

than the traditional carving into jack-o-lanterns or baking into pies. Eve Bunting's *The Pumpkin Fair* (Clarion Books, 2005) is a picture-book account of some of the multitudinous possibilities, described through a catchy rhyming text. The Pumpkin Fair of the title is one small town's annual pumpkin celebration, an exciting affair featuring pumpkin bowling, juggling, and basketball; a pumpkin-seed-spitting contest, pumpkin carving and creature-making; a Pumpkin Princess and a Peter Pumpkin Band; and finally a blue ribbon for the "best-loved pumpkin anywhere." (There's a nice project here – how many things can *you* think of doing with pumpkins? Write and illustrate your own Pumpkin Fair books.) Award-winning painter Wendell Minor's *Pumpkin Heads!* (Scholastic, 2007) may give young readers and writers a few more ideas. This gorgeous seasonal celebration of pumpkins begins in the pumpkin patch and moves on to the many places "pumpkin heads" appear: on scarecrows and harvest figures, outfitted as cowboys or witches, stacked into pumpkin snowmen, on hay wagons or peeking out of windows, and even floating in the air as a pumpkin hot-air balloon.

Or try these:

Pumpkin Drop

phys.csuchico.edu/sps/activities/pumpkin_drop.html

From the Society of Physics Students, an annual demonstration of Galileo's Law of Falling Bodies, with pumpkins.

Pumpkin Chuckin'

www.youthgardenproject.org/pumpkinchuck.htm

Includes helpful instructions for building your own pumpkin-hurling family catapult or trebuchet.

The Periodic Table of Pumpkins

www.clarkson.edu/~jimbo/pumpkins
Pumpkins for chemists. This site features the Periodic Table of Elements, carved in pumpkins.

Pumpkin Globe

fga.freac.fsu.edu/resources/1994/pumpkin.htm

Turn your pumpkin into a map of the world.

And finally, don't forget Charles Schultz's

Peanuts Classic "It's the Great Pumpkin, Charlie Brown!" – available for purchase or rental on VHS or DVD – which features a lot of wonderful characters, the world's most sincere pumpkin patch, and a gentle message about faith, failure, and hope.

Awful Error

The July/August, 2007 Good Stuff column on the theme of "Big Numbers" included a wholly inaccurate pseudo-quotation, purportedly from David Schwartz's *How Much Is a Million?* (HarperCollins, 1985), claiming that a million kids standing on each other's shoulders could reach to the Moon. They can't; and David Schwartz didn't say so. I did, by mindless mistake.

A million kids – let's make each of them about four feet tall – balanced on each other's shoulders would make a wobbly column reaching a bit over 750 miles into the air. The Moon, on average, is about 238,000 miles from Earth; therefore it would take some 300 million kids to reach the Moon.

In the event of further embarrassing mathematical errors, please contact me at rebeccarupp@gmail.com. Do not tell my kids.

Kids Love Spanish

Sisters Krisse Brock Kelly and Julie Brock Campbell both fervently believe that kids should be exposed to a second language at an early age. They cite the multitudinous advantages of learning a second language – kids who do so learn to read sooner, display advanced cognitive and problem-solving skills, have higher levels of self-confidence, and acquire an invaluable life skill – and to promote this skill, they've developed and hosted the award-winning Kids Love Spanish DVD series. There are seven 30-minute DVDs in the series, available either separately or as a boxed set. Titles are *Basic Words*, *Alphabet and Numbers*, *Family*, *Food*, *Colors and Shapes*, *Animals*, and *Basic Phrases*. The programs – introduced by a catchy little song in English ("Kids love learning Spanish today/Won't you come and learn and play?") that I have not been able to get out of my head since hearing it – all center around video clips of Krisse, Julie, a lot of adorable kids, and an animated cac-

cus repeating Spanish words. *Basic Words*, for example, teaches seventeen words, beginning with "Hola" and ending with "Adios." Viewers learn by listening to the featured word, repeated over and over. The Spanish for dog appears on the screen in big colorful letters – PERRO – followed by a long string of cute kids saying "perro," along with occasional clips of real dogs and a voice-over saying "Look at the black *perro*" or "Here there are three *perros*."

Drawbacks: the words are presented in absolute isolation, with no attempts to connect or expand upon them; and it would have been more effective to have had a review of the newly learned Spanish words at the end of the program, rather than a repeat of the English look-what-fun-we're-having song. However, the series is bright and attractive, and clearly a lot of energy has gone into it. It's recommended "for children of all ages," but my guess is that it's best for kids under six.

For more information, visit the Kids Love Spanish website at www.kidslivespanish.com. The DVDs cost \$17.99 apiece, or \$99.99 for the complete boxed set. Available from bookstores and online sources such as www.amazon.com, or can be ordered from Big Kids Video, at (800) 477-7811 or www.bigkidsvideo.com.

Sing, Watch, and Learn Spanish

Agnes Chavez's *Sing, Watch, and Learn Spanish* DVD (McGraw-Hill) is a collection of 16 themed songs, each set in the musical style of a different Latin American country – there's Cuban salsa, for example, along with merengue from the Dominican Republic, samba from Brazil, ranchera from Mexico, and calypso from the Caribbean islands. The songs and videos are cleverly designed to present a *lot* of Spanish (300 Spanish vocabulary words). "Los Animales," for example, not only teaches useful phrases and directions (up, down, left, right), but presents some twenty Spanish animal names, all with accompanying video clips of the featured animal, with its name in Spanish (plus the appropriate article, *el* or *la*) printed as a subtitle on the screen. "Del Jardín" – "From the Garden" – teaches names of foods, with luscious video clips of fruits and vegetables found in either the garden or the grocery store; "What Is Your Family Like?" teaches