

HOLIDAY GIFT GUIDE

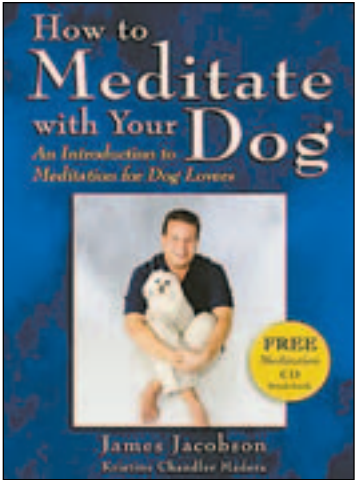
Holiday Spirit

Thursday, December 1, 2005

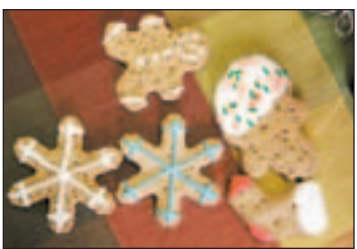
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Second in a three-part series

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Made in Michigan

Local art, jewelry and furniture — plus more gift ideas

BY KRISTEN HAINS
Special to the Record-Eagle

Ever wish you could wrap up that Northern Michigan sunset or bottle the beauty of the Grand Traverse Bay and give it as a gift?

While it may be impossible to give the real thing, Northern Michigan artisans have found ways to capture the beauty of Northern Michigan in a way that can be enjoyed year-round.

Becky Thatcher is a renowned jewelry designer. Her one-of-a-kind pieces at Becky Thatcher Designs are more than just jewelry — they reflect her art and her ability to see beauty in even the smallest of treasures.

For instance, a blue diamond necklace that Thatcher recently designed

captures the beauty of Northern Michigan waters.

"I look at how to capture the color and sparkle of the water when it's frozen over," she said. "When you can't see if through the snow, this will allow the sparkle of that water to shimmer in the light of your fire."

Thatcher's design materials run the gamut from beach glass to diamonds.

"It is always a great challenge to take a piece of recycled glass or a stone that I find on the beach in the morning and translate it into an object to wear by the end of the day," she said.

One of Thatcher's newest creations are hors'd oeuvres knives. The knives feature a cornerstone, not of

jewelry design, but of Northern Michigan: cherry pits.

"We've taken cherry pits and put them through a stabilization process very similar to how they treat turquoise," she explained. "We then stir them up with resin and then cut them and carve them like you would stone. Where some of the centers of the pits sometimes will separate, we've done an inlay of turquoise into some of the cherry pits."

Becky Thatcher has stores in Traverse City, Leland, Glen Arbor and Harbor Springs. Due to the one-of-a-kind nature of her designs, each store has its own varied selection. Her work can also be viewed on-line at www.beckythatcherdesigns.com. Prices range anywhere from \$15 into the thousands.

Sheffield's in Traverse City is a treasure trove for those looking for the perfect gift made right here in Northern Michigan. Owner John Fisher estimates that at least 50 percent of his inventory is comprised of the works of local artists and craftsmen. The offerings are diverse and offer a taste of Northern Michigan.

"I think we have a pretty



Record-Eagle/Tyler Sipe

A diamond waves ring and teal diamond briolette necklace are just a few of many original jewelry items found at Becky Thatcher Designs in Traverse City.



Record-Eagle/Douglas Tesner

Top, a maple bowl made by Dr. Larry Skendzel at Sheffield's in Traverse City. Above, a selection of handmade items at Sheffield's.

incredible round up of local talents in our lamps and art and furniture and glass and wood and everything else," Fisher said, glancing around his showroom.

Fisher carries the works of local visual artists Mary Fuscald, Mary Ann Force, Jan Gwinell, Greg Seaman and David Krause.

Local physician Dr. Chris Scheiberger is one of the furniture makers featured at Sheffield's. The current piece on display is a writing desk, made from Brazilian Epay wood with a solid granite top.

Another (retired) local physician, Dr. Larry Skendzel, has begun showing his work at Sheffield's. Skendzel works with spalted maple and creates a variety of items.

"He does everything from hollow forms to bowls to little platters," Fisher said. "It's just stunning work."

If you're looking to shed a bit of light on the holidays, Sheffield's offers lamps handcrafted by Northern Michigan artists.

Steve Kapheim of

Interlochen works in tandem with his wife to create beautiful lamps. Fisher describes the work as a "beautiful Asian influence lamp made of real fine cut cherry and pine wood."

"He does the real intricate wood cutting and fitting on these Asian style, almost Frank Lloyd Wright style lamp," Fisher said. Kapheim's wife, Marie Lamothe, then paints on the rice paper that the light shines through.

Additional items at Sheffield's include glasswork by Charles Pfluekeft and woodworking by Greg LaCrosse.

Prices at Sheffield's start at \$15.

From the sparkle of diamonds to the glow of candlelight, the holidays are always a time of illumination. Bullfrog Light Co in Charlevoix specializes in gifts to warm and brighten the holidays.

"The candles are known for the way that they glow once they're lit," said owner Betsy Stewart.

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Hugs For The Holidays!
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