

December 2012

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What's new at the zoo?

The Sacramento Zoo has been busy welcoming a variety of new animals. The latest residents include two female Spur-winged Lapwings, a female Grevy's Zebra, Lemur Tree Frogs, California Salamanders and a male Coquerel's Sifaka. They can be found in their exhibits around the Zoo. All animals can be seen during regular Zoo hours.

New to the Zoo are a Coquerel's Sifaka, two Spur-winged Lapwings, Lemur Tree Frogs, California Salamanders and a female Grevy's Zebra. With a collection of more than 500 animals, residents are often moving around or making space for a new roommate. Most animal movements to and from the Sacramento Zoo are based on recommendations by Species Survival Plan® coordinators, who track all individuals of a species in zoos accredited by the Association of Zoos and Aquariums.

The male Coquerel's Sifaka is 9 years-old and is living with the female sifaka across from the Conservation Carousel. Two female Spur-winged Lapwing sisters are new roommates for the two White-faced Owls (who happen to be brothers). Also, the female Grevy's Zebra has joined the other three female Grevy's Zebras and female Ostrich. California Salamanders and Lemur Tree Frogs have made themselves cozy in the Reptile House. Each is an ambassador for their species in the wild, educating the public on the importance of the animal and their natural habitat.



Lemur Tree Frog.

Photo courtesy Sacramento Zoo

Open since 1927, the Sacramento Zoo is home to more than 500 native, rare and endangered animals 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 non-profit Sacramento Zoological Society. This Sacramento treasure inspires conservation awareness through education and recreation. Open daily from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m., general admission is \$11.25; children ages 2-11 are \$7.25 and one 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.org.

Small Wonders of Africa Exhibit—Becoming a Reality

Sacramento Zoo visitors are closer to meeting six new species of animals who will live in an enlarged habitat in the center of the Zoo. Half of the \$500,000 needed to make Small Wonders of Africa a reality has been raised. The Sacramento Zoological Society Board of Directors is fundraising with gusto to raise the rest of the funds needed. The Small Wonders of Africa exhibit, located across from the Tall Wonders giraffe habitat, will include Wolf's Guenon monkeys, Straw-colored Fruit Bats, Aardvarks, Banded Mongooses, Red-billed Hornbills and Crested Guinea fowl. Each of these animals will help tell the story of East Africa, presenting the challenges of conserving wildlife in this corner of the world. Construction is expected to begin next spring. Small Wonders will house six species in three large areas and provide increased behind-the-scenes holding spaces and improved keeper access. Habitat space in the animals' new home will be double the size of the existing older exhibit. New mesh and glass fronts allow up-close viewing by visitors – the project will even provide a realistic termite mound to enhance the Aardvarks' living space. Guests will be able to look inside and watch the Aardvarks as they curl up and nap. If you would like to learn more about Small Wonders of Africa, visit saczoo.org or call 916-808-3713.

Micke Grove Zoo's newest resident

Micke Grove Zoo announces an exciting new event. The zoo's resident male Prevost's squirrel, 'Obi,' has been introduced to a new female companion, 'Katrina.' Katrina, a 10-year-old, highly social Prevost's squirrel, donated by Cleveland Metroparks Zoo.

Katrina and Obi are housed in the Squirrel exhibit which has been completely renovated by primary keeper Colleen Mullikin with support from Avanti Mallapur (Zoo Curator) and James Rexroth (interim Zoo and Interpretive Services Manager) in anticipation of this event. Colleen has been the keeper in charge of Micke Grove Zoo's Prevost's squirrels since 2008. During that time, her excellent care and the provision of a species-appropriate environment for the zoo's previous pair, Obi and Lucy, led to the successful breeding of three litters of Prevost's squirrels at the zoo (two infants each in the first two litters and one infant in the third).

Prevost's squirrels are highly endangered and Micke Grove Zoo has been specially selected to participate in breeding these rare animals. The Association of Zoos and Aquariums' (AZA) species survival plan (SSP) which oversees the breeding of Prevost's squirrels and other species under threat, has selected Katrina to breed with Micke Grove Zoo's male Prevost's squirrel, 'Obi.' The AZA is a non-profit organization that provides members with advice and support to maintain high standards and best practices in animal care, wildlife conservation, conservation science and

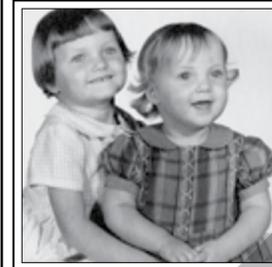


The zoo's new resident female Prevost's squirrel, 'Katrina.'

conservation education. The SSP programs were setup by AZA to involve all AZA-accredited zoos in breeding threatened and endangered species of wildlife.

Prevost's squirrels are an arboreal species found in the tropical rainforests of south-east Asia (Thailand, Malaysia and Indonesia). Free-ranging populations of the species have lost large expanses of their home range habitat to private plantations. Prevost's squirrels are also captured for the pet trade. These human pressures have resulted in depleting wild populations of the species increasing their risk of becoming extinct. Zoos contribute to the survival of this species by breeding them in captivity to maintain self-sustaining captive populations and for reintroduction programs if the need arises in the future.

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Performing Arts Center
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Sacramento, CA 95829
Ticket Info 916-484-1188

Tickets \$12-22
For information or to purchase tickets, visit capitolballet.com

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Fairytale Town Programs

Winter Wonderland, Saturday, December 1, 11 a.m. to 3 p.m.

Enjoy a day of play in the park, make arts and crafts from holidays around the world and visit with Santa Claus in his workshop. Photos with Santa will be available for an additional fee. Winter Wonderland is free with paid park admission. Weekend admission is \$5 for adults and children ages 2 and older and free for children ages 1 and under. For more information, visit fairytaletown.org or call (916) 808-7462.

Free Admission Day, Monday, December 24, 10 a.m. to 2 p.m.

On Christmas Eve, Fairytale Town gives the gift of free admission to visiting guests. For more information, visit fairytaletown.org or call (916) 808-7462.

About Fairytale Town

Fairytale Town is a 501 (c)(3) non-profit children's park and educational center in Land Park whose mission is to promote the imagination, creativity and education of children. Established in 1959, Fairytale Town is home to 25 three-dimensional play sets based on favorite fairytales and nursery rhymes, a family of 22 rare and miniature breed animals, three interactive learning gardens and two performing arts stages. From March through October, the park is open daily from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. From November through February, the park is open Thursday through Sunday from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m., weather permitting. For more information, visit fairytaletown.org or call (916) 808-7462.



Santa's Reindeer

o	w	j	p	a	n	e	z	t	i	l	b
u	a	w	r	w	h	c	p	r	k	n	m
t	o	s	c	e	z	k	e	y	d	b	z
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m	a	o	e	u	n	d	p	k	t	c	r
o	s	x	i	a	u	u	n	w	k	j	e
c	h	y	r	m	c	t	k	i	q	a	n
e	e	p	j	y	x	s	r	j	e	e	n
l	r	j	d	h	p	l	o	d	u	r	o
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x	y	r	e	c	n	a	d	d	a	t	s
j	r	a	v	w	j	d	v	x	n	p	b

Blitzen

Dasher

reindeer

Comet

Donner

Rudolph

Cupid

Prancer

Vixen

Dancer



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December 9th at 9:00am at the St. Paul Missionary Baptist Church Campus, 3996 14th Avenue, Sacramento CA 95820

for more information
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Effie Yeaw Nature Center Calendar

SPECIAL PROGRAMS: Under the Oaks Winter children's camp classes and family programs, crafts, games, and nature walks from 9 a.m. - noon, December 26 through 28. For class descriptions and prices visit online at www.sacnaturecenter.net or call (916) 489-4918. Discounts for ARNHA members! Pre-registration is strongly recommended, space is limited.

FREE WEEKEND ACTIVITIES – Space is limited – Sign-ups taken the day of the program, donations gratefully accepted. There is a \$5 per car daily parking fee in Ancil Hoffman Park (Parking is free to members).

December 2, Sunday, 1:30 p.m., By the River's Edge

Who lives at the river's edge? Hike with a naturalist and explore the habitat where beaver, otter, herons and other wildlife live. Bring binoculars or borrow a pair from us. All ages welcome.

December 8, Saturday, 10:30 a.m., Those Wacky Woodpeckers!

Woodpeckers are instantly recognizable by their unique behavior of pecking vertically on trees and poles, but how much do you really know about these outstanding birds? The staff will clue you in! All ages welcome.

December 9, Sunday, 1:30 p.m., Cold-blooded Critters

Some have scaly skin, some have slimy skin, some have legs and some do not. Can you guess what they are? Join the staff at the Effie Yeaw Nature Center and find out! Meet a resident animal up close. All ages welcome.

December 15, Saturday, 10:30 a.m., Coyote Tales

Join the staff for a traditional story about the trickster coyote, and get a close-up look at a coyote pelt, skull and mounted specimen. Discover some facts about these wild canines and take a stroll to search for tracks and scat. All ages welcome.

December 16, Sunday, 1:30 p.m., Caring for Injured Wildlife

Join Doug Forbes from the Wildlife Care Association and learn about how this volunteer organization helps injured and orphaned wildlife in the Sacramento area. Meet some of the live animals under their care and learn how you can help support wildlife rehabilitation. All ages welcome.

December 22, Saturday, 10:30 a.m., Frog vs. Toad

Meet the Nature Center's resident toad and frogs up close and discover how they are both amphibians, yet very different from each other. Discover the "two lives" of these animals and how their skin can breathe. All ages welcome.

December 23, Sunday, 1:30 p.m., Insects Home for the Holidays

What's bugging you this winter? Cool weather may cause insects to seek shelter inside their homes this holiday season. View the Center's preserved collections of insects to see some fascinating bugs up close and learn some earth friendly ways to keep bugs out of your home.

December 29, Saturday, 10:30 a.m., Leave it to Beavers

Have you seen the beaver tree in the Nature Area? Teeth-marks tell a story of a visit from industrious beavers. You will get to examine biofacts like a skull with orange front teeth and a water resistant pelt. All ages welcome.

The Effie Yeaw Nature Center is located at 2850 San Lorenzo Way, Carmichael, at California Avenue and Tarshe Drive. For more information, call (916) 489-4918 or visit www.sacnaturecenter.net

Natural Bridges State Beach

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

Tours of the Monarch Grove

All Saturdays and Sundays now through January at 11 a.m. and 2 p.m.

Join a Docent Naturalist for a tour of a state designated insect preserve. Thousands of monarch butterflies return each fall to one of the

larger over-wintering sites along the California coast. Learn the story of this beautiful creature and its fascinating seasonal migration. Public tours are offered on weekends and no reservations are necessary, or you may call 423-4609 to arrange a tour for a group of 10 or more. Meet at the Visitor Center for the hour-long program.

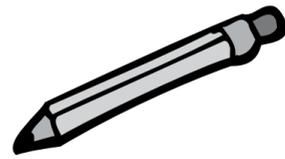
Happy Holiday Hunt!

Hey 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.

D E L I C I O U S F O O D S Z T C
E S M K H B C T W A S M H H N I O
C L Z T O Y S O L M E K O A O N L
O N E L V E S N M I I B L K R S O
R S D S R O Q I Z L K N I K T E R
A D B K H S T V D Y O E D U H L E
T N E M E T I C X E O K A N P C D
I A V Z E N N M A J C L Y A O S L
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- | | | |
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| <p>Bells
Candy Canes
Christmas Trees
Colored Lights
Decorations
Delicious Foods
Elves</p> | <p>Excitement
Family
Hanukkah
Holiday
Holly
Jolly
North Pole</p> | <p>ornament
Presents
Reindeer
Santa Claus
Sugar cookies
Tinsel
Toys</p> |
|---|--|---|

MAKE IT YOURSELF!



Christmas Tree Photo Frame



Here's a quick Christmas craft for kids, who can display their Christmas tree photo frame on the mantelpiece, or perhaps hang it on the real Christmas tree.

You will need: 3 craft sticks, you can use colored or plain and paint, green paint (optional), cork (or toilet roll with slit cut in the top), glue, photograph (about 5"x7" or smaller), double sided tape, green card, decorative bits and pieces, ribbon for hanging (optional)

You will need to do: Glue the ends of your sticks together to form a triangle. Leave to dry and then, if necessary, paint the triangle green. If you intend to hang the Christmas tree frame on the tree, glue a loop of ribbon in between two of the sticks at this stage. Use double sided tape to stick your photo to the back of the triangle, trimming away the excess. Stick a triangle of green card over the back.

Ask an adult to make a groove in the top of the cork with a sharp knife. Fill the groove with glue and push in your craft stick triangle, making sure the photo is the right way up. Alternatively, cut a slit in a section of toilet roll tube and slide the frame into it.

When the glue is dry, decorate the frame with stickers and other decorative bits and pieces.

Felt Christmas Tree craft

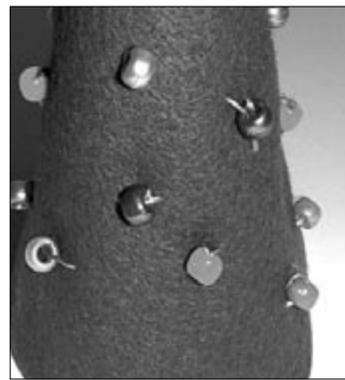
This felt Christmas tree uses some simple sewing skills and looks really pretty on display.

You will need:

A square of green felt, embroidery thread, beads, fabric glue (optional), toy stuffing (optional)

You will need to do:

Cut a curve from one corner to the opposite diagonal corner of the felt to make the cone of your tree. Sew beads all over the felt. Don't sew any too close to the edges so you have space to join the edges. Sew or glue the edges together to form a cone. If your tree is large or the fabric is thin you may need to stuff the tree with toy filling to keep the shape.



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

Holiday Brooch craft

Quick and simple to make out of basic craft supplies, this Christmas brooch is fun to wear or give. You could cut out the leaves in advance for younger children. Older children may prefer to sew the brooch, in which case small red beads or buttons could be substituted for the sequins.

You will need:

Green felt, badge pin/safety pin, red sequins or buttons, fabric glue (white glue will do)

You will need to do:

Cut two holly leaves and glue (or sew) them together overlapping slightly. If you sew them, you can pinch them slightly at the bottom to give the brooch a slightly 3D quality. Glue on the sequins (or stitch on the beads or buttons). When it is dry, glue (or sew) your brooch pin to the back. If you are using a safety pin, cut a small rectangle of felt and cover with fabric glue. Stick the side of the safety pin that doesn't open to the rectangle and then stick the rectangle to the back of the brooch.



Elf Hat craft

Here's a fun elf hat craft for children at Christmas. Hang them from the tree and fill with goodies! Perhaps children could make them as a craft activity at a Christmas party and then take them home with some special treats inside. You can use some simple sewing skills or substitute fabric glue for everything but stitching on the bell if you prefer.

You will need:

Red felt, green felt, ribbon, needle and thread (or fabric glue), a bell

You will need to do:

Cut a quarter circle of green felt and sew with running stitch up the sides to make a cone. Cut a strip of red felt with a zigzag line along one side. Sew the straight edge around the bottom of the hat. Sew the bell to the point of the hat. If you want to hang it from the tree (filled with sweets) sew a loop of ribbon to the base of the hat.



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www.ActivityVillage.co.uk

Saddle Creek Resort in Copperopolis, California

by Carmel L. Mooney

My family needed a break from the daily grind and recently we found the perfect family-friendly golf and tennis escape.

In the heart of the California Gold Rush country where once bustling copper mines made post gold rush history, vacationing families are making their own discoveries and creating their own legacy at Saddle Creek Resort in Copperopolis, California.

This beautiful golf and tennis resort lies just a few short miles from some of the best outdoor recreation and wine country the nation has to offer in both Calaveras and Amador Counties.

With a lovely golf course and beautiful club house and country club, Saddle Creek is the perfect getaway for families looking for an uncrowded diversion richly steeped in abundant wildlife, spectacular sunsets, gorgeous vistas and plenty to do.

It's no wonder that Golf Week Magazine ranked Saddle Creek's course at an impressive #8 in Best Public Access Courses in California.

Comfortable and richly appointed one and two bedroom family vacation bungalows are just a step or two from the second hole. A perfect place to lay your head during a golf



and tennis getaway, these bungalows are spacious yet cozy and boast all the amenities of a resort hotel. Comfortable patios and porches allow guests to enjoy peaceful views of the course, surrounding mountains and wildlife. A few steps from the Copper Grill, Saddle Creek Resort's own signature dining establishment, convenience is the pinnacle.

The Copper Grille offers three meals and excellent floor to ceiling window views of the golf course and ninth green from a lodge style restaurant decorated with large timbers, historical



Photos courtesy Saddle Creek Resort

photographs, and a rustic and relaxed lodge charm.

With an impressive wine storage facility yielding wines from more than 28 local wineries, a pleasant dining experience is guaranteed for mom and dad as well as kids.

The Chef and his team make the specialties from fresh local ingredients and locally farmed raised products whenever possible. Portions are hearty and the

cuisine is both tasty and aesthetically pleasing.

If dining and golfing are not enough, then meticulously maintained tennis courses, bocce courts, a fitness center and pool will entice your family further during your stay at Saddle Creek Resort.

The Copperopolis Town Square with shops, boutiques, spa and restaurants is only five minutes away, allowing even

more opportunities for nearby exploration. A dozen charming Gold Rush communities lie within an hour for more activities from wine tasting, to shopping and even adrenaline-junkie cave exploration and repelling.

Away from the hustle and bustle of the large cities yet close enough to world renowned locations to make travel a breeze, Saddle Creek Resort is convenient, comfortable, and peaceful while offering lots to do or nothing at all, at your pace, and with endless additional options nearby.

www.saddlecreek.com/

Carmel L. Mooney covers travel destinations every Sunday on KMYC 1410AM and is Executive Director of Pawsitive Service Dog Solutions, www.pawsitivesolutions.org You can follow Carmel on Twitter: @CarmelLeeMooney



Make a wreath for the birds, too

This one is a colorful decoration for your feathery friends! Hang it outdoors, out of the rain, or 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
- 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

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.



Christmas card toss

This game couldn't be 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.

Rancho del Oso Nature and History Center

Located 17 miles north of Santa Cruz off highway 1 (831) 427-2288

Rancho del Oso Wildflower Hike, Sunday, December 9, 10 a.m.

Hike starts at the Rancho del Oso gate located along Highway 1, across from the Waddell Beach parking lot. (Just 2.6 miles south of Año Nuevo State

Park) Take a hike among the wildflowers of Rancho del Oso's Waddell Valley. Docent Scott Peden will lead a 4-mile hike to view a variety of wildflowers – there's always something exciting in bloom! Photographers are easily accommodated. Call the Rancho del Oso Nature and History Center at (831) 427-2288 to RSVP, or just show up with lunch, water and energy to hike.

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Teeny Tiny People and Pets

Support Katherine's Book!

by Katherine Nepomuceno Uy

Katherine is a student at St. Ignatius Parish school in Sacramento, California. She loves writing and drawing. She wrote and illustrated 'TEENY TINY' after the summer of 2011. She dreams to be an author and a scientist someday. Teeny Tiny People and Pets is her first book.



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"Books are magic...when you see that magic performed beautifully, it just takes your breath away."

-Author Jennifer Adams



Literary fiction" is a term used to distinguish serious fiction (the time-tested, award-winning kind) from, say popular fiction. Think Tolstoy vs Twilight. The children's book world offers many lasting tales worthy of reading and re-reading, from *Goodnight Moon* to *The Very Hungry Caterpillar*. But how do we introduce the classic novels we so adore as adults to our little one whose brain space is competing with video games? And how young is too young?

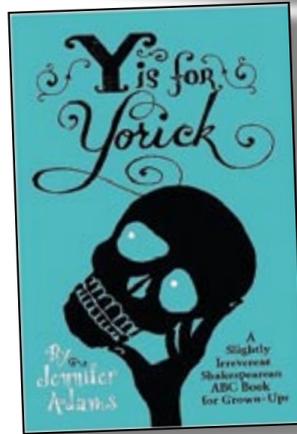
Jennifer Adams might tell you it's never too early to start. She may also tell you it's easier than you think. Author of the award-winning *Little Master Shakespeare: Romeo and Juliet* (BabyLit, 2011) board book, Adams and illustrator Alison Oliver found a way to turn a potentially boring counting lesson into a work worthy of literary praise. What parent can resist introducing their budding little bibliophile Romeo and Juliet, Friar Laurence, Tybalt and Mercutio? In *their Little Master Dickens: A Christmas Carol* (BabyLit, 2012), Scrooge and Tiny Tim introduce toddlers to colors in a way parents have found endearing. Coming in Spring 2013, little ones will

have the chance to learn with *Wuthering Heights*, *Sense and Sensibility*, and *Moby-Dick*.

The interesting spin is her board books aren't a retelling of those classics. After researching the original novel, she highlights a few main characters and settings to help introduce a specific concept unrelated to the novel, such as numbers or letters. One reviewer on Amazon posted, "I LOVE hearing my 2 yr old son saying 'Pemberly' and when my 2 daughters discuss which Ben-net sister they like best I want to clap with joy!"

Turning well-known classics into bite-sized, toddler-tolerable pieces can't be easy. The average number of words in her board books? 20. "Where the text is so spare in children's lit, every children's book is in itself a kind of poem," Adams says.

While she's yet to publish a book on poetry, she's found



the right ingredients for several cookbooks (such as *101 Things to do with Cheese*, published by Gibbs Smith in 2010), wedding help (including *Wedding Showers*, Gibbs Smith, 2006) and an upcoming book for grown-ups combining recipes and crafts (*So Jane*, Gibbs Smith, 2014). She can't help but wonder if her youth surrounded by the beauty of nature helped fuel her appetite for the written word.

"I spent a lot of time outdoors as a child. My father lived on a 28-acre ranch and I loved the pastures, the old hardwood grove, the ditches, the haystack. I loved the smell of earth and acorns," Adams explained. "My mother's family had a cabin up in the mountains. I loved hiking and the gorgeous views and streams and wildflowers and moose and deer. I think so much time outside influenced my writing—it led to a lot of inner reflection and imagining different worlds than the one I lived in."

The real world she did live in was infused with learning. With Adams' mother teaching college English and editing, and her father teaching high school history and psychology, the Adams acorn did not fall far from the family tree.

She credits her high school English teacher with helping and encouraging her writing ability early on. "She was an

MORE ABOUT JENNIFER ADAMS

How to Contact Jennifer Adams

Website: <http://wordmusings.com>

Books and Merchandise: www.BabyLit.com

SELECTIONS FROM JENNIFER ADAMS' LIBRARY

AUTHOR

- Little Miss Bronte: Wuthering Heights* (BabyLit 2013)
- Little Miss Austen: Sense and Sensibility* (BabyLit 2013)
- Little Master Melville: Moby-Dick* (BabyLit 2013)
- Little Master Dickens: A Christmas Carol* (BabyLit 2012)
- Little Master Stoker: Dracula* (BabyLit 2012)
- Little Miss Bronte: Jane Eyre* (BabyLit 2012)
- Little Master Carroll: Alice in Wonderland* (BabyLit 2012)
- Little Master Shakespeare: Romeo and Juliet* (BabyLit 2011)
- Little Miss Austen: Pride and Prejudice* (BabyLit 2011)

Packing Up a Picnic, Activities and Recipes for Kids (Gibbs Smith, 2006)

"Is that exhausting? Yes. Is it good? I don't know. But for the past decade my work schedule has been very busy and late night has been the only quiet time I have for myself," Adam explained. "I am not a morning person—I hate getting up early. My brain is soggy and I feel like I have peanut butter running through my veins if I wake up before 7 am. So I write at night when it is quiet and the world belongs to me."

accomplished poet and really worked with me. She took my writing seriously. I think that training helped me a lot with children's books," Adams recalls. "I also remember when I was very young I found out you could go to college to be an English major and get credit for reading novels. It seemed like a miracle to me."

That miracle has been her dream come true. She pursued her degree in English literature at the University of Washington in Seattle. She worked at an independent books store for three years, where she was inspired with the idea for *Y is for Yorick* (Gibbs Smith, 2011). She's spent the past 15 years happily writing and editing professionally. The past 10 years found her specifically editing cooking, design, and children's books for a publisher near her home in Utah. Last year she relocated to Pennsylvania to become an editor for Quirk Books.

Her work has thrust her onto the news, shuttled her to Shakespeare festivals for book signings, and sprinkled her name about in national news. She finds time every day to pull up a chair and create for herself, despite working full time. She's been known to write from 10 pm to 2 am. In the morning.

Bitsy Kemper is happy to be guest "Who Wrote That?" columnist for Patricia Newman. Bitsy has written over two dozen books; six are published so far. You may have seen Bitsy on CNN, heard her on national radio, noticed her quoted in anything from Parenting magazine to Writing Children's Books For Dummies, or seen her work in countless newspapers, radio and TV stations across the U.S. Maybe you drove past her on the freeway and didn't even know it... Busy with three kids (four if you count her husband), she finds time to present at writer conferences and author visits from L.A. to N.Y. To find out more about Bitsy, check out her website at www.BitsyKemper.com or follow her on Twitter (under, understandably, the name BitsyKemper).

Warehouse Book Sale

An out-of-print or hard-to-find book can make a fine Christmas present, and a great place to look is the December warehouse sale of the Friends of the Sacramento Public Library. Gift certificates will also be available if you're not sure what to get. More than 70,000 "gently used" books, videos, records, and books-on-cassettes will be offered for prices from fifty cents to \$2 at the December 1 and 8 sale.



The warehouse is at Suite E, 8250 Belvedere Avenue, just south of 14th Avenue between Power Inn Road and Florin-Perkins Road. Sale hours will be from noon to 4 p.m. on Saturday December 1, and from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. on December 8. There will be a preview for Friends members only from 9 a.m. to noon on December 1.

The Friends' "Book Den" store at the warehouse, with most items priced individually from \$3 up, will be open during the sale, as well as weekly on Thursdays, Fridays, and Saturdays from 9 a.m. to 2 p.m. For more information, call (916) 731-8493 or go to fsp1.att.net.



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The Book Report It's Almost Christmas!

By **Connie Goldsmith**

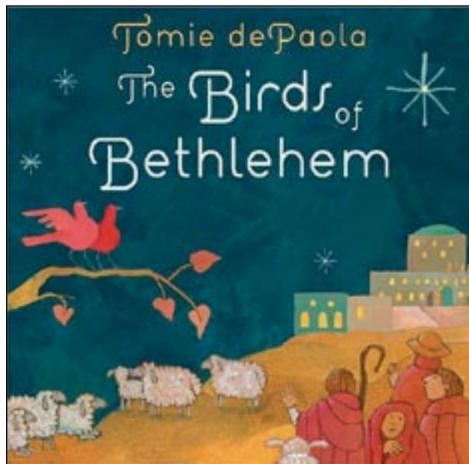
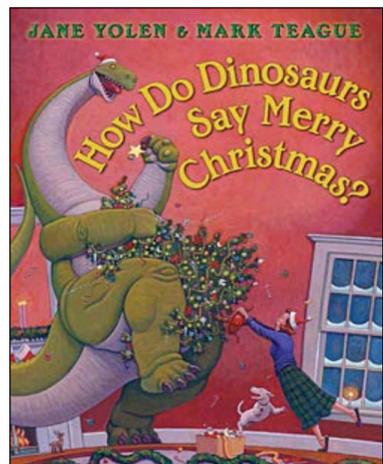
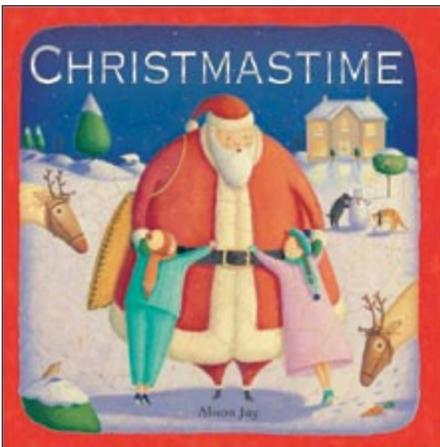
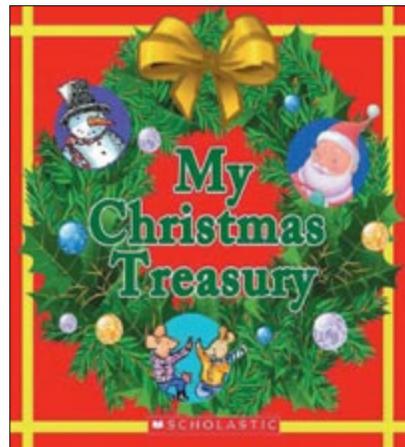
Are you having a hard time finding that last-minute gift for a friend's child, a favorite nephew or niece? Look no further than your local bookstore. Think about making books part of your Christmas tradition. You're sure to find books to delight each discerning munchkin. Books often live on to become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

"How Do Dinosaurs Say Merry Christmas?" by Jane Yolen and Mark Teague. (Blue Sky Press). Yes, dinosaurs are still in vogue; it seems that kids never tire of reading about them. And what better time of year for a new dinosaur book than Christmas? America's favorite dinosaurs romp across the pages of this fun book as they rip open presents, tear down the tree, and eat all of Santa's cookies. But these dinosaurs are child-proxies, and in the end, they behave well enough to keep their name on

Santa's nice list. Search each colorful double-page spread for hidden surprises in the hilarious illustrations.

"The Christmas Quiet Book," by Deborah Underwood, illustrated by Renata Liwska. (Houghton Mifflin Harcourt). "The Quiet Book" became an overnight success when it came out in 2010. This dynamic author/illustrator duo now presents a quiet book especially for Christmas. The gentle words soothe and entertain. "Christmas is a quiet time: Hoping for a snow day quiet; cocoa quiet; listening for sleigh bells quiet." For it's true that some of life's most memorable moments are also the quietest. The huggable cute animals drawn in soft colored pencils inspire quiet examination and quiet sharing with the youngest listeners cuddled on a lap.

"Christmastime," by Alison Jay. (Dial). The author/illustrator's trademark crackle-varnish style is at its best in this visually stunning book. Each page features a deceptively simple image; a stocking, reindeer, Santa Claus, sleigh, snowman. The pictures tell the story of



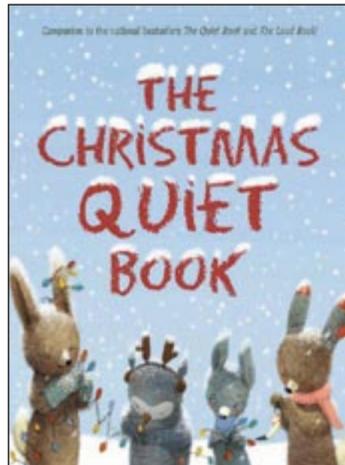
a brother and sister whisked off for Christmas Eve dinner with Santa and Mrs. Claus. But there is much more to this book. Some of the pictures hint at favorite holiday carols. Most pages hold a clue about what the next picture will be. And the final gorgeous double-page spread of Christmas morning incorporates many tiny images from previous pages. Enjoy the beauty while embarking on a holiday find-the-hidden-picture hunt as you read it with your children. This book is a keeper!

**** Reviewer's pick of the month ****

"The Birds of Bethlehem," by Tomie dePaola. (Nancy Paulson Books). It's hard to find a new twist on a Nativity story, but this beloved author/illustrator has scored. A group of birds gather in a field, not to eat corn as usual, but to talk about the unusual sights they've seen. "We saw a long line of people coming over the hills," says green bird. Red bird says, "An angel appeared in the sky and said, 'I bring you tidings of great joy.'" The white birds fol-

lowed the shepherds. All the birds fly to the stable where they discover a young mother, her husband and their newborn. The language is simple, the art bright and appealing. This is a perfect introduction to the story of Christmas for the very youngest child.

"My Christmas Treasury," (Scholastic). This sturdy book holds three favorite Christmas stories complete with original art: The Biggest Christmas Tree Ever, There Was an Old Lady Who Swallowed a Bell and Christmas Morning. Children will love the variety. Mice Clayton and Desmond find and decorate the biggest Christmas tree ever for all of Mouseville to enjoy. An old lady first swallows a bell, followed by toys, a sleigh and the reindeer. She draws the line at Santa! This cumulative story is sure to make listeners giggle at the silliness of it. Christmas Morning is another cumulative



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

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Drop In Family Craft – Candle Dipping, Saturday, December 8, 1 to 4 p.m.

Enjoy an informal afternoon at this hidden jewel near downtown Santa Cruz. You can hand-dip a wax candle in our garden courtyard. The event is FREE. Rain cancels.

Drop In Family Craft – Luminaria, Saturday, December 15 and 21, 1 to 4 p.m.

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Drop In Family Craft – Ramillettas, Saturday, December 22, 1 to 4 p.m.

Enjoy an informal afternoon at this hidden jewel near downtown Santa Cruz. Create colorful layered paper decorations. The event is FREE.

Santa Cruz Mission Adobe Tour, Thursday, December 27, 1 to 2 p.m.

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You can hand-dip a wax candle in the garden courtyard. The event is FREE. Rain Cancels.

*****New! Monday School Tours added at the Santa Cruz Mission State Historic Park**

Attention teachers: reservations are now open. The Santa Cruz Mission State Historic Park is now offering school group programs on Mondays. Reservations will fill quickly, so contact the park if you would like to schedule your classroom for a program.

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Discovery Museum Activities

An Apple A Day, Saturday and Sunday, December 1 and 2

The old adage, "An apple a day keeps the doctor away" may not be completely true, but we do know an apple a day is good for you. Celebrate national "Eat a Red Apple Day" at the Discovery Museum. Learn about healthy eating, what is a fruit or vegetable and play in the Healthy Bones Diner. Children 12 and under bring home a

crafted apple notecard as a souvenir. Each youngster receives a delicious apple. (As supplies last.) Live animal presentations are at noon or 2 p.m. for all ages. Planetarium shows are at 1 or 3 p.m. for ages 4 and older.

Meet A Scientist, Saturday and Sunday, December 8 and 9

Visit the Discovery Museum this weekend to meet

some amazing scientists from UC Davis. Multiple scientists are available each day to interact with your family, sharing their research and offering a hands-on activity to connect you with current science in our community. Children 12 and under receive a souvenir pin once they complete a "science passport". This is a wonderful opportunity to have children meet a real scientist. Please join the staff for this exciting event. Planetarium shows are at 1 or 3 p.m. for ages 4 and older.

Funny Bones Theater and more. A wide range of animal specimens are on display, as well as a small collection of live animals in our nature room. A great way to spend a winter day. Remember, your admission also includes an animal presentation at noon or 2 p.m., and a planetarium show at 1 or 3 p.m. (for ages 4 and above only).

Bear-a-palooza!, Saturday and Sunday, December 22 and 23

The Discovery Museum is celebrating bears this weekend. From teddy bears to polar bears, there is something for everyone. The science of bears is on display in our bear corner with skulls, skins, claws and teeth. Read a bear book to your child. The classroom has a bear craft for children 12 and under to make. As a treat, for this weekend only, the Museum is featuring a "Three Bears" play at noon and 2 p.m. for all ages. Remember, your admission also includes a planetarium show at 1 or 3 p.m. for ages 4 and above only.

New Year's Banner, Thursday - Monday, December 26 - 31

Make the end of 2012 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. Visit the Bone Zone exhibit. Learn about skulls, skeletons and bone health. Little ones enjoy the Healthy Bones Diner and Doctor's Office play spaces. Bring your camera to capture all the fun. Remember, your admission also includes an animal presentation at noon or 2 p.m., and a planetarium show at 1 or 3 p.m. for ages 4 and above only.

The Discovery Museum Science and Space Center is open from 10 a.m. to 4:30 p.m., the activities are from 12:30 to 4 p.m. Discovery Museum Science and Space Center is located at 3615 Auburn Boulevard, Sacramento. Admission is \$8 adults (18+), \$6 seniors (60+), \$6 teens (13-17), \$5 children (4-12), \$0 children (3 and under). The exhibits are age appropriate for 4 to 12 years old. For more information, call (916) 808-3942, www.thediscovery.org.

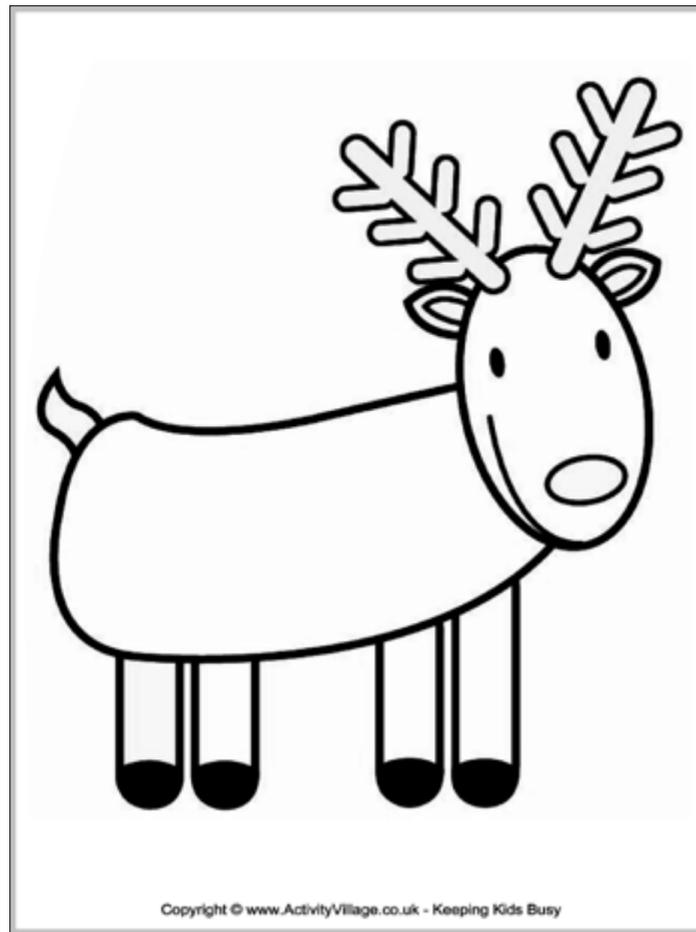
Octopus ornaments, Saturday and Sunday, December 15 and 16

'Tis' the season- for mollusk fun. Add a little science to your holidays with a yarn octopus ornament. Kids 12 and under craft the décor to take home as a souvenir from an exciting visit to the Discovery Museum. The Bone Zone exhibit is going away soon! Visit the play spaces: Healthy Bones Diner, Doctor's Office,

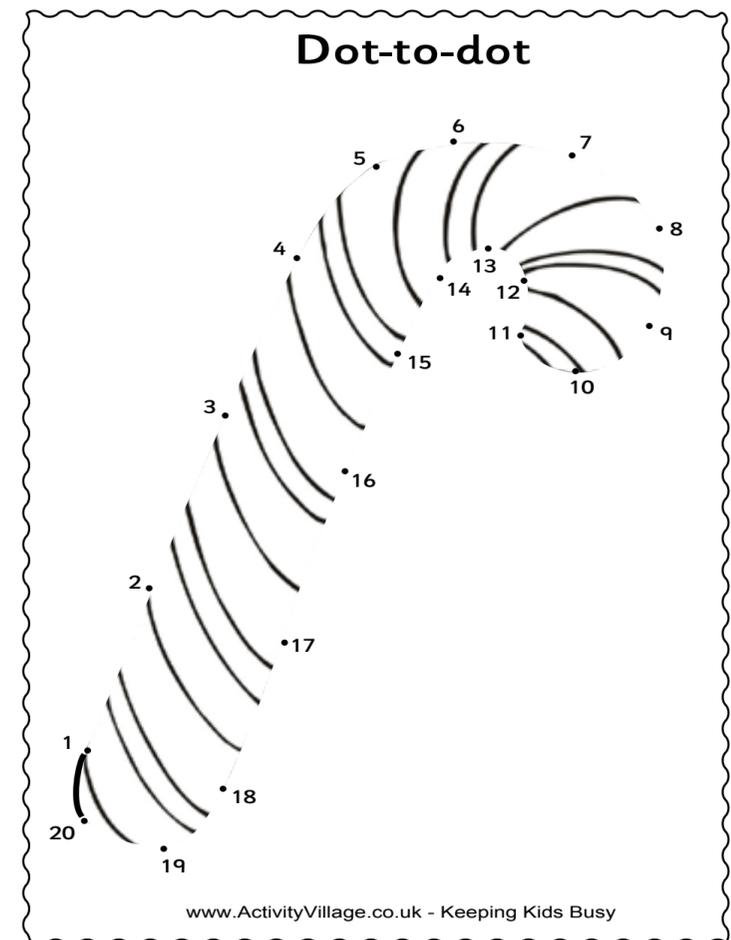


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What is Kwanzaa?

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Kwanzaa is an African-American holiday celebrated mainly in the US for the week between December 26 and January 1 each year.

The holiday was established in 1966 to help African Americans remember and celebrate their heritage. 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 - 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.

Kwanzaa Lights

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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.



HAVE FUN COLORING!



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Chocolate-Berry Wreath Cake

Source: Better Homes & Gardens

Chocolate-lovers will go nuts for this rich, dark cake. Wonderful with just the chocolate-butter frosting, this basic cake is transformed into a sensational holiday treat with the addition of berries and a white chocolate bow.

Makes: 12 servings
 Prep 30 mins
 Bake 35 mins 350°F
 Cool 1 hr

Ingredients:

- 1 tablespoon unsweetened cocoa powder
- 1 1/2 cups all-purpose flour
- 1 C sugar
- 1/2 cup unsweetened cocoa powder
- 1 tbl instant espresso coffee powder (optional)
- 1 tsp baking soda
- 1/2 tsp salt
- 2 eggs, lightly beaten
- 1 C water
- 1/3 C canola oil or vegetable oil
- 1 tbl cider vinegar or white vinegar
- 1 tsp vanilla
- recipe Milk Chocolate Butter Frosting (see below)
- 1 - 2 cups assorted berries; such as blueberries, raspberries, blackberries, and/or small strawberries
- 2 tbsls strawberry jelly
- 1 recipe White Chocolate Bow(s) (see below)

Directions:

1. Preheat oven to 350 degrees F. Grease a 9x2-inch round cake pan or a 9x9x2-inch baking pan. Add 1 tbl cocoa powder. Shake and tilt pan to coat bottom and sides; shake out any excess cocoa powder. Set pan aside. In a large bowl stir together flour, sugar, 1/2 C cocoa powder, espresso powder (if desired), baking soda, and salt; set aside.
2. In a medium bowl combine eggs, the water, oil, vinegar, and vanilla. Gradually add egg mixture to flour mixture, beating with an electric mixer on low speed just until combined. Beat on medium speed for 2 minutes, scraping sides of bowl occasionally.
3. Pour batter into the prepared pan, spreading evenly. Bake for 35 to 40 minutes or until a wooden toothpick inserted in the center comes out clean. Cool in pan on a wire rack for 10 minutes. Remove from pan; cool completely on wire rack.
4. Frost top and sides of cake with Milk Chocolate Butter Frosting. Arrange berries around outside edge of cake to resemble a wreath. Heat strawberry jelly until melted; brush evenly over berries. Place one or more White Chocolate Bow(s) on berry wreath.



White Chocolate Bow(s)

Start to Finish 10 mins

Ingredients:

- 2 ounces chopped white baking chocolate with cocoa butter or vanilla-flavor candy coating (1/2 cup)

Directions

1. Line a small baking sheet with waxed paper or parchment paper; set aside. In a small saucepan heat and stir white chocolate over low heat until melted and smooth. If desired, place melted white chocolate in a heavy resealable plastic bag; snip a small hole in one corner of the bag. Pipe or spoon white chocolate onto the prepared baking sheet to form 3- to 4-inch bow(s). Let stand until set (if necessary, place in the refrigerator until set). Carefully lift bow(s) off paper.

Milk Chocolate Butter Frosting

Start to Finish 10 mins

Ingredients:

- 3 tbsls butter, softened
- 1/4 C milk chocolate pieces, melted and cooled slightly
- 2 1/2 Cups powdered sugar
- 2 - 3 tbsls milk
- 1 tsp vanilla

Directions

1. In a medium mixing bowl beat butter with an electric mixer on medium speed until smooth. Gradually beat in the melted and cooled chocolate. Gradually add half of the powdered sugar, beating well. Slowly beat in 2 tablespoons milk and vanilla. Gradually beat in remaining powdered sugar. Beat in enough additional milk to reach spreading consistency.

Snowman Cupcakes! YUM

eLala/The CupcakeRecipes.com

Makes 15 snowmen

Ingredients:

- 1 package (18-1/4 ounces) yellow or white cake mix, plus ingredients to prepare mix
- 2 containers (16 ounces each) vanilla frosting
- 4 cups flaked coconut
- 15 large marshmallows
- 15 miniature chocolate covered peanut butter cups
- Small red candies and pretzel sticks for decoration
- Green and red decorating gels



Preparation:

1. Preheat oven to 350°F. Line 15 standard (2-1/2-inch) muffin pan cups and 15 mini (3/4-inch) muffin pan cups with paper baking cups. Prepare cake mix according to package directions. Spoon batter into prepared muffin cups, filling 2/3 full.
2. Bake 10 to 15 minutes for mini cupcakes and 15 to 20 minutes for standard cupcakes or until cupcakes are golden and toothpicks inserted into centers come out clean. Cool in pans on wire racks 10 minutes. Remove cupcakes to racks; cool completely. Remove paper baking cups.
3. To assemble, frost bottom and side of large cupcakes; coat with coconut. Repeat with mini cupcakes. Attach mini cupcakes to large cupcakes with frosting to form snowman bodies. Attach marshmallows to mini cupcakes with frosting to form snowman heads. Attach inverted peanut butter cups with frosting to form snowman hats. Use pretzels for arms and small red candies for buttons as shown in photo. Pipe faces with decorating gels as shown.



Reindeer Cupcakes:

eLala/The CupcakeRecipes.com

Bake according to package instructions for cupcakes. Using a butter knife or spatula, lightly frost each cupcake. Break the pretzels in half, and insert into the top of each cupcake for antlers. Use blue candy covered chocolates to make eyes. Cut a pretzel to make a mouth and place the red gumdrop in the center for the nose.

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Christmas open House

Special to California Kids

Find the spirit of Christmas in a beautiful, historic Gold Rush Town. Come to historic Sutter Creek to regain the spirit of Christmas past, with the annual Old Fashioned Christmas Open House celebration. This is the place to be to spark the holiday spirit with the simple beauty of Christmas and small town charm.

The streets of beautifully lit Historic Sutter Creek come alive with Christmas spirit as they are transformed to an era gone by with Father Christmas, Charles Dickens characters and carolers in period costume, strolling along the beautifully lit streets of this magical Gold Rush Town. Ride a lighted horse drawn carriage down Main Street and take in the entire Christmas splendor.

Friday Night, to begin the festivities, at around 6 p.m., Santa and Mrs. Claus will arrive in their sleigh to light the community Christmas tree next to City Hall, pre-empted by the Amador Community Band playing Christmas Carols. 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, on Main Street, where Santa will hear their Christmas wishes. Free Arts and Crafts for the children will also be available there, along with homemade cookies and hot cider. The whole community and beyond is invited to share in the holiday fun on Friday evening from 5 until 9 p.m.

The merriment continues on Saturday with free Horse Drawn Carriage Rides, holiday music, wonderful shopping, Father Christmas and Charles Dickens characters strolling down the street. In the evening, at 7 p.m. is the Las Posadas Candlelight Walk. 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 process down beautiful, historic Spanish Street, lined with flickering luminaries, to Main Street, Sutter Creek. 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. This is 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! Following Las Posadas, there will be hot beverages and cookies available at the social hall of the Methodist Church.

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 them at www.suttercreek.org.

Christmas around the world festival

Bring your family to the "Christmas Around the World Festival," held at First Covenant Church of Sacramento, December 15, 10 a.m. to 8 p.m. Admission is free.

Enjoy international food, a variety of delicious food from around the world, exciting and eclectic mix of performers, and the musical, "Christmas Around the World," presented by the First Covenant Church children's choir. Visit the International Bazaar, featuring booths from a variety of not-for-profit ministries. Purchases of international products will help support ministries dedicated to providing new jobs, education and training to people in need around the globe. Crafts, carnival games and jump houses for the kids.



First Covenant Church of Sacramento is located at 10933 Progress Court in Rancho Cordova, on Highway 50 just west of Sunrise Boulevard. For more information, call (916) 861-2240 or visit www.firstcov.org.

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Calendar of Events

Critter Events

December 2, Critters by the River, 1:30 p.m., 2850 San Lorenzo Way, Carmichael. Hike with a naturalist from the Effie Yeaw Nature Center and explore the habitat where beaver, otter, herons and other wildlife live. Bring binoculars or borrow a pair from the staff. All ages are welcome. For more information, call (916) 489-4918.

December 8, Woodpecker Program, 10:30 a.m., 2850 San Lorenzo Way, Carmichael. Woodpeckers are instantly recognizable by their unique behavior of pecking vertically on trees and poles, but how much do you really know about these outstanding birds. Join the staff at the Effie Yeaw Nature Center and learn more. All ages are welcome. For more information, call (916) 489-4918.

December 9, Cold-Blooded Critters, 1:30 p.m., 2850 San Lorenzo Way, Carmichael. Some have scaly skin, some have slimy skin, some have legs and some do not. Can you guess what they are? Join the staff at the Effie Yeaw Nature Center to find out. Meet a resident animal up close. For more information, call (916) 489-4918.

December 15, Coyote Tales, 10:30 a.m., 2850 San Lorenzo Way, Carmichael. Join the staff at the Effie Yeaw Nature Center for a traditional story about the Wildlife Care Association and learn about how this volunteer

organization helps injured and orphaned wildlife in the Sacramento area. Meet some of the live animals under their care and learn how you can support wildlife rehabilitation. For more information, call (916) 264-2920.

December 23, Insects Program, 1:30 p.m., 2850 San Lorenzo Way, Carmichael. Come to the Effie Yeaw Nature Center for learn about cool weather and how it may cause insects to seek shelter inside our homes this holiday. View preserved collections of insects to see some fascinating bugs up close and learn ways to keep bugs out of your house. For more information, call (916) 489-4918.

Special Events

December 1, Nutcracker, 7 p.m., December 2, 2 p.m., 2300 Sierra Boulevard, Sacramento. Kids of all ages will enjoy this one act version of the Nutcracker and the story of Christmas told in "The Christmas Angels." Beautiful costumes and professional sets. Performed by the Crockett Deane Ballet Company and the Deane Dance Center. Tickets are \$15 adults; \$12 seniors/students; \$10 children. Tickets available at the door and at Deane Dance Center, located at 3385 Lanatt Street. For more information, call (916) 453-0226.

December 1, Holiday Craft Faire, 10 a.m. to 2 p.m., 3235 Pope Avenue, Sacramento. Northminster Presbyterian Church is hosting a family fun day of free "Make It and

Take It" craft event to help children of all ages prepare for Christmas with Christmas gifts and decorations; and with the assistance of Santa's helpers.

December 7, 8, 9, Craft Fair seeks crafters, 11 a.m. to 5 p.m., 5330-B Gibbons Drive, Carmichael. Call to Artists, Crafters and Purveyors of Handmade Goods. The Fine Arts Center's 18th Annual Holiday Craft Fair is coming. There is a Special 2nd Saturday opening 5 to 9 p.m. Prospectus online <http://www.sacfinearts.org/> Click Call to Artist button.

December 8, Master Food Demonstration, 10 a.m. to Noon, 4145 Branch Center Road, Sacramento. The Sacramento County UC Cooperative Extension Master Food Preservers offer a food preservation demonstration called, "Step by Step! Basic introduction to safe water bath canning techniques." This is a free program and no advanced registration is required. For more information, call (916) 875-6913.

December 15, Holiday Festival, 10 a.m. to 8 p.m., 10933 Progress Court, Rancho Cordova. Celebrate the holiday at First Covenant Church of Sacramento's "Christmas Around the World Festival." There will be international foods, music, performers, an International Bazaar, crafts, and carnival games and jump houses for kids. This is a free event. For more information, call (916) 861-2240 or visit www.firstcov.org.

December 15, Lego Block Party, 10 a.m., 10055 Franklin High Road, Elk Grove. Families are invited to the Franklin Library to build with lots of Legos and Duplos for the littlest hands. Bring your imagination and creativity and build something spectacular. For more information, call (916) 264-2920.

December 19, Lego Building, 3:30 p.m. 11601 Fair Oaks Boulevard, Fair Oaks. Kids, ages 5 to 12 are invited to the Fair Oaks

Library to spend the afternoon playing with Legos. Refreshments and plenty of Legos await you. They will display their creations in the library after the program. For more information, call (916) 264-2920.

Ongoing, Music for Young Children Classes, Sacramento. Sacramento Piano Conservatory is offering summer group music camps for kids. For more information about Sacramento Piano Conservatory call (916) 538-3357.

Storytime Events

December 1, Storytime for Toddlers and Preschoolers, 11 a.m., 10055 Franklin High Road, Elk Grove. Toddlers and Pre-Readers, ages 18 months to 5 years, are invited to the Franklin Library for 30 minutes of open play followed by storytime. Fun stories, songs, fingerplays, flannelboards and crafts will be shared. For more information, call (916) 264-2920.

December 4 and 11, Sing-Along Club, 11:30 a.m. 11601 Fair Oaks Boulevard, Fair Oaks. Sing-along with Mr. Cooper is a program for ages 3 to 5 and is presented at the Fair Oaks Library. Join this special 30-minute music program for preschoolers. Ken Cooper brings his guitar and shares songs about weather, letters, counting, seasons and more. You can even do the freeze dance! For more information, call (916) 264-2920.

December 5, Read to the Dogs! 6:45 p.m., 11601 Fair Oaks Boulevard, Fair Oaks. Bring your child, age 5 to 12, to the Fair Oaks Library to read aloud to a quiet, friendly dog. Each dog is attended by an adult volunteer, and both are trained and licensed by Therapy Dogs, Inc. Children who read to the

dogs can earn a book of their choice from the collection of books provided by the Friends of the Fair Oaks Library. For more information, call (916) 264-2920.

Tuesdays, Baby Storytime, Noon, 8900 Elk Grove Boulevard, Elk Grove. Looking for a fun, fabulous and educational program for you and your baby? Join the staff at the Elk Grove Library for an interactive experience focused on babies from birth to 18 months. This program encourages early literacy development through movement, songs and shared reading. For more information, call (916) 264-2920.

Tuesdays, Preschool Story and Play, 10 a.m. 10055 Franklin High Road, Elk Grove. Preschoolers, age 3 to 5, are invited to the Franklin Library for 30 minutes of interactive play with parent or caregiver followed by stories, songs, fingerplays and crafts. For more information, call (916) 264-2920.

Wednesdays, Toddler Story and Play, 10 a.m., 10055 Franklin High Road, Elk Grove. Toddlers, age 0 to 3 years, are invited to the Franklin Library for 30 minutes of interactive play with parent or caregiver followed by stories, songs, fingerplays and crafts. Available to the first 30 children. For more information, call (916) 264-2920.

Thursdays, Preschool Storytime, 11 a.m. 8900 Elk Grove Boulevard, Elk Grove. Children, ages 3 to 5, are invited to the Elk Grove Library to enjoy stories, music and more. For more information, call (916) 264-2920.

Thursdays, Baby Lapsit Storytime, 10:30 a.m., 11601 Fair Oaks Boulevard, Fair Oaks. Join the staff at the Fair Oaks Library for a special storytime for babies 0 to 18 months and their caregivers. For more information, call (916) 264-2920.

A Time out for Parents

A Message from First 5 Sacramento

From the moment you step into parenthood, your needs often come second to the needs of your child. Taking care of YOU becomes a difficult task. Your priorities change; and your own physical and mental health just doesn't seem as important as the attention you give to your child. First 5 Sacramento reminds parents and caregivers that taking care of your own health and well-being is an important step towards being the best parent you can be.

Here are some tips for taking care of your physical, emotional and mental health:

- **Eat Healthy** - Make sure you eat balanced, nutritious meals, and snacks each day. Fill your plate with plenty of fruits and vegetables, but also include a whole grain, dairy product, and lean protein like chicken, fish, or beans.
- **Exercise** - Fit exercise into your daily routine. Exercise is not only good for your physical health, but helps with your emotional and mental health too. Exercise helps to boost confidence and reduces stress and anxiety. Don't feel like you have to exercise for long periods of time either. It's the quality not the quantity. Experts say that with just a 15-20 minute workout, you can achieve great benefits.



• **Get sleep** - Sleep is often the first thing you may lose out on once you become a parent. When you have a newborn or an infant, try to sleep when they sleep. Once your child is sleeping independently, try to get 7-8 hours of sleep each night.

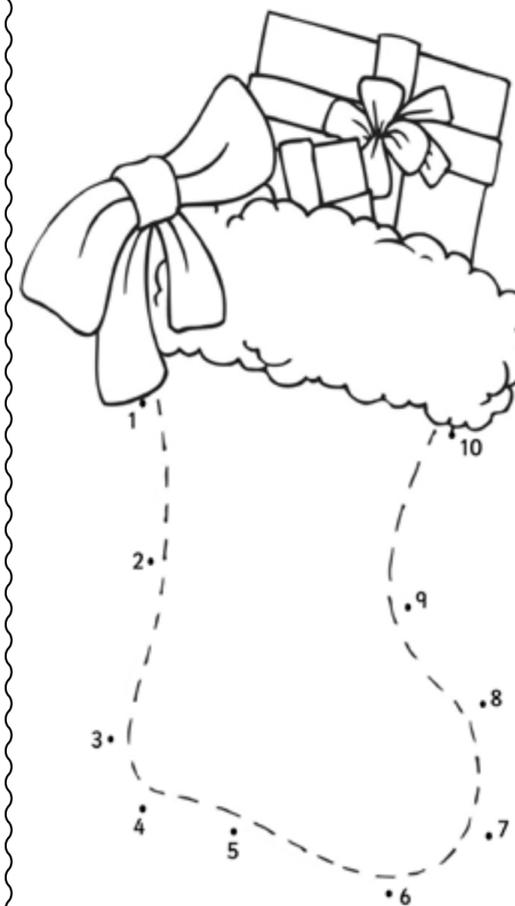
• **Take time out for yourself** - Whether it's to read a book or go for a walk, take some "me" time each day. You may even try waking up early before everyone else to have some time alone, plan your thoughts, and gather your day accordingly.

• **Build a support system** - Creating a strong support system of family and friends is critical. If you don't have family nearby, establish a quality network of friends who you can trust to help take care of your child and give you a break every now and then.

First 5 Sacramento provides resources for parents of children ages 0-5 including a no-cost Kit for New Parents, which consists of an Advice for New Parents guide, DVD, and local parent services. Order your Kit online at www.first5sacramento.net

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Snowflake party ideas

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Snowflake Party Invitation Ideas

- Cut snowflakes out of white paper and paste onto light blue cards.
- On white cards glue sparkly white and silver glitter on the top or in a line going down the front of the invitation.
- Glue white feathers on the top of plain blue note cards and write party information inside with a blue pen or sharpie.
- Make the invitation look like a snow globe.

Snowflake Party Decoration Ideas

- Blue and white are great colors to use when decorating a snowflake party.
- Make paper or buy plastic snowflakes and hang them from the trees outside the party venue.
- Cover the door to the party with them and hang up white strings of Christmas lights inside and out.
- Draw snowflakes on the walkway or driveway with white chalk.

- Hang up snowflakes inside on the ceiling with string to bring the flakes inside to the party.
- New bags of pillow stuffing will look like snow when stretched out over tables and in the corners of pictures where snow would collect if it were outside.
- To make icicles cut up strips of crepe paper and tape one side to the tops of doorways and mantels and let the other end hang down like an icicle does.

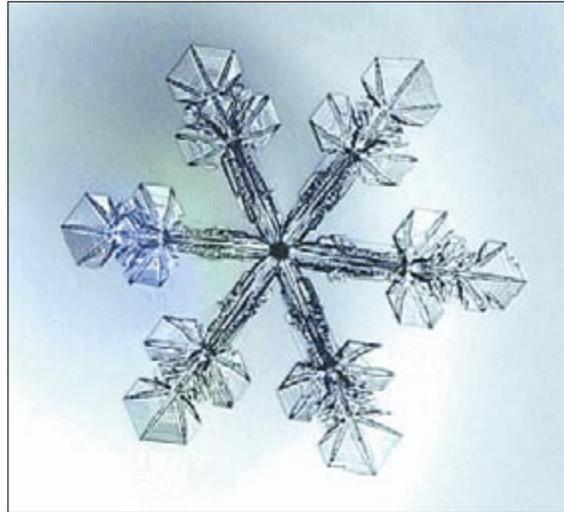
Snowflake Party Icebreakers

Snow Share - You'll need a new roll of toilet paper (snow) for this icebreaker. Have the

party guests sit in a circle and tell them you are going to pass around some snowflake sheets. Without telling them why ask them to take as many snowflake sheets as they think they will need for the game. Pass the paper around without any further instructions and have the guests take sheets of paper off the roll. After everyone has taken sheets tell them that for each sheet they have they have to share one thing about themselves.

Snowflake Party Games

- **Snow Wrap** - This game is fun and easy to set up and kids love it. The object of the snow wrap is to see which team can wrap their partner in snow (toilet paper) first. Separate party guests into groups of 2 or 3. Every group gets a roll of toilet paper for each person who will be wrapping. The groups choose who will do the wrapping and who will be wrapped. On "go" the kids who are wrapping will give the end of the toilet paper to the person being wrapped and they will hold the ends in their hands. Then



they will wrap their toilet paper around and around until they are out of paper and the person being wrapped is covered from head to toe. First group to finish their rolls first wins.

- **Have a Scavenger Hunt** and make lists of only white and blue items.

- **Snowball Treasure Hunt** - Before the party hide lots of cotton balls around the party area. Let the party guests search for the cotton balls. After they have all been found let them turn them in for candy or prizes.

- **Snowball Stomp** - Tie a half blown white balloon to each guest's ankle with string or curling ribbon about 18" long. When everyone has their "snowball" attached to their ankle an adult yells "Snowball Stomp!" and the kids will try and stomp and break the other children's balloons while trying to protect their own.

- **Snow Blizzard Game** - Teams race to move their "snow" from one side of the room and back. For each team you will need cotton balls, ping pong balls or large foam peanuts and a broom. Give each team the same number of items of "snow" and a broom and have them one at a time race to the other side of the room and back while herding their "snow" with the broom. This game works

best on a floor with a hard surface such as wood or tile. If the kids are older set up a fan at the opposite end of the playing field to make it more challenging. The first team that has all of their players complete the relay wins.

Snowflake Party Food Ideas

- Little Debbie Snowballs
- Let the kids make their own snow ice cream and top with different toppings
- Marshmallows cut into star shapes and served in hot chocolate
- Snowflake shaped sugar cookies iced with white icing and blue sprinkles

Snowflake Party Favor Ideas

Little Debbie Snowballs, snowflake necklaces, snowflake bracelets or earring, small snowmen, small snow globes, hot chocolate packets, snowflake

Goody / Loot Bag Ideas

White bags or small boxes with snowflake stickers, stick white circle stickers on blue bags, wrap up the party favors in white and blue polka dot material.

Gingerbread Man Birthday Party Ideas

www.birthdaypartyideas4kids.com

Decoration Ideas • Decorate outside the birthday party area so it resembles a candy filled Gingerbread house. Place really big plastic candy canes so that they line the driveway and walkway. Place colorful strings of lights on trees, bushes and over the entryway to the birthday party. Hang giant plastic candy from trees. Frosting can be cut out of white poster board or card stock and then attached around and over the party's entrance. Decorate in brown, green, red and white.

- Place large see through containers of candy canes tied with red and green ribbons on the table.
- Place colorful strings of lights around the birthday party area and on top of party tables.

Invitation Ideas • Make gingerbread shaped cards by tracing construction paper with a large gingerbread man cookie cutter and then cutting them out. Print party information onto the back and decorate the front to look like a gingerbread man. • Trace gingerbread men from sheets of sandpaper and decorate with markers and paint. • Place gingerbread house or gingerbread man stickers on plain brown note cards and write party information inside.

Party Activities

Play Dough Men - Set out containers of different colored Play Dough and a large amount of brown Play Dough (you can make the brown Play Dough the party). Give the children several different sizes of gingerbread man cookie cutters. They can make gingerbread men with the cookie cutter. Bake in a 200 degree oven for 5 minutes to make them hard so the kids can take them home as party favors. They can easily be made into ornaments by poking a small hole at the top before baking. Tips: If you cover baking pans with some wax paper cleanup will be a breeze. Place a cheap plastic table cloth over the work surface before the guests start working with the play dough - after the party just pick up and toss for easy clean up.

House Decorating Contest - Give each guest several squares of Graham Crackers and a baggie filled with white icing (cut a small



hole at one of the corners to turn it into a pastry bag). Let them get creative building their own houses and then let them decorate with small candies. Tip: Give guests a strong paper plate to build their house on - they can then take it with them as a party favor.

Cookie Decorating - Before the party bake (or buy) large sugar cookies in the shape of Gingerbread men. Set out icing, sprinkles and small candies so guests decorate a Gingerbread Man cookie. Tip: Wrap them up and send them home as party favors.

Life Size Gingerbread Men - Let guests make a life size gingerbread man. Use butcher paper or brown wrapping paper rolls and cut a piece for every party guest that is as tall as they are. Lay the pieces of paper on the ground and have the children lie on the paper. Trace around the kids. Then they can color their shape to look like a gingerbread man.

Gingerbread Man Party Games

- **Candyland** - The game Candyland uses gingerbread men as playing pieces. For younger children set up the Candyland game and they can play together.

Food Ideas

- Cut out gingerbread men shapes with any of these foods: cookies, brownies, fruit, sandwiches, cheese, etc.
- Hot Chocolate with marshmallows

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