident rattlesnake!

Help support the Effie Yeaw Nature Center!

s part of the effort to keep the Effie Yeaw Nature Center's exciting nature programs running, the Center's non-profit partner American River Natural History Association (ARNHA) was selected to participate in the Raley's Quality of Life program. Each time a participant shops at Raley's, Bel Air, Nob Hill or Food Source stores, a portion of the purchase will be donated to ARNHA. There is no additional cost to the shopper to participate in the program.

Raley's Quality of Life fundraising program helps raise funds for youth and education-focused non-profit groups. ARNHA was chosen because of the organization's long-term commitment and dedication to environmental stewardship. Funds raised through this program will go to keeping the Center doors open and feeding the resident animals, including long-time residents Virginia, the Great Horned Owl and Bandit the rattlesnake.

"Because of budget cuts, we are depending on the support of ARNHA to help keep us going

Please

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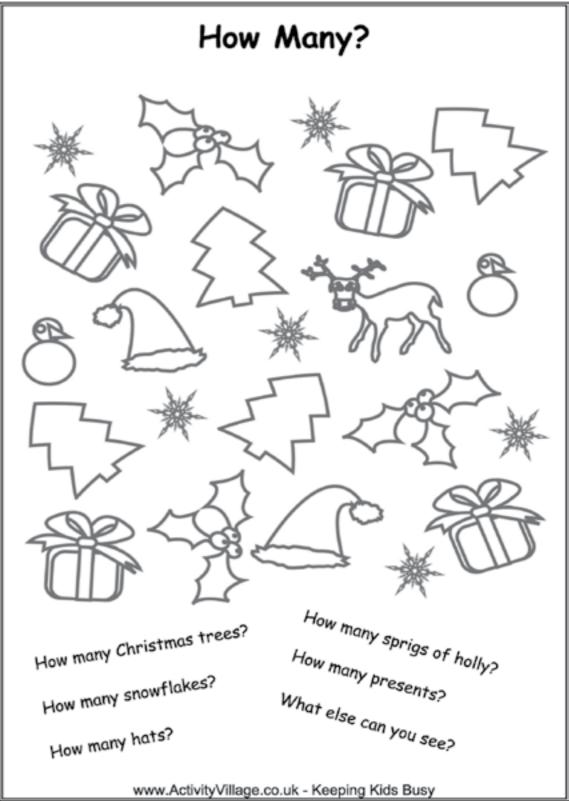
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Thank You!

for children and families," said Betty Cooper, Interpretive Specialist at the Nature Center. "We have built this program over the last 30 years and schools depend on us to help fulfill their state curriculum requirements."

Quality of Life Cards are available at the Effie Yeaw Nature Center, or by calling (916) 489-4918, or by e-mailing Jamie Washington at washintonj@ saccounty.net or Betty Cooper at cooperbe@saccounty.net. Anyone can participate and there is no cost to join. Learn more at www.effieyeaw.org.

"There are many groups throughout the community that have benefited from this Raley's partnership, and we hope that we can raise enough funds to continue introducing children to the wonderful animals and programs at our Center for years to come," said Cooper.





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By Carmel L. Mooney

A fter spending a few days in Hendersonville, NC hiking many of the waterfalls filmed in The Last of the Mohicans, we continued on to Cashiers, NC where we enjoyed the beautiful High Hampton Inn and Country Club. It's an exquisite and very classy historic resort that brings to mind Kellerman's in Dirty Dancing---very old fashioned in a great way!

We played family BINGO the first night and feasted both days on all the wonderful Southern Gourmet dining plus afternoon teas.

We entered the annual Teddy Bear Picnic and contest, a marvelous celebration with hundreds of festivities all day and night including a terrific magic show and performer at night. We even took a fly fishing lesson at High Hampton.

Sad to leave High Hampton (after eating a delectable breakfast of grits, biscuits and gravy, and wonderfully seasoned chicken livers) we traveled across the eastern Continental Divide along the Great Smoky Mt. Expressway and the Blue Ridge Mts.

Crossing through Tennessee and then into Kentucky, we passed the Cumberland Gap and Trail and Boonesborough named after our great uncle 8 generations back, Daniel Boone. When we reached Lexington, KY we toured the spectacular Henry Clay estate.

The Kentucky Horse Park in Lexington, Kentucky the Horse Capital of the World, was where we saw many of the most famous horses of all times like Cigar, the horse that made millions before retiring. The place was truly spectacular. We drove out to Shaker Village and ate lunch at a Shaker restaurant and toured the grounds.

We even passed Boone's Cave where Daniel Boone spent a winter.

We got into Cave City, KY in the evening and toured Dinosaur World, a park with Dinosaur themed activities and exhibits.

While in Cave City we visited Kentucky Down Under and saw the animals and cave tour, and then we visited Mammoth Cave Nat'l Park.

In nearby Bowling Green we toured the National Corvette Museum and savored a scrumptous dinner at Verdi Restaurant and Bar where we had wonderful natural Kentucky raised steak; delicious homemade grits and appetizers. Everything was outstanding.

We toured Bowling Green by first taking the fascinating tour of the Lost River Cave where Jesse James reportedly hid. A great boat tour through the cave adds to the excitement. Mariah's Restaurant is in an old historic building from 1818 so we enjoyed a great lunch there---the best grilled portabella sandwich I've had in ages.

We continued on the Civil War Discovery Trail to tour the Kentucky Library and Musuem where we saw the Duncan Hines exhibit and Civil War exhibits. We then visited the Historic Railpark and Train Museum.

Fountain Square, Circus Square, the Riverview and Hobson Grove were lovely.

We finished out the day enjoying the old-fashioned 100 year-old Beech Bend Amusement Park and Splash Lagoon where we enjoyed a vintage 100 yearold wooden rollar coaster and another ride from Michael Jackson's Neverland Ranch.

Continuing on to the Missouri Ozarks in the SHOW ME STATE, we stayed in Poplar Bluff one night and then we arrived in Branson.

Our first show in Branson we enjoyed the Liverpool Legends show, a superb Beatles revue. George Harrison's sister was a guest and she told the audience stories and answered questions.

The next day we saw a Broadway show for a matinee. Then we saw Branson's oldest show of 50 years, The Baldknobbers, which had relatives of the originals all performing.

While in Branson, we visited the Butterfly Palace and Rainforest and we saw Cathy Rigby star as Peter Pan. The show was absolutely fantastic!

Springfield, MO was the next stop, where there's lots of great things to see and do on Route 66.

In Springfield, we visited nearby Mansfield, MO and the Laura Ingalls Wilder historic homestead and farm.

In the early evening we went to the Discovery Center in Springfield and the famous Lambert's Cafe where the waiters THROW the rolls at you (very cool and unique). It's so popular we had to wait an hour for a table!

We enjoyed Anton's Coffee Shop for breakfast where we had the best omelets ever. Our busy day in Springfield included Dickerson Park Zoo, and a drive-thru Wild Animal Safari where we stayed in our car and hand fed wild animals. We had lunch at Incredible Pizza---very fun and well run and surprisingly actually had good homemade sauces and pizzas for a family fun center.

Later that night we ate dinner at Nakato Japanese Steakhouse where they cook in front of you and again all the locals packed in---excellent in every regard! Springfield has consistently excellent dining everywhere. Andy's Frozen Custard is throughout Missouri, so like we did in Branson, we had to visit Andy's a couple more times.



Digging fossils at Dinosaur Park, Kentucky.

Before leaving Springfield, MO we ate breakfast at Mudhouse---a local favorite and then toured Fantastic Caverns.

Taking a few minutes in St. Louis to touch the GI-NORMOUS St. Louis Arch, we crossed the Mississippi again into Illinois where we ate at the Ariston Cafe, the oldest existing restaurant on Route 66 and quite a little gem. They serve the best liver and onions we had ever had and even the kids love the liver there! The elderly gentleman who runs the restaurant inherited it from his grandparents (about a century old) and lots of famous stars stop there.

We passed a sign on the interstate (I-72) that said "90 degrees Longitude, 1/4 way around the world"---I begged to differ---it felt, at that point, like we had circumvented at least twice!!! We drove through gorgeous farmland with corn and soybeans as far as the eye could see for over 100 miles.

Finally we arrived in Macomb, my college town, home of Western Illinois University, Macomb, a quaint little college and farming city, population 20,000.

Locals directed us to Chick's, the cool happening college-y place to eat and then we checked into the wonderful Pineapple Inn Bed and Breakfast in Macomb. I loved sitting on the porch at dusk watching the cardinals and robins and fireflies! It was one of the highlights of our entire trip----sitting and doing nothing for an entire hour. Wow, what a novel concept. What a wonderful B & B in every regard, with excellent food, hospitality and a lovely ambiance.

We left Macomb and drove through Roseville, Illinois and on through the

Ronald Reagan Trail past Galesburg (Carl Sandburg's birthplace).

We drove through Sparta, Wisconsin the BICYCLE CAPITAL OF AMER-CIA (where we never saw one single bicycle---does a jogging stroller count?) We had driven 7610.2 miles when we left Sparta.

We crossed the Mississippi River too many times to count, all day, as we wound our way in and out of WI and MN. We crossed the Chippewa River into Pepin County and finally arrived at the Laura Ingalls Wilder Museum. We toured there and then drove down to Lake Pepin.

Stopping at a local produce stand to munch on blueberries, raspberries, and the sweetest peach I can ever remember savoring (we fought over the last bite), we then continued on County Road CC to the Little House in the Big Woods where Laura Ingalls Wilder was born in 1867.

Crossing the Mississippi AGAIN we passed the most beautiful farms for miles, eventually making our way out of the country and into Mankato, MN.

After resting up a day in Mankato, we felt ready to tackle the last 4000 miles and 2-3 weeks of our trip!

Leaving Mankato, MN we drove along the Laura Ingalls Wilder Historic Highway to Walnut Grove, MN (On the Banks of Plum Creek). We waded in "Plum Creek," by Laura's real dugout house from the 1800's. We even spotted a crab under the same big rock where 150 years ago Laura tricked the famed Nellie Oleson, in Plum Creek.

After we ate a big pageant dinner at the little local community center

See Travel, page 11



Kids enjoy Teddy Bear stories at Teddy Bear Picnic in Cashiers, North Carolina.

Author and daughter in dresses and bonnets at the Laura Ingalls Wilder Museum, Walnut Grove, MN.

Continued from page 10

we went to the Laura Ingalls Wilder pageant in our dresses and bonnets with hundreds of folks who came from all over the US for this big annual event.

Afterwards we camped on Plum Creek with about a hundred other people, next to "Lake Laura."

In the morning we ate at Nellie's Cafe and left Walnut Grove for the next LIW site in De Smet, SD where "Little Town on the Prairie," and the "Long Winter," took place, and "By The Shores of Silver Lake," and "These Happy Golden Years."

We visited the Surveyor's house, the house that Pa built for Ma in town, The Ingalls Homestead, The Wilder Claim, and we got a special media tour of the "locked and fireproof & closed to the public---archive room" filled with Laura's and her family's actual clothes, dishes, jewelry and belongings.

Staying the night in Pierre, SD, we then drove over hours of prairie after crossing the Missouri River. We spent a few hours in Badlands National Park where we ate Buffalo Tacos and hiked amazing trails and geological formations.

That afternoon we stopped in Wall, SD at the world famous Wall Drug. You'd have to see it to believe it!

In Rapid City we went to the Dances with Wolves set and there we enjoyed a chuck wagon dinner and musical show at Ft. Hays, before retiring at the historic Hotel Alex Johnson.

The next day we arrived in Keystone, SD and took a tour of Custer State Park where we drove the entire wildlife loop during an intense thunderstorm. We saw lots of donkeys, deer and antelope. We ate at The Historic Powder House Lodge in Keystone for a delicious dinner of Elk, Buffalo, and Venison kebobs. After dinner, we went to Mt. Rushmore for the lighting ceremony. It was wonderful.

We stopped by the famous Keystone historic cemetery where many folks who were involved in the creation of Mt. Rushmore were buried. It's the only cemetery in the world with a view of Mt. Rushmore.

(Just a little more LHOTP trivia...the real life Carrie Ingalls of Little House on the Prairie, married David Swanzey (he's buried there) and he was a very prominent historical figure there---naming Mt. Rushmore.)

We left Keystone after a terrific helicopter flight over Mt. Rushmore and Crazy Horse where we saw buffalo. We also enjoyed the Alpine Slide there too. Then we ate at Peggy's Place for breakfast and drove on to Devil's Tower, WY where they filmed Close Encounters of the Third Kind.

There we rode funky low rider 3 wheelers at the KOA near the base of the tower.

Later a fascinating local rock climbing instructor, musician/ bed and breakfast innkeeper Frank Sanders, gave us a terrific tour of his private property at the base of the tower where he takes folks climbing to the top daily. Devil's Tower Bed & Breakfast and Wilderness Climbing Retreat is truly unique and wonderful.

We ate dinner at the KOA while enjoying the views and the warm and gracious hosts. It rained all night and the next day we rode horses around Devil's Tower. We saw a mother fox and her babies on our trail ride. Frank Sanders and the owners of the KOA were amazing people and so kind. They all had captivating stories of when Steven Spielberg came there to film the Close Encounters movie and all sorts of other local tales that were just awesome and captivating. They also make world famous Devil's Tower Fudge at the KOA too.

Sad to leave, we had to continue on to Cody. We drove through the gorgeous Big Horn Mts., stopping in Ten Sleep, WY at Dirty Sally's for Huckleberry ice cream. We arrived in Cody just in time for the famous Cody Rodeo which was terrific!

We visited the Buffalo Bill Historical Center and Firearms Museum right before we left Cody for Yellowstone. Driving through Yellowstone Nat'l Park and the Grand Tetons was stupendous. We saw lots of wild buffalo as we crossed the Continental Divide again and finally arrived in beautiful Jackson Hole. We stayed at the Snow King Resort where we went on the Alpine Slide. The views were amazing.

Before leaving the Jackson, WY area we visited Teton Village and rode the tram to the very top. It's so high it makes the tram in Squaw Valley seem like nothing---three times as high and far more spectacular of a view. We did the bungee jump there also and drove back into Yellowstone. Crossing the Continental Divide many times, we stopped to get ice cream at Old Faithful, while we watched it erupt.

We spotted lots of moose and critters in Yellowstone and many geysers, before checking into Mammoth Hot Springs. Locals recommended a nearby hot springs on the WY/MT border called Boiling River so we took a dip and also spotted more wildlife.

Our last day in WY, we rode horses through the areas around Mammoth Hot Springs in Yellowstone where we spotted lots of bison and elk skeletons, aspen, and wildflowers. Driving through the park we even had to stop for several herds of wild buffalo.

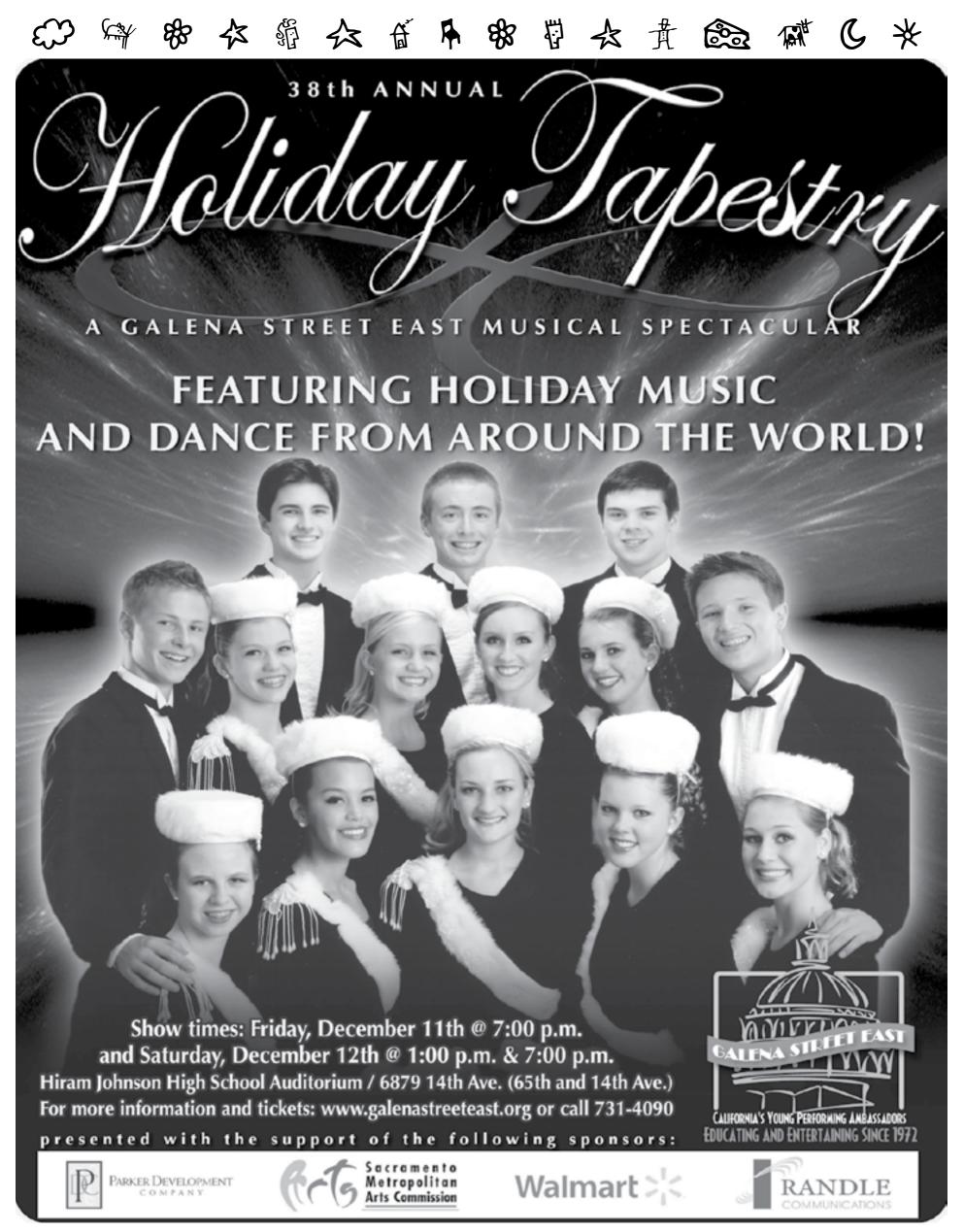
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If you'd like to see more photos, a much more detailed account of this trip, along with specific routes and travel tips, please visit my blog at: http://www.travelblog.org/Bloggers/ moonwriter/

Watch for the last part in my series where I'll cover the Montana and Idaho portion of the US on our unforgettable 80-day adventure.

You can listen to Carmel L. Mooney talk about these and other exciting travel destinations each Sunday afternoon at 1 p.m. on KJAY 1430 AM in Sacramento. Her website is: www. moneythewriteway.com.



Enchanfing ş. Holiday Classic

ome and enjoy the wonder of Tchaikovsky's The Nut-•cracker performed by Capitol Ballet Company with guest dancers from Stockton Ballet School. Attending this classical ballet has become a holiday tradition for audiences in Northern California's Central Valley.

Join Clara at her family's grand, Christmas Eve party where Herr Drosselmeyer amazes the children with his fantastic inventions, a life size doll and bear which seemingly come to life. Then experience Clara's dream, in which her courageous Nutcracker Prince and his toy soldiers victoriously battle the villainous Mouse King and his army of mice. With the battle won, Clara's Nutcracker becomes a handsome prince and leads her away on a magical journey. Travel with them as they pass through the beautiful land of snow and on to the wonderful Kingdom of Sweets, where they are greeted by the Sugar Plum Fairy and delighted by dances



simpler - but it is a great way to use last year's cards and kids (and adults) enjoy it. A good boredom buster for long winter afternoons!

Simply gather together a collection of old Christmas cards and carefully cut off the backs. Avoid glittery cards.

Now set up a "course" by placing a large box or bin on the floor and marking a place to stand some feet away from it, depending on the age of the children. If you are playing with mixed ages, older children should stand further away than younger children. Each child takes turns tossing a stack of cards (like a frisbee) into the box. Count up and the child with the most cards in the box wins.

performed in their honor, including The Waltz of the Flowers and the Dance of the Sugar Plum Fairy and her Cavalier.

The Nutcracker performances are Saturday, December 12, at 2 p.m. at the Sheldon High School Performing Arts Center, 8333 Kingsbridge Drive, Sacramento and Saturday, December 19, at 2 p.m. and 7:30 p.m. at the San Joaquin Delta College Warren Atherton Auditorium, 5151 Pacific Avenue, Stockton. Tickets are \$18 for adults, \$12 for children, seniors, students and military with ID. Tickets may be purchased at www.capitolballet.com, or by calling Capitol Ballet Company (916) 484-1188.

Capitol Ballet Company is a nonprofit organization funded in part by the Sacramento Cultural Arts Award program of the Sacramento Metropolitan Arts Commission with support from the City and County of Sacramento. Visit us at www.capitolaballet.com



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帮 公 弱众 Æ Winter Wonderland at fairytale Town

The holiday season makes ordinary places seem magical and magical places seem divine. With that in mind, Sacramento's most magical spot, Fairytale Town, has expanded its' Winter Wonderland event for 2009 to two consecutive weekends of after-hours magic. The park will be aglow with twinkling seasonal lights and the crisp air will be filled with music and laughter as Fairytale Town celebrates winter family festivities and traditions from around the world.

All the regular Fairytale Town attractions will be open for evening play; over 25 colorful oversized storybook playsets including King Arthur's Castle, the Jolly Roger Pirate Ship, Cinderella's Pumpkin Coach, Robin Hood's Sherwood Forest, the Crooked Mile, live Nursery Rhyme animals, and much more, plus live entertainment and special arts and crafts activities for all ages as well. There will be gift wrapping onsite, along with hot chocolate, holiday decorations, seasonal vendors, and live entertainment. Father Christmas himself will also be on hand and available for any last minute requests as he poses for pictures on the Mother Goose Stage.

The Winter Wonderland celebration at Fairytale Town is a special ticketed event that takes place December 5, 6, 12 and 13, from 6 to 9 p.m. General Admission is only \$5 (children 2 years of age and under will be admitted free). For more information, call (916) 808-7462 or visit www.fairytaletown.org. Fairytale Town is located at 3901 Land Park Drive, Sacramento.

free admission day to fairytale Town

eather permitting, as a special winter holiday gift, free admission is offered on Thursday, December 24, (Christmas Eve) from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. (Adults must be accompanied by children--and vice' versa.)

It's a great way to let children run off some steam on what, for many, is the longest day of the year.

All the colorful retro-attractions are still there (though they may seem a little smaller than your last visit) and all the adorable nursery rhyme animals are waiting to be admired, so come and spend a few leisurely hours in the crisp winter air.

You can say hello to Mary's Sheep, meet Peter Rabbit and family, the Three Pigs, the Three Blind Mice, and the Three Billy Goats Gruff. Pet Eeyore the donkey and Mulan the cow. You'll also find chickens, ducks and squirrels. Run the Crooked Mile again and again or explore King Arthur's Castle, try out Cinderella's Pumpkin Coach, visit Robin Hood in the heart of Sherwood Forest, or dance down the Yellow Brick Road.

"We're very appreciative of the community that has embraced us for 50 years," says Kathy Fleming, Fairytale Town's Executive Director. "These are some of the ways we like to express that gratitude."

For more information, call (916) 808-7462 or visit www.fairytaletown.org.



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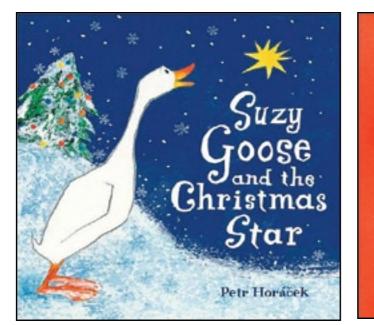
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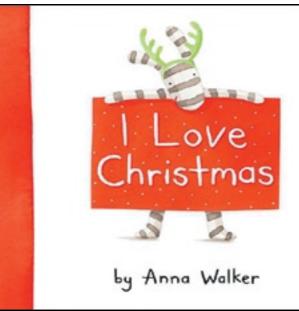
December 13th performance will be interpreted in American Sign Language.

Parking is FREE on Campus (Sat & Sun Only)

For more information Call Doug Lawson Children's Theatre Coordinator **916.558.2174**

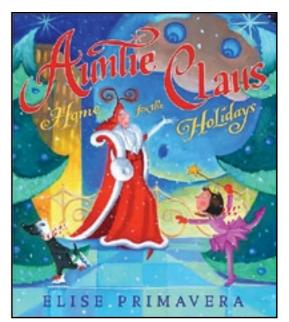
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CHRISTMAS

MAGIC



The Book Report: If's Almost Christmas!

By Connie Goldsmith

Re you having a hard time finding that last-minute gift for a friend's child, a little nephew, or a favorite niece? Look no further than your local bookstore. Think about making books part of your Christmas tradition. One size fits all, and you're sure to find books to delight each discerning munchkin. Books often live on to become cherished memories, unlike many toys that break in a day or two. Check out the feast of Christmas books available this season.

"Who Would Like a Christmas Tree? a tree for all seasons," by Ellen Bryan Obed, art by Anne Hunter. (Houghton Mifflin). This lyrically written and illustrated 'circle of life' book shows us that Christmas trees are used year-round by a variety of animals before reaching our homes for the holidays. "Who would like a Christmas tree in January? We would like a Christmas tree in January answer the black-capped chickadees." In March it's the deer, hungry for tender vegetation. In May, the robin needs the tree for a nesting spot. In November, wild turkeys flock to the tree to scratch for seeds and eat grass. In December, a family picks the tree from the plantation, takes it home, and lovingly decorates it for Christmas. Young children will enjoy the pictures and simple story. Older children may come to realize that even an object as simple as a tree has its own history.

"The Christmas Magic," by Lauren Thompson, art by Jon J. Muth. (Scholastic). We all know what Santa does on Christmas Eve, but it doesn't just hap-

pen – it takes Magic! Far, far north, when the nights are longest and the stars shine brightest, Santa calls his reindeer in from the snowy fields. He brushes out their fur and gives them special treats. He polishes his sled and the harness bells until they gleam. He darns his socks and trims his beard. He picks just

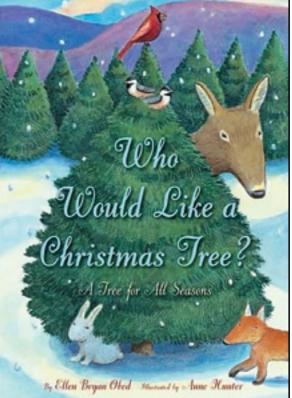
the right toy for every child in the world. Harnessed to the sled, the reindeer paw the snow, setting bells a-jingle while they wait for the magic that will send Santa speeding through the midnight sky. This elegant book is filled with lushly luminescent watercolor drawings. Words and art perfectly merge to capture the spirit of Christmas that we each carry within our heart.

"Auntie Claus: Home for the Holidays," by Elise Primavera. (Simon & Schuster). Sophie Kringle loves her Auntie Claus, but she's waited for years to dance the Sugar Plum Fairy at Miss Crumpet's School for Young Ladies and Gentlemen. What to do? Stay and have her dream come true? That would disappoint Auntie Claus because they go on a Christmas trip together each year. "Yew cahn't have your cake and eat it tew!" says Miss Crumpet. But Auntie Claus says nonsense, and figures out a way. New York will be the new North Pole. Soon, reindeer, toys, and elves all descend on the Bing Cherry

tin the world. Hotel that Sophie calls home. Even the

Hotel that Sophie calls home. Even the *real* Sugar Plum Fairy shows up! New York gets colder and snowier and more North Pole-ish. This unexpectedly fun story plays out in spectacular full-color spreads, some done over two pages turned on end. You'll wish you had your very own Auntie Claus by the end of this imaginative book.

"Suzy Goose and the Christmas Star," by Petr Horacek. (Candlewick). The golden glitter star and embossed silver letters on the book's cover tells you that something special is inside. Suzy Goose and friends have decorated their Christmas tree. It's so beautiful, except for one thing - it needs a star on top. Suzy sees the perfect star shining in the sky. Off she sets, over hills, over fences and log piles, always trying to get high enough to grab the brightly-shining star. She gets lost, but the sounds of her worried friends (honks, oinks, moos, hee-haws) help her return home. This charming story of the singled-minded goose in her quest for the perfect star celebrates

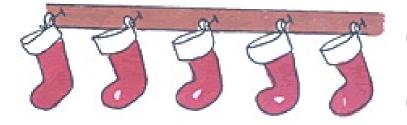


friendship and the joy of Christmas. The color palette is largely blue and white, touched with gold, silver, and green – unusual for a Christmas book but perfect for this lovely story.

"I Love Christmas," by Anna Walker. (Simon & Schuster). Ollie is a gentle and much-loved zebra, hero of several books of his very own. Ollie shows us how much he loves Christmas and what his favorite things are: crinkly paper, tinsel, and string; the cow, sheep, star, donkey and the baby asleep in the manger. He loves to watch the twinkly Christmas tree lights. Most of all, he loves his dog Fred. This sweet story and the simple yet highly appealing illustrations will appeal to the very youngest listener cuddled in your lap on Christmas Eve.

Connie Goldsmith lives and writes in Carmichael. Her latest juvenile nonfiction books, "Cutting Edge Medicine," "Meningitis," and "Superbugs Strike Back: when antibiotics fail," can be found at online booksellers, and in school and public libraries.





fill The Stocking

his is a relay team game similar to an egg and spoon race!

at least 4 per team



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You will need:

Stocking for each team, spoon for each Age: 4+ Numbers: any, but team, bowl for each team, wrapped candy.

Divide the children into teams and line the teams up at one end of the room. At the other end, hang a Christmas stocking for each team. Place a bowl of candy and a spoon in front of each team. The first child in each team takes a candy from the bowl with the spoon. They then carry the candy on the spoon to the stocking, drop it in, and race back to the next person in line. The second person in line then takes the spoon and so on.

Either play that the first team to fill the stocking are the winners - or, if you have large stockings, play for a set amount of time and the team who gets the most pieces of candy in their stocking in the time wins.

Jingle Bells

ingle Bells is a fantastic game for winding down a Christmas party. It is also suitable U for all ages: Play it with a large group of children ranging from 2 1/2 years to 15 years old and it will be enjoyed by all.

Age: 3+ Numbers: 8+

You will need:

A large space (preferably uncarpeted), a chair, a set of bells, a blindfold (scarf will do), The children sit in a circle. A chair is

placed in the centre of the circle and the set of bells put underneath. A child is chosen to be Santa and sits on the chair. Santa is then blindfolded.

A child in the circle is chosen to be the thief. The thief must try to steal the bells without being heard. If Santa hears a noise he must try to point at the thief before the thief returns to his/her place in the circle. If the thief succeeds, Santa has another turn while a new thief is chosen. If the thief is identified, they become the new Santa and the previous Santa rejoins the circle.

Depending on the numbers and ages you can adapt the last part. For example in a large group I try and pick a different Santa and thief each time to try and ensure everyone has a go at something. With younger ones I let the thief become Santa whether they succeed or fail in getting the bells.

Shake raffle and guess

his is an exciting party game for children of all ages, perfect for birthdays and Christmas parties. It can double-up to provide a "going away present" for the kids, too.

Age: 4+ You will need:

A number of different small gifts (the sort you can buy from the dollar or pound store) - one for each child, small boxes of different shapes and sizes, gift wrap, slips of paper and a pencil for each child (you might want to pre-number these).

How to play:

Place the gifts into boxes, wrap them up and number each box.

Give the guests a slip of paper and pencil each. Pass the boxes around. The kids should shake them and rattle them to see if they can guess what's inside, writing down their guesses on their slip of paper against the correct number.

When everyone is finished, let the children choose a gift to open. You can do the choosing in a number of ways.

Start with the youngest child, and progress by age

Start with the birthday child, and progress round the room

Allow the winner of each game during the rest of the party to select their gift.

Before the children leave, have a grand opening of the gifts and let the kids compare their guesses with the actual toys!



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Team Balloon Pop

uch loved by all ages, from little kids to adults, this team game is great fun and very noisy! It is good for a mixed age party and enjoyed by teenagers too.

Age: 6+ You will need:

One blown-up balloon per party-goer (and a few spares)

How to play:

Divide your party into teams and line the teams up at one end of the room. Place a balloon for each team at the other end of the room. On your signal, the first player from each team runs to their balloon and tries to pop it by sitting on it. As soon as it pops, they run back to join their team and you place another balloon ready for the next player. The first team to pop all their balloons wins.

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Hints:

If you can control this game somewhat by keeping an eye on who will be popping the balloon next and giving a sausage-shaped balloon to the more experienced players! If you want to ensure that all teams get a fair chance, you could put all the balloons in a central location and allow each player to choose the balloon they pop.

You can add an obstacle course element to the game by making each player negotiate various obstacles before they reach their balloon.

Make the game more exciting by making players roll a die (or two) before popping their balloon. They must roll a 6 (or a double) before they are allowed to try to pop the balloon.

Add to the fun and chaos by inserting a nursery rhyme forfeit inside each balloon (see Balloon Pop for how to do this). As each player pops their balloon, they

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must find which nursery rhyme they must sing before the next player has their turn. If you have 3 or even 4 teams playing it can get very funny: some players will be bouncing about on their bottoms trying to pop balloons, others will be standing solemnly trying to sing a nursery rhyme as quickly as possible, and others will be frantically running!

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twirl

Blizzard

his is a noisy team Christmas party game for people who don't mind a bit of a mess!

Age: 5+

Numbers: The more the merrier! You will need:

A large supply of white polystyrene packing popcorn (peanuts), a small Christmassy container for each team - perhaps a Santa hat, woolly hat or bucket, a large Christmassy container for each team - perhaps a crate or cardboard box covered in wrapping paper, a scoop or spade for each team. How to play:

Stand the teams at one end of the room and place the large containers at the other end of the room opposite them. Place a large box of packing popcorn on the floor in the middle of the room (the brave will throw the popcorn down without containing it in a box).

At your signal, the teams race to the popcorn and shovel the pieces into their small container. When the small container is full, they race to empty it into the bigger container.

The race ends either when all the popcorn is used up, or when a certain time has passed, or when you think the kids have had enough!

Measure the amount of "snow" in the large containers and declare a winner.



Meow.or, A cat-Napping caper

eow.org, A Cat-Napping Caper" is a children's mystery book that features four young protagonists - each has a physical disability that sets them apart from the other children at school. Using technology and their own natural talents they come together to solve a mystery of dozens of cats gone missing. The book is fast paced and humorous with an underlying message about accepting differences and respecting talents. It's aimed at 4th to 6th graders but could be read to a 7-year-old and understood.

The book has been vetted by mental health professionals and read by a number of adults who heartily endorse the value of the book and express delight with the characters and story.

About the author:

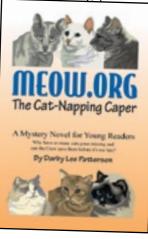
Darby Patterson has been a journalist for more than 20 years. Throughout that career Darby penned fiction and nonfiction books for

the sheer joy of writing and was an avid reader of mystery novels. Now more focused on personal writing, "Meow.org, The Cat-Napping Caper," is her first mystery novel for children. She intends for this unique book that features the abilities of children with disabilities, to be the first in a series.

Contact: www.darbysbooks.blogspot.com-

www.stories and books.com

**Author, Darby Patterson, will be signing books at Borders in Folsom on Bidwell, 1 p.m., Saturday, December 5, and Borders Roseville, Sunday, December 13, at 1 p.m.





DECEMBER 2009 • CALIFORNIA KIDS! Family Fun Guide

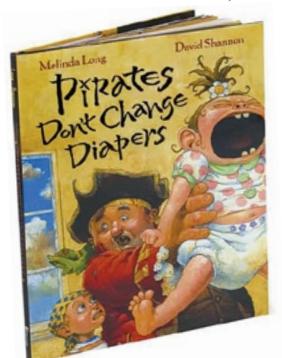


who wrote That?

The Creators of Your Child's Favorite BooksFeaturing Melinda LongBy Patricia M. Newman

have so many good memories from my childhood," Melinda Long says. "My mother and father both were very influential in me becoming a writer. Dad told family stories all the time. Mama was the one that read to me every night. We read Green Eggs and Ham [by Dr. Seuss]. That book was falling apart." Another memory that sticks in Long's mind is the time her mother suggested she write a story and use rubber stamps to illustrate it. "I loved telling stories," Long says in her soft southern drawl, "but I didn't like writing things down, so [Mama] gave me her typewriter and that was [how I wrote] my first story."

Today, Long uses many of her childhood memories in her stories, but she alters the details to keep her books current. "A lot of things are universal and they transcend time," she says. "Kids play pretend even now and we used to play pretend all the time. The one [game] I remember that probably influenced my writing was I used to play pirate. I would go outside and bury things in the yard like my mother's earrings and I would draw pirate maps to find them again." She laughs at the memory. "I can remem-





Melinda Long

ber pacing it off. I used to love doing that stuff!"

Long graduated from Furman University in South Carolina where she majored in elementary education. One particularly influential teacher taught a children's literature class and Long fell in love with Where the Wild Things Are (by Maurice Sendak) and Ira Sleeps Over (by Bernard Waber). "Those are the most awesome books," she says, and for the first time she thought, "While I'm teaching, I might want to write children's books."

In 1984, after Long married, she says, "I got

up the nerve to submit." After 12 years of refining her craft, an agent expressed interest in one of Long's stories and took her on as a client. The manuscript that first piqued the agent's interest never sold, but in 1997 Long sent him When Papa Snores and he sold it within a few months.

Snoring is a family joke in the Long household; both Long and her husband snore. Long's husband once said to their two children, "When your mother snores the manhole covers outside bounce up and down." Long says, "The kids would giggle at that. I couldn't let him top me so I'd say, 'When your daddy snores the people in the graveyard sit up and yell, 'Be quiet!'" The idea took on a life of its own inside Long's head until she developed a story around snoring. The main character in When Papa Snores wanders through her house quieting objects disturbed by her grandparents' snoring.

Long's second book, *Hiccup Snickup*, uses an old rhyme her grandmother taught her about curing hiccups. Before Long's grandmother passed away at the age of 98, *Hiccup Snickup* was published and Long read it to her. Long says, "She laughed and patted me on the knee and said, 'Honey, you should get a prize for that.' She didn't know I had all the prize I needed right there."

Although the inspiration for *How I Became A Pirate* came from Long's childhood pirate games, the seed for the story came from a conversation she had in Barnes & Noble with an acquaintance who mentioned that pirate books were hard to

find. Long based Jeremy Jacob, the main character, on her childhood self. "It's my voice," she says, "and I really love him." But illustrator David Shannon created another of Long's favorite charactersthe pirate with two eye patches. "He's always lifting one up to see. I just think he's hilarious. He's perfectly visual and is all

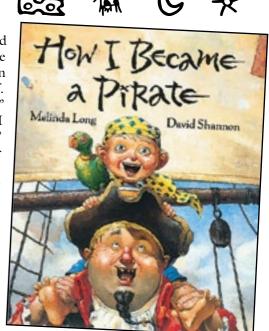
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[Shannon's] creation." In Long's third pirate book still in production, she had to think of a compelling reason for the pirates to return for their treasure; consequently, she researched what might have happened to their ship that would have required an expensive repair.

Long writes from her home in Greenville, South Carolina whenever the creative mood strikes. Generally, the morning hours are her most productive. Long says, "I don't think in pictures," which may seem odd for a picture book author. She chooses words that she thinks will tell a good story, but then forces herself to step back to be sure that the text has enough action and a variety of scenes to create an interesting visual experience for readers. "It doesn't come naturally," she says. "And I still don't see detailed pictures."

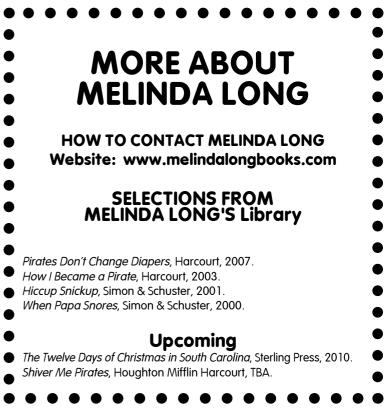


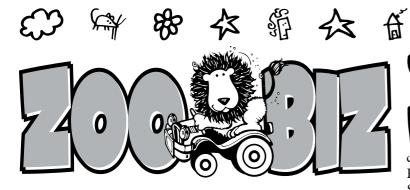
Prior to finding her niche in teaching and writing, Long worked as a disc jockey at a radio station. "It was local hambone stuff," she says, "and fun for a little while." But she confesses to missing the interaction with people, and especially children, that she found in teaching and that she continues to find in her presentations to children. "I love being around kids because they're funny," Long says. And children love being around her and reading her books, because she makes them laugh.

Perhaps Cameron, one of Long's fans, says it best. "Your books are so good they made my bald head grow hair!"

Next month: Kadir Nelson

Patricia Newman is the author of Jingle the Brass (Farrar, Straus & Giroux). Her newest book, Nugget on the Flight Deck (Walker), is now available. Visit her website at www.patriciamnewman.com to watch the trailer.







Toys for Tots

This holiday season the Sacramento Zoo asks you to bring one new, unwrapped toy and receive a free admission to the Zoo for one child. The Sacramento Zoo is open daily from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m., closed Christmas Day.

Holiday Gifts that Give

Winter is a great time to visit the Zoo and take a break from the hectic holiday hustle. While visiting the Zoo, stop by Zoofari Market and find some unique gift items for family and friends or find the perfect gift for those hard-to-buy-for people in your life at the membership office: a Zoo Parent certificate, a gift membership to the Zoo, or a brass paver.

Holiday Magic

Saturday, December 13 from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m.

Why should only humans receive gifts during the holidays? It's time for Holiday Magic - bundle up and watch as the animals unwrap their holiday goodies.

Free Admission Day af the Sacramento Zoo

Thursday, December 24, from 10 a.m. to 1:30 p.m.

Celebrate the Christmas Eve with a Pajama Par-

ty and the animals! Shop at Zoofari Market where you'll find a variety of unique last minute gifts. Have a Happy Holiday at the Zoo with our gift to you-a Free Day at the Sacramento Zoo. The Zoo opens at 10 a.m. and closes at 1:30 p.m. on Wednesday December 24.

Sacramento Zoo Explore 7 Confinents in 14 Acres!

Open since 1927, the Sacramento Zoo is home to over 140 native, rare and endangered species and is one of over 200 accredited institutions of the Association of Zoos and Aquariums. Located near the corner of Land Park Drive and Sutterville Road in William Land Park, the Zoo is wholly managed by the nonprofit Sacramento Zoological Society. This Sacramento treasure inspires conservation awareness through education and recreation. Open daily from 9:00 am to 4:00 pm, general admission is \$9.50; children ages 3-12 are \$7.00 and two and under are admitted free. Parking is free throughout the park or ride Regional Transit bus #6. For information, call 916-808-5888 or visit saczoo.com.

击 む What is Kwanzaa?

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wanzaa is an African-American holiday celebrated mainly in the US for the week between 26th Decemper and 1st January each year. The word "Kwanzaa" comes from the Swahili language and means "first fruits". Each day of the seven days is dedicated to one of "The Seven Principles of Kwanzaa", which are 1. umoja - to maintain unity in the family and community 2. kujichagulia - self-determination, to be responsible and speak for oneself 3. ujima - collective work and responsibility, to build and maintain a community 4. ujamaa - economic co-operation, to help and profit one another 5. nia

Sacramento



- purpose, to build and develop the community for the benefit of the people 6. kuumba - creativity, to do everything possible to leave the community more beautiful and beneficial for future generations 7. imani - faith, to believe in parents, teachers and leaders.

A candle is lit each day on the special candlestick, the "kimara", to represent these principles. The kimara is placed on a mkeka, a traditional straw mat, and one ear of corn is also placed on the mat for each child in the family. A fruit basket, called a "mazao", is also displayed, along with a special "unity" cup, out of which everyone drinks. Families decorate their homes with traditional African crafts. The colors red, green and black - representing the African flag - are used. Gifts, known as "zawadi", are given on the last day of Kwanzaa.



Holida' Magic

Animal Holiday Treats

Last day to donate new unwrapped toys and canned food items!

saczoo.com

Target Free-Admission Day

916-808-5888



ids are great gift-givers. Recently, after a trip through the Lego aisle, my eldest son began to scheme about what toys to purchase for his three younger brothers. I was touched by his willingness to mow the lawn a few more times in order to bless someone else. What was even more amazing was when one of his brothers approached me for some "paying jobs" so that he, too, could have money to buy gifts for the others. That kind of sibling rivalry makes a mom's heart sing!

Jordan's Closet Upscale Children's Consignment

. High-End, Brand Name Infant, Pre-teen & Maternity Clothing, in like new condition Infant Equipment and Furniture

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& family. Receive FREE toys.

Host a shopping party for friends

Birth-12 Yrs. Family Games

On-Line catalog ~ www.DTJudy.com

Inventory in stock for late Holiday delivery!

At our house we also love to make gifts. It has become a tradition over the years. Honestly, there just aren't enough lawns in the world for ME to mow so that I can give gifts like I want to come December. If you're looking for ways to bless others that don't cost a lot, then try out one of these fun, kid-friendly gift ideas. Make some memories and bless your friends with these recipes for fun.

*Hand Dipped Pretzels Makès 12 gifts

You will need:

Fun Toys, Books, Games that feed the mind!

2 bags large pretzel rods 40 caramels, plastic wrappings removed 2 T. cream

chocolate-flavored almond bark vanilla-flavored almond bark toffee brickle pieces

chopped nuts mini candy-coated chocolates (like M&Ms) colored sprinkles decorative food-safe treat bags curly ribbon gift tags

In medium saucepan, combine caramels and cream. Over low heat, melt caramels, stirring frequently. Meanwhile, melt each flavor almond bark in the microwave according to package directions. Prepare a small plate of each of the various toppings: toffee pieces, nuts, chocolates, and sprinkles. When caramel sauce is completely melted and smooth, pour it into a tall glass. Help children dip pretzel rods halfway into caramel sauce, scraping any excess onto the side of the glass. Immediately roll caramel-covered pretzels into the topping of choice. Place on waxed paper to cool and harden. Drizzle melted almond bark over toppings. Allow to cool completely.

Presentation: Divide pretzel rods amongst treat bags. (Save some for snacking!) Tie the top of the bag with curly ribbon. Attach a gift tag.



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Helpful Tips for cooking with Kids:

Make sure everyone washes his hands.

Tie back loose hair.

* Have each child wear an apron or smock of some kind. It's much easier to wipe messy hands on yourself than to hunt down a paper towel.

Cover table or work area with butcher paper or a plastic tablecloth.

* Prepare separate areas for working, holding completed items, and wrapping.

Precut gift tags and precut and curl ribbons for wrapping. Strategize how all family members can work together. Either give each child one step in the recipe or wrapping to be combined in the end, or arrange all the items in stations so that the children will move from station to station, each preparing the recipe "on his own".

BIO – Jessica Fisher is a wife, mom of six, and freelance writer. She regularly writes about kitd-friendly fun and family management at www.lifeasmom.com.

* Cookies and Peppermint Hot Cocoa Mix Makes 12 gifts

Large box of assorted shortbread or gingerbread cookies

8 quarts nonfat powdered milk 48 ounces instant chocolate milk powder

2 dozen peppermint candy canes, plastic wrappers removed, finely crushed

1 cup powdered sugar

1 cup dry coffee creamer

12 decorative food-safe treat bags

24 snack size zip-top plastic

Divide bulk box of cookies into 12 snack size zip-top plastic bags. Set aside.

In large bowl combine powdered milk, chocolate milk powder, crushed peppermint, powdered sugar and creamer. Stir well to combine. Scoop 3 Tablespoons of mixture into each of 12 plastic snack bags and seal carefully. Store any remainder mix in airtight container.

Presentation: Place one bag of cookies and one bag of cocoa mixture in decorative treat bag. Tie closed with ribbon. Attach a gift tag that includes these directions: To prepare Peppermint Hot Cocoa, combine contents of package with one mugful of hot water. Stir well and enjoy with cookies.



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• ATLAS

• MICRO-TRAINS

A Wish From Above

By Artie Knapp

The little angel felt happy, as a young girl held her in the palm of her hand. But the moment she let go the little angel felt quite sad.

"Please come back," pleaded the little angel. But the young girl didn't hear her.

The little angel tried to follow the young girl, but her wings wouldn't budge. She was stuck. And no matter how hard she tried, she couldn't free herself.

Her plea for help didn't go unanswered, however, as a gruff voice said, "Can I be of assistance, madam?"

Although she heard the voice call out, the little angel didn't see anyone.

"Who said that?" asked the little angel.

"I did," said a large polar bear.

"I hear you, kind sir. But I can't see you."

"I can't see you either," said the polar bear. "Where are you?"

"I'm not sure. All I see is a big wall. And to make matters worse, I'm stuck."

"A big wall is all that I see, too," said the polar bear. "And I am also stuck. This is most peculiar."

As she struggled to break free, the little angel hoped that everything happening was just a dream. But when she opened her eyes the next morning, the wall was still all she could see.

"Are you still there?" called out the little angel to the polar bear.

"Yes, and still stuck."

"Me too," she said in a sad voice.

But the little angel's sadness soon faded, when the young girl was standing beside her once more. The little angel thought that the young girl had come back for her, but she had not.



Suddenly everything around the little angel started to shake, and then the young girl was gone. The little angel asked the polar bear if he had also felt the great tremble, but he had something else on his mind. He asked her if she too smelled something wonderful.

"Yes," said the little angel. "But how can you think of food right now?"

And then a voice said, "Hello, I'm a gingerbread man."

The little angel and polar bear could hear the gingerbread man, but they couldn't see him. The gingerbread man told them he was stuck and couldn't move. But unlike the little angel and polar bear, the gingerbread man was facing a window; and through it he could see snowflakes falling outside.

"How do you get to see such things? All we can see is a big wall," said the polar bear.

"I don't know," said the gingerbread man, "but it sure is lovely."

The little angel's eyes filled with tears. She thought that she would never be

State Capitol Event

December 1 - 23

State Capitol Museum Holiday Music

In 1996, California State Parks, the Department of General Services, Joint Rules Committee of the Legislature and the Governor's office worked together to restore historic holiday traditions at the Capitol. As a result, glowing decorations, Victorian-style floral arrangements, live holiday music performances and the traditional holiday tree lighting ceremony help to recapture the spirit of past holiday festivities. Daily holiday concerts at noon in the first floor rotunda.

Museum open daily 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. (Closed Thanksgiving, Christmas, New Year's)

Guided Tours offered every hour on the hour.

For school group reservations (ReserveAmerica) call toll free (866) 240-4655. Reservations are required for school group tours of the California State Capitol Museum.

The Museum is located at 1303 10th Street, 10th Street between L and N Streets, Sacramento.

For more information call, (916) 324-0333 or visit www.capitolmuseum.ca.gov.

able to see such things herself. And then the young girl came back yet again, but this time she plugged something into the big wall. Suddenly beautiful lights flashed in all directions! The young girl then placed a candy cane right above a little angel, and right below a polar bear.

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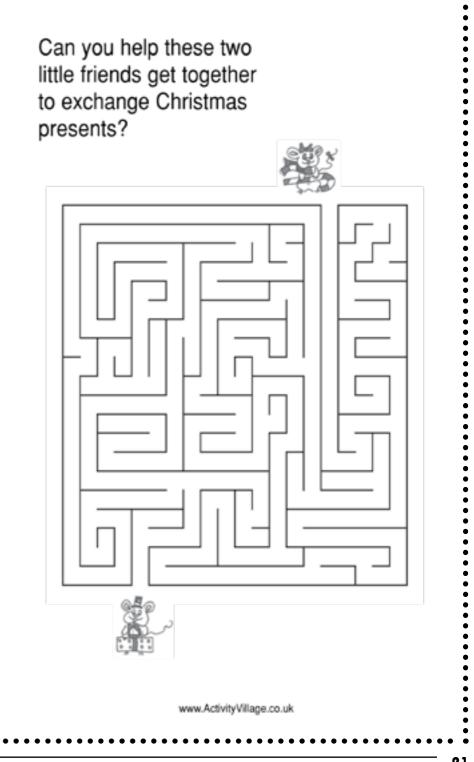
"What do you think, Mommy?"

"I think it's the most beautiful Christmas tree ever," said the young girl's mother. "Now there's only one last thing to do," said her father.

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The young girl's father proceeded to place a gold star atop the Christmas tree, but before doing so, he asked everyone in the room to make a wish. And everyone did. Later that night the gingerbread man ran away as fast as he could - the polar bear was outside playing in the snow - and the little angel was in the young girl's room watching over her.

Artie Knapp is the author of many published works for young readers. His children's book Stuttering Stan Takes a Stand was endorsed by The National Stuttering Association and the American Institute for Stuttering. A frequent contributor to California Kids, Artie's children's literature has also been featured in such publications as The Detroit Free Press, Humpty Dumpty's Magazine, Lincoln Kids, The Modesto Bee, Kids Turn Central, the Fort Wayne Family Magazine and the Cincinnati Enquirer to name a few. He is a member of The Society of Children's Book Writers and Illustrators, and graduated from Ohio University. Artie lives in Cincinnati, Ohio, with his wife and daughter. To learn more about Artie and his work, please visit www.artieknapp.com





The JB Ranch has served Sacramento and all surrounding counties for over 30 years.

Are your children staying indoors too much? Nothing exciting except for video games and TV? Why not try the benefits of horseback riding? It is an adventure. The "horse and rider" is a one-on-one sport. When someone steps up on a horse they are like the captain of a ship. The benefits can go on forever. It is an outdoor sport that teaches balance, provides exercise, and personal responsibility. The love of a horse is deeply inherited. The horse can be your best friend. All ages are welcome. Pony rides for children under 6. Lessons for older children will broaden the horizons of their lives. A personal Mom or Dad trail ride with your child for a birthday, school achievement, or special occasion will bring you closer to your child. It is a natural love all humans have for horses.





Jerry Bestpitch owner, a professional wrangler has competed and rode horses most of his life. He has two Overall World Championships in horse competitions. The horses used are all highly trained and have been in many motion pictures. They are also used for trail rides and lessons. Horse day camps for children are held at the ranch during school holidays and summer vacations. The ranch is located 20 minutes north of downtown Sacramento.

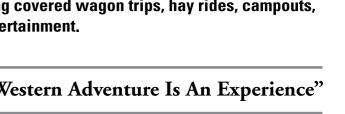
The JB Ranch also provides a wide variety of Western Adventure including covered wagon trips, hay rides, campouts, and equestrian entertainment.

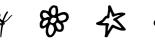
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Christmas Jokes for Kids

www.ActivityVillage.co-uk – Keeping Kids busy!

What's white and goes up? A confused snowflake!

What do you call an old snowman? Water!

What do you sing at a snowman's birthday party? Freeze a jolly good fellow!

What goes ho-ho whoosh, hoho whoosh?

Santa caught in a revolving door!

What goes "oh, oh, oh"? Santa walking backwards!

Knock knock! Who's there? Snow. Snow who? Snow use - I've forgotten my name again!

Why does Santa have three gardens? So he can ho ho ho!

When does Christmas come before Thanksgiving? In the dictionary!

Why is it always cold at Christmas? Because it's in Decemberrrr!

What Christmas carol is a fa-

vorite of parents? Silent Night!

How does a snowman lose weight? He waits for the weather to

What do snowmen eat for breakfast? Frosted flakes!

get warmer!

What did one snowman say to the other snowman? Can you smell carrot?

What do you get when you cross a snowman with a vampire? Frostbite!

Where do snowmen go to dance? A snow ball!

How many presents can Santa fit in an empty sack? Only one, after that it's not empty any more!

What do you get if you eat Christmas decorations? Tinselitus!

What do monkeys sing at Christmas? Jungle bells, jungle bells!

beach have in common with Christmas? Sandy claws!

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What is Santa's dog called?

Santa Paws! Who delivers presents to baby sharks at Christmas? Santa Jaws!

What do you get if you cross Santa Claus with a detective? Santa Clues!

What do you get if Santa goes down the chimney when the fire is lit? Crisp Cringle!

What does a cat on the What do you call Santa Claus when he doesn't move? Santa Pause!

> How do sheep greet each other at Christmas?

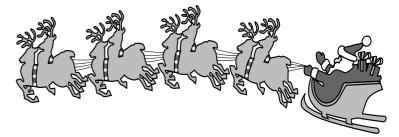
A merry Christmas to ewe!

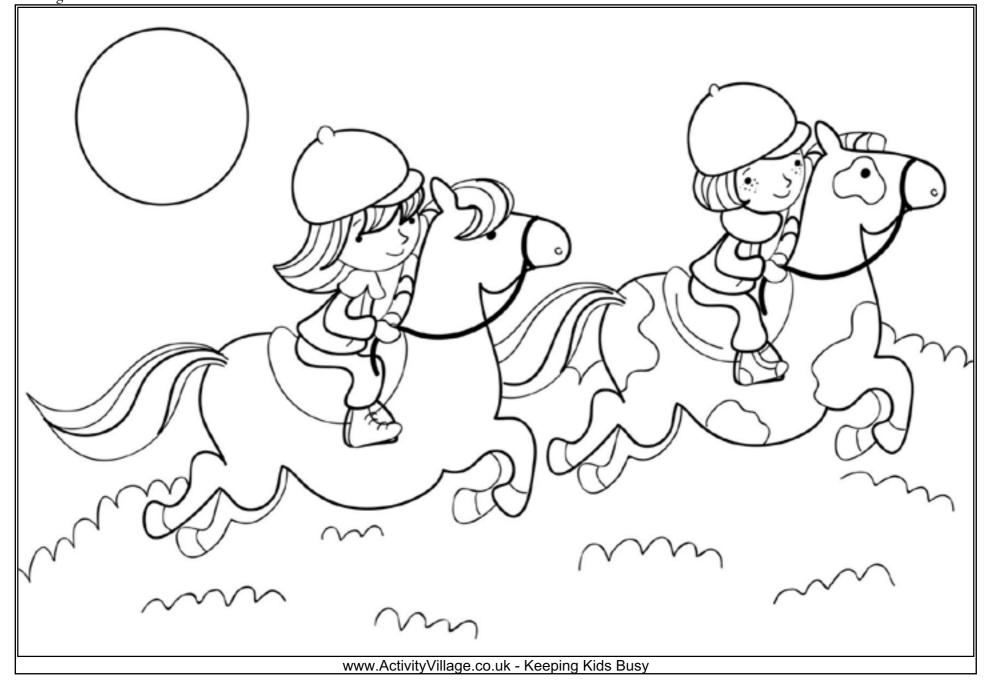
What do you get if you cross an apple with a Christmas tree?

A pineapple!

What often falls at the North Pole but never gets hurt?

Snow!







Sacramento Valley

Ed Harper, longtime educator, tour guide and noted birder of the Sacramento area, will help you learn the finer points of identification, calls and natural history of the many species of winter birds in the Sacramento region. Both beginning and experienced birders can improve their knowledge and skills with this series of lectures and field trips.

Whether you simply want to distinguish one sparrow species from another or seek help learning the distinctive "chuck" note of a hermit thrush, this course has many facets for wide appeal. Anyone who has a serious interest in birds and enjoys their presence in our world can benefit from this class.

LECTURES (40 people maxiumum)

Wednesdays 7- 8:30 pm December 2nd, 16th and January 6 Effie Yeaw Nature Center, American River Parkway

FIELD TRIPS (20 people maximum)

Thursday, Dec. 3rd	Thursday, Dec. 17th	Thursday Jan. 7th
8 am - noon	8 am - noon	8 am - noon
Ancil Hoffman Park	Yolo Basin Wetlands	Nimbus Fish Hatchery

To enroll contact Effie Yeaw Nature Center (916) 489-4918 Fee: \$80 includes all lectures and field trips. Lectures only: \$40. Preregistration is required. Information also at www.arnha.org

Lake Nafoma Parent Group

ake Natoma Parent Group is a group of parents committed to raising healthy children in an environment of good food and nutrition, healthy rhythms of play and rest, age-appropriate activities, limited media exposure, and fostering meaningful adult/child interactions.

We are looking to strengthen our own parenting skills, support each other, and to extend support to new parents who want support in holding true to their healthy parenting choices yet find it difficult in a world of contrary influences.

Meefings:

Lake Natoma Parent Group will meet at Golden Valley Charter School, 9601 Lake Natoma Dr, Orangevale, in the Multi-purpose Room, the second and fourth Thursday morning of the month, from 9 to 10:30 a.m. The first meeting of each month will be a parent enrichment meeting and feature a guest presenter, with childcare provided. The fourth Thursday will be a playgroup format with the parents and children together involved in an activity and/or craft, socializing and snack.

TAT

In addition to the monthly meetings, there will be a Gift Making Craft Day presented by Karen Moulton. Learn fun and easy ways to help your preschooler create homemade gifts and rainy day crafts such as sock puppets and crowns on December 10, 9 a.m. to 10:30 a.m. Childcare and nutritious snack provided.

There will be seasonal themes for the meetings:

DecemberCrafts and Gift MakingJanuaryNutritionFebruaryChild development,Positive Discipline and Parenting support

For more information, contact Meredith Whitehead, Lake Natoma Parent Group, (916) 989-6075 or visit lakenatomaparentgroup@gmail.com.

Advertorial



DECEMBER 12TH: A DAY OF HISTORY AND HOLIDAY CHEER! Sacramento History Museum, 101 I Street, Sacramento

Come and visit the Sacramento History Museum on December 12th from 1pm-4pm and meet the characters of the gold rush. Amid piping cups of hot cider and delicious cookies, the members of Old Sacramento Living History will describe the Christmas's of the past, how they celebrated, what gifts they gave, and hear the stories they have to share. Listen throughout the day for the sounds of hooves as we await the arrival of the Holiday Post from the riders of the Pony Express Association as they bring in letters and postcards from Folsom. So dress in your holiday best and come prepared to meet Father Christmas, sing holiday songs, and bring in the good cheer! Free with museum admission.

DECEMBER 19TH: 2PM-3:30PM VICTORIAN CHRISTMAS CAROLS IN THE EAGLE THEATRE Eagle Theatre, 925 Front Street, Sacramento

Loosen up your vocal chords and join the Old Sacramento Living History Program Choir in singing traditional holiday carols. FREE and fun!



SACRAMENTO HISTORY MUSEUM 101 I street, Old Sacramento 916-808-7059 or visit our website: www.SacHistoryMuseum.org

CALIFORNIA KIDS! Family Fun Guide • DECEMBER 2009

A different way to divorce.

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Calif*rnia Kids!





Arts and crafts

December 5 and 6, Snowflake Furry, 12:30 to 3 p.m., 3615 Auburn Boulevard, Sacramento. Welcome in the winter season by learning about snowflakes at the Discovery Museum Science and Space Center. Fun facts are displayed for you to learn and share with your family around the holidays. Kids 4 to 12 can design a snowflake wreath to take home as a souvenir. The cost is \$6 for 18 and over, \$5 for seniors 60 plus, \$5 for teens 13 to 17, and \$4 for children ages 4 to 12. Free admission for 3 and under. For more information, call (916) 575-3942 or visit www.thediscovery.org.

December 9, Art Studio Workshop, 12:30 to 3 p.m., 2850 San Lorenzo Way, Carmichael. Join the staff for their first non-instructional art studio workshop using the facilities and the animals of the Effie Yeaw Nature Center. The staff will pose taxidermic animals, furs and skeletons such as ducks, owls, hawks, snakes, bobcats, etc., in various poses, offering artists (beginner and experienced) a chance to study and draw/paint them. Participants will supply their own tools and art materials; pencils, papers, watercolors, etc. Professional artist Libby Harmor will bring her extensive theater and exhibit experience to play in facilitating this workshop. Suited to ages 66 and over, advanced registration is required. The cost is \$7 per person. For more information or to register, call (916) 489-4918.

December 10, Bird-feeder craft, 3:30 p.m., 11601 Fair Oaks Boulevard, Fair Oaks. Schoolage children can learn to make a simple, but beautiful, winter bird feeder with a pinecone and a few other ingredients. The free craft program will be held at the Fair Oaks Library. All supplies will be provided. For more information and to register, call the Sacramento Public Library at (916) 264-2920 or visit saclibrary.org.

December 12, Second Saturday for Families: Eat Your Art!, noon to 3 p.m., 216 O Street, Sacramento. Bring your festive mood to the Crocker Art Museum to squish, spread and sprinkle color, shapes and lines onto cookies—an edible canvas. Free with admission. For more information call (916) 808-7000 or visit crockerartmuseum.org.

December 12 and 13, Terrific Tangrams, 12:30 to 3 p.m., 3615 Auburn Boulevard, Sacamento. Enjoy festive color and shape fun by making holiday tangrams to take as souvenirs at the Discovery Museum Science and Space Center. There are three challenges for our guests to complete, including a gold candle, red Santa and green tree. Do not forget all the other offerings at the museum, including the Got Trees? exhibit, Fly Me to the Moon! exhibit, live animals presentations at noon and 2 p.m., and planetarium shows at 1 and 3 p.m. For ages 4 and older. Be sure to bring a camera. For more information call (916) 575-3942 or visit www.thediscovery.org.

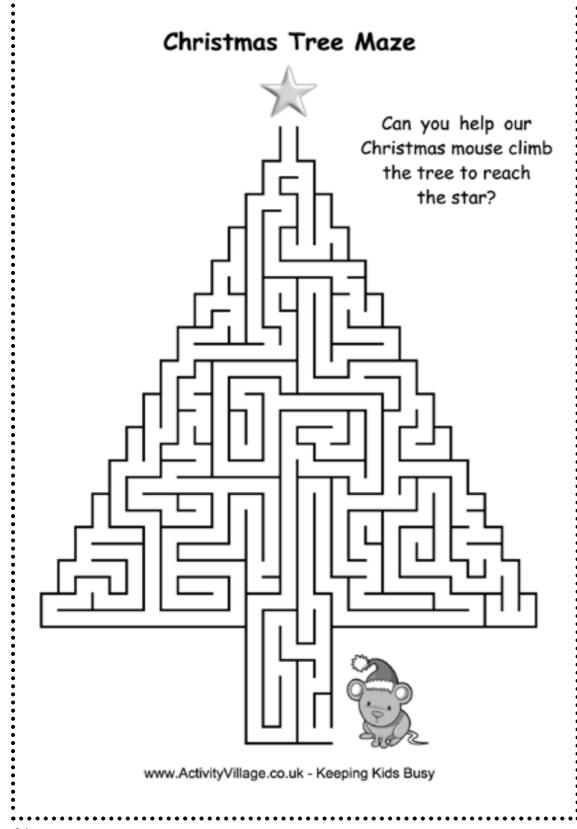
December 15, Art for Everyone: Painting Portraits, 11 a.m., 216 O Street, Sacramento. The Crocker Art Museum and VSA Arts of California offer this enriching workshop designed for children and adults with learning disabilities. Using various works in the Crocker's galleries, participants learn elements of portraiture and then paint portraits of friends and family. Each participant is encouraged to bring a parent, support person or caregiver. Advanced registration is required by December 9. To register, call (916) 808-5499 or email education@crockerartmuseum.org. Free with admission.

December 16, Wee Wednesday, 10:30 a.m. to 1 p.m., 216 O Street, Sacramento. Wee Wednesdays are designed for children ages 3 to 5 and the special adult in their lives. Encourage your early learner's development through multi-sensory activities inspired by art and storytelling. Reservations are required. To register, call (916) 808-1182 or email education@crockerartmuseum.org. Free with admission.

December 21, Decorative Holiday Crafting for Families, 10:30 a.m. to Noon, 2850 San Lorenzo Way, Carmichael. Join Auntie Libby at the Effie Yeaw Nature Center and make some cute and clever items for holiday gifts or decorations. Help the earth by using some recycled materials. Suited for ages 5 through adult, children must be accompanied by an adult. The cost is \$6 per person, per day, which includes materials. Advanced registration is required. For more information, call (916) 489-4918.

December 26 to 30, Tree-rific Necklaces, 12:30 to 3 p.m., 3615 Auburn Boulevard, Sacramento. Relax after the holiday madness by visiting the Discovery Museum Science and Space Center. Guests 12 and under make a beaded tree cookie necklace. You learn all about forests and the animals that live in them in the Got Trees? exhibit, which is open for one more week. Play and explore in the cabin, giant bird nest and forest smell station. For more information, call (916) 575-3942 or visit www.thediscovery.org.

December 28, 29 and 30, Tree-rific Necklaces, 12:30 to 3 p.m., 3615 Auburn Boulevard, Sacramento. Relax after the holiday madness by visiting the Discovery Museum Science and Space Center. Guests 12 and under make a beaded tree cookie necklace. You learn all about forests and the animals that live in t hem in the Got Trees? Exhibit, which is open for one more week. Play and explore in the cabin, giant bird nest and forest smell station. For more information, call (916) 575-3942 or visit www. thediscovery.org.





December 30, My Creative Space, 10:30 a.m. to 4 p.m., 216 O Street, Sacramento. Flex your creative muscles at the Crocker Art Museum, in this action-packed space for families. Drop by anytime for hands-on art activities, family tours and story time. Free with admission. For more information, call (916) 808-7000 or visit crockerartmuseum.org.

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December 6, Cold Blooded Creatures, 10:30 a.m., 2850 San Lorenzo Way, Carmichael. Some have scaly skin, some have slimy skin, some have legs and some don't. Can you guess what they are? Join the staff at the Effie Yeaw Nature Center in Ancil Hoffman Park and find out. For more information, call (916) 489-4918.

December 20, By the River's Edge, 10:30 a.m., 2850 San Lorenzo Way, Carmichael. Many animals are busy along the river in the winter. Explore the habitat where beaver, otter, herons and other wildlife live. For more information call the Effie Yeaw Nature Center at (916) 489-4918.

Especially for Parents

December 10, Free Yoga and Meditation Class, 6 p.m., 828 I Street, Sacramento. A free adult voga and meditation seminar will be available at the Central Library. Presented by the Art of Living Foundation, participants will learn tips for relieving stress while on the job; and principles of healthy living, effortless meditation, and tools to chart a new course for a less-stressed life. Stress-relieving techniques discussed include calming your mind, controlling negative emotions, creating a sense of well-being, infusing your body

with prana, detoxifying through the breath, and increasing energy and vitality. For more information and to register, call the Sacramento Public Library at (916) 264-2920 or visit saclibrary.org.

Ongoing, Book Sale, 9 a.m. to 2 p.m., 8250 Belvedere Avenue, Suite E, Sacramento. The Book Den, has books for sale and is open Fridays and Saturdays. The Book Den is operated by members of Friends of the Sacramento Public Library. For more information, call (916) 264-2880.

> Holiday Events

December 1 to 23, State Capitol Holiday Music, 9 a.m. to 4 p.m., 1303 10th Street, Sacramento. In 1996, California State Parks, the Department of General Services, Joint Rules Committee of the Legislature and the Governor's office worked together to restore historic holiday traditions at the Capitol. As a result, glowing decorations, Victorian-style floral arrangements, live holiday music performances and the traditional holiday tree lighting ceremony help to recapture the spirit of past holiday festivities. Daily holiday concerts at noon in the first floor rotunda. For more information, call (916) 324-0333 or visit www. capitolmuseum.gov.

December 4, Nativity Scene, 4 to 9 p.m., 9910 Bruceville Road, Elk Grove. Bring your little ones and experience the wonder of Christ's birth depicted in hundreds of nativities from around the world. The Open House will be held at Bruceville Chapel of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints. The Open House will also be held Saturday, and Sunday, from 1 to 9 p.m.

December 5, Holiday Shopping, 9:30 a.m., to 2 p.m., 2850 San Lorenzo Way, Carmichael. Help support the Effie Yeaw Nature education programs and pick up some great items for nature lovers and kids on your gift list. Special art and crafts will be featured. All proceed from this annual sale benefit the Nature Center's education programs. For more information, call (916) 489-4918.

December 5, Arts and Crafts Sale, 9 a.m. to 7 p.m., 5701 Locust Avenue, Carmichael. St. John's School parents will be hosting their 31st annual "A Holiday Show of Hands," an arts and crafts Christmas sale featuring custom work by over 150 craftsmen and artists. Special features include the Fashion Pavillion and antiques and collectibles, featured in the Antique Cottage. New this year, the "Green" room, crafts from found and recycled objects. Admission is free. The sale will also be held Sunday, December 6, from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. For more information, call (916)481-8845.

December 5, Teddy Bear Tea, 1, 2:30 and 4 p.m., 7th and K Street, Sacramento. The Discovery Museum Science and Space Center is presenting a Teddy Bear Tea at the Carnival of Lights pavilion, St. Rose of Lima Park. Dress in your very best and take your favorite teddy to tea. There will be a Three Bear play, an interactive sing-along and other activities, tea-time refreshments, and a special visitor, or two. Each tea party guest will also receive a bear to take home. The cost for admission is \$12 for guests 12 and under, \$15 for teens and adults. Tickets include admission to the carnival. To purchase tickets, call (916) 575-3942, or visit the special events page at www. TheDiscovery.org.

December 5, Winnie the Pooh Presentation, 2 p.m., Fair Oaks Boulevard and California Streets, Fair Oaks. The Fair Oaks Theatre Festival presents "Winnie the Pooh," in a live performance during the annual Christmas in the Village celebration, a day-long celebration with Santa, a parade, and carol singing in Old Fair Oaks. Admission is free, please bring a can of food or other non-parishable food item to be donated. For more information, call (916) 966-3683 or visit www. fairoakstheatrefestival.com.

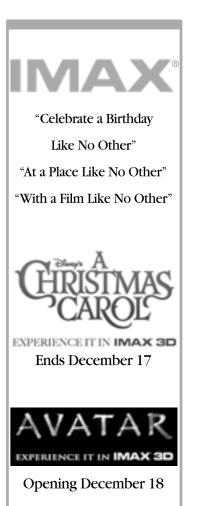
December 11, Annual Community Tree Lighting, 6 to 7:30 p.m., 6826 Hazel Avenue, Orangevale. Bring the family to the Orangevale Community Center for a free event for the whole family. The event will host entertainment, holiday caroling, crafts, face painting, 'Polar Express' train rides, cookies, hot chocolate and cider, kettle corn and more. Come visit Santa and other holiday favorites at this free family event.

December 12, Winter Faire, 10 a.m. to 3:30 p.m., 5701 Freeport Boulevard, Sacramento. Come celebrate the magic of winter with a cup of hot cider, crafts, puppet shows, storytelling, and music. Children can enjoy shopping in a special "children-only" store. Parents and friends can pick up gifts from local artisans. Unique gifts, pottery, jewelry, fine crafts, coffee/tea, candles, cards, holiday evergreen trees and wreaths and more. For more information, call (916) 427-5022 or visit www. camelliawaldorf.org.

December 12, Breakfast with Santa, 9 to 11 a.m., 6826 Hazel Avenue, Orangevale. Bring your family to the Orangevale Community Center, and enjoy a relaxing continental breakfast as you spend tie with Santa and his elves. Children will enjoy making crafts, holiday bingo, and visits with Santa. Tickets are on sale at the District office of the Orangevale Recreation and Park District. For more information, call (916) 988-6140.



Reindeer, 12:30 to 3 p.m., 3615 Auburn Boulevard, Sacramento. Everyone recognizes the reindeer as the animal of the holiday season, but how much do you know about them? Visit the Discovery Museum Science and Space Center, and learn all about these amazing mammals. An outdoor Reindeer Ramble makes for a fun scavenger hunt the entire family can learn from. Once completed, turn it in for a little treat. Children 12 years old and under can make a reindeer craft to take home, commemorating the most famous reindeer of all. For more information, call (916) 575-3942 or visit www.thediscovery.org.



PARTY PACKAGE INCLUDES:

1-1/2 hour party room -Admission for 10 kids Popcorn - Candy - Soda - Invitations -Personal Host- Balloon for each child - Special VIP seating - Movie poster - Photo on screen prior to film: Call 446-2333 x200 for more information.



Special Events

December 2, Free College Admissions Test, 6:30 p.m., 6700 Auburn Boulevard, Citrus Heights. College-bound students can take a free ACT and SAT college-entrance examination at Sylvan Oaks Library. For more information and to register, call the Sacramento Public Library at (916) 264-2920 or visit saclibrary.org.

December 15, Winter Celebration, 3 to 7:30 p.m., 902 Oak Lane, Rio Linda. The entire family is invited to Rio Linda Library's Winter Celebration. Enjoy snacks and activities. From 3 to 6 p.m., there will be face painting and balloon animals with Blanca Rose. From 3:30 to 7:30 p.m., have fun with Wii and board games. There will be a pre-reader disco party from 6 to 7 p.m., and craft making from 3 to 7 p.m. For more information,

call (916) 264-2920 or visit saclibrary.org.

December 26 and 27, Tree-rific Necklaces, 12:30 to 3 p.m., 3615 Auburn Boulevard, Sacramento. Relax after the holiday madness by visiting the Discovery Museum Science and Space Center. Guests 12 and under can make a beaded cookie necklace. Learn all about forests and the animals that live in them in the Got Tree? Exhibit, which is open for one more week. Play and explore in the cabin, giant bird nest and forest smell station. Creature features, with our live animals, are at noon and 2 p.m. For more information, call (916) 575-3942 or visit www. thediscovery.org.

Through February 20, Toy Exhibit, 10 a.m. to 5 p.m., Old Sacramento. The California State Railroad Museum has a new exhibit called "Some Assembly Required." Some toys are so timeless they capture the imagination of kids and adults for generations. Such is the case of the rare, intricate and colorful railroad-themed toys showcased as part of this new exhibit. For more information, call (916) 445-6645 or visit www.californiastaterailroadmuseum.org.

Sunday, Free Admission, 10 a.m. to 1 p.m., 216 O Street, Sacramento. The Crocker Art Museum is offering free admission hours to visitors. For more information, call (916) 808-7000 or visit crockerartmuseum.org.

Tuesdays, Toddler Program, 11 a.m., 4235 Antelope Road, Antelope. The North Highlands-Antelope Library offers a Toddler Time and Playgroup. For more information, call (916) 264-2920.

Tuesdays, Reading Program, 3:30 p.m., 5605 Marconi Avenue, Carmichael. Children ages 5 to 12 are invited to the Carmichael Library for "Reading to Rover: A Learning Program for Children." For more information, call (916) 264-2920.

Wednesday, Pre-school Program, 11 a.m., 6132 66th Avenue, Sacramento. Pre-schoolers are invited to the Southgate Library for this special program. For more information, call (916) 264-2920.

Wednesday, Pre-school Program, 11 a.m., 2901 Truxel Road, Sacramento. Pre-schoolers are invited to the South Natomas Library for this special program. For more information, call (916) 264-2920.

Thursdays, Pre-school Program, 10 a.m, 2443 Marconi Avenue, Sacramento. The Arcade Library invites you to their toddler program, a continuing program. For more information, call (916) 264-2920.

Thursdays, Pre-school Program, 10 a.m, 891 Watt Avenue, Sacramento. The Arden-Dimick Library invites you to their pre-school program. For more information, call (916) 264-2920.

Thursdays, Pre-school Program, 11 a.m, 6700 Auburn Boulevard, Citrus Heights. The Sylvan Oaks Library invites you to their preschool program. For more information, call (916) 264-2920.

Thursdays, Pre-school Program, 11 a.m., 4235 Antelope Road, Antelope. The North Highlands-Antelope Library invites you to their pre-school program. For more information, call (916) 264-2920.

Thursdays, through November, Pre-school Program, 11 a.m. 8962 Elk Grove Boulevard, Elk Grove. The Elk Grove Library invites you to their pre-school program. For more information, call (916) 264-2920.

Saturdays, Pre-School Program, 4:30 a.m., 4799 Stockton Boulevard, Sacramento. Join the fun at the Colonial Heights Library for a pre-school program. For more information, call (916) 264-2920.

Storytellers \$ Puppetry

December 19, Storytime, 10:30 a.m., 2850 San Lorenzo Way, Carmichael. Join a naturalist at the Effie Yeaw Nature Center, located in Ancil Hoffman Park, for some cozy reading of their favorite nature storybooks. This program is good for all ages. For more information, call (916) 489-4918.

First Mondays of each month, Dog Program, 6:30 p.m., 9845 Folsom Boulevard, Sacramento. Join the fun the first Monday of each month at the Rancho Cordova Library for "Reading with Dogs," with Lend a Heart Pet Therapy. For more information, call (916)

Wednesdays, Toddler Storytime, 10 a.m., 8962 Elk Grove Boulevard, Elk Grove. This program is being offered at the Elk Grove Library. For more information, call



Museum Debuts "Some Assembly Required" Toy Exhibit

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ith toys, trains and even good ol' St. Nick, the California State Railroad Museum is sure to capture and spread the spirit of the holidays with visitors of all ages. There's plenty more to see and do at North America's most popular train museum, both inside and out. In fact, the California State Railroad Museum has a nostalgia-inducing new exhibit, titled "Some Assembly Required," showcasing railroad-themed toys from the Museum's collection. Museum admission is \$9 for adults, \$4 for youths ages 6 to 17, and children 5 and under are free.

The California State Railroad Museum's "Some Assembly Required" toy exhibit is sure to inspire both wonder and delight with a variety of rare, intricate and colorful railroadthemed toys on display. The exhibit, with toys and games from the impressive California State Railroad Museum collection, will be featured through February 20, 2010, 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. For more information about the "Some Assembly Required" toy exhibit, "Train Time for Santa," the Toy Train Holiday Show or other museum related events, exhibits and activities this holiday season, visit www. californiastaterailroadmuseum.org. For more information about all of the activities throughout Old Sacramento, visit www.oldsacramento.com.

Operated by California State Parks with assistance from the nonprofit CSRM Foundation, the California State Railroad Museum is open daily from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. except Thanksgiving, Christmas, and New Year's Day. Widely regarded as North America's finest and most-visited railroad museum, the complex of facilities includes the 100,000-sq. ft. Railroad History Museum plus the reconstructed Central Pacific Railroad Passenger Station and Freight Depot, 1849 Eagle Theatre, and Big Four and Dingley Spice Mill buildings in Old Sacramento. 24-hour info: (916) 445-6645 or www.californiastaterailroadmuseum.org







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"A Simple Emigrant Christmas"

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opcorn and cranberry stringing. Candle dipping. Crafting paper cut-out ornaments. Sutter's Fort State Historic Park (SHP) invites the community to step back in time for "A Simple Emigrant Christmas" on Saturday, December 12, to celebrate a variety of early holiday traditions and cultural activities similar to what California's early Emigrants experienced in the 1840s.

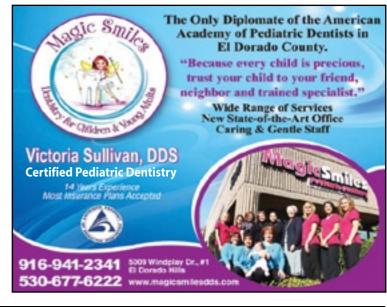
In fact, Sutter's Fort was one of California's early gathering places where different Friends of Sutter's Fort, the cultures came together to share and experience differing holiday traditions, many of which are still celebrated today. As part of "A Simple Emigrant Christmas," families and friends are encouraged to visit this historic gathering place where costumed docents will interpret and demonstrate the many different Christmas traditions that were celebrated by the early immigrants at Sutter's Fort. Also, docents and guests will work together to decorate the Fort's holiday tree using only materials available in the 1840s.

Sutter's Fort SHP is open from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. Tuesdays through Sundays and

admission is as follows: \$6 for adults; \$4 for youths ages 6 to 17 and free for children 5 and under. Regular admission prices apply for "A Simple Emigrant Christmas" and more information about the event or other activities can be obtained by calling (916)445-4422 or visiting www.parks.ca.gov.

About Sutter's Fort State Historic Park Operated by California State Parks with financial assistance from the historic site is open Tuesdays through Sundays from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. Located

in midtown Sacramento on L Street between 26th and 28th Streets, the Fort offers special events and living history programs throughout the year. Established in 1839 by Swiss immigrant John Augustus Sutter, Sutter's Fort was at the center of a flourishing agricultural empire named New Helvetia (New Switzerland.) This empire established Sacramento's earliest settlement and the first non-Indian settlement in California's Central Valley. For more information, call (916) 445-4422 or visit www.parks.ca.gov and click on "Find a Park."





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S. SPCA's Annual Book and Holiday Boufique Sale

he Sacramento SPCA will hold it's Fall Book Sale, Thursday, December 3 through Sunday, December 6, at the Marketplace at Birdcage, located at 6187 Sunrise Boulevard, next to CVS Pharmacy.

In addition the SPCA Thrift Store will hold it's Holiday Boutique and Sale at the Marketplace at Birdcage, next to Starbuck's, to December 6.

Book Sale hours will be from 10 a.m. to 8 p.m., Thursday to Saturday, and 11 a.m. to 6 p.m. Sunday. During the book sale, Thrift Store Holiday Boutique hours will be the same. Prior to the Book Sale, to December 2, Thrift Store Boutique hours will be from 11 a.m. to 6 p.m. daily.



The popular semi-annual book sale, one of the largest in Northern California, will feature great bargains on thousands of new

and used books in 15 categories including mystery, science fiction, cooking, children and teens, biography, holiday specialty books, large print, romance and more.

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- Cosumnes River College 916.691.7380
- Folsom Lake College 916.608.6598
- Sacramento City College 916.558.2542



1/2 tsp (2 mL) maple flavoring

Cookies: In a bowl, whisk

together flour, baking powder, cinnamon, nutmeg, ginger,

baking soda and salt until well

In a large bowl, using an elec-

tric mixer on medium speed,

cream butter, brown sugar and

granulated sugar until light and

fluffy, about 3 minutes. Add eggs

one at a time, beating well after

each addition. Stir in vanilla.

Add pumpkin and stir until well

combined. Scrape down sides

of bowl. On low speed or us-

ing a wooden spoon, gradually add flour mixture, beating just

until blended. By hand, fold in

Using a cookie scoop or

spoons, drop tablespoonfuls

(15 mL) of dough about 2 inches

(5 cm) apart on prepared baking sheets. Bake one sheet at a time,

in preheated oven for 12 to 15

minutes or until edges start to

paper onto a wire cooling rack.

Cool cookies for 5 minutes,

then transfer from parchment

paper to cooling rack and cool

Icing: In a small bowl, com-

bine confectioner's sugar, 1

tablespoon (15 mL) of the cream

and maple flavoring. Using a

small whisk or a fork, blend until

icing is smooth and thin enough

to drizzle from a fork. Add more

cream as needed to achieve the

right consistency. Drizzle icing

over cooled cookies.

Immediately slide parchment

turn lightly golden.

completely.

pecans.

combined. Set aside.

hese slightly spicy, soft, chewy, cake-like cookies are a perfect fall treat.

Makes about 4 dozen cookies

Tip

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Flavors can blend during storage, so store cookies with strong flavors in separate containers.

· Preheat oven to 350°F (180°C)

Cookie sheets, lined with parchment paper

Cookies

2-1/2 cups (625 mL) all-purpose flour

2 tsp (10 mL) baking powder 1 tsp (5 mL) ground cinnamon

1/2 tsp (2 mL) grated nutmeg

1/4 tsp (1 mL) ground ginger

1/4 tsp (1 mL) baking soda 1/4 tsp (1 mL) salt

1/2 cup (125 mL) unsalted but-

ter, softened

3/4 cup (175 mL) packed dark brown sugar

1/2 cup (125 mL) granulated sugar

2 eggs

1 tsp (5 mL) vanilla extract 1 can (15 oz/398 mL) solid pack

(purée) pumpkin

1 cup (250 mL) chopped pecans

lCing

1 cup (250 mL) confectioner's (icing) sugar

1 to 2 tbsp (15 to 25 mL) halfand-half (10%) cream or milk



Recipe from 400 SENSATIONAL COOKIES by Linda J. Amendt (Robert Rose, September 2009, \$24.95/paperback)



PARADISE RANCH EQUESTRIAN CENTER

décor, collectibles and more at the SPCA's Thrift Store Holiday Boutique and Sale. Books, holiday decorations and much more will be available at dog-gone good prices, with proceeds benefiting the Sacramento SPCA.

For more information, call the SPCA special events office at (916) 383-7387 ext. 9068 or visit the SSPCA website at www.sspca.org.

In addition to great deals on books, you won't want to miss the fabulous selection of holiday

C> 婦 務 谷 衛 ☆ 奋 角 務 帮 ☆ 査 ▲ 圖 Calif*miaKids! Disney's A Chrisfmas Carol: An IMAX 3D Experience

Tis the season for The Ghosts of Christmas Past, Present and Yet to Come! Disney's *A Christmas Carol* has opened at the Esquire IMAX Theatre.

"Visiting the Esquire IMAX Theatre has become a holiday tradition for many Sacramento area families' for the past 10 years," explained Doug Link, theatre director. "We are thrilled to bring a new holiday classic to life this year and provide a new option for families wanting to really get into the Christmas spirit."

Through the all-encompassing power of IMAX® 3D, moviegoers will reach for the falling snowflakes, feel the rumble of the horse-drawn carriages over the cobblestone streets and soar with Scrooge high above the London night sky. With crystal clear images, laser-aligned 12,000-watt digital wraparound sound and a 60 x 80 foot screen, the Esquire IMAX Theatre puts you IN the movie.

Ebenezer Scrooge (JIM CARREY) begins the Christmas holiday with his usual miserly contempt, barking at his faithful clerk (GARY OLDMAN) and his cheery nephew (CO-LIN FIRTH). Scrooge later encounters the ghost of his dead business partner Joseph Marley, who's paying the price in the afterlife for his own callousness. Marley hopes to help Scrooge avoid a similar fate and tells him he will be visited by three spirits. But when the ghosts of Christmas Past, Present and Yet to Come take Old Scrooge on an eye-opening journey revealing he's reluctant to face, he must open his heart to undo years of ill will before it's too late.

This film has been rated PG for scary sequences and images. The Esquire IMAX Theatre is located at 1211 K Street in downtown Sacramento. For information on tickets and showtimes, please call (916) 443-IMAX (4629) or visit www.imax.com/sacramento.







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