Help for the Holidays

by Kate Thomas, Reference Librarian

Don’t look now but the holidays are rapidly approaching. Will you be ready? If you’re clueless about what to give, what to cook or bake, how to decorate or entertain, the next few months can be extremely stressful. However, the resources available at the Thousand Oaks Library and Newbury Park Branch can be a big help in relieving some of that stress.

Holiday cookbooks are a great place to start when planning the holiday meal. The library has many seasonal cookbooks. You might want to begin with Chuck Williams’ Thanksgiving and Christmas (641.568) for traditional fare. To add to that special beef meal, a recipe for cranberry horseradish sauce is included. To keep all family members happy, Moosewood Restaurant Celebrates (641.568) includes both vegetarian and vegan menus. The Essentials of Roasting (641.71) has all the information you need to keep your turkey moist. Joan Nathan’s Jewish Holiday Cookbook (641.5676) has hundreds of recipes, representing both the Ashkenazic and Sephardic traditions from all over the world. Check out Angela Medearis’ A Kwanzaa Celebration: Festive Recipes and Homemade Gifts from an African-American Kitchen (641.59296) for recipes and gifts for Kwanzaa. To really get you in the mood, Festive Table (641.568) can help you create a tree trimming and fondue party. If you didn’t make fondue in the 70’s, get some help with Ilana Simon’s 125 Best Fondué Recipes. Each recipe has a tip, make ahead idea and suggestions on what else to serve.

Next get out your baking gear and start baking. If you need some help, many people consider Baking Illustrated (641.815) the best instructional book on baking. Or, when your neighborhood group invites you to their annual cookie swap, pick up Baker’s Field Guide to Christmas Cookies (641.8654) and wow them with your pecan butter balls and sugarplums.

For something more old-fashioned, try making a gingerbread house. Gingerbread for All Seasons (641.8653) has great pictures and instructions for the construction phase. The creative baker might even try making a gingerbread castle. Check out Making Great Gingerbread Houses (641.8653) for designs of castles, lighthouses and even a treehouse.

The 642.4 area of nonfiction has beautiful books on entertaining. For example, if you’re looking to do a holiday dessert buffet, try Martha Stewart’s Menus for Entertaining (642.4). For an overall elegant look, check out Gourmet’s Holiday Christmas Crafts and Entertainment (745.59412) will help the savvy hostess make a great impression with beaded ornaments and decorated trees.

Some of the most cherished gifts are the ones that people make themselves. If you love working with fabric or textiles, Christmas Crafts (745.5941) will help you create the stocking and then make something to put in it!

If you’re hoping to make a special gift for a teacher or a dog-lover, you’ll find a special teacher gift basket and dog bones in It’s in the Bag: Tasty Gifts in Crafty Sacks (641.5973) and Gifts of Good Taste (641.568).

Holiday traditions are important because they provide stability and solidify relations between the genera-

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November and December in the Northern Hemisphere are two months of the year in which the bright days grow shorter and the dark nights grow longer. This is a traditional time in many cultures for rest and storytelling. And how wonderful for us that so many holidays fall during this season! November 1 brings Diwali, the Indian festival of lights, as well as the Mexican Day of the Dead. This year the end of Ramadan falls on November 3, when Eid-al-Fitr celebrations cap this period of fasting. Thanksgiving, a favorite American holiday, is on November 24.

There are many children’s books that celebrate these days. For preschoolers, Nancy Luenn’s *Celebrations of Light: A Year of Holidays Around The World* is a good introduction to some of these holy days and festivals. Rumer Godden’s *Premlata and the Festival of Lights*, a short work of fiction involving Diwali, is suitable for the primary grades.

The library has items in both Spanish and English on the theme of Dia de los Muertos, or Day of the Dead. A good short introduction is Luis San Vicente’s *The Festival of Bones/El Festival de las Calaveras*, a bilingual book which has poetry, instructions on how to build an altar, and even recipes for two treats, pan de muerto and sugar skulls.

A pair of good books on Ramadan and Eid-al-Fitr are Diane Hoyt-Goldsmith’s *Celebrating Ramadan* and Mary Matthews’ *Magid Fasts for Ramadan*. *Celebrating Ramadan* is a nonfiction book which follows one young boy and his family in the United States through the holy month of Ramadan. It has many photographs that illustrate the events and the people who celebrate them. *Magid Fasts for Ramadan* is a short story about what happens when a boy who is really too young to join in the month long fast does so anyway against his parents’ wishes.

Most of us enjoy the traditional American Thanksgiving feast. Alison Jackson’s *I Know An Old Lady Who Swallowed A Pie* is a humorous book about eating way too much during Thanksgiving. *The Thanksgiving Crafts and Cookbook* by Nancy Hathaway has some fun ideas for decorations as well as a yummy recipe for Indian Pudding. In addition to these types of books, there are many that have to do with the history and personalities associated with Thanksgiving. *Squanto and the First Thanksgiving* by Teresa Celsi is an Early Reader that a person just beginning to read may enjoy on their own.

December brings more holidays, among them the old Roman feast of Saturnalia on December 17 – 23, Christmas on December 25, and beginning December 26, both Hanukkah and Kwanzaa.

*Saturnalia* is the title of a Young Adult novel by Paul Fleischman. He uses the “ancient Roman holiday on which masters and slaves trade roles” to build the story of William, an Indian captive turned printer’s apprentice in 1681 Boston. This is an intriguing look at multiple cultures and multiple lives.

There are a multitude of children’s books about Christmas, like Gary Soto’s *Too Many Tamales*. Read it and find out what happens to the tamales and Maria as she searches for her mother’s lost wedding ring. Another excellent book is Barbara Robinson’s *The Best Christmas Pageant Ever*. It will leave you laughing. Music, movies, food – there are children’s materials on these and many other aspects of this holiday. Visit the library and talk to our staff for additional good suggestions.

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Light From Darkness (continued)

Hanukkah, the Jewish Festival of Lights, is another winter holiday. As with Christmas, there are many items in the library’s collection from which to choose. Jane Breskin Zalben’s Papa’s Latkes is a charming book with a song and recipe for potato pancakes included. Nobel Prize winner Isaac Bashevis Singer gives us a collection of short stories for this holiday entitled The Power of Light: Eight Stories for Hanukkah.

Kwanzaa, meaning “first fruit” or “first fruits of the harvest” in Swahili, is an African American celebration of the unity of the black family. Marcia Odle McNair’s Kwanzaa Crafts has brief information about the holiday and a wealth of beautiful crafts for both giving and keeping. “Habari gani (What’s the news)?” is the daily greeting on each of the seven days of Kwanzaa. It’s also the title of the book by Sundaira Morninghouse which follows a family through each day of Kwanzaa.

Through the observation and celebration of these many holidays and festivals, this season of darkness may become a season of light for each and every one of us.

Special Collections Goes to Press

Two library staff members are the authors of a book soon to be published by McFarland Press. The book, entitled, “American Radio Archives - Radio Series Scripts” is an annotated bibliography of radio scripts acquired by the Thousand Oaks Library Foundation and held in the Thousand Oaks Library Special Collections Department. The authors, Jeanette Berard and Klaudia Englund are both certified archivists dedicated to the preservation, description, and organization of the rare and unique materials that comprise the library’s special collections. The book, scheduled to be published in 2006, has a foreword written by Norman Corwin, and text documenting and describing the more than 25,000 radio scripts that are held at the Thousand Oaks Library. The work is illustrated with photographs and, from our collections, original pencil sketches found on some of the scripts. The manuscript was well received by McFarland, and in September, Berard and Englund were offered a contract for another publication to be entitled, “American Radio Archives - Television Scripts.”

Holiday Help (continued)

ations. Meg Cox’s The Book of New Family Traditions: How to Create Great Rituals for Holidays and Everyday (306.85) will help you find fresh ways of commemorating traditional holidays like Thanksgiving, Christmas, Hanukkah and Kwanzaa.

Too often the holidays exhaust us rather than lift us up. So for this busiest time of the year, plan ahead, keep it simple, involve family and friends, and be sure to be good to yourself. Let the library’s collection of current and timeless treasures help you make this the most memorable and stress-free holiday season ever.
### Calendar of Events

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<td>Wee Ones and Toddlers storytimes for ages 18-36 months. TOL at 10:15am and 11:00am. Thru Nov. 15. Storytime is Fun-Time! for ages 3-5; 1:30pm at NPB, storytime for fun-loving preschoolers. Thru Nov. 8.</td>
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<td>Friendly Book Disc., 7:30pm, TOL. “My Sister’s Keeper” by Jodi Picoult.</td>
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<td>8</td>
<td>Wee Ones and Toddlers storytimes at TOL; 10:15 &amp; 11:00am Storytime is Fun-Time! final storytime of the series at NPB.</td>
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<td>Perfect for Preschoolers storytimes for 3, 4, &amp; 5-yr. olds. TOL at 10:30am &amp; at 1:30pm. Thru Nov. 17.</td>
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<td>Shopping on the Net. Free Internet program helps you be a savvy online shopper. TOL at 7:00pm</td>
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<td>Wee Ones and Toddlers final storytime of the series at TOL; 10:15 &amp; 11:00am</td>
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<td>Thanksgiving Day</td>
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TOL = Thousand Oaks Library (Grant R. Brimhall Building) • 805-449-2660
NPB = Newbury Park Branch Library • 805-498-2139 www.toaks.org/library

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### Thanksgiving Day

- Used Book Sale 6 - 8:30pm, NPB. Sponsored by Friends of the Library.
- Used Book Sale 10am - 3pm NPB. Sponsored by Friends of the Library.

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### The Oakleaf

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Director of Library Services: Stephen R. Brogden

**Thousand Oaks Library • 805-449-2660**
1401 E. Janss Road • Thousand Oaks, CA 91362
**Hours:**
- Monday - Thursday: 10:00am - 9:00pm
- Friday: 10:00am - 6:00pm
- Saturday: 10:00am - 5:00pm
- Sunday: 1:00pm - 5:00pm

**Newbury Park Branch Library • 805-498-2139**
2331 Borchard Road • Newbury Park, CA 91320
**Hours:**
- Monday - Wednesday: 12:00pm - 9:00pm
- Thursday - Friday: 10:00am - 6:00pm
- Saturday: 10:00am - 5:00pm
- Sunday: CLOSED