

holiday GIFT GUIDE

NOVEMBER 2020



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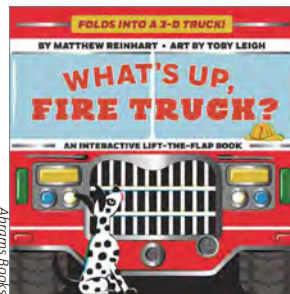


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Great Holiday Gifts for Kids & Teens!



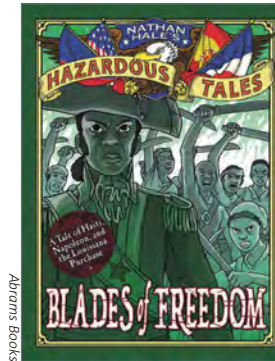
Snow Birds
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Ages 4-8



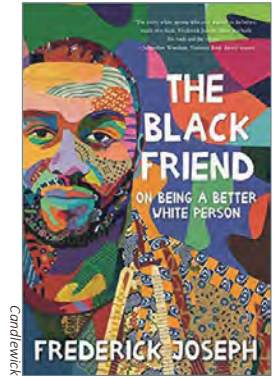
What's Up Fire Truck
by Matthew Reinhart & Toby Leigh
This innovative board book by pop-up wizard Matthew Reinhart transforms into a 3-D fire truck toy!
Ages 3-5



One Girl
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Ages 5-7



Blades of Freedom: Nathan Hale's Hazardous Tales #10
by Nathan Hale
Discover the story of the Haitian Revolution and the Louisiana Purchase.
Ages 8-12



The Black Friend: On Being a Better White Person
by Frederick Joseph
Candid reflections on experiences with racism and conversations with prominent artists and activists.
Ages 12+



Julián at the Wedding
by Jessica Love
The star of *Julián Is a Mermaid* makes a joyful return—and finds a new friend—at a wedding to be remembered.
Ages 4-8



Maya & The Rising Dark
by Rena Barron
12-year-old Maya's search for her missing father puts her at the center of a battle between worlds.
Ages 8-12



Becoming a Good Creature
by Sy Montgomery & Rebecca Green
Learn the many surprising lessons animals have to teach us about friendship and compassion.
Ages 4-7



Act
by Kayla Miller
The funny and honest follow-up to the middle school graphic novel sensations *Click* and *Camp*.
Ages 8-12



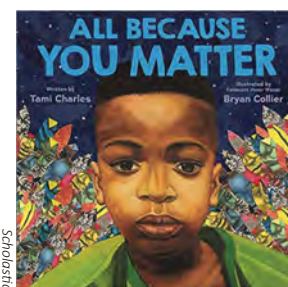
Anya and the Dragon
by Sofiya Pasternack
A lush tale of magic and dragons—a gem for any adventure-seeking middle grader.
Ages 10-12



Winterborne Home for Vengeance and Valor
by Ally Carter
An adventure-filled read with a twisty mystery and spunky friendships.
Ages 10-12



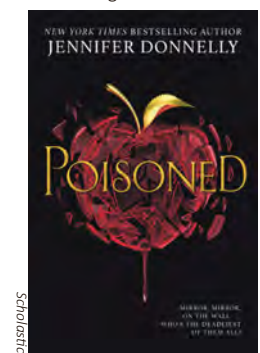
Twins (#1)
by Varian Johnson & Shannon Wright
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Ages 8-12



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Ages 12+



Holiday Gift Guide

November 26, 2020

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A Season of Nostalgia

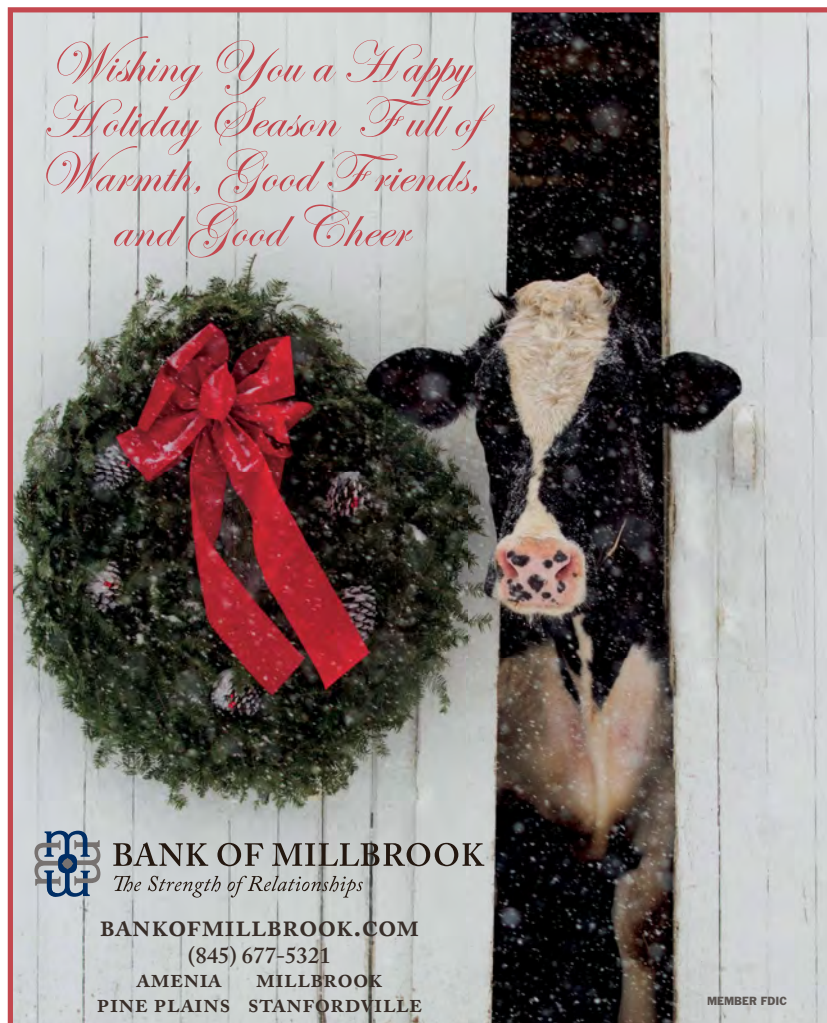
One thing perhaps that 2020 has reminded us of is that we don't actually need a lot of fancy stuff. In a world with toilet paper shortages, we now know that luxury is fun but we can live without it. It's nice to dream, though, isn't it?

For the holidays this year, you can either go super practical or swing in the opposite direction, with gifts that spark dreams of glamour and long-ago days of luxury and ease (such as December 2019).

We hope you will find something that you want for yourself or a loved one in this guide. We have included local shops whenever possible — all of which would be happy to offer curbside pickup.

— Cynthia Hochswender

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PHOTO BY JOHN GRUEN

“Through a Designer’s Eye,” featuring new work by interior designer Matthew Patrick Smyth, includes peeks at homes he has designed over the past 10 years, with images by the world’s top photographers including this one by John Gruen of Lakeville, Conn.

Insights Into Design And Inspiration In New Smyth Book

By Debra A. Aleksinas

It was love at first sight. While browsing a flea market back in 1981, a vintage 1940s starburst wall mirror, with its exquisite series of giltwood rays, caught Matthew Patrick Smyth’s eye. He had just moved into his first pad, a sixth-floor walk-up studio apartment on First Avenue in New York City.

“I was clearing \$90 a week at the time,” Smyth recalled, and the mirror cost half his salary. Still, he couldn’t leave it behind. “I had \$45 left for the rest of the week to live on and buy food. I didn’t have anything nice in my apartment, and I thought it looked so chic, and would fit in with

my minimalist apartment, which was a futon on the floor,” he chuckled.

The apartment is history, but the mirror remains with him, in many ways a reflection of how far he has come as a person, and as a designer.

“I still have it,” revealed Smyth, who, in the ensuing three decades, has earned a reputation as one of the country’s leading interior designers.

“I am standing here looking at it as we speak,” he said of the beloved starburst mirror during a phone interview on Wednesday, Sept. 15, the same day his second design



PHOTO BY ANNE DAY

Matthew Patrick Smyth, one of the top designers in the world and a resident of Salisbury, Conn., has a new book, “Through a Designer’s Eye,” that features his interiors as well as his own inspiring photographs.

book, “Through a Designer’s Eye: A focus on Interiors,” was released by The Monicelli Press.

Smyth’s new book presents the designer’s recent work, ranging from a traditional Park Avenue apartment and an edgy Tribeca loft in Manhattan to waterfront houses in Florida, New England and Long Island that demonstrate his skills in responding to context and eliciting preferences of clients to create a unique environment for each.

Nowhere is this better seen than in his own house in Salisbury, Conn., an unexpected 1970s prefabricated deck house now elegantly appointed with an eclectic mix of furniture, objects and works of art he and his partner have collected over many years.

As was the case with Smyth’s first book, “Living Traditions,” which he wrote 10 years ago, his personal abode is featured on the cover of “Through a Design-

er’s Eye,” as well as inside. Unlike his first book, however, this new publication reveals the author’s own inner photographer: Many of his design projects are highlighted with eye-popping photographs taken by Smyth himself. They are unrelated to the corresponding interiors, yet evoke the same sense of scale, composition, texture, color, line and balance.

“A lot of the photos used in the book are not necessarily directly related to the projects, but their mood and inspiration stuck in the back of my mind,” explained the designer, whose photographs, all shot using a phone camera, have amassed a following on Instagram.

Just as Smyth was drawn to that vintage mirror many decades ago, he still draws inspiration from his surroundings and serendipitous sightings, he said, whether down the street or across the globe. They consciously or subconsciously



PHOTO BY SIMON UPTON.

Smyth’s den, at his home in Salisbury, is loaded with ideas as well as beauty. Note the desk tucked into an odd space on one wall, and the memorable green leather chairs that originally were used at a country club in the 1940s.

reveal themselves in his work.

“The more we look, the more we experience, the better we are able to see,” noted Smyth in his book’s introduction.

From the first time he picked up a camera at age 17, said the designer, he was excited by the way it prompted him to look at details. It was his photography that earned him a place at the Fashion Institute of Technology in New York City, studying interior design many years ago; and it was friend Gloria Vanderbilt who persuaded him to return to photography.

“Taking pictures again has made me rethink just about everything I have learned about interiors over the years,” said Smyth.

“Through a Designer’s Eye,” can be purchased at Oblong Books and Music in Millerton, N.Y.; and through Honeychurch Home and Johnnycake Books, both in Salisbury, Merritt Bookstore in Millbrook, N.Y. and The Hickory Stick Bookshop in Washington Depot, Conn.

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When ‘Old Food’ Is Really Good Food

By Cynthia Hochswender

I have many vintage cookbooks, some of them very aged, and I never cook from any of them.

But I love them and wouldn't give them up—and I'm notorious for throwing out anything in my house that I haven't used in six months. I guess I'm the opposite of a hoarder, albeit on the same spectrum.

The same is largely true of my more contemporary cookbooks. There are certain editions that I have dragged around with me since I was in my 20s; and there are newer cookbooks that I buy in part because I want to support the authors whose recipes I routinely search on the internet. It wouldn't be fair to Ina Garten and Donna Hay if I only used their work for free; I buy their cookbooks even though I look up anything I need online (so much faster than digging through multiple volumes).

This is all leading up to the idea that cookbooks make a wonderful holiday gift, but of course you know that already. I'd like to suggest an alternative angle, however.

If there's someone in your life who really loves to cook, and who also loves history or loves to understand where things came from and why and how, then vintage cookbooks are a good option.

At the end of this article, I'll put a list of my favorite oldies but goodies, ones you can cook from or enjoy by just flip-

ping through the pages.

But here's an even better idea.

The wonderfully monitored Meg Muckenhoupt has written a very entertaining, informative and actually useful food history/cookbook called "The Truth about Baked Beans: An Edible History of New England."

Unlike most history cookbooks, this one is snappy and interesting.

It's also much more of an international/immigrant collection than you might have expected. I thought this book would be mostly about Puritan food cooked by refugees from, mainly, Britain.

Muckenhoupt starts right off by declaring that, "Part of the reason that New England's lists of traditional foods are so stultifying is that writers and publicists are repeating stories about who lives in New England that haven't been true for more than 150 years.

"Millions of non-English immigrants arrived in the region from 1850 onward, but their histories and foodways have been largely ignored."

Well, they're not ignored here. The recipe section of this book has foods that originated in Poland, Greece, Portugal, Africa, Italy as well of course as England and Ireland.

Don't get me wrong: There's nothing social justice-y about the way Muckenhoupt ap-

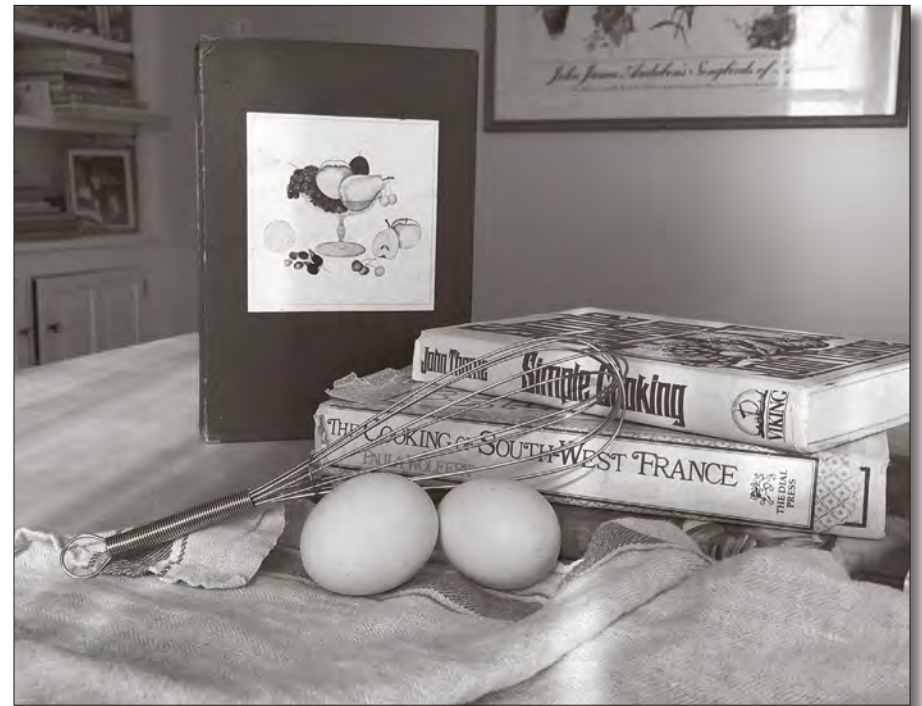


PHOTO BY CYNTHIA HOCHSWENDER

In an era when you don't really need cookbooks, with every recipe you ever dreamed of easily available on the internet, it's still wonderful to have a print edition that you can leaf through and dream, a kind of coffee table book that actually relates to coffee. Particularly charming are older cookbooks that can act as a portal to a different place and/or time.

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... good, old food

Continued from page 7

proaches this. She's just very matter of fact: The stew that is America is not just pot roast.

This is also not a dry, academic history. It's lively and fun to read. But best of all, the recipes are adapted to modern life. Some even have modern origins, such as the Fall River Chow Mein Sandwich, which, unexpectedly, was created by one of the most famous chefs of the late 20th century. Muckenhoupt explains that, "Celebrity chef Emeril Lagasse, who grew up in Fall River, Mass., before he moved to New Orleans, created a recipe for making chow mein sandwich gravy from scratch, available at www.splendidtable.com. Most local restaurants and

Fall River natives use the Hoo Mee Mix."

There are of course several recipes for baked beans. There is a recipe for a Wampanoag tribe dish called "nasaump," which is kind of a hearty grain-and-fruit-based breakfast dish (the English variation on it, called "samp," is included as well).

There are lots of breads and biscuits, including one from Catharine Beecher, a Litchfield, Conn., native and famed cookbook author as well as sister of Harriet Beecher Stowe and daughter of Lyman (and ancestor of Cornwall, Conn., resident and author Roxanna Robinson). Beecher's bread is made from distillery yeast, which is probably easier to get now than

it was a century ago, as we see new breweries and distilleries settling into our region.

There is also a cornbread recipe from the famous and beloved Durgin Park restaurant in Boston, Mass., which closed in 2019.

A variation on bread that is popular with the natives of El Salvador now living in Massachusetts is called pupusa; there is a recipe for these delicious and tender little muffins that is made with cheese and loroco, which is a flower bud that is probably not that different from a squash blossom.

In short, this is a cookbook with a lot of depth and variety. And it's full of recipes you probably wouldn't think to search

for online — and even if you did, many of them are adaptations of historic recipes that were created just for this book.

So if you like culinary history and you like Portuguese stuffed peppers and all kinds of gingerbread and poultry pies, and if you think you'd like to learn how to make a Puerto Rican Thanksgiving turkey, then this is a book that merits some space on your kitchen bookshelf.

"The Truth about Baked Beans: An Edible History of New England" by Meg Muckenhoupt and published by NYU Press is \$29.95.

It can be purchased in Kent, Conn., at the House of Books (www.houseofbooksct.com).



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OLD COOKBOOKS I HAVE LOVED

One problem in COVID-19 world is that you can't easily find vintage cookbooks, which used to be fairly available at library book sales (this was more true when I moved here 20 years ago, but you can still sometimes find an old gem or two — if you can find a book sale) and of course at transfer station swap shops.

Those treasure troves are less available now.

And some people don't appreciate when you bring a gift home from the dump, honestly.

But that's their loss, or as my mother used to say, "More for the rest of us!"

One of my greatest treasures is a Salisbury-Sharon transfer station Swap Shop find: "A Treasury of Great Recipes," by horror film icon Vincent Price and his wife, Mary, who were apparently gourmets and gourmands in the best sense of the words.

If you were fortunate enough to travel to Europe in the 1960s and 1970s (or earlier of course; that's just my timeframe), you'll remember how charming it was to go to a wonderful old restaurant that had a typed menu for the day.

This book is full of those old menus from Vincent and Mary's travels, with recipes for many of the dishes on those menus, often from famous restaurants around the world.

I just love this book. And perhaps it's not a coincidence that one week after I found this gem at the swap shop, The New York Times announced that it had been reissued. It is now available in a 50th anniversary edition for about \$32 online.

I somehow also lucked out by finding a hardcover edition of French author Alexandre Dumas' collection of cooking basics, "Du-

mas on Food." I can't remember where I got it but I know I didn't pay the \$305 it's selling for online these days. If you think your favorite chef and history/literature buff would like this, you can get a paperback copy for \$35 online.

If you live in Litchfield County, Conn., you should own at least one book each by James Thurber and Eric Sloane, who famously lived and worked here. In the same sense, you should really have a copy of one of the late wonderful Laurie Colwin's recipe-and-story books.

Colwin wrote wonderful food essays for *Gourmet* and other publications, and is particularly famous for the part she played in the Salisbury, Conn., "Tomato Pie War" in 2012.

There's not enough space in this issue to go into the whole history of this, but someday we will recount it, with a recipe. Until then, look for copies of "Home Cooking" online for between \$5 and \$20.

If your loved one likes food stories with recipes, and enjoys a Litchfield County connection, don't miss food writer and Northwest Corner resident Moira Hodgson's cookbooks, including one of my all-time favorites, "Good Food from a Small Kitchen." I've owned and actually cooked from this wonderful little paperback since I was in my early 20s, living in an apartment with an actual small kitchen. I now have a life-sized kitchen, but still love and use this book. Look for a paperback copy online for about \$5.

That's a lot of choices. Buy a bunch of books and put them together in a gift basket. Or better still, choose a cookbook and maybe give some coveted ingredients to go along with it.

— Cynthia Hochswender

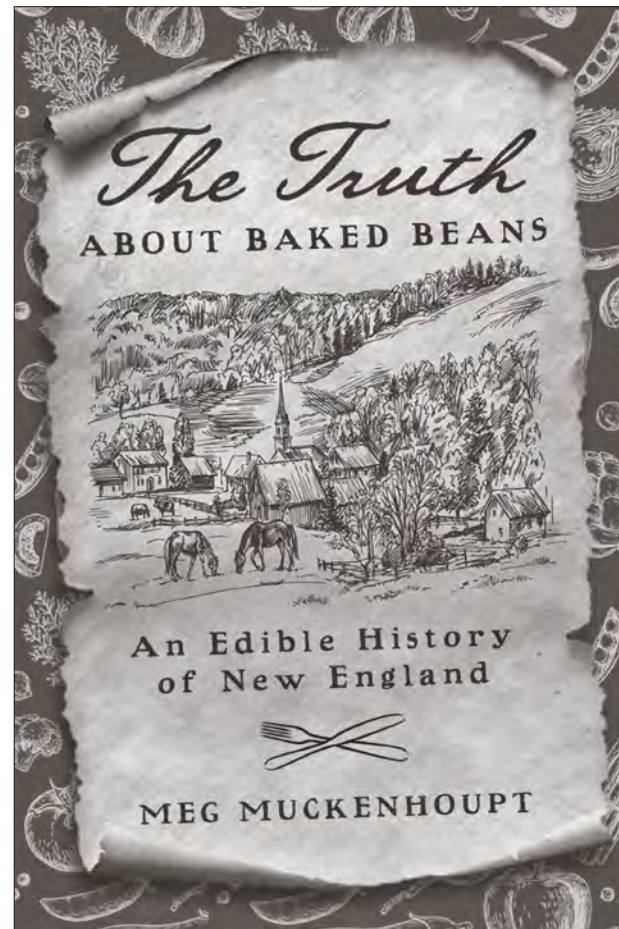


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"The Truth About Baked Beans" offers a charming guided tour through Old New England cooking — and offers modern adaptations of the old classic recipes.

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PHOTOS BY LIA WOLGEMUTH

Cardboard tubes wrapped in fabric or paper make an eco-friendly container for party favors.

Upcycled Holidays Simple Holiday Gifts And Décor From Recycled Materials

By Lia Wolgemuth

Sometimes the most wonderful time of year seems to barrel through at Mach speed. This year, maybe not so much. If you find yourself doing less shopping, hosting, traveling, feasting and all-around merrymaking in this pandemic year, then consider seizing the opportunity to scale back and savor the season with a few homemade niceties.

Whether it's a gift for a friend or a decoration to enjoy in your own home, there's no need to run out and stand in line at stores. Here are a few easy ways to create gifts and decorations with materials you already have around the house — maybe even straight from your recycling bin.

FOR TREATING YOUR NEIGHBOR

Spruce up a bottle of wine or New Year's champagne by wrapping it with a piece of fabric. You can shop your house for old napkins that are still in good shape but whose matches have seen better meals; leftover fabric squares from your sewing cabinet; or scarves that were destined for donation. Maybe you have handkerchiefs or tea towels that never get used. Or if the socks you received as a gift last year aren't your style but they're

still kicking around unused, then slip the bottle into one and tie a bow or knot around the top with the other. Simply attach a gift tag with a ribbon or clothespin, and you're ready to share a gift that has a personal touch.

FOR HOSTING

A DINNER PARTY WITH YOUR SOCIAL BUBBLE

Give cardboard tubes a new life by turning them into party favors. Wrap them in colorful paper or fabric scraps, and tie the ends with twine, yarn or ribbon. While you could fill them with candy, you could also use them for charades or as an ice breaker at a dinner party. Write something on a slip of paper for each guest and tuck it into the tube. Make it silly: "Tell everyone a funny story from when you were little." Or make it mindful: "What is your favorite thing about the person sitting to the right of you?"

FOR KEEPING CHILDREN ENTERTAINED

If your little ones are getting cabin fever from quarantining, then pull a milk carton out of your recycling bin and get out your craft supplies. A small carton, such as for whipping cream or half-and-half, is perfect for creating an elf house. Clean and dry the carton, and then

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either paint it a solid color or cover it with paper.

If the weather allows, head out to the backyard with your budding artist and gather pine cones, pebbles, acorns, twigs — anything that might inspire creativity. Then set out paint, markers, magazines for collaging and other items for recycling, like bottle caps and aluminum foil. Use the project to either keep them busy while you make dinner, or turn it into a memorable way to spend a snowy afternoon together.

**FOR DECORATING
YOUR HOME**

Add some warmth and coziness to your home by making a teacup candle from old candle

stubs. You can find many ways online to do this, but here is one of the easiest. Gather a few candle stubs and use a knife to break them apart and pull out the wicks. Use a small piece of tape to attach the end of a wick to the bottom of the inside of a teacup.

For melting the wax, don't make a mess of your cookware. Instead, grab a large tin can that is clean and dry from your recycling bin, and put the chunks of wax inside of it. Set the tin can in a medium saucepan with about an inch of boiling water. After the wax has melted, pour it into the teacup while making sure

Continued on page 12



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... upcycled holidays

Continued from page 11

the wick stays straight up. Let it cool, cut the wick and then set the mood by lighting it and curling up nearby with a good book.

FOR LIFTING THE MOOD

Clean out your spice cupboard and freshen up your house with a homemade scented stick diffuser. While the most common method is to use a

carrier oil, aim for less mess by making it with alcohol.

There are many recipes online, but here is a basic one that should last about a month.

Choose a pretty glass jar and fill it with a quarter-cup of rubbing alcohol or vodka, three-quarters of a cup of water and 20 drops of an aromatic essential oil, such as lemon. Add a combination of sweet scents, such as whole cloves, a cinnamon stick and orange peels with their piths removed. If you'd like to get creative with it visually, try lining smooth stones or shells from last year's beach vacation along the base of the jar. Insert a few bamboo skewers, and then take a deep breath.

FOR WHEN YOU'RE TRAVELING

If you must hit the road this season, glam up your travels by repurposing a pill or vitamin bottle into a fun travel case. Washi tape from a craft store such as Michael's makes a colorful and eco-friendly wrapping.

Or, clip a magazine photo or a piece of patterned paper, glue it onto the bottle and laminate it by covering it with a piece of clear packing tape.

Use it to store jewelry, loose change, an emergency sewing kit, cotton swabs, earbuds, charging cords, hair ties, bobby pins, breath mints or cough drops. Or, consider packing a tiny bottle of relaxing lavender oil to apply on your wrists and behind the ears - any messy drips stay in the bottle, and you can enjoy a stress-free holiday.



Turn a glass jar and ingredients from your pantry into a scented stick diffuser.



Our holiday market at the White Hart is canceled but you can shop all of our wares online on our website artisansale.org or our Facebook page [facebook.com/SalisburyArtisans](https://www.facebook.com/SalisburyArtisans).

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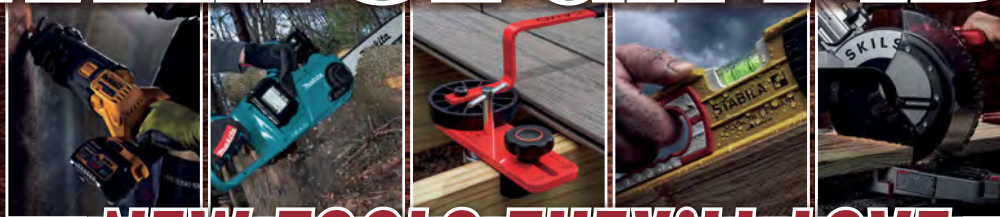
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PHOTOS BY HUNTER O. LYLE

From loaves of white and wheat breads to French baguettes, the KitchenAid stand mixer has been put to excellent use in the Lyle family's kitchen in Sharon, Conn., mixing dough for fresh bread weekly.

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Treat Your Favorite Chef to Gizmos And Gadgets Galore

By Kaitlin Lyle

Once the Halloween candy has gone into hiding and the landscape's fall colors have been replaced with snow and ice, it's time to roll up those sleeves, wipe down those kitchen counters and start prepping the oven for the many dinners and delicacies that will be served and sent out this holiday season.

Those of you lucky enough to know and love someone who enjoys cooking and baking may be all-too-familiar with the stress the holiday season poses on their kitchen, not to mention their culinary creativity.

Yet it's their passion and perseverance in the kitchen that leads to those unforgettable nights around the dinner table; so why not reward the cook in your life with more than just a kiss under the mistletoe this season?

As you browse the holiday deals listed online or at your favorite retail store, there's no end to the gizmos and gadgets you can give your favorite chef. Chances are you'll find something the whole family can use.

FRY WITHOUT OIL

Take for instance, the air fryer, a guilt-free godsend for those trying to encourage healthier eating in their household.

Using rapid hot air 360° convection technology, the air fryer uses circulating

heated air to fry food, resulting in healthy, flavorful cooking with little to no oil. From frying and baking to grilling and roasting, the air fryer is user-friendly, easy to clean and simple to operate. I personally recommend the Secura Air Fryer XL, 5.5 Quart, 1,800-Watt electric version. Prices are in the \$80 range.

You can get smaller sizes, and other brands online and at big box stores such as Walmart, Best Buy, Target and Bed Bath & Beyond.

THE ICONIC KITCHENAID

For those who enjoy making bread but need a break from the endless stirring, kneading and pounding, a KitchenAid stand mixer might do the trick. You pay a pretty penny to bring one of these gadgets home, but the culinary possibilities are endless, between the multiple attachments and the ways to customize your stand mixer to meet your cooking needs.

From mixing bread and cookie dough to cutting pasta and grinding meat, the KitchenAid stand mixer and its selection of attachments is guaranteed to be a welcome addition to your favorite cook's kitchen.

Along with the KitchenAid website, www.kitchenaid.com (where you can find refurbished models for about \$200), the KitchenAid stand mixer can be purchased at

Target, Best Buy and Williams-Sonoma. Prices range from about \$250 to \$500.

BEST BOOK FOR BAKERS

For the aspiring baker in your family, Anne Byrn's "American Cake" is the quintessential cookbook for those hungry for a challenge.

Taking a trip back in time from 1650 to the present, this cookbook introduces bakers to the rich history of cake in America, with more than 125 recipes to try.

I received this cookbook as a Secret Santa gift last Christmas, and with its pages spread out on my kitchen counter, I have since conquered Boston Cream Pie, Cinnamon Flop, Chocolate Roulade

and California Orange and Olive Oil Cake, among other recipes.

Those of you ready to take on a new challenge, I dare you to turn to the Doberge Torte recipe!

You can order a copy of "American Cake" at Oblong Books & Music in Millerton, N.Y., House of Books in Kent, Conn., and online at Amazon and Barnes & Noble.

KITCHEN SHOPS NEARBY

While shopping online may be your safest bet this COVID-19 holiday season, a trip to your closest retail store or specialty shop is a great way to glean some original gift ideas, provided you take the proper precautions. True, you might have to travel outside the Northwest

Yet it's their passion and perseverance in the kitchen that leads to those unforgettable nights around the dinner table; so why not reward the cook in your life with more than just a kiss under the mistletoe this season?

Corner to find a cooking store with a wide selection, but you could even make a day out of your shopping expedition.

In Litchfield, Conn., at 23 West St. you'll find Kitchenworks & Gourmet Gifts. The store is open from 11 a.m. to 5 p.m. Monday through Friday, from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. on Saturdays and from noon to 5 p.m. on Sundays.

In Great Barrington, Mass., The Chef's Shop (formerly on Railroad Street), has moved to a space at Guido's Fresh Market-

place, 760 South Main. You can shop online at www.thechefsshop.com or visit the marketplace and browse the inventory for inspiration.

In Rhinebeck, N.Y., Warren Kitchen & Cutlery has much to offer kitchen enthusiasts of all levels of experience with its cutlery, cookware and other culinary services. Located at 6934 Route 9 in Rhinebeck, the store is open from 9:30 a.m. to 5:30 p.m. Monday through Saturday (closed on Sundays).



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PHOTOS SUBMITTED

Some of us have trouble choosing presents, but a gift that makes both giver and receiver happy, and helps others, can be a perfect solution. These earrings benefit Her Future Coalition.

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No time like the 'present' to learn how:

The 'Perfect' Gift-Giving Guide

By Jenny Hansell

I am the person for whom holiday gift-giving guides were invented. From Patricia Marx's "On and Off the Avenue" columns in *The New Yorker* to online sources like *The Cut*, *Refinery29* and *Buzzfeed*, I'll gobble up any list that's "29 gifts under \$100 for the snobby dad" or "36 gift ideas for the tween who loves makeup but is too young to wear it" (These are made up — don't go looking for them!)

Thanks to gift guides, I once bought my mom some bedazzled dish gloves (what was I thinking??), my young niece a set of colored pencils hand-carved out of sustainably harvested rain forest wood (I think she liked them...?), and to be honest, I've bought myself a lot of cool things off those lists too.

Sadly, I think I trust a random list-icle writer to pick out better gifts for my loved ones than I can choose myself.

No time like the present to fix that, so I went looking for advice from some super-smart gift givers, who happen to be three of my oldest friends (OK, maybe it was just an excuse to have a Zoom catch-up with them, but they did have a lot to say.)

Lisabeth, a consultant to nonprofits in Michigan, also makes beautiful jewelry and home goods, which she sells on *Etsy* and gives to friends.

"I don't buy for occasions anymore," she observed. "I know what the people I love like, and if I see something I just get it for them. I don't wait, I just give it. I get much more pleasure from giving than getting."

Sarah, who lives in Florida, runs a nonprofit that helps women who have been rescued from human trafficking in India and Nepal. One of the programs is a jewelry workshop, so Sarah will often give items made by the young artisans she works with or others she encounters on her travels. Sarah loves choosing gifts for friends.

"Gift-giving is my love language," she said.

I wondered if she learned it from her mother, a wonderful warm woman who, in her 50s, named herself *Freedom* and embarked on a new life of adventure.

"Not at all," Sarah said. "She hated gift-giving. Her love language was acts of service."

Because of her work, she gives a lot of gifts to colleagues, so usually picks a theme to make multiple similar gifts: plastic-free, or consumables. She'll combine maple syrup she picks up at *Costco* with homemade jam and fair trade coffee into beautifully packaged sets.

Aimee, on *Cape Cod*, has children the same age as

mine — late teens/early 20s.

“Once they got to a certain age, we all just made our lists and shopped from that,” she said. “This year, I want my kitchen knives professionally sharpened.”

Her husband knows her tastes in books, and collects them throughout the year so at Hanukkah she gets a big stack of books. Aimee did learn from her mother, who kept a cabinet full of pretty things — beautiful candles, or stationery — so she’d always have a gift at hand.

After consideration of Visa gift cards (not tacky, always welcome), gifts to charity in some-

one’s name (“we like to model giving for a purpose” said Sarah), edible arrangements (can’t go wrong) and booze — Aimee is particularly fond of homemade fireball kits (a shot of whiskey with some cinnamon and hot pepper) — the four of us agreed that handmade gifts from a local artisan, or those that supported a cause we cared about (such as Sarah’s group) were at the top of the list.

Finally, I asked them what the best gift was they’d ever given, or received.

Silence, and then Lisabeth said, “Honestly, the best gift was when I needed to flee my

abusive husband and Aimee dropped everything to come get me, my toddler and my stuff. She took me to a hotel and stayed with me for days.”

Friendship: You can’t buy it in a store or find it on a list-icle, but it’s the greatest gift of all.

Find Lisabeth’s Etsy shop at www.etsy.com/shop/eemabeth; and Her Future Coalition jewelry at www.shop.herfuturecoalition.org

Jenny Hansell is a writer and nonprofit director living in Massachusetts. Full disclosure: she serves on the board of Her Future Coalition.



Lisabeth Lobenthal sells quirky handmade items at her Etsy shop.



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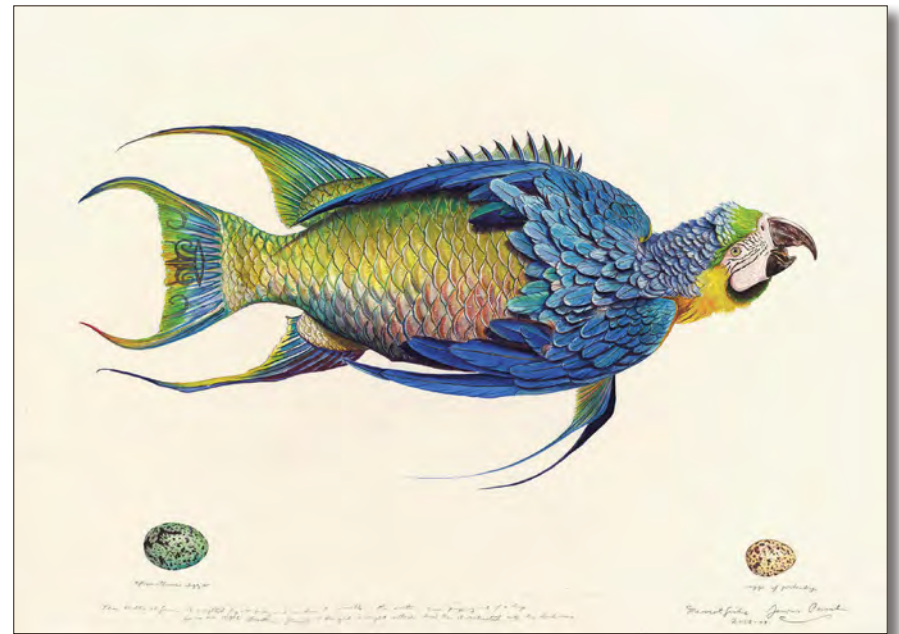
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ILLUSTRATIONS BY JAMES PROSEK

Illustrator and expert fly-fisherman James Prosek fills his gorgeous books with illustrations that are sometimes real and sometimes fantastical, such as this imagined version of a parrot fish.

For The Man In Your Life (Because Who Doesn't Wear Socks?)

By Patrick L. Sullivan

Here is my annual holiday gift guide, concentrating on fly-fishing, traditional American men's clothing and books. I tried to include other things but it turns out I don't know about anything else.

Please bear in mind that manufacturing of, well, everything has been disrupted by the COVID-19 pandemic, so what I write about as of Oct. 25 might be yesterday's news by the time you read this.

FLY-FISHING:

For beginners, it's hard to go wrong with the Echo Base rods, which start at about \$100 (rod only) or the

rod-reel-line combo (around \$180). They are available online, but before you go that route, check with our two area fly shops, Housatonic River Outfitters in Cornwall, Conn., and UpCountry Sportfishing in New Hartford, Conn. HRO's website is www.dryflies.com; UpCountry is www.farmingtonriver.com.

Many anglers have adopted the sling pack as an alternative to heavy and cumbersome vests and packs. I looked into this thoroughly, and my pick is the Vedavoo Beast, because a) you can specify a right- or left-hand casting setup b) it does not have an extra chest

strap to get in the way and c) it's made Stateside. They have a wide range of models; the Beast is \$180. Go to www.vedavoo.com.

Redington Escape wader pants. Full chest waders are not always necessary. In fact, I hate them.

These come up to your waist, and unlike the previous model, they have a Velcro belt that is easy to adjust and a couple of big pockets in front, for an extra fly box or to stow cigar wrappers and bits of fishing line for proper disposal later. About \$170. Go to www.redington.com.

CLOTHING

The world of the Oxford button down collar shirt (OCBD) is getting smaller, with the pending demise of Brooks Brothers.

There are a bunch of crummy mall brands that have dinky collars and buttons that fall off, and are designed for the 2% body fat crowd.

But for regular American men, the off-the-peg choices have pretty much shriveled to J. Press (where you can get the optional flap pocket) at \$125, and O'Connell's in Buffalo, N.Y. (\$145).

The Bros. still have their iconic OCBD on the website, at \$140. I am inclined to suspect that availability is limited.

The top shelf OCBD is from Mercer and Sons in Maine. It's as close to made-to-measure as you're going to get without actually getting measured, and if you need a slightly trimmer fit they can accommodate you. And at \$162.50, Mercer is not that much more expensive than the above. However, delivery might take a little while, because an actual person is going

to make your shirt. Websites to look at are www.jpressonline.com; www.oconnellsclothing.com; www.brooksbrothers.com; and www.mercerandsons.com.

SOCKS

I am assuming the winter will be uniquely horrible because it's 2020 and why should winter be different?

So warm socks will be more important than ever. And my go-to sock is made by Vermont's Darn Tough Socks—specifically, the Hiker Micro Crew Cushion sock, which is normal-looking and can be worn with dress shoes as well as fishing boots.

They are warm and they keep their shape. I have been beating them up pretty thoroughly for a couple of years with no holes in sight. And they are made in the US of A. Go to www.darntough.com.

BOOKS

The David M. Hunt library in Falls Village, Conn., has a book sale on the first Saturday of the month. (Usually.) That means you have one more crack at it, on Dec. 5. Expect the unexpected. And inexpensive, too. (The fact that my mother is involved, and often gets me to help, has nothing to do with this endorsement.) For information, go to www.huntlibrary.org.

TROUT BOOKS

James Prosek is an interesting guy and he knows his fish. (I interviewed him about art recently, and the conversation ranged a bit.) His "Trout: An Illustrated History" and "Trout of the World" are handsome volumes featuring his lovely paintings of trout. (Notice that nobody paints pictures of bass.)

For the housebound angler, these are good choices because the images induce nothing

worse than a vague longing for spring, unlike technical fishing books, which send anglers into a frenzy that cannot be addressed in a timely manner.

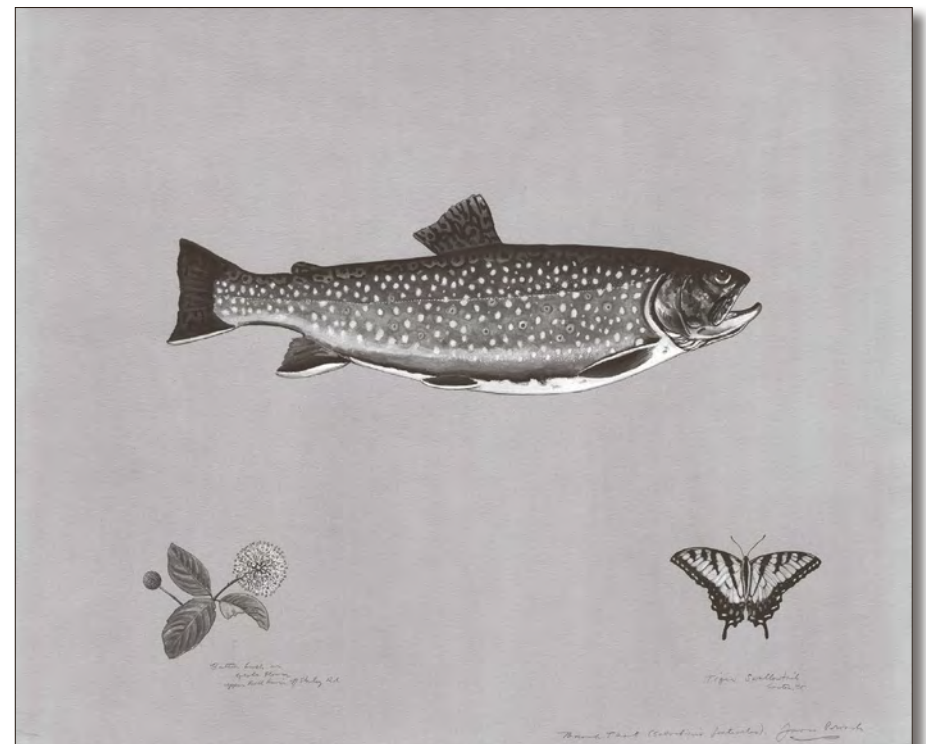
But if you must have a how-to book, I heartily recommend Taylor Streit's "Instinctive Trout Fishing," which is jam-packed

with excellent tips. Any fly-fisher at any level can learn something here.

If you are looking for fish books, Housatonic River Outfitters has a large selection, many out-of-print and/or rare. It's best to call ahead to check store hours: 860-672-1010.



When you can't be up to your waist in ice cold water looking for real trout, you can dream with trout illustrations and lore from James Prosek.



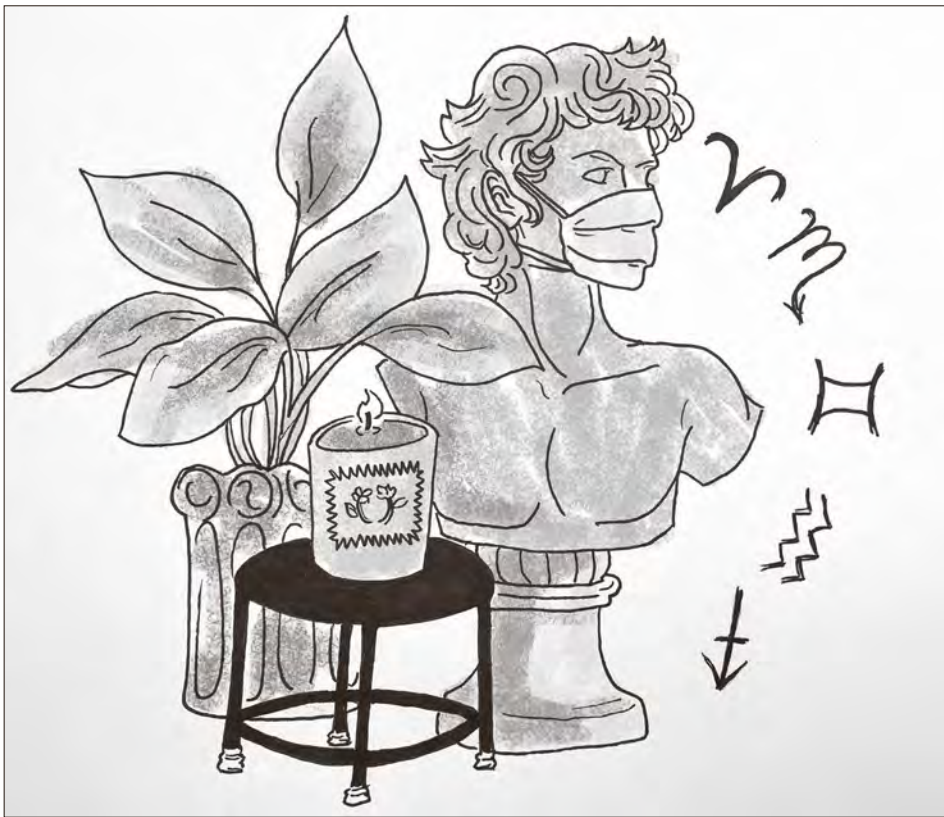


ILLUSTRATION BY ALEXANDER WILBURN

Holiday Horoscopes

Seasonal Shopping According to the Stars

By Alexander Wilburn

Greetings, gift givers! In writing for this year's Gift Guide, I'm glad to say some things are business as usual. I'll still say the best holiday shopping can be found locally. I'll still claim that what this season does best is highlight what wonderful stores we have around us in the countryside. I will still recall all the occasions when friends visiting from New York City marveled at the beautiful, well-crafted gifts found in such a rural place — including the tasteful wrapping paper at Salisbury Pharmacy on Main Street in Salisbury, Conn.

But nothing can be completely business as usual this year.

So here's the hard part: What does anyone need? The strangest part of this pandemic may be how little you now know about the people you used to see every day. Now they're email buddies or Zoom book club buddies.

Luckily, there's an old system in place for guessing your friends' personal tastes. Let Hellenistic divination be your personal shopper ... Let the stars guide your gift-giving plans. I'm getting a message from the future... It says you're going to need more ribbon.

ARIES — Aries was already restless in quarantine back in March. They thrive on excite-

ment and living large. Did you know the home goods store Privet House in New Preston, Conn., also has an amazing collection of vintage books? Think titles that scream glamour, like "The Grand Dames" or "The Very Rich," and biographies of big lives like Gloria Vanderbilt. (www.privethouse.com)

TAURUS — Snuggly Taurus has got to be comfortable. They were the first ones in their cozy clothes making bread. Why not register them for the 2021 CSA (Community Supported Agriculture) from Adamah Farm in Fall Village, Conn.? They'll get a weekly share of locally grown produce sure to inspire lots of cooking at home. (www.hazon.org/adamah)

GEMINI — Your Gemini friend will admit how hard they are to shop for — they love to be the first to know about anything. While they're busy finding unique gifts for all, arm your Gemini with a bright, floral-printed face mask from the Salisbury-based artisan craft company Allegra and Luca. (www.allegraandluca.com)

CANCER — Oh Cancer, this year has been tough. They just want everyone to be alright. What they'll appreciate is the gift of giving back. Make a donation to one of the local food pantries, like The Corner Food Pantry in Lakeville, Conn. ([**BROWSE OUR
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cornerfoodpantry.org) or Fishes and Loaves Pantry in North Canaan, Conn. (www.northcanaan-congregationalchurch.org)

LEO — Don't think Leo is wearing sweats all year. Bold Leos make their presence known, even over Zoom. B. Johnstone & Co. in Sharon, Conn., has everything to keep fashion-savvy Leos happy. Head over to @bjohnstonefashion on Instagram to watch owner Bartley Johnstone tour the store, show off new looks and give you lots of inspiration.

VIRGO — Understatement: Virgo is a bit of a perfectionist. They love order, style and having the best. Give them the Architectural Digest-look at 100 Main Street in Fall Village with beauti-

ful dinner sets from ceramic designer Christopher Spitzmiller. (www.100mainst.com)

LIBRA — Libras love exploring all points of views. Kent-based photographer Jeannette Montgomery Barron and "Call Me By Your Name" author André Aciman have collaborated in their new book "Roman Hours." A conversation between two artists is the perfect balancing act for Libra. Reserve a copy at House of Books in Kent. (www.houseofbooksct.com)

SCORPIO — Secretive Scorpio might be loving staying home, especially with their most exclusive friends: their plants. Honeychurch Home in Salisbury has a fantastic collection of beautifully glazed pots ready

to turn a home into a jungle. (www.honeychurchhome.com)

SAGITTARIUS — Sag misses all the things they used to do. They've already texted all their friends saying, "Remember Paris?" Give them the gift of their memories. Michael Trapp's design store in Cornwall, Conn., has gilt antique frames for hanging your old travel photos like they're in a museum. (www.shopmichaeltrapp.com)

CAPRICORN — Busy Capricorns throw themselves into work. Now that home is their office, keep them organized by heading to Charlotte Taylor in Millerton, N.Y., where desk accessories like to-do lists are bursting with charm. (www.charlotte-taylor.net)

AQUARIUS — Aquarius will always find their sanctuary. They thrive in meditation. Help add to their peaceful quarantine. Plain Goods in New Preston, Conn., carries luxurious candles from Flamingo Estate. Trust me, get the Roma Heirloom Tomato candle. The scent of tomato on the vine is heaven. (www.plain-goods.com)

PISCES — So many emotions for Pisces, such a hard year. Sooth your friend with a delicious carrot cake from Sweet William's Coffee Shop and Bakery in Salisbury (the carrot cake is so good) paired with the perfect dessert wine from Salisbury Wines, which is just next door. (www.sweet-williams.com and www.salisburywines.com)



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Precious, Useless Things That I Cannot Live Without

By Cynthia Hochswender

For the past eight months or so I've mostly been occupied with buying boring utilitarian things that are essential to life: toilet paper, disinfecting wipes and sprays, face masks, bottled water (to get me through extended power outages).

Where's the sparkle? Where's the fun? I used to go down to SoHo in New York City, or the East Village, to browse around shops with precious, beautiful, useless little things that were too expensive to buy but lots of fun to look at.

In our new lives, even a useless trip to the city for hobby shopping can be dangerous. But one thing does happen when the world around us falls apart: Beloved things disappear and habits change, but new things rise up to fill the gap.

One such new thing is the shop in Millerton, N.Y., called Westerlind (and its associated downstairs food shop, called Westerlind Pantry). I am so in love with this store. It completely fills my need to browse things that I can't afford but that it gives me joy just to look at (but not touch, because in COVID world we're not really supposed to fondle things in stores).

Westerlind, owned by Anna Westerlind, opened last year in the space once owned by the iconic Saperstein's, which was in many ways the exact opposite of the new shop but which also in a weird way is kind of the same.

Saperstein's was an overstuffed jumble bag of supremely useful things. Westerlind is spare and crisp and carefully edited and sells things that are at once incredibly fey — but also very utilitarian. It is like Saperstein's in the sense that it sells a lot of outdoor things, like wet weather boots and thick, woolly sweaters and waterproof mittens.

It's different from Saperstein's in that a pair of rubber rain boots for children costs \$95. The sweaters cost about \$250.

But it's all so gorgeous; you get glamourized into wanting it (glamourized in the sense of hypnotized, like a vampire would do). I know people who have bought things there and been delighted with their purchases. I know people who, like me, dream of being able to drop \$570 for a bean bag chair (the world's most plush, inviting bean bag chair). Or as my friend Dana said when I mentioned the store, "I'm so ready to buy \$200 furry slippers!"

She meant it. And I mean it.

I probably won't ever buy anything for myself at Westerlind, because I don't like to have a lot of stuff in my house and I tend to feel splurge guilt.

But I'd seriously think about doing my holiday shopping here. Then I can have the fun of buying things without having to find space for them in my house.

There are many small wonder-



PHOTOS BY CYNTHIA HOCHSWENDER

After perusing the kayaks and expensive but adorable rubber boots for children upstairs at Westerlind, slip downstairs to the Pantry for a curated collection of foods that range from frivolous to essential.

ful gifts here, like the chic-est pair of mittens you've ever seen; a scarf that looks like a small down coat or puffy jacket; a hat with ear flaps that is so cuddly and attractive that you want to take it home and give it a name (and maybe feed it carrots).

They're all expensive — but the recipient of your largesse will know and understand that, although the gift box is small, the value and wondrousness of the contents is immense.

There are also holiday gift items coming in from Japan (the land of over-designed essentials) and other foreign ports (the goods at Westerlind are largely but not exclusively imported).

I will not however hesitate to buy many things downstairs in what used to be the work clothing department at Saperstein's and is now a very refined little

food shop called Westerlind Pantry.

It is run by a Brit named Olly Smith who has exquisite taste and a great sense of humor, both of which traits are exhibited in the shop's products.

Smith's goal is to help fill the grocery store void in the Millerton area by stocking pantry and refrigerator staples as well as pre-made meals. The shepherd's pies are especially popular, Smith said, but there is also lasagna and soup and duck cassoulet, the hearty French classic dish of duck confit and beans. The meals RTE (or ready to eat, as the Army calls them) are prepared by Nichole Craft, who was trained in New York City and now lives in Amenia. Her food line is called Snackcraft.

In addition to meals, she also makes small glass jars full of pistachio-and-mint salsa and home-

made hummus and an elevated version of French onion dip (the kind we used to make with the Lipton soup packet).

People are also coming in to buy fresh milk and yogurt from Berle Farm in Hoosick, N.Y., Catsmo smoked salmon from Wallkill, N.Y., freshly baked bread from Travis Brecher's Creature bakery in Mill River, Mass. There is a perfectly styled table with fresh produce, especially winter squash. There are fat packages of French Plugra butter.

There are canned foods and sauces with exotic origins, from Alaskan canned octopus to jumbo containers of the Japanese mayonnaise product called Kewpie.

There are obscure but necessary spices such as rose harissa (doesn't that sound intriguing and delicious?) and "herbes de romance."

For stocking stuffers and hostess gifts (in the unlikely event that you go to a holiday cocktail party), there are \$18 jars of Bubbly Champagne Drop candies and dark chocolate espresso beans and prosecco gummies.

And there are housewares: Japanese dishtowels and Nordic cookware and my favorite Chinese vegetable brush that I probably bought for \$5 a quarter century ago (they are here at Westerlind for \$12 and I've already instructed my loved ones that I need one in my holiday stocking this year).

I worry with precious stores that they will go under very quickly; I try not to get too attached so I don't have to fear losing them. I don't have this particular fear with Westerlind. The owner, Anna Westerlind, has done a great job of keeping her shops going in Den-

ver, Colo., and New York City and online (www.westerlindoutdoor.com). And Smith said the Pantry has been going gangbusters since it opened in mid-October. He said that on a Friday afternoon when the shop was empty. I returned the following day and had to wait in line because it was so busy.

In case you're wondering what brought me back within 24 hours, I wanted (needed) to buy two \$14 bags of delicious cookies from Savor Fine Foods in Thomaston, Conn., to bring as a hostess gift for a small luncheon (social distancing; masks).

They were just as Smith described them: "Forty-five nuggets of delicious – and an affordable alternative to a foreign holiday!"

Let's be honest: I loved every single useless and/or beautiful item at Westerlind. But I will probably actually buy holiday gifts at the Pantry (perhaps even gift certificates for prepared foods to give to my very good friend Jody, who doesn't cook – at all).

To learn more about Westerlind, go to www.westerlindoutdoor.com. To learn more about Snackcraft (Nichole also does catering), go to www.snackcraftcatering.com. To see more photos of the pantry and the Millerton shop, visit their Instagram pages at [westerlind_us](https://www.instagram.com/westerlind_us) and [westerlind_pantry](https://www.instagram.com/westerlind_pantry).

The store hours as of late October were Wednesday through Saturday, 10 a.m. to 6 p.m., Sunday from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. Those hours will have expanded by the time this issue goes to press, and there will likely be open hours on Monday and Tuesday. Call to check at 518-592-1500. The shop is at 41 Main St. in Millerton.



Along with rugged, classic shoes for the outdoors, Westerlind has a super cool translucent kayak on display.

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Food banks are in particular need of support this year, as many people are seeking aid for the first time in their lives because of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Neighbors Known And Unknown, In Need

By Leila Hawken

Who is your neighbor in a rural area such as ours? Actually, who isn't?

Your neighbors live throughout your town, not just next door. When those neighbors slip into a time of personal need, nonprofit organizations are there to provide help. That's what makes a thriving and caring community.

Such organizations did not always exist as we have them today. My grandmother (now we go way back to the early to mid-1900s) was a superb cook. People in need of a daily meal would go door to door in New Haven, always to the back door, at dinnertime. When a knock came, my grandmother would hand a warm plate of dinner and utensils to the waiting person, who would consume it, leaving the empty plate and utensils on the back step. Often those people would have come into New Haven on a freight train. Or they might be local penniless folks.

The problem was that too many visitors came to the back door. So, at some point my grandfather forbade my grandmother from continuing the practice. And that was that for the back door.

Charitable organizations have brought a better approach to answering needs. They keep their doors open and keep on giving until the need subsides. But the need continues to increase these

days.

As the holidays approach, and you resolve to shop locally, also resolve to select a local organization or two whose mission aligns with your own sense of wanting to help where help is needed. The choices are wide-ranging.

Think of your town's emergency personnel (fire and ambulance), always on call; food and fuel banks that are continuing to provide; your library, carrying on and providing programs imaginatively; arts organizations, historical societies and public radio (and of course your newspaper), all of whom are providing for you in engaging ways. Remember animal, bird and wildlife support organizations. And don't forget organizations that help children. Houses of worship are a possibility always — and especially now when they are doing more with less.

Organizations this year in particular have not been able to fundraise in their accustomed ways. They count on you and your generosity more than ever.

How much to give? The size of the gift is not important. Some suggest that we give until it hurts. Another approach is to give until it feels good. And it does feel good when the donation of whatever amount goes to help your neighbor, whether known to you or not.

Help to keep all the doors open this holiday season.



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PHOTO BY WENDY CARLSON

Many students are home for the next few months. School logo gifts can help youngsters feel connected to their campus.

Finding School Spirit In a Year When There Isn't a lot of School

By Cynthia Hochswender

In a normal year, you might think, "We have a school but we don't have much school spirit!" Or "We have a school and a ton of school spirit!"

This year, you might have a lot of spirit, but you probably don't have a lot of school.

Spirit is something that is best whipped up by communal activities, such as sporting events and campus rallies. But it can also be kindled with the help of school logo items.

You can find gear for Housatonic Valley Regional High School in Region One at www.rokkitwear.com. The school's teams are known as The Mountaineers and The Lady Mountaineers. Refreshingly, in

addition to logo clothing for athletes, there are also items for student musicians and members of the Student Council.

Many of the private schools in the area have their own online stores and some sell their gear through online shops such as www.spiritshop.com. The boarding school for high school boys in Salisbury, Conn., called the Salisbury School has gear at the Spirit Shop, and also at www.prepsportswear.com. The school's teams are called the Crimson Knights.

You can find Hotchkiss School in Lakeville, Conn., gear at Prep Sportswear and Spirit Shop. But Hotchkiss also has its

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... school spirit

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own online store, at www.hotchkisschoolstore.com, with everything from crew socks to Windsor-style chairs and Swiss watches. Team name: The Bearcats.

For the Berkshire School in Sheffield, Mass., go to www.berkshirestore.com. Team name: Berkshire Bears. Unusual and adorable: bear-paw belts, bracelets and cufflinks.

The Indian Mountain School in Lakeville, Conn., has boarding and day students in grades pre-k to 9. Their school store is at www.indianmountain.square.site.

On the quirky side, go to the Prep Sportswear web page for the Marvelwood School in Kent, Conn., which has the pterodactyl as their mascot.

The Millbrook School in

Dutchess County, N.Y., prides itself on offering more thoughtful gear. Their online store has “alternative eco fleece” sportswear; bamboo socks; Patagonia brand sweaters and fleece; and “legacy vintage wool” hats. Their products all have nicely descriptive and enticing names, too, including the “Ra Ra Sporty Stripe Football Shirt” that is evocative of F. Scott Fitzgerald and raccoon coats; the “Cozy Crew” and the “Freshy Tee” and the “Boyfriend Tee.”

The co-ed boarding Kent School is on Spirit Shop and Prep Sportswear and www.rokkitwear.com. It also has its own store online at www.kentschoolstore.myshopify.com, with similar products (chair, watch) to those sold online for Hotchkiss. Team: The Lions.

Photos for the online store for the all-male South Kent boarding school look refreshingly as though real students are in the photos, not models. In addition to clothing you can find old-fashioned banners and pennants as well as water bottles, magnets, coasters and umbrellas and other products that are useful in everyday life on campus and off.

There is of course a world of other schools out there; most are easy to find online. You can encourage your child in the direction of the school of your own choice by selecting, say, Harvard pajamas, but that’s kind of the opposite of school spirit. In the madness of 2020, perhaps the best lesson we all can learn is to live in the here and the now and not the future.

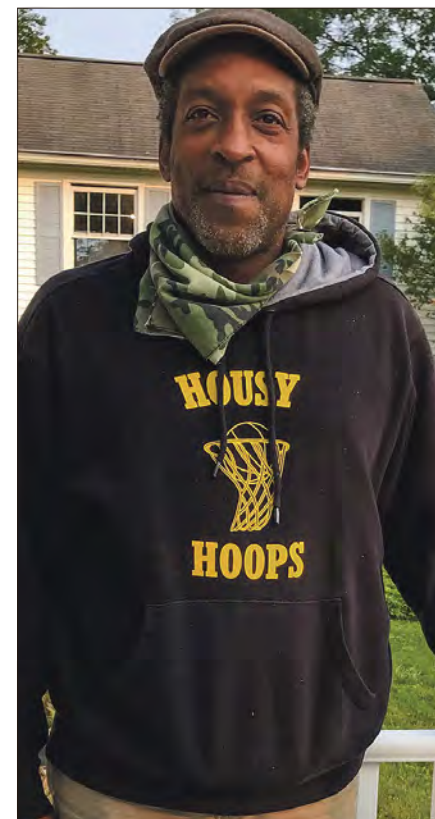


PHOTO BY CYNTHIA HOCHSWENDER

Kevin Wiggins models the sweatshirt of the youth basketball team he coaches.

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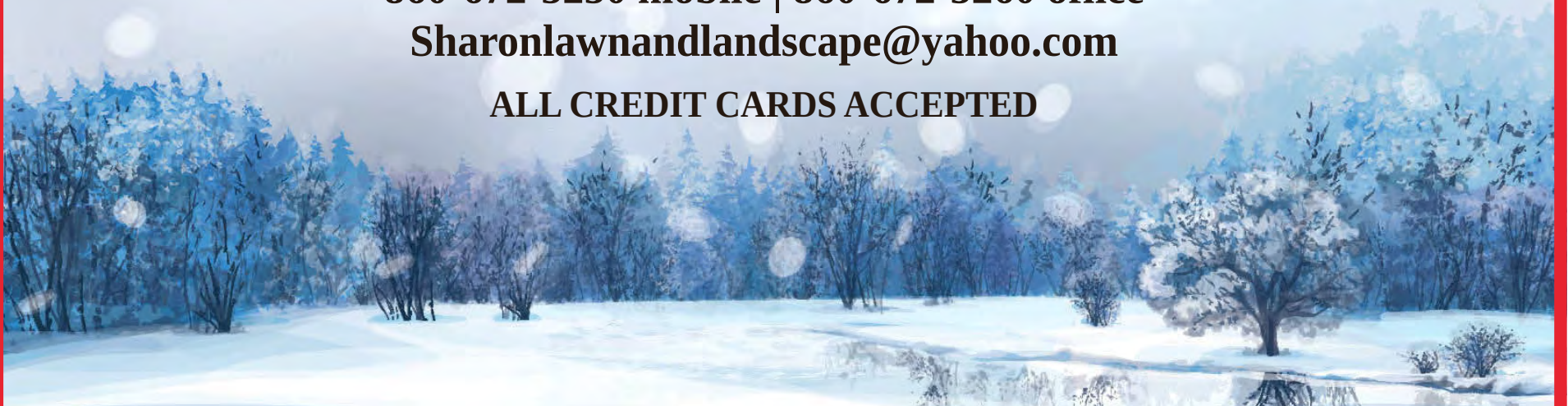


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