

MALLS & MAINSTREETS

Sunday, December 20, 2001

Now and forever

Jewelry tends to keep giving

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If there's a tiny box containing jewelry for a loved one beneath your Christmas tree — or soon to be placed there — consider tapping the sentiments behind the gift.

Get them down in a thoughtful note. Say a few words when the wrapping paper is coming off.

Indeed, jewelry speaks for itself.

But therein is the problem. Years later, it's more than likely the story surrounding your jewelry gift will be told and heard again and again.

That's because jewelry has a better than average chance of becoming a family heirloom.

And, as it travels from one gen-

eration to the next, the story behind it — the event it marked and the relationship between giver and recipient — will make the journey, too.

"We have so many things with such a short life span in our lives," said Steven Tapper, vice president of Tapper's Diamonds and Fine Jewelry in West Bloomfield, where holiday shoppers have been more mindful of jewelry's continuity than in past seasons.

"With jewelry, there's really this emotional baggage that's attached to it. It carries history with it."

"I cannot tell you how many times I've heard adult women say 'This is my mother's ring and it's just precious to me,'" he said. "Whether it makes a little sense or a lot in terms of the value of the piece, they're holding on to something — that piece of jewelry."

While the word heirloom conjures up images of rare and expensive antiques collecting dust in relatives' attics and safe deposit boxes, Tapper believes any item of personal property that's inherited qualifies as an heirloom.

"Heirlooms, to me, represent keepsakes passed on from one generation to the next. Heirlooms are not just antiques."

So why is jewelry commonly passed down among other sacred family treasures?

Gold, silver, diamonds and gemstones are extremely durable and appreciate in value. They also tend to take on meaning and become symbolic.

"What is an engagement ring? Tapper said. "It is a symbol. It is symbolic of someone's love and affection for somebody else, and it tells the story of those two people."



Jewelry gifts: Steve Tapper, from Tappers Jewelry discusses the different types of jewelry that can be given as gifts to become heirlooms within peoples family.

Although jewelry that is rare, unusual or of the highest quality, as well as particular items, such as a diamond ring or handsome watch, are strong candidates for achieving heirloom status, any piece has the potential to become a family treasure.

Steven Tapper
—vice president Tapper's

Tapper's exclusive Tree of Life charm, which sells for \$79 in sterling silver and \$112 in a combination of yellow gold and sterling silver, can be engraved with a personal message and given to celebrate a holiday or tradition, for instance.

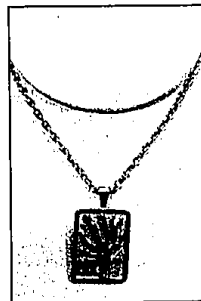
"Even when you purchase jewelry for yourself, it's usually a reward," said Brian T. Schubot, president of Jules R. Schubot Jewelers in Troy. "Jewelry is usually presented to mark a special occasion or event."

While holiday shoppers aren't necessarily looking for future heirlooms to give to loved ones this Christmas, Schubot has noticed a preference for classic, as opposed to flashy or trendy, jewelry.

"I think, in light of recent events, people are focusing more on family and connectivity from generation to generation," Schubot said.

Tapper, too, sees a relationship between shoppers' gift choices and recent events.

"There's always been that sentimental connection with jewelry, but I believe Sept. 11 made us all think long and hard about who we are and about our families. I know, for myself, there are some things I want put aside for my family."



Exclusive: A Tappers exclusive piece made out of silver is very popular as a keepsake among family members.

Local malls help at-risk teens in December

Three local malls are partnering with Covenant House Michigan in December to help at-risk youths living on the streets.

Laurel Park Place in Livonia, Macomb Mall in Roseville and Pointe Plaza in Grosse Pointe have turned over store space to the organization as part of their Store of Dreams program.

Covenant House Michigan, which provides homeless and at-risk youths with shelter, food, clothing, and educational and vocational programs, will accept money donations through Monday, Dec. 31, at the mall stores.

The participating malls are owned and managed by Schostak Brothers & Company, which was founded in 1920 and is based in Southfield.

Donations will benefit Covenant House Michigan's Adopt-A-Teen program and a building renovation project that will double the number of available rooms at a shelter. The shelter project is scheduled to begin next spring.

Covenant House Michigan was established in 1997 and is at the corner of I-96 and Martin Luther King Jr. Boulevard in Detroit. The first Covenant House was established in 1973 as a small Mission Inn in lower Manhattan.

For more information about Covenant House Michigan, call (313) 463-2005 or visit www.covenanthousemi.org on the Internet. For more information on the Store of Dreams program, call (734) 847-1953.



Keepsake: Tapper shows a \$32,000 Jaeger-LeCoultre watch that is very unique, which makes it appealing for a collector or keepsake.

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