

FIVE THINGS to do this week...

1 VISIT some of Rudolph's relatives in the deer sanctuary in the Phoenix Park. The free event also includes a deer talk from one of the keepers and a couple of surprise guests may be in store. Call 6770095 for more.

2 RECYCLE. Do your bit for the environment this Christmas and recycle cards, cardboard, wrapping, cans, plastic, glass and batteries. Find tips on recycling at www.sdcc.ie or www.recyclemore.ie.

3 TAKE the family to the 7UP Winter Wonderland at the Royal Hospital Kilmainham. Running until January 8, the wonderland boasts an ice rink, Christmas circus, winter wonderland market, Santa's Christmas village and Christmas attractions and rides. Visit www.familyfun.ie for more.

4 FEED the birds. As temperatures drop and the ground freezes over, don't forget about our winged-friends. Leave out nuts and fruit or buy



birdseed and fruit balls which will ensure garden birds have a very merry Christmas too.

5 RELAX. Now that the Christmas holidays are upon us it's time to enjoy cosy days in front of the fire, old movies, lazy lie-ins, late breakfasts and long, brisk walks that steer well clear of shopping centres and crowds. Christmas comes but once a year - make the most of it.

The rapping penguin

Once upon a time in the North Pole there was a little penguin called Ivana Pick My Nose.

As this story begins it will be happy, sad, happy and sad, but we will have to start at the very beginning. So here we go, as I said there was a penguin called Ivana Pick My Nose, but everyone called him the Rapping Penguin. He lived in a family of five. His twin sisters Ivana Tinkle and Ivana Winkle and then there's his psycho parents Wilbur Na Pig and Ivana Tinkle Winkle Pick My Nose. Well, on December 1st 2011, the Rapping Penguin wanted to make his Christmas list. So he got some paper, glue, pictures of toys and papier-mâché to decorate, then he was ready. Then he went to the Rectangle shopping centre and gave it to Santa Clause. He was so happy with himself but then he started to have doubts,

"What if the real Santa Clause doesn't get my letter, then what will I do?" he thought.

"It's time to go to bed!" his mam said in a bouncy voice as they walked inside.

"But it's twelve AM!" shouted Ivana Pick My Nose.

By Emily Whelan

Age Nine (and three quarters)
Ms O'Toole's 4th Class
Scoil Maelruan's, Oldbawn

"Go!... To!... Bed!" replied Wilbur Na Pig. Ivana ran upstairs, his sisters followed. Ivana, Ivana and Ivana all got into bed and dozed off. Ivana Tinkle was dreaming about Penguin Top Model. Ivana Winkle was dreaming about handbags but Ivana Pick My Nose was dreaming about Santa, "Was he real or not?" He woke up and went downstairs to his mother. "Is Santa Clause real?" asked Ivana Pick My Nose. "Blah, bloo, blopl!" replied Wilbur Na Pig. Since he got no answer, he went to his dad, he asked "Dad is Santa..." "Ahhhhhhh!" screamed his dad very unexpectedly. So Ivana ran upstairs to his sisters. They were talking about how John Seena, the famous wrestler makes them fall to the floor with gasps. He would be so sorry to break up their conversation, but he just had to do it. "Is Santa Clause..."



Poets corner

Christmas Panic by Trish Nugent

*Shopping Shopping
Frantic shopping
Gotta do my Christmas shopping
Gotta get an Xbox,
A flicker and some Christmas socks
The youngest wants a new Ipad
A woolly jumper for me Dad
The baby wants tickling Elmo
Buy Barbie, but give Ken the elbow
Gotta get a big dolls house
Gotta get a Mickey Mouse
Gotta go clean my own house*

*Cleaning, cleaning, frantic cleaning
Gotta get a move on
Gotta get the Hoover on
Windows need a damn good washing
All the floors need a mopping
Have to clean out all the cupboards
Start to feel like Mother Hubbard
Make a list and check it twice
Don't stop to think about the price
Cannot leave the cupboards bare
Go late night shopping to the Square
Go and post my Christmas cards*

*Head up the lift to St. Bernards
Food shop food shop
Gotta shop until I drop
Twenty five selection boxes,
God knows how many tins of Foxes
Luxury biscuits
Tesco own brand? I wouldn't risk it
Gotta get a full ham,
A turkey, a leg of lamb
Brussels sprouts and other veg
Glad I didn't take the pledge
I really need some alcohol
What's it all about at all?*

*Crackers, crackers,
I think that I am going crackers
Gotta buy some Christmas crackers,
Ten rolls of shiny wrapping paper
Then buy five more that would be safer
Tinsel for the Christmas tree
Haven't time to stop for tea
Don't forget the mince pies
To make my own would not be wise
That was granny's one suggestion
After last year's indignation*

*Two nights in Tallaght on a trolley
That Christmas wasn't very jolly
Thought it was a heart attack
No way this year we're going back*

*Lie down, Lie down
Got to have a lie down
Before I get the bus to town
Gotta finish Christmas shopping
Keep on going, don't keep stopping
Shopping never is complete
Until we go down to Moore Street
You know that it's never too early,
To go and get your cheeky Charlies
Flowers from the dealers
Hiding from the peelers
When buying cheap cigarettes
Getting myself into debt
Breaking into a cold sweat
I know there's something I'll forget
Get myself into a knot
Thinking of things I haven't bought*

*Then I suddenly remember
...it's still only November*



ALWAYS PREPARED: Living in Manor Estate in Terenure, Trish Nugent is a member of Platform One writing group in Rua Red. She has been writing for the past five and a half years, after she starting penning short stories and monologues for her drama group in An Cosán. She told *The Echo*: "I can't stop writing now and I write about everything - I always have my notebook and pen in my bag".