

Saplings

Magazine

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WINTER FUN

Visiting Puerto Rico

It's a holiday celebration

Winter crafts and more

Breaking the code

Poems galore

B12, 065 -- Bingo!

A flurry of stationery

AND MUCH, MUCH MORE!

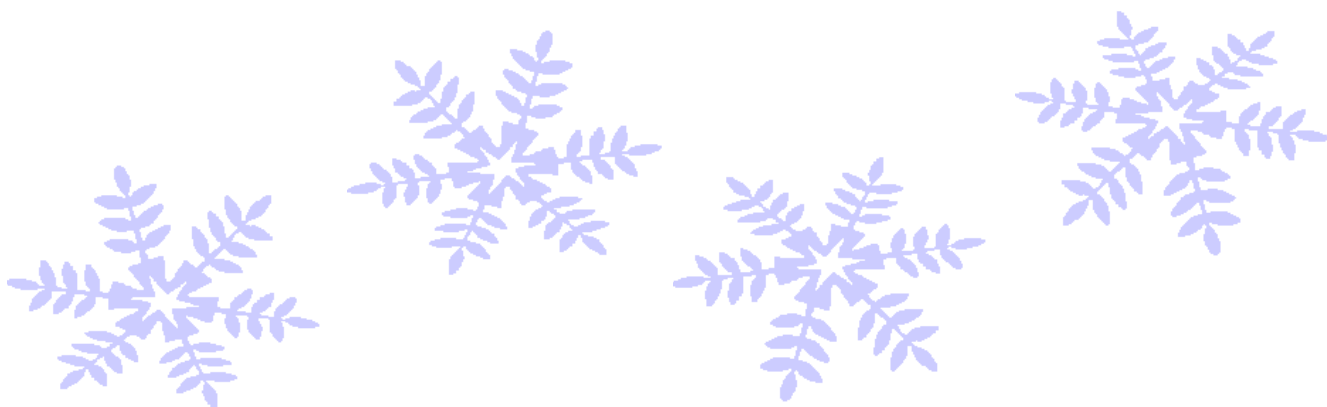


Staff

Editor-in-Chief: Nancy Cavanaugh
Managing Editor: Lisa Keele
Website Design: Elizabeth Dulemba
Front Cover: Bonnie Everett-Hawkes
Writers: Sumbul Naqvi
Deidre Heck
Cyndi Roberts
Deborah Shelton
Caitlin Cavanaugh
Nancy Rechtman
Annie Bailey
Laura Aldir-Hernandez
Kurt Metzler
Teresa Nordheim
Linda Gerber
Raisah Ali
Cindi Nordheim
Stacy Cortez Guidry
Christine Tricarico
Barry Eva
Valerie Hunter
Leticia Pontoni
Nancy Viau



Queries: saplingsmagazine@gmail.com



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Snowflake Fun and Winter Crafts

By Sumbul Naqvi

Here are some fun ideas for making snow crafts and even realistic snowflakes with things that are easy to get. If you have tried this before you can do it again for the young people around you.

Borax Crystal Snowflakes

What you need:

- A wide-mouthed jar like that of a jam
- White pipe cleaners
- Boiling water
- A pencil
- White string
- Borax

Note: Borax is available at the grocery stores in the laundry soap section as 20 Mule Team Borax Laundry Booster.

What to do:

1. To make a base for the crystals to grow on, cut the pipe cleaner into three equal parts. Twist the three pieces together in the middle. Spread out the ends with equal distance between them so that it looks like a star. Trim the edges to even them up.

2. Tie the string to the outer edges of your star to make a hexagonal snowflake design. Set aside and prepare the borax solution.

3. For the solution, fill the wide-mouthed jar with boiling water. Adults please supervise this step! Then add the borax little by little to the water using about three tablespoons per cup of water. Keep stirring it until it cannot dissolve further. Don't take too long or else the water will cool down and you might not get the desired result.

4. Take the snowflake base that you had prepared earlier and tie it to a short piece of string. Tie the other end of the string to a pencil. The string should be just long enough to keep the snowflake base hanging freely in the borax solution when the pencil is placed horizontally on the edge of the jar.

5. Suspend the base in the solution by placing the pencil on the lip of the jar and leave it undisturbed for at least 8 to 10 hours. What you will have in the end will be a super-sized, sparkling snowflake ready to be hung on the wall or the Christmas tree.

Drink Bottle Snowman

What you need:

- Empty juice or soda bottle (like that of Kool-Aid

Jammers)

- White paint
- Black paint
- Black, red, or pink pom-poms
- Black felt
- Scraps of orange felt
- Wiggly eyes
- Glue
- Scissors

What to do:

1. Take an empty juice bottle and paint it white. Leave it until the paint dries.

2. When the paint is dry, decorate the snowman with the supplies that you have, using your imagination. You can start by gluing the wiggly eyes on it. Then take a small piece of orange felt and twist it between your fingers to make it look like a miniature carrot. Glue this too, on the bottle, to make the nose. For the mouth, use black paint and very carefully make a smiley mouth under the nose.

3. Cut a thin strip of the black felt and wrap it around the bottle where the neck of the snowman would be. Paint three dots on the snowman's belly for the buttons.

4. Finally, glue the pom-pom on the top of the bottle for a winter hat.

Laundry Detergent Snowman

What you need:

- Ivory Snow Ultra powdered detergent
- Water
- Tempera paints
- Toothpicks
- Black seed beads
- Shirt buttons
- Black felt
- Pipe cleaner
- Egg carton or soda bottle caps

What to do:

1. To make a brilliant white snowman, make a dough by mixing two cups of the detergent with half a cup of water. Beat it with an electric mixer to get the best results.

2. Make three balls out of the damp soap and stack them together by inserting the toothpicks between them.

3. While the balls are still soft, add the pipe clean-

er arms.

4. On the top ball, press in black bead eyes. For the nose, break a piece of toothpick and dip it in orange paint, then push it in below the eyes. Make a smiley mouth by putting black beads in a row.

5. Press three small shirt buttons onto the middle ball. Cut a piece of black felt and wrap it around the neck for a scarf. Finally, paint the bottle cap your favorite color and put it on top of the snowman's head.

6. Set it aside for some time. As it dries, it will turn bright white.

Snowflake Sticker

What you need:

Paper
Scissors
Dimensional fabric paints in tubes or bottles
Ziploc bag
Glitter

What to do:

1. Fold the paper several times and cut out a snowflake pattern. Put this paper snowflake inside a Ziploc bag and trace its design on the plastic bag using the paint tubes.

2. Before the paint dries, sprinkle some glitter over it. Let it dry for some time and then gently shake away the extra glitter from the bag.

3. Now, very carefully, peel off this paint snowflake and stick it on a window or a mirror, where it can catch the light.

Tongue Depressor Snowmen

What you need:

Tongue depressors
Paints
Black felt or paper
Scraps of orange felt
Wiggly eyes
Ribbon
Glue
Scissors

What to do:

1. Paint a tongue depressor white on one side. Let it dry. Then paint the other side too.

2. Fold a piece of black felt or paper into two and cut out a hat shape about one and a half inches long. When you are done you will have two identical small paper hats. Glue these together with the top end of the tongue depressor in between. Leave half an inch of the hat sticking above the depressor.

3. Next, glue on the wiggly eyes and a carrot nose. You can make the nose out of a tiny scrap of orange felt. Below it, draw a thin black line for a mouth.

4. Tie a small piece of ribbon around the neck.

5. Where the belly of the snowman would be, paint three dots with black paint for the buttons.

6. Punch a hole on the top of the hat and thread a length of ribbon through it. Tie the ends of the ribbon to hang it where ever you like - Christmas tree, window, or backpack.

The Day I Became a Fairy

By Cindi Nordheim

The fairies danced inside their ring.
They twirled around and started to sing.

They sprinkled dust on the flowers.
I liked their mystical powers.

I sat and watched, where they couldn't see.
My best hiding place is the oak tree.

One day I wasn't so lucky.
I met a fairy named Ducky.

He was really quite a mean one.
He yelled to me, "Your spying is done!"

He zapped me with his magic stick.
I fell to the ground like a brick.

I slept so long that it was scary.
When I awoke I was a fairy!



Fun and Letters With Secret Codes

By Deirdre Heck

A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I	J	K	L	M
Z	Y	X	W	V	U	T	S	R	Q	P	O	N
26	25	24	23	22	21	20	19	18	17	16	15	14
N	O	P	Q	R	S	T	U	V	W	X	y	Z
M	L	K	J	I	H	G	F	E	D	C	B	A
13	12	11	10	9	8	7	6	5	4	3	2	1

"What does that say? I don't understand." The little boy's brow knits with concentration.

"You're not supposed to understand, it's a message from my undercover agent!" the young detective replies. He gets out his secret decoder and sets to work. Hmmm, what does it say?

SVOOL! 19-22-15-15-12!

Can you guess what it says? Use the chart above to decode it.

That's right, it says, Hello! Hello! Good job!

Secret codes. Some are simple, some are hard, but no matter which kind you choose to learn, codes are fun! And best of all, codes aren't just a game. They have been used for a very long time; in fact, ways of coding messages have been used since, well, the beginning of written language. Codes have many uses – from those that are very serious, like military secrecy, to those that are simply fun, like writing letters to friends and relatives.

Over 2000 years ago, a Greek spy was sent out to deliver a message. The people he delivered his message to, known in code-talk as decoders, had to do something special to receive the message. They shaved off the spy's hair and found the code tattooed on the spy's head!

All of us have heard African American Spiritual music, specifically songs originally sung by the slaves in the South. Most people believe that the strong belief in God and the beauty of the music sung kept the slaves spirits up as high as they could be. This was no doubt true. But did you know that these songs actually doubled as codes? For those slaves wanting to escape, that is, run away from their slave owners, the lyrics of the songs included messages telling the slaves which directions or paths were the best to follow to freedom.

In war-time, codes are used to keep top secret military information from the enemy. During World War II, America used the Native American Navajo language as their military code. The military employed

many Navajo Code Talkers. They used Navajo because the Navajo language was completely foreign to the Japanese. Though many of the codes during WWII were cracked (that means solved), the Navajo code was completely successful and never cracked.

There are many more stories than these. But we are ready to start learning a few things.

When you send a secret message, the person you send it to is called your contact and decoder. Don't forget to give him the key that tells him how to decode the message. Never use real names – what if your message falls into the hands of the "enemy," also known as your brother or sister?!

Now it is time to get busy. To get started you can use the code key above. The first line is the alphabet, the second line is an alphabet code, and the third is a number code. Choose the code you want to use. First, write your message; maybe you want to write a letter to a friend, or to your grandparents. Write it as normal except leave plenty of room under each line to add another line. Then look at the code key and write the code under your message letter by letter.

So: H e l l o G r a n d m a

Would be: S v o o l T i z m w n z

Then write your coded letter on a new piece of paper, put it in an envelope with the code key, and send it. Wait patiently, and you will receive a coded letter back and it will be your turn to decipher the

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message! Have Fun!

For more ideas for lots of fun here are a just a few internet sites that you can go to:

<http://www.42explore2.com/codes.htm>

<http://www.nps.gov/jeff/LewisClark2/Education/Cr>

<http://www.officialRoleLanguage/SecretCode.htm>

<http://www.scienceyear.com/outthere/index.html?page=/outthere/spy/instructions.html>

http://history1900s.about.com/library/weekly/aa_mcurrent.htm

Make Your Own Bingo Game

By Nancy Cavanaugh

Bingo is a favorite game for kids and adults. You can make your own bingo game to play with your friends or at school.

What you need:

Thin cardboard
White construction paper
Red fun foam
Markers or crayons
Scissors
Ruler

B	I	N	G	O
1	16	33	56	75
4	19	34	46	65
9	21		48	63
8	25	40	58	74
3	23	41	60	61

What to do:

1. Cut the cardboard 7 1/2" wide by 9" tall.

I Won't Peek!

By Annie Bailey

Christmas time is almost here
With sparkling lights and Christmas cheer.

I'll decorate the Christmas tree,
Wrap presents for my family.

Oh, what's this? Some gifts for me!
What could this shiny package be?

I'd sure like to go and sneak
An oh so tiny, harmless peek.

But I won't look in even one,
Mom says, "Wait! It's half the fun."

Do you like to write? We're always looking for new writers. Check out the submission guidelines for more information!

2. Draw a line every 1 1/2" across width-wise creating five columns. Do the same height-wise creating 6 rows.

3. Decide if you want to use pictures or numbers. At the top row write BINGO in the boxes like this: If you're going to use pictures draw a different picture in each box. Try to have at least 50 different pictures. For each picture you put on the cards make sure there is a matching one for the caller.

For numbers, B can have any number from 1 to 15, I can have any number from 16 to 30, N can have any number from 31-45, G can have any number from 46-60, and O can have any number from 61-75.

Remember to leave the middle square empty or write in the word FREE for either type of game card. Make as many cards as there will be players.

4. Use the white construction paper to create the slips of paper that the caller will be using. For the numbers put one number on each slip starting with 1 and going to 70. For the pictures, put each picture that is on the cards onto a slip.

5. Using the red fun foam cut out many 1" by 1" squares to be used as chips in the game.

How to play:

Choose someone to be the caller and give him/her the box or bag with the slips in it. Each player gets one game card and a handful of 'chips' to use to cover the boxes.

The caller will call out whatever is on the slip of paper they pull out. The players put a 'chip' on that square.

When a player gets five chips in a row - either horizontally, vertically or diagonally - he/she should call out "Bingo!" You can choose many different variations including cover all, outside only, four corners, and X.

The player tells the caller what pictures or numbers they used to get a bingo and the caller verifies if it is a real win or not. If not then the caller continues to call out pictures or numbers. If it is, the game is over and you can start over.

Plantains Are the Latin Potato

By Laura Aldir-Hernandez

For many Latinos, plantains are as much a staple as potatoes are to Anglo Americans. Plantains are a starchy, banana-shaped fruit that is served in a variety of ways (except raw), and are useful at all stages of ripeness. They are popular throughout many Caribbean and Central American countries.

Why break out a bag of potato chips to go with that sandwich when you can eat mariquitas (plantain chips)? Unlike potato chips, plantain chips are often served straight out of the fryer, while they are crispy and hot. These addictive treats, that go by the name platanutres in Puerto Rico, are also sold in prepackaged bags in ethnic markets, as well as in supermarkets in U.S. cities with sizeable Hispanic populations.

Tostones are another popular plantain dish. These are made by frying squashed slices of green plantain. The secret, my Cuban grandmother taught me, is to fry the slices twice – both before and after they are squashed in a small press made for this purpose. A little salt, sometimes a savory garlic dip, and you've got a mouthwatering appetizer or side dish. I've enjoyed a delicious variation on these two dishes in many small town restaurants in Puerto Rico. Shredded green plantains are fried in clumps called arañitas or "little spiders." The delectable result is like a cross between mariquitas and

tostones.

Need to avoid fried foods? Another plantain specialty in Puerto Rico is mofongo, a hearty meal of mashed plantains mixed with garlic and often some type of meat or seafood. In this case the plantains are boiled, so you don't have to worry as much about fat content.

Stick with lean chicken or fish as the additional ingredient, and you having the makings of a healthy and satisfying meal.

While you might throw out bananas that have turned dark, a blackened plantain is another cooking opportunity. When a green plantain ripens, its skin turns black and its taste goes from bland to sweet. Ripe, black plantains may be poached, fried, or baked. They are served in various dessert recipes. They are also used in a very common Latin side dish called plátanos maduros.

Plantains are nutritious, lower in carbohydrates than regular bananas, and relatively inexpensive. Why don't you give this versatile fruit a try the next time your menu calls for a baked potato?



Puerto Rico's Nochebuena Celebration

By Nancy Cavanaugh

Every year Puerto Rico celebrates the Christmas season beginning right after the American Thanksgiving and up until Three Kings Day on January 6. Houses are decorated with lights, poinsettias (also known as nochebuenas), Christmas trees and scenes of the nacimientos, or nativity.

Groups form parrandas, asaltos or trullas (types of carolers) that go from one unsuspecting friend's house to another's all night long. The music is lively and often accompanied by bongo, guitar and other musical instruments. After performing, the group is invited in for food and drink before heading to the next friend's house.

One special day of the Puerto Rican Christmas season is Nochebuena, which takes place on Christmas Eve. Nochebuena is a day for families to gather and have a special celebration. Its history can be traced back to Roman time during the festivals of Saturnales, a celebration with abundant food where

slaves were invited to eat, relieved of work for seven days and allowed to exchange gifts.

Some of foods eaten include roast pork, seasoned rice, plantains dishes like cooked yams, seasoned rice with pigeon peas, and pasteles (made of mashed plantains or yucca and filled with meat and other vegetables then wrapped in the leaves of the banana tree). Desserts include things like arroz con dulce or sweet rice (rice cooked with spices, raisins, sugar, milk and coconut milk) and tembleque (custard made from cornstarch, sugar and coconut milk).

At midnight, a Catholic mass is celebrated called the Misa de Gallo (or Mass of the Rooster) and it celebrated the birth of Jesus. The Misa de Gallo starts nine days before Christmas and each day church bells call people to mass. The last day is the midnight mass on Christmas Eve or Nochebuena.

How to Play the Game of Dominoes

1. Count that there are 28 dominoes, from double blank to double six.
2. Place them facedown on the table and shuffle them until they're random.
3. Allow your opponent to take seven dominoes, and take seven for yourself.
4. Allow the player with the highest double to go first.
5. Lay a domino with like value next to the first domino (it doesn't matter which end). Make sure like values are always touching.
6. Pick from the pile if you don't have a domino that corresponds to the ones on the layout. Keep those dominoes concealed from your opponent(s).
7. Pass if no more dominoes are left in the pile.
8. Win the session if you're the first person to run out of dominoes.
9. End the session if everybody passes, in which case the winner is the person with the lowest score.
10. Count your score by the number of dots on the tiles remaining in your hand.
11. End the game if someone reaches 50 points in a game with two players or 100 points with three or more players. The lowest score wins.

Tips:

If you're playing with three or four players, each player should take five dominoes.

If more than two are playing, play rotates clockwise.

If no double is held by any player to determine who will go first, the domino of the highest value is counted.

Keep the largest assortment of different numbers in your hand as long as possible. If you have a choice of playing the 5-4 or 5-3 on an open 5, you should choose according to whether or not you have other

4s or 3s in your hand.

If you lay a double, the layout then forms a T shape and play can continue from any of the exposed ends.

Mofongo

Mofongo is mashed plantains and is a common festival food.

What you need:

- 3 light green plantains
- Vegetable or peanut oil (for frying)
- 4 garlic cloves, peeled
- 2 tablespoons olive oil
- 4 ounces chicharrones (cracklings)
- Salt (optional)
- Chopped fresh cilantro or parsley

What to do:

1. Peel plantains by slicing off the ends and cutting 3 or 4 lengthwise slits through the peel. Soak in cold water for 10 minutes, and pull the skin in strips. Cut crosswise into 1/2-inch slices, cutting at an angle so the slices have an oval shape. Sauté in vegetable oil until softened but not browned. Set aside on paper towels to drain and cool.
2. Mince or press garlic; add to olive oil and mix well.
3. Process cooled plantains in a food processor until barely smooth (this is traditionally done with a mortar and pestle).
4. Break chicharrones into bite-size pieces.
5. In a bowl, mix plantains, chicharrones, garlic and oil. Taste for seasoning and add salt if necessary (chicharrones may make dish salty enough). Form into egg-size balls with your hands. Serve warm, dusted with cilantro. Makes about 20 balls.

Quick Peek: Facts About Puerto Rico

Status: Commonwealth

Population: 3,897,960 (est. 2004)

Capital: San Juan

Languages: Spanish and English

Land area: 3,515 sq. mi.

Territory: Possession of the United States, including the islets of Vieques, Culebra and Mona.

Location: Caribbean Sea, about 1,000 miles east-southeast of Miami

Topography: Mountainous and tropical with very little flat land.



In Other Words, Merry Christmas

By Linda Gerber

Forget the flying reindeer, or the question of how a big guy like Santa can fit through those itty, bitty chimneys. Think about all the languages he has to know!

All around the world, children celebrate Christmas. When they want to say "Merry Christmas," Mexican niños (children) south of the border might say "Feliz Navidad" while in the frozen north, Finnish lapset (children) say "Hyvää Joulua." Even Santa's name

- A. Glædelig Jul, Nisse!
- B. Boas Festas!
- C. Merry Christmas!
- D. 生日快乐 (Gun Tso Sun Tan'Gung Haw Sun!)
- E. Καλά Χριστούγεννα! (Kala Christougena!)
- F. Gleðileg Jól
- G. 幸せなクリスマス! (Merri Kurisumassu!)
- H. Mele Kalikimaka!
- I. '즐거운 성탄, 산타클로스! (Sungtan Chukha!)
- J. God Jul

A. If you guessed #4, Denmark, you were right. In Denmark, Santa has plenty of help from nisse, or Christmas elves, who are very kind to children and love to play jokes. On Juleaften (Christmas Eve) Danish children set out bowls of rice pudding for the elves and seeds for the birds.

B. #8, Brazil is the answer you want here. Instead of a woolen red suit, Papai Noel, as Santa is called, must wear silk clothing when he visits Brazil because of the summer heat. During December, some Brazilian children give gifts without telling who gave them. These amigos secretos, or secret friends, reveal who they are on Christmas day.

C. This one sounds like it could be America, but the answer you want is #5, England. An English child might watch the mummers (masked performers acting out Christmas plays) or go wassailing (pretty much like Christmas caroling.) In England, Santa is called Father Christmas and wears a long, fur-lined robe.

D. This long phrase means Merry Christmas in #2, China. Christmas is not a traditional Chinese holiday, but many children celebrate by decorating "trees of light" with lanterns, chains and flowers made of paper. They hang muslin stockings to await Santa, who is called Dun Che Lao Ren, which means 'Christmas Old Man.'

E. Did the Greek alphabet give this one away? I'll bet you knew it was #10, Greece. On Christmas Eve,

sounds different in various countries. French enfants (children) call him Père Noël but in the Czech Republic, his name is Svaty Mikalas.

Imagine how confusing that must be! Good thing Santa has all those elves to help him figure things out. Do you think you could help as well? Look at the greetings below and see if you can send Santa to the correct country.

- 1. Hawaii
- 2. China
- 3. Korea
- 4. Denmark
- 5. England
- 6. Japan
- 7. Iceland
- 8. Brazil
- 9. Norway
- 10. Greece

Greek children sing kalanda Christmas carols door to door and receive sweets or coins in appreciation. Santa, or Saint Nicolas as he is known in Greece, is an important patron of sailors. His clothes are soaked with brine and his beard drips seawater.

F. In # 7, Iceland, Christmas is an important affair. When the Christmas lights are turned on Christmas Eve, all other services around the country are suspended so that everyone can be at home celebrating. Even television broadcasts are shut down until late at night. Icelandic children dress in their best clothes for their Christmas feast and look forward to opening presents - but not before they help clean up and wash the dishes! Santa is new to Iceland, joining the Jólaveinarnir, or Christmas Boys, in the lineup of festivities.

G. Do you know why this sounds so much like "Merry Christmas" in English? Because in #6, Japan, Christmas is not a traditional holiday so there were no words for Christmas greetings. They simply 'borrowed' the English phrase. However they say it, Japanese children enjoy giving gifts and doing nice things for other people on Christmas. The Hoteisha priest is like Santa Claus, leaving presents at children's homes. Some think he has eyes in the back of his head, so they try their best to behave when he is around!

H. Aloha! Did you guess #1, Hawaii? Very good. In December 2004 • www.saplingsmagazine.com

Hawaii, Christmas is all about ohana (I'll bet you know what that means!) The kanikapila celebrations probably include a lot of ukulele music, chicken, long rice and coconut pudding. Santa arrives in a red outrigger canoe (with the elves paddling, of course,) dressed in shorts, a flowered shirt and a lei. Instead of rushing out to play with their shiny new sled, Hawaiian kids might head to the beach to try out the surfboard Santa left them.

I. Christmas was introduced to #3, Korea, by missionaries in the 19th century, but has not been celebrated much until recently. Many traditions are bor-

rowed from Western cultures, such as Santa Claus and decorated Christmas trees. Korean children might enjoy a Christmas feast of ddeok guk (rice cake soup) served with kimchi (pickled cabbage), bulgogi (barbecued beef) and naeng myeon (clear noodles made from sweet potatoes.)

J. If you were paying attention, you know the only one left is #9, Norway. On Christmas day, Norwegian children enjoy a special rice pudding that has one almond cooked into it. Whoever finds the almond in their bowl will have a lucky year. In Norway, Santa is called Julenisse.

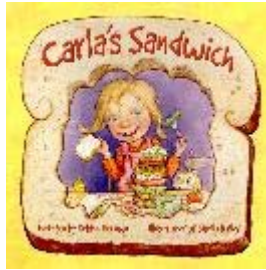
Book Reviews For and By Kids:

Carla's Sandwich and The Only One Club

By Caitlin Cavanaugh

Carla's Sandwich

Written by Debbie Herman
Illustrated by Sheila Bailey
Published by Flashlight Press
ISBN: 0-972-92252-0



I liked the story Carla's Sandwich. The book was fun to read. I enjoyed the main character Carla. She was unique. The illustrations were cool. I liked them because of the colors and the time the illustrator put into them to make them look so cool.

In the story this girl named Carla keeps bringing strange sandwiches to school and when her friends notice it they stop sitting next to her. Her class has a picnic and she brought a "combo sandwich" and someone called it a "wormbo sandwich" because it looked weird. In the end everyone starts to bring in their own unique sandwiches while Carla brings in a normal sandwich.

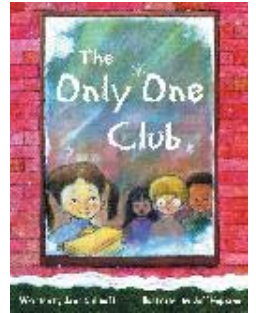
The moral of the story is "Never judge a book by its cover." I like the moral because it teaches kids not to judge people by the way they look.

About the Author: Debbie Herman lives in New York City. Carla's Sandwich is her first picture book. She also wrote Eight Lights for Eight Nights. She has a Master's degree in special education.

About the Illustrator: Sheila Bailey lives in Redwood City, California. She has illustrated 26 books for children including Spaghetti and Peas, Special People, Special Ways, and The Wizard and King Whifflegroan. She has also illustrated many Hallmark cards.

The Only One Club

Written by Jane Naliboff
Illustrated by Jeff Hopkins
Published by Flashlight Press
ISBN: 0-972-92253-9



I like the story The Only One Club. The book was funny. I enjoyed the ending the most. The illustrations were really good. I liked them because there was so much color and the illustrator must have taken a long time to get the pictures just right.

In the story there is a girl named Jennifer who is the only Jewish girl in the class. So she starts a club that she's the only one in it because she is the only one of something and that's what the club is about. All of her friends get really mad and begin the "Not the Only One Club." In the end Jennifer makes everyone a member of the club, even her teacher, and gives a special badge to each new member of the club.

I liked the book because it was fun to read. The book teaches kids that everyone is the only one of something and don't leave people out of things.

About the Author: Jane Naliboff lives in an old farmhouse in Vienna, Maine. She has had several stories published in magazines and published by many educational publishers. She also wrote Kids Will be Kids.

About the Illustrator: Jeff Hopkins lives in Brooklyn, NY. He makes illustrations for animation studios, book publishers, and advertising agencies. He worked as a museum educator for several museums and served as artist-in-residence for a yearlong after-school art program for K-2 students.

Make Your Own "The Only One" Badge

By Nancy Cavanaugh

What you need:

Construction paper (any color)
Markers or crayons
Glue
Glitter, buttons, ribbons, lace, etc.
Scissors
Safety pin
Tape

What to do:

1. Using the construction paper, cut out a badge with the template provided.
2. With markers or crayons, write on the badge one thing that makes you unique.
3. Using the other supplies and glue, decorate the badge as you want. Allow to dry completely.
4. Tape a safety pin to the back of the badge then have an adult help put the badge on.

The Best Chanukah Gift

By Nancy Rechtman

"Who is that?" asked the little girl, gripping her grandmother's hand tightly. She looked at the frail, old woman sitting on the park bench, throwing bread crumbs to the pigeons.

"That's Mrs. Shulman," her grandmother answered. "She always sits out here when it's nice outside and feeds the birds."

"But she looks so funny, Grandma," the little girl said, glancing at the old woman's faded coat and worn shoes.

"Looks can't tell you everything about a person. Mrs. Shulman has trouble seeing now, but she was once an artist who painted beautiful paintings that still hang in art galleries all over the city."

"Wow!" the little girl exclaimed.

Suddenly, Mrs. Shulman looked up. "Is that you, Goldie?" she asked, shielding her eyes from the sun.

"Yes, it's me, Ida. And I'm with my granddaughter, Molly," Goldie Abrams replied. "She's here to visit me for the holidays."

"Are you enjoying your visit with your grandma, sweetheart?" Ida Shulman asked.

Molly nodded her head. "Yes, we're getting ready for Chanukah. We're going to make latkes tonight."

"Aren't you a lucky girl? Your grandma makes the best latkes in town," Ida said, smiling. She looked up at Molly. "Come closer, let me get a good look at you."

Goldie and Molly approached Ida Shulman. Molly stared unabashedly at Ida's thick glasses and Ida smiled. "Aren't you pretty!" she exclaimed.

Goldie nudged Molly. "Thank you," Molly said politely. "And you have very big glasses."

Ida chuckled. "Yes, I do, Molly. Come, sit down. Here's some bread you can throw to the pigeons."

"Thank you," Molly said, eagerly taking the stale bread from Ida. She looked up at her grandmother.

"How come Mrs. Shulman talks funny?"

Goldie reddened. "She has an accent, Molly, she doesn't talk funny. Mrs. Shulman came over to America from Russia when she was a girl."

Ida patted Goldie's hand. "That's OK Goldie, she isn't being rude. To her I sound funny."

Molly sat down. "We once almost moved but then we didn't and I was so glad 'cause I didn't want to leave my friends. Why did you leave Russia?"

Ida sighed. "We had no choice. I didn't want to leave my friends either."

Molly's eyes widened. "How could you have no choice? Everyone has a choice."

Goldie sat down slowly. "In America we have a choice. In Russia, if you were Jewish, you had no choice."

Molly stared at Ida. "Oh, you're Jewish, too? Did you go to Hebrew school and have your bat mitzvah? I hate going to Hebrew school; it's sooo boring!"

Ida stared into the distance. "Back then, girls could not study for a bat mitzvah. I know you don't think so, but you are very lucky that you can go to Hebrew school. Jews in Russia never knew when the soldiers might come and take everything away from us, or even worse."

Molly looked at Ida, then at her grandmother. "But that would be stealing!"

"That was the way it was. They could come and destroy our homes, our temples... they could do whatever they wanted. It was called a pogrom. Terrible things happened then. We got a warning before they came to our village and so we were able to escape. But we heard that everything was burned, even our temple. Our rabbi managed to take the Torah and bury it so they couldn't destroy it. I don't know whether it has ever been found or not. Eventually my family escaped to America."

"Did you ever wish you had your bat mitzvah?" Molly wondered.

Ida nodded. "Yes, I suppose there were times I did."

"Well, you could have one now, you know. Lots of grown-ups at our temple have their bar and bat mitzvahs because they didn't have them when they were kids."

Goldie shook her head. "It's very hard to start learning something new at our age, Molly."

Molly jumped up. "You're the one who always tells me that nothing is worth doing unless you have to work at it, right? I could help Mrs. Shulman. I'm learning my Hebrew letters now and we could do it together. I know she can't see so well now but I could help her."

Ida's eyes filled with tears and she quickly wiped them with her handkerchief. "I never even thought it would be possible," she admitted.

"Well, it is," Molly said stubbornly. "You deserve to have one just like me one day."

"Well, maybe I will," Ida nodded. "Would you and your grandma like to come upstairs and have some tea? Maybe you'd like to see some of my paintings."

Molly tugged on her grandmother's sleeve. "Oh can we? Please, please, please?"

Goldie smiled. "Of course we can. Thank you, Ida, we'd love to."

"And then maybe tonight Mrs. Shulman can come over and help us make the latkes! Could you, please, please, please?"

It was Ida's turn to smile. "I'd love to. What a wonderful way to celebrate Chanukah."

Molly laced her fingers through her grandmother's hand, then Ida's. Together, the three companions walked slowly down the uneven, winding path, leading them to what would always be remembered as the best Chanukah gift ever.

Twin Trouble

By Stacie Cortez Guidry

Tracie & Stacie looked very much the same
Their hair, their eyes and almost the same name

Even though they looked, walked and sounded alike
Their tastes were different ever since they were tykes

Tracie liked to paint and work with clay
Stacie liked to read and write all day

Tracie's favorite color was robin's egg blue
Stacie's favorite color was of a purple hue

When it came to music they both had different views
Tracie liked rock while Stacie liked the blues

Tracie liked to watch movies that were very scary
Stacie liked movies that were nice, light and airy

Stacie liked cats and Tracie liked dogs
But they both could agree they didn't like frogs

Even though their tastes were very diverse
They loved each other best in the whole universe.

Things of December

By Teresa Nordheim

Down

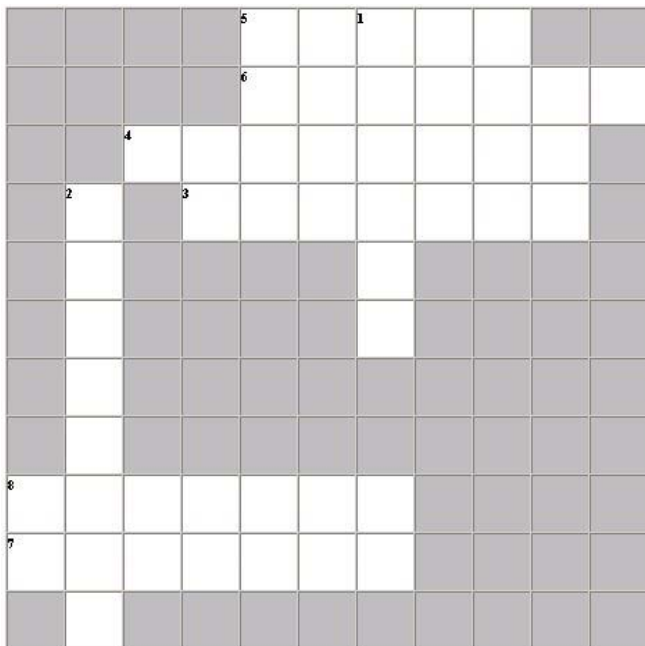
1. Mom, Dad, Brothers, Sisters
2. Hung by the fireplace

Across

3. Wooden holiday toy to spin
4. The last month of the year
5. Unwrap your _____
6. December 26, 2004 - January 1, 2005
7. Frosty the _____
8. They warm your hands

Answer on page ___

**Check out the forums today
and let's get chatting!**



Make Your Own Kwanzaa Calendar

What you need:

White construction paper
Black, red and green markers or pens
Glitter
Glue
Scissors
Ruler
Pencil

What to do:

1. Trim a 9-inch-by-12-inch piece of white construction paper to 7 inches by 10.5 inches.
2. Turn the paper sideways, and then use a ruler and pencil to mark off six vertical lines at 1.5-inch intervals.
3. Trace over the lines with a black pen. This will create seven spaces for the seven days of Kwanzaa.
4. Write "26" at the top center of the far left space to represent December 26, the first day of Kwanzaa.
5. Continue numbering the spaces, ending with "1" on the final space, to represent January 1, the last day of Kwanzaa.
6. Write the Swahili word "Umoja" under the date in the far left space. Write its English translation, "Unity," at the bottom of the space. This represents the first of the seven principles of Kwanzaa.
7. Write in this space how you and your family will celebrate Kwanzaa that day and how you will recognize the principle of umoja. Draw pictures or use

magazine cutouts to illustrate.

8. Use a red pen to write "Kuhichagulia" at the top and "Self-Determination" at the bottom of the second space. Write how you and your family will celebrate Kwanzaa that day, and how you will recognize this principle, in the space that remains.

9. Repeat the process, using a green pen for the principle of ujima and its translation - collective work and responsibility - in the third space.

Use a red pen for ujamaa - cooperative economics - in the fourth space.

Use a green pen for nia - purpose - in the fifth space.

Use a red pen for kuumba - creativity - in the sixth space.

Use a green pen to write imani - faith - in the final space. This will represent the seventh principle, celebrated on the last day of Kwanzaa.

10. After you have finished decorating your calendar, glue it to a 9-inch-by-12-inch piece of black construction paper, allowing an approximate 1/2-inch margin.

11. Write "Kwanzaa" with white glue at the top center of the black section. Cover with gold glitter and shake off the excess.

12. Finish decorating your calendar using the red, green and gold glitter. Allow to dry completely.

Use tape or tacks to hang on a wall, or use magnets to hang on a refrigerator.

Why Do We Celebrate Boxing Day?

By Barry Eva

Boxing Day takes place every December 26th, it is also called St. Stephen's Day. In countries like Britain, Australia and Canada it is a special day.

Despite the name, it is nothing to do with the sport of boxing or clearing the boxes out the house left over after Christmas. Also it has nothing to do with the after-Christmas sport of returning unwanted gifts to stores.

The roots of the holiday can be traced back to medieval times. One theory is that it was the one day off a year the lord of the manor gave his workers. On this day he presented each of his workers with a small book of food or goodies. Quite often these were the leftovers from the lord's Christmas feasting, but it was better than nothing. Being the one day a year the workers had off, it was also a day for enjoying oneself. This tradition still lingers on, and Boxing Day is a huge day for sporting events.

Some of the other versions of the origin are around ranging from seasonal religious donations, to being tipped in the form of a small earthenware box by ones' masters.

These days after the frantic preparations for Christmas Day it is a day to relax with family and friends, eating cold leftovers, and watching sport. A day truly to enjoy.



Yours Till the Tree Barks

By Valerie Hunter

September 14 out of it!

Dear Erin,

My class is doing a friendship project, and my teacher gave us all pen pals from a list she had. I got your name and address.

Anyway, my name is Dorisa and I'm 10 ½ years old. I live in Villa Park, Illinois with my parents and my dog, Stringbean.

I like swimming, reading, and playing softball. I really hope you write back.

Sincerely,
Dorisa

P.S. I'm deaf.

In school I like art and science. When I'm older I want to be a marine biologist or an illustrator. What about you?

Yours till pigs fly,
Erin

November 18

Dear Erin,

I can speak a little, but I probably sound pretty bad! I can also read lips a little, but that's hard. Sign language is easiest for me, and I guess it's not that hard to learn because besides Melanie learning a few signs, I also taught Stringbean the signs for 'sit' and 'stay.'

When I'm older I want to be an Olympic swimmer. Of course, that's not really a job, but I haven't come up with anything else yet.

Yours truly,
Dorisa

Dear Dorisa,

Hi! I was really happy to get your letter. I'm eleven years old, and I live with my dad and my step-mom, Cheryl. I have a sister, Maggie (14), two step-siblings, Ron (10) and Janella (6), and a half-sister, Dana, who's two. My house is pretty crowded! We also have a kitten named Peaches, and a hamster, Vernon.

I like softball, too, and I'm on a team called the Bears. What position do you play? I'm a pitcher.

Besides softball, I like drawing and hiking. Write soon!

Yours till the tree barks,
Erin

October 16

Dear Erin,

I'm on the Raiders in softball, and I play first base. We won the championship last year.

Do you get along with your siblings (step, half, and otherwise)? I wish I had a brother or sister. Sometimes I pretend my baby cousin Melanie is my sister. She knows a little sign language already. She's so smart!

What's your favorite subject at school? I like English.

Yours truly,
Dorisa

Dear Dorisa,

Is Villa Park near Chicago? Maggie and I are visiting Mom in Chicago for Christmas, and if Villa Park isn't too far away, I could come visit you on the 27th. Wouldn't that be cool?

I'm so excited about Christmas! I went shopping for gifts today and bought earrings for Maggie, paints for Janella, and a book for my dad. I think I like shopping for gifts almost as much as getting them!

Yours till the ocean waves,
Erin

December 1

P.S. I have a Christmas present for you, plus a surprise.

December 17

Dear Dorisa,

Wow, your baby cousin is so smart to learn sign language! Can you speak at all or do you just sign? Is sign language hard to learn? Sorry if I sound nosy; I'm just interested.

I get along okay with Maggie and Ron, but Janella can be bratty and Dana's a pest. I hope they grow

Dear Erin,

Villa Park is about an hour away from Chicago. I asked my parents and they said it would be great if you came. I promise I'll save some Christmas cookies for you! I can't wait.

How is your shopping going? I'm making gifts this year. I'm sewing a really cute pillow for my mom, and I'm working on something for you, too.

See you soon!

Your friend,
Dorisa

January 2

Dear Dorisa,

Well, I'm back in Ohio. I loved our visit! Thank you so much for the necklace with the baseball beads. It was my favorite present, along with the mitt Dad gave me. I'm going to wear the necklace when I pitch for good luck.

I'll be visiting Mom again this summer, and maybe we can get together again then. I'm already planning all the fun we'll have!

Love,

Erin

January 10

Dear Erin,

You're the best pen pal ever! I love the book you gave me, but your surprise was even better. Who'd have thought you could learn so much sign language from a book in just a month! It was great to 'talk' to you a little without having to write everything down or read lips. You're so thoughtful!

I can't wait to see you this summer. Maybe I can visit you at your mom's house. In the meantime, write soon!

Love,

Dorisa

Kwanzaa Craft Fun

By Deborah Shelton

Kwanzaa is December 26th through January 1st. Celebrate this cultural holiday with your children with these fun ideas.

Learn the principals of Kwanzaa: Umoja (unity); Kujichagulia (self-determination); Ujima (collective work and responsibility); Ujamaa (cooperative economics); Nia (purpose); Kuumba (creativity); Imani (faith). Make a poster with drawings to reflect these principals, and hang it in your home.

Make Kwanzaa jewelry for zawadis (gifts). String together red beads, black beads, and green beads for necklaces and bracelets.

Decorate your home with paper kinaras. A kinara is a candle holder with mishumaa (seven candles): 3 green candles, 1 black candle in the center, and 3 red candles. First, use a marker to draw a simple kinara on a sheet of paper. Cut green, black and red rectangles from construction paper to use as candles. Glue the candles onto the kinara. Next, glue popcorn kernels onto the paper as the flames of the candles.

Happy Kwanzaa!

My New Kitten, Cici

By Raisah Ali

We got her from three weeks old,
Her pleasure filled my heart with gold.
Playing throughout the day,
Meowing if she had anything to say.

Funny little pussycat hitting her head on the floor,
Funny little pussycat hitting her head on the door,
Together we had fun,
Playing all day in the sun.

We had to give her away as she was too hard to handle,
She sat there playing with my sandal.
We gave her away to a classmate,
I will always remember that date.

I could recall all the things she did,
And all the places she hid.
I recollect us playing all the time together,
I thought those days were going to last forever.

Five days later she's back and ready for action,
Now I have a smile of great satisfaction.
Running around and playing while I write this,
She is something everybody will miss.
We stand together in the sun rays,
And will stay together forever and for always.

Ballet Days

By Christine Tricarrico

My favorite days are ballet days...
Soft fabric flows. On tippy toes!
I soar ... ballon ... floating midair.
Jeté... I leap with grace and flair,
In shimmer white like swirling light.
Smooth satin lace tied all in place.
I glide... I slide... across the floor,
Fouetté until my feet are sore.
A final bow. I curtsy now...
My last plié... on ballet day!

Ballet terms:

Ballon: (ba- LAYN) Holding a pose in the air.

Fouetté: (fwe -TAY) A turn done on one foot as the other foot circles around to pull the body.

Plié: (plee-AY) To bend at the knee.

Jeté: (zhuh -TAY) A leap from one foot to the other foot.

Make Your Own Snowflake Stationery

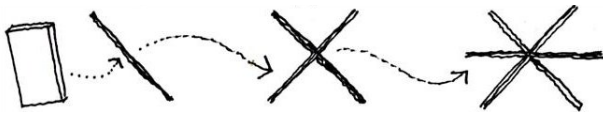
By Fran Gallagher Ripsom

What you need:

- Purchased plain stationery or notecards
- Plain paper
- Newspaper
- Paper towels
- Materials to be used for printing (i.e.; old tablet backs, cereal boxes, toilet paper rolls, Styrofoam trays, egg cartons, plastic straws, small bottle caps, pipe cleaners, etc.)
- Gold, silver or other metallic stamp pad
- Glue
- Glitter or fake snow

What to do:

- Cover workspace with newspapers.
- Before you begin on the good note paper try making a few snowflakes on a plain sheet of paper. This will allow you to experiment and see which print tools work best for you.
- Imagine a snowflake under a microscope. It has six symmetrical sides. To begin your snowflake cut a piece of cardboard to a small size, from a 1/2" to 2". Press one edge of the cardboard onto the stamp pad. Print an "X" then stamp a straight line through your "X". This is the base of the snowflake.

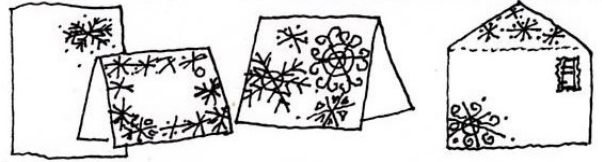


4. Embellish your snowflake. Remember all six

sides need to be the same and that every snowflake is unique.

5. Now you're ready to print on the good note card. Insert a paper towel between the pages. This will keep the writing surface clean and allow you to randomly print off the page.

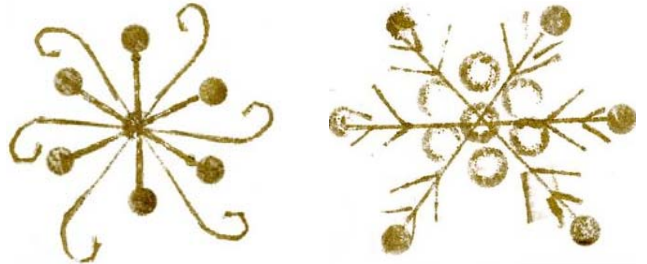
Snowflakes can be many sizes and they can overlap. Print as few and as many snowflakes as you'd



like. You can even add snowflakes to the envelope.

6. After you're done creating your snowflakes you can use glitter to add a special finishing touch. Use a small amount of glue then shake on the glitter. Let it dry then shake off the excess glitter.

7. Allow the paper to dry overnight then you can start using it.



Christmas is Here

By Teresa Nordheim

The lights are twinkling on the house.
A stocking's hung for Ed the mouse.

Candy canes hanging on the tree,
Today I sat on Santa's knee.

Dad brings out the plastic reindeer
He'll put them on the roof this year.

Gingerbread cookies on a plate.
I hope Santa Claus won't be late.

The elves have been busy all night.
Santa's sleigh is ready for flight.

I head to bed and wait to hear
The tapping hooves of his reindeer.

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I dream of a place faraway,
The North Pole, Santa and his sleigh.

When I awake, my stocking full,
A ball, a top, a train to pull.

A new sled to play in the snow,
A knitted scarf from my Aunt Jo.

A surprise visitor walks on in.
A gray beard covers his chin.

A red hat, a red Santa suit.
A jolly big belly to boot.

Santa a question, if I may,
Next year can I ride in your sleigh?

Frugal Holiday Fun For Everyone

By Cyndi Roberts

With the holidays just around the corner, why not try out some new crafts with the children? You might just start a new tradition at the same time!

Scented Cinnamon Cutouts

What you need:

10 tbsp. hot applesauce
5 oz. cinnamon

What to do:

1. You can use other spices too (ginger, allspice, etc.), or combine several. Mix applesauce and spice; if it is dry add more sauce. If wet, add more spice. This makes a great non-sticky dough. Very workable.
2. Sprinkle work area with spice, and with a rolling pin, roll dough 1/4" thick.
3. Cut into desired shapes. Holiday shapes, houses, ginger people, apples, bears, hearts, etc.

For Ornaments:

Use a straw to poke a little hole in the top of each cutout. Place cutouts on a screen. Let dry 6 to 7 days, or dry in warm oven for 3 or 4 hours. The dried product feels almost like driftwood. Paint if you wish. Be creative.

Snow Ice Cream

What you need:

1 egg, beaten slightly
1/2 c. sugar
Pinch of salt
1 tsp. vanilla
2 c. milk

What to do:

1. Mix well. Stir in enough clean fresh snow to make it about the consistency of homemade ice cream. Makes about 4 quarts.

WARNING: Young children or those in poor health should not eat foods made with raw eggs.

Marshmallow Snowman

What you need:

Fruit leather
Pretzel sticks
Marshmallows - large and small
Gumdrops
Cloves

1. Cut strip of fruit leather for scarf. Gently push a pretzel stick through 2 marshmallows. Wrap scarf around end of pretzel. Add another marshmallow for head. Use another pretzel to attach gumdrop hat.

2. Make face with cloves and rolled fruit leather. Make arms with pretzels and mini-marshmallows.

Decorator Bags

What you need:

1 plain brown bag
Sponge
Acrylic paint(s)
Hole puncher
Twine or curling ribbon

What to do:

1. Take a plain brown bag and a sponge cut into any shape. Using acrylic paints, decorate bag, using the sponge as a stamp. You can also use a stencil and stencil a design on the bag. Get creative!

2. Allow to dry and then turn down a couple of inches at the top and use a hole puncher and punch two holes about 2" apart. Run packing twine or curling ribbon through the holes and tie a bow.

My First Terrarium

What you need:

Large (32 oz.) plastic drink bottles, empty
2 or 3 small plants
Artificial flowers or bugs
Sticks
Small stones
Potting soil

What to do:

1. Soak bottles in very warm water for a few minutes. Then empty them and pull off the colored bottom parts and peel off labels. Clean the glue out of the bottom parts.

2. Put a layer of small rocks in the bottom part of each bottle. Put potting soil over the rocks and then put in your plants. Be sure to press the roots of the plants down. Add more soil around your plants to fill the planter. Arrange pretty stones, tiny sticks, or tiny toy animals around the plants.

3. Use a sharp knife to cut the top off the clear part of the bottle (about 4" from the cap). Turn the clear part upside down. Slip the cut edges into the planter to make a dome top.

4. You can glue an artificial flower or bug to the dome for decoration.

Christmas Sponge Art Wrapping Paper

What you need:

- White paper
- Scissors
- Dry sponge
- Ballpoint pen
- Water colors (red & green)

What to do:

1. Draw a yuletide motif on white paper. Then cut out and place on a dry sponge (the sponges with tiny holes work the best). Trace the pattern with your ballpoint pen and cut out the shape. (Parents will need to help with these steps).

2. Dip the sponge in paint, squeeze excess paint out and blot onto either plain white or solid colored wrapping paper. You can stamp each sponge several times before re-dipping in the paint.

SALT DOUGH ORNAMENTS

What you need:

- 2 c. flour
- 1 c. salt

Chanukah

By Leticia Pontoni

I saw men, soldiers into a temple.
They found enough oil to light the temple.

Lamps for one day they had.
They needed more light.

Suddenly, a miracle covered them.
The oil lasted and the lamp stayed lit for eight days and nights.

Long days and long nights were behind them.

They could restore the temple for people.
A menorah is lightning every year recalling those days.

One candle for each day.

It's time for feasting, for family celebration,
and for gift giving.

It's Chanukah and it's near us.

1 c. water

What to do:

1. Mix all thoroughly. Add 1 tablespoon of water if dough is dry. Knead 5 minutes. Shape as desired.

2. Poke a small paper clip in back of ornaments. Place on lightly greased cookie sheet. Smooth rough edges with wet knife before baking. Bake at 250 degrees for 2 hours.

3. Paint with acrylic paints or Testor's paints (model paint). Coat with clear shellac.

Ideas:

Braid dough and make into wreath. Decorate with ribbon and dried flowers. Make into holiday ornaments: snowman, Santa, etc. Use utensils, garlic press, or toothpicks to make designs.



Gabby

By Kurt Metzler

Gabby bopping baseballs
Thunder in her bat
Gabby bopping baseballs
She can knock them flat.

Gabby bopping baseballs
Walloping the ball
She hit one in the Summer
And it landed in the fall.

Answers from page 13

				g	i	f	t	s		
				k	w	a	n	z	a	a
		d	e	c	e	m	b	e	r	
s		d	r	e	i	d	e	l		
t					l					
o					y					
c										
k										
m	i	t	t	e	n	s				
s	n	o	w	m	a	n				
g										







Meet the Writers

Being a children's author and illustrator is **Teresa Nordheim's** dream. Apart from being a Mom, it is her favorite thing to do. Her supportive husband Andre, daughters Cindi, Katerina, and Teresa. Her graphics and writing samples can be viewed at: www.buzzyb.net

Nancy Machlis Rechtman is the author of "My Little One," a novel about infertility which has received Honorable Mention for Best Novel in the 2004 Norumbega Fiction Awards. Nancy has also written several children's plays and a humor/observational column which you can read at www.nancyrechtman.com. Nancy is a member of SCBWI.

Stacie Cortez Guidry grew up in Lafayette, Louisiana. She currently resides in Houston, TX with her husband and two children. She is a certified paralegal and has a twin sister.

Cindi Nordheim is 12 years old. She enjoys drawing pictures, reading, and hanging out with her friends and family. She lives in Washington with her Mom, Dad, and little sister, Katerina.

Leticia Pontoni lives in a quiet town named Salsipuedes, in Cordoba, Argentina. She lives with her mother, her husband, and her pets. She loves to write. It is her path in life, and it is what makes her happy.

Linda Gerber lives and writes in Tokyo, Japan, where she serves as the Regional Advisor for the Society of Children's Book Writers and Illustrators and leads a local youth organization. Add to the mix four children, a traveling husband and an absentee dog and her life is never dull.

Cyndi Roberts is the editor of the bi-weekly newsletter 1 Frugal Friend 2 Another, which brings you practical, money-saving tips, recipes, and ideas. Visit her website to subscribe and receive the Free e-course, "Taming the Monster Grocery Bill": <http://www.cynroberts.com>

Deborah Shelton is a mother and the author of the award-winning book *The Five Minute Parent: Fun & Fast Activities for You and Your Little Ones*. Visit Deborah's website for more fun ideas: <http://www.fiveminuteparent.com>

Raisah Ali is a 12 year old who enjoys writing, playing with her cat and hanging out with her friends. She's the type of person that tries to make everybody laugh.

Bonnie Everett-Hawkes has been drawing,

designing and creating since she was old enough to hold a pencil. She is a Graphic Designer, Illustrator and Photographer. She has been professionally illustrating books since 1975 when her first author-illustrated book was published. You can contact Bonnie through her site www.4uall2c.com/labluerose-gallery.

Sumbul Naqvi can be reached via *Saplings Magazine* at saplingsmagazine@gmail.com.

Valerie Hunter is a senior English education major at The College of New Jersey, and has had fiction and non-fiction for children accepted by magazines including *Cricket*, *Cicada*, *Boys' Quest*, and *Confetti*. As a child, she wrote to many pen pals, and in fact her college roommate is a former pen pal!

Christine Tricarico a children's writer who lives in Michigan with her daughter Fallon, husband Steve and three little dogs. She has had cover stories in *Our Little Friend*, as well as *Confetti*, *Kidvisions* and *TWAU*. You can read some at <http://christinetricarico.smartwriters.com>

Barry Eva, a former resident of England, lives in Connecticut with his wife and young family. He can be reached via *Saplings Magazine* at saplingsmagazine@gmail.com.

Caitlin Cavanaugh is a fourth grader who loves to read, do crafts, hang out with her friends, swimming in the pool, and is looking forward to school starting again. She has one pet cat named Meowers.

Elizabeth Dulemba is a former graphic designer currently writing and illustrating children's picture books. Her website is Dulemba.com. You can also email her at elizabeth@dulemba.com.

Fran Ripsom can be reached via *Saplings Magazine* at saplingsmagazine@gmail.com.

Kurt Metzler teaches at the Shoreham Public School in Toronto and has been writing with children since his first placement in 1989. When his children were young he was lucky enough to be home by day and playing music in the evenings. His stories, songs and poems have appeared in *Ladybug*, *Spider*, *Sing Out*, *Smile* and *Cappers*.

Annie Bailey is a writer, Certified Public Accountant and songwriter residing in Lubbock, Texas. She lives with her two biggest fans, husband Jeremy and son Taylor.

Deirdre Heck can be reached via *Saplings Magazine* at saplingsmagazine@gmail.com.

Do you like to write? *Kids Holiday Crafts Magazine* is looking for writers. Click on the submission guidelines link today!