Audience guide for:

the Nutcracker

December 16-18, 2015
(Discover Dance performances, Dec. 15, 16, 10:00am)

PPAC, Providence, RI

Music        PYOTR ILYICH TCHAIKOVSKY
Scenario     MIHAIOLO DJURIC
Based on the story by      E. T. A. HOFFMAN
Choreography    MIHAIOLO DJURIC
Costumes      FREDA BROMBERG, MIHAIOLO DJURIC, ANN MORSILLI
Lighting       ALICIA COLANTONIO

FESTIVAL BALLET PROVIDENCE
Mihailo Djuric, Artistic Director
Dear Educator,

This December, Festival Ballet Providence performs the magical ballet, **The Nutcracker**. The audience, whether student or adult will be transported to another time and place and see the story of a little girl and a magical nutcracker doll come alive onstage. The company’s beautiful dancing as well as the dazzling music, sets, and costumes are sure to capture the mind's imagination and hopefully inspire creativity.

This comprehensive educational packet is meant to prepare you and your students for your experience at the theater. The first section contains information about your arrival at PPAC and the student's expected behavior at the theater. We hope this will answer any questions you might have. Then there is a section filled with behind-the-scenes information about the ballet. This information should inform the students about the production. They will be able to make mental connections during the show that they would not have made before. Lastly, you will find a section with classroom assignments and activities. These activities are ideas to incorporate **The Nutcracker** into your classroom. Feel free to simplify or build upon the activities and execute them before or after the show. We hope this packet will enhance your experience of **The Nutcracker** and we cannot wait to see you at the theater!

Sincerely,

Valerie Cookson-Botto
Educational Outreach Coordinator

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**THEATER INFORMATION**

- The performance will begin promptly at 10:00am and lasts approximately two hours, with one intermission.

- Let your children know, in advance, what behavior is expected of them. This is a LIVE performance. Unlike television or the movies, the people on stage are there at that moment and are dancing for the audience's pleasure.

- School clothes are appropriate dress, however, some children may choose to “dress up.”

- Please plan to arrive at PPAC (220 Weybosset Street, Providence, RI 02903) at least 30 minutes prior to the performance as latecomers cannot be seated once the performance has begun.

- If applicable, your bus driver will be given instructions for where to park and assigned a number that you will reference upon dismissal.

- Once you arrive at the theater, please see an usher who will check your group off of our master list and direct you to your seats.

- No food, drink, chewing gum, skateboards, cameras, or recording equipment are allowed inside the theater. Please leave these items at home as we do not have provisions for storing them.

- It is important to have your children visit the rest rooms before the performance begins. It is not appropriate to visit the rest rooms during a live performance.
THEATER ETIQUETTE FOR STUDENTS

Students should be encouraged to:

• Watch the dancers
• Listen to the music
• Look at the costumes and set designs
• Laugh when they see the dancers do something funny
• Clap to show the dancers that they are enjoying the performance when the dancing has finished. It is customary to applaud when the dancers take a bow.

Students should NOT be encouraged to:

• Talk or make noise because they might miss something important
• Chew gum or eat because it is disruptive to others and makes a mess at the theater.
• Leave their seats before the lights go on because this is very disruptive to their neighbors

SYNOPSIS

ACT I

It is a cold, snowy evening and guests are traveling to the Silberhaus’ house for a grand holiday party. The parents and children dance beautifully until a mysterious stranger arrives. It is Herr Drosselmeyer, Clara’s uncle. Drosselmeyer entertains the children with stories and toys from his bag and gives a special nutcracker doll to Clara. She dances with the doll until her brother, Fritz steals and breaks it. Drosselmeyer graciously repairs it and the party ends with a grand dance. The family goes to bed but Clara sneaks downstairs, finds her nutcracker, and falls asleep. When the clock strikes midnight she has a strange dream…

The house begins to grow and a hoard of mice led by the evil Mouse Queen attacks. The Nutcracker grows and comes to Clara’s aid along with his army of toy soldiers. There is a great battle and the Mouse Queen and Nutcracker kill each other. Clara is heartbroken but Drosselmeyer brings him back to life as a Prince and sends them on a journey together. They are met by the Snow Queen and King who lead them through a glittering forest of dancing snowflakes.

ACT II

Clara and the Nutcracker Prince arrive at the land of the sweets. They are met by dancing angels, sweets from across the land, and the rulers, The Sugar Plum Fairy and her Cavalier. They ask Clara how she came to the land and she retells the battle story. In celebration each sweet dances for Clara, including the Sugar Plum Fairy and Cavalier. The sweets say farewell and Clara clings to her Nutcracker Prince as Drosselmeyer tells her it is time to leave. She falls asleep and wakes up with her beautiful Nutcracker doll in her arms. As she looks at it she wonders, was it a dream or was it real?
ABOUT THE CHOREOGRAPHERS AND COMPOSER

MIHAILO DJURIC, Nutcracker, Choreographer

Mihailo “Misha” Djuric is a former first soloist with the National Opera and Ballet Theatre in Belgrade, Yugoslavia. His training and experience encompass ballet, jazz, modern, folk dance and musical theater. During his ballet career, he has worked with Nevena Miric, Dusanka Kecojevic, Jovanka Bilegojevic, Ana Roje, Natalia Dudinskaya, Constantin Sergeyev, Svetlana Afanasieva and Maryon Lane. As a choreographer, he has been recognized with numerous awards including gold and bronze medals at the Yugoslavian choreographers’ competition. Besides Yugoslavia (and its former six republics) and the United States, his work has been performed in Russia, Switzerland, Malta, Romania, Italy and Venezuela.

In 1991, Mr. Djuric was appointed Artistic Director at Ballet New England. Under his direction, Ballet New England’s Company and School dramatically increased its programs and visibility, becoming the leader of New Hampshire’s dance community.

In July, 1998, Mr. Djuric was appointed as the Artistic Director of Festival Ballet Providence (FBP) where he is responsible for managing the Company, Student Company, and the Festival Ballet Providence School. During his tenure, the organization has grown into one of the most exciting and accomplished arts and cultural organizations in Rhode Island and has been recognized as one of top regional ballet companies in the country.

In April 2011, Mr. Djuric received the VIP Invites Award from the Serbian Ministry of Culture at the Belgrade International Dance Festival. He is honored as the first laureate to receive this award for outstanding Serbian artists living and working outside of Serbia.

MARIUS PETIPA, Original choreographer of Nutcracker

Marius Petipa was born in 1818 in Marseille, France. He received his early dance training, starting at the age of seven. The family moved to Brussels where Petipa attended the Grand College and also studied music at the conservatoire. In 1838 Petipa became a principal dancer at the theatre in Nantes, France where he also staged opera dances for the theatre.

In 1847 Petipa was engaged to dance at the Mariinsky Theatre in St. Petersburg, Russia. Petipa’s first choreography in Russia occurred in 1849 for Flotow’s opera Alessandro Stradella in Moscow. He did not, however, choreograph a ballet for several more years. In 1869 Petipa was made the Premier Ballet Master of the Imperial Theatre.

Petipa choreographed several classical ballets which continue to be performed today as pillars of classical ballet. He brought us the ballet Don Quixote to music by Minkus in 1869 and La Bayadère in 1877. Petipa brought the French and Italian traditions to Russia and gave increased importance to dance over pantomime.

The collaboration of Marius Petipa and Pyotr Tchaikovsky lead to three of the most well known ballet masterpieces: The Sleeping Beauty, The Nutcracker, and Swan Lake. Although they were not immediately successful these three ballets have become considered by many to be the greatest classical ballets of all time.
Pyotr Tchaikovsky was born May 7, 1840, in a village outside of Moscow, Russia. Tchaikovsky grew up with music. Tchaikovsky started piano lessons at age 4, and in three years he could read music as well as his teacher.

When Tchaikovsky was 10 years old, his parents sent him to the Imperial School of Jurisprudence to train as a lawyer. Music was not a high priority at the boarding school, but Tchaikovsky was able to attend the opera and theater with other students. He assisted the school’s choir director, studied harmony and continued piano lessons. In 1854, Tchaikovsky’s mother died from cholera, and within a month of her death the 14-year-old composed a waltz in her memory, his first serious attempt at composition.

Swan Lake was Tchaikovsky’s first composition for ballet. Vladimir Begichev commissioned the score from Tchaikovsky in 1875; Begichev and Vasily Geltser adapted the story about a girl turned into a swan by evil sorcerer from Russian folk tales and ancient German legends. The ballet premiered in 1877 at the Bolshoi Theatre in Moscow under the title The Lake of the Swans.

This first production was critically panned; even Tchaikovsky’s score was called “too noisy, too ‘Wagnerian’ and too symphonic.” Swan Lake was the first ballet set to a score by a symphonic composer, which made it unusual in an era when the norm was hiring so-called “specialist” composers to score simplistic music for the ballet. Even critics who recognized the brilliance of Tchaikovsky’s score deemed it too complex for ballet.

Despite these reviewer responses, the ballet ran for 6 years and Tchaikovsky went on to compose two more ballets: The Sleeping Beauty in 1889 and holiday favorite The Nutcracker in 1892. Tchaikovsky’s ballet compositions are now beloved fixtures of classical ballet. Tchaikovsky also composed four concertos, 10 operas, over 100 piano works, and six symphonies, including The 1812 Overture.
BALLET BASICS

These five basic positions are the foundation for all ballet moves. They will help you understand the positions that a dancer moves through. Each position has a shape for the feet and the arms. Every ballet dancer starts with these five positions and masters them early on to be able to perform complex movements. If you master these moves you will be on your way to becoming a ballet dancer!

For each of these movements you must maintain good dancing posture: Stand up tall and straight, don’t let your stomach hang out or your bottom stick out. Think of having a long neck and lift the chin slightly, as if you have glitter on your cheekbones.

**ACTIVITY - Teach your students the first five positions of ballet:**

Teach the students as many or as few of these positions as they can learn. Play a game by yelling out the number of a position and having them achieve it as quickly as possible.
Beginning records of dance are rare as the very nature of dance leaves nothing physical behind once the dance has ended. There are no canvases, scripts or scores of dance to leave for the next generation. Dances have been passed down through the ages with direct interaction from human to human. But from early manuscripts, sculptures and paintings we do have an understanding that dance has been an integral part of human celebration, ceremony and entertainment for centuries.

In Western cultures people reached out to join hands and move with the melodic phrases of the voice. One of the earliest western dances was the Ring Dance. It often had a central focus such as a sacred object or a tree to which the dance moved around. This chain-dance can be traced back to the Greek poet Homer, as it is one of the items on the Shield of Achilles in the Iliad. Greek philosopher Aristotle describes dance in Poetics as a rhythmic movement that expresses man’s character and struggle.

As dance rose up through the courts of Europe during the Renaissance one’s ability to dance properly was an important status symbol. The ability to dance without showing much effort was a valued trait. It was fashionable to walk with toes turned out and the center of gravity further forward on the toes. Court dancing masters worked with the aristocracy to develop the skill required to perform dance with ease and make the dancing look effortless.

The courts of Italy and France helped storytelling in dance flourish through their grand spectacles. Often these stories placed the king in a lead role depicting an omnipotent character, such as a Greek god. King Louis XIV of France is referred to as the Sun King for his most notable dancing role as Apollo in the Ballet de la Nuit. King Louis XIV allowed the dancing masters to begin training court performers in the nobles dance technique to fill the supporting roles in his grand performances. Through this work the dance masters codify the positions of the feet and arms which are the foundation for ballet positions still used today. King Louis XIV founded the first dance training school in France, L’Academy Royale de Danse.

Today ballet schools around the world continue to use the positions and terminology developed at L’Academy Royale de Danse. Ballet steps continue to be taught and explained with their French terms. For example, a ballet plie is a movement in which the dancer bends at the knees to lower the body. The French term for fold or bend is plie. Dancers continue to bow and curtsey as though they are performing for royalty.
VOCABULARY

Record(s)
1. to write (something) down so that it can be used or seen again in the future to produce a record of (something)
2. to show a measurement of (something)
3. to indicate (something)
4. to store (something, such as sounds, music, images, etc.) on tape or on a disk so that it can be heard or seen later, to produce a recording of (something)

Manuscript(s) written by hand or typed <manuscript letters>

Ceremony
1. a formal act or event that is a part of a social or religious occasion
2. very polite or formal behavior

Melodic
1. a pleasing series of musical notes that form the main part of a song or piece of music
2. a song or tune

Sacred
1. worthy of religious worship
2. very holy
3. relating to religion
4. highly valued and important, deserving great respect

Philosopher
1. a person who studies ideas about knowledge, truth, the nature and meaning of life
2. a person who studies philosophy

Status
1. the position or rank of someone or something when compared to others in a society, organization, group, etc.
2. high position or rank in society
3. the official position of a person or thing according to the law
Aristocracy
1. the highest social class in some countries
2. the people who have special titles (such as duke and duchess), who typically own land, and who traditionally have more money and power than the other people in a society

Spectacle(s)
1. something exhibited to view as unusual, notable, or entertaining; especially an eye-catching or dramatic public display, an object of curiosity or contempt
2. glasses

Omnipotent
having complete or unlimited power

Codify
1. to put (laws or rules) together as a code or system
2. to put (things) in an orderly form

Terminology
the special words or phrases that are used in a particular field

**UTILIZE EACH OF THE VOCABULARY WORDS TO ANSWER THE FOLLOWING QUESTIONS**

1. What was at the center of a Ring Dance?

2. What occasion or event were early humans known to have danced for?

3. What language was used to develop words for the field of dance at L' Academy Royale de Danse?

4. Where did dance flourish with grand public displays that told stories?
5. Dancing without showing much effort was an indication of what social class?

6. When Western cultures joined hands to dance, what would their music be?

7. Who described dance as a rhythmic movement that expresses man’s character and struggle?

8. What ruler was responsible for putting a system of rules together for dancing?

9. What type of role was typical for a king to dance as in the courts of France and Italy?

10. How do we know that people have danced for centuries?

11. If you wanted to improve your ranks in society, how would a court dancing master help?
ANSWER KEY

1. The center of a Ring Dance often had a **sacred** object as a central focus.
2. Early humans were known to dance as part of a **ceremony**.
3. French is the language used to create dance **terminology**.
4. Dance flourished in the courts of Italy and France with grand **spectacles**.
5. Dancing without showing much effort was an indication that one was part of the **aristocracy**.
6. Western cultures joined hands and danced to **melodic** voices.
7. The Greek **philosopher** Aristotle described dance as a rhythmic movement that expresses man’s character and struggle.
8. King Louis XIV was responsible for **codifying** dance.
9. It was typical for a king to dance an **omnipotent** role.
10. We know that humans have danced for centuries through **manuscripts**, event though specific **records** are rare.
11. A court dancing master would help you improve your **status** by training you to dance without showing much effort.
Describe the setting of the Nutcracker:
__________________________________________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________________________________.

Who are the main characters?
__________________________________________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________________________________.

Which character possessed magical qualities? Why?
__________________________________________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________________________________.

What is the conflict or problem in this Fairy Tale?
__________________________________________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________________________________.

How was the conflict resolved in the story?
__________________________________________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________________________________.

What part of the story was make-believe, or seemed not real?
__________________________________________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________________________________.

How did the fairy tale end?
__________________________________________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________________________________
GEOGRAPHY AND METEOROLOGY

Describe the prologue (introductory section) of the ballet The Nutcracker. What were the dancers doing? What were they wearing?

Based on what the dancers were wearing, make an assumption about what the weather was like in the story of The Nutcracker.

Research the average daily temperature for the following US cities for the month of December and identify which state capitals the story of the Nutcracker could have taken place in. Circle the cities which have a climate that would match the prologue of the Nutcracker.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>State</th>
<th>Capital City</th>
<th>Average December temperature</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>MAINE</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>ARIZONA</td>
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<tr>
<td>COLORADO</td>
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<tr>
<td>FLORIDA</td>
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<tr>
<td>RHODE ISLAND</td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>TEXAS</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
PERSUASIVE WRITING

Was It All a Dream?
At the end of Festival Ballet Providence’s Nutcracker, the curtain closes with Clara holding the Nutcracker doll. The ending presents a question to the audience. Did Clara really travel to the Kingdom of Sweet or was this all a dream in Clara’s imagination? Write a persuasive piece explaining why you think Clara was dreaming the journey, or if she really battled mice and meet the Sugar Plum Fairy. Justify your reasoning with examples from the ballet, and your life experiences. Be convincing and site at least three reasons why the reader should believe your point of view.

Performance Review
Write a dance review of The Nutcracker. Convince readers to either go see the show themselves or not to go. Use good descriptive adjective and adverbs in your writing so that the reader can see what you saw. Justify your reason with at specific examples from the performance. Consider the answers to these questions:

- Did the ballet keep your interest? Why? How?
- Did the ballet make you feel emotional?
- Did the ballet tell a story that was interesting, exciting, or scary?
- Did the movement help tell the story? How?
- Was there a particular dancer that whose dancing stood out?
- Did the dancers make the characters believable? How?
- Were the costumes and scenery effective in telling the story? How did they give you an understanding of the time and place of the ballet?
- Did the lights and music contribute to the mood or setting of the ballet?
- Did you find one scene particularly interesting or uninteresting?
- Was the ending satisfying?
- Would you go see the ballet again?
DESIGN A COMIC STRIP

Use the boxes below to draw the events from the fairy tale The Nutcracker. Use speech bubbles to show what each character might have said in the story.

Drosselmeyer brings gifts for the children at the party.

Fritz breaks the Nutcracker doll.

Clara is surrounded by mice and the mouse queen.

The Nutcracker battles the mice.

Clara and the Nutcracker travel through the snow.

Clara and the Nutcracker arrive at the Kingdom of Sweets.

Clara meets the Sugar Plum Fairy.

Clara watches dances from around the world.

Clara awakens back in her home.

CHALLENGE: Write each sentence of dialogue using proper quotations and punctuation.
INFORMATIVE (EXPLANATORY) WRITING

Write an informative report about your field trip to see The Nutcracker. Remember to use good descriptive words and concrete details. You might want to include:

- How did your day begin?
- How did you travel to the theater?
- Who was with you?
- What did you do at the theater?
- What did you see?
- What did you hear?
- What happened at the end of the performance?
- How did your field trip end?
Write a letter to your favorite character in the ballet. Tell them what you liked about their dancing, costume, or music and what made them stand out in your mind. Draw a picture of them and add it to the letter.

Dear ____________________,

Sincerely, ____________________

DRAW A PICTURE OF THE CHARACTER
Write a letter to your favorite character in the ballet. Tell them what you liked about their dancing, costume. Draw a picture of them on the back of your letter. Some character ideas: Nutcracker, Sugar Plum Fairy, Mouse Queen, Clara, Drosselmeyer, Snow King or Queen.

Dear ____________________,

You were my favorite character in The Nutcracker!

I loved it when you _____________________________

_______________________________________________.

Your dancing was _________________________________

_______________________________________________.

Your costume was _________________________________

_______________________________________________.

Sincerely _________________________________.

P.S. I drew a picture of you on the back of this letter!
Ballet Dancers sometimes look like they defy gravity when they jump through the air and are lifted into the air. But they are actually constantly working with gravity to execute these moves. The center of gravity is the point at which an object will balance. A dancer’s center of gravity must stay above the area that he/she makes contact with the floor. This is what allows them to balance.

For example, the center of gravity for this teeter totter is the blue vertical line:

Try to find the center of gravity for your pencil by balancing it on your finger.

Draw a line through the images of the dancers below to illustrate their center of gravity. Identify the forces at work in these images:
MATHEMATICS

Draw a bar graph and answer each question.

During the Russian dance in the Nutcracker, two men dance along with 10 women. In the Nutcracker, how many more women are Russian dancers than men?

In the Waltz of the Flowers, there are two soloist ballerinas and 8 corps de ballet ballerinas. What is the ratio of soloist to corps de ballet dancers in the Waltz of the Flowers?

There are three French Marzipan and two Spanish Chocolate dancers. The total number of Snow dancers is twice as many as the total number of Spanish Chocolate and French Marzipan dancers combined. How many snow dancers are there?

GLOSSARY

Corps de ballet - Dancers who perform together as a group, usually providing a frame for the soloist.
Soloist - A dancer who dances alone
Waltz - A type of dance that includes steps in groups of threes that is characterized by long flowing movements, turns, rises, and falls.
CREATIVE WRITING / SOCIAL STUDIES

Our version of The Nutcracker is set in Germany in the 1800s. The costumes and dances in the party scene are period appropriate. Rewrite the story of the Nutcracker by setting it in a different time period and location while keeping the basic events the same. In your narrative story you should describe:

- The Party (What are the guests wearing? What is the entertainment at the party? What toys do the children receive? How are they dancing?)
- The Battle (Replace the Nutcracker, Mouse Queen, soldiers, and mice with something else. What weapons do they use? Who wins?)
- The Snow Scene (Think about the location you set the story in and make the snow scene appropriate for that climate. Perhaps they travel through a tropical rainforest or a desert.)
- The Dream Land (Replace the Land of Sweets with a different dream-like land. Get very creative and describe the different characters and dancers.)

HISTORY

In the ballet, Clara is taken to the Land of Sweets by Herr Drosselmeyer and Nutcracker Prince. In Festival Ballet Providence's production, each sweet represents the country where it originated or became popular. Choose one of the countries, research it and do a presentation on its culture. This should include their history, attire, cuisine, traditions, etc. As a bonus, look up a traditional folk dance from their culture, learn it and perform it for the class. The different sweets and countries from the ballet are:

- Hot chocolate from Spain
- Marzipan from France
- Tea from China
- Trepak or Candy Canes from Russia

SCIENCE / SCENIC DESIGN

On their way to the land of Sweets, the Nutcracker and Clara travel through a magical snow storm. Choose a different type of storm for them to travel through: sand storm, hurricane, or tornado. Draw costumes and a backdrop or set that illustrate the weather that you have chosen.

Draw several natural formations and come up with patterns for the dancers that relate to that weather. For example, a tornado would have swirling, circular patterns.
HEALTHY SNACKING

Dancers eat healthy snack throughout the day to keep their energy up and mind alert. What healthy snacks do you eat?

Snack-Shopping List

Instructions: Answer these five questions about your snacking habits and what you like to eat. When you’re done, use your answers to make a shopping list at the bottom. Tear it off and send it with a parent, or tag along and shop for snacks yourself.

Remember: If the snack has a few ingredients, list them all.

<p>| | |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Instead of buying sugary or high-fat snacks at school or the store, put a healthy snack in your backpack every morning.</td>
<td>BACKPACK SNACK:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Do you snack after school? If so, what healthy snack would you like to eat after school?</td>
<td>AFTER-SCHOOL SNACK:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Do you eat dessert after dinner? If so, what healthy dessert would you like?</td>
<td>DESSERT:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Don’t forget the weekend! Think about what you’ll be doing — playing sports, hanging out with friends — and if you’ll be eating snacks. What healthy snacks would you like to have on the weekend?</td>
<td>WEEKEND SNACKS:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. To pack or store a snack, you might need some containers. For your snacks, will you need anything like a plastic bag or reusable plastic container?</td>
<td>CONTAINERS:</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

SHOPPING LIST:

________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________
MOUSE QUEEN
CHINESE/TEA
DROSSELMEYER