

December 2010

California Kids!



Season's Greetings

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Valley Community Newspapers, Inc. • 2709 Riverside Boulevard, Sacramento, CA 95818

Publishers of the Arden-Carmichael News, the East Sacramento News, The Land Park News, The Pocket News, The Valley Shopper, and The Valley Wedding

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Governor's Mansion Event



Demonstration Day: A Simple Emigrant Christmas

Step back in time to holidays past with festive, hands-on activities such as stringing popcorn and cranberries, candle dipping and crafting paper cut-out ornaments when Sutter's Fort State Historic Park presents "A Simple Emigrant Christmas" special event. Friends and families are encouraged to visit the Fort, Saturday, December 11, 10 a.m. to 5 p.m., to enjoy docents in period attire as they interpret and demonstrate a variety of early holiday traditions and cultural activities similar to what early Emigrants did in the 1840s. In fact, Sutter's Fort was one of California's early gathering places where different cultures came together to share differing holiday traditions, many of which are still celebrated today. Don't miss the special "A Simple Emigrant Christmas" for one day only this December.

Sutter's Fort State Historic Park is located at 2701 L Street, Sacramento. Admission is \$6 per adult, \$4 per youth (ages 6-17), free for children 5 years and under. For more information call (916) 445-4422 or visit www.parks.ca.gov/suttersfort

On December 11 and 18, from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m., get ready to experience lavishly re-created period décor, entertaining live holiday music and captivating storytellers during two upcoming special "Christmas Memories" events at the Governor's Mansion State Historic Park. 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. And, to add to the festive activities, Mr. and Mrs. Claus will make special visits to the Mansion to meet excited little



ones and be available for holiday photographs.

The Governor's Mansion is located at 1526 H Street, Sacramento. The cost is \$6 for adults, \$4 for youth (ages 6 to 17), children five and under

are admitted free. Pictures with Santa are available for nominal fee of \$3.

For more information, call (916) 323-5916 or visit www.parks.ca.gov/governorsmansion

Winter Warehouse book sale

The Friends of the Sacramento Public Library are sponsoring a big Winter Warehouse Sale on two consecutive Saturdays, December 4 and 11. Public sale hours will be noon to 4 p.m. on December 4, and 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. on December 11. A preview for Friends' members only is scheduled for 9 a.m. to noon, December 4. Prospective members may join at the door for \$15 and attend the preview. The sale will be held in the Friends' warehouse, at the rear of their Book Den store, 8250 Belvedere Avenue, Suite E, between Power Inn Road and Florin-Perkins Road just south of 14th Avenue. Over 75,000 paper-

back and hard-bound books, videos, books on cassette and more will be sold at prices ranging from \$.50 to \$2. All proceeds, after expenses, benefit the Sacramento Public Library.

The Book Den store will be open during the Warehouse Sale and preview, too. At the Book Den shoppers select from individually priced better books, including collectibles, and other materials, with most books priced at \$3 and up. The Book Den is regularly open Thursday through Saturday from 9 a.m. to 2 p.m. For more information call (916) 731-8493 or email fspl@att.net

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Elephant Seal guided walks

Guided walks to see the elephant seals at Año Nuevo State Park will begin this year on December 15, and continue every day through March 31, 2011, except December 25. The Park is west of Highway 1, between the cities of Santa Cruz and Half Moon Bay, approximately 1 1/2 hour drive south from San Francisco.

Reservations are recommended for these popular guided walks. School Group Walks are offered Monday through Friday mornings for 1st through 12th grade classes. Public Seal Walks are offered daily for families, individuals, or groups.

Reservations can be made through ReserveAmerica, at 1-800-444-4445, from 9 a.m. to

5 p.m. weekdays and 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. on weekends through February 28; 8 a.m. to 6 p.m. daily from through September 30; and 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. from December 18 through December 31—except Thanksgiving, Christmas, and New Year's Day. School Group Walk reservations may be made beginning Saturday, October 2, for any dates during the season. Public Seal Walk reservations will be accepted beginning October 20, up to 56 days in advance, or as late as 1 day prior to the reservation date. Public Seal Walk reservations can also be made online at the Año Nuevo link at www.parks.ca.gov.

School Group tickets cost \$21 each and allow entry for up to 20 students with two adult chaperones. One chaperone is

required for every 10 youths 17 years or under.

There is no entrance fee for school groups that arrive by school bus. There is a limit of 4 School Group Walk tickets per call. Public Seal Walk tickets cost \$7 per person. Children 3 and under are free. The entrance fee to the Park is \$10 per car, paid at the Park. There are no ticket refunds or exchanges for cancellations, no shows, weather, or late arrivals. Refunds are issued only when the Park staff must cancel a walk.

The first guided walk of every day will begin at approximately 9 a.m. and the last walk in mid-afternoon. These popular three-mile walks over rolling sand dunes and sloping terrain last about two and one-half hours and are considered moderately strenuous. Each walk will begin on time; visitors who are late will forfeit their reservations.

Guided Walks are conducted rain or shine. Visitors should prepare for an outdoor hiking adventure that may include high winds, heavy rains, and cold temperatures. Recommended clothing includes hooded rain gear, layered clothing, and sturdy walking shoes. For safety reasons, use of umbrellas and baby strollers are not permitted on the walks. Food and beverages are not sold at the Park, but picnic tables are available for use before or after guided walks. It is advisable to bring bottled drinking water on the tour.

Individuals with accessible needs may make reservations for special Equal Access Guided Walks. Equal Access walks are available January 1 through



March 27, on weekends only. Reservations are required. Tickets cost \$7 per person. Reservations may be made, by dialing (650) 879-2033 beginning December 1, on Mondays, Wednesdays, and Fridays between 1 and 4 p.m.

Año Nuevo State Park is home to a large colony of Northern Elephant Seals, and the interpretive program has attracted increasing interest every winter for over 30 years. People who hope to see the seals during the winter breeding season are urged to get their reservations early.

The Elephant Seal viewing area will be closed except for official guided walks from December 1 - March 31. Similar closures and guided walk programs since 1975 have allowed a natural

development of the elephant seal herd. The mainland herd has increased during that time from only 35 males to more than 5,400 animals, including the birth of more than 1,700 pups.

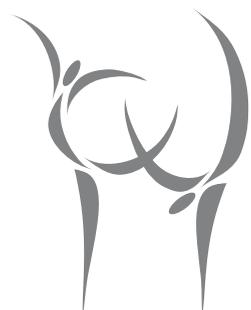
Adult seals begin arriving on the beaches by mid-December. Bulls weighing up to 5,000 pounds engage in battles for breeding access to the females. Pregnant females come ashore to have pups beginning in mid-December, with births reaching a peak by late January. Mothers nurse their pups for about a month before weaning them, mating, and departing back to sea. Birthing and mating activity peak by mid-February; and by early March, most adult seals have returned to the sea. During March, hundreds of weaned

pups remain behind to rest in the dunes and learn to swim in the tide pools.

State Park volunteer naturalists from the surrounding community take an intensive 2 1/2 months (65-hour) training course given by California State Parks, prior to the breeding season. During the guided walks, they and Park staff will lead visitors among the huge marine mammals and explain both the story of the elephant seals and the other natural and cultural history of the area.

For more information on the elephant seal, the guided walk program, and other features of the Park, phone the Park at (650) 879-2025, or (650) 879-0227 for recorded information. Visit the Park's web site at www.parks.ca.gov.

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Four Sacramento Animal Shelters Come Together to Find 1,000 New Homes

The Sacramento SPCA, City of Sacramento Animal Care Services, Sacramento County Animal Care & Regulation and Happy Tails Pet Sanctuary are holding a joint “Home for the Holidays” pet adoption special which will run through December 30. The goal of the holiday adoption promotion is to increase adoptions community-wide and to ultimately find new homes for 1,000 homeless animals by the end of 2010. During “Home for the Holidays” adoption fees for all animals will be reduced by half.

The four participating shelters will take in more than 35,000 homeless animals this year alone. This figure represents an increase over previous years due to the poor economy and other factors. Sacramento animal shelters are overburdened with hundreds of animals seeking permanent homes. Through “Home for the Holidays,” the shelters will work together to boost adoptions, and will strive to facilitate 1,000 additional adoptions before the end of the year.

For more information on “Home for the Holidays” visit “www.sspca.org, www.happytails.org, www.cityofsacramento.org/generalservices/animal-care/, or www.saccountyshelter.net.



www.ActivityVillage.co.uk - Keeping Kids Busy



Christmas open house

If this Holiday Season finds you in the mood to regain some of the spirit of Christmas past, then historic Sutter Creek, with its annual Old Fashioned Christmas Open House celebration, is the place to be.

On Friday and Saturday, December 3 and 4, the streets of Historic Sutter Creek come alive with Christmas spirit as they are transformed to an era gone by with Charles Dickens characters and carolers in period costume, strolling along the beautifully lit streets of this magical Gold Rush Town.

Friday night, at around 6 p.m., Santa and Mrs. Claus will arrive in their sleigh to light the community Christmas tree next to City Hall. On Main Street the shopkeepers will be open late to offer a warm and friendly Open House, with snacks, refreshments, and wonderful displays of unique items ready for your Christmas list. And for the children, free photos with Santa will be available inside the Methodist Church where Santa will hear their Christmas wishes. Arts and crafts will also be available there along with homemade cookies and hot cider. The whole community is invited to share in the holiday fun on Friday evening from 5 until 9 p.m.

The merriment continues on Saturday with holiday music, shopping, and Charles Dickens characters strolling down the street. The Las Posadas Candlelight Walk takes place at 7 p.m. The public is invited to participate in this beautiful reenactment of Joseph and Mary's journey to Bethlehem. The parade will begin at the Immaculate Conception Catholic Church on Spanish Street where Mary will mount a donkey and she and Joseph will proceed down historic and beautiful Spanish Street, lined with flickering luminaries. Narrators will retell the familiar story and musicians will lead in singing familiar Christmas carols that everyone is urged to join in and sing along. Truly a heart warming experience for all ages, the Las Posadas Candlelight Walk will be an evening you will cherish forever. Dress warm so you can enjoy the entire evening.

Sutter Creek, with all of its classic holiday charm, will rekindle the Spirit of Christmas in your heart. For more information call (209) 267-1344 or visit www.suttercreek.org.

Fun hands-on art projects for kids and parents

Saturday, December 11, 1 to 4 p.m., Live Bees!

Learn about the honeybee with Dr. Eric Mussen, an apiculturist in the UC Davis department of entomology. See a section of a real hive up close up, and hear about current challenges to their survival. Families can then learn how to paint the different sections of the bee using watercolors with illustrator Jed Alexander.

For advanced registration, call (530) 758-3370, ext. 2. The fee is \$5 per person (members get \$1 off). Adults are free if not doing a project. Projects are appropriate for ages 3 to 12.

This program is funded by the City of Davis Arts Contract Program. The Pence Gallery is a nonprofit art organization and is located at 212 D Street, Davis.

if you did THIS STUFF IN A RESTAURANT, THEY'D ASK YOU TO LEAVE.

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Christmas in the Village

Town & Country Village, located at Marconi and Fulton Avenues, presents Christmas in the Village on Saturday, December 4, from 9:30 a.m. to 4 p.m. Come and enjoy the festivities with lots to see, hear, smell, eat and do. Free activities include craft-making, chocolate-dipping and face-painting. Use your imagination to decorate your own gingerbread men (and women). Catch the holiday spirit with music from the El Camino High School band and choir, Old Sacramento Living History Strolling Carolers, and additional vignettes throughout the Village. Warm up with complimentary hot

chocolate and apple cider. The sweet aroma of freshly popped kettle corn help create the ambiance. Of course, don't miss getting your photo taken with Santa Claus.

Whether you are looking for that special gift, or shopping for yourself, there are plenty of stores, restaurants and services to enjoy as Old World charm meets modern convenience at Town & Country Village. Come and experience the holiday season! Rain or Shine.

For more information visit www.shoptownandcountry.com

Happy Ho! Ho!

Hey kids! It's that exciting time of the year again, time for holiday activities and hanging the holiday lights. Better take time to make your "wish list" for shopping, and OH BOY! Can't wait for all those delicious holiday cookies! 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.

D A A Z N A W K S F A X D S Z N C
 E S M K H B C T W A S M H H N O O
 C L Z T O Y S O L M D K O A O M L
 O N F V I D H N M I S B L K R T O
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 O L N N K B S T O C R S E H L T I
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 K S E E R T S A M T S I R H C P C

Bells

Candy Canes

Christmas Trees

Colored lights

cookies

Decorations

Excitement

Family

Garlands

Hanukkah

Holiday

Holly

Kwanzaa

North Pole

Presents

Reindeer

Santa Claus

Stocking

Surprises

Tinsel

Toys



Who Wrote That?

The Creators of Your Child's Favorite Books

Featuring **Gail Carson Levine** By **Patricia M. Newman**

Gail Carson Levine, one of the most beloved Newbery Honor winning children's authors, worked for New York State for 27 years, the vast majority of that time in the welfare department. As a child she loved fairy tales and wrote several stories and poems, a few of which were published in anthologies of student writing, but she did not dream of becoming a writer until a children's story popped into her head one day while meditating. Even then, she approached the idea more from an illustrator's perspective than a writer's, and enrolled in a painting class. But Levine soon found out that she loved the writing. "Illustration was much too hard for me," she says. "When I realized I wanted to write, it was always for children. Novels were my most important reading experience when I was a child. That's what I write back to."

Through writing classes, peer critique groups, and the Society of Children's Book Writers and Illustrators (SCBWI), Levine learned all she could about writing for children, collecting nine years' worth of rejection slips. During one writing class, Levine wondered if she could translate her love of fairy tales into novel form. *Cinderella* became the likeliest possibility because of its importance in fairy tale literature and Levine's inability to understand Cinderella's seemingly blind obedience to her horrid stepmother and stepsisters. On her website, Levine says, "It's hard to write a book about a character who annoys and puzzles you." Then Levine conjured up an idea: Ella suffered from a curse of obedience forcing her to obey, a plot device that not only



explained Ella's actions but provided the necessary conflict for *Ella Enchanted*. After the story was completed, Levine submitted it to an agent and crossed her fingers. When the agent telephoned hysterically requesting the missing page 222, Levine figured she'd hit pay dirt. *Ella Enchanted's* Newbery Honor gave Levine enough self-assurance to quit her job with the state and become a full-time writer.

The Tale of Two Castles also has its roots in fairy tales. Levine wanted to write a mystery, but didn't know how. She searched for a fairy tale mystery and settled on *Puss 'N Boots* because the reader only has the cat's version of the story on how he bested the ogre. Although Levine hung her story on the framework that *Puss 'N Boots* supplied,

she says, "It changed as soon as I started writing."

The link to the original fairy tale became tenuous and a reader unaware of the link might not see it when reading Levine's story.

A scene from *The Wish* popped into Levine's head like a gift—an image of a shy, unpopular girl on a crowded subway car who offers an old lady her seat. The old lady is a witch who grants the girl one wish. Levine borrowed liberally from her own shyness and the unpopularity that plagued her in tenth

grade. "Every day I walked to school alone amidst groups of kids," she says. "They weren't shunning me. They didn't know me."

Levine admits that her mind turns to fantasy first and foremost, and although *Dave At Night* began as fantasy, she eventually scrapped early drafts in favor of a highly researched historical fiction approach. Her father was an orphan at the Hebrew Orphan Asylum in the 1920's until he was 16 years old, and would never speak about his experiences, so she assumed his life was hard. After his death, Levine decided to invent a childhood for him. She created Dave and wrote what she now considers the favorite of her books because it reminds her of her father, "a joyous man," who died too young.

In another departure from fantasy and fairy tales, Levine wrote *Writing Magic: Creating Stories That Fly* a nonfiction guide to writing that uses her experiences as a writing teacher to middle school students. Levine's honest, straight-forward style guides young writers through the process of creating character and plot, and exploring avenues of publication. On the advice of her editor, Levine also entered the social networking world with a blog about writing. "I didn't like Facebook," she says, "and Twitter wasn't for me." Levine responds to readers' questions with the same honesty and sensitivity that made *Writing Magic* a success. "I love seeing [readers'] responses and seeing the writing community form," she says.

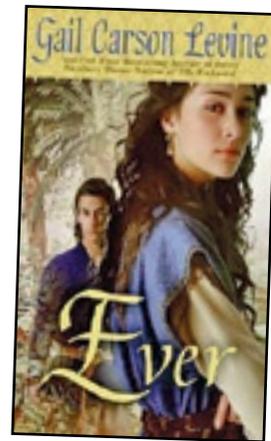
Levine writes from her New York home, but does not adhere to a particular schedule. "I get it done eventually," she says. However, if she feels a deadline breathing down her neck, she's more likely to deliver a book early rather than late. A digital folder on her computer called Remember helps her stay organized as she works on a book. "If I describe a character, I put the description in Remember to find it quickly. The geography of a place is [also] in Remember."

Levine's petite 90-pound frame belies her strength as a storyteller. Her characters feel like real people who suffer real dilemmas. She says, "With any luck more books will keep coming."

Count on it.

Next month: Coleen Murtaugh Paratore

Patricia Newman is the author of Jingle the Brass (Farrar, Straus & Giroux). Her newest book, Nugget on the Flight Deck (Walker), received the California Reading Association's Eureka! Silver Honor Award for excellence in children's nonfiction. Visit her website at www.patriciamnewman.com to watch the trailer.



MORE ABOUT GAIL CARSON LEVINE

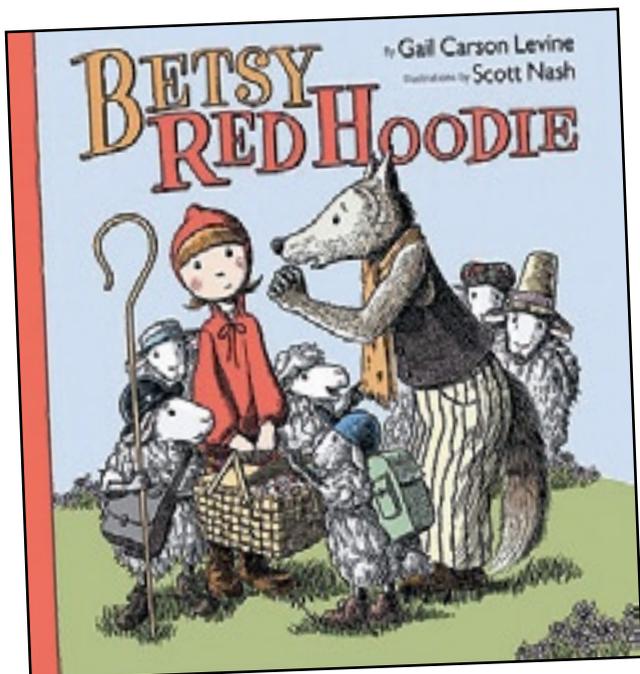
How to Contact Gail Carson Levine
Website: <http://gailcarsonlevine.com/>

SELECTIONS FROM GAIL CARSON LEVINE'S LIBRARY

- Betsy Red Hoodie*, HarperCollins, 2010.
- Ever*, HarperCollins, 2008.
- Fairest*, HarperCollins, 2006.
- Writing Magic: Creating Stories That Fly*, HarperCollins, 2006.
- Betsy Who Cried Wolf*, HarperCollins, 2002.
- The Two Princesses of Bamarre*, HarperCollins, 2001.
- The Wish*, HarperCollins, 2000.
- Dave at Night*, HarperCollins, 1999.
- The Fairy's Mistake*, HarperCollins, 1999.
- Ella Enchanted*, HarperCollins, 1997.

UPCOMING

- A Tale of Two Castles*, HarperCollins, 2011.
- Forgive Me, I Meant To Do It*, HarperCollins, 2012.





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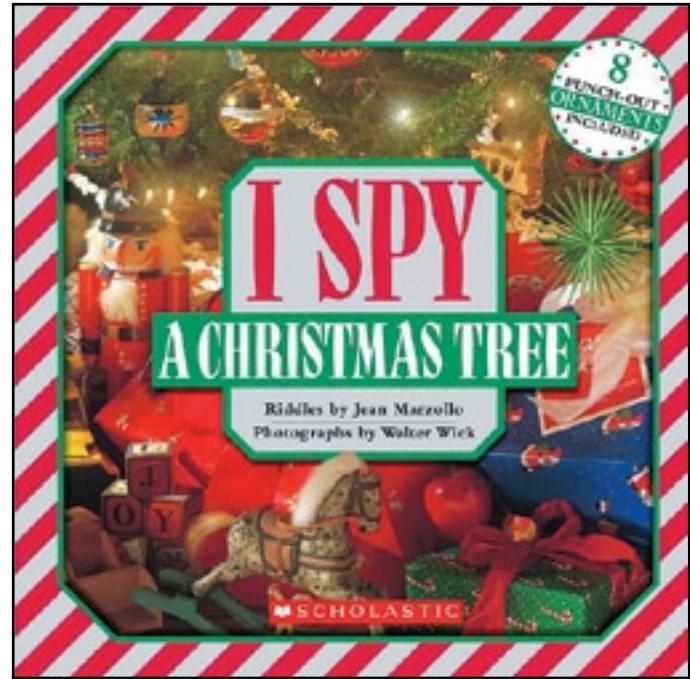
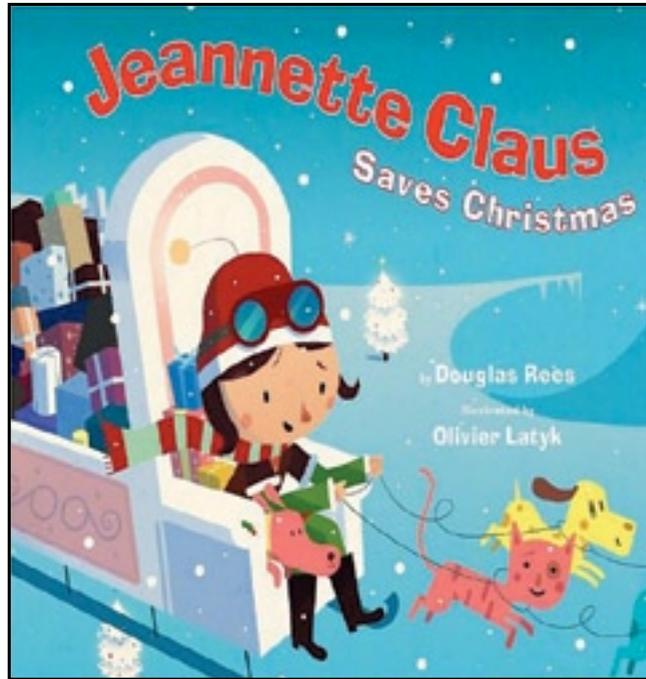
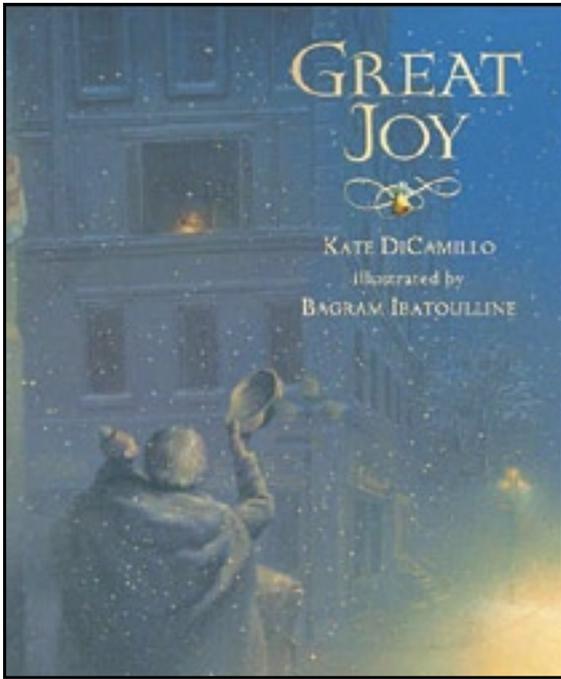
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The Book REPORT

It's almost Christmas!

By Connie Goldsmith

Are you having a hard time finding that last-minute gift for a friend's child, a favorite nephew or niece? Look no further than your local bookstore. Think about making books part of your Christmas tradition. 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.

"The First Christmas: A Changing Picture-Book," by Sophy Williams. (Templar). Uniquely lovely, this Nativity story consists of two images in vertical strips that move when the page is turned. The cut-out hole on the cover shows baby Jesus in his manger surrounded by lambs. Open the book and the illustrated strips slide into a new scene: the Wise Men headed to Bethlehem. In the fields outside of town, shepherds watch over their flocks. Open the tab and see them standing in awe at the stable. The Wise Men, resplendent in royal robes, hold gifts in their hands. The page slides into a scene of Mary, Joseph, and Baby Jesus. The pastel illustrations of angels and shepherds are luminous, and the classic tale retold in a simple, yet effective way.

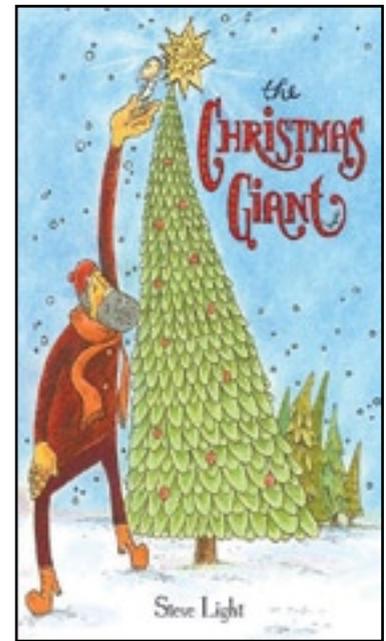
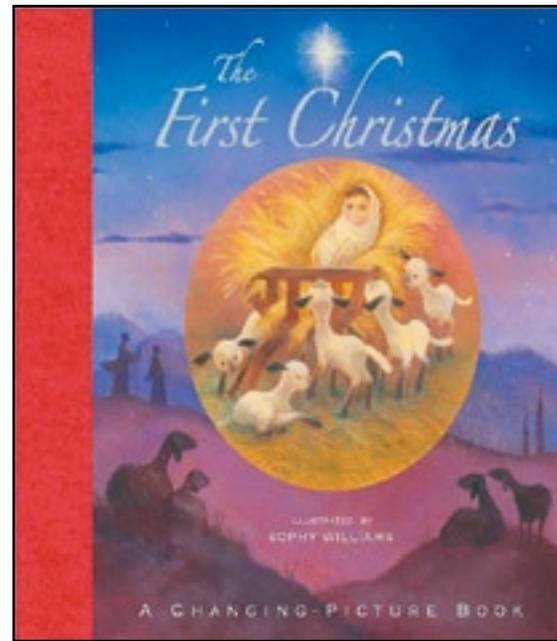
"Great Joy," by Kate DiCamillo, illustrated by Bagram Ibatoulline. (Candlewick). It's Christmas, circa 1940 when Frances peeks out her apartment window to see an organ grinder and his monkey in the streets. "Where do they go at night?" But her

mother doesn't know. Besides, she's busy making Frances' angel dress for the church pageant. Frances stays up that night and discovers the old man sleeps in the snow with the monkey tucked inside his jacket. The next day, she invites the man to her Christmas pageant. Frances stands on the stage, too scared to say her lines until the old man and monkey enter the church. "Behold!" she shouts when she sees them. "I bring you tidings of great joy." This small, exquisite book may bring tears to your eyes and a catch to your voice as you read it aloud. Its gold-gilt cover and warm words make it a collector's item to read anew each holiday season. ***

Reviewer's Pick of the Month

"I Spy a Christmas Tree," riddles by Jean Marzollo, photographs by Walter Wick. (Scholastic). This practiced duo has produced a series of *I Spy* books on many topics. This Christmas search-and-find is perfect for younger readers. One page features lovely glass ornaments. "I spy a sun face and Santa's sled," on the left side, and a scramble of ornaments on the right side. The goal is for the child to find the named items. Another page is, "I spy a guitar and a cookie clock," next to a page of yummy-looking Christmas cookies. The items are beautifully photographed, many with tiny gleaming lights. Bonus puzzles appear at the end, and new to the series, eight punch-out ornaments to hang on your own tree.

"The Christmas Giant," by Steve Light. (Candlewick). Giant Hum-



phrey and Elf Leetree make Christmas wrapping paper at the North Pole for Santa's presents. They love their job, but are sad when it's over. Santa gives them a special assignment – grow the holiday tree for Christmastown. Leetree plants the small seed. Humphrey wields the big watering can. Months later, the pair carry the tree toward town, but along the way they stop for a rest. After all, it's a very big tree! While they're sleeping, the tree floats away on an iceberg. What to do? They come up with an idea and rush back to the toy factory, unveiling the new tree at the Christmas party. (You've got to read the book to see the amazing tree!) The pen, ink, and pastel artwork is a perfect match for the sweet, gentle story that celebrates both the spirit of Christmas and the joy of friendship.

"Jeannette Claus Saves Christmas," by Douglas Rees, illustrated by Olivier Latyk. (McElderry). Santa's got a bad cold and cannot perform his Christmas duties. His sassy daughter Jeannette takes over. But the reindeer are a balky bunch. "You're

not Santa," Dasher says. "Criminy Christmas crackers, don't give me a hard time," Jeannette tells the team. She harnesses them up, but sure enough, halfway through her rounds, the reindeer take off and strand her on a rooftop. But Jeannette is a resourceful girl. She gathers a group of homeless dogs and cats and hooks them up to the sleigh. Christmas magic ensues, Jeannette finishes her deliveries. Back at the North Pole, the persnickety reindeer are a bit peeved to have been replaced. But the cats and dogs are delighted at their new home. This is a fun story, nicely accompanied by colorful digital art.

Connie Goldsmith www.connie-goldsmith.com lives in Carmichael where she writes for adults and children. Her newest nonfiction juvenile books, *"Battling Malaria: on the Front Lines Against a Global Killer,"* and *"Skin Cancer,"* one of the new USA Today Health Reports series, came out this fall. Her books can be found in school and public libraries, and at online booksellers.



Reminder: Free admission day

As a special Winter Holiday Gift, Free Admission is offered on Friday, December 24, (Christmas Eve) from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. It's a great way to let children run off some steam before the holiday festivities begin.

Spend a few leisurely hours in the crisp winter air and let the hustle and bustle of the season pass you by. Relax with your family and let your imagination run wild and around the 25 oversized storybook playsets and exhibits. Say hello to Mary's Sheep, meet Peter Rabbit and family, see the Three Pigs, the Three Blind Mice, and the Three Billy Goats Gruff, pet Eeyore the Donkey and Moo-Lawn the Cow (who jumped over the Moon). Parents and children alike can explore the Crooked Mile, King Arthur's Castle, Cinderella's Pumpkin Coach, Sherwood Forest, or the Yellow Brick Road.

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

Nativity Word Scramble

All these words come from the Christmas story. Can you unscramble them?

1. STRA _ _ _ _ _
2. MAGREN _ _ _ _ _
3. MYAR _ _ _ _ _
4. SEPHE _ _ _ _ _
5. DOEYKN _ _ _ _ _
6. AEGLN _ _ _ _ _
7. JPHOES _ _ _ _ _
8. JSSEU _ _ _ _ _
9. KIGSN _ _ _ _ _
10. STBALE _ _ _ _ _



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Photos courtesy of DNC Parks & Resorts at Yosemite, Inc.

Chef's Holidays in Yosemite

An Unforgettable Winter Getaway for Mom and Dad

By Carmel L. Mooney

Occasionally part of “family travel” is getting mom and dad away somewhere special to recharge and this winter The Ahwahnee in Yosemite National Park, announces the 2011 Chefs’ Holidays featuring 29 world-class chefs from across America.

Truth be told, older children and teenagers who love to cook and even those who don’t, could come along on this amazing travel excursion. And with all the wonderful winter activities offered at Yosemite such as skiing, hiking, and ice skating, the kids could stay busy, and happy, while mom and dad enjoy Chef’s Holidays.

This is truly the way to savor the country’s best culinary talent in the wintertime majesty of Yosemite National Park.

The Ahwahnee, a full-service, AAA Four-Diamond hotel located in Yosemite National Park, offers a spectacular lineup for the 26th annual Chefs’ Holidays event series where cooking buffs can learn, sample, and celebrate the range of styles, personalities, and trends that characterize the American culinary scene.

Since 1985 The Ahwahnee and Yosemite has provided the perfect backdrop for an annual celebration of food, wine and culinary masters who innovate American cuisine from coast to coast.

Guests meet the chef’s, enjoy fascinating and educational demonstra-

tions with tastings, and experience a fascinating behind-the-scenes kitchen tour. As if that wasn’t enough, the grand finale includes a five course gala dinner prepared by the headliner chef, complete with wine pairings, and served by candlelight in The Ahwahnee Dining Room.

If mom or dad ever wanted to learn the inside secrets from world famous chef’s, then this is the chance.

Chefs’ Holidays 2011 brings together 29 prominent American chefs and culinary professionals from Boston to Los Angeles in a wintertime celebration that includes a series of eight sessions from January 9 to February 4, 2011.

“Chefs’ Holidays is a much-anticipated event each year at The Ahwahnee,” says Chance Jorgensen, general manager of The Ahwahnee. “Guests enjoy the magic and comfort of being surrounded by a breathtaking winter wonderland setting and interacting with the country’s best culinary professionals.”

“We work hard to bring the best of the best to Chefs’ Holidays each year,” says Program Director and Chief Concierge Kathy Langley. “Many of our participating chefs are nationally-known for their talent and have been recognized with James Beard Awards. Others you may recognize by their participation in such shows as ‘Iron Chef’ or ‘Top Chef’ and others continually ‘wow’ guests nightly at their restaurants. This is a chance for people to

get up close and personal with some of their favorite chefs in the industry.”

Since its inception over two decades ago, as a small gathering of top chefs and hotel guests, Chefs’ Holidays has become a premier destination for epicures and culinary professionals alike.

“I look forward to Chefs’ Holidays year after year,” said Chef Jesse Ziff Cool of Flea St Café, who has been part of the event since 1989. “There’s a genuine camaraderie among the guest chefs and the staff in The Ahwahnee kitchen. The positive energy spills over to everyone involved. It’s truly rewarding to give participants a behind-the-scenes glimpse of what really happens in the professional culinary world. For all of us it is a magical opportunity and pleasure to step out of our restaurants for a few days and into one of the most beautiful natural wonders in the world. We all feel honored to take part in this extraordinary culinary celebration.”

Chef’s Holidays offers two- and three-night packages at The Ahwahnee and Yosemite Lodge at the Falls, which include lodging for two and admission for two to three culinary demonstrations, the private “Meet the Chefs” reception, behind the scenes kitchen tour, and the spectacular five-course Chefs’ Holidays Gala Dinner with wines to complement, all served in the majestic Ahwahnee Dining Room.

Whether mom and dad choose to travel without the kids this time or to bring older children along, Yosemite Valley continues to offer outstanding winter outdoor recreation and there

exists no place more beautiful in the winter for enjoying some of the world’s most glorious settings while luxuriating in award winning accommodations.

The 2011 lineup is as follows:

Session 1: January 9-11 (Sunday – Tuesday) ~ “Chefs of Pat Kuleto Restaurants”

Moderator: Pamela Wischkaemper, Culinary Consultant

A collaborative dinner featuring one course from each chef:

Host Chef: **Percy Whatley—The Ahwahnee**

Guest Chef: **Mark Franz & Emily Luchetti (pastry)—Farallon, San Francisco, CA**

Guest Chef: **Parke Ulriche—Waterbar, San Francisco, CA**

Guest Chef: **Adam Mali*—Nick’s Cove, Point Reyes, CA**

Session 2: January 13-14 (Wednesday – Thursday)

Moderator: Pamela Wischkaemper, Culinary Consultant

Headliner: **Michael Tusk*—Quince, San Francisco, CA**

Demonstrator: **Colin Ambrose—Estia’s Little Kitchen, Sag Harbor, NY**

Demonstrator: **Jesse Ziff Cool—Flea Street Café, Menlo Park, CA**

Session 3: January 16-18 (Sunday – Tuesday)

Moderator: Izabela Wojcik, Director of House Programming, James Beard Foundation



Travel

Continued from page 14

Headliner: **Tony DiSalvo**—Whist, Los Angeles, CA

Demonstrator: **Ariane Duarte**—CulinaryAriane, Montclair, NJ

Demonstrator: **Scott Youkilis**—Maverick/Hog & Rocks, San Francisco, CA

Session 4: January 19-20 (Wednesday – Friday) ~ “Culinarians from the San Francisco Ferry Building”

Moderator: **Izabela Wojcik**, Director of House Programming, James Beard Foundation

Headliner: **Traci Des Jardins**—Jardinière & Mijita

Demonstrator: **Peg Smith & Sue Conley**—Cowgirl Creamery

Demonstrator: **Michael Recchiuti**—Recchiuti Chocolates

Session 5: January 23-25 (Sunday – Tuesday)

Moderator: **Sara Moulton**, Author, TV Personality

Headliner: **Michael Cimarusti***—Providence, Los Angeles, CA

Demonstrators: **Douglas Keane**—Cyrus, Healdsburg, CA

Demonstrator: **Annie Somerville**—Greens, S.F. CA

Session 6: January 26-27 (Wednesday – Thursday) ~ “Taste of LA”

Moderator: **Sara Moulton**, Author, TV Personality

A collaborative dinner featuring one course from each chef:

Host Chef: **Percy Whatley**—The Ahwahnee

Guest Chef: **Neal Fraser**—Grace, Los Angeles, CA

Guest Chef: **Suzanne Goin**—Lucques, Los Angeles, CA

Guest Chef: **David Lentz***—The Hungry Cat, Los Angeles & Santa Barbara, CA

Host Chef: **Paul Padua**—The Ahwahnee (pastry)

Session 7: January 30-February 1 (Sunday – Tuesday)

Moderator: **Andrew Friedman**, Author

Headliner: **Barbara Lynch***—No. 9 Park, Boston, MA

Demonstrator: **Jerry Traunfeld**—Poppy, Seattle, WA

Demonstrator: **Elizabeth Falkner**—Citizen Cake & Orson, San Francisco, CA

Session 8: February 2-3 (Wednesday – Thursday)

Moderator: **Andrew Friedman**, Author

Headliners: **Duskie Estes & John Stewart**—Zazu/Bovolo/Black Pig Meat Co, Healdsburg, CA

Demonstrator: **Brandon Miller**—Mundaka, Carmel, CA

Demonstrator: **Andrew Kirschner***—Wilshire, Los Angeles, CA

*Indicates new chef this year.

For more information on Yosemite Chefs’ Holidays at The Ahwahnee or to make reservations, call 801-559-4903 or visit online at <http://www.YosemitePark.com/Chefs>.

Carmel L. Mooney is a 4th generation California and travel expert who enjoys sharing her favorite destinations with her listeners on KJAY 1430 AM in Sacramento on Sundays at noon. You can catch her travel tips and hidden gems monthly on Sacramento & Co, on News10.



Photo courtesy of DNC Parks & Resorts at Yosemite, Inc.



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Happy Holidays!

Christmas Wreath Art for Kids!

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 your Fruit Loop/peanut/oats wreath.

You will need:

Newspaper, cardboard, a cup of Fruit Loops, a cup of Cheerios, a cup of peanuts in their shells, glue (white glue works fine) a piece of ribbon to hang wreath from tree

You will need to:

Spread newspapers out for your work area. Cut a wreath shape from your cardboard. Glue Fruit Loops, Cheerios, and peanuts on the wreath. Tie a ribbon and hang your wreath.

Shredded wheat Wreath Tree ornament

After breakfast, save one of your large shredded wheat biscuits (not the ones soaked in milk, though!) and make this easy and unique wreath ornament.

You will need:

One large shredded wheat biscuit, green food coloring, (when using food coloring, wear thin latex gloves), glue (white glue is fine), plastic lid from margarine, whipped topping, or coffee can,

glitter, sequins, or beads, Christmas tree hook or thread (green is best), and narrow red ribbon

You will need to:

Break up the shredded wheat into a bowl. Mix the green food coloring with the glue (about 1/3 cup), add your green glue to the crumbled shredded wheat and mix until you get the shade of green you like and your mixture becomes easy to work with. Now, form the mixture into the shape of a little wreath a few inches across using the plastic lid as a guide (the plastic lid will also keep it from sticking to your work surface.) Decorate your wreath with glitter, sequins or beads while the glue is still sticky. Add the Christmas tree hook to the back or make a hanging loop out of thread. Let it dry, and glue a small red bow onto it. Now you're ready to hang it on your tree!

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More Christmas wreath art

Make an Authentic Nature Wreath

Venture into the great outdoors and find the fixins' for your "nature wreath." Take an afternoon walk through the park or, if you're lucky, in the mountains. As you explore, look for different types of nuts that are still in their shells, dried flowers, dried leaves, small pine cones and some greens from the pine trees. Try to find a good variety to create your wreath.

You will need:

A straw, vine or wicker wreath (any size will do), gold spray paint, newspapers, Christmas ribbon (red would be nice), 2 jingle bells, nuts, flowers, dried leaves, small pine cones, greens from pine trees, white glue OR glue gun and refills

(NOTE: Be VERY careful when you use a hot-glue gun. It's best to have an adult supervise or help you with this part.)

What to do:

Spread the newspapers out to protect our work area.

Spray all the nuts, leaves, flowers, and pine cones thoroughly with the gold spray paint.



After everything has dried, arrange the items on your wreath and glue or hot-glue them in place, adding a few of the greens for color.

Loop the ribbon through the wreath and tie in a big bow.

Tie the jingle bells on the ends of your ribbon.

Tie one piece of ribbon loosely through wreath to hang your wreath.

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Pine Cone Bird Feeders

This Fall feeder is easy to make and your backyard visitors will love it!

You will need:

- Pine cones—try to find the longer ones
- Peanut butter
- Popsicle or craft sticks
- Birdseed, any kind will do
- Cookie sheet or a piece of foil to hold the seed
- Heavy string or yarn
- Wax paper

You will need to

Apply the peanut butter to the pine cones with the craft sticks, pressing it on as best you can. It will be messy and sticky and all over your hands! Yum!

Roll the peanut butter-covered pine cones in the birdseed. Gently shake off the excess.

Tie the string or yarn tightly around the base or top of each pine cone and hang near a window so you can see all the activity as the birds feast!

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Events at the Crocker Art Museum

Saturday, December 11, 1 p.m. and Sunday, December 19, 11 a.m.

Drop, Yak, Splat! A Museum Adventure for Families

Different artworks will provide inspiration for a stimulating gallery experience for families and children of all ages. Free with Museum admission.

Saturday, December 11, 4 p.m.

Art Appetizer

Start your evening at the Crocker with a tour of the Museum's most recent exhibitions. This is a 50-minute experience designed to fulfill your art cravings. Free with Museum admission.

Tuesday, December 14, Noon-2 p.m.

Homeschool Day

Homeschool and family groups are invited to visit the Museum regularly for thematic, gallery adventures designed to intrigue children ages six and older. Registration is required. For pricing specifics and registration, visit crockerartmuseum.org or call (916) 808-1182.

Wednesday, December 15, 11 a.m.

Wee Wednesday

Bring your little one and yourself to this gallery-based play date for children ages 3 to 5. Advance

registration is required. Register at crockerartmuseum.org. Free with Museum admission.

Sunday, December 26, Noon to 4 p.m.

Kwanzaa Family Festival

Celebrated worldwide, Kwanzaa focuses on family, community, creativity and the cultural traditions found in the African diaspora. At this museum-wide festival, the Crocker celebrates its new collection of African art with music and dance performances, unique studio art workshops, storytelling and much more. Free.

The Crocker Art Museum was established in 1885 and is one of the leading art institutions in Northern California. The Museum offers a diverse spectrum of special exhibitions, events and programs to augment its collections of Californian, European, Asian, African and Oceanic artworks. The Crocker is located at 216 O Street in Downtown Sacramento. Museum hours are 10 a.m. to 7 p.m., Tuesday to Wednesday; 10 a.m. to 9 p.m., Thursday; 10 a.m. to 5 p.m., Friday to Sunday. Every Third Sunday of the month is "Pay What You Wish Sunday". For more information, call (916) 808-7000 or visit crockerartmuseum.org.



Wilder Ranch State Park Calendar

Wilder Ranch Coast Nature Walk, Saturday, December 4 at 11 a.m.

On this two-hour natural history excursion you will explore the plants, animals, and geology of the spectacular coastal bluffs. Meet at the Wilder Ranch interpretive center. Bring a snack, water, binoculars, and good walking shoes. Binoculars are available to borrow. Walk is cancelled if rain.

History, Nature, and Scenic Views: A Tour of the Grey Whale Ranch Area

Saturday, December 11 at 9 a.m.

This challenging guided three-hour hike will explore the natural and cultural history of the upper hills of Wilder Ranch State Park. Meet at the Wilder Ranch interpretive center. Bring good walking shoes, lunch, snacks, and water. Hike is canceled if rain.

Saturday, December 18, 11 a.m. to 3 p.m., "Holidays at the Ranch" at Wilder Ranch State Park

Celebrate a warm, festive holiday season as folks did in Santa Cruz in Mexican, Victorian, and early 20th-century times. Join in an old-fashioned sing-along around the piano, make Victorian and Mexican holiday crafts, create wreaths and ornaments, make and play dreidel and more as you delight in the season at Wilder Ranch State Park. The park is located off Highway 1 just north of Santa Cruz; for more information, call (831) 426-0505.

Wilder Ranch Living History Demonstrations: Some weekend days, 11 a.m. to 3 p.m.

History comes alive at Wilder Ranch State Park on many weekends. Come for a picnic and Victorian games on the lawn, and you may find a blacksmith in the shop, a quilter in the Victorian, or treats baking in the wood stove. The park brings alive the experience of early California dairy ranching; experience first-hand the life of a circa 1900 dairy rancher in Santa Cruz County. Call (831) 426-0505 for specific dates and activities.

Wilder Ranch State Park is located on Highway 1 at the northern end of Santa Cruz. Admission to the event is free; day-use parking is \$10 per car. For more information, or to make arrangements for those with special needs, call the Wilder Ranch Interpretive Center at (831) 426-0505.

State Park activities

Henry Cowell Redwoods State Park

Main entrance located two miles South of Felton on Highway 9 (831) 335-7077.

Holiday Gift and Craft Faire - Saturday and Sunday December 11 and 12 from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m.

Nature's Beauty and the joy of the Season meet as you shop for nature-themed gifts! Enjoy crafters and artisans, kid's activities, an extensive holiday toy train and railroad display, live entertainment, redwoods and more at this magical event! Proceeds benefit environmental and cultural education. More information is available at (831) 335-0782 and www.mountainparks.org.

Natural Bridges State Beach

Located at the end of West Cliff Drive in Santa Cruz (831) 423-4609.

Tours of the Monarch Grove- All Saturdays in December at 11 a.m. and 2 p.m. and All Sundays in December at 11 a.m. and 2 p.m.

Join a Docent Naturalist for a tour of a state designated insect preserve. Learn the story of the fascinating seasonal migration of thousands of monarch butterflies to one of the larger overwintering sites in the United States. Public tours are offered on weekends and no reservations are necessary, or call (831) 423-4609 to arrange a tour for a group of 10 or more. Meet at the Visitor Center for the hour-long program.

Big Basin Redwoods State Park

Located 9 miles outside of Boulder Creek on Hwy 236 (831) 338-8861.

All Programs Begin at Park Headquarters

Ocean View Summit Hike - Saturday, December 4 at 10:30 a.m.

Join docent Doreen Devorah on one of their most diverse hikes—by mountain streams, oak woodlands, chaparral and redwoods. Discuss forests, flowers and fires on a six-mile, four-hour hike. This somewhat strenuous ascent is rewarded with ocean views on a clear day. Bring water, lunch and good hiking shoes. Meet at Park Headquarters. Heavy rain cancels.

Footsteps of the Pioneers- Sunday, December 5 at Noon

Join docent Doreen Devorah on an easy three-mile, 2.5-hour round trip to the site of the Maddock Cabin. Enjoy a beautiful walk through the redwoods and hear stories of the early settlers and their life deep in the forest. Meet at Park Headquarters and bring water. Heavy rain cancels.

Redwood Loop Walk - Saturday, December 11 at 1 p.m.

How do these grand redwoods grow to be so old? So tall? How are they important to humans? Join us for this fun and informative guided half-mile stroll through a magnificent old-growth redwood forest. Meet the famous Mother Tree, the Father of the Forest and the incredible Chimney Tree on this one-hour walk. Stroller and wheelchair accessible. Meet at Park Headquarters. Heavy rain cancels.

Rancho Cordova Library hosts weekly baby storytimes

Parents and caregivers are invited to bring their babies, from newborns to 24 months old, for fun storytime programs at 9:30 a.m., Wednesdays, through December 22, at Rancho Cordova Library, 9845 Folsom Boulevard, Sacramento. The free weekly programs include stories, songs, and rhymes which foster early literacy in youngsters. For details, call the Sacramento Public Library at (916) 264-2920 or visit saclibrary.org.

Weekly adult storytelling set for Belle Coolege Library

Adults have the opportunity to tell their true stories live, without scripts, from recollections, and memory with plenty of heart, at 6:30 p.m., on the first Wednesday of each month, through May 4, 2011, at Belle Coolege Library, 5600 South Land Park Drive, Sacramento. Each storytelling program will last five to ten minutes. Listeners and storytellers are welcome. For details, call the Sacramento Public Library at (916) 264-2920 or visit saclibrary.org.

Food and Toy Drive at the Zoo

During this holiday season bring a non-perishable food item or a new and unwrapped toy when you visit the Zoo and receive \$1 off your Zoo admission! The Zoo is raising donations for Toys for Tots and Sacramento Food Bank and Family Services. The Zoo won the 2009 "Holiday Spirit of Giving" award for most pounds of food raised by a small company!

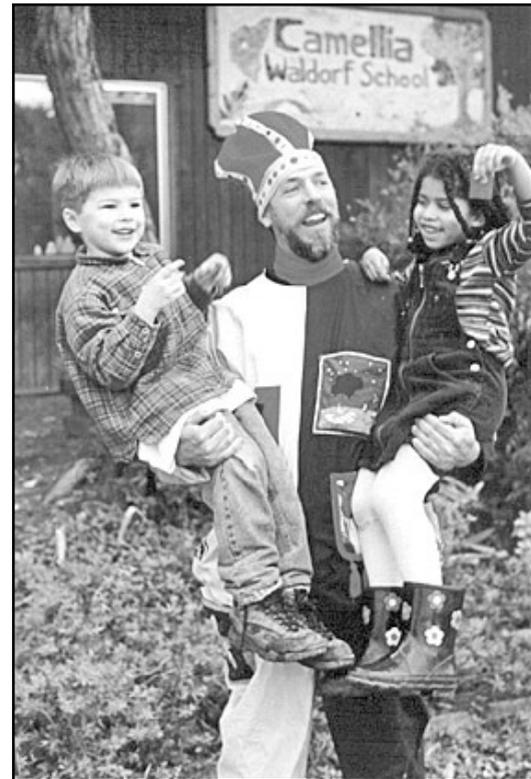
Through visitor donations in 2009 the Zoo raised 4,295 lbs. of food for the Sacramento Food Bank and Family Services and contributed to the 34,371 toys collected by Toys for Tots in Sacramento. They hope to do it again with your support!

The Zoo is proud to partner with two organizations that make such an impact on our community. The Sacramento Food Bank and Family Services provides free emergency goods and services to nearly 20,000 men, women and children every year. The Toys for Tots program ensures that needy families will be able to provide Christmas gifts through their annual services and toy donations. In 2009 they distributed 54,262 toys within Sacramento County from toy drives like the Zoo's as well as monetary donations.

Open daily from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m., general admission is \$11; children ages 3 to 12 are \$7 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.

22nd annual Winter Faire!

Camellia Waldorf School will hold its 22nd Annual Winter Faire on Saturday, December 11, from 10 a.m. to 3:30 p.m. The school is located at 5701 Freepoint Blvd (near Fruitridge), Sacramento. Come celebrate the magic of winter with a cup of hot cider and a day of heartwarming activities. There will be free live festive music, a Sacramento Restaurant Soup competition, crafts, educational presentations, and more! Children will enjoy watching puppet shows, storytelling, making crafts, gingerbread creations, and affordable shopping in a special "children-only" store. Parents and friends can do holiday shopping with local artisans for unique gifts as well as enjoy live music, home-baked goods, and more! Free admission with nominal charges for some activities. For more information, call, (916) 427.5022. or visit www.camelliawaldorf.org



Elk Grove Nativity

The Fourth Annual Elk Grove Nativity will be held December 10 through December 12 at the Seasons Chapel of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints located at 6711 Seasons Drive in Elk Grove. The times are as follows:

- Friday, December 10 - 5 to 9 p.m.
- Saturday, December 11 - 1 to 9 p.m.
- Sunday, December 12 - 5 to 8:30 p.m.

The Open House features a diverse collection of over 500 nativities from all around the world. See how artisans from all continents and countries such

as Egypt, Nigeria, New Zealand, Israel, China, and many more view the manager scene through the prism of their own culture.

Children ages 4 to 11 will recreate the greatest story ever told in Live Nativity performances. Live Nativities will be performed at the bottom of every hour during the Open House.

The event will also include musical presentations performed by local talent at the top of every hour. The Sacramento California Stake will perform portions of Handel's Messiah at 6 and 7 p.m. on Sunday only.

The Nativity Open House is open to all people throughout the Sacramento area. All the nativity sets used in the Open House are privately owned and are on loan for the viewing pleasure of the community. Light refreshments will be served. For more information visit the Open House website at www.elkgrovenativity.org. The Open House is free of charge.

Carmichael Recreation and Park District event

7th Annual Holiday Tree Lighting
Thursday, December 9, 6 p.m.
Carmichael Park (front of park)
5750 Grant Avenue, Carmichael
Free admission and parking

Live music, refreshments, and of course, a visit by Santa. Free and fun for all ages! Sponsored by the Carmichael and Mission Oaks Recreation and Park Districts, Carmichael Chamber of Commerce and the Carmichael Kiwanis Club. For more information call (916)485-5322.



Calendar of Events

Arts and Crafts

December 16, Make Your Own Beaded Bracelet, 4 p.m., 891 Watt Avenue, Sacramento. This fun program is for school-age children, ages 5 to 12 at the Arden-Dimick Library. Have fun with creative, crafty gift ideas and include ways to make cool homemade wrapping paper.

Holiday Events

Daily through December 23, Holiday Music Program, 11 a.m. to 1 p.m., 10th Street between L & N Streets, Sacramento. Visitors to the California State Capitol Museum will enjoy live holiday musical performances in the Capitol Rotunda each day. Beautiful vintage decorations create a lovely backdrop for a variety of diverse and amazing live holiday performances. The cost is free. For more information, call (916) 34-0333 or visit www.capitolmuseum.ca.gov

December 4, Arts and Crafts Sale, 9 a.m. to 7 p.m., 5701 Locust Avenue, Carmichael. St. John's parents will be hosting their thirty-second annual "A Holiday Show of Hands" an arts and crafts Christmas sale featuring custom work by over 150 craftsmen and artists. There will also be a Fashion Pavillion, antiques and collectibles, and the "Green" room with crafts from found and recycled objects. This event will also be held Sunday, December 5 from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. Admission is free.

December 9, Holiday Tree Lighting, 6 p.m., 5750 Grant Avenue, Carmichael. Free admission and parking to this event. Meet at Carmichael Park (front of park) for live music, refreshments, and a visit from Santa. Free and fun for all ages. For more information, call (916) 485-5322.

December 11, Winter Faire, 10 a.m. to 3:30 p.m., 5701 Freeport Boulevard, Sacramento. Camellia Waldrof School 22nd Annual Winter Faire. Come celebrate the magic of winter with a cup of hot cider and a day of festive music, crafts, educational presentations, puppet shows, storytelling, crafts and shopping. Free admission with nominal charges for some activities. For more information, call (916) 427-5022.

December 11, Demonstration Day, 10 a.m. to 5 p.m., 2701 L Street, Sacramento. Step back in time to holidays past at Sutter's Fort "A Simple Emigrant Christmas". Friends and families are encouraged to visit the Fort to enjoy docents in period attire as they interpret and demonstrate a variety of early holiday traditions and cultural activities similar to what early Emigrants did in the 1840s. For more information, call (916) 445-4422 or visit www.parks.ca.gov/suttersfort

December 14, Holiday Concert, 4 p.m., 891 Watt Avenue, Sacramento. Return to an era of glamor, romance, and innocence at a special free concert by Sister Swing at Arden-Dimick Library. The singers and their band will perform old favorites, getting in the mood for the holidays. There will be a brief meeting to elect new members of the Friends of Arden-Dimick Library board. All are welcome to attend. For more information, call (916) 264-2920 or visit saclibrary.org.

Throughout the holiday season, Old Sacramento Theatre of Lights, 6 and 7:30 p.m., Sacramento. Back for the second year, event-goers will experience the Old Sacramento Theatre of Lights. At 6:30 p.m. a symphony of lights, sounds and visual effects will take the audience back to a time when the beloved poem "The Night Before Christmas" was first introduced in Sacramento in 1857. The Old Sacramento Theatre of Lights will run two 20-minute light shows throughout the holiday season Thursdays through Sundays. Video from last year's inaugural event can be seen at - <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rUxn1938kk4>

December 24, Free Admission, 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. 3901 Land Park Drive, Sacramento. A special Winter Holiday Gift, free admission to Fairytale Town, Christmas Eve. It's a great way to let children run off some steam before the holiday festivities begin. For more information, call (916) 808-7462 or visit www.fairytaletown.org.

December 26, Kwanzaa Family Festival, Noon to 4 p.m., 216 O Street, Sacramento. Celebrated worldwide, Kwanzaa focuses on family, community, creativity and the cultural traditions found in the African diaspora. At this Crocker Art Museum-wide festival, the Crocker celebrates its new collection of African art with music and dance performances, unique studio art workshops, storytelling and much more. Free.

Special Events

December 11, Museum Event for Families, 1 p.m. and December 19, 11 a.m., 216 O Street, Sacramento. The Crocker Art Museum presents, "Drop, Yak, Splat!-A Museum Adventure for Families." Different artworks will provide inspiration for a stimulating gallery experience for families and children of all ages. Free with Museum admission. For more information, call (916) 808-7000 or visit crockerartmuseum.org

December 11, Music Show, 2 p.m., 2901 Truxel Road, Sacramento. Musician-singer Felipe Ferraz will present a lively multi-lingual program of folk songs at a free family program at South Natomas Library. For more information, call (916) 264-2920.

December 14, Homeschool Day, Noon to 2 p.m., 216 O Street, Sacramento. Homeschool and family groups are invited to visit the Crocker Art Museum regularly for thematic, gallery adventures designed to intrigue children ages six and older. Registration is required. For pricing specifics ad registration, visit crockermuseum.org or call (916) 808-1182.

December 15, Wee Wednesday, 11 a.m., 216 O Street, Sacramento. Bring your little one and yourself to the Crocker Art Museum for this gallery-based play date for children ages 3 to 5. Advance registration is required. Register at crockerartmuseum.org. Free with Museum admission.

January 20, Bubble Program, 4 p.m., 891 Watt Avenue, Sacramento. Rebecca Nile presents lots of fun with bubbles in her interactive and creative show as well as encourages kids to have fun by using their imaginations. Join the fun at the Arden-Dimick Library with "Journey to Bubble Land with the Bubble Lady." Rebecca explores creative ways to tell stories, and describes reading as "a magic door into new wonderful lands."



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December 3 and 4, Winter Wonderland, 5 to 8 p.m., 3901 Land Park Drive, Sacramento. Explore Fairytale Town under the twinkling holiday lights. There will be festive decorations, live holiday music and entertainment, hands on activities, vendors featuring holiday treats and wares, gift wrapping purchase pictures with Father Christmas. The cost is \$5. Members receive a 2 for 1 discount. Children 2 and under are free. For more information, call (916) 808-7462 or visit www.fairytaletown.org

December 3 and 4, Christmas Open House, Sutter Creek. On Friday night around 6 p.m., Santa and Mrs. Claus will arrive in their sleigh to light the community Christmas tree next to City Hall. On Main Street the shopkeepers will be open late to offer a warm and friendly Open House, with snacks, refreshments, and wonderful displays of unique items ready for your Christmas list. Enjoy arts and crafts, homemade cookies and hot cider. On Saturday, enjoy holiday music, shopping and Charles Dickens characters strolling down the street. For more information, call (209) 267-1344 or visit www.suttercreek.org.



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Holiday Music Program

Through December 23, 11 a.m. to 1 p.m., get ready for some holiday fun at this free event on your next visit to the California State Capitol Museum! To set a festive stage and spread holiday cheer, beautiful vintage decorations create a lovely backdrop for a variety of diverse and amazing live holiday musical performances in the Capitol Rotunda each day. Visitors will enjoy live musical entertainment that includes a Salvation Army brass quintet, a Cal-Trans vocal ensemble (made up of a spirited group of state workers), trombone jazz, world and baroque music, bell-ringers, a harp circle, a youth violinist, a number of talented school choirs and many more. This special holiday experience is made possible by the State Capitol Museum and California State Parks in association with the California State Legislature Joint Rules Committee, the Governor's Office and the Department of General Services who have worked collaboratively to restore holiday traditions inside the Capitol.

The California State Capitol Museum is located at 10th Street between L and N Streets, Sacramento. For more information about scheduled performances, call (916) 324-0333 or visit www.capitolmuseum.ca.gov.

Discovery Museum Activities

Paper Drop Ornaments - December 4 and 5, 12:30 to 4 p.m. Start December off with a festive holiday craft. Kids 12 and under enjoy constructing these keepsake ornaments. Multiple colors of construction papers are available to represent different winter holidays. In addition, your admission includes a visit to the Bone Zone exhibit, a planetarium show (ages 4 and above) and a Creature Feature.

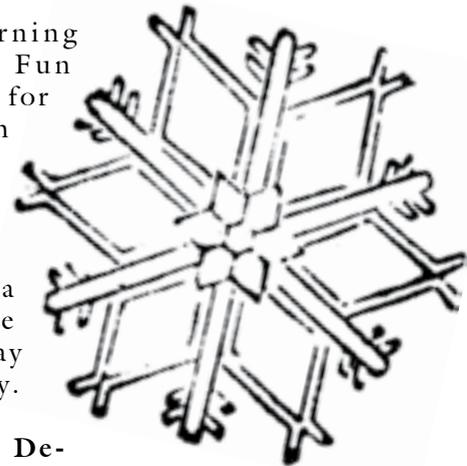
Reindeer Days - December 11 and 12, 12:30 to 4 p.m. Everyone recognizes the reindeer as an animal of the holiday season, but how much do you really know about them? Visit the Discovery Museum this weekend and learn about these amazing mammals. An outdoor Reindeer Ramble makes for a fun family scavenger hunt. Once completed, turn it in for a little candy treat! Children 12 years old and under make a reindeer craft to take home,

commemorating the most famous reindeer of all, Rudolph!

Scented Sachets for the Holidays - December 18 and 19, 12:30 to 4 p.m. Kick off Winter Break at the Discovery Museum. View exhibits, walk the grounds, take in a planetarium presentation (ages 4 and older) and visit with the animals. Children 12 and under add a fragrant addition to the season by making a holiday sachet. It is a good keepsake from a day at the Museum, or a special gift to be made for another.

Snowflake Flurry - December 26, 12:30 to 4 p.m. Celebrate the win-

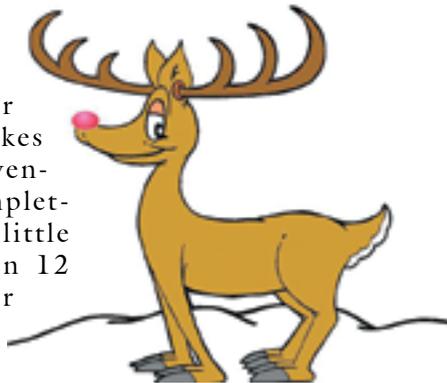
ter season by learning about snowflakes. Fun facts are displayed for you to share with your family around the holidays. Kids 12 and under design a snowflake wreath to take home as a souvenir. A day at the museum is a great way to stay warm and dry.



New Year Banner - December 27 - 30, 12:30 to 4 p.m. Make the end of 2010 memorable by visiting the Discovery Museum with family and friends. Explore exhibits, a nature walk and the craft room. Kids 12 and under color and assemble a New Year Banner to take home. Remember, this is the last week of our Bone Zone exhibit. Learn about skulls, skeletons and bone health. Little ones enjoy the Healthy Diner and Doctor's Office play

spaces. Bring your camera to capture all the fun!

The Discovery Museum Science and Space Center is located at 3615 Auburn Boulevard, Sacramento. Admission is \$6 adults (18+), \$5 seniors (60+), \$5 teens (13-17), \$4 children (4-12), \$0 children (3 and under) The programs are appropriate for 4 to 12 years old. For more information, call (916) 808-3942 or visit www.thediscovery.org.



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Parties! Parties! Parties! Parties! Parties! Parties! Parties! Parties! Parties!

Under the cups

This is a fun version of "Memory" which you can play with all age groups. Listed are three versions: a party version and a non-party version, both of which your kids will enjoy, as well as a version for one child to play on their own.

Age: 4+
Preparation for the party version:

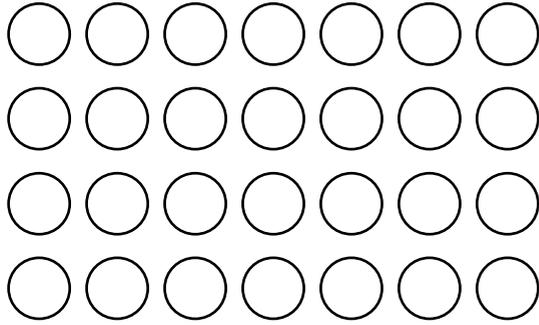
You will need 28 Styrofoam or paper cups (not transparent) and 2 each of 14 different pairs of treats to hide such as sweets (candy), treat-sized chocolate bars, or tiny gifts. When nobody is looking put the treats in a rectangular grid pattern (7 x 4) on a table and cover with the cups to make a "concentration" game.

How to Play:

The children take it in turns to turn over a pair of cups. If the treats underneath match, they may take the cups away, claim the treats as their own and have another go. If they do not match, they must carefully replace the cups and play passes to the next player.

Home version:

For a game at home with your own children, find articles such as buttons, toy cars,



coins, pencils etc to use instead of treats - although you may want to include a treat or two to make the game extra fun and motivate your child to play! Count up the number of pairs of objects you have found at the end and declare a winner.

Solitaire version:

A child playing on his or her own can count the number of moves made to find all the pairs, and try to beat the score next time.

Hints:

Increase or reduce the number of cups and pairs of objects to suit the age and ability of the children.

For a party game for older children, reduce the number of "treats" and throw in the odd booby prize! You could also hide an "instant forfeit" under one or more of the cups: choose something that all the kids at the party would be happy to do.

First Name Game

This is a very simple game for children of all ages which just requires a supply of pencils and paper and a bit of thinking-power!

Number of Players: - 2 + Age Range: 6+

You will need:

Paper and pencil for each player.

You will need to:

Choose a name randomly (shorter for younger children, longer for older kids) and write it down on the left hand side of the page, one letter under another. Now give everybody 5 minutes to write down as many first names as they can think of which begin with the letters in that name. Score one point for each name that you come up with.

Hot Holiday Present Game:

During this Holiday party version of a classic "Hot Potato" game, kids sit in a circle and pass the mini present while the music is playing. When the music stops, the person holding the present goes out of the game and receives a small prize.

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Parties! Parties! Parties! Parties! Parties! Parties! Parties! Parties! Parties!

Pin The Star on The Tree

This is a spin-off of the classic "Pin the Tail" on the Donkey game
Age: 4+

You will need:

A pin board or bulletin board, a large piece of cardboard or poster paper, glitter, crayons or colored maker pens, yellow or white paper, drawing pins and a blindfold.



You will need to:

Draw a Christmas tree on a large poster board - as big as possible and color it green, then attach the tree to the pin board. Cut out a star from poster paper, cardboard, or construction paper. If you want, decorate it with glue and glitter. Hang or prop up the tree at "child-height" so the children can reach it easily.

Blindfold a child, turn them round three times, then lead them so that they stand just in front of the pin board, and put the "star" in their hand, with the drawing pin already attached. The child pushes the "star" into the pin board in what they think is the right position. The blindfold is removed and a tiny circle drawn for the position of the drawing pin, and the child's initials written nearby.

When everybody has had a go and a few laughs, the child who was closest to the correct position is declared the winner.

Variations:

Find a poster, or draw, your child's favorite character, or perhaps a large clown's face or celebrity's face. Invent something such as a moustache or a wart! You can also use an inanimate object such as a house or school (you could provide a "teacher" and try to place her at the front door).

Ask the party child to come up with an idea for the pin board in advance - you might be surprised!

Some children don't like to wear a blindfold. If you have one of these kids at your party, appoint them the official in charge of writing initials, or tying the blindfold.

For younger children you could use sticky-tack or even sticky-tape to attach the "star".

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