

# MALLS & MAINSTREETS

Sunday, November 11, 2001

## Visits by well-known designers planned

Leave it to glass ornament designer Christopher Radko to weave patriotism into holiday decorating.

Radko's latest creation, Braveheart, is a heart-shaped American flag. And Radko collectors not only can see and buy the new ornament but also meet the popular designer, 4-7 p.m., Nov. 14 at Jacobson's at Laurel Park Place in Livonia.

In addition to greeting collectors and signing ornaments, Radko will introduce a new line of vintage American holiday decorations called Shiny-Brite.

Radko's glass ornaments are hand-blown, lined in sterling silver and painted by hand. For information about Radko's appearance, call (734) 591-7696.

Radko devotees may also be interested in stopping by Birmingham boutique La Belle Provence on Dec. 1 when Radko representative Rebecca Beebe is slated to

present the company's latest designs, including the limited edition collection Chillin' Treats.

Beebe's visit is slated noon-5 p.m., and patrons who bring in a new children's book for donation to Children's Hospital of Michigan, will receive 10 percent off Christopher Radko glass ornaments. La Belle Provence is located 185 West Maple. Call (248) 540-3876 for more information.

There's good news for crystal lovers, too. Neiman Marcus at the Somerset Collection in Troy presents Baccarat designer Thomas Bastide, 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. Nov. 16.

Bastide, who has designed a full range of Baccarat pieces since joining the company in 1982, will speak with shoppers and introduce a collection of his work.

For more information, call (248) 643-3300.

## Crimes of fashion set to go; new St. John boutique is open at Somerset Collection

It's not a crime to crave fashion when holiday shopping might make better sense at the top of the to-do list.

Among planned events for fashion followers is Crimes of Fashion, an annual benefit for the Jewish Ensemble Theatre, scheduled 7-10 p.m., Nov. 11 at Neiman Marcus, the Somerset Collection in Troy.

The event features private shopping with fine dining and live jazz. Tickets are \$50 and can be purchased by calling (248) 788-2900.

If eying jewelry is more your style, stop by Schubert Jewellers' annual holiday party, slated 5:30-9:30 p.m. Nov. 15 at the Troy showroom.

The latest creations by jewelry designers Judith Ripka, Stefan Hafner and Lee de Vroomen will be on display.

The jeweler is also commemorating its 85th business anniversary so will be passing out balloons containing special gifts. Schubert Jewellers is located 3001

West Big Beaver. Call (248) 649-1122.

For fashion lovers already thinking about spring, Saks Fifth Avenue is presenting series of trunk shows featuring several designer spring 2002 collections.

Designers being shown include Andre Laug, Escada, Ralph Lauren, Lili, Alese Fisher and Christian Dior. The trunk show series runs through Dec. 12, and all collections will be showcased on the second floor at Saks in Troy. For more information or to schedule a personal appointment, call (248) 614-3393.

And, there's good news for devotees of the St. John label. On Nov. 7, St. John opened a boutique at the Somerset Collection in Troy. The more than 5,000-square-foot store will carry St. John's evening, sport and collection clothing lines, as well as, accessories and home merchandise.

— Compiled by Nicole Stafford

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## Kid's stuff

### Juvenile furniture business is a brand new world

BY NICOLE STAFFORD  
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Martha Stewart probably kicks herself every time she sees a Pottery Barn.

In 1999, the home decor retailer launched Pottery Barn Kids, a catalog of fashion-forward furniture and accessories for children's rooms.

A year later, the company rolled out the first Pottery Barn Kids store, a bright and airy interior decorating showroom with appeal to parents and children alike.

In October, the retailer opened an 8,000-square-foot Pottery Barn Kids at the Somerset Collection in Troy, along with several other stores elsewhere in the nation. That's despite fears about the slowing economy's effect on the retail sector, which tells you a lot about juvenile furniture and the evolving home decor business.

"Pottery Barn Kids really believes that retailers were missing the kids' market," said Geoff Wissman, vice president and manager, home goods at Retail Forward, a retail industry research and analysis firm in Ohio. "And I'm hard-pressed to think of any specialty retailers that really focused on kids."

Besides, several retailers have followed Pottery Barn Kids' lead. Both Sears and the Bombay Company recently debuted an Internet site and catalog of home merchandise for kids, said Wissman.

It is a coincidence Ethan Allen and Warren-based Art Van Furniture, which has 28 stores in Michigan, have beefed up offerings and display merchandise in the juvenile furniture category?

"Our research shows there's an



New concept: Pottery Barn Kids, an interior decorating store for children's rooms, recently opened at the Somerset Collection in Troy.

increased demand for youth furniture," said Tom DeCorte, vice president of merchandising for Art Van. "We've always had a good assortment of children's furniture in our stores, but as we remodel, we've given additional space to the youth category and improved displays."

DeCorte even describes the youth furniture department at the retailer's recently remodeled Westland store as "a major addition." Art Van recently started offering a line of Harry Potter furniture, too.

But retailers' belief in the strength of juvenile furniture has more to do

with tapping an untapped market, than meeting an overfilling demand for children's bedroom sets, said Wissman at Retail Forward.

"A lot of the people in the traditional furniture store industry ... were basically selling the same thing — functional furniture but not overly fashionable," he said, explaining why specialty furniture retailers like Pottery Barn and Crate & Barrel have come on the scene and been so successful. "There's been a shift in the market," said Wissman.

One has to wonder what's next: Furniture stores for pets?

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