

Happy Holidays

A SUPPLEMENT TO THE RECORD-EAGLE

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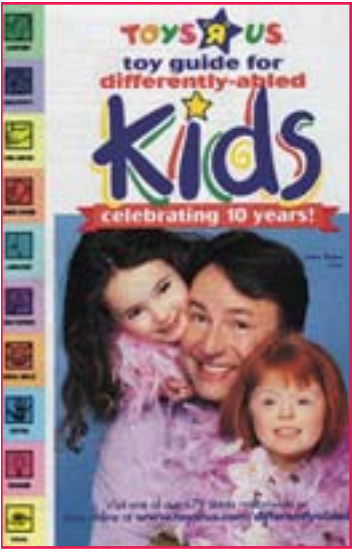
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BY STACIE CARLSON
Special to the Record-Eagle

Is there a hole in your stocking stuffer list? Don't worry. Here are some ideas that won't take a bite out of your holiday budgets.

"So far, people are buying smaller this year," said Liz Wildman, owner of Leaping Lizard in Traverse City. "As a result, I've concentrated a lot of my buying on smaller items."

Stocking stuffer items can range from incense and magnets to beads and garden items.

"Our incense matches are great stocking stuffers," added Wildman. "They come in all kinds of scents and they're handy for bathrooms, cars and hotels. We're also selling a lot of items like magnets and towels. These are nice because both genders like them a lot."

Themed magnets are popular this year.

"We sell a lot of our bird magnets," said Julie Sovereign, co-owner of Garden Goods in Traverse City. "They've got great detail and really neat dimensions."

Beads are other items that are great for adults and kids alike, and prices vary greatly so beads can fit all budgets.

"We've got a great bag of beads for sale," said Sue Oseland, owner of Osiris in Traverse City. "Basically, the bags offer a pound of mixed color and sized beads. They're great for kids and the bags themselves come in three different sizes ranging in prices from \$8 to \$10."

Also available are starter kits which include a bead design board, a yard of stringing wire, tools and starter beads. Oseland mentioned that these were very popular last year and they are great for people who are just starting out with beads.

For those with a hankering for nature, the outdoors and gardening, there are many stuffers available.

"A lot of gardeners really like our steel plant markers in combination with our UV resistant markers," added



Record-Eagle/Meegan M. Reid

Leaping Lizard in downtown Traverse City has a larger selection of stocking stuffers this year. From the top: Under the Sea Bath Confetti, small metal Pocket Angels and incense matches.

Sovereign. "The markers let people identify their plants year round. Plus, they come in sizes from four to eight inches, so they're convenient for most gardens."

In addition, everyone's stocking list can include gift cards and 2004 calendars.

According to Kathy Dittenbir, general manager of Borders Books and Music in Traverse City, these remain popular gifts throughout the season.

As far as gifts for women, Dittenbir suggested CDs by Josh Groban, Barbara Streisand and Sarah MacLachlan, and books by Anne Rice, Danielle Steele, Jan Karon and Mitch Albom.

For women and girls, pampering items seem to be popular.

"We have some great tubes of bath confetti," said Wildman. "Essentially, it's bubble bath with flamingoes, palm trees, fish and other fun figures that break down in water. Also, we've got some very pretty mirrors with floral or mosaic patterns that come in small organza pouches. Our crystals and prisms are really neat, too, and they come in all shapes, sizes and colors."

Jewelry remains a popular gift idea, as well, and many of the finest jewelers and artisans call northern Michigan their home.

"Over 20 local artists offer their finished products for

sale at our store," said Oseland. "Their handmade beads and jewelry are absolutely beautiful, and there are many select finished locally cut raw gemstone beads available. We also offer classes and workshops year-round for people who are interested in learning how to create their own pieces."

For both genders, there are some nifty gadgets out to help ease into next spring.

"Our coated, tight fitting garden gloves always make great stuffers," added Sovereign. "We also offer pruners in a variety of price ranges and a great quality line of tools by Oxo that are specifically designed to be more comfortable in the hands. Our rain gauges in glass or decorative copper are also popular, as are our grass shears to get into those hard-to-reach areas."

Sovereign suggested hand lotions and lip balms specific to gardeners. The ingredients are specially formulated with special agents to act as protection and salves for skin that's constantly in the soil or water. Also of interest are clogs that slip on and off called floggers, flexible, strap-on kneepads and garden seeds.

For men, Dittenbir suggested books including "Skipping Christmas" by John Grisham, "Big Bad Wolf" by James Patterson,



"The DaVinci Code" by Dan Brown and "Wolves of the Calla" by Stephen King.

"Men may also enjoy our maple syrup called Northern Comfort that comes in a Southern Comfort-type of bottle," said Wildman. "Also, men enjoy our selection of key chains, leather luggage tags with catchy phrases on them and our small wooden slide-cover boxes."

For children, Dittenbir suggests a new DVD "Finding Nemo," the book

"Eragon" and quite a few books for very young children including "Philadelphia Chickens" and an "Alice in Wonderland" pop-up book.

"The Alice in Wonderland book is really neat," added Dittenbir. "It's sure to be a collectable. It is by far the most intricate pop up book I have ever seen and would be a must-have for any Alice fan."

Stacie Carlson is a local freelance writer.



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