

## For Kids

### Gingerbread houses: Fun to build — and eat

by Donna Nordenstrom

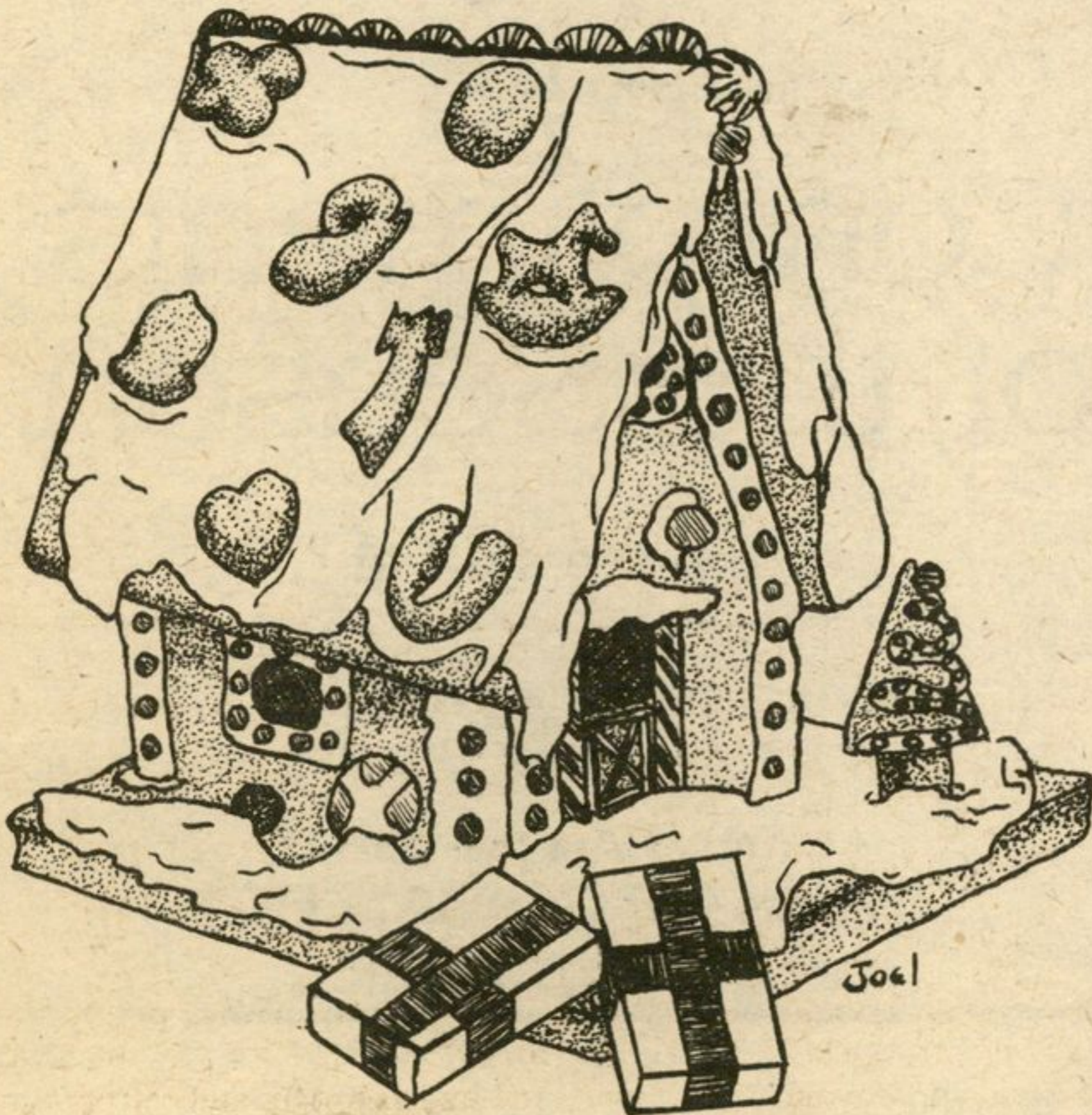
It's a very popular time in our household when I get together with the children to make gingerbread houses, Jena (6) and Jay (4) get very excited with the prospect of decorating the houses with icing, jujubes, Smarties, gum drops, lifesavers, or whatever type of goodies I happen to buy.

Outside of the fact that the kids like being that close to so much candy, they do work very hard at

doing a good job. I suggest that an adult actually assembles the house because the melted sugar is hot enough to burn little hands.

#### YOU NEED:

6-inch square of cardboard covered with tinfoil for a working base. Houses may be removed from base when dry. Graham crackers should be the kind that are almost square. Lastly you need sugar, Royal icing, and assorted candy.



—Illustration: Joel Nordenstrom

### Snowman place cards

The snowman is made by gluing two cotton balls together. Before gluing, however, compress the top one by rolling it between the palms of your hands so that the snowman's head is a bit smaller than the body. Tie a piece of ribbon around the neck.

For the hat, cut a circle from construction paper 1 1/4 inches in diameter. For the crown, cut a strip 1 1/2 inches by 2 1/4 inches, roll it up by gluing the short ends together, and attach to the center of the circle with glue. Another touch of glue will hold it to the snowman's head.

Attach the snowman, with glue, to a two-inch by three-inch card made of the same colour material as the hat.

Cut out the snowman's face from a snapshot or drawing and glue it to your snowman.

### KIDS PICTURE CONTEST

The Castor Review's Winter Scene Children's Drawing Contest is now open for entries.

Drawings must be submitted on a sheet of white paper 8 1/2 by 11 inches before January 16, 1982. Any number of colours may be used.

Cash prizes of \$5 each will be awarded to the winner in each of two age categories: six to eight years; and nine to 12 years.

Winning pictures will be published in the Castor Review.

Drawings will not be returned and the judges' decisions are final.

Please mail drawings to the Castor Review, Box 359, Russell, Ontario, K0A 3B0.

#### ROYAL ICING (enough for 4 houses)

- 1 teaspoon lemon juice
- 2 egg whites
- 3 cups or more icing sugar

Combine lemon juice and egg whites in a small bowl and gradually beat in sugar until stiff peaks form. A knife drawn through the icing should leave a clean sharp line.

#### PASTRY CONES

Fold heavy duty waxed paper double. Keeping the fold at the point, form the waxed paper into a cone with a sharp closed point. Fasten with tape.

Fill cones half-full and bring top edges together and fold top down to level of icing. Keep tip well-filled with icing. Keep at room temperature until needed.

#### TO ASSEMBLE HOUSES:

Put layer of sugar 1-inch thick in heavy fry pan (electric pan is good at 350 F). Heat and stir with wooden spoon until sugar melts.

This makes a quick hardening, edible glue, but it is extremely hot. Do not touch or taste. Rubber gloves help avoid burns.

Take 4 graham crackers — long side of the cracker is the width of the house and the short side is the height.

Dip the short edges of the crackers in the hot syrup and stick crackers together to form the walls.

Dip the long sides of two crackers and balance them on the side walls to form the peaked roof.

Hold a cracker against the front of the roof and score angle of roof with a knife. Lay flat and gently saw the unnecessary parts of cracker away at the corners. This is the peak.

Dip bottom of peak and tip (not necessary for the sides) into syrup and stick onto house. Repeat for other end.

Make tree from another cracker. Stick together with right angle at centre of bottom.

Dip house bottom and place on tinfoil base. Dip tree and place on base next to house.

Houses are ready to decorate immediately.

#### TO DECORATE:

Cut tip off icing cone so it will make a fine line. Hold cone in the left hand and wrap right fingers around folds (opposite for lefties).

Squeeze and direct cone to the area to be iced. Writing with icing can be practiced on foil base. Keep icing in point of cone and keep point near writing surface.

Draw doors, windows, and small details. Turn house by turning foil base.

Then cut the tip larger and hide seams with icing. Place candy as you go or the icing will harden and will not hold the candy.

These houses make great gifts for the children to give to teachers or grandparents. A sample house is on display at Maria Bianca's.

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