

Art for the sake of a great gift

BY SALLY D. KETCHUM
Special to the Record-Eagle

One the most beautiful and often overlooked gifts is the gift of art. Choices might be a soothing watercolor landscape, a bright modern ceramic bowl or a large, glass sculpture that dazzles when light hits it.

Holiday shoppers are fortunate in the number of art galleries in northern Michigan. They're in the small towns surrounding Traverse City, and a number of them are right on Front Street.

Most galleries have a focus, a mission or a specialty, and that can be helpful to the shopper, since it saves time and it helps shoppers to make the selection.

While Mullaly's 128 in downtown Elk Rapids has gifts that range from stocking stuffers like pen knives and money clips to fine art and wood carvings, the gallery specializes in glass, and that includes museum quality glass sculpture.

Owner Barbara Mullaly represents the work of more than 300 artists — 150 glass artists alone — and she has met every one of them in person.

"My job is to give the customer as much information about the artist and his work as is possible," Mullaly said.

Shopping at the gallery while she talks about its pieces is like listening to a museum docent. The information is helpful, and it is also an art education.

Mullaly says that she doesn't know if people are more knowledgeable about art today, but in the case of blown glass, she does know that they are certainly more exposed to it.

Color and light dazzles in fused and blown glass. Mullaly points out a blown glass sculptural piece that glistens with colors from light blue to pale orange, a collection of perfume bottles, a large and elegant piece — suitable for a dining room table, black in a gold leaf stand.

"We have everything for a modern home," she said. "There are some wonderfully contemporary sculptural glass artists."

A small elongated lipped bowl in teal and rose colors and a unique glass jellyfish are examples.

For more information, call 264-6660.

Cathleen and Charles Thayer are new to the Traverse gallery scene, having recently purchased Evergreen Gallery on Front Street in Traverse City.

Their goal, says Cathleen Thayer, is "to be a support to local artists and craftsmen in the area, as well as to be a place where quality art and craft can be found, works that are functional and inspiring."

Evergreen offers works in a range of prices so that a child on an allowance might purchase an art card to stand on his teacher's desk, a couple might choose a watercolor landscape for the home, and a young professional might select an upscale piece for the office.

"We want families of all income levels to find something for their homes or for gifts," Thayer said.

She noted that everything in the gallery is handcrafted in American and much of it made locally.

The Wooden Gallery, also on Front Street, features art and documents preserved by a unique process. They work with photos, lithographs, canvases, posters, newspaper

articles, prints, children's artwork and more. The works are first saturated in a special acrylic formula and then finished by brushing by hand. Thus preserved, they need no glass and have the great advantages of being unbreakable and also non-reflective.

The subjects of the gallery's art are varied. There might be European street scenes or floral print; they might capture a scene of firemen. A preserved family photo or document certainly makes a caring personal gift.

For more information, contact Wooden Gallery at 941-0823 or visit their their Web site at www.woodengallery.com

Some folks believe that art doesn't need a purpose, except for "Art for art's sake."

But this time of year, art work may have a valuable purpose — to be a perfect gift.

Sally D. Ketchum is a freelance writer and columnist.

Area art galleries

Check out the following galleries for their holiday offerings, but be sure to call ahead for their fall/winter hours: **Americana Collection of Leland**, 104 River St., Leland; 256-9350.

Amy Jo's Folk Art Studio, Open house Dec. 2, 3 & 4. 6995 Center Road, TC; 941-1181.

Antiques at Railroad Place, fine antiques and collectibles, 620 Railroad Place, TC (next to the Grand Traverse Dinner Train); 946-6600.

Art & Soul 140 E. Front St., TC; 947-4888.

Art Center-Traverse City (former Northern Michigan Artist & Craftsmen), ongoing gallery displays; 720 S. Elmwood, TC; 941-9488.

Asher Gallery & Framing, 445 E. Front St., TC; 932-8638.

Bayside Gallery Suttons Bay, 204 N. St. Josephs, Suttons Bay, 271-4975.

Bayside Gallery Traverse City, 206 E. Front St., Traverse City, 946-7642.

Becky Thatcher Designs, Lake Street, Glen Arbor; 334-3826. Also a location in Traverse City.

Beedazzled, 6289 River Road, one mile off U.S. 31, Benzonia, 882-7765; www.beedazzled.com

Bella Galleria, open daily; in the Old Mission Tavern, 17015 Center Road, TC; 223-4142.

Belstone Gallery & Gifts, 321 E. Front, TC; 946-0610.

Bier Art Gallery & Pottery Studio, six miles S. of Charlevoix on U.S. 31, 547-2288 or (866)880-5624; www.biergallery.com.

Blue Heron Gallery, 131 Ames St., Elk Rapids; 264-9210.

By the Bay Nautical Fine Art Galleries, 172 E. Main St., Harbor Springs, 526-3964; 102 E. Front St., Traverse City, 933-4460; www.bythebay.com.

By the Bight Gallery and Studio, works by gallery owners Tom and Carole Bowker; gallery hours vary; 640 E. Woolsey Lake and Snyder roads, Northport; 386-7019, www.bythebight.com.

Corners Fine Contemporary Art, 6920 Putney Road, Arcadia; 352-7389.

Courtyard Fine Art, 914 E. Eighth St., TC; 929-9877.

Coyote Woman Gallery, 160 E. Main, Harbor Springs; 526-5889.

Crooked Tree Arts Center Gallery, 461 E. Mitchell St., Petoskey; call 347-4337.

Crystal Lake Art Center gallery, 111 10th, Frankfort; 352-4151.

Elements, 107 Bridge St., Charlevoix; 547-5820.

Evergreen Gallery, fine hand-crafts and art, pottery, glass, photos, original watercolors, greeting cards and more; 531 W. Front St., TC; 929-9522.

Fired Earth Pottery Studio Art Gallery, 121 E. Nelson St., Cadillac; 775-0888.

Full Circle Gallery, By appt., 215 River St., Elk Rapids; 264-9195.

Gildner Gallery, West Main St., Cheboygan; 627-2121 or (800) 441-0850.

Hands On Art, paint your own pottery studio, no reservations required; 144 Hall St. (behind the Lighting Center), TC; Julie T. O'Hearn, 941-5071.

Ice House Gallery & Studios, 113 Benzie Blvd., Beulah; 882-9081.

Insideout Gallery, featuring cutting edge, contemporary, low-brow and outsider art; 229 Garland, off Hall Street, downtown TC; 929-3254 or www.insideoutgallery.com.

Jordan River Arts Center, 301 Main, East Jordan; 536-3385 or www.jordanriverarts.org.

Kaleva Art Gallery Cooperative, 14459 Wuoksi Ave., Kaleva; 362-2749.

Les Sirenes Galerie D'Art of Frankfort, 338 S. Main St., 352-7640, www.lessirenes.com.

Lloyd Henry Gallery, River Street, Manistee; call Manistee Art Institute, 723-2682.

Main Street Gallery, 307 S. Main St., Leland; 256-7787.

Michigan Artists Gallery, 309 N. St. Joseph, Suttons Bay; for hours, call 271-4922.

Mimi Nieman Fine Art Studio, 110 N. Lake St., Leland; Limited hours, call 256-9910.

Mullaly's 128 Studio & Gallery, 128 River, Elk Rapids; 264-6660.

Murphy's Lamplight Inn, M-88, Central Lake; for details or appointment, call 544-6443.

Next Door Gallery, call for gallery hours; 301 S. Main, Leland; 256-2229.

North Peak Brewing Co. Backroom Gallery, 400 W. Front St., TC; 228-5106.

Northern Michigan Artists Market, featuring works by more than 50 artists; 445 E. Mitchell, Petoskey; 487-0000. **River Street Gallery**, 384 River

St., Manistee; 398-4001. **Ruth Conklin Gallery**, 6632 M-109, Glen Arbor; 334-3880.

Secret Garden Gallery, 10206 Front Street, Empire; 326-5428.

Sheffield's Gallery & Handmade Furniture, 803 W. Front St., TC; 933-0960.

Tamarack Craftsmen Gallery, M-22, Omena; call for hours, 386-5529.

Three Pines Studio A working gallery and studio featuring 50 local artists, workshops. 5959 West Levering, Cross Village; 526-9447.

Trick Dog Gallery, Elberta Beach Road, Elberta; 352-8364.

Tvedten Fine Art Third Street Gallery, 284 E. Third St., Harbor Springs; 526-2299.

Twisted Fish Gallery, 10443 S. Bayshore Dr., south of Elk Rapids on U.S. 31, 264-0123.

Vigland Gallery, U.S. 31, Benzonia; 882-7203 or svigland@coslink.net.

Watermelon Sugar Gallery, 153 E. Front Street, TC; 929-7426.

Be sure to check out the final Holiday Gift Guide on Thursday, Dec. 8 in the Record-Eagle

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