

# CO-OP CAPERS

The Newsletter of the Williamsburg, Farm and Cooperative Enterprise



## PIZZA AND PAJAMA NIGHT!

The whole family is invited, Sunday, March 9th, 5:30—7:00 p.m. for pizza, pajamas and music by the C. Shells at St. Martin's Parish Hall. We encourage, but do not require, you wear your PJ's—but do bring a blanket for a family picnic from 5:30-6:00.

Water bottles, carrots and cookies will be provided to go along with your pre-ordered pizza (forms are due by Wednesday, March 5th). From 6:00-7:00 enjoy the music of singing duo C. Shells, with dance space provided! We hope to see you there!



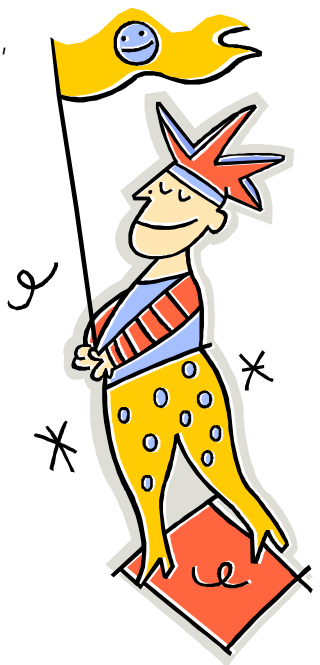
## LOOKING FORWARD...

### CO-OP CARNIVAL RAFFLE DONATIONS

It is time to start planning for this year's Co-op Carnival on May 4, 2008. If you are a consultant or a business owner, or know of anyone who would like to donate raffle items for this year's carnival raffle, it would be very appreciated. It is a good opportunity to have your products seen or make yourself known. Donations can be anything from individual items, to gift certificates or baskets. Anything goes. The carnival is such a fun time for all Co-op families, so please mark your calendar for May 4th. If you have any questions or need more information, contact either Cindy Kordek, 253-2971 or Jennifer Youngs, 566-4302.

### DONATIONS FOR THE CARNIVAL: BOOKS, CDs, SOFTWARE and VHS

We will be collecting children's and parenting books soon—along with music cd's, software and VHS tapes for the sale at the carnival, coming in May. Check the center room for a cardboard box to place your donations. Thank you! If you have any questions or need more information, contact Cindy Kordek, 253-2971 or Jennifer Youngs, 566-4302.





# In the News...

Phthalates (pronounced thowl-ates) are used to make plastics flexible and stabilize fragrances. The federal government doesn't limit their use, although California and some countries have restricted their use. These phthalates could be in your homes, could be used by your family on a daily basis. They are found in baby bubble bath, powder, sunscreen, cradle cap treatment, lotion, oil, soap, wipes, diaper cream, shampoo and even nipple cream for moms.

## Babies absorb phthalates from baby products

By Megan Rauscher, Pediatrics, 2/08

NEW YORK (Reuters Health) - A new study suggests that baby lotion, baby powder, and baby shampoo may be exposing babies to potentially harmful chemicals called phthalates.

"At this time, we do not know what the potential long-term health effects might be, but there is a large body of animal studies to suggest developmental and reproductive toxicity (from phthalates) and a few human studies with changes in health outcomes as well," Dr. Sheela Sathyanarayana told Reuters

Health.

Phthalates are used to make plastics flexible and stabilize fragrances, and are found in a plethora of consumer products including toys, personal care products and medical equipment.

As reported online today in the journal Pediatrics, Sathyanarayana, from the University of Washington, Seattle, and colleagues measured the levels of nine different phthalate breakdown products in urine from diapers of 163 infants aged 2 to 28 months.

All of the urine samples contained at least one phthalate at measurable levels, they report, and 81 percent of the samples had measurable amounts of seven or more phthalates.

"We found that reported use of baby lotion, baby shampoo, and baby powder was associated with increased concentrations of monethyl phthalate (MEP), monomethyl phthalate (MMP), and monoisobutyl phthalate (MIBP) in infant urine," Sathyanarayana said.

This association was strongest in young infants less than 8 months old, "who may be more vulnerable to developmental and reproductive toxicity of phthalates," the investigators note in their report.

At present, U.S. manufacturers are not required to list phthalate contents on products' package labels, making it hard for parents to make informed decisions, the investigators point out.

"If parents want to decrease exposures for their children, they can try to use lotions, shampoo, and baby powder sparingly unless otherwise indicated for



# CO-OP CALENDAR



<b>March</b>	9 (Su)	Pizza and Pajama Night
<b>April</b>	7-11	NO SCHOOL—Spring Vacation
	14 (M)	School Reopens
	24-25 (Th-F)	NO SCHOOL—Parent-Teacher Conferences
		AM 2's WILL meet
<b>May</b>	4 (Su)	Carnival, 2-4 p.m.
	23 (F)	Last Day
	26 (M)	Memorial Day
	27 (T)	Teachers Organize Clean-up
	28-29 (W-Th)	End of Year Clean-up

Deadlines for submissions are as follows: Monday, March 31; and Wednesday, April 30. Please contact Loralee Clark at 258-3254 for further information. We welcome news of local opportunities for family activities and/or any parent- or child-related materials. Submissions via e-mail are strongly encouraged: [loralee13@verizon.net](mailto:loralee13@verizon.net)

## THANKS!

Eileen O'Brien (mother of Kaya O'Brien-James, Lisa Old's 3-Day 4s) would like to thank everyone in the Co-Op family who offered their prayers, support, good vibes and good luck during her recent job crisis. Eileen is pleased to announce she will be leaving University of Richmond to join the sociology faculty at Christopher Newport University this fall, cutting her commute time in half, happily! She couldn't have done this without all of your support.

## You are invited!

- What:** A puppet Show
- When:** Wednesday, March 5, 10:00 a.m.
- Where:** Williamsburg Regional Library Theatre
- Who:** All Co-op Students, siblings, parents & friends

Barefoot Puppets will perform a 45-minute show  
"Dreamtime: Tales from Down Under."

This show was inspired by three Aboriginal tales and is told through the eyes of Billy, an inquisitive young platypus. Rod puppets come to life on a beautifully textured table-top stage which allows for lots of audience participation.

Presented by Williamsburg Parent Cooperative Pre-school with a grant from An Occasion for the Arts and sponsored by the Williamsburg Regional Library.

For questions, contact Molly Gareis, 229-5619.



# Crafty Kids: Easter Fun



Au naturel: Color your eggs the old-fashioned way

By Lee Svitak Dean, *Star Tribune* Taste Editor

Piles of yellow onion skins, chunks of bright red beets, bunches of deep-green spinach leaves, even bags of fragrant Red Zinger tea, redolent with hibiscus flowers, filled the kitchen counter. Bottles of paprika, dill seed and turmeric stood at the ready, as did a pot of coffee. So did dozens of eggs and a jug of white vinegar. We were dyeing eggs. And there wasn't a PAAS coloring kit in sight.

Egg dyeing, by its very nature, makes a mess and, frankly, it's even messier when the colors are made from edible food. The homemade version also takes a bit longer to prepare than dye from a package.

But don't let these cautions deter you. The homemade variety offers more of a challenge—and it's fun, too. As many cooks know, that sense of curiosity and discovery is half the reason so many of us hang out in the kitchen. Making your own dye lets you experiment with the vagaries of color, from the leftovers in the refrigerator to the stock of spices in the pantry.

Many of the colors from homemade dye are a softer hue, and there's more possibilities of shades in the color palette. But there is nothing precise about natural food dyes: You might get the colors you anticipate when using them; then again, you might not. The variations depend on what you're using for dye—and how long you soak the egg. It also depends on the egg shells, which are as variable as snowflakes.

Though not readily apparent, shell texture differs from egg to egg—from smooth to rippled—as does the thickness of the shell. All of this affects how the egg picks up dye. So if you expect the unexpected when you're using homemade dye, you won't be disappointed.

There are two ways to color eggs with natural dyes: cold and hot dye. Most directions recommend starting with hard-cooked eggs. The dye is then prepared separately, and in the last step the egg is soaked in the coloring (which usually is recommended to be hot). This method works fine with commercial food dyes, such as PAAS or Dudley, where eggs are dipped into color for only a few moments. But with natural dyes—which take longer to imprint their shade—the eggs are soaked in the color for at least 15 minutes, which is the same amount of time it takes to hard-cook eggs. So eggs can be dyed at the same time they are being hard-cooked (they also will get a more uniform and saturated color as they roll around in the simmering dye).

The hot method of natural food dye means placing the eggs in a single layer in a non-aluminum pan. The eggs are covered with 1 inch of water and vinegar is added to the water to help the color adhere to the eggs. The dye materials—which include spices, fruits, vegetables and more (see chart at below)—are also added, and the whole mixture is brought to a boil, then reduced to a simmer for 15 to 30 minutes, depending on the desired color.

Whatever food is used to dye eggs, vinegar should be added to help the color adhere (but if you forget to add vinegar, don't fret; the eggs will still be colored, but it likely will be lighter).

Which leads the cook to a familiar question: Can these dyed eggs be eaten? Well, it depends. Eggs should sit out no longer than two hours if they are to remain safe to eat. And hard-cooking them for more than 15 minutes will definitely toughen them up (though they will look beautiful). Also, some colors

might seep into the egg white, which makes them less appetizing. So, you might want to use these colorful eggs for decoration only, or else refrigerate them until mealtime.

If you want to eat your colored eggs—or if you want to dye them a second time for added interest—try the cold method of coloring. In this case, to prepare the dye separately, add the edible materials to water, along with vinegar (see chart for quantities). Bring the mixture to a boil, reduce heat and simmer until the dye is the preferred color, 15 minutes or more. Remove from heat and cool; strain. Dip cooked eggs in the dye for at least 15 minutes. The longer the eggs sit in the dye, the richer the hue will be.

If the dye isn't dark enough, add more ingredients to deepen the hue—or let the eggs soak in the color for hours or overnight (in the refrigerator, of course).

You don't necessarily have to stop after dyeing the eggs once. Dip them in a darker color for a second coating. (In this case, do not boil the eggs a second time; simply dip the egg in the second dye for 5 to 10 minutes). Some color combinations recommended by the Alberta (Canada) Egg Producers Board: coffee dye, then blueberry; turmeric and onion skins, followed by cranberries.

Once the dyed eggs are dry, they can be rubbed with vegetable oil for a sheen (if being used for decoration).

#### TIPS:

- Wash uncooked eggs in mild soapy water before they are hard-cooked to remove any oily coating that might prevent the dye from adhering.
- To avoid staining your fingers, wear rubber gloves when working with reds, yellows and purples. And cover the table or counter with newspaper or a protective coating for the same reason.

Pink/red: Fresh beets, pickled beet juice, pickled red cabbage juice, cranberries, frozen raspberries

Orange: Yellow onion skins, paprika

Deep yellow: Ground turmeric

Pale yellow to light green: Spinach leaves, Golden Delicious apple peels

Soft yellows: Orange or lemon peels, carrots tops or shredded carrots, celery seed, ground cumin

Purple: Red Zinger® tea (by Celestial Seasonings)

Blue: Canned blueberries, blackberries, red cabbage leaves, purple or red grape juice

Beige to brown: Strongly brewed coffee, tea, walnuts, dill seeds

Brown to orange: Chili powdered, ground cumin

Add more of the coloring agent for a deeper hue.

- 1 Tbsp. spice or 4 c. chopped fruit or vegetable, or more
- 4 c. water, or more
- 2 Tbsp. white vinegar (per 4 c. water)

Combine spice or foodstuff with water and vinegar. Bring to a boil, then simmer for 15 to 30 minutes. Eggs can be colored (and cooked) in the dye while it is being prepared. Or they can be hard-cooked in advance, then dipped into the prepared dye (which can be either cold or hot).





## EARTH CORNER:

# Winter Wildlife in Your Backyard

What can you do to make backyard wildlife stick around? Plenty!

**Fill the Feeder:** For many creatures, winter means less food. And less daylight can mean less time for food hunting. Birds appreciate an easy treat, especially if your yard becomes covered with snow or ice.

**Leave 'Em Standing:** Clumps of dead flowers, grasses, and vines make cozy hideouts for birds, rabbits, and other creatures. Tiny bees and other insects use the stems as winter homes—unless hungry birds find them. Come spring, birds will use the dried plant bits to make nests.

**Pile It On:** Clean up rocks or fallen branches from your yard. Then pile them up, with the biggest stuff at the bottom. *Presto*—a comfy home for hibernating butterflies, beetles, snakes, lizards, and toads. Birds and other small creatures can find shelter there too.

**Hang a House:** Birds such as chickadees or bluebirds might snuggle up in a birdhouse for warmth on a cold winter's night. A birdhouse makes a good storm shelter too.

### Recommended Earth Corner Reading

Books can use intriguing storylines and imagery to open a child's mind to concepts of sustainability, environmental stewardship and greener living.

**Our Tree Named Steve** by Alan Zweibel (2005, G. P. Putnam's Sons). A giant tree becomes a part of the family in this beautifully illustrated book for young children about the role of nature in children's development.

**The Adventures of Pelican Pete: Annie The River Otter** by Frances and Hugh Keiser (2006, Sagaponack Books). The fourth in a series of books about plucky Pelican Pete teaches children ages 4 to 8 about the importance of conservation.

**Nobody Particular: One Woman's Fight to Save the Bays; The Diane Wilson Story** by Molly Bang (2005, Chelsea Green). When commercial shrimper and mother Diane Wilson finds out that her local bays are being polluted, she successfully persuades a huge corporation to adopt environmental safeguards. Brought to life in striking illustrations.

**The Tree** by Dana Lyons and David Lane Danioth (2002, Illumination Arts Publishing Company). Amidst the sound of encroaching bulldozers, an 800-year-old Douglas fir ponders its role in the natural world, as people rush to save it from destruction.

# Power Down-Dream Big

Celebrate TV Turnoff Week  
with Co-Op Friends  
April 21-27, 2008  
*Kick-off Celebration*  
*Saturday, April 19, 2-4 p.m.*

The Parent Education Committee will be joining with thousands of parents, teachers, and pediatricians to adopt TV Turnoff Week. TV Turnoff Week is organized by the Center for Screen-Time Awareness ([www.tvturnoff.org](http://www.tvturnoff.org)), an international non-profit organization that empowers people to take control of electronic media in their lives. Organizations as well known as the AMA, the NEA, and the American Academy of Pediatrics support TV Turnoff Week. The original TV Turnoff Week began in 1994, and the Center for Screen Time Awareness estimates that since then 50 million people have participated.

Why recognize TV Turnoff Week? Too much screen time (including computers and electronic games) has been linked to obesity, literacy problems, violence, depression, isolation, bad sleep habits, and more. Researchers have found that:

- For every hour of television children watch each day, their risk of developing attention-related problems later increases by ten percent (D. Christakis, Pediatrics, April 2004)
- A preschooler's risk of being overweight increased by six percent for every hour of television watched per day. If that child had a TV in his or her bedroom, the odds of being overweight jumped an additional thirty-one percent for every hour watched. (Dennison, et al, 2002)
- Children in households where the TV is on "always" or "most of the time" are less likely to read than are children in other homes. (Zero to Six: Electronic Media in the Lives of Infants, Toddlers, and Preschoolers, Kaiser Family Foundation and the Children's Digital Media Centers, 2003)

What's so great about TV-Turnoff Week? It's a coordinated effort to recognize the benefits of reducing our time in front of electronic media. TV Turnoff week is not just about learning the dangers of too much screen-time, it's about realizing the educational and social activities we and our children miss when electronic media plays too large a role in our lives. Turning off the television gives us a chance to think, read, create, and do—a time to connect with our families, engage in our community, and be more physically active.

How can we get involved? We'll be kicking off the week with an afternoon of fun events and information about non-screen activities you can do at home that your kids will love. In addition, we'll be providing more information through the newsletter and handouts, and we are asking each class to come up with one informal play activity that week.

Look for a reminder and more info in the April newsletter regarding TV Turnoff Week events and



## Let There Be Light! By Tracy Teare

The night was young and there was plenty of winter ahead, but already we felt like gerbils trapped in too small a cage, except that at least gerbils get exercise. My 5-year-old twins, Caitlin and Ellie, were whirling blond dervishes, playing chase or setting up toy train tracks all over the kitchen rather than going outside in the cold and dark, which seemed to fall as soon as the school bus dropped them off.

I'd tried in these dark afternoons to get them blowing off steam before dinner with snowman-building or sledding, but it was a struggle. "We just did that," they'd say, or "It's freezing!" Last Christmas, they got pint-sized snowshoes that leave bear tracks in the snow, which I thought would be the answer. Like many Mainers, my husband and I love to snowshoe, so we had hoped the kids would join us. Instead, with startling alacrity, the girls deemed tramping around the yard and woods "boring." But then I found a secret weapon.

One night I came across my husband's headlamp — one of those geeky-looking strap-on numbers — and had a parental "aha" moment. What kid doesn't love a flashlight, especially one that straps to your forehead? I borrowed two more headlamps and dangled them in front of Caitlin and Ellie like fresh mackerel before two hungry sea lions. It took them all of 30 seconds to pull on their snowsuits and find their snowshoes.

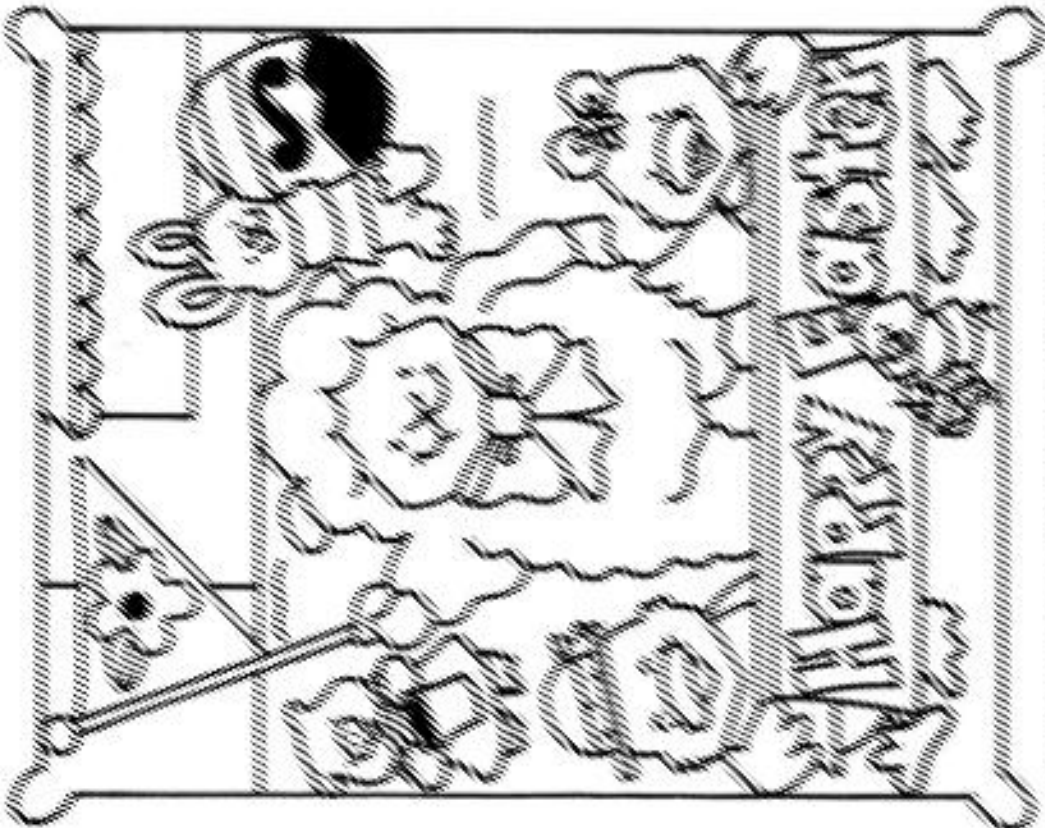
In the near dark, the girls immediately got busy trotting around and swiveling their heads to illuminate each other's fleece-lined faces, the snow-covered spruce trees, and our patient black Lab. The air was nippy, with that iron smell that signals more snow to come. The darkness filled up not with whining but with joyful shouts of discovery and the crunch of snowshoes biting crusty snow. Our backyard had been almost instantly transformed from forbidding arctic outpost to playground of possibilities.

Since then it's been a lot easier to mount outdoor adventures. We bought headlamps for the girls, and I plotted short courses suitable for short legs. We take turns as head musher, packing the trail. Instead of intimidating the girls, the darkness seems to draw out questions about the world around them. Where do the deer — whose tracks they now recognize near the stream — hunker down on these frigid nights? What if they can't break the ice to drink? Why don't we see any bats?

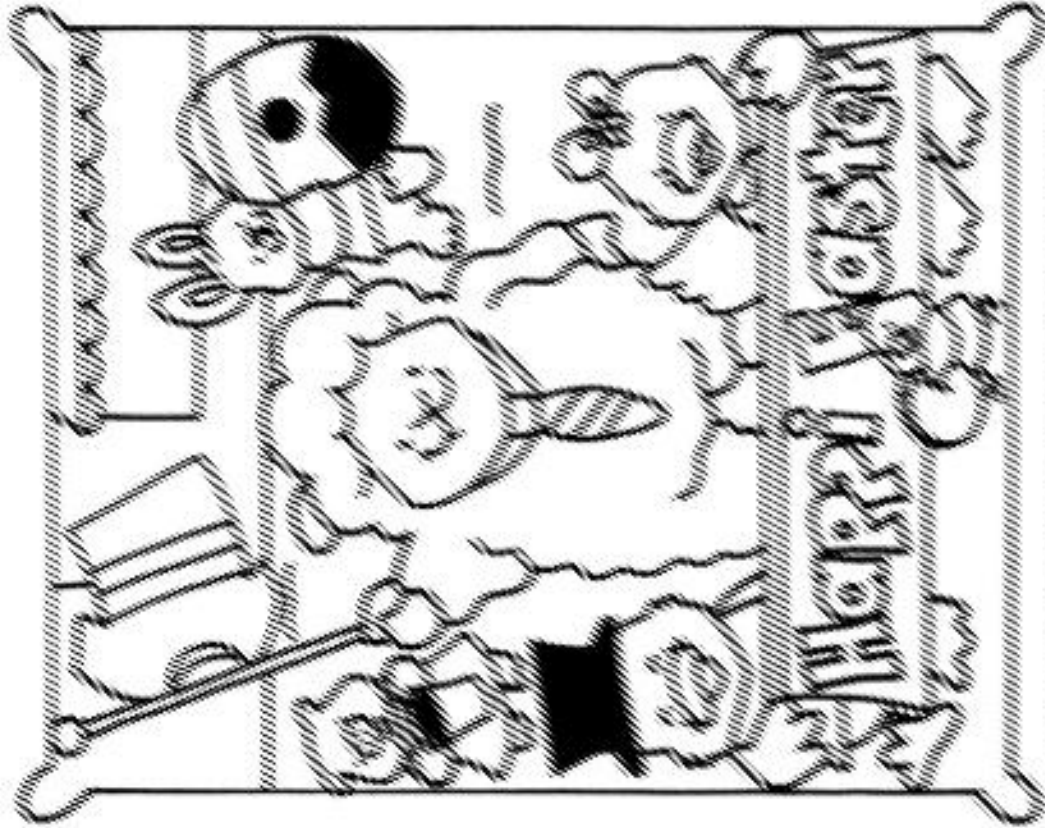


On the way back home, giddy with the treat of being out after dark, Caitlin and Ellie often play tag or hide and seek, or become mini urban planners, making a stump store here, a house under a balsam canopy there.

Headlamps bring out the potential fun in winter darkness regardless of whether you live where there's snow. They don't, however, solve everything. It's still cold outside, bindings don't always stay put, and what your kids consider a mighty hike will probably strike you as a far cry from exercise. But there's something about those lights that sparks kids'



Everyone loves to watch the Easter parade. Here it comes!



The parade looks the same, but 6 things have changed. Circle all of the changes.