

THE Manly Daily

Fun minus the mess
17 January 2006

SUE HOBAN

FORMER peninsula teacher and artist Jane McKay promises a macaroni-free zone for any parents or carers who turn to her new children's craft book for holiday activities.

She was encouraged to write Kids Create by parents impressed by the quality of activities she was doing with their children at holiday activity programs at the local library in Perth. McKay, who now lives in the west, makes a point of avoiding the more common craft projects like macaroni necklaces or painted egg carton planters.

“A lot of parents wanted to know what book I got the activities from and I'd explain to them that I made them up myself,” McKay said. “Books at the time tended to be on one topic, for example a whole book on masks with 30 different masks they could make but I wanted to combine different activities.”

The book therefore provides detailed instructions for things like tissue paper decoupage, kite and magic mirror making, mosaic work or finger puppets, using affordable and readily-available materials.

“A number of activities have been developed to create further opportunities for play, like the finger puppets,” McKay said. “I think anything these days that keeps kids off computers and away from TV for a while is a good thing.”

Another part of the brief was to select activities that children of varying artistic ability could manage and still produce good quality pieces that parents would be happy to keep and display.

McKay, who did a lot of relief teaching on the peninsula before moving back to Perth, said her professional art career began with a course at Seaforth TAFE. She has since completed a fine arts degree, won awards for her art work and taken part in overseas exhibitions. She said she firmly believed children should have the opportunity to exercise their creativity. “Some have more innate ability but it's certainly something you can foster and develop,” she said.

Kids Create (rrp \$9.95) is available in some bookstores or visit her website www.redgriffinart.com/books