

HOLIDAY GIFT GUIDE

HAPPY HOLIDAYS

Thursday, December 9, 2004

SUPPLEMENT TO THE RECORD-EAGLE

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Last in a three-part series

The spirit of family-owned businesses

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BY CAROL SOUTH
Special to the Record-Eagle

For small family-owned businesses, surviving means keeping customers happy, finding a niche, anticipating trends and just plain hard work.

Traver Teboe and his wife, Kathy, owners of Teboe Florist in Traverse City, supply a range of floral and greenery decorations during the holiday season. Companies, too, turn to the 58-year-old business for a range of party centerpieces plus corsages or gifts to employees or customers.

But it hasn't always been easy. One year Teboe Florist narrowly escaped losing every poinsettia in their 18,000 square feet of greenhouses, which are situated behind the store. Severe weather knocked out power and the family scrambled to provide the heat to keep the plants going.

Another year, a huge blizzard socked in the town and customers began calling for their plants and decorations.

"People didn't want that poinsettia or centerpiece the day after Christmas," said Traver Teboe. "So they called us expecting delivery."

Providing service in the breach is characteristic of small businesses, who operate more on customer loyalty and satisfaction than gross volume.

To Teboe, the more flower sellers out there — not only other florists but also grocery stores — the better for everyone.

"We provide the quality and if the grocery store is doing a good job that doesn't hurt us, it gets the message out there that flowers are important," he said. "Then when someone wants to send flowers to the hospital or have another delivery, they come to us because we provide that service."

Mike Deering has carved out a niche at Maxbauer Market, a specialty meat market on Union Street. With 70 percent of sales being upscale meats,



Maxbauer Market is a destination as well as a convenient stop-in-for-a-forgotten-gallon-of-milk store for nearby residents.

Tony and Albert Maxbauer started the store in 1913 and Deering is the third generation owner, having stepped into two uncles' shoes in 1979.

Deering noted that by Christmas, many of his customers are "turkeyed" out. Prime rib is a big seller, followed by hams and tenderloins and some fresh turkeys. New Year's special requests call for lots of seafood, such as shrimp and crab, as well as tenderloins.

Some repeat customers have ordered their meat at Maxbauer Market every year for decades. Deering has watched grandmothers train their daughters who are now teaching their daughters where to buy the best meat and how to prepare the traditional Christmas dishes.

"Usually what happens is a tradition is set and if you try to change that tradition, the children are the ones who throw the biggest fit," noted Deering. "They want it the way it's always been because it brings the warm fuzzies."

Left photo: Record-Eagle/Lara Neel
Bottom photo courtesy of the Teboe family

Left, Mike Teboe checks a poinsettia at Teboe's Florist and Greenhouses in Traverse City. Bottom, from left: 40 years ago, the Teboe's team was floral designer Sandy Hanell, Teboe's founder Ralph Teboe, name not known and deliveryman Chuck Samulsen. Teboe's opened in 1946 and today is comprised of a flower shop and five greenhouses.



The market also offers two different seasoning blends, which they will either add to the meat or send home with the customer — another small service that distinguishes from larger stores. "The prime rib not only has the quality and the flavor and the taste but it is incredibly easy to prepare," said Deering of the Chairman's Reserve beef. "We have knowledgeable staff who can tell (buyers) how to cook them." Even in uncertain econom-

ic times, Deering said customers will "bite the bullet," pull out the credit card and purchase the components of their traditional holiday meal. "The other thing is if you screw up a lady's Christmas dinner, she will never forget," Deering said. "We have the best customers in Traverse City and it's our job to fulfill their needs, don't disappoint them." Pam Agee, owner of Holiday Traditions at the Grand Traverse Mall, lis-

tens to her customers year-round to anticipate trends and decide what Christmas ornaments and decorations to stock the next season. Starting her 12th season, Agee has a secret weapon in attracting customers: her daughter, Stacy Sheren. "She does all the trees and the villages and that gives them a real professional look," said Agee of her designer-manager daughter.

PLEASE SEE PAGE 3

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Bountiful gifts for shoppers browsing in Benzie County area

BY JOSHUA A. BRADLEY
Special to the Record-Eagle

Everybody knows that Benzie County is a great place to climb a sand dune, kayak a river, or hunt for morels. But this outdoor paradise is also fast becoming a shopper's paradise.

Three of its towns — Frankfort, Beulah and Benzonia — create a triangle of shopping opportunities that rival more populated counties. You won't find huge stores or endless aisles of merchandise there. But you will find unique, hand-crafted products that might be just right for those people on your list that seem to have everything. And in some cases, the person who sells you the product might very well be the artist who made it.

Frankfort

Frankfort, situated on Betsie Bay and Lake

Michigan, is the largest of these towns. It has many shopping opportunities throughout downtown, but especially along Main Street.

Northern Lights and Lifestyles offers a variety of quality home décor and gift solutions, with a specific focus on lighting accessories. Their products are a mix of periods and styles, including mission-style furniture, art, pottery, decorative tiles and other period accessories.

According to owners Ed and Shirley Wald, products in the store are limited in production, but one can still find everything from "a pair of hand-crafted earrings to a crystal chandelier."

"We're a small boutique store," Shirley Wald said. "Everything you see here is handcrafted because of its long-lasting quality."

She added, "The test of a good purchase is the longer you have it the more you love

it." Also along Main Street is Country Accents, a "store for every room in your home, including your garden and patio," said Marcia O'Neal, who owns the store with her husband, Fred.

The store offers everything from one-of-a-kind birdfeeders, to bake ware, hand-blown etched wine glasses and Christmas ornaments. They also specialize in lace.

The Bookstore, also on Main Street, is a small independent bookshop, but it's jammed pack with the latest best sellers, classics and greeting cards. A second location is in Beulah.

Beulah

Beulah sits on the shore of Crystal Lake, just off U.S. 31. Its main street, Benzie Blvd., has many shops that are open year-round.

Art-Cetera offers an eclectic mix of pottery, jewelry,

glass, wood, metal and woven products. She also carries aerial photos of the area.

Owner Connie Messina said that her goal is to offer "art for your heart and home."

"The holidays are a stressful time," said Messina. "Shopping in a small community keeps things at a quieter pace. And when you leave my store, you'll be all gift wrapped and ready to go."

Kitty Ely, owner of Northern Décor, stresses the uniqueness of her products, which range from purses, scarves and jewelry to more "woody, up north" products like lodge and cabin décor and garden accents.

Crystal Crate and Cargo, open since 1977, has "distinctive accessories for person and home," says its owner, who prefers to remain nameless because she wants to stress the shop's

community environment. "Our store is a socially inclusive atmosphere," she said.

From wall to ceiling, the shop is filled with high-quality and long-lasting products, such as cookware and serving items. They say their mission is to find the best quality for the price.

Benzonia

The town of Benzonia is an art lover's dream. Home to "the gallery district," a stretch of U.S. 31 near M-115, the area is a great place to find original arts and crafts.

Vigland Gallery, owned by Alan and Susie Vigland, specializes in pottery, but also features paintings, prints, weavings and jewelry.

According to Alan Vigland, almost all of their products come from Michigan artists.

Another nearby gallery is Savannah Victoria. Owner Vickey Ramsey carries home

décor products there — "everything from shabby-chic to Victorian," she said.

This holiday season, Ramsey finds that shoppers are buying pampering gifts, like bath and body products and scented candles, over more extravagant gifts.

Benzie hospitality

Benzie County store owners agree that shopping locally has many benefits, often saying that they offer a more "personal touch."

Alan Vigland said the close proximity of the towns makes it easy to get around to all the shops without being stuck in traffic or trying to find a parking spot.

"Get a cup of coffee and shop," Messina said. "None of us have signs on our doors that say you can't bring in your coffee."

Joshua A. Bradley is a local freelance writer.

The gift of art: Special present that is timeless and comes in many varieties

BY CAROL SOUTH
Special to the Record-Eagle

What could be a more personal gift during the holiday season than a piece of original art?

Area artisans and businesses offer choices ranging from photography to furniture, ornaments to adornments. Purchasing a friend or loved one a piece of art sends a message that the recipient is special, said Sara Smith, owner of Evergreen Gallery on West Front Street in Traverse City.

"I know when I go on vacation I always look for hand-crafted gifts to bring home," said Smith.

The Evergreen Gallery offers items from more than 100 artists nationwide, including a number of local

artists. Smith noted that she and partner Darla Raney sell art in a range of media, including pottery, wall tiles, watercolor paintings, dried flower arrangements, photography, glass items and jewelry.

"Traverse City is more traditional, functional, buyers want usable pieces — art for every day," said Smith.

Maurice (pronounced Morris) Hayden is squarely in the functional camp. He and wife Jackie opened Old World Gifts & Furnishings in Interlochen Aug. 1 to sell original Amish furniture, both rustic and fine, and accessories. Each piece is handmade by one of 96 different families he buys from in the Amish community in northern Indiana.

The 4,500-square-foot

showroom features bedroom sets, dining room sets, couches, recliners, gliders, hutches and entertainment centers. Customers can custom order these pieces in the woods and colors they desire with delivery in eight weeks.

This season, Hayden is seeing more optimistic shoppers, feeling that the economy is on an upturn. However, these customers still demand quality and most of all, utility.

"I don't think they're getting extravagant by any stretch of the imagination, they are still more utilitarian," said Hayden. "If they want to get more extravagant, they will buy something together like for the bedroom or a hutch for a Christmas present that they both can enjoy and have

been putting off buying."

The Jordan Valley Glass Works offers specialty items — from yard ornaments and Christmas tree decorations to five-foot chandeliers. The gifts are made on site by artisans. So far, big sellers this holiday season are old-fashioned lamps as well as snowman or ribbon-candy ornaments.

"Another trend for us this year is custom-made fish, that has really picked up this year," said Glenna Haney, co-owner of the glass works with Jay Bavers. "They might want us to match a color, but it is better to complement (a paint chip or wallpaper sample) because we can only match to a certain degree."

Starting her fifth holiday season since opening in May of 2000, Haney said that the

average shopper this time of year spends between \$200-\$300. While in recent years they may be buying more smaller ticket items, they are purchasing more of them.

"We have people coming in who are shopping for that last-minute decoration for the holidays," noted Haney of some shoppers who want their tree up and home decorated by Thanksgiving. "Right now we're getting a lot of husbands coming in a looking for their wives and after Thanksgiving we'll get a lot of couples buying for family members."

Boni Rickman at Rickman's Antiques has just the answer for furniture accessorizing dilemmas: small, fancy carved chairs.

"We like unusual pieces that have scenes on the

back," said Rickman, who has co-owned the business with her husband, Paul, for 16 years.

Functional gifts are also in demand at her store since people want to actually use their purchases.

"What's nice about furniture is that you're using it all the time, it's not just stuck in a cupboard and forgotten about," Rickman said.

Nostalgia is a big seller as people search for old-fashioned bubble lights, antique ornaments and smaller pieces of furniture that evoke childhood memories.

"These things bring back lots of memories for people," she said.

Carol South is a local freelance writer.

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Perennial and new favorites make TC shopping fun

BY KRISTEN M. HAINS
Special to the Record-Eagle

This year in downtown Traverse City, holiday shoppers are finding a mix of old and new as they can visit perennial favorites as well as brand new retail stores.

One of downtown's veteran retail spots is Captain's Quarters. A mainstay for 38 years, the Captain's Quarters offers gift-giving options for men.

According to Manager Wayne Schmidt, a 20-year employee of Captain's Quarters, shoppers can expect a little more from their shopping experience.

"We know our customers, both as customers and as friends of the store," said Schmidt.

He explained that owner Maurie Allen's knowledge of his customers helps ensure that the Captain's Quarters will help each shopper find the perfect gift.

"Maurie knows his customers and keeps that in mind when doing his buying for the store," said Schmidt.

In addition to complimentary gift-wrapping, Captain's Quarters offers its shoppers another downtown holiday tradition, "Grandma Betsy's Hot Spiced Cider." For some 25 years, Allen's wife Betsy has prepared her "secret recipe" to greet shoppers as they enter the store.

Shoppers at Bayshore Framing in Downtown Traverse City will find a gift as special as the person who's receiving it. According to Owner Jeff Needham, holiday shopping isn't always about purchas-

ing a new print or piece of art, it's about giving life to a memory that already exists.

"Everybody has got treasures in the attic," said Needham.

Whether it's Grandpa's war medals, a christening or wedding gown, a football jersey or memorabilia from a family trip to Disneyland, Needham said all of these things hold the potential to become a lasting family treasure.

"The biggest thing to push the limit as far as creativity is shadow boxes," Needham explained. "We like to help our customers see beyond the limits of two dimensional artwork."

Needham said shadow boxes aren't limited to things that will fit on the wall. Needham can create shadow box tables, allowing family treasures to become a conversation piece of their own.

Bayshore Framing has been a part of downtown Traverse City for 24 years. The business was formerly a part of a franchise, which it left in 2001. Part of leaving that franchise also included a renovation last year.

When Bayshore Framing moved their in-house production facility downstairs, it opened up valuable Front Street retail space. It's space that Greg and Amy Gembis were quick to snatch up.

As one of downtown's newer stores, the Gembis' Pop-kies is billed as creating "gourmet popcorn and fun foods," Greg Gembis said the couple had a motivation for opening up their

gourmet popcorn shop.

After spending the past 15 years in corporate Chicago, Greg Gembis was ready to return to northern Lower Michigan. Both Greg and Amy have ties to Traverse City. Greg's family owned a business on Arbutus Lake for many years and Amy was born and raised here. As they contemplated starting their own family, they knew they wanted to head north. The inspiration for Pop-kies turned out to be right outside of Greg Gembis' office window.

Gembis worked in the office building directly above Garrett's, a gourmet popcorn shop that is world-famous. The Gembises decided to use that shop as their inspiration and to open their shop here in Traverse City.

Some of their most requested flavors are the movie-style buttered popcorn, caramel corn and cheddar corn. Their hottest seller is their Front Street Blend, a mixture of the caramel corn and cheddar cheese popcorn. Gembis says it satisfies that sweet/salty snack craving.

One flavor that is gaining quick popularity is the Cherry Capitol Crunch.

"It's our ode to Traverse City," Gembis said of the mixture that combines their caramel corn with dried cherries and cashews. Other favorites include cookies and cream, rainbow pop (a mixture of five fruit flavors), kettle corn and caramel apple.

For holiday gift-giving Pop-kies offers a variety of tins, starting at one gallon. Most of the tins can be divided, allowing the gift giver to choose up to three flavors to fill the can.

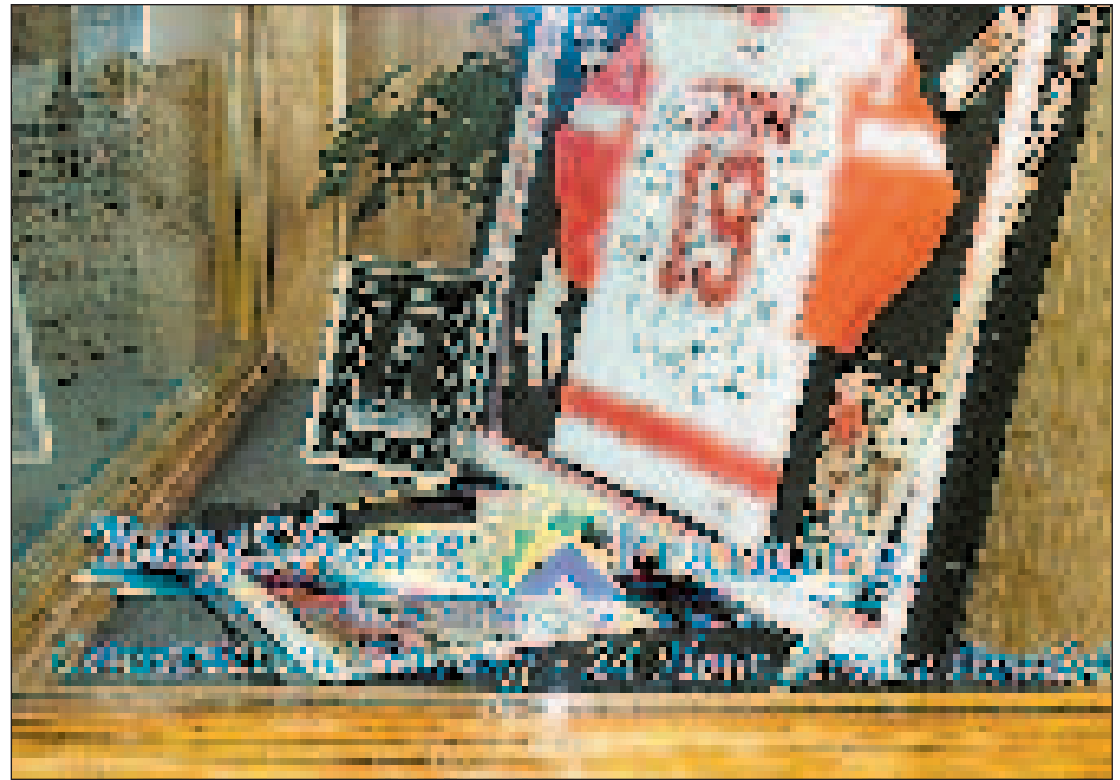
For those shoppers who simply can't find time to shop, check out the Web site, www.pop-kies.com. It offers on-line ordering with shipping throughout the United States.

Another new store greeting holiday shoppers is the Art and Soul Gallery. The gallery opened in Acme about three years ago and after waiting about a year and a half to find a location in downtown Traverse City, finally made the move.

"We want to be a part of the changes downtown," owner Amy Stinson explained, citing the Chamber of Commerce's "Cool Cities" initiative as an example.

Stinson said the greatest thing she offers holiday shoppers is diversity.

"We have pottery, jewelry,



Top photo: Record-Eagle/Douglas Tesner

Two downtown businesses not only represent Traverse City's perennial and new retail shops, but they are neighbors as well. Top, Pop-kies is the new kid on the Front Street block, where owners Greg and Amy Gembis make gourmet popcorn and other fun food. Above, BayShore Framing has been part of the Traverse City scene for 24 years. One of their holiday specialties is shadow box frames for valued mementos, like the Red Wings jersey pictured.

FAMILY

FROM PAGE 1

Launching her 23rd Christmas season, Kim Kierczynski, owner of Kim's Hallmark on Munson Ave., has been thinking about Santa, presents and ornaments since July. That is when Hallmark premieres their collectible ornaments, though sometimes shoppers in shorts and flip-flops complain about the Christmas display.

"It's amazing because people will get upset when they see it but all I can say is, 'Well, it's done at the national level,'" said Kierczynski. "There's a lot of people who do buy their ornaments in July because they are collectors and don't want them to sell out. We take lists and

set them aside if asked."

Carrying the weight of the store on her shoulders requires hard work year-round from this small business owner. What she enjoys most of all is helping customers in the front, but often her managerial duties keep her out of sight.

"I enjoy the time out front, but I'm the bookkeeper, the accountant and I do the ordering, so I'm in the back quite a bit," said Kierczynski, who has five employees, one an almost full-time manager. "I do enjoy getting out front and talking to customers and helping them find things."

"Being a small business owner certainly has its challenges and its frustrations, but I enjoy it," she concluded.

Carol South is a local freelance writer.

sculpture, glass and paintings," she said.

She and partner Pam Dow work to bring a variety of art mediums to the gallery. Some of the gallery's current artists include Jill Johnson, Chuck Forman, Jerry Gates, Kathy Lyons, Pauline Viall, Dan Heron, Mary Fuscaldo, Robbie Carmichael, Vincent Pernicano, Dennis Bean-Larson, Onlee Bowden, Donna Weber, Emily Lichty-Woods, Mary Lizenby and Carol Murray-Cruzen.

The gallery is open Monday-Friday 11 a.m. - 6 p.m., Saturdays 11 a.m. - 5 p.m. and is closed on Sundays. Stinson said the gallery will extend its hours

into the evening for holiday shopping.

Kristen M. Hains is a local freelance writer.

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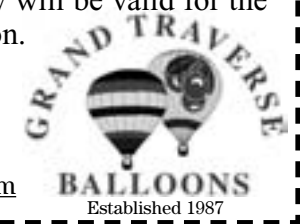
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Area non-profits have plenty of holiday needs

BY ERIN ANDERSON
Special to the Record-Eagle

These are just a few of the many worthy area charitable organizations. The following offers this year's needs and a little about what they do:

This year the **Women's Resource Center** in Traverse City is asking supporters to respond to the wide range of families' needs by providing them with gift cards.

"Gift cards will give them the option to buy whatever they really need at this time," said Jody Smith, WRC's volunteer coordinator.

Smith encourages gift cards from some of the larger, all-inclusive retailers, such as Target, Kmart or Meijer, as they offer the most options to families with a variety of needs such as groceries, shoes, clothing and — especially crucial for the elderly — a pharmacy where they can use a gift card to purchase medications.

"We often get requests to sponsor young children, but many families are extended and include grandparents or maybe teenagers. They need help too," said Smith. "Our goal is to fill in some of the gaps."

To donate or volunteer, call Jody Smith at 941-1210.

Community Meals Program
A hot meal two nights a

week — that's what Sandra Svec and friends have been serving up for over 16 years as the Community Meals Program.

Every Sunday and Monday night, Trinity Lutheran Church, in conjunction with 10 other area churches, hosts a hot dinner for anyone who's hungry. The food is donated by local restaurants, while any gaps are filled with supplies from the program's food pantry. While the Sunday and Monday dinners typically feed between 40 and 60 people, the most well-attended by far are the holiday meals: Thanksgiving and Christmas.

"The number of people definitely keeps increasing. A large percentage of our guests are homeless, the rest just need a decent meal," said Svec.

These ambitious holiday undertakings require plenty of volunteer support to keep things running smoothly. During the holiday meals, donated clothing is distributed to those in need.

"This year we really need winter coats, snow pants, men's underwear, hooded sweatshirts — and especially socks," said Svec.

Personal care products like soap, lotion, and shampoo are also given out as gifts. Christmas set-up is at 8:30 a.m., Dec. 24. Donations of clothing and other items

are accepted at Trinity Lutheran Church the day before the meals. To get involved call Sandra Svec at 263-7130.

Grand Traverse Regional Land Conservancy

If northern Michigan's wild and scenic places have given you peace, inspiration, or a chance to connect with family and friends, then you understand their importance to our quality of life.

"When you make a gift to the Regional Conservancy, it's an investment in both the future of our region and the future of our children," said Glen Chown, executive director. "Your dollars stay in our area."

Love to spend time outdoors? Volunteer to be a Preserve or Trail Steward and help care for properties that have been protected. To make a donation call Desiree Worthington or, to volunteer, Abby Gartland at 929-7911.

Big Brothers Big Sisters of Northwestern Michigan

"It's not about big, extravagant gifts or activities, it's really just about these kids having another adult in their lives who will spend some time with them," said Mary Sue Christian, executive director.

Most mentors, called "Bigs," spend an hour a

week with their "Little"—a child between the ages of 6 and 12. And the need for Bigs' involvement has never been greater. There are currently over 200 children on the program's waiting list — the largest number ever.

According to Christian, studies show that 80 percent of "Littles" have improved in the area of self-esteem, and 67 percent have improved in academically since they were joined with their mentor. Children are paired with mentors on the basis of common interests and personalities. Mentors are supported and trained by BBBS case managers, all of them professionals in the social work field.

Don't have the time to commit to weekly visits? Consider being a "Big for a day" and pair off with one of the waiting list "Littles" at an event. You must be at least 18 to be a mentor.

Monetary donations to support this program are always welcome, especially this year, in the wake of serious budget cuts.

To make a donation, call 932-7810. To become a "Big" or to volunteer to work at a fundraising event, ask for Gary Swaney, program director.

Child & Family Services of Northwestern Michigan
For some Michigan chil-

dren, Christmas doesn't come with gifts and festivities that many of us receive. Child & Family Services currently oversees over 200 children in foster care homes, as well as dozens of other children and families in various educational and counseling programs.

"Many of the children and families participating in these programs will have very little, if any, of their holiday wish list fulfilled without community involvement," said Gina Aranki, CFS's marketing director.

Gift amounts have been set at \$75 per child under 12 and \$100 for teens and older.

Businesses, organizations and individuals are invited to sponsor a single child or a whole family. CFS also runs a holiday store, which allows children in need the opportunity to "shop" for gifts for their families using play money. Donated items and store volunteers are needed. Cash donations will help purchase additional store and Wish List items. To fulfill a wish list, to donate cash or your time, call Gina Aranki or Kathy Ferguson at 946-8975 by Dec. 17. For more check their Web site at www.cfsnwm.org

American Red Cross
The NW Michigan Red Cross will be expanding its Disaster Action Team pro-

gram to more effectively meet increased local disaster preparedness needs. DATs are comprised solely of volunteers and the training is free. Once volunteers have training and experience on the local level, they are also qualified to assist with Red Cross national disaster relief efforts.

Quality medical care is one of the most basic and pressing needs for seniors, but having access to that care can be a challenge. For many area seniors who can no longer drive or who have mobility issues, just getting to their doctor's office can be impossible feat.

The Red Cross' new Senior Medical Transportation program aims to change that. Beginning in January, the program will employ a fleet of volunteer drivers who will shuttle seniors from their homes to their respective doctors' offices and hospital appointments, even appointments as far away as Grand Rapids and Ann Arbor.

The Red Cross will partner with 26 local agencies that will help identify seniors' needs.

To volunteer for the DAT program or to be a medical driver, contact Executive Director Kip Dottie at 947-7286 or www.redcross.org

Erin Anderson is a local freelance writer.

Real-life 'characters' who bring Christmas to life

When I was a child, I couldn't wait until December because then the Advent calendar came out of its box. I loved opening the paper shutters of each tiny window as a candle, a star, a tree or a toy was discovered. But I was especially delighted when the day's window revealed a Christmas character — a Nutcracker, a wise man — an angel, perhaps.

As Christmas approaches, I wonder about my inclination for people over things. What I have gradually discovered, like the curtains of a puppet show opened by a child, is that the Christmas "characters" are important because of their connection to each of us. They are here as we gather family, friends, neighbors and perhaps some new folks, too. I chuckled aloud when I realized that these people more or less represented those Christmas characters.

I think about the Christmas morning gatherings on the

east side of Detroit, and I see that my friend's mother, Mrs. Widmann, was like Babushka of Russian lore — the obsessive housekeeper who was too busy ironing everything with her beloved mangle in the basement, too busy dusting under the beds, to follow The Star when the Three Kings asked her to join them.

Realizing what she had missed and remorseful, Babushka later made up for her remission by abandoning her treasured home to spend the rest of her life traveling to give toys to poor children. Like Babushka, Mrs. Widmann's home was clean to the point of sterility, but like the fabled character, she made gifts for the neighborhood children — knitted mittens from colorful scrap wool and she created the most elegant of all Christmas treats — pastel-washed Marzipan fruits. Later in life, she realized that the real gifts she had given to her family were not ironed sheets, but those

of nurturing.

Yes, Scrooge was at the neighborhood go-arounds, too. That was Mr. Murdock, a tall, unsmiling man who carefully worked with insurance numbers at his office, adding, subtracting and gathering facts. Behind his back, neighbors chatted about poor Murdock: he always folded his poker hand first; never let his spaniel out of the dog run for a walk; banished his only child to the kitchen during evenings with a radio, so he and his wife could read books-of-the-month in a small reading room uninterrupted. Yet, at Christmas, Murdock was Scrooge reformed, circulating among the men, carrying a few glasses and a bottle of his best Scotch.

There was an angel at the gatherings, too — Viola Mullins, a woman of unlimited kindness and optimism. Stern neighbors gossiped that she as a divorcee — taboo then, a Scarlet Letter among the holly berries.

A free spirit, Viola served children punch in fancy red glasses, those usually reserved for adults. She frosted chocolate cakes with pointed dollops and called them porcupine cakes. She told the children, over the fence and matter-of-factly, about boys and girls, love and romance — and sex — when their own parents would not.

Viola also wore her hair in a sassy up-do, which we children adored. Always a flower, a bit of ribbon, and for Christmas, a holly sprig was tucked in the knots of hair.

My mother and father were Mr. and Mrs. Santa. Their connection as helpers to Santa became more suspect and waned, year-by-year, as I grew older and sadly, more literal.

Then there was The Woodcutter-toy maker, reminded me of my uncle, who whittled fishing lures most of the year, yellow and

green spotted flatfish and stumpy lures called Riverbunts for walleye.

But at Christmas, he would create tiny carved boxes for my dime store trinkets.

My tall, stern, German and Lutheran grandfather was another character from holiday myth, The Forester, who brought home the tree.

Though living near the center of Detroit, he always brought a scraggly fir branch to his home, obviously discarded by a more discerning person. Grandpa set the branch up as a small tree, trimmed with my uncle's gold paper cigar bands, bits of foil and always silver tinsel.

These real-life characters made my holiday rich, but it was not complete without the Christ Child, and I had Him then and still do. He is a tiny figure, only two inches or so



BY SALLY D. KETCHUM
Local columnist

long. The figure is an antique — Italian-crafted infant, beautifully painted, his eyes open and focused.

He will come out of the box of decorations soon, for I have him still in my heart, above all the Christmas people in my life.

Sally D. Ketchum is a local freelance writer who is a self-confessed Christmas lover who enjoys all the trappings of the holiday.

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Festival of Trees events are year-long in the planning

BY MICHELLE ARNTZ
Special to the Record-Eagle

Would you call the Zonta Club's recent "Light Up the Night" a fund-raiser or a November Christmas party? Actually, it was both.

The halls were decked to the nines for the Nov. 19 Festival of Trees event held this year in the new George and Clara McManus Building, located on the Great Lakes Campus of Northwestern Michigan College.

Guests admired the many Christmas trees, a main part of the Festival of Trees week-long celebration, while soft music added to the ambiance. In addition to food, drink and entertainment and there even an opportunity to visit with Santa Claus.

The Sweet Adelines sang holiday carols. Pianist David Chown and Lake Leelanau's duo, the Windy Ridge Boys, were just two more of the musical talents scheduled to grace the event.

Every wreath, Christmas tree and auction item was

donated to Zonta Club. The proceeds from the auction and raffle will go toward programs designed to enrich the lives of girls and women in the community.

In conjunction with Northwestern Michigan College and the Women's Resource Center, Zonta will help fund the Opportunity for Change scholarship program. The Navigator Program, a support program for breast cancer patients, and the Intergenerational Day Care program at the Grand Traverse Pavilions will also benefit from the fundraiser. Project 100, a math and science program designed to keep eighth grade girls interested in math and science, is also Zonta-sponsored.

According to the Festival of Trees Web site, 100 percent of the money raised from the six-day event will stay in the community. "Light up the Night" sponsors were Bank One, Bill Marsh Automotive Group, Howard Energy and Miner's North Jewelers.

Traditional and contempo-

rary Christmas trees were found in both the Professional Tree or School Tree entries. Winning a First Place ribbon in the Traditional, Large Tree Category was Marlene Houghan's "Deck the Hall's with Timeless Elegance."

"This is the best tree I have ever done," said Houghan of her glowing 12-foot tree. According to Houghan, it took 10 hours to decorate the towering tree. 50 yards of fabric, large red silk peonies, sprays of glittering greenery and elegant ornaments graced this, the tenth tree donation she has made to the Festival. Houghan also dried and sprayed pillow hydrangeas that she collected from a friend's garden months ago to complete the beautiful giant. This year, she shares credit with her friend, Sally Adams, who designed and sewed the tree skirt using four different heavy baroque-inspired fabrics embellished with thick gold cording. The tree was decorated at the Great Lakes Campus building.

According to Zonta member and co-chair, Manpower's Jane Cavender, the successful Festival continues to grow each year. "This year, we had 38 professionally decorated Christmas trees and 23 from schools," she said.

According to Cavender, over 100 contributed items were auctioned off along with the Christmas trees.

She said that her participation in Zonta is a "labor of love" and that there more than 60 local members who "donate a tremendous amount of their time to the



Photo by Michelle Arntz
"Light up the Night," one of Zonta Club's Festival of Trees events, took place at Northwest Michigan College's Great Lakes Campus Nov. 19. All proceeds from all events benefit programs in the community.

organization." If you would like to donate a decorated Christmas tree or make a contribution next year, write to Rose Denomme, Zonta Club, P.O.

Box 1412, Traverse City MI 49685-1412 or visit the Web site: www.tcfestivaloftrees.org. Michelle Arntz is a local freelance writer.

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Key ingredient for memorable entertaining is tradition

BY BETHANY BROADWELL
Special to the Record-Eagle

The decorations may be divine and the music merry, but the edibles that hosts serve during holiday entertaining is a big reason guests leave feeling satisfied.

Members of the Traverse City food industry understand the significance of feasting at festivities.

"Having unique foods and dishes is what makes a party stand out," said Darric Newman, a purchaser for Folgarelli's who runs the wine shop. "When we entertain we try to have foods that meet the desires of a broad spectrum of people."

Hosts should consider the kind of occasion they want to have — whether they are serving hors d'oeuvres only, food for an open house, a formal sit-down dinner or strictly desserts, said Newman.

"By establishing this, it

helps to decide what types of food you should serve and also how much," he said.

Understanding guests' tastes is another factor that should steer menu planning. However, traditional dishes like roasted turkey prepared with chestnut stuffing and roasted or grilled beef and pork tenderloin with a port demi glaze are often customary choices.

"Have a well-balanced array of finger foods, from veggies to meats and seafood. Foods in bite-size pieces are much easier to eat at a party," advised Teri Burritt, co-owner of Burritt's Fresh Markets. "Keep ingredients on the simpler side, unless you're familiar with everyone's taste."

As far as a specific food trend for 2004 holiday entertaining, Tena Evans, senior bakery and deli merchandiser for Tom's Food Markets said, "Cheeses are

huge this year with great emphasis on English cheeses such as heart of England, English stichelster and the derby varieties. French cheeses are also growing in popularity with the flavored gourmandise, goat and French Fol Epi."

Yola Pepellashi, chef and co-owner of The Silver Swan Homemade Foods and Creative Gifts, said food trends should not really affect menu choices.

"Although it is fun to introduce people to new foods, the holidays are for whatever may be special to you, your family and friends," she said. "The aromas and tastes of the foods you present should elicit fond memories of happy experiences."

"Tradition, not over-the-top preparations, is the best bet," said Mike Busley, owner of the Grand Traverse Pie Company.

At his bakery/cafe, customers can choose from a wide-selection of gourmet,

handmade pies, assorted sauces and preserves featuring local products and other party-friendly items.

"Holiday party foods usually spare no expense," said Evans.

While the price range can vary tremendously depending on the type of event, she estimated hosts can expect to spend between \$8 and \$10 per guest for food.

Hosts may offer seafood dishes with crab, lobster and shrimp; holiday breads such as stollen and panetone, cheese fondue made from rich Swiss cheese blends of emmenthal and gruyere with hits of brandy and sweets galore.

For those wanting to serve pure decadence, Evans said, "Champagne, fresh strawberries and chocolate are an absolute must."

Allowing plenty of time in advance of a holiday gathering is another necessity to simplify food preparation. Newman suggested the five following tips:

1. Make out the menu weeks ahead of time. Shop at least a week prior to the event for products that are shelf-stable.

2. Order products, like fish, meat, cheeses and cold cuts that need to be fresh, so they are ready to pickup just ahead of the occasion.

3. Freeze dishes, like spinach pie and quiche, which can be placed in the oven and simply heated before serving.

4. Choose main dishes, such as beef tenderloin, that require little laboring over the stove during the actual party.

5. Make a list of the beverages to be served, and pick them up a week prior to the party.

Evans suggested garnishing dishes to give them a quick dazzle. The simple act of adding a sprig of fresh mint, basil or rosemary to a casserole, meat or salad, spruces up plain foods. A dusting of powdered sugar or cocoa or a drizzle of

chocolate or butterscotch syrup around the edge of the plate can make desserts extra tempting.

Offering foods with contrasting colors and textures, Burritt said, adds a festive touch. As examples, she explained cherry peppers resemble decorations and green onions can be tied into bows.

Putting care into the choice of plates, linens, stemware and silver is important, said Pepellashi, "Take a little extra time for the presentation. It makes a huge difference."

Pepellashi reminded that hosts need not get overwhelmed by holiday expectations when it comes to the kitchen.

"Don't try to do it all yourself. Enlist your family and friends to help" she said. "Cooking together can be a wonderful sharing experience."

Bethany Broadwell is a local freelance writer.

Easy recycling tips makes the holidays and future merrier

BY KELLY IGNACE
Special to the Record-Eagle

Recycle Santa Claus? Recycling the Santa story has been a tradition handed down from parent to offspring for generations. Well, not only is Santa Claus recyclable, but so are many other items associated with the Christmas holidays.

Christmas Trees

They can be recycled, thanks to Traverse City Light & Power, from Sunday, Dec. 27 through Saturday, Jan. 22, at Hull Park, behind the Traverse Area District Library at the end of Hannah Street. Hours will be from 8 a.m. - 5 p.m. Follow the drop-off signs to the boat parking lot at Hull Park. The trees are chipped and the mulch is used to groom area nature trails.

Christmas Lights

You may have had a few un-kind words with dud lights in the past. But look on the bright side. You can recycle them at your local scrap metal facility. In the Traverse City area, take them to Integrity Iron & Metal on Cass Rd., 946-3499 or Traverse Bay Recycling on Blair Town Hall Rd., 943-9000. Please bundle and tie your light strings.

Christmas Cards

My favorite re-use for old Christmas cards is to cut them up and use them for next year's gift tags. Another suggestion is cutting out the pictures and gluing them on homemade cards for the following year. Children love this. Donate them to a preschool or latchkey program to be used for arts & crafts activities. They can also be recycled at the county drop-off recycling sites.

Gift Boxes

Of course, reuse them. If

they are beyond repair, recycle them at one of the nine Grand Traverse County drop-off sites.

Corrugated cardboard

Can be taken to any one of nine conveniently located Grand Traverse County drop-off recycling sites. Sites are open 24/7 for your convenience. For locations, call the Recycle Hotline at 941-5555 or go to www.grandtraverse.org

Paper

You know you are not going to read those instructions, so you might as well recycle them. And most holiday gift wrap with the exception of foiled and glittered paper can be taken at the drop-off sites as well.

Old Clothes/Shoes

Make room for the new. Take your unwanted items to one of the many area reuse stores, such as Goodwill or the Women's Resource Center. There is a helpful way to find local re-use centers using the web. Go to the following Web site: www.liaa.cc/seeds/green-map.asp. Choose the search for locations option. Enter your zip code and choose reuse site from the drop-down box.

Electronics/e-waste

Electronics are a growing concern. Many electronics are host to toxic heavy metals. While it is still legal to dispose of them in regular trash, many states have already banned the disposal of e-waste in landfills. Grand Traverse County held an e-waste collection in October 2004. Nearly 45,000 pounds (2

semi-trucks full) of electronics were collected for recycling. The collection was a great success. No date is yet scheduled for the next collection. To save your place on the e-waste collection waiting list, please call the Recycle Hotline at 941-5555.

Household Batteries

Batteries contain toxic heavy metals and when disposed of improperly, are a danger to you and the environment. You can recycle batteries year-round at the following locations:

- Traverse City Fire Station at 510 W. Front St.
- City/County Building on Boardman
- County Public Services Building on Lafranier Rd.

Accepted at these locations are regular household batteries, rechargeable batteries and cell

phones. Please take your auto batteries to a scrap metal facility (see Christmas lights). Call the Recycle Hotline for more information 941-5555.

Food & Beverage Containers

These containers can be taken to any one of nine conveniently located Grand Traverse County Drop-off recycling sites. Sites are open 24/7 for your convenience.

For locations, contact the Recycle Hotline at 941-5555 or www.grandtraverse.org

The following clean items are accepted:

- Glass food and beverage containers that are clear, green or brown.
- Metal food and beverage cans and kitchen foil items.
- Plastic food and beverage containers marked with the numbers 1 or 2 contained in the recycling

symbol.

Leftovers

When you've had all that you can take of leftover casseroles, compost them. Composting is a great way to cut down on disposal costs while creating a helpful soil amendment. Remember to compost only plant matter. Meat should not go into the compost pile. Re-use leftover turkey meat & bones by making soup. Freeze in a storage bag and pull it out on one of those "don't feel like cooking" nights. For information on composting or to purchase a backyard compost bin for \$53, call the Recycle Hotline at 941-5555. Remember this: Please use your garbage disposal lightly. Over-using this appliance can be a burden on municipal wastewater treatment systems and on your septic.

Styrofoam

Unfortunately there is not a local option for recycling Styrofoam in the Traverse City area. Please throw your molded Styrofoam away. Do not put it into a recycling bin. Clean foam packing peanuts can be taken to your local shipping store for re-use.

Kelly Ignace is a Grand Traverse County Resource Recycling Specialist.

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Inside Hallmark Cards: Joyful, artistic job atmosphere

BY SHEILA GARRETT
Special to the Record-Eagle

"Merry Chr-" read the front of the ugly-looking hand-made card that came in the mail. I opened it and read inside, "I didn't care enough to send the very best!"

That was one friend's reaction to my new job at Hallmark Cards of Kansas City years ago. Other friends wrote apologetic notes if they sent me a card by a competitor.

My job title was children's editor. A college friend working at Hallmark had alerted me to the possibility.

Applicants were required to take an I.Q. and a creativity test, which included an audition of sorts. So I wrote a little birthday verse that went:

*Darlene, the dolly, was up with the dawn,
Ran out of the house to the street,
Passed all her friends with a wave of her hand
As though she had wings on her feet.
She ran past the school and the church and the*

store,
And straight round the corner she flew.
And here she is now, she just couldn't be late
To say "Happy Birthday" to you.

My friend looked it over and said that a verse of eight lines was too long for a simple birthday card, but that I, as an applicant, could not be expected to know that. She suggested I go ahead and submit it, which I did. A few weeks later, I began work at "the plant," a humdrum name for an amazing place.

There was a certain party atmosphere that prevailed and management encouraged this. There was a daily newsletter, decorated with a bunny in a herald's costume, blowing a trumpet. With all the artists in the building, newsletters and signs invariably looked good. Choirs and other music groups were welcome to visit the plant and entertain, especially during the holidays.

When the real Christmas rolled around, though, we were working on the "little holidays" — Halloween and

Thanksgiving. In the editorial department, pumpkins and pilgrims were everywhere.

My friend and I merrily flew back to Michigan, carrying shopping bags of presents from Halls, Jones and The Plaza — Kansas City's glamorous shopping district. We happily met our families and headed home for a few fun-packed days.

Then, when we were all worn out from celebrating, we returned to a dark and depressing post-holiday January in Kansas City, to start work immediately on Christmas cards two years into the future.

My job didn't involve writing verse as much as planning a line of cards, such as the Christmas line for children. Other editors dealt with the general, humorous and religious lines, and the elegant Crown Line that included famous art reproductions.

A line would consist of a given number of spots, each to be filled by a card at a given price. Most spots were filled by proven material,

solid sellers from past years. We sent designs to the art department to be updated, giving the cards a fresh look.

The company encouraged new ideas and many were provided by the writers. This fortunate group was allowed to go Christmas shopping on company time. They could watch television and read magazines. This was all considered research.

Accountability involved having a certain number of acceptances — work approved for future use.

Since editors gave the presentations, we tried to put our best spin on the writer's new material. The humor editor was a great standup comic. When it was my turn, I tried to use my best story-lady voice.

I remember once reading these lines at the end of a card that featured a story about a magic lamp:

*"But what if you don't have a lamp? That's all right
For Christmas Eve is a magic night..."*

All the executives around me seemed to have turned into 6-year-olds waiting in

suit. All of his entourage followed two steps behind him. I almost expected to see two dancing mice bringing up the rear.

The poet Ogden Nash came in once, alone. He was much more casually dressed, in a tweed jacket and smoking a pipe. Smoking was strictly regulated according to time and place in the plant. However, nobody said anything to the author of "Custard the Dragon" that, I proudly noted, was in my line.

Eventually, I left the company for the simple reason that I missed Michigan. I was about to be married and we had decided to live in my home state.

This time of year, I always remember my coworkers at the plant. They brought a lot of happiness to many people, especially during the holidays, and I'm proud to have been associated with them.

Sheila Garrett is a local freelance writer.

Spruce up holiday decor with the latest in ornamentation

BY MARTA HEPLER DRAHOS
Record-Eagle staff writer

It used to be that decorating for the holidays meant stringing colored lights around the big spruce in the front yard and spraying the windows with artificial "frost."

But thanks to technology, holiday decor in the 21st century has taken on an entirely different look — from animated light sculptures and holographic greetings to gel-look sculptures crafted from PVC material.

Among the newest decorations at Meijer in Traverse City are battery-powered light sets for use on door wreaths, said store director John Spaulding. But blow-up yard ornaments and lighted deer sculptures with heads that move are the best sellers for the third year in a row.

"I think the reason the inflatables are so popular is they aren't a lot of money and they're still huge," Spaulding said. "When you can put a 15-foot snowman in your yard for about \$20, it's pretty impressive."

Inflatable yard ornaments are also popular at Ace

Hardware on Front Street, where they went on sale the day after Thanksgiving. But more and more people are discovering the convenience of lights by the foot, said store manager Jason Gothard.

"The advantage of having those is you can make a string 150 feet long out of one cord instead of connecting three strings," Gothard said. "One guy did his whole fence with it, so he didn't have to connect strings together, he just ran one enormous line out."

Ice lights have been redesigned for the holidays. Besides classic, clear white, they come in multi-color, "windowcicle" and snowflake varieties. Even regular lights have undergone a facelift, with faceted bulbs — shaped like pine cones, blossoms and teardrops — to add texture.

"That's kind of for someone who wants something a little different, a little trendy," Gothard said. At Garden Goods in Traverse City, the hottest trend in outdoor decorating is using fresh greens to extend the life of planters like pots, window boxes and

urns. "In essence, instead of doing an evergreen tree like a dwarf evergreen or spiral topiary, you use fresh greens," said co-owner Julie Sovereign. "It's less expensive, and whenever we put a tree or shrub in a pot over the winter we run the risk of losing it."

The greens come in bundles selected for their color, texture and aroma, and include berried hollies, incense cedars, eucalyptus leaves, boxwood, blueberry juniper and curly willow.

"It is absolutely the look that you see in catalogues," Sovereign said. "It's very Smith and Hawken, Williams-Sonoma."

New at gift stores this year are window stickers made of soft, crystal-clear gel. The brightly colored "Gel-Gems" come in shapes like snowmen, penguins, holly and snowflakes, and do double-duty on refrigerators and mirrors.

"I know girls who are buying them for their lockers, and we just had a woman who put them on her shower," said Nancy Peacock, assistant manager at Tiny Treasures in Glen Arbor.



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Elk Rapids

wow!

I've been shopping at
Sweet Peas,
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Shopping
the way it used
to be!

Elk Rapids

Friday, December 10th • 2-4 p.m.
Holiday Book Signing
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Thursday, December 16th • 5-7 p.m.
Elk Rapids Business After Hours • Rustic Designs

Wednesday, December 22nd
Men's Shopping Night

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Gift Certificates Available
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LIQUOR

TOWN CLUBS

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Saturday, December 18th - Karaoke 9 p.m.-1 a.m.
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