OBSERVER & ECCENTRIC

GUIDE TO THE MOVIES

National Amusements Showcase Cinemas

Showcase Auburn Hills 1-14
2150 N. Opdyke Rd.
Between University & Walton Blvd
248-373-2660
Bargain Matinees Daily:
All Shows until 6 pm
Continuous Shows Daily
Late Shows Fri. & Sat.
THRU THURSDAY
NP DENOTES NO PASS

NP END OF DAYS (R)
10:40,11:10, 1:20, 1:50, 4:10, 4:40, 7:10, 7:40, 9:50, 10:20
NP TOY STORY 2 (G)
10:30, 12:00, 12:45, 2:30, 3:00, 4:45, 5:15, 7:00, 7:30, 9:05, 9:35
NP SLEEPY HOLLOW (R)
10:45, 11:15, 1:30, 2:00, 4:10, 4:50, 7:10, 7:45, 9:55, 10:25
NP THE WORLD IS NOT ENOUGH (PG13)
10:30, 11:00, 1:35, 1:45, 4:00, 4:30, 7:00, 7:30, 9:45, 10:15
DOGMA (R)
1:30, 4:35, 7:20, 10:00
THE MESSENGER: JOAN OF ARC (R)
10:30 A.M.
POKEMON (G)
10:30, 11:30, 12:30, 1:30, 2:40, 4:20, 6:30, 8:30
THE BONE COLLECTOR (R)
11:40, 2:20, 5:00, 7:40, 10:10
HOUSE ON HAUNTED HILL (R)
4:40, 7:05, 9:20
BEST MAN (R)
10:40, 1:20, 1:50, 6:40, 9:35
THE SIXTH SENSE (PG13)
11:30, 1:50, 4:20, 6:50, 9:10

Showcase Dearborn 1-8
Michigan & Telegraph
313-561-3449
Bargain Matinees Daily
All Shows until 6 pm.
Continuous Shows Daily
Late Shows Fri. & Sat.
THRU THURSDAY
NP DENOTES NO PASS

NP END OF DAYS (R)
10:40, 11:10, 1:20, 1:50, 4:10, 4:40, 7:10, 7:40, 9:50, 10:20,
NP TOY STORY 2 (G)
10:30, 12:00, 12:45, 2:30, 3:00, 4:45, 5:15, 7:00, 7:30, 9:05, 9:35
NP SLEEPY HOLLOW (R)
10:45, 11:15, 1:30, 2:00, 4:10, 4:50, 7:10, 7:45, 9:55, 10:25
NP THE WORLD IS NOT ENOUGH (PG13)
10:30, 1:15, 3:50, 7:20, 9:55
POKEMON (G)
10:35, 11:45, 2:15, 4:50, 7:25
THE BONE COLLECTOR (R)
1:10, 4:10, 7:10, 9:35
BEST MAN (R)
9:15

Showcase Pontiac 1-5
Telegraph Sq. Lake Rd. W. Side of Telegraph
248-332-0241
Bargain Matinees Daily
+ All Shows Until 6 pm
Continuous Shows Daily
Late Shows Thurs. Fri. & Sat.
THRU THURSDAY
NP DENOTES NO PASS

NP TOY STORY 2 (G)
10:40, 12:00, 12:50, 2:30, 3:00, 4:45, 5:15, 7:00, 7:30, 9:05, 9:35
NP THE WORLD IS NOT ENOUGH (PG13)
10:30, 11:00, 1:10, 1:50, 4:00, 4:30, 6:45, 7:15, 9:25, 9:55
THE BONE COLLECTOR (R)
1:20, 4:10, 7:25, 9:45
DOGMA (R)
10:30 AM

Showcase Pontiac 6-12
2405 Telegraph Rd. East side of Telegraph
248-334-8777
Bargain Matinees Daily
+ All Shows Until 6 pm
Continuous Shows Daily
Late Shows Thurs. Fri. & Sat.
THRU THURSDAY
NP DENOTES NO PASS

NP END OF DAYS (R)
10:40,11:10, 1:20, 1:50, 4:10, 4:40 7:10, 7:40, 9:50, 10:20
NP ELIMINATED (R)
11:30, 2:20, 4:30, 7:20, 10:00
NP SLEEPY HOLLOW (R)
10:50, 11:20, 1:30, 2:00, 4:30, 5:00, 7:00, 7:50, 9:30, 10:10
POKEMON (G)
10:30, 11:50, 12:30, 1:00, 3:00, 5:00, 7:00
MUSIC OF THE HEART (PG)
9:15
THE INSIDER (R)
3:00, 6:50

Star Wallis
Warren & Wayne Rds
313-425-7700
Bargain Matinees Daily
All Shows Until 6 pm
Continuous Shows Daily
LATE SHOWS FRIDAY & SATURDAY
THRU THURSDAY
NP DENOTES NO PASS

NP SLEEPY HOLLOW (R)
10:45, 11:15, 1:30, 2:00, 4:15, 4:45, 7:15, 7:45, 9:55, 10:25
NP THE MESSENGER: JOAN OF ARC (R)
12:00, 3:10, 6:10, 9:25
LIGHT IT UP (R)
SUN. 2:10, 6:40
MON-THURS 11:00, 6:40
THE BONE COLLECTOR (R)
10:50, 1:15, 4:00, 7:30, 10:10
THE HOUSE ON HAUNTED HILL (R)
2:10, 4:30, 9:20
NO 2:10 SHOW ON SUNDAY
SLEEP IN GREENLAND (G)
SUN. 11:30

Showcase Westland 1-8
6830 Wayne Rd.,
One blk S. of Warren Rd.
313-729-1060
Bargain Matinees Daily
All Shows Until 6 pm
Continuous Shows Daily
Late Shows Fri. & Sat.
THRU THURSDAY
NP DENOTES NO PASS

NP THE WORLD IS NOT ENOUGH (PG13)
10:30, 11:00, 1:15, 1:45, 4:00, 4:30, 7:00, 7:30, 9:45, 10:15
NP DOGMA (R)
10:40, 1:05, 3:55, 7:25, 9:50
NP POKEMON (G)
10:35, 11:05, 12:40, 1:10, 2:45, 3:45, 4:50, 6:20, 7:00, 8:20, 9:00
THE BACHELOR (PG13)
11:00, 1:05, 3:10, 5:15, 7:20, 9:40
MUSIC OF THE HEART (PG)
10:15
THE SIXTH SENSE (PG13)
11:10, 1:30, 3:50, 7:45, 10:00
DOUBLE JEOPARDY (R)
11:15, 1:40, 4:15, 7:50, 10:10

Star Theatres
The World's Best Theatres
Bargain Matinees Daily $5.00 All Shows Starting before 6:00 pm
Now accepting Visa & MasterCard
"NP" Denotes No Pass Engagement

Star Great Lakes Crossing
Great Lakes Shopping Center
248-454-0366

NP END OF DAYS (R)
10:50, 12:20, 1:50, 3:20, 4:50, 6:20, 7:50, 9:20, 10:40
NO VIP TICKETS
NP TOY STORY 2 (G)
9:30, 10:50, 10:30, 11:50, 11:30, 12:00, 12:30, 1:00, 1:30, 2:00, 2:30, 3:00, 3:30, 4:00, 4:30, 5:00, 5:30, 6:00, 6:30, 7:00, 7:30, 8:00, 8:30, 9:00, 9:30, 10:00, 10:30
NO VIP TICKETS
NP FLAWLESS (R)
10:05, 12:25, 2:55, 5:35, 7:55, 10:35
NO VIP TICKETS
NP THE WORLD IS NOT ENOUGH (PG13)
9:50, 10:40, 11:20, 12:10, 12:50, 1:40, 2:20, 3:10, 3:50, 4:40, 5:20, 6:10, 6:50, 7:20, 8:10, 9:40, 10:10, 10:50 NO VIP TICKETS
NP SLEEPY HOLLOW (R)
9:40, 10:45, 11:15, 11:45, 12:45, 1:15, 1:45, 2:45, 3:15, 3:45, 4:45, 5:15, 5:45, 7:15
NO VIP TICKETS
NP POKEMON (G)
9:45, 10:45, 11:15, 11:45, 12:45, 1:15, 1:45, 2:45, 3:15, 3:45, 4:45, 5:15, 5:45, 7:15 - NO VIP TICKETS
THE BACHELOR (PG13)
7:45 AND 10:25
DOGMA (R)
10:10, 1:05, 3:40, 6:15, 9:05
THE BONE COLLECTOR (R)
11:40, 2:25, 4:55, 7:35, 10:15
BEING JOHN MALKOVICH (PG13)
10:05, 1:25, 4:10, 6:35, 8:55
AMERICAN BEAUTY (R)
12:35, 3:05, 5:35, 8:20, 10:45
ANYWHERE BUT HERE (PG13)
9:55, 12:15, 2:35, 5:05, 7:25, 9:45
THE INSIDER (R)
11:35, 2:40, 6:05, 9:35
THE MESSENGER (R)
12:05, 3:25, 6:25, 9:25
MUSIC OF THE HEART (PG)
9:15 PM

Star Island 8
at 14 Mile
32287 John R. Road
248-585-2870
CALL FOR SATURDAY SHOWTIMES
No one under age 6 admitted for PG13 & R rated films after 6 pm

NP TOY STORY 2 (G)
11:00, 11:50, 12:40, 1:30, 2:20, 3:10, 4:00, 4:50, 5:40, 6:30, 7:20, 8:10, 9:00, 9:50, 10:50
NO VIP TICKETS
NP END OF DAYS (R)
10:50, 12:50, 1:40, 2:40, 4:20, 5:20, 7:00, 8:00, 9:40, 10:40
NO VIP TICKETS
NP FLAWLESS (R)
12:50, 3:20, 6:00, 8:40
NO VIP TICKETS
NP THE WORLD IS NOT ENOUGH (PG13)
11:30, 12:30, 1:20, 2:30, 3:30, 4:30, 5:30, 6:20, 7:30, 8:30, 9:30, 10:30
NO VIP TICKETS
NP SLEEPY HOLLOW (R)
10:55, 12:10, 1:10, 2:50, 3:50, 5:10, 6:40, 7:40, 9:10, 10:10
NO VIP TICKETS
NP POKEMON (G)
11:20, 12:20, 2:00, 3:40, 4:40, 5:50, 7:10
NO VIP TICKETS
DOGMA (R)
11:05, 1:35, 4:10, 6:50, 10:00
LIGHT IT UP (R)
9:20 PM ONLY
THE INSIDER (R)
11:40, 3:00, 6:10, 9:25
SIXTH SENSE (PG13)
7:50, 10:20

Star Rochester Hills
250 Barclay Circle
248-853-2080
SUNDAY THRU THURSDAY
No one under age 6 admitted for PG 13 & R rated films after 6 pm

NP END OF DAYS (R)
11:40, 12:45, 2:30, 3:45, 5:00, 6:15, 7:45, 9:00, 10:40
NO VIP TICKETS
NP FLAWLESS (R)
11:10, 1:30, 4:15, 6:45, 9:30
NO VIP TICKETS
NP JAMES BOND: THE WORLD IS NOT ENOUGH (PG13)
11:00, 12:00, 1:45, 3:15, 4:30, 6:00, 7:15, 8:45, 10:00
NO VIP TICKETS
NP SLEEPY HOLLOW (R)
11:30, 1:20, 2:00, 3:30, 5:45, 7:00, 8:00, 9:15, 10:30
NO VIP TICKETS
NP DOGMA (R)

12:15, 2:45, 5:30, 8:15, 10:50
NO VIP TICKETS
THE INSIDER (R)
11:20, 2:00, 6:30, 9:45
THE BONE COLLECTOR (R)
11:20, 3:00, 6:30, 9:45

Star Southfield
12 Mile between Telegraph and Northwestern off I-696
248-353-STAR
No one under age 6 admitted for PG13 & R rated films after 6 pm
FOR SHOWTIMES AND TO PURCHASE TICKETS BY PHONE
CALL 248-377-2222
www.STAR-SOUTHFIELD.com
NP FEATURES - SORRY NO VIP DISCOUNT TICKETS ACCEPTED

NP TOY STORY 2 (G)
10:30, 11:10, 11:50, 12:30, 1:10, 1:50, 2:30, 3:10, 3:50, 4:30, 5:10, 5:45, 6:30, 7:15, 8:30, 9:10
NP END OF DAYS (R)
10:40, 12:40, 1:10, 1:40, 2:40, 3:40, 4:10, 4:40, 5:40, 6:40, 7:10, 7:40, 8:40, 9:40, 10:10, 10:45
NP FLAWLESS (R)
10:30, 1:30, 4:30, 7:30, 10:30
NP THE WORLD IS NOT ENOUGH (PG13)
10:30, 11:20, 12:20, 1:20, 2:20, 3:20, 4:20, 5:20, 6:20, 7:25, 8:20, 9:20, 10:25 - NO VIP TICKETS
NP SLEEPY HOLLOW (R)
11:00, 12:00, 1:00, 2:00, 3:00, 4:00, 5:00, 6:00, 7:00, 8:00, 9:00, 10:00 - NO VIP TICKETS
NP DOGMA (R)
10:40, 1:40, 4:40, 7:40, 10:40
NO VIP TICKETS
NP THE MESSENGER: JOAN OF ARC (R)
8:40 PM ONLY
NO VIP TICKETS
ANYWHERE BUT HERE (R)
9:50 PM ONLY
POKEMON (G)
10:30, 11:30, 12:30, 2:10, 3:30, 4:50, 6:00, 7:25
LIGHT IT UP (R)
9:45 PM ONLY
THE BACHELOR (PG13)
11:40
THE BONE COLLECTOR (R)
10:30, 1:15, 4:15, 7:15, 10:15
THE INSIDER (R)
8:00 PM ONLY
DOUBLE JEOPARDY (R)
12:15, 2:50, 5:25, 8:00, 10:40
THE BEST MAN (R)
7:45, 10:45

Star Winchester
1136 S. Rochester Rd.
Winchester Mall
248-656-1160
No one under age 6 admitted for PG13 & R rated films after 6 pm

NP TOY STORY (G)
11:00, 11:45, 12:30, 1:20, 2:10, 3:00, 3:50, 4:30, 5:20, 6:10, 7:00, 7:50, 8:40, 9:20, 10:00 NO VIP TICKETS
NP POKEMON (G)
11:00, 12:00, 1:10, 2:20, 3:20, 4:30, 5:30, 6:40, 7:40, 8:50
NO VIP TICKETS
STRAIGHT STORY (G)
11:20, 2:30
THE INSIDER (R)
6:00, 9:15
SIXTH SENSE (PG13)
11:30, 5:00, 10:00
BEING JOHN MALLOVICH (R)
11:10, 4:10, 9:50
MUSIC OF THE HEART (PG)
2:00, 7:30
THE BACHELOR (PG13)
1:40, 7:10
THE MESSENGER: THE STORY OF JOAN OF ARC (R)
9:40 PM ONLY

United Artists Theatres
Bargain Matinees Daily for all shows starting before 6:00 PM
Same day advance tickets available.
NV - No V.I.P. tickets accepted

United Artists Oakland
Inside Oakland Mall
248-908-0786
ALL TIMES SUN-THURS

ANYWHERE BUT HERE (PG13) NV
1:30, 4:15, 7:15, 9:45
THE MESSENGER (R) NV
12:15
THE STRAIGHT STORY (G)
1:00, 3:30, 6:45, 9:30
THE BACHELOR (PG13)
3:15, 5:20, 7:40, 9:50
AMERICAN BEAUTY (R)
12:30, 4:00, 7:00, 9:40
DOUBLE JEOPARDY (R)
12:20, 2:45, 5:00, 7:30, 10:00

United Artists 12 Oaks
Inside Twelve Oaks Mall
248-349-4311
ALL TIMES SUN-THURS.

SLEEPY HOLLOW (R) NV
12:15, 2:35, 4:55, 7:30, 9:50
THE WORLD IS NOT ENOUGH (PG13) NV
12:50, 4:05, 7:10, 10:00
THE MESSENGER (R) NV
12:40, 3:50, 7:00, 10:05
THE INSIDER (R)
3:10, 4:30, 8:00
THE OMEGA CODE (PG13)
12:10, 2:30, 4:50, 7:20, 9:40

United Artists West Bloomfield
9 Mile
One Block West of Middlebelt
248-788-6592
ALL TIMES SUN-THURS

TOY STORY 2 (G) NV
12:00, 1:35, 2:20, 3:55, 4:40, 6:30, 7:00, 8:45, 9:30
END OF DAYS (R) NV
1:45, 4:30, 7:15, 10:00
SLEEPY HOLLOW (R) NV
12:40, 3:05, 5:30, 7:55, 10:15
THE WORLD IS NOT ENOUGH (PG13) NV
1:00, 4:00, 7:10, 10:05

DOGMA (R)
9:45PM ONLY
THE MESSENGER (R)
1:15, 4:45
POKEMON (G)
12:30, 2:45, 5:00, 7:30
THE BONE COLLECTOR (R)
1:40, 4:20, 7:25, 9:55
THE INSIDER (R)
12:45, 4:15, 8:00
THE BEST MAN (R)
7:40, 10:10

United Artists-Commerce-14
3330 Springside Drive
Adjacent to Home Depot
North of the intersection of 14 Mile & Haggerty
248-960-5001
Bargain Matinees Daily for all Shows starting before 6 pm
Same Day Advance Tickets Available
NV-No VIP Tickets Accepted

TOY STORY 2 (G) NV
10:45, 11:35, 1:05, 1:55, 3:30, 4:25, 6:05, 7:00, 8:25, 9:40, 10:40
END OF DAYS (R) NV
10:30, 1:25, 4:30, 7:30, 10:30
FLAWLESS (R) NV
11:30, 2:45, 5:15, 7:50, 10:20
SLEEPY HOLLOW (R) NV
11:15, 12:10, 2:00, 2:50, 4:30, 5:30, 7:05, 8:00, 9:45, 10:35
THE WORLD IS NOT ENOUGH (PG13) NV
10:35, 12:25, 1:35, 3:15, 4:15, 6:30, 7:15, 9:25, 10:05
ANYWHERE BUT HERE (PG13)
10:50, 1:20, 4:20, 6:50, 9:20
BEING JOHN MALLOVICH (R)
9:00 P.M.
DOGMA (R)
11:10, 1:50, 10:25
THE MESSENGER (R)
11:00 A.M.
POKEMON (G)
10:40, 11:40, 12:40, 1:50, 3:00, 4:10, 5:20, 6:35, 7:40
THE BACHELOR (PG13)
9:50 P.M.
THE BONE COLLECTOR (R)
2:30, 5:10, 7:50, 10:15
THE INSIDER (R)
10:30, 1:40, 4:55, 8:30
MUSIC OF THE HEART (PG13)
2:10, 7:45

Birmingham Theatre
211 S. Woodward
Downtown Birmingham
644-FILM
NP Denotes No Pass Engagements
PURCHASE TICKETS BY PHONE! CALL (248) 644-FILM AND HAVE YOUR VISA, MASTERCARD OR AMERICAN EXPRESS READY. A $1.5 SURCHARGE PER TICKET WILL APPLY TO ALL TELEPHONE SALES - MATINEE MOVIES $5.00

NP TOY STORY 2 (G)
12:10, 1:15, 2:20, 3:25, 4:30, 5:35, 6:45, 9:05
NP THE WORLD IS NOT ENOUGH (PG13)
1:00, 3:35, 6:15, 8:50
NP END OF DAYS (R)
1:15, 4:00, 7:00, 9:35
NP SLEEPY HOLLOW (R)
12:10, 2:20, 4:30, 7:00, 9:20
DOGMA (R)
1:20, 4:00, 6:45, 9:20
THE MESSENGER: THE STORY OF JOAN ARC (R)
12:00
THE BONE COLLECTOR (R)
12:00, 2:15, 4:35, 7:00, 9:25
THE INSIDER (R)
7:45

MJR Theatres

$1.00 Ford Fri 11/19
313-541-7280
AFFORDABLE FAMILY PRICES
$1.00 Till 6 pm After 6 pm $1.50
Ample Parking - Telford Center
Free Refill on Drinks & Popcorn
(SUN. No children under 6 after 6 pm except on G or PG rated films)
MATINEES DAILY

DUDLEY DO RIGHT (PG)
12:00, 1:30, 3:15
RUNAWAY BRIDE (PG)
SUN. 12:30, 2:45, 5:00, 7:15, 9:30
MON-THURS. 5:00, 7:00, 9:15
AMERICAN PIE (R)
5:00, 7:00, 9:15
HOLIDAY MATINEES TOMORROW

Waterford Cinema 11
7501 Highland Rd.
S.E. corner M-59 & Williams Lake Rd.
24 Hour Movie Line
248-666-7900
CALL 77 FILMS #331
Stadium Seating and Digital Sound
Makes for the Best Movies

NP TOY STORY 2 (G)
11:15, 12:00, 1:40, 2:30, (4:00 & 5:00 @ $3.75) 6:40, 7:15, 9:00
NP END OF DAYS (R)
11:00, 11:45, 1:30, 2:15, (4:00 & 4:45 @ $3.75) 6:45, 7:30, 9:20, 10:05
NP BOG: THE WORLD IS NOT ENOUGH (PG13)
11:30, 2:10, (4:45 @ $3.75) 7:20, 9:55
NP SLEEPY HOLLOW (R)
11:40, 1:50, (4:50 @ $3.75) 7:20, 9:55
ANYWHERE BUT HERE (PG13)
11:45, 2:15, (4:40 @ $3.75) 6:50, 9:30
DOGMA (R)
1:20, (4:15 @ $3.75) 6:50, 9:30
THE MESSENGER: THE JOAN OF ARC STORY (R)
9:45
POKEMON: THE FIRST MOVIE (G)
11:30, 12:15, 1:30, 2:30, (4:30 & 5:45 @ $3.75) 7:00, 7:45
NPC BONE COLLECTOR (R)
1:15, (4:10 @ $3.75) 7:10, 9:50
THE INSIDER (R)
9:20
SIXTH SENSE (PG13)
9:10

Wed & Weekend Accepted

Main Art Theatre III
118 Main at 11 Mile
Royal Oak
248-542-8180
call 77-FILMS ext 542
Phone Orders 2 pm - 10 pm
call (248) 542-5196
(DISCOUNTED SHOWS!!!)
TICKETS AVAILABLE AT THE BOX OFFICE OR PHONE 248-542-0180
VISA AND MASTERCARD ACCEPTED

DOGMA (R)
(1:45, 4:15) 6:45, 9:15
BOYS DON'T CRY (R)
(2:00, 4:30) 7:15, 9:45
BEING JOHN MALKOVICH (R)
(1:30, 4:00) 7:00, 9:30

Movie Art Theatre III
4135 W. Maple, West of Telegraph
Bloomfield Hills
248-855-9090
(DISCOUNTED SHOWS!!!)

THE STRAIGHT STORY (G)
SUN. (11:30, 4:00) 6:45, 9:35
MON-THURS (4:00) 6:45, 9:15
PRINCESS MONONOKE (PG13)
SUN. (11:45, 4:15) 7:15, 10:00
MON-THURS (4:15) 7:15, 10:00
FRIDAY'S JUBILEE (R)
SUN. (2:15, 4:30) 7:00, 9:30
MON-THURS. (4:30) 7:00, 9:15

EARLY MATINEES WEDNESDAY AND THURSDAY

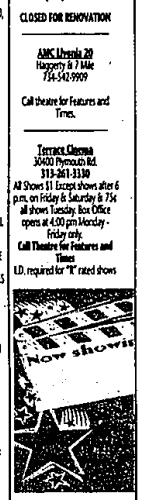
Oxford 3 Cinemas, L.L.C.
Downtown Oxford
Lapeer Rd. (M-24)
(248) 628-7101
Fax (248) 628-1300

CLOSED FOR RENOVATION

AMC Lincoln 20
Haggerty & 7 Mile
734-542-9909

Call theatre for Features and Times.

Terrace Cinema
30600 Plymouth Rd.
313-261-3130
All Shows $1 Except shows after 6 p.m. on Friday & Saturday & 75¢ all shows Tuesday. Box Office opens at 4:00 pm Monday - Friday only.
Call Theatre for Features and Times
I.D. required for "R" rated shows



Collection of mystery stories makes an ideal holiday gift

"Irreconcilable Differences: 20 Mystery Stories," edited by Lia Matera (HarperCollins, $24).

BY VICTORIA DIAZ
SPECIAL WRITER

Not long ago, editor and writer Lia Matera approached a number of award-winning writers with an idea for a new anthology, and a request that they each create a short mystery tale for inclusion in the collection. Matera's only stipulation was that the story be structured around the theme of irreconcilable differences.

VICTORIA DIAZ

In addition to her work as an editor and writer, Matera is a veteran attorney, and when she made her request to the writers, she expected them to define the term in the same legalistic way that she did.

"I was. . . delighted to see how much more broadly they interpreted it," she writes in her introduction. "My years as a lawyer had. . .limited the words for me, narrowing them to diminished potency. Appropriated by divorce statutes, irreconcilable differences had lost some of the vigor. . .of its earlier, less specific usage."

The stories in this collection are not just about irreparable marital relationships (although those are here); they also focus on myriad types of personal relationships that have reached a kind of impasse, or gone awry in some terrible way that cannot be "fixed" by any court of law.

After all, adds Matera, "judging from crime statistics, a great many conflicts continue to cry out for vengeance, either in blood or money or tears."

Come along on this diverse and spine-tingling journey that opens with "Tusk," Joyce Carol Oates' dark account of adolescent anguish, and closes with Matera's own eerie tale, "It Can't Be True," which also deals with childhood's indelible brand of emotional pain.

In between, mystery mavens can delve into this collection as if it were Gump's box of chocolates. Some surprises can be found along the way, and some may really hit the spot.

If sepulchral humor is to your taste, Eileen Dreyer's "Fun With Forensics" will tickle your funny bone. In it, "the new Forensic Sciences Association. . .struggling to claim its place in the pantheon of professional organizations" finds, to its horror, that it is "saddled with a member who (is) not only completely unqualified, but a full-fledged psycho to boot." What the highly image-conscious group does to finally rid itself of misfit Wanda Mummerson is, shall we say, extremely bone-chilling.

Extremes of temperatures play a role in a number of other stories. Edna Buchanan's "Miami Heat" shows us a man on a sultry night in the crime-ridden Florida city, losing his family and perhaps his life because he insists that his dreamy past has not evolved into the violent present. Bill Pronzini's "Wishful Thinking" also takes place during a relentless heat wave. In it, we meet Jerry, an odd bird who lets off steam by pretending that he has murdered his nagging wife, Verna, in various ways. As part of his pretense, he announces his "crime" to his next-door neighbor. In the colorful and inventive "Paleta Man," by Laurie R. King, an ice-cream vendor who commits a deadly deed possesses just the right stuff for disposing of his victim's remains.

Former Michigan author Marcia Muller, in "Up at the Riverside," writes of an aging, gay couple who, on inheriting a decrepit hotel, come up against irreconcilable differences regarding its fate. Despite the darkness at the heart of the tale, this Sharon McCone mystery that examines the past and the future actually ends on an upnote.

Also looking at the interconnectedness of past, present, and future is Jeremiah Healy's well-wrought story, "Legacy," in which his popular private eye, John Francis Cuddy, encounters a dying woman who feels she must break the law in order to preserve her beloved family.

"The Perfect Revenge" (Amanda Cross), "Buried Treasure" (Sarah Lovett), "Just Desserts" (Judith Kelman), "Heart Break" (Gillian Roberts), and Jan Burke's "An Unsuspected Condition of the Heart" (the only story not set in the present) are some of the additional tales examining the common theme.

Naming the strongest story in "Irreconcilable Differences" is a little like picking apples over oranges.

Though some pack more punch than others, there's not a really bad one in the bunch. If you're seeking out the ideal holiday gift for those on your list who love a mystery, you've found it with "Irreconcilable Differences."

Victoria Diaz is a Livonia resident who writes book, movie and theater reviews for the Observer & Eccentric Newspapers.

Here's a holiday sampler of books that deserve a place under the tree

BY THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

You know what is is even before you tear off the rectangular wrapping, but a book still is one of the most rewarding gifts to receive, and to give:

For grown-up minds

■ Photographer Fred Maroon had no inkling of its dramatic end when he began a project to photograph the Nixon presidency. "The Nixon Years: 1969-1974" (Abbeville Press, $29.95 hardcover) portrays the period, from Richard M. Nixon's election to the end of his presidency with the Watergate scandal, with many photographs that have not been previously published. Text is by former New York Times columnist Tom Wicker.

■ Norman Rockwell used to be dismissed by critics as a mere illustrator. Nobody liked him except, it seems, the millions of readers who enjoyed his Saturday Evening Post covers. In "Norman Rockwell: Pictures for the American People" (Abrams, $35 hardcover), curators Maureen Hart Hennessey and Anne Knutson compile new critical acclaim from modern critics, who appreciate Rockwell's contribution to American 20th century culture.

■ Aerial photography reveals the earth in fascinating patterns and perspectives. "Earth from Above" (Abrams, $65 hardcover), by Yann Arthus-Bertrand, distills his five years of airborne photography across five continents and 60 countries.

For the young in age, outlook

■ "Stormy Night" (Kids Can Press, $18.95 hardcover), by Michele Lemieux, is a serious, philosophical book for children, approaching their fears and questions about God, life, death, abandonment, chance, happiness, sadness, and what-happens-if. Lemieux, with simple text and drawings, enables youngsters to grasp these abstracts. The book, first published in Germany and subsequently translated into nine languages, is winner of the Ragazzi Prize awarded at the Bologna Book Fair.

BOOK HAPPENINGS

Book Happenings features events at suburban bookstores, libraries and literary gatherings. Send news leads to Keely Wygonik, Observer & Eccentric Newspapers, 36251 Schoolcraft, Livonia, MI 48150, or fax them to (734) 591-7279 or e-mail to kwygonik@oe. homecomm.net

LOCAL INTEREST

Northville resident James E. Person Jr. will discuss and sign copies of his book, "Russell Kirk, A Critical Biography of a Conservative Mind," noon to 3 p.m. Sunday, Dec. 5, at the Little Book Shoppe on the Park in Plymouth. Person is a graduate of Plymouth Salem High School and his book is an account of the noted thinker Russell Kirk, who also lived in Plymouth as a youth. Kirk developed a unique philosophy of conservative values and perspectives. The Little Book Shoppe is located at 308 S. Main.

■ Author David Carson, who wrote "Rockin' Down the Dial: The Detroit Sound of Radio from Jack the Bellboy," will sign copies of his book at the Detroit Historical Museum. The signing is scheduled for 2 p.m. Sunday, Dec. 5, in the Louise C. Booth auditorium of the museum. Carson, whose book was recently published by Troy-based Momentum Books, will be joined by a few of the radio personalities featured, including current WOMC-FM morning man and Detroit radio institution Dick Purtan, former WXYZ and WJLB radio personality Jack Surrel and veteran WJR and WJBK radio personality Clark Reid. The program is presented in conjunction with the Museum's new "On the Air!" exhibit, which allows museum-goers to take a walk through time and the area's radio and television broadcast history. The program is free with regular museum admission. The "On the Air!" exhibit continues at the Detroit Historical Museum through April 30. The museum, located at Woodward and Kirby in Detroit's Cultural Center, is open 9:30 a.m. to 5 p.m. Tuesday through Friday and 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. Saturday and Sunday. Admission is $4.50 for adults, $2.25 for seniors and children ages 12-18 and free for children 12 and younger. Call (313) 833-1805 for more information.

OTHER BOOK SIGNINGS

TV talk show host Mike Douglas will sign copies of his new book, "I'll be Right Back," at the Barnes and Noble store in Northville, 2-4 p.m. Saturday, Dec. 4. In "I'll be Right Back," Douglas writes about his more than 50 years of involvement in television, including his popular late afternoon programs from the 1970s. For more information, call (248) 348-0696. The store is located off of Haggerty and Six Mile.

■ Farmington Observer reporter and Livonia resident Tim Smith will sign copies of his new book, "Miracle Birth Stories of Very Premature Babies – Little Thumbs Up!" Saturday, Dec. 11, 1 p.m., Waldenbooks, Lakeside Mall, Hall Road, Sterling Heights, (810) 247-0420, and Thursday, Jan. 6, 7 p.m. Borders Books and Music, Oakland Mall, 14 Mile Road, Troy. Smith can be contacted directly at (248) 477-5450.

■ Author Sandi Brewer will read from and sign copies of her novel, "Murder for Beltene," 7 p.m. Tuesday, Nov. 30, at Borders Ann Arbor, 612 E. Liberty. The book is set in Brennan County, Mich., and tells the story of the Beltenes, a family like none you've ever encountered before. Considering that Rhiannon Beltene is a vampire novelist and loves going out for ice cream late at night, it's no surprise that someone leaves a bloodless, embalmed body in her path one evening, especially for her to find.

BORDERS ROCHESTER HILLS

■ Four Seasons: A Romance Reading Group will discuss "Bayou Magic" by Elizabeth Turner. The discussion will be led by romance authors Marie Allen and Jeanne Savery, both members of the Greater Detroit Romance Writers Association. The session starts at 7:30 p.m. Monday, Nov. 29. Call (248) 652-0558 for information.