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**Off the Shelf:**

An e-mail newsletter from the Prince William Public Library System  
January 15, 2009  
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Fun Family-Friendly Winter Crafts!

When winter days turn gloomy and gray, kids and their parents need inspiration, stimulation, and a challenge to keep them from growing bored and antsy. The longer and drearier the winter, the more days stuck inside. Why not try some fun, family-friendly winter crafts? There are easy projects for little ones, and there are more difficult ones for older children. . .and every one is great fun!

To help you get started, here's a checklist for your winter craft day:

Be prepared. Once you've chosen your craft project, it's helpful to gather all your supplies together before you begin crafting. Make sure to have extra supplies for do-overs, since young crafters, especially first timers, may make mistakes.

Cover your work area and the children to lessen the mess. Make sure children have on old clothing and/or aprons. Take a few garbage can liners or clean paint tarps and cover the floor or table. When the project is finished, you can just gather the liners and throw the mess away. You can find inexpensive bags by the roll at your local dollar store or you can even use brown paper grocery bags.

Pick a slow day for the project, such as a day off from school or a quiet Sunday afternoon when nothing else is on the family schedule. Having enough time to make mistakes and do things over will make the project less stressful and more fun for everyone.

Make the project age appropriate. For instance, a hot glue gun should only be used by older children under supervision. Keep in mind you may have to make a few modifications to a project to keep an older child's interest. Especially encourage older kids to be creative and think outside the box.

Put on some background music. In keeping with the winter theme, why not check out this recording from the library? John McCutcheon's *Four Seasons: Wintersongs* (JCD 398.8 McC).

For project ideas, check out some of these books from the Library:

Crafts to make in the winter, by Kathy Ross (J 745.5 Ros)

Step-by-step crafts for winter, by Kathy Ross (J 745.5 Ros)

Winter day play! : activities, crafts, and games for indoors and out
by Nancy Castaldo (J 790.1922 Cas)

Wintry weather keeping you indoors or simply no time to come to the Library? Why not try these websites for craft ideas:

<http://www.create-kids-crafts.com/winter-crafts-for-kids.html>

<http://home.howstuffworks.com/winter-crafts.htm>

<http://www.apples4theteacher.com/holidays/winter/kids-crafts/>

You can also locate articles on winter crafts from your home computer by searching the Library's Electronic Resources (<http://www.pwcgov.org/library/electronicresources>). You will need your library barcode number to access our many wonderful databases! To find the databases designed for kids, just browse the subject guide under "Kids".

Two great Electronic Resources to try are *InfoTrac Kid's edition* and *Kid's InfoBits*. Type in search terms such as "winter crafts", or "winter fun", and then scroll through the article titles to find what you're looking for. *Searchosaurus*, also included on the Kid's page of Electronic Resources, has a terrific Arts & Crafts section. And of course, for the little ones, don't forget *TumbleBooks*, where preschoolers and beginning readers can follow a story that is read aloud to them!

Whatever craft your choose, have a great time! Happy Winter Crafting!!

IN THE SPOTLIGHT: Random Acts of Genealogical Kindness!

Did you begin this new year hoping to spend some time researching your ancestors?

Look to Bull Run Library and the competent RELIC staff (<http://www.pwcgov.org/library/relic>) who will be happy to assist you no matter if you are a beginner or a veteran genealogist who is stuck on some part of your family tree.

Your library system has access to *Heritage Quest* and *America's Obituaries and Death Notices* as well as other electronic resources to help you with your search. For a listing of the electronic databases available, just visit the Library's electronic resources page (<http://www.pwcgov.org/library/electronicresources>) and click on "genealogy" under Subject Guides.

Additional help can also be found online at the website Random Acts of Genealogical Kindness (<http://www.raogk.org>) which is a global volunteer organization. Volunteers take time to do such things as to search courthouse records, help with research, and photograph cemetery memorial stones. The volunteers only ask for reimbursement for photocopies, film, or postage. This organization is also looking for volunteers in various states.

If your wish this year was to learn more about your ancestors, think of your library as your place to start.

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