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Issue #00455

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TIDBITS® DECORATES WITH YULETIDE PLANTS

by Kathy Wolfe

Get into the holiday spirit this week as Tidbits checks out several festive plants associated with the yuletide season.

- There are about 480 species of holly in all shapes and sizes. The dwarf holly shrub is only about 6 inches (15 cm) high, compared to the 70-foot-tall (21-m) holly trees. Some are round, while others are shaped like pyramids or columns.
- Each individual holly plant is either male or female, thus earning the plant the classification of “dioecious,” which translates from the Greek for “two households.” The two types of bushes must be located near each other for cross-pollination in order to guarantee berries. Those bushes loaded with berries are always female.
- The ancient Druids considered the holly plant to be sacred, and cutting down a tree would bring bad luck. They hung the plant in their homes to bring good luck and protection from evil spirits. They believed it would also protect them from lightning strikes. The Romans decorated with boughs of holly during their winter solstice festivals, also known as Saturnalia, because they believed it was linked to Saturn, the god of agriculture and harvest.

turn the page for more

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YULETIDE PLANTS (continued):

- Holly became associated with Christian symbolism during medieval times, with the holly also referred to as “Christ’s thorn,” as the pointed leaves symbolize the crown of thorns placed on Jesus’ head. According to tradition, holly berries were originally white, but the blood that Christ shed for the sins of the world stained the berries red for all eternity.
- A certain species of holly grown in Japan is associated with the sun goddess Amaterasu, who hides in her cave during the winter. According to legend, Uzume, the clown goddess, has the task of coaxing Amaterasu out of the cave every Spring, and uses a sacred jewel and mirror tied to a holly branch to lure the goddess out of the cave so that Spring could begin.
- Although holly berries are an important food source for birds and other animals, they are toxic to humans, and can cause vomiting and diarrhea if consumed. They are especially dangerous to children, with the possibility of death if more than 20 berries are ingested. But some cultures use the leaves of certain species to make tea, most commonly Yerba mate.
- The most common type of ivy is English ivy, a plant which stays green all year and can thrive in the cold. The plant is not native to North America, and was brought over by colonists in the early 18th century. It now grows across the U.S. and Canada.
- In addition to being an eye-catching holiday decoration, English ivy has been used for its medicinal properties for centuries. Ancient Greek physician Hippocrates used ivy as an anesthetic, to reduce swelling, and to prevent intoxication. Ivy is now recognized for its apparent capability to treat asthma, bronchitis, and





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Holiday Hours

Closed Friday Dec. 25th to Sunday Dec. 27th

Closed Friday Jan. 1st to Sunday Jan. 3rd

TIDBITS
presents
TRIVIA NEWSFRONT

1. This word comes from the Finnish word meaning “open rolling plain”
2. This word likely came from the French phrase meaning “one who weaves snowshoes”
3. This word means “people” in the Eskimo language
4. This word comes from the Latin word for ice
5. The country’s name likely comes from the Huron-Iroquois word meaning “village” or “settlement”

allergies by relaxing the airways and reducing coughs, and its extract is frequently used as an expectorant. Herbalists also recommend ivy to treat arthritis and inflammation.

- NASA has declared English ivy as one of the top ten air-purifying plants, able to remove toxins such as benzene, formaldehyde, xylene, and toluene from the air. It also helps reduce indoor pollution and allergens such as molds and fungus.
- Ivy does have its drawbacks, however. The leaves and sap are mildly poisonous and should be kept away from pets and children. A substance in the plant can cause dermatitis, inflammation, and blisters and gloves are always recommended when handling English ivy plants. Outdoors, because ivy has no natural enemies to control its growth,

TRIVIA NEWSFRONT ANSWERS

1. Tundra
2. Eskimo
3. Inuit
4. Glacier
5. Canada

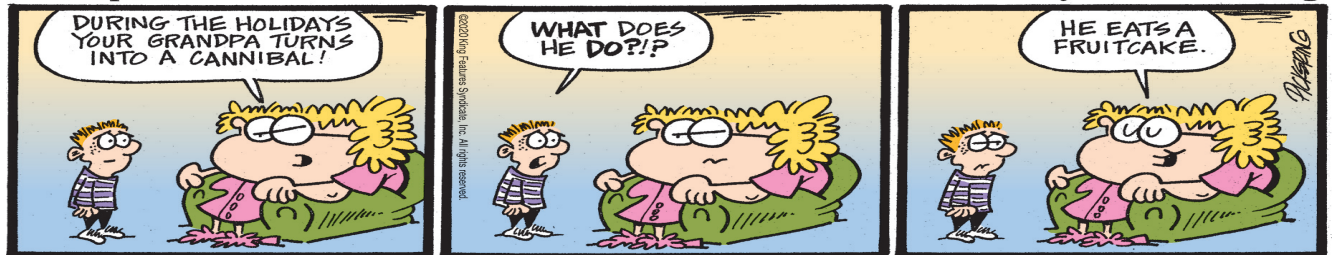
the plant can become invasive and overtake and damage other plants.

- The botanical name of the poinsettia plant, “euphorbia pucherrima,” is very appropriate, translating to “very beautiful.” They are not native to the United States, but found their way here through the efforts of Joel Roberts

continued pg. 4



The Spats



* “I have a rubber disc (used for taking covers off jars) that I keep in my shower. When showering, I put the disc over the drain so the water can accumulate, then I soak my feet at the same time.”

* To save yourself some time and aggravation, make a safety set of keys that match your current set exactly. You will never have to go looking for your keys when you are in a hurry, and you won’t have to determine if the key you need is on the ring. It is!

* “Re: your recent tip about storing heirloom quilts in a cedar chest: No, no, a thousand times no! Nothing is worse for quilts -- heirloom or otherwise -- than storing them in cedar chests. Acids will not only stain them but break down the fabric over time.” -- B.R. Thanks B.R. Although my grandmother did store quilts and other fabric items in her cedar chest, according to sources at the National Quilters Circle, the best place for an heirloom quilt may be on a bed. You

can stack them, but rotate so that no quilt gets too much sun. -- JoAnn

* “For squeaky door hinges, forget about graphite, WD-40 or any of those other messy lubricants that may last for only a few months. Pull the hinge pins, wipe them clean with a dry rag, and then apply a thin coating of Vaseline with your finger. Properly done, your hinges should remain free of squeaks for at least a year.” -- F.B.

* “If you live in a cold area where you might experience icy sidewalks and you have a dog or cat, don’t forget to protect your pet’s feet from the salt and/or chemicals that are frequently used to melt ice. Be sure to wipe down your pet’s feet after a walk outside.” -- F.F.

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GRIN and BEAR IT by Waagner



“HO HO HO!”

Strange BUT TRUE

By Lucie Winborne

* Doc Martens come in all different colors and sizes now, but the first pair was created using old tires.

* There actually aren't "57 varieties" of Heinz ketchup, and never were. Company founder H.J. Heinz thought his product should have a number, and he just happened to like 57.

* March 3 is known as "What if Cats and Dogs Had Opposable Thumbs Day."

* The number of permutations within a deck of cards is mind-bogglingly large: an 8 with 67 zeroes after it. That means there are more card combinations than stars in the Milky Way, which amount to as many as 400 billion!

* Cataract surgery was possible as early as the 6th century B.C.

* Barbie's physical appearance was inspired by a German doll named Bild Lilli, created in 1952 and

based on a high-end call girl named Lilli who was featured in the comic strip "Bild-Zeitung." She was sold as an adult novelty in bars and tobacco shops -- definitely not as a children's toy. Barbie inventor Ruth Handler saw the doll while vacationing in Europe and brought it home.

* Sunsets on Mars are blue.

* The Gate Tower Building in Osaka, Japan, has a highway that passes through the building, between the fifth and seventh floors.

* A Paris morgue needed help identifying bodies in the 1860s, so decided to open its doors to the public. They probably underestimated people's morbid curiosity, though, as soon 40,000 people a day were coming to look at corpses.

* Mob boss Vincent Gigante would wander around New York in his bathrobe to convince the police he was insane, and thus avoid capture.

Thought for the Day: "Life is mostly froth and bubble. Two things stand like stone. Kindness in another's trouble, courage in your own." -- Adam Lindsay Gordon

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Weekly Sudoku Puzzle Sponsored by



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Weekly SUDOKU

by Linda Thistle

		7	6		8	1
5			4		3	
	1			5		4
	2		8		4	
	7	9		3		6
4			5			9
2				4	7	
		1	9	7		3
	3		8			6

Place a number in the empty boxes in such a way that each row across, each column down and each small 9-box square contains all of the numbers from one to nine.

DIFFICULTY THIS WEEK: ◆◆◆

◆ Moderate ◆ Challenging
◆◆◆ HOO BOY!

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King Crossword

ACROSS

- 1 Porter's burdens
- 5 Before
- 8 Dull sound of impact
- 12 Enticement
- 13 Blend
- 14 Abundant
- 15 Opera show-stopper
- 16 U.K. broadcaster
- 17 Black, in verse
- 18 Fight
- 20 Like a lot
- 22 Solid ground
- 26 Entire
- 29 Smack
- 30 Zilch
- 31 Bees' home
- 32 Parsons or Gaffigan

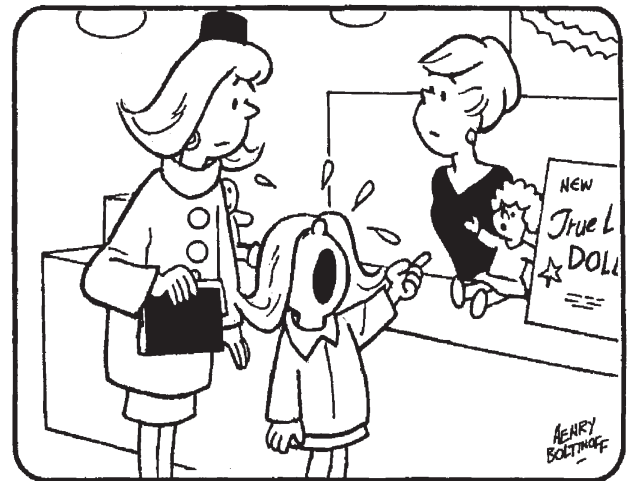
1	2	3	4		5	6	7		8	9	10	11
12					13				14			
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37			38					39				
			40				41			42	43	44
45	46					47	48			49		
50						51				52		
53						54				55		

- 51 Barn bird
- 52 Alaskan metropolis
- 53 Vortex
- 54 — Aviv
- 55 Get larger
- 7 Cry out
- 8 Italian fountain site
- 9 Ireland
- 10 Venusian vessel?
- 11 Lair
- 19 Appomattox surrenderer
- 21 Frequently
- 23 Serengeti beast
- 24 Chinese dynasty
- 25 Choir member
- 26 Sharpen
- 27 Raise
- 28 Above
- 32 Lotto win
- 33 Incredible
- 35 Mandible
- 36 Call — day
- 38 Make a comeback
- 39 Warble
- 42 Bloodhound's clue
- 43 Quarterback Tony
- 44 Dispatched
- 45 Mimic
- 46 Foundation
- 48 Didn't pay yet

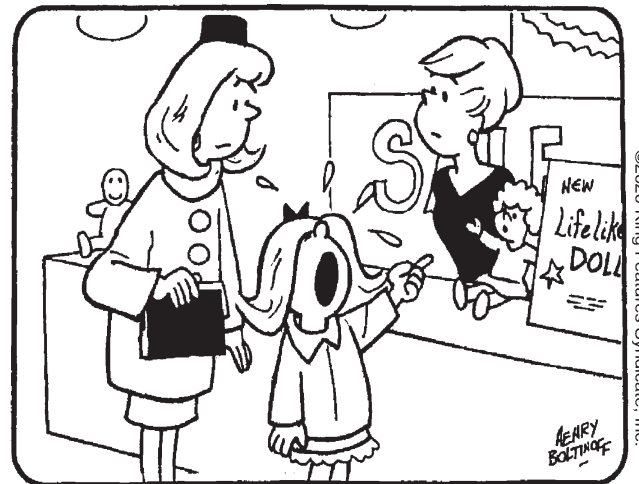
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HOCUS-FOCUS

BY HENRY BOLTINOFF



Find at least six differences in details between panels.



Differences: 1. Mom's hair is different. 2. Doll on left has been moved. 3. "Sale" sign is added. 4. Girl's skirt has ruffle. 5. Doll ad is different. 6. Girl has hair bow.

Just Like Cats & Dogs

by Dave T. Phipps



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Christmas Tradition Gets a Modern Twist

It seems like I was just planning and preparing our Thanksgiving dinner and now Christmas is upon us. If you want to change things up a little for your Christmas dinner, try modernizing an old traditional recipe.

Recently, I've been reading about Christmas customs and holiday meals in Europe. I discovered a tradition called The Feast of the Seven Fishes, along with several delicious recipes for preparing fish. The fish is often used as a symbol of Christianity. Because of the persecution faced by the early church, when a

Christian met a stranger in the road, the Christian sometimes drew one arc of the simple fish outline in the dirt. If the stranger drew the other arc, both believers knew they were in good company. Preparing and eating seafood on Christmas Eve in celebration of the birth of Jesus Christ is an old European tradition with Italian roots. Many families abstain from eating meat and serve only fish or other types of seafood on Christmas Eve. This traditional holiday meal is called The Feast of the Seven Fishes. A typical feast features cod, eel, octopus, calamari, mussels, clams, shrimp and lobster.

This year, you might want to create a holiday dinner menu based on a variation of the Feast of the Seven Fishes. These recipes are budget-friendly ways to incorporate an ancient holiday tradition into a simplified, modern Christmas Eve dinner using just one pot or pan. Merry Christmas and Happy Holidays, ya'll!



CHRISTMAS EVE SEAFOOD PAELLA

- 1/3 cup extra-virgin olive oil
- 8 ounces (16 to 20) shelled, deveined shrimp
- 8 ounces squid (bodies), rinsed, patted dry and sliced into rounds
- 1 1/2 teaspoons salt
- 1 teaspoon turmeric
- 1 teaspoon paprika
- 1 medium onion, finely chopped
- 1 can (14 ounces) fire-roasted diced tomatoes, drained
- 1/4 teaspoon red chili flakes or cayenne pepper
- 3 cloves garlic, chopped
- 1 1/2 cups Arborio rice
- 3 1/2 cups seafood, chicken or vegetable broth
- 1 bottle (8 ounces) clam juice
- 12 littleneck clams, scrubbed
- Parsley and lemon wedges, for garnish

1. In a deep 12-inch cast iron skillet, heat oil on medium-high until hot but not smoking. Add shrimp, squid, 1/2 teaspoon of the salt, 1/2 teaspoon of the turmeric and 1/2 teaspoon of the paprika. Cook 2 minutes or until shrimp start to brown, stirring once. With slotted spoon, transfer the shrimp and squid to medium bowl.
2. Reduce heat to medium. Add the onion, tomatoes and the remaining salt, turmeric, paprika and the chili flakes or cayenne pepper. Cook 8 minutes, stirring often. Add garlic; cook 2 minutes. Add rice; cook 2 minutes, stirring.
3. To skillet, add broth and clam juice, stirring to distribute rice evenly in pan. Heat to boiling on medium-high. Boil, without stirring, 15 minutes.
4. Gently press the shrimp, squid and clams on top of the rice. Cover skillet with lid or foil; cook another 10 to 16 minutes or until the clams open and rice is just tender. Remove from heat. Let stand, covered, 10 minutes before serving. Garnish with parsley and lemons. Makes 6 servings.

TIP: If you're peeling and deveining your shrimp, use the shells to make shrimp stock. Place the rinsed shrimp shells, 1 chopped carrot and stalk of celery, the onion skin and parsley stems in a large saucepan. Cover with 2 cups of cold water. Bring to a boil, then reduce heat and simmer uncovered for 30 minutes while preparing the recipe. Use the shrimp stock according to directions above.

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- Q: What did one Arctic tern say to the other?
A: "What? We flew 25,000 miles for THIS?!"

YULETIDE PLANTS

Poinsett, U.S. Congressman and the first U.S. Ambassador to Mexico. Poinsett discovered the plants growing wild on the slopes of Mexico in the 1820s and began sending plants back to his South Carolina greenhouses. Previously known as the Mexican flame flower, the plant was named in Poinsett's honor by horticulturist William Prescott.

- Growing wild in Mexico, a poinsettia plant can reach a height of 10 feet (3.05 m). The plant is very intolerant of the cold, so is grown indoors in northern climates.
- According to Mexican legend of long ago, a

young peasant girl desired to contribute a gift at the Christ Child ceremony on Holy Night, but had nothing to offer. She picked weeds along the roadside to make a bouquet offering, and by the time she reached the ceremony, the weeds had been transformed into beautiful red poinsettias.

- The red "blooms" of the poinsettia plant aren't really flowers, but are petal-like leaves known as bracts. The actual flowers of a poinsettia are the tiny yellow blooms at the center.
- We tend to think to poinsettias as the brilliant red holiday plants, but in fact they come in over

continued pg. 5

100 different colors, including white, yellow, pink, and gold. The plant's color is determined by how much light it gets. In order to achieve red leaves, the plant needs bright light during the day and pitch darkness for at least 12 hours at night. If you want to force your plant to bloom again, it will need about 10 weeks with less than 12 hours of sunlight per day.

- The leaves of the poinsettia are not as poisonous as was once believed, and are not deadly to children and pets if ingested. In fact, a child would have to eat upwards of 500 leaves to have very serious effects. A person or pet can become mildly sick if leaves are consumed in sufficient quantities. However, touching the milky sap that oozes from the plant can cause dermatitis and itchiness. Always be careful not to touch your eyes after coming in contact with the sap.
- December 12 has been declared Poinsettia Day, in commemoration of Poinsett's passing on that day in 1851
- How is the word "poinsettia" pronounced? It's frequently misspelled, leading to mispronunciations, for example, "poinsetta" (dropping the "i") and "pointsetta" (adding a "t"). Both poin-SET-ee-uh and poin-SET-uh are listed in dictionaries as acceptable pronunciations, but the correct spelling is poinsettia.

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**MOVIE FAVORITES:
ELF**

This week, Tidbits digs into the facts on the 2003 Christmas classic "Elf."

- "Elf" is the story of Buddy the Elf, a baby in an orphanage who stowed away in Santa's sack of toys and ended up at the North Pole, where he was raised by Papa Elf. When Buddy learned of his adoption, he headed to New York City to find his biological father, who had no idea of Buddy's existence. Buddy began his journey by hopping on an iceberg, and travelled through the seven levels of the Candy Cane Forest and through the sea of swirly-twirly gum drops before reaching Manhattan.
- The screenplay for "Elf" was written in 1993, created with Jim Carrey in mind as the cheery elf, but when it took nearly 10 years for the film to go into production, Carrey became involved in other projects and turned down the role. The role went to Will Ferrell, and became one of his most successful. Likewise, Zooey Deschanel was not the first choice for Jovie, the department store worker who became Buddy's love interest. She was the backup who stepped in when the first choice dropped out.
- The infant Buddy was originally slated to be played by a set of twin boys with blonde curly hair. But when the babies cried unceasingly, they were replaced by a set of happy and playful brunette triplet girls.
- Filming began in early December, 2002, and was completed three months later. The film was wildly successful, grossing \$220 million on a \$33 million budget.
- Although the setting was Gimbels Department Store in New York City, the interior retail scenes were actually shot at Macy's. That's because the Manhattan Gimbels store had been closed since 1987, 16 years earlier, after 77 years of operation in New York City. Today, Gimbels is the home of the Manhattan Mall.

- Much of the movie was shot on sound stages in Vancouver, Canada, because of the financial benefits of filming there. However, all of the Manhattan shots – Rockefeller Center, Central Park, and Central Park West, where Buddy's dad lived – were shot on location. Filming in the city had its drawbacks. On the final day of New York filming, just three people were on the job – Ferrell, the director, and one cameraman. These were the scenes of Buddy skipping enthusiastically around the downtown, discovering all the attractions and busyness of the city. However, as Ferrell walked through traffic in the Lincoln Tunnel in his elf costume, distracted drivers were involved in several fender benders as they gawked at the actor.

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TIDBITS

NUGGET OF KNOWLEDGE

We think Santa lives in the North Pole because of a cartoon. Thomas Nast, a 19th century cartoonist, depicted Santa's mailing address as being The North Pole – a place that was all over the news thanks to a number of daring expeditions that had been in the news at the time.

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Amber Waves

by Dave T. Phipps

WELL, HEY THERE, LITTLE GUY. WHAT WOULD YOU LIKE FOR CHRISTMAS?

OH, GIVE ME, I MAILED YOU MY WISH LIST WEEKS AGO. I THINK YOU KNOW.

ALTHOUGH MY DAD DID SAY THE POSTAL SERVICE HAS BEEN STRUGGLING.

OK, FOR YOUR SAKE, PERHAPS I SHOULD GET YOUR EMAIL ADDRESS.

Laugh a bit with TIDBITS

Q: What did the detective in the Arctic say to the suspect?

A: "Where were you on the night of September to March?"

ELF (continued):

- Two different sets had to be built for the North Pole scenes, a large-scale one for the small elf actors, and a small-scale set to make Buddy and Santa look big. The film was then overlaid to combine the two.
- Will Ferrell endured several headaches and bouts of sleeplessness throughout the shoot, brought on by the massive amounts of sugar he was obliged to consume. As Buddy said, the four main elf food groups are “candy, candy canes, candy corn, and syrup,” and Ferrell ingested maple syrup-coated spaghetti, cotton balls made of cotton candy, pastries, and large amounts of candy. One of the candy scenes had to be shot twice, due to Ferrell’s vomiting the first time.
- Another famous Christmas classic actor, Peter Billingsley, who starred as Ralphie in “A Christmas Story,” was seen in “Elf” as Ming Ming, an elf master toy maker. Will Ferrell’s brother Patrick had a small role as a security guard at the Empire State Building.
- Although Ferrell was offered \$29 million for a sequel to “Elf,” the actor turned down the offer.

MISTLETOE

- Mistletoe has long been viewed as the holiday season’s romantic plant, but it is in fact a harmful parasite that attaches to trees, plants, and shrubs, drawing out their nutrients and water. Once a tree is infected, the mistletoe’s roots grow through the bark, up and down within the branches. New sprouts of mistletoe can grow from inside the host, weakening and eventually killing the plant. Its white berries each contain a sticky seed that attaches to birds and mammals for transmission to a new host. The berries can also explode, spewing seeds at speeds of up to 60 mph (96 km/hr) for as far as 50 feet (15.2 m).
- Mistletoe also contains a poisonous ingredient called phoratoxin, with a heavy concentration in the leaves. Ingesting the plant can cause drowsiness, nausea and vomiting, diarrhea, and even seizures. Although the berries are toxic to humans, mammals such as deer, elk, squirrels, and porcupines, and birds including robins, chickadees, bluebirds, and doves eat the berries during the winter when other foods are scarce, with no negative effects.
- Yet for all of its negative properties, the European varieties have been used for centuries for medicinal purposes as a treatment for illnesses ranging from arthritis and hypertension to leprosy and infertility. In Europe, the extract of some types are even injected for treatment of colon cancer with optimistic results.
- The mistletoe is critical for the survival of three types of North American butterflies, the great purple hairstreak, the thicket hairstreak, and Johnson’s hairstreak. The butterflies lay their eggs on the plant, and the newly-hatched eat the leaves. The adults also partake of the plant’s nectars, along with a few species of bees.
- The name “mistletoe” has its origins in the language of the ancient Anglo-Saxons. When the ancients noticed that the plant grew with a high level of bird droppings, they used their

DONNA’S DAY: CREATIVE FAMILY FUN

By Donna Erickson

Make Marbleized Paper at Family Wrap Party

Whether we’re children or adults, we all like to feel useful and part of the holiday festivities. Now’s the time to enlist the kids in the fun and creative job of gift-wrapping. But before you go out and purchase rolls of wrap, save money by making a beautiful batch for this year’s gifts. Gather big paper bags from your recycling bin, plus marbles and bright poster paint, and you’ll be ready for family fun.

Here’s the stuff you’ll need:

- One large, sturdy cardboard gift box approximately 12 by 18 inches, or similar container with sides
- several marbles (one for each paint color)
- liquid poster paint in several colors
- spoons (one for each color)
- plain brown paper grocery bags, construction paper or butcher paper
- recycled deli or margarine tubs
- scissors
- newspaper



Here’s the fun:

1. Cover your work surface with newspaper. Cut open the paper bags and trim a sheet to fit the bottom of the box. (Or, if using construction paper or butcher paper, cut to size.) Place the paper inside. Pour a small amount of each color of paint into the containers.
2. Drop a marble in one of the paint containers. Shake the container gently until the marble is thoroughly coated with paint, or use a spoon to move the marble around in the paint. With a spoon, drop the marble in the box and shift the box back and forth so the marble rolls in all directions, leaving paint on the paper. Repeat the process, using a different marble for each color of paint desired.
2. When the colorful, abstract design is complete, remove your paper of modern art and let it dry.

TIP: For smaller packages, “shake and create” gift wrap using a clean, large cylindrical potato-chip can with a lid. Loosely roll a sheet of paper inside the can so that it lines the interior. Using one color at a time, roll a marble or two in paint (as described above) and drop in the can. Snap on the lid, shake a few times, remove the lid and put the marble or marbles onto newspaper. Repeat with a marble or two in another color. Remove the paper to reveal your art. You might want to paint jingle bells along with the marbles for a fun, festive sound while shaking.

Find more family fun in Donna’s book “Donna Erickson’s Fabulous Funstuff for Families.”

(c) 2020 Donna Erickson

TIDBITS GOES LONG.....

Greenland is less than ¼ the size of the U.S., with a population of about 56,000 people. There are 90 mi (150 km) of roads in the whole country and only 40 mi (60 km) are paved. Almost all are in and around the capital city of Nuuk.

SCRAMBLERS
Unscramble the letters within each rectangle to form four ordinary words. Then rearrange the boxed letters to form the mystery word, which will complete the gag!

Bent WEAKS

Pop TRUBS

Defend DELISH

Bottom NDURE

TODAY’S WORD

“I can’t cook, but my husband says I’m the best little _____ in the world.”

Even Exchange by Donna Pettman

Each numbered row contains two clues and two 6-letter answers. The two answers differ from each other by only one letter, which has already been inserted. For example, if you exchange the A from MASTER for an I, you get MISTER. Do not change the order of the letters.

1. Catwalk girl	___ D ___	Traveler’s lodging	___ T ___
2. Winding staircase	___ R ___	Of the backbone	___ N ___
3. Tenant	___ T ___	Melt down fat	___ D ___
4. Greasy dirt	___ M ___	Complain	___ P ___
5. Within the vicinity	___ C ___	Steadfast	___ Y ___
6. Papa	___ D ___	Fine and ___	___ N ___
7. Parisian country	F ___	Walk lively	P ___
8. Multitude of people	___ D ___	Queen’s headwear	___ N ___
9. Flambeau	___ R ___	___ and go; iffy	___ U ___
10. Gas pump rating	___ N ___	Musical interval	___ V ___

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TIPBITS QUOTE

“The Arctic is among the least understood places on the planet; however, we do know that its landscape is changing and evolving as quickly as cell phones and the Internet.” -Philippe Cousteau, Jr.



PAW'S CORNER By Sam Mazzotta

Small Holiday Gathering Can Still Stress Pets

DEAR PAW'S CORNER: This year, we are only going to have a few family members over on Christmas Day. In past years, I've put our dog, cat and rabbit in the back of the house with plenty of water and beds to sleep in, so the noise and lights and strange people don't stress them out. I feel like we can safely keep the pets in their usual spots this year because there will only be eight people here for dinner and presents. What do you think? -- Cheryl in Lake City, Florida

DEAR CHERYL: That's your call. You know your pets. In addition to the size of the gathering, you should consider the personalities of your guests: Are any of them timid or afraid around pets, and would anyone be upset if your dog starts barking? The big question here is how many strangers each of your pets can handle. Rabbits, for example, are very susceptible to stress and should be kept in a quiet spot and not handled too much by visitors. A calm, well-socialized dog may be able to handle the influx of people. Same with your cat, who will simply disappear to a hiding spot if things get a little overwhelming. Even though it's a smaller crowd this year, make a plan and share it. How much time should the pets spend with visitors around? When should they be placed in a separate area? (During dinner or when presents are opened, for example.) If a pet shows signs of stress, such as barking, yelping, meowing, hissing or growling, who will grab them and take them to the quiet spot to calm down? When everyone knows the strategy, they can act quickly to keep the party calm and pets healthy and safe.

Send your tips, comments and questions to ask@pawscorner.com. (c) 2020 King Features Synd., Inc.

word "mist," meaning "dung," and combined it with "tan," translating "twig."

- As early as the third century B.C., the Druids hung mistletoe in their homes to keep evil spirits away and bring good luck. English women in medieval times tied the plant around their waists, believing it would enhance fertility. During World War I, mistletoe was used as a symbol of peace, and was a common item pictured on postcards sent to soldiers during the war. It's also viewed as a symbol of renewal because it stays green all winter.
- Legends differ as to how mistletoe became associated with kissing. In Norse mythology, the goddess Frigga and her husband Odin had a son, Balder, who was the god of love, peace, forgiveness, and justice. When Balder was killed by an arrow made from mistletoe, Frigga's tears of sorrow brought her son back to life. The goddess promised that all who passed under the mistletoe should receive a kiss. The Europeans were observing the custom in the 1500s. In the U.S., author Washington Irving mentioned the practice in an 1820 collection of essays and stories. According to Irving's "Christmas Eve," whenever a couple kissed under the mistletoe, they would remove one of the white berries. When the mistletoe was empty of berries, there was no more power in that sprig. Later in that century, the magazine "Harper's Weekly" began featuring pictures of couples kissing under the mistletoe.

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- Brenda Weaver

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CryptoQuip

This is a simple substitution cipher in which each letter used stands for another. If you think that X equals O, it will equal O throughout the puzzle. Solution is accomplished by trial and error.

Clue: R equals E

XS V WRVY NRYR VQQLNRU PL
KYRKVYR JLSSRR LY PRV, JLGQU
ALG PMRH OVA MR NVO WYGXH?

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SCRAMBLERS
solution

1. Askew 2. Burst;
3. Shield; 4. Under

Today's Word
THAWER

Even Exchange
answers

1. Model, Motel	6. Daddy, Dandy
2. Spiral, Spinal	7. France, Prance
3. Renter, Render	8. Crowd, Crown
4. Grime, Gripe	9. Torch, Touch
5. Local, Loyal	10. Octane, Octave

CryptoQuip
answer

If a bear were allowed to prepare coffee or tea, could you then say he was bruin?

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

3	4	7	9	6	2	5	8	1
5	6	2	4	1	8	3	9	7
9	1	8	7	3	5	6	4	2
6	2	5	1	8	9	4	7	3
1	7	9	2	4	3	8	6	5
4	8	3	5	7	6	1	2	9
2	9	6	3	5	4	7	1	8
8	5	1	6	9	7	2	3	4
7	3	4	8	2	1	9	5	6



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