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HERALDNEWS

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BOOKSHELF



Grace in space

The Washington Post

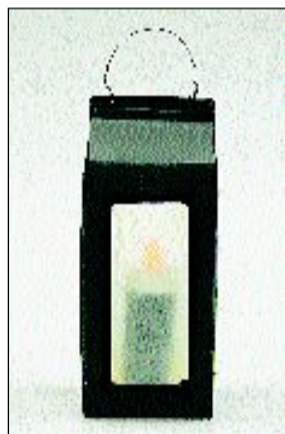
"Comets, Stars, the Moon and Mars,"
by Douglas Florian; ages 7-10; Harcourt
Children's Books (\$16)

How well-versed are you on the universe? This little nugget of a rhyming book is a nice liftoff for National Poetry Month in April. It has poems about the solar system, the planets, comets, constellations, black holes and "the great beyond."

You'll hardly notice you're learning things. For example: Jupiter is "gaseous, not dense"; Venus was named for the goddess of love; and "Mars is rusty" (What rhymes with "dusty"?).

The illustrations (paintings by the author) are colorful and a bit mysterious. There's a car on Mercury and little green faces on Mars. Can you guess why?

PROJECT TIME

Lantern recalls
Revere's rideBy KATHY ANTONIOTTI
Akron Beacon Journal

Memorizing historical dates is difficult for most students. It helps to associate a date with something that is easier to remember, such as a song or a poem. Thanks to American poet Henry Wadsworth Longfellow, it's a breeze to remember when Paul Revere (1734-1818) rode through the countryside to warn of a British invasion. "Paul Revere's Ride" is one of the most popular poems in American literature. It memorializes the date, April 18, 1775, that helped launch a revolution.

Longfellow's account of the lantern signal in the steeple of the Old North Church is inaccurate. Revere directed the signal, "one if by land, and two if by sea," be sent not to him, but to friends in Charlestown, so they would know British troops were crossing the bay from Boston to Cambridge by boat.

Using a milk carton, I made a lantern that looks similar to the signal lights that hung in the Old North Church. Use only a battery-operated tea light (available at craft stores) to light the lantern and not a real candle.

SUPPLIES YOU WILL NEED:
1 half-gallon milk or juice carton
1 empty toilet paper roll
1 battery-operated tea light
Waxed paper
Clay
Glue
Scissors
Black paint and brush
Ruler

Wash the inside of the carton. Draw a 3-1/2 inch by 5-1/2 inch rectangle centered on each side of the box. Cut the rectangle out.

Slide the toilet paper roll down the side and overlap the edge about one-half inch so the tea light can be inserted without falling through. Secure with tape or glue.

Paint the box and toilet paper roll black. Let dry.

Roll a ball of clay into a flat circle. Cut waxed paper to size and glue to the inside of three sides of the carton. Press the toilet paper roll on the clay so it stands upright and straight. Glue to the bottom of the carton.

Press the button of the tea light to the "on" position and place on the top of the toilet paper roll through the open side.

sneakers

The Presidential Race:
Off and RunningCAMPAIGN
VOCABULARY

General Election: When candidates are elected to office. General elections are held in November, on the Tuesday following the first Monday of the month. General elections are open to all registered voters, whether or not they belong to a political party. Presidential elections are held every four years.

Primary: An election in which voters nominate their candidate (or delegates who support their candidate) for a coming general election. Usually, only members of the political party holding the primary may vote in it. In some states, the winner of a presidential primary gets all of that state's delegates to that party's nominating convention; in other states, the delegation is split according to how many votes each candidate receives. New Hampshire is scheduled to hold the first state primary next year, on Jan. 22.

Caucus: A meeting of party members to select delegates for the nominating convention. Iowa is scheduled to hold the first caucus next year, on Jan. 14.

Delegate: A person chosen (in a primary or caucus) to represent the views of others at a nominating convention. The presidential candidate who wins the majority of a party's delegates wins that party's nomination. The Democrats will select 4,354 delegates for their 2008 convention. The Republicans won't know their total until the end of this year.

Party Convention: A meeting of delegates to select the party's presidential and vice presidential nominees, called the party's "ticket." The nominees then make the case to the American people why they should be elected in the general election. In 2008 the Democrats will hold their convention in August in Denver, Colo.; the Republicans will gather in September in St. Paul, Minn.

Federal Election Commission: An agency that makes sure that candidates obey the law when they raise and spend money for their campaigns. The commission also oversees a fund that provides public money to presidential candidates.

— The
Washington PostPhotos by The
Washington PostBy TRACY GRANT
The Washington Post

In 566 days, Americans will elect the next president of the United States.

Hey, wait a minute: That's more than a year and a half away. So why is it that every day there are headlines, news reports and photographs of all these people running for president?

And why should you care — given that, if you are reading this page, chances are pretty good you won't be old enough to vote on Nov. 4, 2008? (For those grown-ups reading this, we won't tattle; we love our young-at-heart readers!)

KidPost's Tracy Grant explains the election process, why it has started so early and, hopefully, why you really should care.

Check the calendar

While the general election isn't until November 2008, the first votes in the process of deciding who will be the next president will be cast less than nine months from now. On Jan. 14 voters in Iowa will meet to choose delegates to represent them at the party conventions in August and September of 2008.

There are two major political parties, the Democrats and the Republicans. Each party will nominate a candidate after a series of elections called caucuses and primaries. In the month or so following the Iowa caucuses, people in as many as two dozen other states will vote for their choice to be their party's nominee. The candidate who does best in these early elections often goes on to win his or her party's nomination.

A historic election, part 1

Much of the time, it's fairly clear who is going to be the nominee of at least one, if not both, of the major parties. For example, if a first-term president decides to seek reelection, it's rare for someone in his own party to challenge him. (By law, President George W. Bush cannot seek a third term.) Sometimes when a president can't run, the vice president will. If he does, he is pretty much guaranteed his party's nomination.

The election of 2008 will be the first time since 1952 that neither a sitting president nor vice president will be running for office. The uncertainty about who will be the nominees makes this election more exciting.

A historic election, part 2

The election of 2008 has the potential for an important first in U.S. history. Sen. Hillary Rodham Clinton (a Democrat) is seeking to become the first female president. Sen. Barack Obama (also a Democrat) would be the first black president. New Mexico Governor Bill Richardson (another Democrat) would be the first Hispanic president, and former Massachusetts governor Mitt Romney (a Republican) would be the first Mormon president.

Who may become president?

The Constitution has some rules on this. You have to be at least 35 years old. You have to be a natural-born citizen, and you have to have lived in the United States for at least 14 years.

Anything else?

It's not in the Constitution, but you need to have (or be able to raise) lots of money to run for president. The Democratic and Republican nominees could each wind up spending \$500 million before the election. Candidates raise money from people and groups who believe in their positions on the issues of the day. It costs a lot of money to fly around the country campaigning and to buy ads on radio and TV and in newspapers. The government, through the Federal Election Commission, keeps track of how much money candidates get and from whom.

Why should I care who is president?

The president affects issues such as education, war, the environment, crime and the economy (the cost of food, clothing and housing; how many people are employed; how much of what people earn gets paid to the government as taxes). In other words, he or she affects decisions about your world.

Candidates at a glance

More than a dozen people have announced that they are running for president in 2008. Here's a quick look at six leading candidates in each major party.

DEMOCRATS

Joe Biden
Job: Senator from Delaware
Age: 64
Family: Married, three children
Fun fact: Took office at age 30 — the fifth-youngest U.S. senator.



Hillary Rodham Clinton
Job: Senator from New York
Age: 59
Family: Married, one child
Fun fact: She is the first former first lady elected to the U.S. Senate.



Chris Dodd
Job: Senator from Connecticut
Age: 62
Family: Married, two children
Fun fact: He and his dad, Thomas Dodd, were the first father and son elected to the U.S. Senate from Connecticut.



John Edwards
Job: Lawyer and former senator from North Carolina
Age: 53
Family: Married, three children
Fun fact: Favorite Web sites included those for the UNC basketball teams.



Barack Obama
Job: Senator from Illinois
Age: 45
Family: Married, two children
Fun fact: His father was a goat herder in Kenya who won a scholarship to a university in Hawaii.



Bill Richardson
Job: Governor of New Mexico
Age: 59
Family: Married, no children
Fun fact: He spent his childhood in Mexico, his mother's country.



REPUBLICANS

Sam Brownback
Job: Senator from Kansas
Age: 60
Family: Married, five children
Fun fact: His Senate Web site has a photo of him riding a rodeo bull.



Rudy Giuliani
Job: Lawyer and former mayor of New York City
Age: 62
Family: Married, two children
Fun fact: He lost his first bid for mayor in the closest election in New York City history.



Mike Huckabee
Job: Former governor of Arkansas
Age: 51
Family: Married, three children
Fun fact: Since 2003, he has lost 110 pounds and run in four marathons.



John McCain
Job: Senator from Arizona
Age: 70
Family: Married, seven children
Fun fact: He was profiled in KidsPost about his book "Character Is Destiny."



Mitt Romney
Job: Former governor of Massachusetts
Age: 60
Family: Married, five children
Fun fact: He was the boss of the 2002 Olympics in Salt Lake City, Utah.



Tommy Thompson
Job: Former governor of Wisconsin
Age: 65
Family: Married, three children
Fun fact: His father ran a gas station and country store in Elroy, Wis.

