



Pathfinder Pathways...

A Publication of the Georgia-Cumberland Conference Pathfinders

December 2003

A Touching Christmas Story

It's just a small, white envelope stuck among the branches of our Christmas tree. No name, no identification, no inscription. It has peeked through the branches of our tree for the past 10 years or so. It all began because my husband, Mike, hated Christmas – oh, not the true meaning of Christmas, but the commercial aspects of it – overspending...the frantic running around at the last minute to get a tie for Uncle Harry and the dusting powder for Grandma – the gifts given in desperation because you couldn't think of anything else. Knowing he felt this way, I decided one year to bypass the usual shirts, sweaters, ties and so forth. I reached for something special just for Mike.

The inspiration came in an unusual way. Our son, Kevin, who was 12 that year, was wrestling at the junior level at the school he attended; and shortly before Christmas there was a non-league match against a team sponsored by an inner-city church, mostly black. These youngsters, dressed in sneakers so ragged that shoestrings seemed to be the only thing holding them together, presented a sharp contrast to our boys in their spiffy blue and gold uniforms and sparkling new wrestling shoes. As the match began, I was alarmed to see that the other team was wrestling without headgear, a kind of light helmet designed to protect a wrestler's ears. It was a luxury the ragtag team obviously couldn't afford.

Well, we ended up walloping them. We took every weight class. And as each of their boys got up from the mat, he swaggered around in his tatters with false bravado, a kind of street pride that couldn't acknowledge defeat. Mike, seated beside me, shook his head sadly, "I wish just one of them could have won," he said. "They have a lot of potential, but losing like this could take the heart right out of them." Mike

loved kids – all kids – and he knew them, having coached little league football, baseball and lacrosse.

That's when the idea for his present came. That afternoon, I went to the local sporting goods store and bought an assortment of wrestling headgear and shoes and sent them anonymously to the inner-city church. On Christmas Eve, I place the envelope on the tree, the note inside telling Mike what I had done and that this was his gift from me. His smile was the brightest thing about Christmas that year and in succeeding years. For each Christmas, I followed the tradition – one year sending a group of mentally handicapped youngsters to a hockey gam, another year a check to a pair of elderly brothers whose home had burned to the ground the week before Christmas, and on and on. The envelope became the highlight of our Christmas. It was always the last thing opened on Christmas morning and our children, ignoring their new toys, would stand with wide-eyed anticipation as their dad lifted the envelope from the tree to reveal its contents. As the children grew, the toys gave way to more practical presents, but the envelope never lost its allure. The story doesn't end there. You see, we lost Mike last year due to dreaded cancer. When Christmas rolled around, I was still so wrapped in grief that I barely got the tree up. But Christmas Eve found me placing an envelope on the tree, and in the morning, it was joined by three more. Each of our children, unbeknownst to the others, had placed an envelope on the tree for their dad.

The tradition has grown and someday will expand even further with our grandchildren standing around the tree with wide-eyed anticipation watching as their fathers take down the envelope. Mike's spirit, like the Christmas spirit, will always be with us.

- Unknown

Honor Toolbox



Chemistry Honor

There are many fun and different experiments that can be used to help teach the chemistry honor. Here's a really fun experiment you can try. Also several Websites are listed below that have other experiments that you might like to check out.

Homemade Slime

To make one golf ball size batch of slime you will need:

- Elmer's glue (most kinds of white craft glue will work)
- A clear plastic cup
- Food coloring (you pick the color)
- Water
- Borax (available at most large grocery stores near the laundry detergent)
- Small plate, dish or plastic wrap.
- A popsicle stick (for stirring)

What to do:

Beforehand: Mix about a teaspoon of the Borax into a cup of water and stir (it usually doesn't fully dissolve)

SLIME TIME!

1. Fill the plastic cup with about 1/2 inch of Elmer's glue
2. Add 20 ml (three tablespoons) of water to the glue and stir
3. Add 2 drops of food coloring and stir again
4. Add two tablespoons of the Borax solution and stir well.
5. Lift out the stick with the goo and place it on the dish
6. Let it sit for a minute and then pull it off the stick and play with it!

[Homemade Slime](#)

[More Homemade Slime](#)

[Kitchen Chemistry](#)

[Reeko's Mad Scientist Lab](#)

[Recipes for Family Fun](#)

[Smile Program Chemistry Index](#)

[Science Bob](#)

[Rader's Chem4Kids](#)

Safety Tips for Indoor Games

Indoor games can produce of injuries. Here are some safety tips.

- **Floor.** Is it slippery? Is ordinary footwear compatible with it? Remember that socks are not a good idea for games on polished floors. Are splinters possible?
- **Furniture and fittings.** If somebody collides with these, can they get hurt? Is anything sharp? Think about the possibility of eye injuries.
- **Games equipment.** Is it designed for, and appropriate to the game? If, for example, heavy bats and balls are not essential, use light ones.
- **Players.** Try to avoid situations where large players are tackling smaller ones.

Make sure that there is adequate adult supervision throughout the whole game. Carefully explain the rules of the game, spelling-out the do's and don'ts, before the game starts.

Have a means of bringing the game to a halt (a whistle is ideal) and make sure that the players obey it.

If the players become overexcited and boisterous, stop the game and remind the players of the rules (e.g., no pushing and shoving) This gives players time to calm down. Don't hesitate to abandon the game if you think that it has gotten out of control.

If we did all the things we are capable of doing, we would literally astound ourselves.

--Thomas Alva Edison



Knot this Month

Aside from serving as a line to dry your bathing suit after a dip in the lake or airing out that soggy sleeping bag, rope is essential to any backpacking or hiking adventure. Sure one or two simple knots are all you need to get by, but using the right knot in the right circumstance can mean the difference between you or your pesky forest neighbors downing your food supply. Actually it is wise to keep all smelly items tied in bags . . . you never know the exotics your smellables may attract.

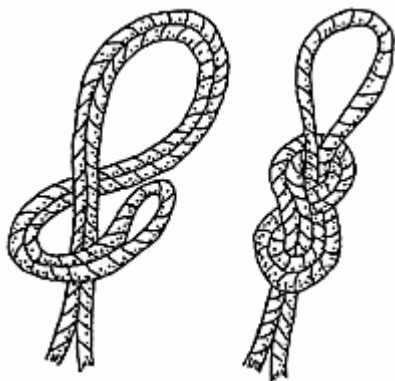
Rain and other unexpected surprises can also make your adventure a real adventure when crossing an otherwise slow-moving stream. A rope may come in handy when you and your buddy need to get safely to the other side

Figure Eight

Also known as the Flemish knot, this basic knot has a variety of uses. Tied at rope's end, the figure eight acts as a stopper, preventing the rope from slipping through a grommet. The overhand knot could be used, but the figure eight is easier to untie. Tied in the middle of the rope, the figure eight can be used as a slip knot

- Double the rope over, then form a loop
- Take the doubled over free end and pass it through the loop you just formed. Cinch the knot tight.

www.gorp.com



Camping



Backpacking 101 – Loading your pack

Whether you are carrying an internal or external frame pack, you should load it with balance and the convenient location of gear in mind. A few basic packing principles apply to both styles of packs.

- Remember to keep in mind that whatever goes into the pack first will come out last.
- **Protect your sleeping bag.** Internal frame packs have a special sleeping bag compartment in the bottom. External frame packs have a special area below the pack bag where you can lash on your sleeping bag. In either case, make sure your sleeping bag is well protected from the elements. It is always a good idea to carry a large plastic garbage bag. If it rains, you can line your sleeping bag stuff sack with it for extra protection.
- **Balance your load.** Carry clothing, cooking essentials and food in the main compartment. The heaviest gear should be stowed toward your back and centered in the pack to provide proper balance. It helps to use a soft garment as a buffer between your back and hard-edged items such as cook kits and fuel bottles. Mid-weight gear should be carried toward the top and outside portion of the pack. Organizing your gear in color-coded stuff sacks makes packing easier and helps you locate supplies quickly on the trail.
- **Keep essentials handy.** Decide what you'll need during the day. What does the weather look like? Will you need easy access to rain ponchos and plastic garbage bags to cover the packs? Or will you want to change into shorts at midday? A change of clothes, along with sunglasses, suntan lotion, maps, candy bars, and other small essentials need to be within easy reach. Lunch and munch food should also be easily accessible. Plan to take pictures at every scenic point? If so, keep your camera in a handy pouch.

- If you will be hiking or getting into camp in the dark, make sure to pack your flashlight or headlamp where it's quick and easy to get to.
- The easiest way to avoid frustration is to consistently pack the same items in the same pockets. Once you have a packing routine, you'll find it natural to reach for the right pocket every time.
- Aim for no more than one-fourth of your body weight to start, one-fifth of your body weight if you're out of shape and already hauling around a few extra pounds of your own. Very fit hikers can handle one-third of their body weight, and in some cases more.
- If there's any chance of wet weather, make sure to pack in waterproof bags. Garbage bags will work. Gallon size Ziplock® bags work great for sets of clothes. Also remember to make sure that if you have to open your pack in the rain that you haven't put everything in one garbage bag. If you put like items in smaller bags, you will be able to find things you need without everything getting wet.
- Many times when backpacking you will be sharing gear with another person. Even if you intend to walk together at the same pace, make sure each of you has complete useful items: The person carrying the stove should have the pots and the fuel; the person with the tent gets the whole thing, including poles. The person with the stove should carry the ground cloth or space blanket; the person with the tent gets food that can be eaten cold. That way, if you get separated by accident, you each have gear you can make use of.
- Some liquid gas-fueled stoves come in two parts; make sure you've got both parts of your stove. Also if your stove has a specific fuel bottle as part of the assembly, make sure that the bottle you take fits the stove you're going to use.
- Make sure you have your tent poles: The right number of the right kind. Ditto for tent stakes.

- Another item that seems pretty straightforward is to make sure that the waistband buckles are both there. I once reached the trailhead and tried to snap the plastic buckles and realized that one of them was missing. A carabiner worked in a pinch but it sure wasn't comfortable.
- Keep your gear straight. Stuff sacks are backpacking's answer to file cabinets. Go for bright colors: you won't end up leaving one behind by accident. (Don't worry – you're not violating low-impact courtesy- your stuff sacks spend most of their time hidden in your pack, right?)
- Once your pack is packed check out the fit when it's loaded down with actual gear. Make sure your shirt doesn't have seams exactly under your pack's shoulder straps, and everything that's supposed to fit inside your pack actually does.
- Last but not least, if you're the person with the keys to the car, make sure that they are easily accessible when you get to the car. You don't want to have to dig through everything to find them once you get to the vehicle.

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## Outreach Activity Ideas

**S**hopper sitting – Have a group of Pathfinders turn the youth room into a nursery and baby-sitting room for half a day. Publicize the free service to parents in the church. Ask parents to bring their children to the church for a specified time so they can run holiday errands.

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The real art of conversation is not only to say the right thing in the right place, but to leave unsaid the wrong thing at the tempting moment.

- Dorothy Nevill

Hike of the Month



Falls Branch (Falls) Trail – Citico Wilderness

The Falls Branch Trail is a relatively short (1.3 mile) trail leading to a secluded and beautiful, but little known, waterfall. The trail starts out, along with the Jeffery Hell Trail, from the Rattlesnake rock parking/overlook down a short access trail to the old Sassafras Ridge Road. Jeffery's Hell trail goes to the right on the old road while the Falls Branch Trail goes to the left. This section of the old road passes through an especially beautiful old growth grove. Follow the old road for about .9 miles and watch for the trail going off to the right. Brush has been piled across the road to warn you of the turn, most hikers do not find it difficult to locate.

Shortly after leaving the old road the trail descends rather precipitously. This portion is quite rocky and treacherous but lovely! Some of the knurled and knotted old tree roots are like illustrations out of a fairy tale. When you finally reach Falls Branch you can see the waterfall, but in summer your view will be obscured by the foliage. You can cross the branch carefully and climb through a miniature "stone door" and up the other side of the branch for an unobstructed view.

To find this trail take whatever route suits you best to Tellico Plains. The simplest (not the shortest) route is to go north on I75 to SR68 (Sweetwater exit) and then go east to Tellico Plains. Follow the signs for the Cherohala Skyway to the Rattlesnake Rock (8.4 miles from the junction with FS345, which has a sign pointing to Bald River Falls). Rattlesnake Rock has no sign, but is in Tennessee past Eagle Gap and before Beech Gap, both of which are marked. Although at approximately 80 miles from Chattanooga, which is a long drive for such a short hike, this would make a nice "break" for anyone traveling the Cherahala Skyway for whatever reason.

For more information or to purchase a map contact: Tellico Ranger District

Route 3, Tellico River Road

[Chattanooga Hiking Club](#)

Most of the time when we think of taking a hike, we think of going off someplace in the woods, but that's just one type of hike. Here's an idea an additional type of hike.

Historical Hike – Have the units consult the library, their school teachers, their pastor, and the local Chamber of Commerce, for historical facts of your locality. Decide on a hike route that will include the greatest possible number of interesting spots. Send out the units to investigate as many places as possible. At the hike destination each unit reports on its findings.



Camp Cooking

This is a recipe that my best friend gave me and it's a great, filling one-pot meal.

Chili Mac

Serves 6

1 can kidney beans
1 can tomato sauce
1 can pinto beans
2 cups water
1 onion, medium, chopped fine
3-4 Dinner Cuts, chopped fine
1 1/2 cups elbow macaroni
chili powder
Cumin
Garlic powder
Sour cream (optional)
Cheddar cheese (optional)

Sauté onion & Dinner Cuts in small amount of oil in large saucepan. When done add all ingredients except the macaroni. Bring to a boil. When boiling add macaroni - reduce heat to simmer and cook until macaroni is tender. Add chili powder, garlic and cumin to taste. Serve with small cubes of cheddar cheese and/or sour cream.

This is great served with corn bread. If you're cooking for a unit, make it in a Bakepacker. If you've got a large group to serve, make it ahead of time.

Nature Nugget



“Meet a Tree”

This game is for groups of at least two. Pair off. Blindfold your partner and lead him through the forest to any tree that attracts you. (How far will depend on your partner’s age and ability to orientate himself. For all but very young children, a distance of 20-30 yards usually isn’t too far.)

Help the “blind” child to explore his tree and to feel its uniqueness. Specific suggestions are best. For example, if you tell children to “*Feel the tree*”, they won’t respond with as much interest as if you say “*Rub your cheek on the bark.*” Instead of “*Explore your tree,*” be specific: “*Is this tree still alive... Can you put your arms around it? ...Is the tree older than you are? ...Can you find plants growing on it? ...Animal signs? ... Lichens? ... Insects?*”

When your partner is finished exploring, lead him back to where you began, but take an indirect route. (This part of the game has its fun side, with the guides leading their partners over imaginary logs and through thickets that might easily have been avoided.) Now, remove the blindfold and let the child try to find the tree with his eyes open. Suddenly, as the child searches for *his* tree, what was a forest becomes a collection of very individual trees.

A tree can be an unforgettable experience in the child’s life.

- *Sharing Nature with Children*
By Joseph Cornell

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*Every child has inside him an aching void for excitement and if we don’t fill it with something which is exciting and interesting and good for him, he will fill it with something which is exciting and interesting and which isn’t good for him.*

- Theodore Roosevelt

## *Walking in His Moccasins*

### Tepees



If your club is interested in making a teepee or tipi as a project for the Camporee here are several Websites that have instructions on how to make them. You may choose to make a full sized one or a model. One website also outlines the proper etiquette of a tipi.

Or you may choose to make a model of another type of Native American dwelling. Remember when you are working with your Pathfinders on these projects to teach them about the tribe that the tipi represents.

### [Tipis](#)

### [How to make a Tipi](#)

### [Plains Architecture: Tipis and Sweatlodges](#)

### [Living in a Plains Indian Tipi](#)

### [The "What's in a House?" Educational Program](#)

### [Teepee Plans 10'](#)

### [Painting the Teepee](#)

### Other Projects

### [Sioux Indian War Bonnet](#)

### [Native American Activities](#)

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