

Malls & Mainstreets

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Sunday, December 5, 1999

Stocking gifts abound in local stores



CARI WALDMAN

Stuffing Christmas stockings is a ritual, but don't underestimate your ability to tailor each one to the recipient.

There's a plethora of pint-sized merchandise out there designed to tickle just about everybody on your list without burning a hole in your pocket.

Since we're in the midst of the holiday shopping season, I thought I'd put together a list of stocking stuffers aimed at easing the process of finding the right item for the right person. Good luck and happy holidays!

For the hard-to-buy-for:

- Emergency survival kit for the car, \$17.95 at Moosejaw Mountaineering in Birmingham

- Magnetic grocery list for the refrigerator, \$9.95 at Barnes and Noble stores

- Photo cube for a stylish display of photographs, \$5 at Old Navy stores

For the pet lover:

- Antlers for dogs and cats to don during the holidays, \$2.60 at Adventures in Toys in downtown Birmingham

- Dog cookie mix with cookie cutter to bake the pooch a personalized bone, \$9.95 at Harrison Luggage in Berkeley

For the gourmet:

- Hot pepper raspberry jelly, \$5.25 at A Matter of Taste in Commerce Township

- American Spoon's winter compote, \$8.50 at The Great Harvest Bread Co. in Birmingham

- Peppermint straws for cocoa and other winter beverages, \$4.95 at Caribou Coffee stores

For the outdoor enthusiast:

- "McGo-Blue" or MSU cocoa mix, \$9 at The Village Barn in Franklin

- Fleeced hats, \$19.95 at Moosejaw Mountaineering

For good little boys and girls:

- Black paper note pads, \$4, with "Milky" white pens, \$1.25, both at Write Impressions in Royal Oak
- Pokémon key chains, \$5 at Adventures in Toys

- Plastic airplane spoons, \$3.50 at The Union General Store and Sweetshop Cafe in downtown Clarkston

For the millennium-mad:

- Millennium time capsule filled with chocolate cookies, \$12 at The Basket Shoppe in Berkeley

- Millennium snow globe, \$5 at Old Navy stores

- Millennium chocolate champagne bottle, \$14.99 at Omaha Steaks stores

- For the feminine and romantic:

- Chenille gloves, \$8 at The Sock Shop in Farmington Hills

- "Unwined Vinotherapy" body oil made with grapes, \$12 at Lori Karbal

For the man-in-your-life:

- Anything tiny - a pair of Ralph Lauren socks - from The Claymore Shop in downtown Birmingham (they promise to wrap each stocking stuffer for you!)

- Football and golf ball, by-the-slice soap, \$7.50 at Lori Karbal

For the stressed-and-seeking-relaxation:

- Deep Steep herbal bath tea in sweet rose milk, \$5 each at Lori Karbal

- Orange and mango massage cream, \$5.99 at Attitudes in West Bloomfield

- Homeopathic stress mints and pick-up drops, \$5 at The Discovery Channel Store at the Somerset Collection in Troy

- Stress relief jelly, \$10 at Bath & Body Works stores

- Gingerbread tea, \$5.95 at Caribou Coffee stores

For holiday revelers:

- "And So This Is Christmas," tape, a collection of music featuring Babyface and Harry Connick Jr., \$9.99 at Target stores

- Pine and cranberry candle votives, 99 cents each at Wicks 'N' Sticks stores

For the teen-in-your-life:

- Rhinestones for the hair, \$10 at The Sock Shop

- Body glitter and Candy Stick lip gloss, \$5 each both at Limited Too stores

- "This Is Christmas" compact disc by 98 Degrees, \$14.99 at Harmony House stores

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Holiday appearances Gift-wrapping takes center stage

BY NICOLE STAFFORD
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It's the thought that counts? Don't judge a book by its cover? First impressions are everything?

While all these sayings hold weight, they present a paradox when it comes to gift-giving and, more importantly, gift-wrapping.

While the item inside the box certainly matters, how a gift is presented seems to have taken on greater importance these days. It only makes sense. We live in a time when it's possible to buy containers for our containers and write monies in fonts that grace wedding invitations.

Hoping to help local shoppers present their holiday gifts in a manner befitting the times, West Bloomfield's recently opened organization and storage store, Organized Living, is holding a series of gift-wrapping workshops this month.

Slated for Dec. 11 and 18, the seminars will teach participants how to create unique gift packages, pack and send holiday gifts and make interesting bows.

"I think it's easier not to be creative," said Jan Wilmot, Organized Living's assistant manager. "It's also a matter of convenience."

Though time and convenience explain why many people resort to solid-colored wrapping paper and stick-on bows, most people simply fear the outcome of creative experimentation, said Wilmot, who conducts many of Organized Living's gift-wrapping workshops.

"Once you see it, see how it's done and examples of gift packages, you're much more comfortable that you can do it," she said, encouraging area shoppers to attend a seminar or visit the store, which is overflowing with examples of creative holiday packaging.

The store also carries everything required to wrap a gift and a plethora of unique packaging options, from reversible, European sheets of wrapping paper to elegant, red velvet gift boxes.

While specific techniques for making holiday packages more decorative and unique will be covered in Organized Living's workshop, Wilmot said a few basic principles - paying attention to details, personalizing gift packages and experimenting with colors and patterns - make all the difference.

Creative gift-wrapping, like home decorating, only requires a little extra time, energy and thought, she said. "I can't draw. I can't paint. But, all these things I just did look great. It shows a lot about my personal taste. ... And, the person who is going to receive the gift knows I took the time."



Details: Jan Wilmot at Organized Living shows how small details make packages more personal and unique.



Inspiration: From unique boxes to festive bows, Organized Living has plenty of examples of creative holiday packaging.

Wrap It!

What: Holiday gift-wrapping workshops

When: 10 a.m. Dec. 11 and 10 a.m. and 1 p.m. Dec. 18

Where: Organized Living, 7230 Orchard Lake Road at

14 Mile Road in the Gateway Center in West Bloomfield

Workshops are free, last 30 minutes and cover different subjects, from creative gift-giving to creating holiday bows. For details about each workshop, call (248) 539-1640.

HOLIDAY HAPPENINGS

Holiday Happenings will keep you informed about holiday shopping programs, services, events and boutiques during the busiest shopping time of the year. Send information to: *Malls & Mainstreets*, c/o Observer & Eccentric Newspapers, 805 E. Maple, Birmingham, Mich. 48009. Fax: (248) 644-1314. Information must be received by 5 p.m. Monday for publication the following Sunday.

MOONLIGHT SHOPPING SPIRIT

Restaurants and shops in downtown Birmingham are open late, and carolers and live entertainment fill the streets, 6-11 p.m., Friday, December 10. Also, meter and dock parking is free after 6 p.m.

CHARLIE BROWN CHRISTMAS

Wonderland Mall in Livonia hosts a presentation of "A Charlie Brown Christmas" at 7 p.m. Saturday, Dec. 11, Food Court stage. For details, call (734) 522-4100.

SANTA FOR THE HEARING-IMPAIRED

A signing Santa listens to the holiday wishes of hearing-impaired children and uses American Sign Language to communicate with them, 1:30-4:30 p.m. Dec. 5 at Fairlane Town Center in Dearborn, Fountain Court Stage. For additional information,

call (313) 593-1370.

CHILDREN'S GIFT SHOP

Volunteers help children shop for gifts in a children's holiday gift shop at The Community House in downtown Birmingham through Sunday, Dec. 12. Hours are: 3-6 p.m. Monday-Friday and 10 a.m.-2 p.m. Saturday. For more information, call (248) 644-5892.

SALVATION ARMY BAKE SALE

The Salvation Army holds a bake sale at Laurel Park Place in Livonia, 10 a.m.-3 p.m. Saturday, Dec. 11. Proceeds help feed hungry children. For details, call (248) 443-2242.

HOLIDAY CAROLING

Enjoy holiday caroling by area high school choirs at Art Van Furniture stores in Livonia, Novi, Royal Oak, Southfield, Waterford and Westland, 1-3 p.m. Sunday, Dec. 12.

SHOPPING BENEFIT FOR ANIMALS

Shop for shoes at DSW Shoe Warehouse stores in Troy, Novi and Southfield on Saturday, Dec. 11 and Sunday, Dec. 12 and a portion of the proceeds will benefit the Animal Welfare Society of Southeastern Michigan. Also, shoppers will be able to adopt a dog or cat from the agency. For more information, call (248) 349-0404.

NORTHEAST TROLLEY SERVICE

Northeast Express trolley service between Southfield's Northland Center and area businesses begins Monday, Dec. 6. Sponsored by the Southfield Downtown Development Authority and the Northland Center, the trolley service runs 11:30 a.m.-2:30 p.m. Dec. 6-9 and Dec. 13-16. Shoppers may use the trolley service, which includes a box lunch run to the no-fee mall, from designated Southfield businesses. For details, including pick-up and drop-off information, call (248) 443-5311.

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SANTA VISITS JACOBSON'S

Children who visit and speak with Santa receive a special gift at Jacobson's stores in Birmingham and Rochester Hills, noon-5 p.m. Wednesday, Dec. 8 and Saturday, Dec. 11, Children's Department.

CHOIR PRESENTATIONS

Livonia Mall hosts the Plymouth Academy Children's Choir at 7 p.m. Monday, Dec. 6 and the Calvary Baptist Church Youth Choir at 3 p.m., Saturday, Dec. 11, both near the Sears fountain. Also, carolers from the Church of Holy Spirit perform throughout the mall, 7-9 p.m. Thursday, Dec. 9 and members of the Mitcham Chapel choir perform throughout the mall, 5-6 p.m. Saturday, Dec. 11. For additional information, call (734) 476-1160.

COOKIE WALK

Purchase your holiday treats at Holy Transfiguration Orthodox Church's Sixth Annual Cookie Walk, 9 a.m. until sold-out, Saturday, Dec. 11. The Livonia church is located at 38075 Seven Mile Road between Farmington and Newburg roads. Call (248) 476-3432.

SANTA BEAR APPEARANCE

The Hudson's Santa Bear visits with children in his millennium costume between Thursday, Dec. 9 and Monday, Dec. 13 at the retailer's store at Oakland Mall in Troy and Fairlane Town Center in Dearborn. Please call individual stores for appearance times.

TOYS FOR TOTS DROP-OFF

Laurel Park Place in Livonia serves as a drop-off place for Toys for Tots donations. Please bring new toys to the mall between 6 a.m. and 10 a.m. Tuesday, Dec. 14. For more information, call (734) 462-1100.

ADDED ATTRACTIONS

Designer Jewelry and Precious Jewels Salon, first floor

WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 8

ST. JOHN CRUISE & HOLIDAY SHOW

View St. John's collection of cruise and special order holiday wear at Saks Fifth Avenue, the Somerset Collection in Troy, 10 a.m.-5 p.m., St. John Collections, second floor.

THURSDAY, DECEMBER 9

CELEBRITY FASHION SHOW

Local celebrities, including WXYZ-TV 7 news anchor Guy Gordon and WDIV-TV 4 reporter Lila Lazarus, strut down the runway in holiday fashion at the Northland Center in Southfield to benefit the Barbara Ann Karmanos Cancer Institute, 11:30 a.m.-1 p.m. Tickets include lunch and a chance to bid in a silent auction and cost \$30. For more information or to purchase tickets, call (248) 353-6444.

DIAMOND TRUNK SHOW

Astrein's Creative Jewelers, 120 W. Maple in downtown Birmingham, hosts a trunk show of contemporary

rare diamond pieces by Jewelers Asprey & Guiding through Dec. 11 and a Swiss watch trunk show on Dec. 10. For show times and more information, call (248) 644-1651.

FRIDAY, DECEMBER 10

BERNARD COHEN APPEARANCE

Saks Fifth Avenue, the Somerset Collection in Troy, hosts Bernard Cohen and his collection of estate jewelry pieces through Dec. 12, 10 a.m.-5 p.m., Fine Jewelry Collection, first floor.

SATURDAY, DECEMBER 11

MILLINERY TRUNK SHOW

Meet designer Gena Conti and view her collection at Nordstrom, the Somerset Collection in Troy, 11 a.m.-2 p.m., Fashion Accessories department.

SUNDAY, DECEMBER 12

TASTE OF LAUREL PARK

Enjoy free food samples from Max & Ernie's restaurant while you shop at Laurel Park Place in Livonia, noon-4 p.m., near Center Court.

HOLIDAY DOLL SHOW

New and used dolls and accessories are on sale at the Plymouth Cultural Center, 525 Farmer Street, 11 a.m.-4 p.m. Admission is \$5 for adults and \$2 for children under age 12. For more information, call (734) 455-2110.

Retail, style and special store events are listed in this calendar. Please send information to *Malls & Mainstreets*, c/o Observer & Eccentric Newspapers, 805 E. Maple, Birmingham, Mich. 48009. Fax: (248) 644-1314. Information must be received by 5 p.m. Monday for publication the following Sunday.

CHRISTOPHER RADKO EVENT

Christopher Radko's United for Peace ornament is introduced at Jacobson's in Rochester Hills. Also, customers receive a Radko ornament with Radko purchase of \$50, noon-3 p.m., Trim A Home department.

MONDAY, DECEMBER 6

KIDS TRUNK SHOW

Here's the Boardwalk in West Bloomfield hosts a trunk show of Margaret O'Leary sweaters, knits and separates through Dec. 8, 10 a.m.-6 p.m. For more information, call (248) 628-7778.

TUESDAY, DECEMBER 7

JEWELRY TRUNK SHOWS

Neiman Marcus, the Somerset Collection in Troy, hosts several jewelry trunk shows, including collections from St. John, John Hardy, Steven Lagos, Bibbig, Scott Kay, Jeffrey Roberts and Wayne Savitt, who will make a personal appearance, 10 a.m.-4 p.m.,