

# Shopping in Antrim County a is scenic gift-buying stop

BY NANCY SUNDSTROM  
Special to the Record-Eagle

From Elvis cookie jars to area-influenced art by some of northern Michigan's most respected artists, the stores and businesses found throughout Antrim County offer a diverse range of holiday gift-giving options.

If you're familiar with the trek that basically begins in Acme on US-31 and stretches north through villages from Elk Rapids to Atwood, just outside of Charlevoix, you most likely know that a trip in that direction can make for a scenic one with plenty of options for interesting diversions, shopping and

restaurants.

During December, there are also many special events taking place, particularly on the weekends, that can add to the fun. Area Chambers of Commerce can be a helpful source of information on events, and can be contacted by phone or their Web sites.

The following list is a sampling of some specialty stores throughout Antrim County. Most have extended hours for the holiday season, but it is recommended that you call ahead if you're planning a trip to seek them out.

**Atwood**

*Friske Orchards (599-2604)*

- Located just 10 miles south of Charlevoix on US 31, this farm market and country house has a year-round bakery, café and gift shop and specializes in an extensive array of apples, which they will ship anywhere in the country. Friske's has fresh-pressed cider, holiday gift packs and a fruit-of-the-month club. For more information, visit their Web site at [www.friske.com](http://www.friske.com).

**Bellaire**

*Bear Paw Tackle Company (533-8604)* - Since 1946, the Bear Paw Tackle Company has made fishing tackle products all aimed at mak-

ing easier, more enjoyable and successful fishing experiences. They have a large catalog of items that can be viewed on their Web site at [www.bearpawtackle.com](http://www.bearpawtackle.com). A few of the products they specialize in include live bait snells, flicker snelled hooks, crawler harnesses, custom crawler harnesses, electric fish scalers and line-leader connectors.

**Central Lake**

*Adam's Madam's (544-2770)* - A crafter's consignment store that features the work of more than 150 artists, its owners say they "go wild" for the holidays by carrying

all manner of snowmen, Santas, decorations, wreaths and much more. They have areas of the store designated for special looks and themes, such as lodge look, red white and blue, and kitchen, to name a few. You can also find paintings, homemade soaps and candles, and much more.

**Elk Rapids**

*Mulally's 128 Studio & Gallery (264-6660)* - Open seven days a week year-round, this fine arts and crafts gallery is well-known for an array of glass, and at this time of year, there are many specialty ornaments available.

Owner Barb Mulally says that patrons come to them from all over the world for glass pieces, which include paperweights and vases to 85-pound sculpture pieces. The store also carries a large line of jewelry items that run the gamut in terms of costs. Gift certificates are also available.

*Rustic Designs (264-5000)* - This store carries lodge, cottage and up north rustic style decor and accessories. Designer Cathleen Cardwell is on hand to help provide advice or customize special orders, and there are many that have been made by local and statewide artists. During the holidays, they stock a range of small artificial trees, many that have been made with a second home or cottage in mind. Lines of larger furniture pieces are also available.

*Blue Heron Gallery (264-9210)* - Husband and wife owners Dan Reszka and Pat Curran will have their gallery open every day of the week until the end of the year. One of Blue Heron's claims to fame is an extensive line of fine art creations by more than 100 Michigan-based artists. Everything in the store is made by some-

one who has a residence in Michigan, and among the items are watercolors, pen and inks, etchings, woodcut prints, pottery, sculpture, jewelry, decorative tiles, textile art, photography, wood turning, cast paper, ornaments and treasure boxes.

Reszka has his nature-themed pen and ink and watercolor pieces available, and Curran says they also carry a "great line of affordable stocking stuffers."

*Now & Then (264-5560)* - This is where you can find an Elvis cookie jar, along with others featuring Betty Boop, "I Love Lucy" and many more. Owner Joanne Hanna says the store has an eclectic mix of old and new items, such as the nostalgic lines such as "The Wizard of Oz," Coca Cola, Smokey the Bear, in addition to cup and saucer sets, dishes, tables and furniture pieces, doll-houses with all the furnishings and salt and pepper shakers. They have many handmade quilted items like jackets and wall hangings and a large part of the store is a yarn, crochet and quilt shop.

*Dick Little Treasures (264-6885)* - Now in their 11th year, this specialty toy store has a mission of selling quality toys that are different from what one might find at a national chain toy source. They have many imported toys from Europe and the Orient, and feature products from Brio, Lego, Breyer, Learning Curve, Playmobil and Thomas the Tank.

Shoppers will also find children's books, dolls, game, puzzles, models and hobby supplies. Little Treasures has another larger location on Cayuga Street in Bellaire (533-6559), which has a full line of pedal cars. Both stores are closed on Sundays.

**Nancy Sundstrom is a local freelance writer.**

## Holiday inflatables blow away competition

BY JURA KONCIUS  
The Washington Post

Forget icicle lights, pre-lit wire deer and illuminated spiral trees. The outdoor decoration that is blowing away the competition this year is the giant holiday inflatable.

Yes, we mean those 6-to-12-foot Bart Simpson Santas, nutcrackers, snowmen, penguins and Grinches buoyantly dominating front yards, looking like they got lost on their way home from the Macy's parade.

Chances are an inflatable has landed in a yard near you. After popping up in stores a couple of years ago selling for \$75 to \$150, big-impact inflatables appeared at vastly deflated prices this fall.

Retailers such as Rite Aid report they can barely keep inflatables in stock, at prices that average around \$35 to \$50 for eight-foot versions.

"Inflatables are one way that people can instantly make any yard look profes-

sionally decorated without breaking the bank," says Paula Thornton-Greear, a spokeswoman for Target Stores.

The newest air-blown inflatables are particularly popular because they are accompanied by small plug-in fan motors that pump the bulbous nylon shapes up to full size in mere minutes.

Interior lights keep them glowing after dark, and tethers and spikes hold them in place. The fabric is washable and can be sewed or taped back together if torn.

And when the season is over and the pump is unplugged, they deflate almost instantly and fold back in the box for easy storage. Beats shivering in the cold as you string thousands of lights along the roof.

Americans are pushovers for seasonal decorations. According to a nationwide survey conducted for Walmart stores this fall, 72 percent of those polled were planning to put up outdoor displays this holiday sea-

son.

That could mean a single candle in the window or a 13-foot carrot-nosed snowman hulking over the bungalow.

According to Julie Valeant Yenichek, spokeswoman for Lowe's, residential inflatables are derived from the gigantic versions that have been used for years in such commercial situations as auto lots, retail stores and trade shows to attract attention for big events.

Gemmy, the seasonal novelty gift company that brought us Big Mouth Billy Bass in 1999 and the Dancing Hamster in 2002, introduced residential inflatables in 2000.

But according to Jason McCann, vice president of marketing for the Irving, Texas-based company, the first couple of years the blow-up Santas and snowmen were sold mainly at Christmas and party stores. Now prices have come down and the company has 400 inflatable styles to display all year long.

## Holiday health: Good nutrition, exercise combat overindulgence

BY PAT STEIN  
Copley News Service

The holidays are fraught with health hazards, ranging from too much of the wrong kinds of food and drink to stress.

Tempting as it may be to go on a six-week binge of over-indulging from Thanksgiving to New Year's, Dr. Neil Hirschenbein, a physician based in El Cajon, Calif., warns that throwing dietary caution to the wind during the holidays may set in motion long-term health problems.

"It's not going to hurt you to indulge in a few treats and sweets during the holidays, but if holiday indulgences become a pattern over time there can be serious health consequences, including diabetes, high blood pressure, heart disease, high cholesterol, obesity and even cancer," said Hirschenbein said.

Typically, holiday goodies and meals are high in fat, sugar and simple carbohydrates that the body con-

**"It can become a vicious cycle. People eat so-called comfort foods to make themselves feel better, but if the food is high in sugar, it will end up making them feel worse."**

**Dr. Neil Hirschenbein, physician**

verts to sugar.

Eating foods too high in sugar and simple carbohydrates, such as pasta and white bread, can lead to insulin resistance — a biological imbalance of high

insulin levels that can prevent the body from burning stored fat efficiently and lead to obesity.

"When you eat a lot of sugar and carbohydrates during the holidays or at any other time of year, the body has to make more insulin. As a result some cells become insulin resistant, which causes the body to make even more insulin than it really needs. This can lead to high blood pressure, heart disease, diabetes and sugar cravings," Hirschenbein said.

To avoid health hazards associated with the holidays, Hirschenbein suggests "trying to maintain a somewhat normal routine."

"Part of the problem during the holidays is that there's a lot more food around and people get out of their daily routines. They may stop exercising because they're too busy with shopping, social engagements and other holiday-related activities and the next thing is they let

their eating get out of control," Hirschenbein observed.

The holiday routine he recommends includes regular exercise, getting enough sleep, getting some sunlight on a daily basis and a balanced diet.

That includes eating three meals a day with a four-ounce serving of protein at each meal, "lots of vegetables, some fruits and complex carbohydrates such as whole grains," Hirschenbein said.

Although he prefers animal protein, such as lean meat, fish and poultry he finds nonfat cottage cheese an acceptable substitute and vegetarians can get their protein by eating soy products such as tofu and combining foods such as legumes and grains.

When you overindulge in sugar and processed carbohydrates it can lower the amount of the neurotransmitter serotonin that your body produces. Low levels of serotonin can lead to dif-

ficulty in sleeping and depression, according to Hirschenbein.

The holiday blues are a real health issue for many people and overindulgence in sugary treats only exacerbates the problem, Hirschenbein said.

"It can become a vicious cycle. People eat so-called comfort foods to make themselves feel better, but if the food is high in sugar, it will end up making them feel worse," Hirschenbein said. "When people are depressed they don't have the energy to exercise or figure out how to eat well so they'll feel better."

A strategy that can help prevent overindulgence in the smorgasbord of sugary treats at holiday gatherings is to avoid going to parties hungry.

"You need to plan ahead. Eat something before you go to a party so you aren't starving when you get there. Then take your time to look at the food that's available and try to make the healthi-

est choices. You can enjoy some holiday treats, but don't go hog wild," he advised.

Stress is another holiday health hazard that can be minimized by maintaining a routine of regular exercise, adequate sleep and balanced nutrition, according to Hirschenbein. Stress has been identified as a factor in everything from heart disease to high blood pressure but Hirschenbein said, "You can handle the stress of the holidays if you eat well, exercise and get enough sleep."

While there are some supplements such as the mineral chromium and the amino acids carnitine and glutamine that Hirschenbein believes can help diminish sugar cravings and restore balance, he said, "There's no magic formula."

"People are always looking for a magic potion, but there's no substitute for good nutrition and regular exercise if you want to be healthy," he said.



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