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Letter from the publisher

Every society has a designated day for giving thanks. Our day, in November, is perhaps my favorite holiday. It's truly a national holiday and, while celebrated on different days in different lands, an international holiday in spirit. It's a day on which we count our abundance, whatever that amounts to.



For many years of my life, Thanksgiving was a day I worked, and when I finally had the day off and was available, I found myself alone and uninvited to any banquet or celebration. I was alone in New York without family — and people without family nearby can often spend holidays on their own. It's a weird feeling and can easily lead to depression and feelings of isolation. So much expectation surrounds holidays and the marketing folks can make you feel even worse than you already feel.

Being the kind of gal I am, I decided to do something worthwhile on that holiday alone, and I found myself volunteering to serve meals to the homeless, ill and needy. It was a good day and I felt busy, vital and necessary. At the end of the day, the group of volunteers all sat down together and had our meal. I met some very nice people that day and I've always looked back on it as a day when I saved myself.

Anyway, not everyone's going to volunteer, or think about it. Some people are so alone they can't get past the solitary nature of their lives. As we're planning this year for our celebrations and our banquets, think of someone you may know who has nowhere to go on this day. Maybe it's someone from another country or someone like I was, living in New York, with family far away.

Share this invite idea with your children. It may be that they also know someone who is alone at the holidays. Holidays are more enriched when there are "new friends" at the table. Happy Thanksgiving!

Thanks for reading.

Susan Weiss-Voskidis, Publisher

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NEWBIE DAD

BRIAN KANTZ

Thankful (really) for my mother-in-law

One night, way back in the year 2 BC (before children), I found myself in the middle of an ugly scene in a graduate school class. What started out as an innocuous discussion about parental influence on education quickly turned into a mother-in-law bashing session.

One by one, venom-spitting students told their worst mother-in-law stories. A guy claimed his mother-in-law tried to sabotage his

Classics, I know.

Eventually, all eyes turned to me. The mob expected one more juicy story from a disgruntled son-in-law. Instead, I simply shrugged my shoulders and said, "I like my mother-in-law." Of course, I wasn't telling the class the whole truth. I didn't want to rub their faces in it. What I should have said was, "I love my mother-in-law."

You see, the older I get, the more I realize how fortunate I am. And one of the most fortunate aspects of my life: I have a wonderful mother-in-law. Really.

OK, OK, I know what you're thinking. What did I do wrong? What do I want? A man must have some ulterior motive for declaring his love for his mother-in-law — yes, his mother-in-law — in print, right? Wrong. There's no motive here other than it deserves to be said.

My mother-in-law is the best. My admiration for her has grown each day since we met, and especially since my wife and I became parents and my mother-in-law became a grandmother. As mother, mother-in-law and grandmother, she is always there for us. Always. She's the heart of the family. She proves this again and again.

Here's a quick example: recently, I was offered — and accepted — an interim job position. This decision shook up our family's routine — namely, we needed a new childcare arrangement during weekdays. The decision also shook me up. After nearly six years as a stay-at-home dad, I was pretty accustomed to taking care of things myself during the day. I rarely needed to ask for help. Now, I did. And I found it very difficult to give up control. Actually, I found it excruciating.

My wife brought up the idea.

"Let's ask my mom if she'll take the kids in the afternoons," she said. Despite the fact that my mother-in-law has never missed an opportunity to babysit the boys, I hesitated to ask for her help. This was different. This

would be a huge time commitment. I didn't want to burden anyone else with the care of our children.

As I wrestled with the situation, a friend of the family — a very wise woman and a grandmother herself — knocked some sense into my head, saying, "Did you ever consider that your mother-in-law might actually want to watch the kids? That she might consider it a gift, not a burden? Did you ever consider that she just might be waiting to be asked?"

No, I hadn't really considered that.

But as soon as I did, my thoughts immediately went back to my own childhood to a time when my brothers and I spent a few hours after school each day at my grandmother's house after my mom went back to work. There's no doubt in my mind that the time I spent there was the reason I always felt so close to my late grandmother. I still think of her most days and plan to write a book about her some day. That kind of bond is priceless.

And guess what? My mother-in-law happily accepted our invitation. Of course she did. And I couldn't be happier about it. Our younger son, who spends the most time with Grandma while his older brother is at school, is quickly becoming "Grandma's boy." You may have seen the couple around town on a lunch date.

My mother-in-law is truly one of the most selfless — and capable — people I know. There is no better role model for my two boys. There is no better role model for me.

It's November and that means Thanksgiving. I'm one son-in-law who is thankful to have a wonderful mother-in-law in my life. If you're lucky enough to have a mother-in-law you love, too, let her know it. Donna, thank you for everything you do.

Brian Kantz says his father-in-law is pretty terrific, too. OK, now he's rubbing it in. Visit Brian online at www.briankantz.com or drop him a note at thenewbiedad@yahoo.com.



wedding. Even worse, one young woman countered, her mother-in-law had actually tried to help her plan her wedding. The horror. Classmates gasped.

Luckily, a few of the less emotionally scarred students lightened the conversation with a round of tasteless mother-in-law jokes:

- "I went to buy a car and the salesman asked if I needed an airbag. I said, 'No thanks, I already have a mother-in-law.'"

- "How do you stop your mother-in-law from drowning? Take your foot off her head."

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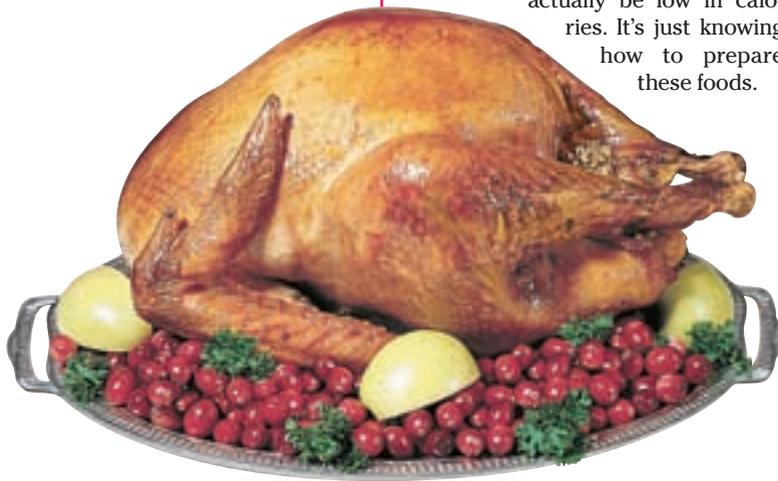


GOOD SENSE EATING

CHRISTINE M. PALUMBO, RD

The healthy side of Thanksgiving

The traditional Thanksgiving meal is considered laden with fatty foods and excess calories. Is there anyway to enjoy this time-honored dinner and still eat healthfully? Well, if you think about it, individual components of the meal score pretty high in nutrition and can actually be low in calories. It's just knowing how to prepare these foods.



Turkey: White meat sans skin provides more protein per calorie than almost any other meat. A three ounce serving — about the size of a deck of cards — provides just 120 calories and 26 grams of protein. Think dark meat is verboten? Think again. A three ounce serving of thigh meat provides just 135 calories. Either type is a source of iron, zinc, potassium, phosphorus and B vitamins.

Gravy: Depending on the skill of

the cook, homemade gravy can either be fatty or lean. But cooks who “cheat” by using jarred or canned gravy are actually doing you a favor since it’s virtually fat free.

Dressing: Make this healthier by sneaking in extra veggies such as chopped onions, celery, leeks, and shallots. Instead of sweating them in butter, use broth. Include whole wheat bread for at least half of the bread cubes.

Sweet potatoes: These tubers are loaded with beta-carotene, potassium, fiber and vitamin C and also provide magnesium, phosphorus, choline, iron and calcium for just 90 calories per half cup. Try scraping off the marshmallows and butter if they’re served that way.

Cranberries: These gorgeous red orbs contain anthocyanins, ellagic acid, quercetin, resveratrol, selenium and vitamins A, C and E.

Green beans: Prepared without soup mix or butter, they’re a good source of vitamin C at a calorie cost of just 22 per half cup.

Brussels sprouts: These little cabbages are high in vitamin C and are a good source of folate and beta carotene, as well as a myriad of phytochemicals.

Mixed nuts: Nuts contain protein, healthy fat and plenty of antioxidants, so crack away when the nut bowl gets passed. For example, walnuts are a particularly high source of melatonin, a compound linked to

good health.

Pie: Even dessert, such as pumpkin or apple pie can provide nutrients. Pumpkin provides beta carotene, while apple contains quercetin, both powerful antioxidants. To minimize calories, eat just the filling and skip the crust.

• • •

In general, nothing should be off limits. As you know, it’s all about portion size. Encourage children to sample whatever appeals to them and talk about how yummy the healthier foods are.

And keep them involved in the day, too.

“Have them draw what they are thankful for and incorporate the pictures into your table centerpiece,” says Diane Sowa, MS, RD, Assistant Director, Clinical Nutrition at Rush University Medical Center in Chicago, and mother of two college-aged sons. “Create a family heirloom by having an empty album on hand for their works of art and pictures from the day. After dinner, share memories by watching family movies and looking at photo albums.”

Children can also make place-mats, napkin rings or place cards for the dinner table.

Sowa also suggests making Thanksgiving an active day, and encourages a family touch football game before dinner, followed by a light walk after the meal.

“Get the kids involved by making some homemade ‘hand turkey’ invitations with details about signing up for a Turkey Trot.”

With a little advance planning and tweaks in the usual schedule, Thanksgiving can be a day of healthful eating and activity to burn it off.

Christine M. Palumbo, RD is a Naperville, Illinois-based nutrition speaker and a mother of three. Her favorite part of the Thanksgiving meal is, well, all of it. Send your questions and column ideas to her at (630) 369-8495 or Chris@ChristinePalumbo.com.

Cranberry Pear Tarts

Makes 30 tiny desserts.
Prep time: 10 min. Cook time: 15 min.

INGREDIENTS

1/2 cup fresh cranberries
1/4 cup honey
1/4 teaspoon allspice
1/8 teaspoon cinnamon
2 ripe pears, peeled, cored and chopped

2 (2.1-oz.) boxes mini phyllo shells, thawed

1/4 cup chopped walnuts
Finely grated orange zest

INSTRUCTIONS: Place cranberries, honey, allspice and cinnamon in a small saucepan. Bring to a boil; reduce heat and simmer for five minutes. Stir in pears and simmer

for 10 minutes or until excess liquid has cooked off. Let cool, then spoon mixture into phyllo cups. Top with walnuts, then lightly grate orange zest over the top.

NUTRITION FACTS: 110 calories, 21 grams carbohydrate, 2 grams protein, 2.5 grams fat, 0 saturated fat and cholesterol, 60 milligrams sodium, 2 gram fiber and 12 grams sugar (per 3 tarts).

Recipe courtesy of Patty Mastracco of I Do Food

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Youth in revolt!

Realizing when your child is seeking her independence

BY RISA C. DOHERTY

From the time children are babies they are trying to break free. As soon as toddlers can stand and take their first wobbly steps, they start to run. Invariably, they run away, racing out into the world, arms outstretched — not to brace for the inevitable fall, but to grab the world in their hands.

Kids are like that: craving independence, every step of the way.

As parents, our job is to protect, guide and — eventually — let go, which can be challenging because there are times when we enjoy taking part in the activity.

The day came suddenly when my toddler, Melissa, was no longer content to be fed with a spoon. I knew I was way more adept at depositing the food into her mouth, but she flailed her arms and pushed me away, blocking all my attempts to feed her. I acquiesced, and relinquished the fork to her unsteady hand. I watched her feeble attempts as the orange mush landed on her right cheek, then her left, and, finally, in her hair. I had to let her try — not only did she give me no choice, stubborn as she has always been, but I knew that I couldn't feed her forever.

Letting go is also hard because we need to analyze some pretty

bizarre and sudden requests on the spot, like, "What is wrong with a coed sleepover? We are all friends." Or this doozie: "Mind if I go to a midnight show on Houston Street?"

I used to be challenged by seemingly simpler queries, such as my 11-year-old son's request to go to

the supermarket with his friends, unchaperoned. I couldn't understand the lore of the produce and frozen food aisles to a bunch of pre-pubescent males, but, to a great extent, this tween was asking for his freedom. He was asking me



The author's daughter, Melissa, back when she was trying to exert her independence by feeding herself.

to trust him, and not just asking to “hang” with his friends. It was up to me to determine whether or not these boys would be safe in a public supermarket, and whether they would become a nuisance to the other shoppers.

I don’t appreciate it when my children present me with a new challenging request, expecting an instantaneous answer. Sometimes I feel like I’m in the hot seat, as a teen hastily presses me for approval of the newly revealed evening agenda, one foot out the door, telling me that someone’s mother is already waiting outside.

“Teens need to learn to wait for results, just like adults do,” says Lori Hiller,

a school social worker in Brooklyn. She suggests parents tell teens that failure to ask for permission early enough might result in denial of their request. After all, she says, in making these tough decisions, parents walk a tight-rope between too strict and too lenient.

“Safety” is usually my first line of defense.

When my then-fourth grader stubbornly insisted that she was old enough to walk the four blocks home from school by herself, I finally gave in and permitted it, shadowing her with my SUV. She trod down the street, chest puffed out, blatantly proud of her newfound independence. That is, until an unidentified white car pulled up just ahead of her. I lowered my window, and in my most authoritative tone, yelled “Melissa, get in this car this minute!” That put an end to the “walking home alone” discussion for quite a while.

But children need to subconsciously push the envelope both to see how far they can go and to see you put up a boundary for them, so that they feel safe, says Hiller.

My second line of defense is

“intel.” Knowing full well that my children will be telling me that I am the last parent holdout to reserve my approval of their group plans, I try to foresee their upcoming requests and I confer secretly with my peers. I’ll inquire of parents who have traditionally shown themselves to be like-minded in their standards and values.

By seventh grade, Melissa asked to be allowed to be dropped off at the mall with her friends. They wanted to shop together without any adult in tow. I needed to be weaned from the protective mother mode slowly, so at first, a parent was nearby, checking in every half hour or so. As

the girls got older and proved to be more responsible, and since they had cellphones, a mother was in the mall and on call for a crisis, but was not stationed within viewing distance. Then, sometime near the end of eighth grade, I finally gave in and actually dropped the girls off at the mall, sans chaperone.

I believe a parent’s instinct is often accurate. If a

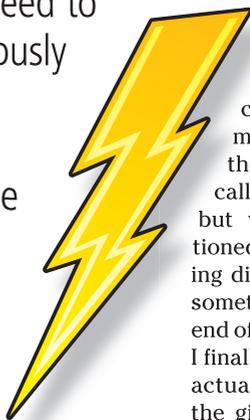
child’s proposed plans seem inappropriate or make a parent feel particularly uncomfortable, then the plans probably require more analysis and discussion.

Whenever my children were prohibited from going where they wanted, exactly when they wanted, I was labeled as “the strictest, most overprotective mom” in the neighborhood. My guess is there were plenty of other parents hearing those same exact words.

Independence is a process, but it takes baby steps and basic goals at each stage along the way, with the ultimate goal being an independent adulthood.

Risa C. Doherty is a freelance writer and attorney from East Hills, NY, and mother of an independent college student and almost-independent high school senior.

Children need to subconsciously push the envelope both to see how far they can go and to see you put up a boundary for them.



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The perfect fit

Finding the right NYC school for your child

BY NATANIA BLUMENKEHL

Very few parents have any idea what their options are when it comes time to start planning for their child's enrollment in school, which is why many look at school zoning when house hunting. A school like PS 321 in Park Slope, Brooklyn, can be a huge draw in a real estate ad, as the reputation and test scores of such a school act as a boon to the value of the home.

But in New York City, your zoned

on their behalf for application and acceptance.

I have been researching my options for a few years now and, as a result, my daughter attends first grade at Brooklyn School of Inquiry — the city's newest "gifted and talented" school, which opened to kindergarten and first grade students in 2009.

I had originally wanted my daughter to go to the local Sigma program, but when her test scores came back too high, I learned that there were other options I hadn't considered.

As a teacher for the Department of Education since 2001, I had no clue as to how the non-zoned public schools worked. I knew there was something more to public school options than just attending the one in my zone, but I knew no more than that. I worked down the block from the Mark Twain Middle School, another gifted and talented school in Brooklyn, but I never thought much about its admissions. Why should I? I wasn't looking for my child. But as I began to instruct in private tutoring, I soon became aware of a gifted and talented exam for middle school, and then another one for special-

ized high schools. I know this may equate to a lot of testing and a lot of pressure for kids, but isn't that just preparation for life?

Last year, I taught at a Charter School. When I told my friends and family, they all asked, "What is that?"

There are 54 Charter Schools in Brooklyn, and many more throughout the city. They are public, therefore, they are free, but they march to the beat of their own drum. Seventy five percent of their students

are funded publicly and the rest through grants and donations. They are held to stricter standards, their test scores must be higher, and their calendar year is usually longer. Their programs may be different — no gym, but, perhaps, dance, Hebrew instead of Spanish classes, and other variables. Longer days, shorter summers, more rigorous curriculum — this is all typical of a charter school. How do you get in? Lottery, not tests.

My search for options continues as my son finishes up his last year of kindergarten at a three-year Montessori school. Unfortunately, most parents stay uninformed or are too busy to do the leg work that is required when it comes time to research and advocate on behalf of their children in such a scenario. It's a good excuse, but not good enough. Because we parents don't get any guide to city schools, and the city's website doesn't give much insight into our choices, it's our obligation and privilege to be our child's academic life coach and guidance counselor. It's our job to ask and find out what lies beyond our borough's zoned school, and that doesn't mean using our cousin's best friend's address to get our child into the better neighborhood-zoned school.

Our public schools have to work for us. They can't always be the scapegoat of our children's short comings. Instead, our public schools need to be the reason why we didn't need a private school, and a consequence of our children's progress. Search your options. What Charter Schools are in your area? Is there an Eagle, Delta or Sigma program at any of your district schools? Consider signing your child up for the gifted and talented test (The deadline to apply is Nov. 17).

Resources:

nyccharterschools.org/schools.nyc.gov/Academics/GiftedandTalented/ParentResources/default.htm

www.Insideschools.org



school is one of many public school options and, unlike in suburban communities, parents in the five boroughs can choose a public school in any borough for their child to attend — even if it's not the one zoned for them.

So, you know your child, but do you know your options?

We, as parents, must make the time to explore all the public school options and deem which school will best fit our child's personality and learning style, and then advocate

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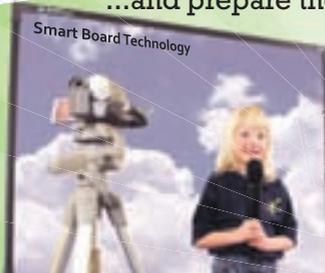


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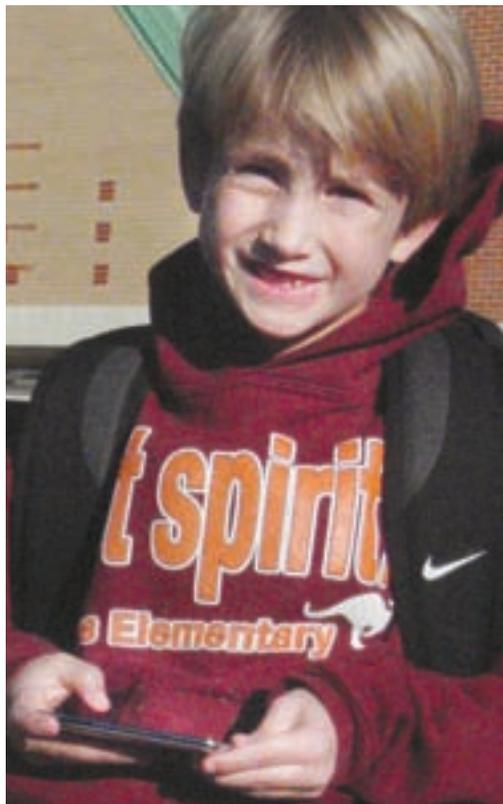
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The apps making learning easier for kids with special needs, like the developer's daughter, Mary (above).

New way to learn

A mother creates iPod apps to help her daughter learn

BY ALLISON PLITT

As the world becomes increasingly dependent on technology for day-to-day living, it is only logical that educators and parents are using computers and handheld devices to teach children. Enter a mother who aims to use technology specifically to help teach children with special needs.

Last year Margaret Ellis, a mother of two who lives in Blacksburg, Va. started her own company and created four different types of Apple iTunes applications, which include interactive books and a communication program that translates words into different languages, including sign language.

The company, called DevelopEase, is focused on using technology to help children with disabilities overcome the challenges of learning. Ellis has firsthand knowledge about the usefulness of the applications from raising her daughter, Mary, who

has disabilities resulting from a brain infection. In Aug. 2009 Mary, who is deaf and can barely communicate through speech and sign language, started using the iPod apps, which aid her verbal communication skills, giving her a sense of achievement, self-confidence and independence.

"Mary doesn't need a lot of assistance to interact with the apps," says Ellis. "If you get into an app and you make a mistake, it's really safe. The usability is really good because you can always press the home screen and go back and start over. She has a lot of success with it. Whereas, if you've experienced a game on a desktop, it's like you have to arrow out and arrow out and arrow out and you get in somewhere that you didn't mean to go and it's likely that she would enter into the wrong zone and then give up."

Anyone who owns an iPhone, iPad or iPod touch can use DevelopEase's software, which can be purchased through Apple's App Store or iTunes.

Ellis was amazed by the global response she received when she first marketed her product on the online store.

"There's people actually all over the world who are buying DevelopEase's apps. I can't see who has bought them, but I can see ... somebody just bought my app in Israel or in England or in Japan. I've even seen someone in Australia purchase one."

Although DevelopEase software is geared toward special needs children, any child can use it. At Mary's elementary school, the software has proven useful, since children with special needs are in classrooms with children who don't have disabilities. In the fall of 2009, her school, Kips Elementary School in Blacksburg, was the first school to use iPods with DevelopEase apps.

With both a B.S. in Mathematics Education and an M.S. in Computer Science from Virginia Tech, Ellis has the technological expertise to de-

velop the apps. She also taught computer science in high school, an experience that has allowed her to creatively design software programs that teach students with a wide range of aptitudes.

“My concept is technology for differentiation. People say now more ‘UDL’ (universal design learning) and that’s saying we should have a classroom that truly represents our community,” she explained. “We should use approaches that reach all different children. There are three demographics within those classrooms that we can especially reach with technology — which are children with special needs, children who speak English as a second language and children who are gifted — because they are going to stand out as needing some extra services.”

Not only does DevelopEase create the applications, but the company also visits the classrooms and assists teachers with installing their software on iPods and implementing them into students’ curriculums.

“We go to the school and tell them how we can help them,” explains Ellis. “Then we help the teachers set-up their accounts and the iPods. Then they’ll manage them and it’s a school account.”

To teach educators and families how to use Apple’s different handheld devices, DevelopEase offers workshops that explain equipment and custom software installation.

“The bulk of DevelopEase’s work is really providing workshops and training for schools,” Ellis says. “A lot of school systems have purchased iPods or they know that they’re useful, but then the reality of the classroom teacher, of the special teacher or of the technology resource teacher, is that it’s a lot of work to get them set-up for a whole class of students to use. We essentially serve as a consultant to the schools.”

DevelopEase also designs



Apps that aid verbal communication skills and give a sense of achievement, self-confidence and independence.

case management websites where school professionals, doctors, families and other caregivers can access information about a child’s developmental growth. To ensure that the information on the website is kept confidential, the company provides a password to all its users. DevelopEase can also update information on the website or train the customer to post news to the site.

Ellis observed that the portable devices seldom break in the hands of the students. One of her long-term goals is to make iPod training more accessible to communities so more people are aware of its usefulness in teaching special needs children. Currently, she lacks the funding to financially back her vision. She hopes, however, that schools will be able to receive grants and partner with her to support her research activity.

As for the future, Ellis sees the possibility of her business expanding nationally. If more people contact DevelopEase for business proposals, she envisions herself traveling more often to implement software, provide workshops to customers and create more customized applications for specific client needs.

Describing the teaching potential of iPods, Ellis believes these portable devices will profoundly change the way children learn.

“For a long time, programmers like myself, we would work on software programs, but it’s not like you could walk down the street and have it make a difference to a family. Now you know it can. It’s a real revolution in computing.”

Margaret Ellis can be contacted by e-mail at support@developease.com or by phone at (540) 552-2232. For more about DevelopEase, visit www.developease.com.

Special holidays

How families with special needs can have stress-free holidays

BY JULIA GARSTECKI

Tis the season of holly jolly parties and extended family visits.

Calm? Not a chance! For families that have children with a disability — however mild or severe — there is more planning that goes into a fun, peaceful holiday season. Unfamiliar cousins, culturally diverse foods, and adapting to time zones can be a challenge. The following tips just might help.

explain what they can expect to see. Answer any questions and offer any support websites if people ask.

Be sure to clear gifts ahead of time — gifts that may be inappropriate are clear to you, but may not be to the aunt who has never met your child.

Schedule

If there are medications that need to be given on schedule, make it clear to the host ahead of time so she can

be prepared. Know what routines work for your child — and stick to them as much as possible.

If your child is overactive, make sure there are places you can take her to to burn off energy. If an overtired child is prone to becoming angry and easily agitated, stick to bedtimes and routines as much as possible.

Because family at the gathering may have different bedtimes, consider keeping “quiet hours” that benefit those who are late nighters and early birds.

Then, provide quiet activities, such as coloring books, crafts, or designated favorite videos only to be watched during these hours.

Plan for success

There are some activities in which a child with a disability may not be able to participate. Always have an equally enticing option available. For example, if the disability is physical and some children are going sledding, perhaps take a trip to an aquarium or a movie, and recruit some family members to come along. If

lack of rules will keep your child feeling insecure, choose games with specific instructions that everybody will enjoy. Kids won't know what they couldn't or didn't get to do unless you make it a point to tell them. Maybe a favorite cousin or grandpa can think of something special to do with your child, like a trip to a favorite restaurant or store. One-on-one time might be just what your child needs.

Food

If your child has a severe food allergy (such as nuts), make it clear there will be no chestnut roasting. It needs to be clear to the host prior to accepting the invitation, especially if the smell of certain foods can set off a severe reaction. It is necessary to have this conversation — prior to driving 12 hours for a visit — so that everybody can agree on the menu. Offering to bring snacks you know your child can eat is a great opportunity to be a hospitable guest — and is the safest bet for your child.

• • •

Here are a few last minute tips that may help keep the holiday merry and bright:

- Bring toys and videos you know are slam dunks. If your child gets anxious, familiar objects can bring comfort.

- Ease up on rules — if possible. It is vacation!

- Don't be afraid to say no if things get stressful. With so many different families expecting to create the perfect Christmas, you might have to be Scrooge. As hard as that may be, stick with the big picture.

- Finally, accept the help other people may offer. One of the best gifts you can give and get is help. While it is easy to believe moms know best, you might be pleasantly surprised by your friends and family. This means you may have to give up control, hold your breath a little, and just see what happens. You just never know when a Christmas miracle may present itself.

Julia is a freelance writer living in western New York. Contact her at julia-garstecki@gmail.com.



Educate

You know how a change in routine or certain behaviors can act as triggers for your child. Inform relatives about your child's disability before the trip. Consider the most important information you want to share, including possible safety concerns and how the disability may affect the trip. It can be a low-key conversation with or without the child with the disability present.

Also offer age-appropriate information to the other children, and

Special Needs

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Speak UP!

Teaching presentation skills now can give kids the edge they need

BY MONICA BROWN

Over the summer, my 16-year-old niece interviewed for a job. Afterward, she decided to call to thank the interviewer, but was absolutely panic-stricken at the thought of what to say, and how to say it.

When I asked her mother why Katie, who is extremely bright, was so tongue-tied, she replied, "All she does is text. She doesn't know how to talk anymore."

It's no secret that today's teens and tweens are the "text generation." They pride themselves on how quickly they can type and send a text. But how will they fare in job interviews as they get older? Teaching your texting kids presentation skills now can give them the edge they'll need in the business world later.

Make no mistake: this technologically advanced generation has unique challenges to face.

How do you compete in the business world when all your interaction takes place through symbols and abbreviations on a screen? When you text, tweet and e-mail all day, how can you possibly feel comfortable when it's time to give a presentation, explain a coherent thought to your boss, or ace a job interview?

Communications experts say kids who learn how to present themselves professionally may not only have a competitive edge over their peers, but may also start to experience increased levels of confidence and self-esteem.

With just a little coaching — and a whole lot of fun — even very young children can be taught eloquence and articulation, and that's a very powerful weapon in the competitive world beyond the classroom.



How to help

Here are some of the ways you can practice with your child, teaching her to feel more comfortable when she has to spend a moment in the spotlight:

- Ask your child to act like her favorite TV or movie character for a few minutes. Have her recite some lines from this show or movie, and ask her to do it several times. The child may be able to imitate several different characters, or even perform dialogue with friends or siblings (this is a great way to get all your children into the act, and teach them all at the same time!)

- Videotape this. Watch carefully for certain repetitive mannerisms that seem like nervous habits, or just absent-minded fidgeting — things like certain hand motions, or constantly saying, “you know.”

- Coach the child to move around comfortably when speaking, so she doesn't appear stiff.

- Teach her to make eye contact with different people in the room (perhaps other family members can help).

- Have her practice projecting her voice with strength and authority.

Some of the techniques listed above may indeed work best when preparing the child for a specific presentation, such as a school project. But there are other ways to continue to develop speaking skills while going through your busy day:

- Watch the news or sports with your child, pointing out the mannerisms of the anchors and reporters. They appear authoritative, and sometimes friendly. Reporters and anchors are taught to deliver the news as if they are telling a story to a friend, which is why television news writing seems conversational.

- Teach introverted children to order their own meals at a restaurant. This is a fun and simple way to teach a child to find her own voice, and to articulate her exact

needs in a “professional” manner. It's also something the child can master somewhat easily — it becomes a milestone accomplishment for her and continues to build confidence.

- Teach your child to approach adults she knows — for example, her teacher or principal — and say, “good morning.” By practicing a friendly greeting that's more than just a wave and a “hi,” kids will start to develop a habit of engaging others in “professional” communication.

- Have your child talk about a photo of a birthday party, family vacation or school activity — something that she remembers vividly. Have her write down the details on a note card, using key ideas instead of full sentences, and then ask her to present the “photo talk” to you and other members of the family. This is another fun way for her to practice articulating her thoughts and ideas without memorizing every word.

...

Let's face it: Technology continues to evolve everyday, and it has made our lives easier, more fun, more connected and streamlined. But our children face an uphill battle in the corporate world if they can't conduct themselves properly during a face-to-face job interview. If they can't present their thoughts and ideas verbally, how can they expect to convince a hiring manager that they are the best, most qualified applicant for the job?

Helping them improve their communication skills is something that should start now. Who knows, by breaking up all the texting with some real conversation, you might even become their new “BFF.”

Monica Brown is a cable television anchor and a mother of two, who is currently launching a public speaking program for children, teens and adults.

For more information, and more tips, she can be reached at monicadbrown@gmail.com.

This technologically advanced generation has unique challenges to face. How do you compete in the business world when all your interaction takes place through symbols on a screen?



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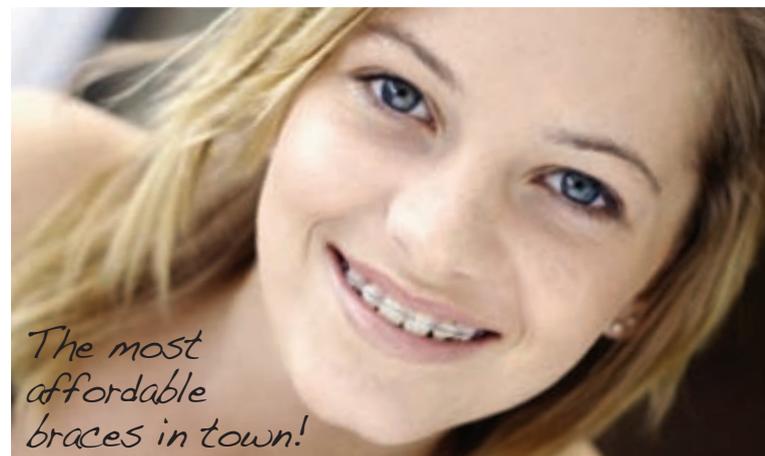
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FAMILY HEALTH

BY PHILIP ROTH, MD, PHD,
Chairman, Department of
Pediatrics, Staten Island
University Hospital

Fall, the flu and your child's health

As the leaves change color and the air turns cold, it's once again time to think about the flu — and getting yourself and your family vaccinated.

Cases of the flu can appear as early as October, but the flu season generally peaks from January to February. However, by getting a flu vaccine for yourself and your family now, you'll be taking advantage of the most effective mode of prevention.

The Centers for Disease Control currently recommends that everyone older than 6 months receive the vaccine as soon as it becomes available. Those at highest risk of developing severe complications are young children, pregnant women, people with chronic conditions like asthma or diabetes, and those above age 65. If you care for somebody in a high risk group, whether in a health care setting or at home, getting the vaccine would help prevent spreading infection to them.

Most people have long been familiar with the constellation of symptoms — fever, cough, sore throat, runny nose, muscle aches, headaches, and fatigue. But the emergence of the swine flu, or novel H1N1 virus, last year, created tremendous anxiety due to its global spread and concerns about the vaccine produced to protect against it. Because of its relatively late emergence last year, a separate vaccine specific to H1N1 had to be prepared in addition to the seasonal flu vaccine. While separate, this vaccine was not new, but was produced by a longstanding process that has been used to prepare the seasonal vaccine. As expected, there were no unforeseen complications.

The vaccine for the 2010-2011 season will consist of three strains — Influenza A H3N2, Influenza B and H1N1 — which, as in past years, were selected based on worldwide surveillance as the likely causes of the flu this year. In order to produce adequate quantities of vaccine, pro-



duction had to have begun approximately six months ago.

The success of the vaccine in preventing the flu and its complications depends on how good a “match” there is between the viruses included in the vaccine and those actually prevalent and causing infections in the community. Even if there is some mismatch, antibodies produced against one strain may still offer some protection against related, yet distinct strains. In addition, since the vaccine contains three strains, there will still be protection against the other two viruses.

Make sure everyone in your family knows to cover his mouth and nose when coughing or sneezing,

frequently wash his hands with soap and water or use an alcohol-based rub, and stay home with the flu for at least 24 hours after his fever is gone. Aside from these simple measures, anti-viral medications like Tamiflu® and Relenza® are available by prescription and may shorten symptoms, reduce its severity and decrease the occurrence of complications. However, in order to be effective, these drugs must be initiated within two days of the onset of illness.

The bottom line, however, is that the single most effective way to avoid the flu in your family is getting the vaccine. Don't dawdle — GET VACCINATED!

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Dating and the single parent

Romance is complicated — especially with kids at home

BY CANDI SPARKS

Dating can be complicated — singles often need the help of friends, family, and, perhaps, a professional to help sort things out. Dating can be even more complicated when you or your potential dates have children.

For just one moment, forget that you're a parent and think about yourself. This can be hard, especially for a custodial parent, since so much time and energy goes into raising kids.

If you are thinking about getting back on the dating scene, it helps to use your free

 time during the week to go out and meet people. Think about what it is you want out of life, and then go out and get it.

They say that misery loves company — but no one really wants to date or even befriend a miserable person, so do the things that make you happy.

Here's how single parents can keep their priorities straight while navigating the tricky world of dating:

Make time for yourself

The kids may keep you busy, but make sure to remember that you need some “me” time.

“You have to remember to make time for yourself; to be around other adults and to do adult things,” says Mario, a widower raising kids in Astoria.

He says his schedule is so jam-packed sometimes that all he can do is meet his love interests for coffee and conversation, but says that most of the women he dates are understanding.

“But I also let them know that I am ready for a serious relationship, if the right one comes along.”

Good for Mario — he is meeting potential mates, knows what he wants and has a plan that doesn't interfere with his parenting to make it happen.



Have fun

What do you want out of life this week — to make it to the gym? It could be that your true love is waiting for you there. Keeping your commitments to do things for yourself will help you to find a relationship that might work for you. Even better if you are doing things that you love, because it gives that special someone a chance to meet you when you are happy. Things are likely to go better when you are enjoying life, because the law of attraction is working in your favor. People that are happy attract more happy people to themselves.



Keeping your commitments to do things for yourself will help you to find a relationship that might work for you.

Volunteer

If you are looking for a friendship based on mutual interests that might go somewhere, a connection through a group activity or volunteering might work.

Bronx resident Linda says she met her husband at the perfect time.

“When I wasn’t looking. It was the furthest thing from my mind,” she says. The couple met doing volunteer work for an environmental organization in New York and has been married for what Linda calls, “The best 12 years of my life.”



Online dating

According to statistics, about 20 million people have been to a dating site at least once. In looking for love, it can be nerve-racking to create a profile, but it is an important piece of getting people to react and want to meet you in person.

Dating sites like SingleParent.com are specifically for single parents.

A positive attitude, intelligence and high self-esteem are key in getting dates.

The online dating site eHarmony celebrated its 10 year anniversary in 2010 and reported on average, 540 eHarmony couples get married every day, up from 90 couples per day in 2006.

Most men using the site say that they are looking for a woman who appreciates them “for who they are and who’s not going to try to change them,” says Greg Waldorf, the company’s CEO.

Women, apparently, are looking to find men who are dependable, reliable and good communicators — someone who tells the truth.

“You tend to find those things, interestingly, no matter where you travel, no matter where you go...I can say this based on [research from] Asian countries, North America, South America... these are really universal qualities,” says Waldorf.

However, there is always a risk in meeting someone in person when the relationship started online. Be on the lookout for scam artists and people that want to meet offline too quickly. It is better to use the dating site as a buffer to keep from giving out your personal information too soon. According to OKCupid — the Google of online dating — height is one of the top three things American men lie about on online dating sites, while women are more likely to lie about their weight and build.

Ultimately, dating is not up to the children and is not about the children. But, if you are a single parent looking for long-term love, it may be better to mingle with people who have kids, want kids, or don’t mind if you have kids. Kids can be a deal breaker, even for those skilled in the art of finding love.

...
Candi Sparks is the author of the “Can I Have Some Money?” book series. You can follow her on Twitter and Facebook as Candi Sparks (writer).

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You say it's your birthday?

Put together a bash they'll remember forever

American parents are the biggest spenders in North America when it comes to their children. It costs one third more to bring up a child in the United States than in Europe.

Italian families spend more on food and clothes but American parents top the lot on luxuries like birthday parties and holidays. I don't think this is because we're indulgent. It's no coincidence that we also work the longest hours. We have less free time to spend with our children so we make the most of it.

A whole industry has sprung up to cater for special times like birthdays, and there's no shame in using it. Whether you're a fan of small home gatherings or you're thinking of recreating Moulin Rouge in a marquee on Broadway — read our dos and don'ts of children's parties and give your child a birthday to remember.

Party pitfalls

One of the headaches is trying to anticipate what could possibly go wrong. These parents speak from experience:

- Give a child a sword and I'll show you an assassin: "I had a pirate party for Josh. One child got hit over the back of the head with a sword. I saw red pouring out and shouted, 'What are you doing with the tomato ketchup?' then realized it was blood. I spent the rest of the party at the doctor's office. The very nice parent didn't mind too much and actually apologized for ruining my son's birthday." — *Elle, mom of three*

- What time did I say it would start?: "Not once but twice I have forgotten what I put on the invitation and who I sent them to. Both times

I had to phone a mom and ask her. Now I always keep one invitation back for myself and write the guests' names on the back."

— *Jane, mom of three*

- How many guests?: "Don't invite too many children. Use your child's age as a rule of thumb; one other child at the first birthday, two friends at the second, and so on. It works well up until they're about 10."

— *Chris, mom of two*

- Be allergy aware: "I once held a party and ordered the optional extra helium balloons. As she was dropping her child off, almost as an afterthought, this mom announced her son was allergic to balloons. I wasn't sure how serious it was so I just left them at one end of the room and tried to keep the child away. It was going quite well until some bright spark started tying chocolate fingers onto the balloon strings and eating them as they bobbed about the room. Then they were all at it. I spent the rest of the party on the brink of hysteria. Ask about special diets or allergies on the invitation!"

— *Jen, mom of three*

- Don't go mad catering for the grown ups: "For Alexandra's first birthday I spent three days making yummy adult food and bought loads of booze and barbecue stuff. On the day half the people I invited didn't come with their other halves, weren't drinking and those with kids only stayed for a few hours. First timer at the children's party game—I will know better this year!"

— *Janneke, mom of one*

- Beware the party bag trap: "I must have spent a fortune on Day-glo pencils, crummy junk shop toys and penny sweets over the years.

They're a total waste of time and money. I have a new policy: one nice present for each child."

— *Sarah, mom of four*

Party food

They say you can tell what children have eaten by the way they behave. You can get away with healthy fare at a party when they're too little to argue but older children tend to be harder to tempt with anything unfried. Don't make too much food, sheer excitement means they don't actually eat much.

Don't put out the food until it's time for tea and keep sweet stuff hidden until they've eaten the meal, otherwise they fill up on sugar and go bonkers.

One mom told me that now that her children are older, they have forced her to cave on her no-sweeties rule but she draws the line at Smarties, Skittles and ice lollies. "Have you seen the stains they leave on clothing? And that would be in their tummies!" If you want to be ultra-careful, buy naturally-colored sweets from health food shops. A surprising number of children are vegetarian or aren't allowed non-organic meat. It's worth keeping most things veggie just to be on the safe side.

Main food ideas

- Pizza Muffins: English muffins split and topped with grilled tomato and cheese

- Salad Boats: Fill celery with cream cheese for the boat, place a carrot stick into the cream cheese for the mast, use half a cucumber slice for the sail.

- Quesadillas: Sandwich together two tortillas with grated cheese,

finely chopped tomato and onion and zero percent fat yogurt. Fry quickly on both sides and cut into strips.

- **Smoked Salmon Pinwheels:** Butter two slices of bread, cut crusts off, fill with cream cheese and smoked salmon. Roll up like a Swiss roll. Wrap in clingfilm and cut into rounds when the children arrive.

- **Risotto Cakes:** Take teaspoons of cooked risotto rice, roll in slices of mozzarella (rice on the inside), roll in breadcrumbs. Shallow fry, deep fry, or bake in the oven.

- **Diddy Bean Patties:** Can of kidney beans puréed, mix with chopped spring onions, grated cheese, chopped coriander and a dash of chili sauce. Form into little cakes, fry or bake, serve with sour cream, salsa or guacamole.

Sweet food ideas

You're probably not short of ideas but just in case...

- **Hot Fruit Kebabs:** pineapple, kiwi and strawberries on skewers. Whack under the grill and serve with frozen yogurt or a yogurt dipping sauce.

- **Orange Flapjacks:** Use your standard recipe but add orange zest and juice.

- **The Cake:** Avoid artificial preservatives and colorings by making your own cake. If the kitchen is not your natural stomping ground, here's a simple recipe. Tray bakes are easiest, there's only one layer, or you can make two and build a train or a castle or something if you're feeling fabulous. If the party is away from home, bake it in a tin foil tray so you can throw it away afterwards.

Entertainers

Check with parents of classmates who have a birthday around the same time. If there's a clash with another child's party the playground politics can be ugly.

- Book your entertainer 10 weeks ahead. Some people leave it four to six weeks but you might not be able to book the particular performer you want.

- 2-4 p.m. is a terrible time for a party. It swallows up the day and falls between two mealtimes. For little children 11 a.m. to 1 p.m. or 12-2 p.m. are best. Most of them have been up since 6 and they're too tired by the afternoon. For older children a lunchtime slot or a 3:30 or 4 p.m. start is best.

- Let the entertainer know what to expect. If there are 50 children with

accompanying parents it's not a problem but he will want to bring a PA system. Do they want a disco? Will older children want magic lessons?

- Read the confirmation letter when you receive it.

You'd be amazed how many people forget to tell their entertainer they've changed the date or venue.

- Put away all the toys. Otherwise guests think it's an Aladdin's cave.

- Remove any breakables.

- Have the games first so they work off some energy. Avoid games where lots of them will be 'out' all at once.

- Have lots of prizes for joining in. Make sure the birthday child is a winner.

- Two is too young for an entertainer. But you could have music, soft play equipment or a face painter. 3 year olds like a bit of dancing; just jumping up and down. When they're 5 and 6 they want to invite the whole class. They want more sophisticated entertainment. They're used to sitting down and listening so they can concentrate but if they've been locked up in school all day they'll be desperate to let off steam. You've got to accommodate that.

- Try to avoid mixing home and school friends. If you have lots of friends outside school, have a separate family party for them.

- You don't need chairs.

Furniture is for grown ups, children sit on the floor. If you don't have enough chairs you can always have a picnic in the kitchen with a pizza delivery and juice boxes, not cups.

- Decide ahead where you will put bags and coats. Shoes on or off?

- Have a glass of wine with your girlfriends. Relax and enjoy watching the children—they can be so funny. If there are lots of adults, stay in another room.



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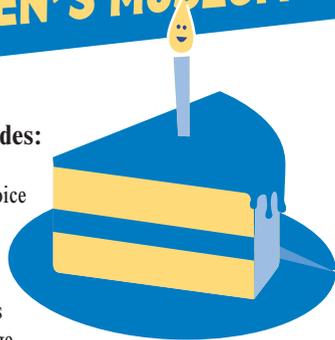
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Continued on page 24

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Party

DIRECTORY

Continued from page 22

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TWICE THE ADVICE

JACQUELINE AND
KERRY DONELLI

Is the babysitter getting too close?

Dear Twins,

The older woman in the apartment next door has taken an interest in my 6-year-old son. She always offers to babysit him for free, and because I'm a single mom, this saves me a lot of money and makes my life easier. The problem is, she wants to see my son all the time. She offers him treats and gifts just to come over, even when I'm home. But this incident that happened the other day has really disturbed me: My son was waiting outside the apartment and I heard the woman call him over to say hello. I then saw her take my son's face in her hands and kiss him, but the kiss was on the mouth and uncomfortably too long, at least it felt that way to me. Lately, I've noticed my son seems a little withdrawn. Do you think I'm overreacting or is this something to worry about? — *Worried Mom*

Kerry says: You should be worried. This woman seems to have taken a very unhealthy and unnatural interest in your son. In fact, it may very well have gone too far, and I'm not being an alarmist. The fact that your son has been withdrawn is not a good sign; neither is the fact that she has inappropriately caressed your son. And while most pedophiles are men, there are many female sex offenders, too. It is not worth taking any risks trying to save money on a sitter (even if others in the building vouch for her), so stop all contact with her immediately; and don't care if it offends her. Then, get your child to a child psychologist to see if there has been greater damage and, if so, to provide help. I hope your worries are in vain, but I would not take any chances on your child's well-being.

Jacqueline says: People don't kiss other people's children on the



mouth. There's no gray area here. It's disconcerting that you are actually still sitting on the fence with this. Take Kerry's advice and stop all contact with her and entrust in a child psychologist to make sure no more damage was done.

• • •

Dear Twins,

My 6-year-old daughter loves to get her fingernails painted. The problem is, now my 3-year-old son wants his fingernails painted like his sister! I tell him no and he cries and looks hurt. I try to explain that fingernail painting is for girls and if he wants a special treat I'll give him a boy treat, like a baseball cap or a toy truck, but he just isn't interested. I'm sick over this. Do you think he might turn out gay, or, yet, a cross dresser. What should I do?

—*Full of Angst*

Jacqueline says: There isn't much you can do to prevent your son from being gay, or a cross dresser, for that matter. Discouraging him from polishing his nails isn't going to change a thing. What's more important is that he knows you'll love him either way.

Kerry says: I'm sure he'll grow out of it. He's 3, for goodness sake. Paint his darn fingernails.

• • •

Dear Twins,

My husband and I have full-time

jobs, and our 13- and 14-year-old daughters are in school, which keeps them pretty busy. However, they get home several hours before we do each day, but because they are quite mature for their ages, we feel that they can take care of themselves until we arrive home around supper-time. The problem is, our neighbors — who live in the same building, on the same floor — have two worthless sons, ages 17 and 18, who prey on our daughters when we're not around. Our girls are terrified of them, and yesterday when our girls were entering our apartment, the boys tried to push their way in! We were furious, and went to see the parents, but, of course, they denied it. When we threatened to call the police, we find out their father is a policeman! The parents became just as rude as their children! Any recommendations? — *Furious Family*

Kerry says: It doesn't matter who the father is if his sons are breaking and entering. Fact is, it's against the law and the girls should have dialed 911 and had them arrested. You say you've already tried speaking to the parents but they dismissed you. Then, without hesitation, if these boys harass or go anywhere near your daughters again, dial the police. Having to face the police will intimidate the heck out of them, not to mention the humiliation it will cause the father, who is in the same brotherhood. If the police don't scare them off, their father sure will.

Jacqueline says: When 17- and 18-year-old males push their way into females' apartments, they are not looking to chat. They are dangerous and want something from your young daughters. What does their father being a policeman have to do with this? When your daughters are raped will it matter? Let the ignorant father get embarrassed by his sons' behavior and report this incident at once to the police. I doubt the sons will as much as even look at your daughters again.

Jacqueline and Kerry Donelli, twin sisters, are multi-award winning filmmakers. They are currently getting their *Masters in Mental Health* and have a radio show on WBCR-AM also called, "Twice the Advice" — where one twin gives advice and, often, the other completely disagrees! Please e-mail them at TwiceTheAdvice2@gmail.com.



GROWING UP ONLINE

CAROLYN JABS

Websites that help save on holidays

Every family has to figure out a holiday spending strategy. Negotiate a price limit on gifts, or max out credit cards to be sure everyone's wish comes true? Make creative homemade gifts, or give open-ended gift cards? Cover holiday costs with a year-end bonus check, or put a little in a savings account each month? Give modestly to family and generously to charity, or vice versa?

No matter how you answer these

sources. The great thing about this website is that it includes taxes and shipping so there are no surprises at checkout.

Get gift cards at a discount

Sites like Giftcardrescue.com offer discounts of up to 30 percent on gift cards other people didn't want. Even if you don't want to re-gift these cards, you can use them for your own shopping. The site also buys unwanted gift cards which might come in handy after the holidays.

Find a coupon

The number of websites offering coupons has exploded — and so has the number of ways to use them. Look for print-and-clip coupons at Coupon.com and check Couponcabin.com for website discount codes. Try Cellfire.com to retrieve on-the-go coupons with your cell-phone.

Find local deals

Sign up at Groupon.com to get regular e-mails about discounts available from businesses in your community — everything from laser tag to clothing stores, cupcakes to sushi. The catch is that deals are only activated when a certain number of people sign up, so you may want to share this site with friends. Groupons can also be given as gifts.

Stay loyal

Many stores offer discounts to people who register for a customer card. Shortcuts.com allows you to load coupons directly onto the card. Then, when you're at the store, you don't have to search frantically for the diaper coupon that you know you had when you left the house. Discounts appear as soon as you swipe your card.

Sell old to buy new

If the latest tech gadget is the most important thing on your child's list, consider selling tech gadgets

that were the must-have last year or the year before. Wireflytradeins.com tells you exactly how much you can get for old video games, cellphones and other electronic paraphernalia.

Make it your treat

Taking friends and family out for holiday meals is expensive — unless you know about Restaurant.com, a website that offers substantial discounts on restaurant cards. Find local eateries with a zip code search. Cards are discounted as much as 60 percent, though you should read the fine print. Some restaurants have a minimum order. Some exclude specific days or times, and most include a gratuity of 18 percent.

Consider rentals

Whether you are throwing a special party or attending one, you may save if you rent instead of buying what you need. Wearthodaygonetomorrow.com rents designer dresses for a fraction of what they cost. Partypop.com has a comprehensive state-by-state directory of rental services — as well as anything else you might need to make a party memorable.

Keep a clear head

One last tip: don't obsess about getting rock bottom prices on everything. With all the websites offering last chance deals, that's a sure way to make a crazy season even crazier. Instead, remember that the spending you do at the holidays is never an end in itself. It's simply one — of many — ways to celebrate a special time of year. Sing your favorite songs. Share your favorite stories. Hug your favorite people. At this time of year, the best things in life really can be free.

Carolyn Jabs, MA, has been writing about families and the Internet for over 15 years. She is the mother of three computer-savvy kids. Other Growing Up Online columns appear on her website www.growing-up-online.com.

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questions, one thing is certain — everyone is happy about making the holiday budget stretch a little further. Knowing you got the most out of every dollar is a little gift for yourself in December — and in January when the bills come due. Here are nine websites that will help you spend less on making merry — plus a bonus website that will help you keep your budget intact.

Compare prices

You know what you want to buy, but what should it cost? Put any product into Google.com/products and you'll get a list of how much things cost at local, as well as online,



OUR RELATIONSHIPS

JOAN EMERSON, PhD

Being an effective communicator

When talking to your partner about something in the relationship that's bothering you, you have to use the kind of communication that helps make things better, instead of just adding to resentment and alienation. Complaining, yelling, and blaming are certainly ways to let off steam, but they can leave your partner angry or hurt.

To be a better communicator, you need to recognize — and be willing to change — hurtful patterns. Unfortunately, it is a set of skills most people don't have when starting a committed relationship. So, for most of us, it must be learned.

In order for these techniques to work, conditions must be right so that your partner can really take in what you are saying, instead of becoming defensive, angry or withdrawn. This requires great self-control on your part. You cannot even think about talking to your partner when you're in the throes of hurt or anger. Instead, the talk must take place at a time when you know that your partner can be willing and relaxed and that you, yourself, will be able to maintain a neutral and gentle tone without blame, contempt or resentment. Therefore, you both must find a mutually agreeable time to say, "OK, I'm ready, let's talk."

As you sit down to talk, instead of asking the loaded question that sets a negative tone ("Why can't you just..."), turn the conversation to what you are feeling, what you notice yourself thinking about, what you're wishing for, what pains, hopes and fears you have, and your desire to return to a state in which you can feel relaxed and loving.

Preface the talk with "I want to talk about some of the things I've been having trouble dealing with. I'm not saying I know the answer, maybe it's even crazy to feel this way, but I'd like to let you know what's been going through my head. All I want you to do is listen, OK?" Once your partner agrees, say "thank you" and start sharing. It shouldn't take more than 15 to 20 minutes to describe what you're having trouble with.

To keep your partner fully engaged, your talk must stay gentle and safe. For the best results, you can sit together, perhaps touch, and look into each other's eyes. You might say something like, "I notice that one of the things that would help me feel more relaxed, comforted, loving (you choose your feeling), is if you would ... (fill in the blank). When you don't do this, I see myself start to worry, feel angry, withdrawn (again, you choose). Then, I start acting in a way that drives us apart, and I don't want

this. Do you think we could try to come up with something that would work better for us?"

The conversation must stay focused on the present and how you both can find solutions that would calm and comfort you and allow your loving feelings to return. Care must be taken to avoid talking about past hurts or getting into a blame mode. If your partner gets defensive, things have gone off track, and you'll need to redirect the conversation by saying, "I know that things haven't been going right, but I just want to talk today about what we can do to make it work better. I'm sure that there are things that I could do differently to help you give me what I need. I'd like to hear about that, too."

Usually, partners are more than happy to present their side and talk about what each person could do to fix the problem. If your partner doesn't, make sure you take the opportunity to ask, "What would you need from me in order to make these changes?" This is a time to listen thoughtfully since there is, no doubt, something to be learned about yourself and some of your less than perfect behaviors. Acknowledging your responsibility to your partner helps him acknowledge his to you. In a talk like this, you're in charge of keeping the tenor calm and hopeful.

Once you've tried some of these techniques and can actually feel deep understanding, mutual concern and even, at times, humor and good feelings emerging between you both, make sure you show great appreciation for your partner's efforts. Tell your partner how helpful the talk was for you and ask how it was for him. Ask if it's OK to talk this way in the future when issues come up. If your partner agrees, it is key to show appreciation, appreciation, appreciation.

Dr. Joan Emerson is a New York psychologist who specializes in couples therapy. Visit her website at www.JoanEmerson.com.



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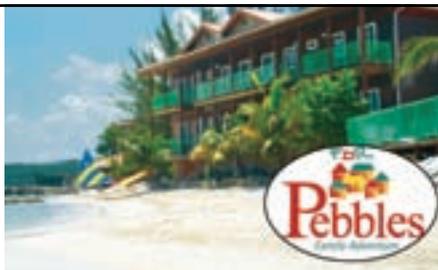
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Pumpkin Picking: Decker Farms, 435 Richmond Hill Rd. (718) 351-1611 X 281; Saturdays and Sundays, 11 am–4 pm, Now – Sun, Oct. 31; \$5 (\$16 for family of four).

Hayrides, corn maze and pumpkin painting. Meet at parking lot at 441 Clarke Ave in Historic Richmondtown.

“Little Red Riding Hood”: Galli Theater, 38 West 38th St. between Fifth and Sixth avenues; (212) 810-6485; newyork@galli-group.com; www.gallitheaterny.com; Saturdays and Sundays, 3 pm, Now – Sun, Oct. 31; \$20 (\$15 children 2-17).

Children three and up will enjoy the classic Grimm’s fairytale. Workshop to follow performance.

Tree tots: High Rock Nature Center, 700 Rockland Ave. at Brielle Avenue; (718) 351-3450; naturecenter@sigreenbelt.org; Wednesdays, 9:30–10:15 am, Now – Wed, Dec. 22; \$6 (\$4 members).

Children three and four years old and their caregivers explore the forest through hands on activities, finger plays, games and stories. Registration required.

Greenbelt Peepers: High Rock Nature Center, 700 Rockland Ave. at Brielle Avenue; (718) 351-3450; naturecenter@sigreenbelt.org; Wednesdays, 11:30 am–noon, Now – Wed, Dec. 22; \$6 (\$4 members).

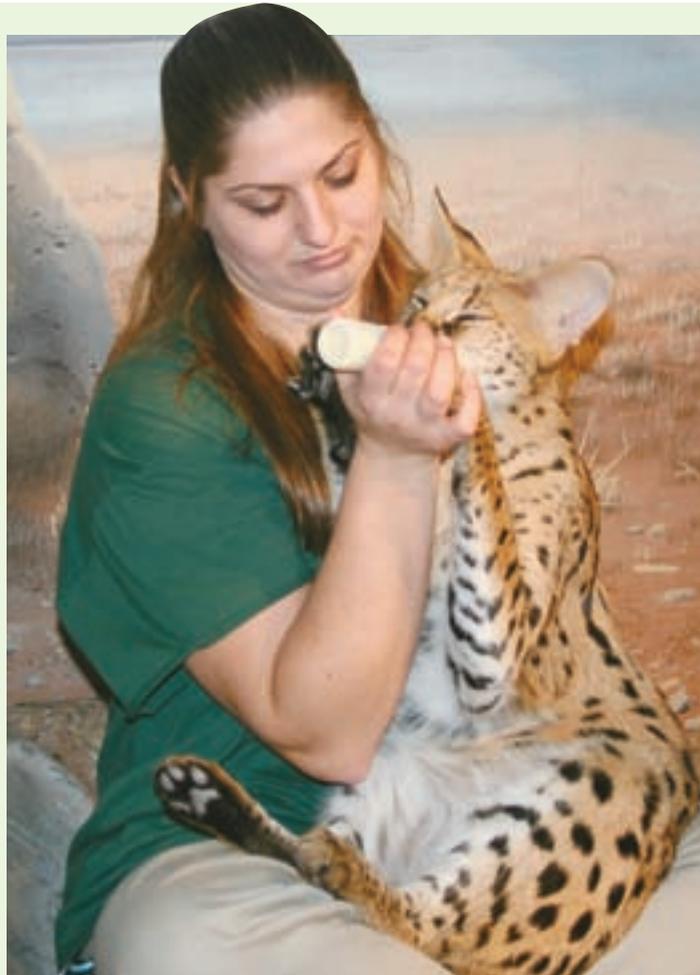
Children two years old and their caregivers explore the forest through hands on activities, finger plays, games and stories. Registration required.

Read aloud: Tottenville Library, 7430 Amboy Rd; (718) 984-0945; Wednesdays, 4 pm, Now – Wed, Nov. 17; Free.

The librarian reads picture books to children ages three and older.

Read aloud: New Dorp Library, 309 New Dorp Lane; (718) 351-2977; Wednesdays, 4 pm, Now – Wed, Nov. 24; Free.

The library shares her favorite picture books with children ages three to 12.



Feed the beasts!

These dinner guests are a bunch of animals — literally.

On Nov. 21, get in the holiday spirit at the Staten Island Zoo as it hosts Thanksgiving with the Beasts, a day-long series of special feedings at the zoo.

Watch as the food gets prepared in the zoo’s kitchen, then trail the staff as they visit the zoo inhabitants. The zoo keeps won’t own until a few days leading up to the event which animals will be involved in the feeding, so it’ll

be a surprise!

The day will also include an arts and crafts session, where you can make your own Thanksgiving craft to take home.

Thanksgiving with the Beasts at the Staten Island Zoo [614 Broadway at Colonial Court in West Brighton, (718) 442-3100], Nov. 21 from 10 am–4 pm, with a craft session from 1:30–3:30 pm. Admission \$8 for adults (15 and over), \$6 for seniors, \$5 for children (3–14) and free for children under 3. For info, visit www.statenislandzoo.org.

Submit a listing

Going Places is dedicated to bringing our readers the most comprehensive events calendar in your area. But to do so, we need your help!

All you have to do is send your listing request to calendar@cnglocal.com — and we’ll take care of the rest. Please e-mail requests more than three weeks prior to the event to ensure we have enough time to get it in. And best of all, it’s FREE!

FRI, OCT. 29

Halloween celebration: Historic Richmond Town, 441 Clarke Ave. (718) 351-1611 X 281; 3:30–5 pm; \$8 (\$3 adults-nonmembers) \$7 (Adults free -members).

Bob for apples, play games and visit restored colonial houses. Reservations required.

Fright Night: Church of St. Andrew, Richmond Rd and St. Patrick’s Pl. (718) 361-0900; www.churchofstandrew-si.com; 7–10 pm; \$10.

Tour the church and haunted cemetery.

SAT, OCT. 30

Not too scary Halloween: Staten Island Children’s Museum, 1000 Richmond Terrace; (718) 273-2060; statenislandkids.org; Noon–4 pm; Free.

Halloween parade, thriller dancing & tricks & treats. Costumes encouraged.

Halloween celebration: High Rock Nature Center, 700 Rockland Ave. at Brielle Avenue; (718) 351-3450; naturecenter@sigreenbelt.org; 1 pm; \$7 (\$8 non-members).

Crafts and treats for children five to eight. Wear a costume and enjoy the day. Pre-registration required.

“Abbot and Costello Meet Frankenstein”: St. George Theater, 35 Hyatt St. between Stuyvesant and St. Mark’s places; (718) 442-2900; 2:30 – 4 pm; \$18.

Haunted theater and movie, fangs included.

“Dracula”: St. George Theater, 35 Hyatt St. between Stuyvesant and St.

Continued on page 32

Going Places

Continued from page 31

Mark's places; (718) 442-2900; 7:30–9pm; \$18.

Haunted theater and movie, fangs included.

SUN, OCT. 31

Hike Heyerdahl Hill: Ranger Station at High Rock, Nevada Ave. and Rockland Ave. (718) 967-3542; 1 pm; Free.

What creatures lurk on the Greenbelt's Red Trail?

Halloween House: Wagner College, Main Hall, 631 Howard Ave. at Signal Hill Road; marketing@wagner.edu. 1–4 pm; Free.

Children of all ages enjoy supervised Halloween activities.

MON, NOV. 1

The Shangri-La Chinese Acrobats: Enrichment Through the Arts, 11 Borman Ave. at Rockland Avenue; (718)982-5678; 10–11 am; \$8, \$9.

The troop performs daring feats of balance.

WED, NOV. 3

Clay Day: Staten Island Children's Museum, 1000 Richmond Terrace at Tysen Street; (718) 273-2060; www.statenislandkids.org; 1:30–4:30 pm; \$6 (members free).

Create projects with air-dry clay.

THURS, NOV. 4

Tot's time: Staten Island Children's Museum, 1000 Richmond Terrace at Tysen Street; (718) 273-2060; www.statenislandkids.org; 11 am–1 pm; Admission plus \$5 per child.

Toddlers and caregivers socialize and sing.

Paint day: Staten Island Children's Museum, 1000 Richmond Terrace at Tysen Street; (718) 273-2060; www.statenislandkids.org; 1:30–4:30 pm; \$6 (members free).

Kids experiment with color, lines and shapes.

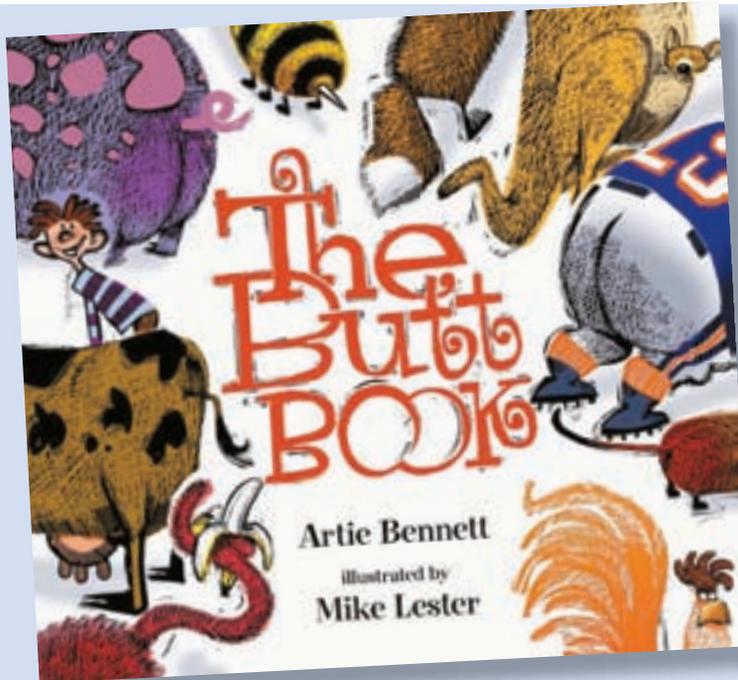
FRI, NOV. 5

Kidz Cook: Staten Island Children's Museum, 1000 Richmond Terrace at Tysen Street; (718) 273-2060; www.statenislandkids.org; 2,3 and 4 pm; \$6 (members free).

Kids create culinary masterpieces.

John Edward: St. George Theater, 35 Hyatt St. between Stuyvesant and St. Mark's places; (718) 442-2900; 7 pm; Call for tickets.

SI Museum Know-It-All Bowl: Wagner College, Main Hall, 1 Campus Rd; (718) 483-7105; 7–10 pm; \$15 (3



Bet your bottom dollar

Author Artie Bennett really gets to the bottom of things in his children's tome, "The Butt Book," a clever and unique work that's sure to delight both kids and adults.

Come on down to the Staten Island Children's Museum and

laugh your butt off when Artie brings his unique "buttness" on Nov. 7 at 1:30 pm. Tickets are \$6.

Staten Island Children's Museum [1000 Richmond Terr. at Tysen Street in Randall Manor, (718) 273-2060]. For additional information visit <http://statenislandkids.org>.

person team).

Test your knowledge of trivia. Pre-registration required.

SAT, NOV. 6

Veteran's Day: Veteran's Park, Park Ave. and Bennett Street; 11 am; Free.

Celebration will go on rain or shine.

Saturday's tots: Staten Island Children's Museum, 1000 Richmond Terrace at Tysen Street; (718) 273-2060; www.statenislandkids.org; 11 am–12:30 pm; Admission plus \$5 per child.

Toddler time with singing and playtime.

Family Literacy Day: Staten Island Children's Museum, 1000 Richmond Terrace at Tysen Street; (718) 273-2060; www.statenislandkids.org; Noon–4 pm; \$6 (members free).

Go green with your family and read.

Pot-Luck "Spaghetti" dinner: Christ Church New Brighton, 76 Franklin Ave. (718) 727-6100; www.christchurchnbrighton.org; 6–9 pm; \$10 (\$5 children, Free for children under

five).

Homemade foods, a cash bar, entertainment, and a Pot of Gold Raffle featuring three different prize amounts. Reservations required.

SUN, NOV. 7

Book signing: Staten Island Children's Museum, 1000 Richmond Terr. at Stuyvesant Place; (718) 273-2060; statenislandkids.org; 1:30 pm; \$6.

Author Artie Bennett reads from his book "Butt Book".

MON, NOV. 8

Teen cafe: New Dorp Library, 309 New Dorp Lane; (718) 351-2977; 2:30 pm; Free.

Teens hang out with friends, enjoy snacks and play Wii. For ages 12-18.

TUES, NOV. 9

Pre-school Moms club: Salem Church-Fellowship Hall, 634 Clove Rd. at Purcell Street; (718) 442-7740; 6:30–8:30–pm; Free.

Mothers of preschool aged children (expecting to age 5) are welcome. Childcare is provided and refreshments served.

THURS, NOV. 11

Paint day: 1:30–4:30 pm. Staten Island Children's Museum. See Thursday, Nov. 4.

FRI, NOV. 12

Toddler time: Tottenville Library, 7430 Amboy Rd at Yetman Avenue; (718) 984-0945; 10 am; Free.

Tots listen to stories.

Kidz Cook: 2,3 and 4 pm. Staten Island Children's Museum. See Friday, Nov. 5.

Haunted tour: Staten Island Children's Museum, 1000 Richmond Terrace at Tysen Street; (718) 273-2060; statenislandkids.org; 5–6:30 pm; \$8 per tour.

Visit the ghostly grounds of Snug Harbor and then have hot cider and donuts. Pre-registration required.

Spanish Guitar: St. George Theater, 35 Hyatt St. between Stuyvesant and St. Mark's places; (718) 442-2900; 8 pm; \$58, \$48, \$38, \$28.

Performed by Benise.

SAT, NOV. 13

Kids and kitters: Blue Heron Park, Poillon Ave., between Amboy Road and Hylan Boulevard; 917-751-0071; 11 am–12:30 pm; Free.

Children ages 5-7 with parent or caregiver enjoy an outdoor activity and a craft, story and game. Dress weather appropriate.

Saturday's tots: 11 am–12:30 pm. Staten Island Children's Museum. See Saturday, Nov. 6.

Krafty kids: Blue Heron Park, Poillon Ave., between Amboy Road and Hylan Boulevard; 917-751-0071; 1–2 pm; Free.

Children 4-10 with caregiver enjoy arts and crafts. Pre-registration required.

SUN, NOV. 14

Boyz II Men: St. George Theater, 35 Hyatt St. between Stuyvesant and St. Mark's places; (718) 442-2900; 7:30 pm; \$140 (includes dinner).

Dinner and show.

MON, NOV. 15

Teen cafe: 2:30 pm. New Dorp Library. See Monday, Nov. 8.

TUES, NOV. 16

Pre-school Story time: Tottenville Library, 7430 Amboy Rd at Yetman Avenue; (718) 984-0945; 11 am; Free.

Going Places

Pre-schoolers and caregivers listen to stories.

THURS, NOV. 18

Baby storytime: Tottenville Library, 7430 Amboy Rd at Yetman Avenue; (718) 984-0945; 10:30 am; Free.

For infants birth to 18 months and their caregivers.

Paint day: 1:30–4:30 pm. Staten Island Children's Museum. See Thursday, Nov. 4.

Teen-tech time: South Beach Library, 21-25 Robin Rd. at Ocean Avenue and Fr. Capadano Blvd. (718) (718) 816-5834; 4 pm; Free.

For young adults 13-18 years old.

FRI, NOV. 19

Kidz Cook: 2,3 and 4 pm. Staten Island Children's Museum. See Friday, Nov. 5.

SAT, NOV. 20

Christmas fair: Our Lady Queen of Peace (entrance on Cloister Place), 22 Steele Ave. at Third Street; (718) 351-0370; 10 am–6 pm; Free.

Games, crafts and pictures with Santa.

Kids and krittters: 11 am–12:30 pm. Blue Heron Park. See Saturday, Nov. 13.

Saturday's tots: 11 am–12:30 pm. Staten Island Children's Museum. See Saturday, Nov. 6.

Krafty kids: 1–2 pm. Blue Heron Park. See Saturday, Nov. 13.

"La Cucarachita Martina": Puerto Rican Traveling Theater, 304 W. 47th Street; (212) 529-1545; <http://www.teatrosea.org>; 3 pm; \$15 (\$12.50 children).

Teatro Se presents the classic children's fable in English and Spanish.

Liza Minelli: St. George Theater, 35 Hyatt St. between Stuyvesant and St. Mark's places; (718) 442-2900; 7:30 pm; \$175 (includes dinner.

Dinner and show.

SUN, NOV. 21

"La Cucarachita Martina": 3 pm. Puerto Rican Traveling Theater. See Saturday, Nov. 20.

Concert: St. Alban's, 76 St. Alban's Place; (718) 984-7756; www.Musicat-SaintAlbans.org; 3:30 pm; \$25 (\$20 seniors and students).

Tenor Aaron Caruso sings with piano and guitar accompaniment.

MON, NOV. 22

Teen cafe: 2:30 pm. New Dorp Library. See Monday, Nov. 8.



Thunderbirds dance

The Thunderbird American Indian Dancers bring its Powwow to Enrichment through the Arts on Nov. 24 from 10 to 11:30 am.

The troupe, founded in 1963, aims to teach students about the rich cultural history of Native American culture through the playing of traditional music and storytelling of the Iroquois and Native Peoples of the Northwest Coast, the Southwest, the Plains, and the Arctic regions.

A Powwow is more than just a spectator event, it is a joyous reunion for native peoples to meet with the non-Indian community and share their rich history. It has also come to include dance competitions, exhibitions, and sampling traditional foods. Participants are encouraged to join in.

Tickets are \$9, \$8 for group rate.

Enrichment through the Arts, 11 Borman Ave. at Rockland Avenue in New Springville, (718) 982-5678.

WED, NOV. 24

Thunderbird American Indian dancers: Enrichment Through the Arts, 11 Borman Ave. at Rockland Avenue; (718) 982-5678; 10–11:30 am; \$9 (\$8 group rates).

Participants explore the rich cultural legacies of Native Americans through music and movement.

FRI, NOV. 26

Day After Turkey Day: Staten Island Children's Museum, 1000 Richmond Terrace at Tysen Street; (718) 273-2060; stateniskids.org; 10 am–5 pm; \$8 per tour.

Presented by Northfield Bank Foundation, kids enjoy a cool school holiday.

Kidz Cook: 2,3 and 4 pm. Staten Island Children's Museum. See Friday, Nov. 5.

SAT, NOV. 27

Saturday's tots: 11 am–12:30 pm. Staten Island Children's Museum. See Saturday, Nov. 6.

THURS, DEC. 2

Wii: Tottenville Library, 7430 Amboy Rd at Yetman Avenue; (718) 984-0945; 2:30 am; Free.

Challenge your friends or improve your skills.

FRI, DEC. 3

Grand Illumination: The Conference House, 298 Satterlee St. (718)984-6046; www.conferencehouse.org/index.html; 7:00 pm; Free.

Traditional Colonial holiday kick off. Hot mulled cider and cookies served.

SAT, DEC. 4

Kids and krittters: 11 am–12:30 pm. Blue Heron Park. See Saturday, Nov. 13.

Krafty kids: 1–2 pm. Blue Heron Park. See Saturday, Nov. 13.

SUN, DEC. 5

Christmas fair: St. Theresa School and Church, 1632 Victory Blvd. at Fairview Avenue; (718) 877-6569; albano728@aol.com; TBA; Free.

Gift and handmade items.

MON, DEC. 6

Christmas fair: TBA. St. Theresa School and Church. See Sunday, Dec. 5.

THURS, DEC. 9

Wii: 2:30 am. Tottenville Library. See Thursday, Dec. 2.

It figures

BY CYNTHIA WASHAM

NOVEMBER NUMBERS

25,000 Number of children adopted in the United States between 2000 and 2009 as part of National Adoption Day, to be held Nov. 21.

8 Average age of children awaiting adoption.

19 Percent who spend more than five years waiting to be adopted.

26 Percent of adults who, given the choice of having Thanksgiving dinner with any celebrity, would choose Jennifer Anniston.



322 B.C. Approximate year the Etruscans started the custom of pulling and wishing on the wishbone from chicken or turkey.

86 Weight, in pounds, of the world-record stuffed turkey, recorded in London in 1989.

1947 Year Harry Truman started the annual White House tradition of pardoning a turkey.

Nov. 1 Date Sears traditionally puts out holiday decorations and wrappings.

372 Number of Sears stores that opened their Christmas Lane holiday section this year in early July.



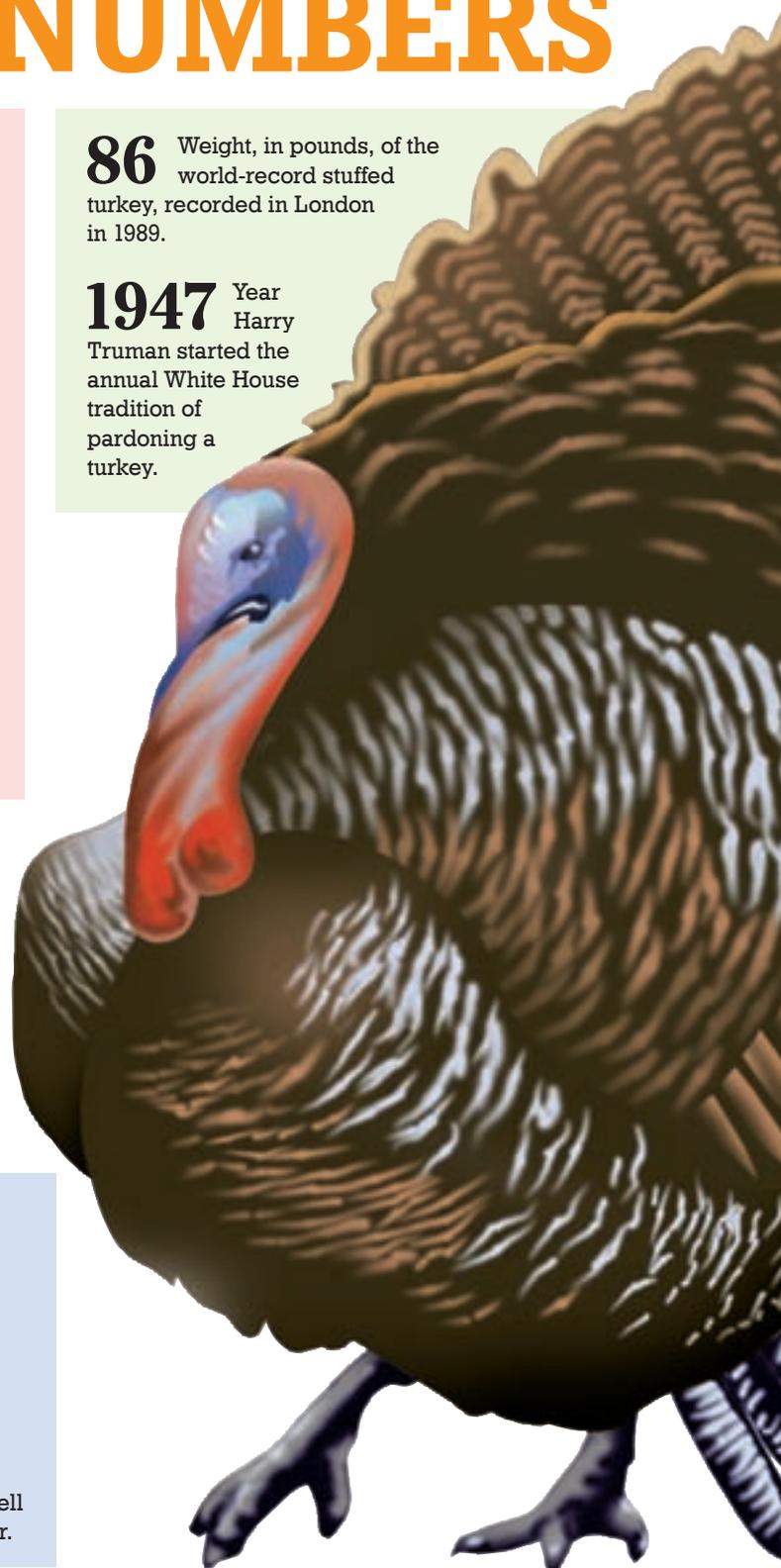
More than 40 million Number of green-bean casseroles served on Thanksgiving.



20 Percent of cranberries that are eaten on Thanksgiving.

44 Percent of people who keep and eat leftovers.

30 Percent of adults who said they fell asleep after Thanksgiving dinner.



Sources: Nationaladoptionday.org, UPI News Track, Thaindian.com, Coolest-holiday-parties.com, About.com, Healthdiaries.com, Notmuch.com, Lazylightning.org

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chirp and jingle, as well as soft books that play a variety of Peek a Boo games.

With over 180 designs to choose from between both Jellies, from cuddly elephants to plush pigs, the hard part is choosing which one to get.

For more information, visit www.jellycat.com.



Woodland friends

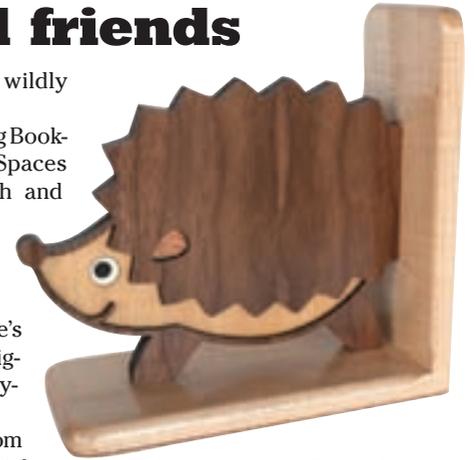
This bookend is wildly cute.

Woodland Hedgehog Bookends from Graphic Spaces bring a richness, warmth and modern playful style to any environment, though especially to a baby nursery or children's room.

Hazel the Hedgeie, as she's called, is full of charming originality, handmade in a family-owned wood shop.

Each body is laser cut from walnut and attached to thick northern hard maple with rounded corners and no exposed metal fasteners. Multiple coats of shellac, hand sanding, more shellac and a final beeswax buffing after assembly all combine to achieve a level of distinct smoothness and softness.

And they're a perfect baby shower or holiday gift and arrives ready for gifting in eco-friendly packaging, as each Bookend is snuggled in a comfy



burlap drawstring bag with a matching name tag and neatly tucked in a kraft gift box tied simply with twine for a fitting rustic look.

Other woodland friends come in 10 different designs, including an owl, fox, squirrel, bunny, and bird, so you can mix and match the combination for your own friendly forest.

For more info, visit www.graphicspaces.com.

Ready, set, teach!

As your child grows, Teach My Toddler's products grows with him.

These all-in-one learning kits teach age-appropriate skills to infants, toddlers and preschoolers. There are no "bells and whistles" or lights and sounds in the Teach My items, just good, old-fashioned, traditional learning. Teach My items also save busy moms and dads the time of shopping for different learning tools for their children.

Teach My Baby is geared toward 6–18-month-olds, focusing on first words, first numbers, sound and touch. Each section contains modern and multicultural coordinated teaching tools that encourage natural repetition for fun, educational play: nesting blocks, finger puppets, books, textured and mirrored flashcards, a story board, and one and two piece puzzles.

For children ages 18 months to 3, there's Teach My Toddler, which

helps toddlers master the basics: the alphabet, numbers, shapes and colors. Each section is fully coordinated with a total of five puzzles, four board books, four posters and four sets of flashcards, all designed to give toddlers a head start and encourage one-on-one time between toddlers and their caregivers.

Lastly, Teach My Preschooler helps prepare kids three and older for kindergarten. The kit is divided into four sections — Ready to Read, Ready to Print, Ready for 1-100, and Ready for Math. Each section is fully coordinated with books, flashcards, posters, a print guide and magic drawing board, designed to give preschoolers a head start, develop fine motor skills, encourage parent-child interaction and increase school readiness skills.

For more information, visit www.teachmy.com.



Walk this way

This winter, warm up those little toes with socks from Trumpette.

These clever designs are fun new additions to your little one's wardrobe, with socks featuring little shoes, sneakers and even bows on them for the look of shoes, even if your baby isn't quite walking yet.

And even if she can't walk, your little one will be getting around in style, with dozens of designs to choose from to fit her personality. For the little balle-

rina, there's ballet slippers. A budding fashionista in the works? Try the leopard print shoes.

When your child is walking, graduate to soft shoes, with designs including boat shoes and even Converse look-a-likes that are as comfortable as they are adorable.

For more info, visit www.trumpette.com.



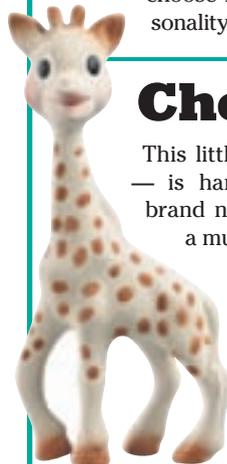
Chew on this

This little guy — well, girl — is hardly new, but for brand new mothers, she's a must-have.

Sophie the Giraffe is a time-tested teething toy developed nearly 50 years ago. Often baby's first toy, this cheerful,

adorable giraffe does more than just help a teething baby make it through the day. It also stimulates all five senses: the contrasting spots on the body are for the eyes; the squeaker is for the ears; the soft feel for touch; and, as it's made from 100 percent natural rubber from the Hevea tree, it has a unique scent for the nose.

For more info, visit www.sophiegiraffeusa.com.





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