The Art of Healy
Capturing Old Town in Watercolor for Over 30 Years
See page 4
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Wishes You
and
Yours a Happy Holiday From All of Us!

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Celebrating 50 years of service
Healy brings art home ......................................................

What’s ‘up’ with up? .......................................................

2010 is so over ...............................................................

Dems celebrate 86 with Arlington ..................................

A naked opportunist writes dad .....................................

Local hero not forgotten ............................................... 

Kabbalah what ? ............................................................

Clockman ticks off comments .........................................

A creamy delight ...........................................................

Holiday shopping for the sane ........................................

Parléz vous good food? ...................................................

My sherry ......................................................................

Recipes like mom used to make .......................................

Winter events you can warm up to .................................

Pet safety for the holidays ...............................................

The world’s cedar chest ..................................................

Holiday puppy love ........................................................

Welcome to The Zebra!

There is an old joke that asks, “What is black and white and red all over?” The answer is usually a newspaper or sometimes a sunburned zebra.

I have worked in Alexandria for over 20 years. Out of college, I moved here for Virginia residency with the intention of going to law school after one year. But I bought the print media bag and myself pounding the cobblestones selling newspaper advertising. Quickly, law school lapsed from my mind, and I became enthralled with the businesses and personalities that brought my life and hastened my steps around Old Town. While to most, I was merely a door-to-door salesperson with tucked newspaper under my arm smudging my jackets with ink, I fashioned myself the captain of a small ship which was my sales territory; King Street to Mount Vernon, and that sailed with me – shop owners, realtors, entrepreneurs and restaurateurs. I used folks like Beverly Gure, who designed handbags from her third floor flat on Cameron, to John McKenzie, lord of Alexandria’s “real” estates. Bruce at Market Square decorated my townhouse, and Laurent at Le Bergerie and Wendy at Tempo catered my annual Academy Awards parties with lemon tarts and ham biscuits. I picked when Santa Fe East closed as their chipotle chicken was a regular take home item along with The Warehouse’s clam chowder. Old Town, and the surrounding landscape – Del Ray, Crystal City and Shirlington – were my home, my family. And I perhaps purchased more from the shops than they ever purchased from me, and I certainly are very well along the way.

Early on, I stumbled upon Gallery Lafayette with Alice’s discerning eye and a snappy, salt and pepper-topped artist sporting a bow tie by the name of Ted Healy, who quickly became a friend. I dallied in real estate when it boomed and returned to advertising when the housing market bombed. And without apology, I soon realized that I could no longer work for other people because I still thought I was a captain, sailing my own ship. But in hard economic times, any company is leery of a salesperson who runs the occasional free ad and wants to steer editorial content to benefit the community.

So here we are. The Zebra. My publication. And yours. It is a lifestyle magazine, intended to enhance the lives of its readers by offering informative and entertaining content, well beyond city council meetings and water sewage proposals. The Zebra aims to please, bringing the best of the towns and the neighborhoods that you call home, and I call home. So please join me on this voyage, my quirky combination of a newspaper and a sunburned zebra, as I sail my ship into unchartered waters one issue at a time.

Mary Wadland
Publisher/Editor-in-Chief

Zebra is printed on the second Wednesday of each month throughout the year.

Distribution

34,000 copies delivered by hand each month to households and businesses in the following neighborhoods and high traffic areas:

- Alexandria
- Alexandria West
- Annandale
- Beverly Hills
- Burke Cross
- Crystal City
- Del Ray
- Fairlington
- Fairmont
- Fort Royal
- Great Falls
- Landmark
- Mcclean
- Mclean Court
- Mount Vernon
- Old Town
- Park Fairfax
- Pentagon
- Reston
- Seminary Hills
- Shirlington

Publication Dates

Zebra is printed on the second Wednesday of each month throughout the year.

Deadlines

The deadline for the receipt of all new advertising material is 5:00 p.m. Wednesday, seven days prior to publication. Materials and space reservations will be accepted for prepayment-unsubscribed readers ready repeat ads until 5:00 p.m. Friday, the week before publication. Cancellations and changes cannot be accepted after Monday, the week of publication and no refunds will be made after that time. For advertisers wishing to see a proof before publication, the deadline for approval is Wednesday, seven days prior to publication.

For advertising information call 703-919-7533

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QUOTABLE:

“MapQuest really needs to start their directions on #5. I’m pretty sure I know how to get out of my neighborhood.”

— Anonymous

WORD PLAY

Here’s one for the Librarian

The two-letter word "UP" is very interesting.

This two-letter word in English has more meanings than any other two-letter word. It is listed in the dictionary as an [adv], [prep], [adj], [n] or [v].

It’s easy to understand UP meaning toward the sky or at the top of the list, but when we awaken in the morning, why do we wake UP? At a meeting, why does a topic come UP? Why do we speak UP and why are the officers UP for election and why is it UP to the secretary to write UP a report? We call UP our friends, brighten UP a room, polish UP the silver, warm UP the leftovers and clean UP the kitchen. We lock UP the house and fix UP the old car.

At other times this little word has real special meaning. People stir UP trouble, line UP for tickets, work UP an appetite, and think UP excuses. To be dressed is one thing but to be dressed UP is special.

And this UP is confusing: A drain must be opened UP because it is stopped UP.

To be knowledgeable about the proper uses of UP look UP the word UP in the dictionary. In a desk-sized dictionary, it takes UP almost 1/4 of the page and can add UP to about thirty definitions. If you are UP to it, in the dictionary.. In a desk-sized dictionary, it takes UP almost 1/4 of the page and can add UP to about thirty definitions. If you are UP to it, it will take UP a lot of your time, but if you don’t give UP you may wind UP with a hundred or more.

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When it threatens to rain, we say it is clouding UP. When the sun comes out we say it is clearing UP. When it rains, it soaks UP the earth. When it threatens to rain, we say it is clouding UP. When the sun comes out we say it is clearing UP. When it rains, it soaks UP the earth.

When things dry UP, it is easier to walk on the grass. When it rains, the grass is muddy.

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In Healy’s case, coming from a navy flier family, the choice was a natural — go to work for an airline. But, there was also the challenge of getting a job that you could walk away from after your eight hour shift in order to concentrate on perfecting your artistic skills.

“I have dedicated my professional life to promoting Old Town Alexandria.”

That is how Todd Healy, owner of Gallery Lafayette, describes his 35 years as an Alexandria resident devoted to capturing the heart and soul of this colonial seaport city through his precise watercolor depictions of its homes and buildings. His work is the very essence of a labor of love, requiring a minimum of 110 hours to create an image of a single building.

Each Christmas holiday season 12 of those images are offered to the public in the form of a calendar. His 2011 edition, unveiled November 6 at his gallery in Gadsby’s Arcade, 320 King St., marks the 30th anniversary of how Alexandria is portrayed through the eyes and emotions of Todd Healy.

“When I walk along the footpaths of George Washington, who first surveyed these original lots of Alexandria, Virginia I am drawn to the sense of home and community. I often think of the artisans who built these homes and public buildings, by hand, using minimal tools, and how almost 300 years later they are still in use,” Healy writes on the back of his current calendar.

“Most of their names are lost to us forever, but they have achieved their own immortality through their craftsmanship, skill and effort,” he states. “My watercolors and illustrations are dedicated to these artisans and their significant contributions to this city.”

A native Virginian, Healy was born in Virginia Beach. His father was a U.S.Navy pilot during World War II and the family moved nearly every year until Todd was 10 years old.

His father was also an avocational artist, doing illustrations for a naval flight magazine. It was in his father’s home studio that young Todd began his love of art. “I started drawing in my father’s studio at home as a child. His assessment of my work was not always the most flattering,” Healy recalled.

But, Todd knew that art was his calling. First, he attended Mira Coster Junior College in Carlsbad, CA, and then San Diego State College in San Diego, CA. In both instances majoring in art. However, as with most young aspiring artists, he wondered how he would make a living while perfecting his talent.

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“I went to work for National Airlines in ramp services — loading and unloading aircraft. This enabled me to work on my art in my free time without taking the job home with me,” he explained.

When National Airlines starting cutting back and laying off personnel in the Norfolk area in 1975 Healy was transferred to Washington and became an Alexandria resident in 1976. He and his wife Laraine were married in 1974. She remains in the airline industry as a pricing analyst for U.S.Air.

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Local Artist Portrays “Tradition”

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▼ See TRADITION on page 5

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PHOTO | GREG KNOTT

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Healy’s images adorn many custom items available in his gallery
TRADITION from page 4

National Airlines eventually merged with Pan American Airways and Healy left the airline business in 1982. He then went to work for Colonial Parking as Director of Safety and Claims. That’s when he decided to initiate his holiday calendar depicting the colonial charms of Old Town.

Healy works only in watercolor, starting with the original drawing of each residence or building. He also does hand coloring of limited edition prints.

Eventually he rented space in Gallery Lafayette, then owned and operated by Alyce Gambel, and became the gallery’s artist in residence. It was located on Duke Street in the carriage house of the Lafayette House — thus the name Lafayette Gallery.

Upon Gambel’s retirement in 1998, Healy bought the gallery which was then situated in its present location. He also expanded the framing element of the shop and added a wide variety of fine art gifts that include Christmas cards, holiday gift tags, ornaments, note cubes, trivets, serving trays, tote bags and much more.

“This is really three businesses in one. There is the art, the framing and our gift items, which, as well as being sold here, are wholesaled to other shops throughout the city,” Healy said. “In fact, we have the largest selection of Christmas Cards depicting Old Town in Alexandria.”

Gallery Lafayette specializes in “conservation framing.” Each piece uses UV glass, acid free backing and matting, and hand painted frame bevels, according to Healy. But it is the art within the frame that commands center stage in each Healy creation.

“I am an artist that does framing. I want people to concentrate on the art that is within the frame. I want the frame to blend — to enhance what is being framed. Many of our customers leave the decision on framing completely up to us. They just bring in the art and say frame it,” Healy said.

And, speaking of customers, the overwhelming majority are local residents. “They are the ones that have supported me. And, I am extremely grateful to them. Tourism has never really touched my business to any significant extent,” Healy emphasized.

“I love what I’ve done over the years. But, the last four years have been hard, primarily due to the economy,” he said.

That recession impact is exemplified by this season’s calendar sales, which retail for $19.95. Healy has sold them in bulk at a reduced price to local businesses such as the real estate firms and Burke and Herbert Bank for distribution to their customers. However, some are not buying this year due to a drop in their businesses, according to Healy.

“I’ve sold the calendar to Burke and Herbert for 15 years with no price increase in the bulk rate. Then three years ago, with my production costs continuing to increase, I called them and said I’d have to raise the discounted bulk price by 25 cents a unit. They said they had decided to go “dirtier and cheaper,” Healy said. “In my opinion they were successful.”

However, after 35 years of following his artistic dream, the enthusiasm and dedication about that dream have not diminished. Plus, it has spread to his daughter Lauren Katherine, who also studied art and is now the fashion editor for Belle magazine in Richmond, VA.

“My art work is inspired by the sense of home and community that I discovered when I found my muse in this historic city,” he said.

“My hours of effort honor the significant contributions of the craftsmen who built and made Alexandria a very special place to live and work then and now. Tradition, tradition, tradition — that’s how I see it,” Healy proclaimed.
Alexandria Readies to Ring in First Night

First it was TV megahits Glee and The Office...now First Night Alexandria is part of the nationwide a capella craze! The harmonies of two a capella ensembles are part of the colorful line-up of more than 100 live performances throughout Old Town Alexandria for First Night's annual New Year's Eve bash — professional a capella ensemble Musikanten and the popular College of William & Mary Stairwells. The Stairwells will usher in the New Year just prior to the fireworks finale.

Swing, Argentinean tango, Cajun, Russian folk, rock, blues, jazz, even a comedy magic show and entertainment for kids, are just some of the acts that can be found at 17 indoor venues throughout Old Town. With these performances, plus interactive kid’s activities and the all-ages, brain-teasing Fun Hunt, First Night Alexandria is the largest family-friendly and alcohol-free New Year’s Eve event in the region.

Your ticket for the event is a First Night badge which gives you access to entertainment and activities at spots all around Old Town. This year’s First Night headquarters is the Durant Arts Center, 1605 Cameron Street, just blocks from King Street Metro Station.

Starting at 7 p.m., with your First Night badge and schedule in hand, stroll Alexandria’s charming historic streets among venues, or hop on and off the free King Street Trolley to catch your favorite acts. Check out fabulous entertainment at venues including the Torpedo Factory Art Center, the Little Theatre of Alexandria, historic Christ Church, and the Lyceum. Museums, public buildings, and even retail shops are turned into performance venues to showcase incredible regional and national talent. Make a night of it!

IF YOU’RE GOING ...

WHAT: First Night Alexandria

WHEN: December 31, 2010

Second Annual Fun Hunt: 1 p.m. to 4:30 p.m.
Kick-off Event at Durant Arts Center: 5 p.m.
100 Live Performances throughout Old Town:
7 p.m. to 11:30 p.m.
Multimedia Fireworks Finale at George Washington Masonic Memorial: 12 midnight

WHERE: Headquarters: Durant Arts Center
1605 Cameron St., Alexandria, VA 22314
Event: Throughout Old Town

INFO: www.FirstNightAlexandria.org; 703-746-3301

TICKETS: $15 before December 21; $20 after. Children 12 and under are free. Admission badges may be purchased online through December 25. Badges can be purchased in person at the Alexandria Visitors Center at Ramsay House, 221 King Street. On December 31, all First Night venues will have badges for sale beginning 15 minutes prior to the first performance. Admission badges will also be available beginning at noon on December 31 at the Durant Arts Center, 1605 Cameron Street.

First Night Alexandria began in 1994 as a celebration of the New Year through the performing arts. Coffee shops, retail stores, hotels, museums and public buildings are turned into performance venues to showcase a variety of talent. First Night celebrations take place around the world and the event was founded in 1976 by a group of civic-minded artists in Boston as a meaningful alternative to traditional New Year’s Eve revelry. To learn more, visit www.FirstNightAlexandria.org.
with dinner at one of Old Town’s acclaimed restaurants, or grab a bite to eat at designated First Night venues.

Award-winning acts include Al and Amy’s Celtic and Appalachian acoustic groove, as heard on the Emmy-winning Ken Burns documentary “The National Parks: America’s Best Idea”, Grammy-nominated Bill Kirchen’s roots rock and roll, and 2009 WAMA Best Jazz Recording winner Al Williams. QuinTango serenades with sounds from Argentina, and Russkie Musikanti will play Russian folk music that might be heard in the village after a long day’s work. The History of Acoustic Blues show includes authentic instruments from the 1920s and 1930s and is performed by Curtis Blues who was voted Solo Blues Artist of the Year.

Dance the night away with the irresistible swing dance band King Teddy plus country and honky-tonk by the Folsom Prisoners, Americana roots music by the Granddons, the Cajun tunes of Zydeco Crayz, and the lively sounds of the Irish Breakfast Band.

Delight in the a capella renaissance with the Stairwells’ mix of musical genres and holiday favorites, or the inspiring choral chamber sounds of professional a capella ensemble Musikanten.

This family-friendly event is chock full of activities for kids including face painting, moon bounce, clowns doing balloon sculptures, and interactive games. Try model boat building and sailing for an additional fee. Kids will also love the How-To Cowboy Joke Fest, sing-along and rhythm instruments with Mr. Don, and more. Alcohol-free venues keep it fun and accessible for all ages – and children under 12 are free!

New this year, First Night Alexandria’s New Year’s Eve midnight finale is exploding into a complete multimedia spectacular with videos, lasers, music AND fireworks. The city’s most visible monument, the George Washington Masonic Memorial, will be the focus, with pyrotechnics that explode from the roof of the building! Be sure to grab a seat on the memorial lawn for a great view and to hear an inspiring vocal performance by the College of William & Mary Stairwells.

For an extra adventure, start your New Year’s Eve fun in the afternoon with the Second Annual First Night Fun Hunt – which, by popular demand, has been made even more challenging this year! The scavenger-style hunt uses puzzles and clues to take teams to sites around Old Town and completed clue sheets are eligible to win great prizes. The Fun Hunt is not a timed event. Everyone that completes the hunt will be eligible for prizes. Winners must be present at the kick-off event at the Durant Arts Center at 5 p.m. to claim their prizes.

“First Night is a blast whether you are celebrating as a family, out with friends, or on a date,” says Charlotte Hall, First Night Alexandria board president and vice president of Potomac Riverboat Company. “No other ticket in town will get you a more fun variety of high caliber entertainment as you ring in the New Year.”

This year’s First Night has been made more green through a partnership with Dominion and Dominion Green Power which purchased renewable energy certificates on behalf of the event.
QUOTABLE:  
“Always borrow money from the elderly. They may die before you have to pay it back.” — Anonymous

LIFESTYLE

Lost in Suburbia

My Holiday Newsletter 2010

Dear Friends and Family,

I hope this first decade of the new millennium has been a good one for you! As the year comes to a close, it’s always nice to reflect on the things that made it special and memorable. Of course nothing can compare with just spending time with friends and family, whether it is as a guest at Buckingham Palace (really good tea!) or at the White House (saw their dog, Bo!).

This has been a good year for us. With two of our own teenagers in the house now, you never know what you can expect! Then of course there were those ten refuge teenagers we took in for a few months following that nasty pngmy mouse stampede in the Congo. It was quite chaotic here for a while, as you can imagine, but since our kids are fluent in ten different tribal languages, at least there was no language barrier! Boy, good things they did that African Language Immersion Pre-school!

We were fortunate to take some really memorable vacations this year. First stop was Alaska where we competed in the Iditarod and placed second! We would have won, but our sled dogs saw a squirrel and took off in the wrong direction! LOL! Still it was a lot of fun and it was really cool to be able to see Russia from our sled.

On the way home we went through Alberta, Canada to join an archaeological dig where we helped discover new species of dinosaurs. Don’t be surprised when you hear about the new Beckermanaurus!

The summer was pretty quiet. While the kids were off on a teen tour searching for the Lost Civilization of Lemuria (they found it!), the hubby and I went hunting for black truffles in Umbria, Italy. We brought back to our friend Wolfgang who was featuring them in a dish at his new restaurant. Wolfgang was so grateful, he named one of the dishes after us. So now we have a dinosaur and a pasta both named in our honor!

Things were a little slow at work for my husband this year with the economy being what it is, so he used his free time to work on several privately funded projects including invisibility, teleportation, and time travel. He hasn’t quite perfected the first two yet, but he is making great strides with the third! We will let you know how that’s going as soon as he gets back from 1963! By the way, if you watch that Zapruder film again, you might just catch a glimpse of him behind Kennedy’s motorcade!

Meanwhile back at home, I’ve been doing the usual… taking care of the family, writing, doing laundry. I did have a little incident in the kitchen trying to get a stain out of a shirt. While mixing a couple of ingredients together I accidentally invented a clean bio fuel that will make gasoline obsolete. Everyone seems to be pretty excited about this. I’m just happy because it also got the stain out!!

Oh, and if anyone is looking for a good murder mystery, we are trying to find some hours for a litter our dog, Riley gave birth to last month. Yes, Riley is the first dog ever to have kittens. Pretty amazing, especially when you consider that Riley is a male!

Best wishes for a wonderful holiday and New Year!

The Beckermans

Tracy Beckerman writes the syndicated humor column, Lost in Suburbia® and is the author of the book, “Rebel without a Minivan: Observations on life in the ‘burbs.” For more Lost in Suburbia, visit Tracy’s Blog at www.lostinsuburbia.net.

Letters to Dad

Just Another Naked Opportunity

As a senior in college, I’m already accustomed to my parent’s disappointment. It’s not easy to tell your parents you want to be a journalist, No, it’s about on par with telling them you’d like to change your major to philosophy. You get the same stark look of distress that flashes across their face when they envision you sucking their 401k dry in the coming years. I first experienced that look four years ago when I embarked for college, bound by my love of reporting, barrel-full-speed ahead to the School of Journalism and Electronic Media at the University of Tennessee. I knew this wouldn’t be the last time. I’d go against my parents’ wishes, but it wasn’t until a phone call three years later that I realized how much my ideals differed. “Dad, it’s me,” I said, over the celebratory music blasting in the background. “I’ve got some great news. I’m going to work for Playboy.”

My dad took the news better than my mother, a southern woman who spends her spare time singing in gospel choir. “I’ll call your aunt, I’m sure she can get you an internship somewhere else,” she pleaded. But it was too late, I’d already been bitten by the salty, unfail magazine that is Playboy.

The internship was part of the College of Communication and Information’s Alex Haley/Playboy Interview Scholarship, a fund established on behalf of the author, who conducted the first Playboy interview in 1963. As the recipient, I received $5,000 towards my tuition and a paid summer internship as an editorial assistant. Family friends, and even my dentist, scoffed when I told them about my summer plans, usually saying in a sarcastic tone, “Right, because people read it for the articles.” But the age-old mantra is quite believable if you’ve ever had a chance to flip through the publication. I worked with brilliant editors and had the opportunity to research materials for “Grown In the USA” about the economics of marijuana (much to my mother’s dismay) and “Playboy Honor Roll”, an insightful look at the country’s most innovative academias.

Playboy Enterprises’ headquarters is a mod, two-story workplace in a historic building on Chicago’s Lake Shore Drive. A golden bunny mounted on the wall and framed nude photographs greeted me on each morning, but despite provocative decorations, the editorial department was a typical office space with rows of cubicles and busy employees. It wasn’t until my last week of work that I actually encountered a naked woman. A stylist asked me to make a coffee and afterwards needed me to organize clothing and accessories for the shoot. I caught a half-hour of the shoot and even stood on the set (fully clothed) with a fan blowing my hair for a few embarrassing moments. Afterwards, I spent hours in the Playboy closet, arranging shoes by color and size; occasionally taking breaks to model fur coats and stilettos in the mirror. When I had finished, I returned to the editorial cubicles, beaming to my boss, “They let me organize the costume closet.” It wasn’t until she laughed at my use of the word “let” that I realized how important enthusiasm is for any job, however menial. They made me organize a closet, but completing the smallest tasks with feeling showed coworkers my willingness to learn. And surely that would make my parents proud.

Flora Theden is a senior journalism major at the University of Tennessee at Knoxville.

Bepper finds his way into the Christmas Tree box in Manchester, NH.

If you own a cat, you know they can’t resist climbing into boxes, and squeezing themselves in every which way. Next time it happens, snap a picture and send it to mary@zebramediasolutions.com. We’ll select one or two every month for our cat-loving readers.

Celebrating over 25 years

Old Town’s Favorite Country French Restaurant

The Refuge is located in a historic building on Chicago’s famous Lake Shore Drive. A golden bunny mounted on the wall and framed nude photographs greeted me on each morning, but despite provocative decorations, the editorial department was a typical office space with rows of cubicles and busy employees. It wasn’t until my last week of work that I actually encountered a naked woman. A stylist asked me to make a coffee and afterwards needed me to organize clothing and accessories for the shoot. I caught a half-hour of the shoot and even stood on the set (fully clothed) with a fan blowing my hair for a few embarrassing moments. Afterwards, I spent hours in the Playboy closet, arranging shoes by color and size; occasionally taking breaks to model fur coats and stilettos in the mirror. When I had finished, I returned to the editorial cubicles, beaming to my boss, “They let me organize the costume closet.” It wasn’t until she laughed at my use of the word “let” that I realized how important enthusiasm is for any job, however menial. They made me organize a closet, but completing the smallest tasks with feeling showed coworkers my willingness to learn. And surely that would make my parents proud.

Flora Theden is a senior journalism major at the University of Tennessee at Knoxville.
December 2010

On Watch

A Forgotten Hero

Marcus Fisk

On a recent outing, I was moved to tears. It was the evening of November 16. My course that evening took me past the Alexandria Recreation Center on Commonwealth Avenue and I stopped to look at the statue of Capt. Howard R. "Rocky" Versace, U.S. Army. It is a simple piece and beautiful in its simplicity. As a former Army brat and aspiring sculptor, I was struck that the piece depicting this Special Forces soldier, a prisoner who was ultimately executed by his Viet Cong captors and ultimately received the Medal of Honor is not in typical warrior garb. He is standing uncovered and talking with a little girl and a boy holding a ball. His hands are strong yet relaxed and his face holds his trademark peaceful smile.

Rocky spent part of his childhood growing up in Del Ray here in Alexandria. His father was an Army Colonel and his mother Terre was an accomplished author who would write a short story "The Fifteenth Pelican," the basis for "The Flying Nun." A West Point graduate, class of '59, he was a Special Forces advisor to the Vietnamese Army when he was captured in October 1963 during a six-month extension of his first tour in Vietnam. He was captured his last week in Vietnam and was going to leave the Army to become a Maryknoll missionary and work with orphans in Vietnam. His Viet Cong captors brutally tortured Versace, then Lt. James "Nick" Rowe and Sergeant Dan Pützer, attempting to extract propaganda from them. He resisted these efforts and provided no information other than what was required by the Geneva Conventions. He cited the treaty from memory again and again. Four times he attempted escape, the first time crawling due to his leg wounds. Fluent in French and Vietnamese, he would, as Rowe put it, "give the Vietnamese hell in three different languages." Throughout his captivity, Rocky Versace assumed the leadership mantle and agitated his captors so that he could deflect their horrors on himself and spare his fellow POWs.

The last time Rowe saw Versace he was singing "God Bless America" at the top of his lungs. But the thing he remembered most about Rocky Versace however was his wonderful smile. He wrote about a moment when Rocky was standing in a little Vietnamese village surrounded by laughing children. Rowe said he had his hands out to the children looking up at him, smiled and said, "Aren’t these wonderful people?"

Veterans Day is now ‘passed and opening’ by the time you read this. On November 16, 2010 in a White House ceremony Staff Sgt. Salvatore Giunta U.S. Army was awarded the Medal of Honor. Following the moving ceremony surrounded by family, the who’s who of the military, and fellow soldiers, this young man was interviewed in the news media and demonstrated the genetic humility, focus on family, and fierce loyalty to his fellow soldiers that is the common thread found in all Medal of Honor recipients. SSgt Giunta is very essence of the American warrior and possesses that rare moral character that we cherish and admire. He and Rocky Versace are cut of the same bolt of American cloth and both wore the cloth of their nation.

Throughout his captivity, Versace was cited the treaty from memory in three different languages. "Put it, ‘give the Vietnamese hell’ in three different languages.”

I was moved to tears. It might happen to you, too.

Marcus Fisk is a retired Navy Captain, Naval Academy graduate, sometime actor, sculptor, pick up soccer player, and playwright. He and his wife Pamela live in Alexandria.
Kabbalah is a word that has been heard a lot lately, but what is it? The word means “the received tradition” and it is a mystical interpretation of the Bible’s Old Testament or Torah that is as ancient as Judaism itself. It is the theology of the Jewish people and deals with the way Jews understand God, the world, and what God wants from human beings. Kabbalah is not one particular book, and was an oral tradition for much of its history.

Kabbalah Healing is an alternative to psychotherapy that uses a model of the human psyche that is derived from Kabbalah, Jewish Mysticism that has been used for centuries for achieving wholeness. It is a transformational process that teaches us that we are whole in our brokenness and allows us to love and respect our true self. It is appropriate to issues that would bring one to counseling, including relationship difficulties and self-esteem issues. It also addresses the mind body connection.

Sessions can be in person or over the phone. Call 703-521-4898.

Kabbalah supposedly contains a blueprint for the universe and a kind of map depicting the forces of creation as well as an explanation of the relationship between human beings and everything else in the universe. When we complain that life does not come with an instruction book, the Kabbalists would say take another look because the study of Kabbalah is just such a book. Additionally, its study provides a guide for daily living and self-knowledge.

The basic symbol of Kabbalah is the Tree of Life. It is a picture of the characteristics of the human psyche that is said to reflect the characteristics of the God consciousness. Many believe the Tree of Life is the picture of how human beings are thought to be created in the image of God.

Kabbalistic thought frees humans from either/or and good/bad ways of thinking. Passing emotions are put into perspective. Similar to Buddhist thought, light and dark feelings are both allowed to exist, and the lessons of both are embraced. One can discover their true self in this way, and learn to love and respect that self. Jews and others have used these principles for centuries for self-discovery, healing, and wholeness. Kabbalistic self-discovery does not deal with pathology or illness, but rather is a question of balancing the characteristics of the Tree of Life.

Kabbalah was the Sefer Yetzirah or the book of creation. The timing is not known but many believe it was composed somewhere between the third and sixth centuries. Kabbalah study was quiet until the twelfth century in Provence. It then spread to Spain where it had a great Renaissance during the golden age of Spanish Jewry in 1280, the Zohar, the seminal work of Kabbalah was written. It teaches that everything in the universe is connected and that creation is an ongoing process. The Kabbalistic creation myth sounds a lot “the big bang” theory of creation. After the crisis, the inquisition and the expulsion of the Jews from Spain caused the study of Kabbalah to go underground again.

It resurfaced in the Galilee town of Safed where Isaac Luria, the father of modern Kabbalah, shaped it form into the future. In the late 1960’s anti-Semitism balloononed and the study of Kabbalah went underground again until another resurgence in the last 20 years. The secret or esoteric level of Kabbalah supposedly contains a

Allegedly Jesus was very precocious, and was teaching when he was a boy of twelve. Because he did not meet the established qualifications for Kabbalistic studies, many in the Kabbalistic hierarchy may have been upset that a twelve-year-old boy, even Jesus was teaching Kabbalah. An early written version of Kabbalah was the Sefer Yetzirah or the book of creation. The timing is not known but many believe it was composed somewhere between the third and sixth centuries. Kabbalah was the Sefer Yetzirah or the book of creation.

Kabbalah is a guide for daily living and self-discovery. Anne Alden is a practitioner of Integrated Kabbalistic Healing. She is committed to bringing Kabbalistic healing into the world, and helping others achieve the freedom that she has experienced. She can be reached at 703 521 4898.
Q: I have an antique mantel clock that belonged to my mother. I have it on the mantel in the living room, and it keeps good time except the chime is off. It always strikes the wrong number. No matter what I try, it’s not right.

A: This is a common problem with older clocks and even new ones. I am going to assume when you say the “wrong number,” you mean the time showing on the dial is different than the number of strikes produced by the clock movement. In most cases, this is a very easy fix. So easy that sometimes this simple fix is hard to understand. The “HOUR” hand is not positioned to the correct location.

If, for example, your clock strikes 4 and the time on the dial says 8, move ONLY the hour hand from 4 to 8. The hour hand is always at 6, and that it just hanges there. This is because the hand has moved to the small end of the taper and is not fitting at all. Use the same fix: first move the minute hand to the hour and allow the clock to strike. However many times it strikes is where you should position the hour hand. Then set the clock to the correct time using the minute hand.

Q: I have an old clock, and I was wondering what it might be worth. It’s been in the family forever.

A: Wow! I get this question all the time. “Tell me what my clock is worth.”

From the photo, I can only say this appears to be what is called a “black mantel clock” circa 1890. During the Victorian Age, life was good and Americans were buying all the latest goods. This clock is a copy of a French clock that was made of black marble or black onyx. The clock you have is American, and it looks to be made of painted steel. These clocks were also made of painted wood. I can tell it’s American because of the distance between key holes in relationship to the center post.

The French version has these holes closer together. Just as today, there are many products that look the same, but have different levels of quality. In 1890, if one was to walk into a clock shop, the French clock would be selling for about $15.00, while the American version would list for $3.50. From a short distance, to the untrained eye, these clocks were the same in look and function. Therefore, lots of American clocks were sold. As to the current value of your clock, if you were to walk into an antique shop and found this clock in perfect running condition, I would expect it to have a price tag of at least $800.00.

Christmas Concert an Overwhelming Success!

Bishop Ireton’s Wind Ensemble, Choir, and Concert Band, along with special guests, the USAF Band’s Brass Quintet and the Seika Girls High School Band, performed to a packed house in the Auditorium on Sunday, December 12. Special guests included the Ambassador of Japan in the U.S., ichiro Fujisaki and wife Yoko, as well as Air Attaché Yoshinori Ogi and his wife Eri, the Deputy Director Japan Information and Culture Center Mayu Hagiwara, and Embassy of Japan Counselor Nakamura Kimitake.

Special thanks to the Conductors of the five groups: Yoshihisa Fujisige and Noriko Sakumuchi, Col. Arnold D. Gabriel, Barry Ward, Christen Reddig, and Dr. Randall Eyles. Also present were Principal Mineo Kunikazu of the Seika Girls High School and Bl Principal Tim Hamer.

DID YOU KNOW?

Do you buy ice cream? Have you ever had whipped cream on your ice cream?

Desperate for a sweet topping for an unexpected cherry pie she was given, and wanting to avoid a long grocery store line, a staffer stopped at Baskin Robbins to see if she could purchase just enough whipped cream to fill a medium-sized ice cream cup.

To her amazement, the pink-hatted clerk quickly retrieved a 1.5 oz can of ice-cold, real whipped light cream for $4.99!

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11
T A K E  A  W A L K  O N  T H E  S A N E  S I D E  O F  H O L I D A Y  S H O P P I N G

By Chuck Magee

H

ad enough of the seasonal madness known as The Mall Crunch? How about some relaxing shopping, where there are items not found in the sardine shopping tubes and where merchant’s actually know their merchandise? Then think small not mall.

Small as in small shops — not big box stores or mega malls. There are excellent possibilities in the Hollin Hall and Belle View shopping centers of Mount Vernon District as well as throughout Alexandria — Old Town, Del Ray and the West End.

Kevin Green, owner of THE VIRGINIA FLORIST, recently opened a new shop in the Hollin Hall Shopping Center at 7908 Fort Hunt Road. His original shop remains in the Belle View Shopping Center off Belle View Blvd.

Located next to The Variety Store, in space once occupied by The Blossom Shop, the new Virginia Florist shop offers a wide variety of one-of-a-kind gifts such as the Wesson music boxes. Each has a miniature, mechanized holiday/winter scene inside a small model of a 1950’s TV with rabbit ears on top. Just switch on the vintage-style television and watch the scene come to life. It also has a volume control to raise and lower the holiday tune being played. The price is $239.

Another possibility at the Hollin Hall Virginia Florist, for someone who is really in the spending mode, is a 1920’s model of a square rigged sailing ship that is detailed from stem to stern. It’s cost is $4,995. For the less extravagant, there is an array of Sofia & Chloe gold necklaces and bracelets.

In Green’s original store at 1632 Belle View Blvd., which this year features an actual antique sleigh from upstate New York in the window, there is the model of an 1880’s steamboat, plank-on-frame pond yacht priced at $2,995.

For something more ornate, there is a varied selection of Faberge-like goose egg creations. Some serve as ring and necklace boxes. Others present a delicate scene when the egg opens. Some also serve as music boxes. They sell in the $100 plus price range.

A most unique offering this year are the Lafco soaps and candles. A European creation, the soap is reported to be unusually smooth. Both items have been endorsed by Oprah Winfrey and featured on her television show.

As always, the shop offers a wide array of vintage framed maps of Mount Vernon area, art depicting various historic sites in Northern Virginia, and other items that appeal to discriminating shoppers who are searching for that certain, individualized something. Bring a florist shop, there are also flowers — usual and unusual — arranged and/ or boxed, at both shops.

At the other end of The Belle View Shopping Center, 1520 Belle View Blvd., is HODGES GALLERIES which specializes in art restoration and framing while offering an eclectic array of gifts. The art work ranges in price from $45 to $850 and framing is available for pickup right up to a few days before Christmas.

Some of the most intriguing items on display are tiny porcelain boxes portraying a variety of items and animals. Each has a “surprise inside” according to the display label. They sell for $8 each.

For those who want to give or preserve cookies for Christmas there are figurine cookie jars in the form of a “cowboy” dog and Scottish piper for $45. And, for a mental challenge how about a jigsaw puzzle at $16 — there’s a variety from which to choose.

This is one shop where the buyer must spend some time looking at the myriad items on display. There are antique tree ornaments, carved wooden conversation pieces that stand over five feet tall, toys, animal carvings, and other possibilities too numerous to mention.

After the shopping there is usually the chance of wrapping Will. THE VARIETY STORE, 7902 Ft. Hunt Road, in Hollin Hall Shopping Center can solve that as well as having the gift container serve as an additional gift itself — a decorated gift box.

These keepsakes come in various sizes each decorated with scenes of Christmas and winter wonderland. They are fully decorated inside and out in both one and two dimensional art. Priced from $2.99 to $11 each require only a gift inside and possibly a ribbon, optional of course, to make them under-the-tree ready.

And, that’s not all to be found in this long standing emporium that lives up to its name not only during the holiday season but year round. There are decorated bags, wrapping paper, ribbons, stocking stuffers, toys, outdoor and indoor decorations and supplies, and all the other necessities needed by Santa and Mrs. Claus prior to the big night.

The Variety Store has physically expanded this year by combining many of the items previously featured in the now closed Gift Store. Those more upscale and personalized offerings can be found in this expanded area.

Alexandria offers the avid shopper a limitless wealth of choices.
SPECIALTY SHOPS for every age group and taste abound throughout the city.

What better place to start Christmas shopping than in THE CHRISTMAS ATTIC at 125 S. Union St. In addition to the annual White House Ornament this year owner Fay Carter is offering a special gingerbread house assortment of ornaments that are based on the tree or as a separate table display.

Each one is designed to hold a small light so that when arranged they make a nautical, Alpine village priced at $17.95. There is also a special, limited addition holiday ornament made in North Mountain for $16.95. Plus the Christmas Attic is packed with a myriad Christmas decorations on two floors. A block closer to King Street on the opposite side of the street at 104 S. Union St is THE VIRGINIA SHOP. It is filled with Virginia peanuts, foods, wines as well as assorted gifts and local souvenirs. Check out the colonial ginger jars on the mangle — Virginia, Maryland and Alexandria in both large and small sizes.

At the corner of King and South Lee streets are two shops that offer gifts for both adults and children that are nearly impossible to duplicate in the entire metro area. For children and their unique gifts is WHY NOT at 200 King St. On the opposite corner, 132 South Lee St is 13TH STREET TOYS, Inc., one of Why Not’s real fun toys is Puppets at Why Not.

As the name states, the shop specializes in puppets, many of them hand-made. They can be purchased in a wide range of sizes from a 6” hand puppet to a life-size 6’ puppet. The puppet master, Tammy St Pierre, states, “They are the delight of “children” of all sizes, for the season there is a collection of handmade nativity scenes from around the world priced from $12 to $700. Some are signed by the artist.

Speaking of one-of-a-kind nativity scenes, there is a collectors dream selection at TEN THOUSAND VILLAGES, 915 King St. Thin most unusual shop is a “Fair Trade” enterprise managed by Kate McMahon. Every item is hand crafted by artisans in the world’s nations enabling them to tell their stories while making a livable income.

This year McMahon is doing an “ornament club.” Anyone who buys 10 ornaments gets one free. Nativity aficionados can find creations in all mediums of artisans from North America to Bali. Across the street is THE PURPLE GOOSE at 2005 Mt Vernon Avenue, a unique children’s boutique. The store features a wide variety of children’s clothing, gifts, and stuffed animals.

At 2205 Mt Vernon Avenue is KIRKLAND’s — a women’s apparel shop. It has a wide selection of holiday women’s apparel from $60 up with complimentary jewelry priced from $10 to $200. The jewelry is designed by local artisans as well as those from New York and Los Angeles, according to co-owner Darby Rush.

And finally, as well as most fitting for this recession holiday season, are the offerings of Christopher St Pierre at his shop, AUTHENTICALLY AMISH, in the Fox Chase Shopping Center, 6409 Duke St, Alexandria. The selections are both beautiful and lasting. “Something that can be passed on from one generation to the next,” St Pierre states.

His inventory includes a wide selection of wooden toys from a $30 to $100, children’s furniture such as a $999 high chair for $300, a wooden rocking home which serves as a three-in-one combo of horse, desk and high chair for $290; regular rocking chairs from $120 to $160, and a wide variety of smaller gift items such as table runners. Across the street are several wooden items are handmade in Lancaster County, PA, home to the eastern U.S. Amish population. The craftsmanship, quality and beauty of these products are renowned throughout the world.

The true joy of Christmas, as can be attested to by the story of the first Christmas, is in the giving not in the receiving. And, that special something can be found only in special places.

KEY FOR GIFT PHOTOS

1. Fabergé eggs
2. Lego trains
3. Miniature porcelain boxes
4. Cowboy dog cookie jar
5. Wooden rocking schoolhouse
6. Model motorboat and race car set
7. Decorated boxes
8. Child party outfit
9. Holiday wine at Christmas Attic
10. Special Gingerbread ornaments
11. 2010 White House ornament

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THE ZEUNER

庆祝这个节日季节和Alexandria的历史与最新的收藏品

 furnishings from the Office of Historic Alexandria! The year's commemorative ornament depicts historic Carlyle House in a festive and wintery setting. This stunning ornament features an etched brass-finish design of the mansion decorated with a wreath and surrounded by a fresh snowfall. Each ornament costs $16 and comes in an embroidered gift box.

The ornaments will make memorable gifts for family and friends this holiday. Order your 2010 ornament online or stop by Gadshy's Tavern Museum, Carlyle House Historic Park, the Historic Alexandria History Center and Museum Store, or another Historic Alexandria museum gift shop. For more information, please call 703.746.4242 or visit www. historicalexandria.org.

The Carlyle House mansion was completed in 1753 by British merchant John Carlyle for his young bride, Sarah Fairfax. Their home quickly became a center of social and political life in Alexandria and gained a foothold in history when British General Edward Braddock made the mansion his headquarters in 1755. Braddock summoned five colonial governors to meet there to plan the early campaigns of the French and Indian War. Restored in 1976 during the Bicentennial celebrations, the house is owned and operated as a museum by the Northern Virginia Regional Park Authority.

Carlyle House Historic Park is located at 121 North Fairfax Street in Old Town Alexandria, and is open during the winter Tuesday through Saturday, from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m., and Sundays, noon to 4 p.m. For more information about Carlyle House, please visit carlylehousedc.org or call 703.549.2997.

Carlyle House Collectible Ornament on Sale in Museum Gift Shops, Online
In this time of economic turmoil and uncertainty what better way to celebrate the holidays than returning to a era when the guiding principles of this nation set a new course for the world. That can be achieved with gifts from The Shops at Mount Vernon at the southern terminus of the George Washington Memorial Parkway.

This Christmas season is a particularly appropriate one to find that special something which is available nowhere else but at The Shops. 2010 marks the 150th Anniversary of the restoration and opening of George Washington’s beloved estate by the Mount Vernon Ladies’ Association.

To commemorate that momentous journey and accomplishment, initiated and led by Ann Pamela Cunningham, a new hardcover 192 page volume is available at THE SHOPs for $26.95. Beautifully bound with a blue linen cover and gold-edged pages, it contains 400 illustrations and traces the compelling story of Mount Vernon’s resuscitation from death due to neglect and indifference.

Edited by Stephen A. McLeod, it contains scholarly essays, detailed sidebars, and narrative captions as well as biographical sketches of the Association’s leading ladies, Regents and Vice Regents, whose personalities and endeavors have shaped the meticulous restoration. And, as a tangible example of the most recent election season’s philosophy, it has all been accomplished without one penny of government money — state or federal.

Another tribute to this anniversary, that would be a keepsake for any recipient, is the 2010 MOUNT VERNON ORNAMENT. One side is the Mount Vernon Mansion as Cunningham took possession in 1860 — a collapsing hulk of rotting wood and abandonment. On the opposite side is today’s restored edifice that has hosted more than 80 million visitors as “the nation’s most visited and iconic historic home.”

The two oval portraits of the Mansion are surrounded by a gold sculpted border that denotes the 150 year preservation effort. Also included is a detailed history of the Association’s beginnings, a portrait of Cunningham, and a group picture of the original gathering of the Ladies on Mansion’s piazza, where their initiative started the preservation movement throughout the United States. It sells for $18.95.

But, the Founding Fathers and colonial patriots, including The General, were never about all work and no play. In their homes and battlefield camps, as well as throughout the deliberations in Philadelphia they enjoyed both whiskey and beer to ease the tension of the impending revolution.

Recognizing each of the preferences of Washington, Jefferson and Franklin for a particular beer, the Yards Brewing Company of Philadelphia, in conjunction with Mount Vernon Estate, has created ALES OF THE REVOLUTION. At $3 per bottle, these would make a unique gift for beer lovers.

Each ale is an historic recreation based on the original recipes of the three founding fathers. Thomas Jefferson’s Tavern Ale “is a strong golden ale which includes ingredients specified and grown on his Virginia estate,” then brewed by his wife.

Poor Richard’s Tavern Spruce Ale is based on Franklin’s original recipe “which included spruce essence and molasses.” It was created by Yards in recognition of Franklin’s 300th birthday this year and his “affinity for fine ales.”

Washington’s favorite ale is based on his admiration for Philadelphia style porters and the necessity to quench the thirst of his field officers, according to Yards. His recipe called for a molasses-based ale All three can be purchased separately or in a six pack.

Other taste treats in the food and beverage section of The Shops include various jams, wines, nuts, and beverage section of The Shops.

Unique Gifts Of America’s Past

Unique gifts from The Shops at Mount Vernon

With its own exclusive holiday label depicting The Mansion and portraits of George and Martha. A “grape wine with natural spices added,” it is bottled and sold by North Mountain Vineyard & Winery, Maurertown, VA, especially for Mount Vernon. It is good either room temperature or heated, according to Julia Mosley, retail director, Mount Vernon Estate & Gardens.

The second is the first offering of a full bottle of UNAGED RYE WHISKEY distilled in Washington’s restored distillery. “It took more than a month to distill this lot for The Shops and there are only 672 bottles available,” Mosley said. Each sells for $85.

The original batch of 471 bottles was introduced on July 4 at The Distillery using Washington’s recipe. Being unaged, it differs from rye whiskey found in liquor stores in that it is clear. It is twice distilled and bottled at 43 percent alcohol. Each 375ml bottle is sealed and labeled by hand with its own number to distinguish it from every other bottle.

A sale product of this process are WOODEN “BUng” ORNAMENTS on sale in The Shops for $6.95 and $8.95 each. The former is in the shape of a barrel and the latter in the shape of a bottle which carries the rye whiskey label. As described, “a bung is a wooden stopper that is placed in the barrel when it is filled. It is extracted after the aging process when the barrel is emptied.”

For avid readers on the Christmas list there is a wide array of historical treats. Two new offerings this season are author Ron Chernow’s WASHINGTON: A LIFE and Richard Beeman’s PLAIN HONEST MEN: THE MAKING OF THE AMERICAN CONSTITUTION.

Beeman is a University of Pennsylvania professor, was awarded the 2010 George Washington Book Prize, one of the world’s most generous literary awards at $50,000, for his detailed account of the Constitutional Convention. “It has been praised by critics as the fullest and most authentic account of the Constitutional Convention ever written.”

Chernow’s 904 page work is priced at $40 and Beeman’s award winner sells for $30. The other finalist in this year’s GW Book Prize competition — Richard Bernstein’s THE FOUNDING FATHERS RECONSIDERED and Edith B Gellner’s “Abigail and John, Portrait of a Marriage” — are also available.

For the high rollers there is a wide selection of antique jewelry including a $8,500 DIAMOND NECKLACE made of 18 ct. white gold that contains a total of 196 diamonds for a total of five ct.; a $5,000 18 CT YELLOW GOLD PENDANT with a carved blue lapis and diamonds that can serve as a pin or a necklace; and a $4,500 PEARL, PLATINUM, DIAMOND AND ONYX PENDANT. Or, how about a $250...
Do you want to find unique, artistic gifts for those on your gift list? Try shopping at the area’s many craft shows.

My friend Dan is impossible to shop for. He has several of everything. Long ago, I despared of finding something for him, until I discovered craft shows. I have successfully found gifts that he really liked. If you have a “Dan” in your life, check out these fun and interesting shows.

You will be amazed at the number of creative, artistic items that you can find and there. You can find wearable items such as jewelry, scarves, clothing, and leather goods. You can find decorative items such as furniture and other wooden items, decorated boxes, dried flower arrangements, linens, ornaments, art glass, photographs, and paintings. Sculpture, cards and stationary, pottery and much more.

There are many kinds of shows. There are shows that sell high-end items by professional artists from all over the world. These shows are usually held in convention centers, museums or other large public venues. There are shows that specialize in local artists whose items range from fine art to very creative amateur offerings. These shows are held in schools and community centers. Many local shows are benefits and by shopping there, you are helping good causes.

All high-end shows are juried, and many local shows are too. To get really handcrafted unique items, stay away from shows that allow items that are not made by the vendors involved. Some shows allow items that are purchased by the vendor and rebranded. Often these items are mass-produced overseas and are of poor quality. Shows produced by organizations such as the Northern Virginia Handcrafters Guild have crafter-only rules. One can call the show promoters to find the answer to this question.

Many shows have food available, but be sure to check first. At large shows, crafters usually take credit cards. At smaller shows, I recommend that you bring cash or checks. Most shows occur in the fall, but there are shows all year around. If you have any artistic skills that you might like to turn into a business, consider becoming a crafter at shows. It is fun and satisfying to create beautiful things that others enjoy and even pay you for. There are guilds of crafters that are all inclusive and generalized and some that are organized around specific crafts. Attend several shows of various kinds to get an idea of price points and booth set up. Most crafters are very generous and will guide you.

Craft Shows Are Great for Holiday Shopping

QUOTABLE:
“I love getting married, but then they want to come in the house.” — Shelley Winters

The Zebra

December 2010

Mathew Allen

HISTORIC GIFTS from page 14

ANN HANDEL FRENCH SILK SCARF
This paisley homage to Washington and Marquis de Lafayette. It comes in red, dark blue and black. Maybe one of each! Art lovers will find works in a variety of mediums and tastes. Prominent this year is a 12 by 20 inch, ready to frame and hang. PRINT OF MOUNT VERNON ESTATE IN 1857 by artist Eastman Johnson. It has been “carefully reproduced on canvas and hand-mounted on wooden stretcher in gallery-wrap style.” Its price is $39.95. There is a smaller size for $19.50.

Finally, there are fun and teaching gifts for those Christmas is really all about — children. A new smaller size for $19.50. In addition to shopping, time spent at Mount Vernon features the Estate’s annual Christmas program, “Bringing Them Home — both with a variety of offerings.

The Zebra

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Constant Country French

There are only five numbers stored in my BlackBerry — my parents, sister, niece, mancunian and Le Buffle, hence its importance. Established in 1983 by Jean Francois and his wife, Francoise, I first discovered it in 1988, and without apology, it is perhaps one of the most enduring and dependable relationships I have known. If the restaurant served breakfast, I would be there.

Situated on Washington Street across from Christ Church, the enchanting entrance, topped with a burgundy awning and flanked by handwoven chalkboard listing today’s specials, is the quintessential local country French bistro, a place you would find if you just walked around the corner from your Paris flat. Cascading seasonal surroundings welcome you inside to an intimate private dining room with iconic French culinary images stacking the walls — wine posters, wooden cheese wheels, vintage plates — creating an atmosphere of casual elegance and unpretentious, relaxed simplicity. Francoise’ daughter, Anne Claire, orchestrates the front of the house with absolute aplomb, and dishes are delivered to the table as if in a measure. There is no waiting. You are immediately eating, drinking and sipping up. A la Julita Child, the succulent sauces with crusty French baguettes. Offering a full bar and extensive wine list, I tend to gravitate to the house cocktail of champagne, peach schnapps and a single splurge raspberry, which I reserve until the last sip.

Appetizers comprise the best dinner party in town. Take a group, order a bunch of hors d’oeuvres, and circulate the plates. From homemade country pate of Old town, with sophistication New American cuisine and sensational bar. Excellent brunch featuring delectably delicious hush puppies.

If you want to be listed in our Dining Directory, Call us at 703-919-7533 or email dining@ezbramediasolutions.com.
I am quietly walking about the clay floors of a two hundred year old Spanish cellar. Natural light silently and unobtrusively streams through the repoussoir of small carved square windows fifty feet above me. The soaring ceiling is a series of barred arches supported by tall columns. My Catholic sensibilities overwhelm me and I feel the balm of a Cathedral around me. The Bodega’s casks (called “butts”) diffuse the intoxicating aroma of the Sherry they hold like the incense of Benediction; stacked rows of butts now take on the illusion of rows of pews.

In my spiritual trance, my eyes suddenly fall across a scene that baffles me – yet, seems so natural in this setting. In the middle of this quiet bodega – in the dim and cool air, a single candle flickers before a carved statue of Mary. Regally sitting upon a stack of three lone barrels bearing the gold-leaved words, Ave Maria Gratia Plena, Saint Mary is serenely presiding over her beloved children - thousands of barrels of Sherry aging patiently and awaiting their glorious birth.

Along with a handful of other journalists, I was traveling to the far reaches of Jerez, Spain to learn about the region and her wine. Her wine is Sherry. In my mind, it was the wine that time forgot. Sherry is the wine sipped at noon by a few wise Southern women. (Please remember not to let your guests drink and drive.)

But, I knew little about this area of Spain and even less about Sherry. In religious terms, I am a Sherry agnostic – bordering on atheism. I traveled to southernmost part of the Iberian Peninsula (just across from Morocco) merely for the wine producing area of Jerez (aka Cadiz). Within Cadiz is the lost city of Atlantis is thought to be off the coast of Jerez.

Like most religious, Sherry has her fanatics. I met the first right off the plane waiting for my luggage: “The Passionate Foodie,” a fellow journalist specializing less specifically in wine and more generally in all things gourmet - particularly in wine and more specifically in wine and less generally in all things gourmet.

Sherry-loving English.”

The Passionate Foodie spoke passionately about Sherry-her Palo Cortados, Amontillados, Finos, and Pedro Ximénez. “You now know more about Sherry than 99% of the world. Let’s keep going.”

Hail Sherry, Full of Grace

CVI

MARI STULL

Hail Sherry, Full of Grace

In 1587, Sir Francis Drake invaded Jerez in the 7th century and renamed it “Seris” - hence, the name Sherry.

I left a convert. And this is my new personal story of conversion.

Can I Get an AMEN!

Like most religious, Sherry has her fanatics. I met the first right off the plane waiting for my luggage: “The Passionate Foodie,” a fellow journalist specializing less specifically in wine and more generally in all things gourmet and decadent, immediately began peppering me with the history of Sherry and Jerez -

The lost city of Atlantis is thought to be off the coast of Jerez.

Cadiz, a seaport city in the Jerez region, is thought to be the most ancient existing city in Europe.

The Moors (Musulmans from North Africa) invaded Jerez in the 7th century and renamed it “Seris” - hence, the name Sherry.

The first bodega we visited was the famous Harvey’s - as in Harvey’s Bristol Cream. I already thought the name was unfortunate and misleading. A “cream” Sherry should be the consistency of Butterscotch, right? Wrong. “Cream” actually refers to a blend of different Sherry wines which make a unique “house style” of Sherry. Harvey’s was the innovator of both the technique and the term “cream.” Harvey’s Bristol Cream is a proprietary blend of three Sherry types — Fino, Amontillado and Oloroso, all created from the Palomino grape. Additional Sherry made from the sweeter Pedro Ximénenez grape is then added to the final blend or cream. Huh. And I’d just been toasting into my Lobster Thereminis this whole time…

And after i toasted my Harvey’s Bristol Cream into my Lobster Theremin, I would take a sip. And I was never wholly impressed. I was about to find out why.

We were served our Cream Sherry in highball glasses, over ice, and with a slice of orange. Another “huh” from me. Ever have a sip of warm Champagne? Doesn’t matter if it’s ’98 Krug, warm Champagne simply won’t offer the same enjoyment as it does chilled. I was committing the same foul error with Sherry - sipping it at room temperature. Sherry is meant to be sipped chilled. A properly cooled Sherry makes all the difference.

I took my first taste of Harvey’s Bristol Cream on the rocks. Almonds, fig and raisins filled my mouth. Are you kidding? This deep, mysterious palate is what I’ve been missing? If Cream Sherry is typically the starting point of Sherry, what about the more complex and sophisticated Sherries? It was at this point, dipping my highball glass of Cream Sherry, that I was determined learn more about this elusive character.

Generous

Sherry is one of the most difficult, complex, and mystifying wines produced. To understand its nuances and utterly unique character, it’s important to appreciate how she’s made and from where she hails.

In the southwest corner of Andalucia, Spain lies a province called Cadiz. Within Cadiz is the Sherry producing area of Jerez (aka Xérèz or Sherry). Just three grapes are grown in this region to produce every type of Sherry – Palomino, Pedro Ximénez, and Moscatel. The majority of Sherry is made from Palomino grapes. Aside from Cream Sherry, in order or complexity and genuineness, the other types of Sherry are:

1 ½ cups cranberry juice cocktail
3 ½ oz cans pineapple juice
3 oz juice

Stir to redistribute alcohol and pour into glasses filled with crushed ice.
So, only three grapes make nine different types of Sherry. This fact alone is rather amazing to a wine-OH like myself. But, even more intriguing and extraordinary is Sherry’s very unique and long journey to her bottle. It’s a time consuming (minimum three years to over a century), hand-crafted and utterly remarkable process that’s as mysterious as it is romantic.

Once the wine grapes are harvested and pressed, the first juice is quickly fermented in steel vats. After this first fermentation, the wine is transferred into barrels or “butts” (by law, these butts must be American Oak). And here is where the mystery and romance of Sherry begins...  

**Mystical Transformation**

The winemaker fills each butt about 85% capacity, leaving space in the head of the barrel. In this space, the mystery of sherry begins as a spontaneous layer of yeast, called “flor,” develops. This flor cannot be reliably introduced or fully controlled by the winemaker - it is simply part of sherry’s remarkable mystique. This enigmatic flor serves as a protective barrier between the wine and oxygen and allows the wine to age. As the sherry matures beneath the flor, it extracts some of its characteristics - such as caramel, green apple, honey and roasted nuts. Essentially, this flor takes the relatively unimaginative Palomino grape and transforms it into an elixir that is magnificently complex, nuanced and nearly indescribable.

The next captivating quality of sherry is its fractional aging process. Very rarely will you find a vintage sherry because each bottle of sherry is created with a blend of vintages through a unique technique called the solera system.

A sherry’s solera consists of 4-10 rows of botas, stacked one on top of the other. Each of these rows represents different ages of wine. With each year, wine to be bottled is drawn only from the oldest row of botas, which rests on the ground. About a third of sherry is taken from each bota, which is then replaced by wine from the next-oldest row just above it. Rows after rows is refilled with newest vintage always being poured into the youngest botas which rest at the top. The rows of botas continue to rotate and refill for years and years. Some have been continually filled with sherry for over a century.

So, when a winemaker bottles his sherry, he’s bottling the labor and love of generations before him. And when we sip a bottle of VSOP sherry, we may very well be partaking of the same sherry that Thomas Jefferson sipped hundreds of years before us. A very romantic and nostalgic image, indeed.

**The Conversion**

The complexity, history, and romanticism is enough to keep me mesmerized by sherry’s man. However, it’s when I taste and explore the depths of her offerings that I completely abandon any skepticism and become an ardent believer.

I’m visiting Grupo Estevez, a family owned bodega whose brand date back to 1760. In an otherwise silent cellar, orchestral music is wafting between hundreds of rows of botas. The feeling of reverence overcomes my senses, once again. In every venerable Jerez bodega I encounter this curious religious feeling - but, the soft melodies of the violin and cello in this bodega add an almost heavenly dimension to the experience. Grupo Estevez President, Jose Estevez explains that he plays this music in his bodega because he wants his sherry’s flor to “enjoy a more agreeable, soft and harmonious ambiance.” The flor, is afterall, a living organism and he believes may be influenced by his music’s “feelings and sensations such as happiness, sadness, hope, etc.” More sherry romance. And I am utterly taken in.

But, it’s not until I taste Sr Estevez’ Amontillado and Oloroso that I readily become baptized in sherry.

**Videlberg**

Amontillado Contrabandista - $30

(Amontillado sherry from Grupo Estevez)

Amontillado begins her life quietly maturing under the flor for more than eight years. The flor then naturally breaks apart and dissipates leaving the sherry to age another eight years under the bota’s oxygen. At the end of this sixty year barrel aging, the winemaker adds a touch of wine produced from the Pedro Ximenez grape, which is dark and sweet. The result is a sherry that is filled with sensuality - hazelnut, toffee, but a touch of salt. Amontillado is both acidic and sweet. A study in contrast and contradiction.

**Real Leoso**

Amirante Oloroso - $25

(Oloroso sherry from Grupo Estevez)

Oloroso sherry is chosen by the winemaker to spend little time under the flor. To manually stop the flor then growing, the winemaker fortifies Oloroso to about 17% alcohol. The sherry is then aged in the oak bota for a minimum of 17 years, with each year becoming more concentrated and rich. The matured sherry is caramel in color and has notes of dried fig, roasted toffee, and golden raisins. About as sexy as it gets.

Religious Orders

Amontillado and Oloroso may have led to my baptism in sherry. But, I was prepared to swear vows to sherry when I experienced her Palo Cortado. Palo Cortado, like all sherries begins her life under the flor. But, along the aging process, the flor inexricably dissapates. Traditionally, the flor breaks up on it’s own accord and without the intervention of the winemaker - a mysterious and rare occurrence. And when this curious phenomenon happens, pure hedonistic results.

One of the more amazing Palo Cortados I sipped was from Bodega Lustau, founded in 1896.

**Lustau**

Amarmaza Sherry Palo Cortado - $35

Notes of coffee and nougat, but with a nervy edge of sharpness. Simply elegant. I realize this sounds impossible - but, this Palo Cortado has the elegance of Audrey Hepburn with the voluptuousness of Marilyn Monroe. Was so difficult to wrap my taste buds and mind around her complexity. It was a gorgeous experience.

**Exodus**

And this is my true witness to my conversion to sherry. Sherry is the most misunderstood and under appreciated wines in the world. Bad news for Sherry and Jerez, but good news for wine-OHs like you and me. Because sherry is so under appreciated, it is under consumed. And just as any commodity’s price is set upon supply and demand, sherry offers incredible value today. Having witnessed the painstaking, time consuming, and costly process involved in a single bottle of sherry I am at a loss to explain how the sherry bodegas even break even. But, afterall - sherry is the wine of romance and mystery.
Christmas at Mount Vernon
Thru January 6
Mount Vernon Estate
South End of GW Parkway
Alexandria
mountvernon.org
703/780-2000
Visitors receive an enchanting glimpse of an early-American Christmas, Washington style. The rarely-seen third floor will be open to the public for this tour exclusively. While viewing the third floor of the Mansion, visitors can see the refurbished Martha Washington garret chamber where Mrs. Washington resided after her husband’s death.

An elaborately re-created dessert course will be displayed in the large dining room with the Washingtons’ famed “Great Cake” as the feast centerpiece. Free copies of the “Great Cake” recipe and a version adapted to the 21st century will be available. The estate is open Christmas Day and New Year’s Day. This special tour is included in the regular estate admission: $13 adults/$6 children (ages 6-11) Children under 6 free!

Ice Skating
Thru March
Pentagon Row Skating
1201 South Joyce Street
Arlington
pentagonrowskating.com
703/418-6666
The ice skating rink is now open! $8 adults/$7 children. Skate rental $3. Open everyday including the holidays with extended hours when school is closed.

Colonial Handbell Ringers
December 19
The Lyceum
201 South Washington
Alexandria
703/746-6994
alexandriahistory.org
Enjoy your favorite holiday music. Two performances. 2 pm and 4 pm. Free.

Waterskiing Santa
December 24
Lady Bird Johnson Park
George Washington Parkway
Arlington
waterskiingsanta.com
703/288-1788
Looking for a unique family holiday experience? Gather at the banks of the Potomac River for the 22nd anniversary of this exciting, one-of-a-kind Washington tradition. See The Water-Skiing Santa and his Kneeboarding Reindeer. Also featuring the Flying Elves, the Jet-Skiing Grinch and Frosty the Snowman in a dinghy. Sing-along with the Candy Cane Kids. Free parking available at the Columbia Island Marina. 1:00 pm. Free!

First Night Alexandria
December 31
First Night Alexandria
Old Town and Del Ray
Alexandria
firstnightalexandria.org
703/746-3299
Family-friendly affordable celebration of the New Year through performing arts. Tickets $15/children free accompanied by an adult.

Sunset Boulevard
December 7-February 13
Signature Theatre
4200 Campbell Avenue
Arlington
571/927-1860
signature-theatre.org
The area’s first staging of the Tony Award winning musical.

“A Christmas Carol” Thru January 2
Ford’s Theatre • 511 Tenth Street NW • Washington, DC • 202/347-4833
Join the ghosts of Christmas Past, Present and Future as they lead the miserly Ebenezer Scrooge on a journey of transformation and redemption.

Tavern Toddlers - Colors
January 3-April 25 Weekly
Gadsby’s Tavern Museum
134 North Royal Street
Alexandria
gadsbystavern.org
703/746-4242
It is never too early for your kids to appreciate history! A special program for toddlers/walkers through 36 months) and their caregivers. Features weekly open playtime on Mondays anytime between 10:30 am and noon, and a new craft activity each week. Each week costs $7 for a group of three, including one adult and additional people are $3 each.
DINING FINDS
Le Refuge
Come, visit a little corner of France.

Le Refuge serves lunch and dinner, Monday through Saturday. For hours and reservations, call (703) 548-4661 or visit lerefugealexandria.com.

COMING IN JANUARY!
The Zebra Academy Awards Contest Winner receives a Dinner for Two at a prestigious Alexandria restaurant. In the meantime, brush up on your Oscar knowledge with the puzzle below.

CALENDAR
from page 19
703/549-6006
Works in wax, oil and wire by new artist Lindsey. Her name will dazzle and amaze you.
703/486-2345
Arlington Drafthouse
2903 Columbia Pike
Arlington
“Pushing the Envelope”
Art Direction and ___

CROSSWORDS
Across
1. A double Best Actress winner and the shortest-tenured Academy president ever
2. He won his Oscar for portraying Ensign_Tiger" and for portraying ____ in the film
3. A double Best Actress winner
4. Best Years of Our Lives
5. He won his Oscar for "Kiss of the Spider Woman"
6. The oldest male performer to finally feel that the Academy
7. He won his Oscar for "The African Queen"
8. A former host, she wasn’t afraid of PUSHUPS
9. The category in which Bruce Springsteen and Eminem won Oscars for performances in ___
10. He won an Oscar for "To Kill a Mockingbird"
11. The Academy’s first Best Actress winner
12. The Academy’s Humanitarian Award winner, and the shortest-tenured Academy president ever
13. The only Best Picture written by William Shakespeare
14. He won his Oscar for "I Am a Camera"
15. He called the historic meeting that led to the Academy’s creation
16. He sang three nominated songs (one in French) at the 77th Awards presentation
17. The Academy's first Best Actor winner
18. The Academy’s most-nominated male performer
19. A Zebra 2010 Best Actress winner
20. He hosted the most Academy Awards telecasts
21. He’s the Academy’s current president
22. She was the first African-American actress to win an Oscar
23. The category in which Bruce Springsteen and Eminem won Oscars for performances in ___
24. He won his Oscar for "Annie"
25. He holds the record for the most nominations and Oscars
26. He won his Oscar for "Scent of a Woman"
27. The Zebra 2010 Best Actor winner
28. He showed "True Grit" when he was the Academy’s current president
29. He won two Oscars for "Paris, Texas"
30. She won Actress awards for "To Kill a Mockingbird"
31. The Academy’s most-nominated actress
32. He won back-to-back Actor awards in 1937 and 1938
33. He won an Oscar for "Leaving Las Vegas"
34. He won his Oscar for "For Me and My Gal"
35. The only Best Picture directed by Orson Welles
36. It’s the Academy’s first Best Picture winner
37. He won Oscars for portraying the same character
38. He was named Best Actor of 1939, over Clark Gable, Laurence Olivier, Mickey Rooney and James Stewart
39. "Anjelica" and "She's had her day"
40. He won the Supporting Actress award for "L.A. Confidential"
41. He took home two Oscars for "The Heiress"
42. He hosted the most Academy Awards telecasts
43. He won his Oscar for portraying ____. He called the historic meeting that led to the Academy’s creation
44. He won Academy Awards for acting as well as songwriting
45. He won his Oscar for "Annie"
46. He won his Oscar for "Annie"
47. He won his Oscar for portraying ____. He called the historic meeting that led to the Academy’s creation
48. The Academy’s most-nominated male performer
49. The Zebra 2010 Best Actress winner
50. She sang three nominated songs (one in French) at the 77th Awards presentation
51. He won his Oscar for "For Me and My Gal"
52. He won his Oscar for "The African Queen"
53. An American acting winner
54. The only brothers to win both the Directing and Best Picture awards
55. She won the Supporting Actress award for "Shakespeare in Love"
56. The only posthumous Acting award winner — so far
57. She won the Supporting Actress award for "Shakespeare in Love"
58. He showed "True Grit" when he was the Academy’s current president
59. Both Melvyn Douglas and___. He called the historic meeting that led to the Academy’s creation
60. He showed "True Grit" when he was the Academy’s current president
61. 1987’s Best Actress winner ...
62. Best Actress winner ... so far
63. The Academy’s most-nominated film
64. She was the first African-American actress to win an Oscar
65. Best Picture winner Lionel (but not John)
66. She won Actress awards for "To Kill a Mockingbird"
67. Every member of this film’s cast was nominated for an Oscar
68. She won his Oscar for "For Me and My Gal"
69. He won his Oscar for "For Me and My Gal"
70. She was the first African-American actress to win an Oscar

Down
1. The theater where it all happens
2. Supporting Actress winner for "L.A. Confidential"
3. The theater where it all happens
4. The highest box office grossing Best Picture ... so far
5. He won his Oscar for "Kiss of the Spider Woman"
6. He won his Oscar for "The Philadelphia Story"
7. He won his Oscar for "The African Queen"
8. He won his Oscar for "L.A. Confidential"
9. "Born ___.
10. He was named Best Actor for "Annie"
11. Hitchcock’s only Best Picture
12. The Academy’s Humanitarian Award is named for him
13. He took home two Oscars for ____. He called the historic meeting that led to the Academy’s creation
14. She won his Oscar for portraying the King of ____. He took home two Oscars for ____. He called the historic meeting that led to the Academy’s creation
15. He won his Oscar for "Annie"
16. He won his Oscar for "Scent of a Woman"
17. The Academy’s first Best Actress winner
18. He won her Oscar for portraying ____. He called the historic meeting that led to the Academy’s creation
19. She was the first African-American actress to win an Oscar
20. She won his Oscar for portraying ____. He called the historic meeting that led to the Academy’s creation
21. With her second Oscar, she finally felt that the Academy liked her
22. She was the first African-American acting winner
23. Oscar-winning actor Henry or his Oscar-winning daughter Jane
24. She’s still the youngest Oscar-winning actress
25. He won his Oscar for portraying both Tim Strawn and Kid Sheik in "Ain’t Misbehavin’"
26. He holds the record for the most nominations and Oscars
27. He won his Oscar for "Scent of a Woman"
28. He won his Oscar for portraying ____. He called the historic meeting that led to the Academy’s creation
29. She was the first African-American actress to win an Oscar
30. He won his Oscar for portraying ____. He called the historic meeting that led to the Academy’s creation
31. The Academy’s most-nominated actress
32. Nominated as an actor, director and producer — but not yet for his music scores
33. "Falling Slowly" last year’s Original Song winner, came from this film
34. He won Oscars for "Save the Tiger" and for portraying Ensign_Pusher
35. He was named Best Actor of 1939, over Clark Gable, Laurence Olivier, Mickey Rooney and James Stewart
36. Best Picture, Actor, Directing and Screenplay winner
37. She won Academy Awards for acting as well as writing
38. Oscar winner Walter or Oscar winner John or Oscar winner

SOLUTION

December 2010

December 2010
Keep Your Furry Ones Safe during the Holidays

As pet owners, we love to include our pets in holiday celebrations. However, many holiday decorations and foods that we enjoy can put the family pet at risk.

Veterinarians and other pet care experts recommend taking some special precautions to keep pets safe from holiday hazards.

Decorate with care

That glittering Christmas tree is sure to attract your cat or dog. Be sure it is well secured so that it won’t come toppling down if your pet bounds into or onto it.

Select ornaments with your pet in mind. Don’t hang glass balls in reach of your pet and use sandal, rather than tinsel, which can cause intestinal obstructions if ingested. Be sure to remove any ornament hooks that drop from the floor. Keep electrical cords and tree lights out of reach.

Stagnant water can be a breeding ground for bacteria, which can lead to vomiting and diarrhea. If your pet is likely to try to drink water, don’t add preservatives or aspirin additives to it. You might also invest in a tree stand with a cover that will keep your pet out.

Food, dangerous food

Ingesting holiday foods is one of the biggest reasons for emergency vet visits during the holiday season. Rich, fatty foods can cause stomach upset, or even predispose your pet to life-threatening pancreatitis or bloating. Prevent the great escape

Warn family members and offer them when others are away or out of reach when not in use. Wrapping paper, ribbons, and tape also represent potential dangers. Remove them as soon as possible. Never leave lighted candles unattended and be sure they are securely anchored so they won’t be dislodged by the swat of a paw or tail. Better yet, use candles with domes or cylinders that enclose the flame.

Liquid potpourris, fireplace colors and scents, Styrofoam, tinsel, angel hair and other tree decorations can also be toxic if ingested, cause skin or eye irritation, or cause intestinal obstructions. If you suspect that your pet has ingested something poisonous, seek medical attention immediately.

Preventing the great escape

- With numerous viewing devices to choose from, including TiVo, mobile phones, laptops and gaming consoles (check netflix.com for a complete list), it’s never been easier to explore the film media.
- Best of all, you can pause within any scene and return to it at a later date, or restart the title from the beginning. In other words, you can bookmark multiple titles that will remain in your streaming queue. New titles are added weekly, and it is a tremendous thrill when you find something you haven’t seen in 20 years, or view entire seasons of television shows as well as concerts and documentaries. It’s perfect for the entire family, providing extensive selections for children as well.
- With thousands of titles, from recent releases such as Julie & Julia, District 9 and Up to Hollywood classics including The Glenn Miller Story, The Way We Were and the original Willy Wonka and the Chocolate Factory, this is your magic window in the cinematic world.
- At your leisure, you can become macquainted with a favorite movie you haven’t seen in 20 years, or view entire seasons of television shows as well as concerts and documentaries. It’s perfect for the entire family, providing extensive selections for children as well.
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The World’s Cedar Chest

BY HOLLY BURNETT

There are few things more gratifying in life than to win an eBay auction. I would liken the experience to watching a horse race on which a lofty bet has been placed or reeling the "big one" off the back of a Chris-Craft. The moment is exhilarating, satisfying and altogether sweet.

An idyllic hideaway approaching – Lost Horizon

EBAY

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One in "never-used, mint condition in the original box." A woman had received it as a wedding present and tucked it away in a closet until she discovered it again when packing to move. The auction opened at 99 cents and had several bidders. Three days later, it was mine for a mere $12. It was probably only worth 99 cents since it was nearly 10 years old and carried no manufacturer's warranty, but it was worth $12 to me and worth $11.99 to someone who had been defrauded, but upon checking the auction information, I pointed out that the seller had provided the exact measurements of the miniature skillet he had received. My friend had failed to read the item description carefully and had no grounds to complain.

Of course, there are the auctions I didn’t win because I was not aggressive enough in my bidding or simply failed to remember when the auction closed. My greatest heartbreak remains a white, Eames Era side table, owned by the late Walter Matthau. The auction included a letter of authenticity from Matthau's son and a vintage photo of the actor sitting next to the table in his Florida room.

You should always take a moment to read the seller’s feedback profile before you place a bid. This evaluation system, which allows buyers and sellers to rate and comment on each other, is an excellent indicator of the experience you will have with a particular seller. Do not be put off if someone has a few negative feedbacks. You are looking for habitual problems, not the ravings of one buyer out of 100 who was not satisfied. As a seller myself, I know it’s almost impossible to please every buyer because expectations fluctuate. However, most sellers are reputable, and their feedback profiles will bear this out.

Keep in mind that you will also have your own feedback profile based on your behavior as a buyer. Be pleasant in your communication with the seller. If you win, be timely with your payment. You will build your own positive feedback, and future sellers will feel more comfortable doing business with you.

As I first said, there are few things more gratifying in life than to win an eBay auction. It is far more satisfying than walking into a department store and purchasing the uninspired tie, the indecisive gift card or the kitchen gadget that flips burgers, beats eggs and comes with a bonus opener and nutcracker. Go back to the simpler things in life – those that will put a smile on someone’s face – a bulletin board, a record album, a wooden spoon, a metal band-aid tin. These are the treasures of our lives, and eBay is the purveyor of its riches change daily, and although you can never possibly visit every virtual push cart, you will find something you want that you will never be able to purchase anywhere else.

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These furry friends (and many others) are looking for loving homes where they can spend the holidays ...

Alice - (Female)
Breed: Beagle / Dachshund Mix
Age: 7 years
History: Owner Release

Description: Hi, my name is Alice. I am a 7 year old female beagle/dachshund mix. I am housebroken, crate trained and moderately active. My favorite pastime is sleeping in the sun on my back porch. I get along well with other dogs and children. I am very good with my own family. If you are looking for a dog that is friendly and loves attention, then I am the dog for you. I am a very good girl and need a loving family to call my own. I am a great family dog and enjoy being a part of a dog pack. Belle enjoys the company of her many foster dog friends, but also craves to be the center of her loyal friend's attention. Belle is a sweet blonde coat and a coat like white velvet. There are 3 girls, my foster mom and my foster sister who I am laying with in the picture. She says I am an angel because I don't chew on anything and she can trust me when I am out of her sight. I am not good with young children as they make me nervous so I would do best in a home with no children under 12 years of age. I prefer to be the only pet so I can get all the hugs and kisses. I walk nicely on a leash and am not a big barker.

Buddy the Retriever - (Male)
Breed: Retriever Mix
Age: 4 years
Weight: 63 pounds
History: Owner Release

Description: Buddy was adopted from our rescue about 3 years ago. He was 7 months old and thought he found his forever family. Now 3 years later the kids are grown and the parents are divorced. Buddy is now looking for a new home to call his own. Once Buddy has arrived back with us we can add more information.

Bugsy - (Male)
Breed: Black Labrador Retriever Mix
Age: 4 years
Weight: 36 pounds
History: Shelter

Description: Bugsy is a black lab mix puppy and a bundle of pure energy. If you are a lab lover this dog is for you! He is learning how to do stairs and exploring everywhere. His uncoordinated puppy romp is adorable as are his facial expressions. He has taken quite nicely to his new love and setting into his foster home. He will make a great addition to any family.

Cierra - (Female)
Breed: Chihuahua / Shiba Inu Mix
Age: 3 years
Weight: 17 pounds
History: Owner Release

Description: Hi, my name is Cierra. I am a chihuahua mix (probably mixed with spitz or shiba inu). I am housebroken and crate trained. My foster mom says I am an active girl and need a lot of exercise. I certainly have the chihuahua trait of being nervous when I first meet you, but once I am up to you I am fine. I am not good with young children as they make me nervous so I would be best in a home with no children under 12 years of age. I am good with most other submissive small to medium dogs but I want to be the boss. My foster mom says no cats or other small animals because I am not nice to them.

Cierra - (Female)
Breed: P/K Bull Terrier Mix
Age: 2 years
History: Owner Release

Description: Hello, my name is Cierra and I need a new home since my owner died. I have been a little lost and confused since dad died, but AHF has been taking very good care of me. My foster mom lets me hang out with her all day long and I get to sleep with her at night. I have fosters, brothers and sisters who I get to play with and we go to this place called a dog park everyday. Since my dad was a dog trainer/dog breeder, I am a very good little girl. I listen very well except when there is a squirrel since I MUST chase them as they are bad little creatures who must stay out of the yard. I am a member of an exclusive club called Pit Bulls. Because we are misunderstood group who are often discriminated against, I can only go to someone who owns their home. If you would like to meet me in person, please contact AHF right away so we can fall in love and live happily ever after...

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