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Annual Report

News and Notes from the Workshop
 Posted by Jordan Brown

SESAME FAMILY NEWSLETTER---Happy Halloween!
 October 22, 2003

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***HALLOWEEN HEEBEE-JEEBIES

Ever since my wife Ellen and I were kids, we've been fans of Halloween. Each October, we look forward to wearing spooky costumes, hanging creepy decorations, and nibbling chocolate treats. Until recently, however, our almost 3-year-old son Finn did not share our enthusiasm for the holiday. In fact, he has sometimes acted like the Scrooge of Halloween. Last week, when I happened to mention this holiday in a local store, he shouted "No Halloween, Daddy!" Then again, Finn's a toddler, and he says "no" to many things--"No nap!" "No broccoli!" "No clean up!" and so on.

To help him feel more comfortable about this strange thing called "Halloween," we bought him his own little pumpkin. He carries it from room to room, and rolls it off the table, pretending it's the meatball in the song, "On Top of Spaghetti." Luckily, his pumpkin hasn't become mush yet! We also bought Finn a funny book about Halloween called HALLO-WEINER by Dav Pilkey. In this silly story, a sweet dachshund named Oscar is forced by his mother to dress up as a hot dog for Halloween. The book has become one of Finn's favorites.

The pumpkin and book were warm-ups to our big Halloween adventure last weekend--a family reunion at Sesame Place, the Sesame Street amusement park in Langhorne, Pennsylvania. My sister recently moved near the park, and since we both have young children, we thought it would be fun to have our families meet there. It turned out that Sesame Place was hosting a special Halloween celebration: "The Count's Halloween Spooktacular." In addition to giving Finn a

chance to play with his cousins Ben and Danny (ages 7 and 2), the trip to Sesame Place was a celebration for my father's 65th birthday. We knew he'd enjoy watching the grandkids play together at the park. We also felt this would be an entertaining, age-appropriate way to introduce Finn to the excitement of Halloween.

For tips on how to keep Halloween fun, and not scary for the little ones, check out these articles from the Workshop.

FUN OR FRIGHTENING?

Halloween can scare little kids. Here's how to keep it fun.

<http://www.sesamestreet.org/gwr?s=nl&t=777>

A FEAR-FREE HALLOWEEN

Help the little ones enjoy a tricky holiday.

<http://www.sesameworkshop.org/gwr?s=nl&t=16340>

***MY SON, THE TRAIN

For his first two Halloweens, Finn dressed up as a pumpkin, then as a bumblebee. This year, Ellen and I have picked a costume that reflects his latest obsession--trains. He loves to play with toy trains, read train books, and, of course, ride on real trains.

When Finn runs on the sidewalk, he pretends that he IS a train. He tells us to walk about ten feet away from him as he stands squarely on a "track" (aka crack in the sidewalk) Then he tells us to pretend we're on a cell phone saying things like, "WHERE is the train? Oh, I guess the train isn't coming today." Then he bolts down the sidewalk, screaming, "Train coming now! Loud es-press [express] train! Fast one!" Passersby get a good laugh watching my son, the train.

During our visit to Sesame Place, many young visitors wore their Halloween costumes for the "The Count's Spooktacular." Finn enjoyed seeing other kids dressed up as some of his favorite characters, including Elmo, Winnie the Pooh, and SpongeBob SquarePants.

For Finn's train costume, we plan to keep things simple. We bought a T-shirt with a logo of a big train number. We also got him a conductor's hat and bandanna.

For some interesting homemade costumes, here are some ideas from Sesame Workshop.

PINT-SIZED PIRATE

This instant, easy costume will delight your little sea-lover.

<http://www.sesameworkshop.org/gwr?s=nl&t=75721>

DALMATIAN DRESS UP

Create a clever costume that's dog-gone great.

<http://www.sesamestreet.org/gwr?s=nl&t=16811>

WACKY WIZARD

Conjure up a great costume for your child.

<http://www.sesamestreet.org/gwr?s=nl&t=73300>

BEAUTIFUL BEE

Take the sting out of costume making with this simple pattern.

<http://www.sesamestreet.org/gwr?s=nl&t=73240>

FAIRY TALE COSTUME

Create a magical world with two easy fairy tale props.

<http://www.sesamestreet.org/gwr?s=nl&t=16888>

***A SPOOKTACULAR FAMILY REUNION

Entering Sesame Place, we noticed ghosts and other Halloween decorations waving in the trees. My nephew Ben spotted a giant stuffed spider crawling up the side of a pretend firehouse. Finn had fun finding pumpkins everywhere.

My sister and I were confident that Finn and his 2-year-old cousin Danny would have a great time. But we wondered if the other seven people in our group--ranging in age from 7 to 65--would be as enthusiastic. It turned out that everyone had fun. While the grandparents enjoyed watching the little ones play, the parents had a screaming-good-time on Super Grover's roller coaster. 7-year-old Ben had a blast jumping on Ernie's Bed Bounce--a giant, springy air mattress. Finn loves to jump on mattresses at home but Ellen and I were amazed that he was willing to go on this mattress "ride" without us. Later, we marveled at our nephew Ben's talent for cheering up Finn when he was getting frustrated or cranky. When Finn started to have a meltdown, Ben would pull his head inside his shirt like a turtle, and ask, "Where's my head?" This always brings a smile to Finn's face.

When it came time for Finn and Danny to meet a costumed character of Elmo, their reactions were very different. Danny darted right up to Elmo, leapt in his arms, and gave him a big hug. Finn, on the other hand, was more reserved. He walked up to Elmo timidly then ran back to me. We stood in line again, and this time, Finn walked up to Elmo with confidence, and they exchanged high fives.

To keep the Halloween theme active in our home between now and the 31st, we've helped Finn play some online Halloween activities featuring his favorite Sesame pals.

ZOE'S HALLOWEEN

Create a funny Halloween decoration that you can print out, or animate.

<http://www.sesameworkshop.org/gwr?s=nl&t=10762941>

HALLOWEEN E-CARD

The Count says, "Make a vunderful Halloveen card. Then e-mail it! Ah ah ah!"

<http://www.sesameworkshop.org/gwr?s=nl&t=161003>

ELMO CARVES A PUMPKIN

Print this page, connect the dots, and color Elmo's fun Halloween picture.

<http://www.sesameworkshop.org/gwr?s=nl&t=10410>

FRANKENELMO COSTUME

Your child can play Halloween dress-up with this amusing Elmo coloring page.

<http://www.sesameworkshop.org/gwr?s=nl&t=10419>

WICKED WITCH COSTUME

In this spooky, kooky coloring page kids play Halloween dress up with Elmo.

<http://www.sesameworkshop.org/gwr?s=nl&t=10422>

***BOO-TIFUL HALLOWEEN PARTIES

Growing up, my best friend's father used to organize an elaborate haunted house in their basement. When trick-or-treaters took a tour, they encountered giant spider puppets, creepy cobwebs made of stretched cotton, and spooky sound effects. The haunted tour featured a series of boxes that daring trick-or-treaters could put their hands inside. One box, I remember, was supposed to house bloody intestines. I think it actually contained cold spaghetti.

In a few years, Ellen and I look forward to hosting a Halloween party for Finn's friends. When we do, we'll go online to see what innovative ideas the Workshop has to offer.

SPIDER WEB PARTY

Not all webs are online! Turn a room into a spooky web for Halloween.

<http://www.sesamestreet.org/gwr?s=nl&t=109738>

HAUNTED HOUSE PARTY

How to make invitations, decorations, activities, food, and favors

<http://www.sesameworkshop.org/gwr?s=nl&t=103726>

BLACK-MAGIC SPIDERS

These creepy crawly critters take minutes to make.

<http://www.sesamestreet.org/gwr?s=nl&t=72380>

ORANGE-O'-LANTERNS

Brighten your child's Halloween with this decorating activity.

<http://www.sesamestreet.org/gwr?s=nl&t=70561>

CAULDRON, BUBBLE

Turn ordinary apple juice into a witches' brew.

<http://www.sesamestreet.org/gwr?s=nl&t=73825>

FROSTED PUMPKINS

Orange you glad it's Halloween? Your kids will get a kick out of these citrus treats.

<http://www.sesamestreet.org/gwr?s=nl&t=72383>

***SESAME STREET MUSIC WORKS

Normally, Finn is not fond of live musical performances. Even the simple "Hello" song at his nursery school drives him batty (no pun intended!) Ellen and I were, therefore, not sure if Finn would enjoy the live music stage shows at Sesame Place. We were pleasantly surprised to discover that Finn had a good time watching Big Bird, Cookie

Monster, Elmo, and Ernie and Bert dance and sing. Each time the musical numbers ended, Finn said, "More songs. More dancing."

To hear Sesame Street classics at home, we tune into Sesame Radio.

SESAME STREET RADIO

<http://www.sesameworkshop.org/gwr?s=nl&t=105602>

***SWEET GIFTS MINUS THE SUGAR

At the end of our day at Sesame Place, my parents gave each of the grandkids a Halloween goody bag. My wife and I were relieved that the bags didn't contain any candy. The boys will get enough of that in a few days when they trick-or-treat. The best part of Finn's Halloween goody bag was a sticker book of, what else... trains, of course! If you're as concerned as we are about sugar overload during the Halloween season, see what the experts at Sesame Workshop have to say on the subject.

CANDIES AND COOKIES AND CAKES, OH MY!

Sweet news about taming your little candy monster.

<http://www.sesameworkshop.org/gwr?s=nl&t=1104>

***SESAME STREET BEAT

In an upcoming episode of Sesame Street, Telly and Baby Bear are playing basketball when Telly accidentally hits Baby Bear in the nose. It really hurts, but Gina takes a look and says Baby Bear should be fine. Telly becomes petrified of playing with Baby Bear because he's afraid he's going to hurt him again.

Will Telly play with Baby Bear? Check your local PBS station to find out when this episode is airing where you live. Then join your Sesame pals for some online fun.

PBS KIDS: WHERE DO YOU LIVE?

<http://www.sesameworkshop.org/gwr?s=nl&t=9697605>

THE NUMBER OF THE DAY IS 4

Color Cookie's apples in this fruitful printable.

<http://www.sesameworkshop.org/gwr?s=nl&t=3095>

ELMO GOES TO THE DOCTOR

See Elmo's doctor visit come alive in this interactive storybook!

<http://www.sesameworkshop.org/gwr?s=nl&t=108867>

TELLY IN SPACE

Create your very own story starring Telly!

<http://www.sesameworkshop.org/gwr?s=nl&t=105881>

Sesame Street Trivia!

What happens when the Count finishes counting things?

A. Numbers fall from the sky

- B. He sneezes
- C. Thunder and lightning fill the sky
- D. Nothing

The answer is C. Whenever the Count finished counting, lightning flashes and thunder booms! Ah-ah-ah!

Have a happy, safe Halloween!

Jordan Brown
Sesame Workshop

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