

Activity Director Monthly

The Monthly Newsletter of The Activity Director's Office Website

Special Introductory Issue *Providing Online Resources for Activity Directors*

December 2004

The Real Christmas Story

"...Joseph also went from the town of Nazareth in Galilee to Judea, to the city of David called Bethlehem, because he was descended from the house and family of David. He went to be registered with Mary, to whom he was engaged and who was expecting a child." - Luke 2:4-5

Some 2000 years ago a young lady, named Mary, about 15 years of age, was praying in her home. All of a sudden she saw a stranger standing before her. She did not know how he had come in. The visitor was brighter than the light of day, and Mary frightened. She understood that he was not a man but an angel, when he greeted her: "Hail, you who are full of grace; the Lord is with you."

The angel told her not to be afraid. Then he conveyed to her the message that she would bear a son to be called Jesus." He shall be great," said the angel. "And men will know him for the Son of the Most High," which is one of the names of God. The Lord God would give him the throne of his ancestor, David, king of the Jews; he would make him a king, but one different from earthly kings, for unlike human kingdoms and empires, "his kingdom," said the angel, "shall never have an end. "Mary, who was not yet married, asked the angel how it could be. He answered her: "The Holy Spirit will come upon you and the power of the Most High will overshadow you."

Mary had always been obedient to the law of God; bow she

confirmed that his will was hers. Thus this humble maid was chosen to become the mother of one, whom the angel called the Son of the Most High, to be named Jesus, which means Savior.

She remembered that 700 years earlier Prophet Isaiah had foretold: "A virgin will conceive". It was also announced that the Savior would be of the family of David to which she belonged, as did Joseph, the young man to whom she was betrothed. Mary, full of joy, thanked God daily for his gift. Her elder cousin Elizabeth, the mother of John the Baptist, also congratulated her on being God's choice.

Some time later, Mary was married to a young man of David's clan, called Joseph. A carpenter by profession, he was God-fearing, pious and of great virtue. Before the marriage, learning Mary's condition, he had felt puzzled. But during the night, in a dream an

angel of God reassured him, inviting him to take Mary as his wife, for it was by the power of the Holy Spirit that she had conceived a child. "Mary", the angel said, "will bear a Son, whom you shall call Jesus, for he is to save his people from their sins." So Joseph took Mary into his house; he kept her secret and protected the all pure virgin, ready to become the guardian of her Child.

A few months after the marriage, Joseph and Mary left

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Linda's Notes

Hi, AD's!

Thank you so very much for subscribing to my newsletter. At **The Activity Director's Office** we are trying to use every means possible to help Activity Professionals across the United States, Canada, Great Britain and Australia.

This website and newsletter would not be possible without the help of other AD's who have already established excellent sites on the internet. It is their efforts and encouragement that have made it possible for me to get my website up and running. Special thanks go to Pennie and Chip Bacon of **The Activity Director Network** at <http://www.activitydirector.net> ; Gina Salazar of **Activity Ideas That Work** at <http://pages.ivillage.com/ginasalazar2004/> and **Activity Chat** at <http://health.groups.yahoo.com/group/Activ...?yguid=32256940> ; and, of course, my husband Bob Lucas of **Newsletter-Express.com** at <http://www.newsletter-express.com> .

In my facility it seems that nearly everyone gathers in the Activity Office during the day for a little chat, or to work on documentation. It is my hope that **The Activity Director's Office** will work the same way for all of us. Let it become a place to gather and to get encouraged and renewed. We all need a place to relax and feel at home. Visit often...stay longer...take a deep breath...and relax. You've got the greatest job in the world. - Linda



Linda Lucas is the owner of **The Activity Director's Office** website. She has been an Activity Director in Indiana since 1983.

Readers may contact Linda at:
admin@theactivitydirectorsoffice.com

Bob's Monthly Journal

The Car or the Box

By Robert Lucas,
Health Facility Administrator (retired)
Owner/Editor
Newsletter-Express.com
<http://www.newsletter-express.com>

They tell me it was freezing cold on that Christmas day of 1950. The heavy snow was piled in small mountains and most of the country roads were impassable. My parents and I were living with my grandparents at that time while my dad was going to school on the GI bill. I was three. It was only a few months before my Uncle Jim would be drafted into the Army and stationed in Korea. He was probably the most excited person in the little farm house on that chilly morning.

Jim was the second person up that day. My grandmother was always the first. The coal fired kitchen oven was quickly fighting back the cold while the Ben Franklin was doing the same in the living room. The smell of fresh brewed coffee filled the little house as the other adults drifted down the narrow stairs to find their seats at the large, oaken table. Soon the sound and smell of sizzling bacon and eggs joined the aroma of the coffee; and someone started making toast.

Everybody was chattering about the Christmas presents under the tree. Jim was eager for me to wake up and see the present he, Dad and Grandpa had gotten for me. It was a beautiful, gleaming, gray and red and chrome-plated pedal car (my first and only convertible). The camera was ready. The present was ready. The adults were ready. But the kid was still upstairs sound asleep.

They waited and waited.

The kid was still asleep.

They finished breakfast, had some more coffee and shared the newspaper.

The kid was still asleep (I am still a sound sleeper. Ask my wife).

Finally, Jim had enough of the waiting. He bounded up the narrow stairs and burst into my room. Leaning over me, he gently lifted me into his arms and carried me down to the family.

We all went into the living room; me riding on Uncle Jim's shoulders. There was the largest Christmas present I had ever seen. It was as big as me, covered with beautiful red and green wrapping paper and ribbon and a giant red bow. Everybody talked with excited voices. Someone made sure that the old Kodak box camera was ready to record some historical black and white photographs of the event.



The 1950 Murray Comet

Dad and Jim helped me unwrap the monstrous present. Paper and ribbon flew everywhere. Suddenly, there was the giant, naked cardboard box. It was really fascinating...a wonder to behold. But there was more. My dad gave the flaps a sharp tug and with a crisp ripping sound he opened the top of the box. Then he and Uncle Jim carefully lifted out the gleaming, super-streamlined pedal car and lowered it to the floor.

Everybody was impressed with the present. It was absolutely beautiful! They all loved it. It had been the top-secret project of the year. Dad and Jim had ordered it from the hardware store in town. When it arrived they carefully stored it away in one of the out-buildings on the farm. They had all wrapped it up carefully and placed the ribbon and the bow on it just so. There was pride in every heart. If they could, they all would hop in and take it for a spin around the little living room.

Me? I favored the box.

They tried to coax me into the pedal car; but I wouldn't go. I tried to climb into the box. Finally, Jim picked me up and tried to force me into the car. I screamed and kicked and threw a tantrum. I didn't want anything to do with that metal monster. If they would only let me climb into that huge cardboard box, everything would be just dandy. But, no; they wanted to take pictures. It was Christmas. Finally, my mother calmed me down and Dad was able to set me into the icy cold convertible. Yes, pictures were taken. But when all of the hoopla was over, and everybody went about their business, I spent the rest of the day delightfully playing in my beautiful cardboard box.

When my Dad finished his schooling, we moved to the city. Uncle Jim went off to Korea and saw Marilyn Monroe (he has pictures). I did play with the pedal car (although not often). Eventually it found its way back to my grandparents' farm where my cousins loved it and played with it for many years. Finally, it lived out its days, worn and rusted, but loved. When my grandparents retired and moved to town, all of my cousins had grown up and the little car was left behind. Today that little pedal car is worth a small fortune to collectors (\$350.00 +). What happened to the cardboard box? It went up in flames the day after that Christmas morning. Well...so much for my sense of financial value.

Attention Activity Directors!

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Also, for a small fee you can have the newsletter personalized with your choice of Title and your Facility name.

Gina's Activity Ideas for December

By Gina Salazar, AD

Owner of Activity Ideas That Work and Activity Chat websites

Crafts Corner:

I love Christmas time because there are so many fun crafts to do, here are some of my favorites.....

CRAFT SPOON CHRISTMAS TREE

What you need:

- Wooden craft spoons;
- the spoons that come with ice cream cups.
- Acrylic paint
- Fabric paint tubes
- Paint brushes
- Yellow fun foam or felt
- Craft glue
- Scissors
- Pin backs or ribbon

What to do:

Step 1. Paint five wooden spoons with green acrylic paint. It will take just a few minutes of drying time before handling.

Step 2. Cut the star from the fun foam or felt. I prefer fun foam. It's easier for kids to cut & glue.

Step 3. Glue the craft sticks in a fan shape to make the tree.

Step 4. Make dots with the paint tubes, for the decorations.

Step 5. For an ornament or gift tag; glue a ribbon loop to the back.

To make a pin, attach a pin back. Pin backs can be found plain or with self adhesive strips already attached

CANDY CANE REINDEER

What you need:

- 6 inch wrapped Candy Cane
- Ribbon
- 2 wiggle eyes
- Red or Brown pom-pom
- 2 pipe cleaners
- Craft glue or glue gun

What to do:

Leave the wrapping on the candy cane. Glue eyes on rounded face of the candy

cane. Glue red pompom on the face for a nose. Tie ribbon into a bow on the straight part of the candy cane. Cut one of the pipe cleaners in half. Wrap the full pipe cleaner around the crook of the candy cane to begin the antlers. Use the cut pipe cleaners to manipulate into antlers.

PEPPERMINT CANDY FRAME

What you need:

- Peppermint Candies
- jumbo craft sticks
- tacky glue
- card board
- a photograph or drawing to put in the picture
- clear acrylic spray.

What to do:

Glue four jumbo craft sticks together to form a square. Turn the picture so it is facing you. Glue peppermint candies all the way around the edge. You can leave the wrappers on or take them off. If you take the wrappers off spray several coats of clear acrylic paint over the candy and let dry between coats. This will keep the candy looking fresh and keep ants away. Glue a picture backed with card board on the back of the craft stick frame. Cut out a stand and glue it to the back.



GRAHAM CRACKER HOUSE

What you need:

- Graham Crackers
- Icing
- An Assortment of Candies

What to do:

What you need to do is line a small sheet of card board with tin foil then place 4 crackers in a square standing up to form the base of the house. 'Glue' them together with icing. Gently place 2 more graham crackers over the top to be the roof. Decorate your house using a variety of candy, which can be 'glued' on using the frosting.

Be creative and try your hand making different sized houses! For more support use a small box or milk carton as a base for your 'gingerbread' house. This will help it be sturdier.

Merry Christmas to all of you....Have fun!

-Gina

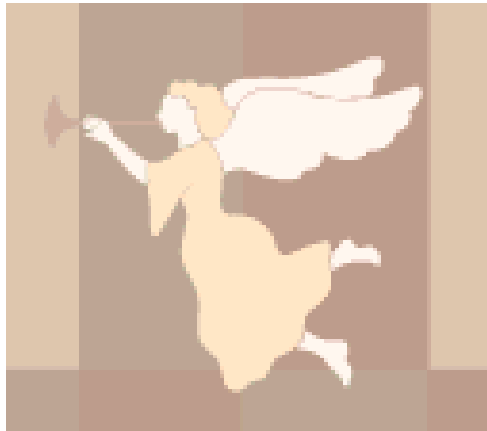
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Nazareth and traveled to Bethlehem, the birth place of King David. The Roman Emperor, Augustus, wanting to know the size of the population of his empire, had ordered a census to be taken. In Palestine, a province of the Empire, the Governor issued orders that all Jews should register their names in their ancestral home town. Joseph set out for Bethlehem on foot, leading a donkey on which sat Mary. They traveled peacefully for 4-5 days. When they reached Bethlehem, the town and the local inn were crowded with visitors. Joseph and Mary found shelter and privacy in one of the grottoes situated outside the town. There shepherds sometimes took refuge with their sheep during the night. In this grotto Mary was delivered of a son. She wrapped him in swaddling-clothes and laid him to rest in a manger, where they kept the food for the animals. Jesus, the Savior, was born into the world.

He was born in absolute poverty and simplicity. But God wanted the world to hear of the good news without delay. At a short distance from Bethlehem, a group of shepherds had gathered their flocks for the night's rest. All of a sudden, they were awakened and startled by a bright apparition, such as they had never seen before. They heard an angel announce to them: "Do not be afraid; behold the news I bring you is good news of a great rejoicing for the whole people. This day in the city of David, a Savior has been born for you, no other than the Lord Christ. This is the sign by which you are to know him; you will find a child still in swaddling-clothes, lying in a manger."

Without delay, they started in search of the Lord Christ. The city of David they knew was Bethlehem. There they went to those grottoes and looked inside. In one

of them, they saw a man and a woman watching over a baby wrapped in swaddling clothes. Entering it they told of the angel who had announced to them the happy news. Having paid their homage to the young king, and offered some little lambs in token of their devotion, they went back to their flocks, their hearts full of joy. They marveled that the Child-King was so feeble, so approachable to poor people like them, with dirty hands, patched clothes, but hearts melting



like butter in the sun of his life.

Eight days after birth the Boy was circumcised according to the religious prescriptions of the Jews, and given the name Jesus as the angel had told. On the 40th day Jesus was taken to Jerusalem to be offered to God in the temple. As they entered the temple, a man of great holiness called Simeon, stepped forward to meet them. God had revealed to him that he would not die before seeing the Savior. Led by the Spirit he had come to the temple, where he met Mary and Joseph bringing the Child Jesus.

The Child was also recognized by an old woman called Anna, a widow 84 years old. Her husband died 7 years after the marriage and it was since then she had lived a life of prayer, in expectation of the Savior. The priest took the Child, and offered him to God without comment; he did not know who

he was. An old man and an old woman alone had greeted the Lord coming to his temple. They had acknowledged the end of the old Law, which like Simeon could now retire from the stage of history. The old Law was antiquated; the time had come for its exit. The old order could retire with Simeon and Anna, whilst the new order was being prepared into the world by Mary.

It was then Joseph and Mary came back to Bethlehem. They settled down in a house where they were to receive some remarkable visitors.

A group of wise men, called Magi, had seen an unknown star moving in the heavens some time previously. They knew that the Messiah was expected about this time, and connected the appearance of this star with the birth of one. They felt an inclination to follow the star, which seemed to invite them. They set off on their camels, provided with presents for the newborn king and journeyed to Jerusalem. In quest of a young king, these scholars, men of high standing, entered into King Herod's residence to enquire where they could find the newly born king of the Jews. The news of Messiah's birth astonished everyone in the palace; for they knew nothing of this. Herod, a half-Bedouin succeeded in getting to the throne with the support of the Romans, and contrived to remain on it with the help of spies and assassins. This proud and selfish ruler was not a man to accept any challenge to his authority and decided that the young competitor must disappear. The scholars told Herod that Bethlehem was named by the Holy Scriptures to be the birth place of the Savior,

Herod had directed these pilgrims from the East to continue their journey to Bethlehem, and find the young king out there. He

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also instructed them to call again on their return journey, to inform him of the whereabouts of the Child; he himself wished to go and pay him homage, he added.

On leaving Jerusalem, the wise men were overjoyed to see

again the star. It led them to Bethlehem and stopped above the place where the Child lay. They entered the house they prostrated themselves at the feet of the Child with deep faith. Then opening the treasures they had brought, offered

their gifts of gold, frankincense, and myrrh.

After paying homage to the Child, the Magi started on their way home. They avoided Jerusalem, having been warned in a dream not to return to Herod.

Soon he understood that they had eluded him. Greatly angered and anxious for his throne, he sent soldiers to Bethlehem with orders to kill all male children below the age of two years. The soldiers reached there and did as ordered.

Herod did not know that this massacre was useless. For, Joseph, warned by an angel in his sleep, had taken the Child and his mother Mary away. They were on the road to Egypt, the road to voluntary exile. The Light had come to the world and men whose actions were bad tried to extinguish this light: they preferred to live in darkness to keep their bad deeds secret.

To Joseph and Mary, Egypt meant safety, but also the bitter bread exile in a land where the Jew had been a captive doing the work of slaves. Despite all these the Child was safe. Joseph and Mary, accustomed to hard work, with simple needs, kept in perfect peace their



soul centered on God. He had saved the Child from the sword of Herod's executioners; he would protect them in all circumstances.

Meanwhile, King Herod, a man of incredible cruelty and duplicity, a killer of his own wives and grown-up sons had been arrested by his own son. There he had developed fatal illness. And he died shrouded in curses and the hatred of the whole population. With his death there spread over Jerusalem and the whole state a general sense of relief. Once again the angel

warned Joseph in his sleep that he could now take the Child and Mary back into his own country. Soon Joseph and Mary along with the Child went back to his own country into Galilee to the village of Nazareth. Henceforth, the Child of Joseph and Mary, the Messiah, would be known by all as the son of Joseph, the carpenter from Nazareth.

What NOT to get your Dog for Christmas

1. A CD of cats meowing popular Christmas songs.
2. A chew toy with the head already gnawed off by his canine brother who chewed his way into the gift box around the 15th of the month.
3. A chew toy shaped like a shoe which he is immediately going to confuse with the right sneaker of your favorite pair.
4. Central A/C for his Dogloo when you're still using individual wall units that are barely up to cooling a small close-size area in your house.
5. Anything Garfield.
6. A remote control for the refrigerator door.
7. A knitted pink sweater that makes your macho Doberman look like a poodle.
8. A deluxe pre-packaged treat-filled Christmas stocking that's large enough for you to use as a sleeping bag.
9. Doggie antlers when your near-sighted hunting relatives will be spending the holidays with you.
10. A stuffed toy dog with an angel's halo as a hint as to what he has to do to get more presents next year.
11. A doggie door between you and the suspicious butcher next door.
12. An audition for a diet dog food commercial where they feed him so much during retakes that he actually gains weight.
13. A piece of jewelry featuring a ceramic dog of his breed for you to wear.
14. His own i-pets.com credit card.
15. A cat.

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EDITORIAL

The following editorial recently appeared on Gina Salazar's Activity Chat site. It is a response to an Activity Director (AJ) letting off steam caused by living under the stress of AD responsibilities, while trying to maintain a meaningful home life. It hits home for all of us.

Hi, AJ!

My name is Bob. My wife, Linda (Lucas), read your posting on Activity Chat and wanted me to respond from the point of view of an AD's husband. My position may be a little biased because I am a retired Health Facility Administrator. However, Linda and I have gone through the very things you and Gina (Salazar) have mentioned.

Like Gina, Linda has also been an AD for 20+ years. She has a soft heart for all of the residents and is a strong advocate for their psycho/social rehab through individual and group activities. Not only that, we are both perfectionists. And, to complicate matters, I have retired to our hometown where we knew most of the residents socially when we were all much younger. They quite literally are our friends, neighbors and family. So her dedication and commitment to the residents has a lot of other emotional ties. Also, the census in her facility (beginning from the time she started working there), completely turned over a couple of days ago. Not only that, her mother is a nursing home resident in another town.

When all of that is placed on top of the demands of the job (planning and executing the activities; all the volumes of charting; the "threat" of surveyors suddenly popping into the building), the stress bears down on her like a steam roller. I don't think other husbands realize what their AD wives are going through. I understand and yet (even) I get peeved with all of the long hours she puts in, even after other department heads have gone home. I get upset coming to pick her up from work at 5:00pm and she doesn't make it out for another 30 – 45 minutes. I get upset when she comes home at night totally exhausted and all she talks about is the residents and the facility and planning activities. And on, and on, and on it goes.

So how do I cope with all of this? I have a unique situation because I operate a home based business and have extremely flexible hours. I realize not every husband does. My hours allow me to do a lot of volunteering at her facility (some 400+ hours last year). I also, whenever possible, travel with her when she needs to get supplies in another town. We do a lot of eating out and I help with the laundry, cooking and dishwashing. We have a housekeeper who comes one day every two weeks.

I do all of this so we can have more time together. We are older and our time together seems much more precious than when we were young. I can see the fire in her, the excitement and stubborn pride she has concerning the residents and the activities. I've shared her tears and

her venting. I've celebrated her achievements when a long planned activity receives praise and when her department receives zero deficiencies on the survey. I worry with her when new responsibilities come her way due to new state regs for documentation (she is dyslexic). But, through it all, I love her, support her and do everything I can to help her in her job.

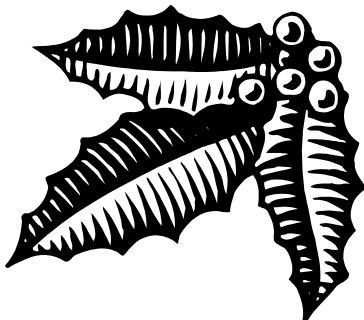
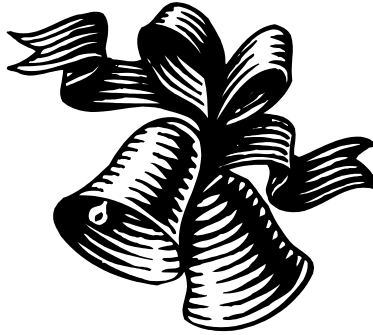
The job of Activity Director is a monster. In all of its aspects, responsibilities and demands, both physical and emotional, it will never be tamed. It often controls the AD's life both at work and at home. If it didn't affect her that way, the AD wouldn't be worth her salt. It is not an occupational hazard; it is a job description. The AD and her family all need to realize what she is getting into, up front, or the position can wreak havoc with her personal relationships. Spousal understanding and support are of great importance in under girding the responsibilities of an AD.

Let your husband read this post and see for himself what you are going through. It's not just you, AJ...but all AD's everywhere. I wish you the very best in your career as an Activity Director. It is one of the best and most important jobs in the whole world.

Sincerely,

Robert Lucas, HFA (retired)
Newsletter-Express.com

Clipart for December



QUOTATIONS ABOUT SANTA CLAUS

Let me see if I've got this Santa business straight. You say he wears a beard, has no discernible source of income and flies to cities all over the world under cover of darkness? You sure this guy isn't laundering illegal drug money?

--- Tom Armstrong

I stopped believing in Santa Claus when I was six. Mother took me to see him in a department store and he asked for my autograph.

--- Shirley Temple Black

Santa Claus has the right idea. Visit people once a year.

--- Victor Borge

Yes, Virginia, there is a Santa Claus. . .

. Thank God! He lives, and he lives forever. A thousand years from now, Virginia, nay ten times ten thousand years from now, he will continue to make glad the heart of childhood.

--- Francis Pharcellus

Church "The Sun" Sept 21, 1897



I never believed in Santa Claus because I knew no white man would be coming into my neighborhood after dark.

--- Dick Gregory

Santa Claus wears a Red Suit, He must be a communist. And a beard and long hair, Must be a pacifist. What's in that pipe that he's smoking?

--- Arlo Guthrie

I played Santa Claus many times, and if you don't believe it, check out the divorce settlements awarded my wives.

--- Groucho Marx
"The Groucho Phile"

He was dressed all in fur,
from his head to his foot,
And his clothes were all tarnished
with ashes and soot;
A bundle of toys he had

flung on his back,
And he looked like a peddler
just opening his pack.
His eyes -- how they twinkled!
his dimples how merry!
His cheeks were like roses,
his nose like a cherry!
His droll little mouth
was drawn up like a bow,
And the beard of his chin
was as white as the snow;
The stump of a pipe
he held tight in his teeth,
And the smoke it encircled
his head like a wreath;
He had a broad face
and a little round belly,
That shook, when he laughed
like a bowlful of jelly.
He was chubby and plump,
a right jolly old elf,
And I laughed when I saw him,
in spite of myself;

A wink of his eye
and a twist of his head,
Soon gave me to know
I had nothing to dread;
He spoke not a word,
but went straight to his
work,
And filled all the stockings;
then turned with a jerk,
And laying his finger
aside of his nose,
And giving a nod,
up the chimney he rose;

He sprang to his sleigh,
to his team gave a whistle,
And away they all flew
like the down of a thistle.

--- Clement Clarke Moore "The Night Before Christmas"

Santa is even-tempered. Santa does not hit children over the head who kick him. Santa uses the term folks rather than Mommy and Daddy because of all the broken homes. Santa does not have a three-martini lunch. Santa does not borrow money from store employees.

Santa wears a good deodorant.

--- Jenny Zink (To employees of Western Temporary Services, world's largest supplier of Santa Clauses, NY Times 21 Nov 84)

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Attention: Activity Professionals

You are invited to submit articles of interest, poems, humor, photos and just about anything else for publication into

Activity Director Monthly

The only compensation we can offer you is credit for the submission. All submissions are subject to editing. We cannot guarantee that all submissions will be published. However, they definitely can't be published if you don't send them in.

So be brave and fire your e-mail to us at:

admin@theactivitydirectorsoffice.com.

Or you can mail your information to:

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The Activity Director's Office
103 Tami Lane
Williamsport, Indiana 47993

Main topic interests include: anything that will benefit Activity Directors; items which can be used in facility newsletters (i.e. original and/or public domain items); personal Activity Director/resident experiences.

Please send only copies of your submissions.
The material will not be returned.



About Activity Director Monthly

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