Computers & Kids NEWS

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COMPUTER EXPLORERS®

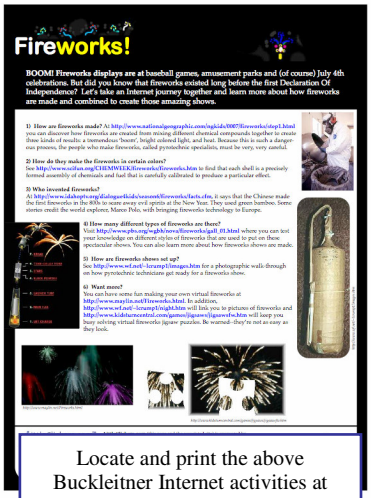
4th of July Fun Anytime!

Bring back a great summertime tradition to your neighborhood by organizing a neighborhood parade. Whether your parade is on July 4th, August 1st, or Labor Day doesn't matter as much as starting a great tradition that your children will remember!

Pick a date, time, and place for the parade and then host a parade preparation party! If your neighborhood has an email list, E-invitations make getting the word out easy and inexpensive. Summer-themed e-mail invitations from www.evite.com are especially fun!

Streamers, tape, and balloons are must - haves for a parade preparation party! For ideas on decorating bicycles and wagons visit one of these sites: Kaboose at http://crafts.kaboose.com/bike-decorations.html or PreschoolRock at http://activities.preschoolrock.com/index.php/activities-2/bicycle-and-wagon-party-parade. For children who would rather dress up, have costume-making crafts available. To learn how to create a Lady Liberty or Red, White, and Blue Caped Crusader, visit FamilyTime at www.familytime.com and search for "parade costumes".

On Parade Day, get the attention and excitement of the whole neighborhood by offering something for everyone! Make an exhaustive list of categories and be prepared with prizes for everyone to encourage an even more elaborate parade next year! Categories could include: best float (wagon), best strollers, and best bicycles, best use of blue, best-dressed doll, best hat, etc. A large variety of summer-themed prizes are available inexpensively at Oriental Trading (www.orientaltrading.com). Have fun making great memories!



Locate and print the above Buckleitner Internet activities at www.computerexplorers.com

Children engaged in neighborhood activities might win parade prizes for soccer ball or basketball dribbling. Ask children adept at digital music to lead the parade with patriotic music downloaded from Apple's site, www.itunes.com.

Or ask older children to memorialize your 1st Annual Parade by taking photos and videos, and sharing them with neighbors at one of the sites listed by contributor Warren Buckleitner below.

Buckleitner Box

Parents: Put Childhood in the Digital Bottle!

Last month, I spoke at a conference of technology coordinators and I asked them what age they thought a child should get their first email address. I was surprised at one answer. "We setup a Gmail account for my Granddaughter when she was 14 months old" said one participant. She went on to describe how she and other adoring relatives used Gmail, Google Calendar, YouTube and Picasso (Google's photo sharing tool) to capture anecdotes, birthday's, photographs, and movies among all interested relatives.

What's cool about these services is that once a baby video is digital, it lasts forever. In other words, pixels don't fade. Unlike photographs of most adults these days that have faded, these images will always be crystal clear.

Google isn't the only site for such a job. Other sites like Artsonia (http://www.artsonia.com) and Tikatok (http://www.tikatok.com) are designed to collect children's artwork and sell it back to their adoring parents or Grandparents on a coffee mug, T-shirt or hardcover book. The sites are free and easy to use.

Childhood is so short –capture some of it in the digital bottle!

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