

HOLIDAY

gift guide

Inside:

- *Self Care*
 - *Shop Local*
 - *Loving from a distance*
- & more!***



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Editor's letter:

Well, happy holidays, ya'll. Reporters will make the point, endlessly, that these holidays feel strange and hollow.

Thanksgiving follows and concerns mount. Drop off food for the quarantining family members, maybe? Because we can't risk making them sick, whether from flu or from COVID-19, and I'm out and about with my job, potentially catching everything. Christmas—same thing. We'll put up our tree and buy some presents, but it doesn't feel right.

Psychologist Kim Olver, in an interview for the Gift Guide, says we're mourning for people and for our changed lives. I think that's it. For many, it's a grief-stricken holiday season. And all you can do is get through it, accepting that things have changed.

Is that depressing? I'm sorry. But Olver makes another point: that we can choose joy. It won't look like joy from holidays passed, maybe, but we can look for and cling to happiness. We can look for others to help; we can support our friends and neighbors by shopping at their stores and yard sales, if we're able to spend money. And if not, there are other ways to help.



RR photo by Joe Cooke
 The best gifts turn up in strange places. This crocheted Triceratops is from a Scranton consignment store, and I wish I knew who made it.

Jude Waterston talks about loving from a distance, sharing food and caring. We take a look at predicted trends in holiday shopping and offer up a lot of suggestions for gifts in pandemic times. Reflexologist Caroline Verdi shares ways to stay calm and centered through the holiday season. And the Velvet Maple's Alessandra Maria Iavarone shares her expertise on choosing the perfect gift for these strange times.

Stay well, everyone. And have a joyous holiday season.

— Annemarie Schuetz, section editor

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Choose joy

The holiday spirit is there if you reach for it

By ANNEMARIE SCHUETZ

Psychologist Kim Olver has a holiday gift for us all. It is hope, and a way to find it.

Olver (who also writes for the **River Reporter** in her column "From the Relationship Center") works with Choice Theory. Basically, it helps you understand why people do the things they do and make the choices they make.

The next step is to realize that the only behavior you can control is your own. The only choices you can make are your own.

Stop trying to force change

Take a given behavior, maybe something a family member does that's really aggravating. Ask: "What does this person want that they try to get with this behavior?" Olver said.

Try to understand.

And then this: "Daily, attempt to try to stop trying to change things," she said. You can't truly affect a situation or another person's behavior. You can only change how you respond."

You've got three basic choices in how you respond: "You can keep doing what you're doing," she said. "You can do it worse." (And play that out in your mind. What would that look like?) And, "you can make it better."

How do we apply this notion of choice to our present time?



Photo contributed by Kim Olver
Read more from Kim Olver at www.riverreporter.com/relationship-center.

We are grieving

Our vision of how things should be has altered.

"With this pandemic, people are grieving," Olver said. Not just for people lost, but for "the way of life that they want... Some people want to hold onto the reality that was."

We thought everything would go a certain way. And when it changes, especially if it's not our fault, that's painful, difficult and overwhelming.

Olver refers me to the Kubler-Ross stages of grief: denial, anger, bargaining, depression and acceptance.

"We have the whole world in this situation," she said.

How do you break out of grief? Remember that some people have it worse.

Reach out, she said. "Think about ways to help other people."

We won't stay this angry or in grief forever. We will work through this.

And it's okay to need help seeing the path forward.

Surviving

One key to getting through the emotional upheaval is "to realize that you have no control over this," Olver said. "To fight against reality is what creates misery."

So how do we fix that in ourselves?

Choice Theory says that we have basic needs, and we're unhappy if those needs aren't met. We need connection, security, significance, freedom and joy, Olver said.

Well, creativity may be required to get those needs met. You may have to take each



Photo by Brigitte Tohm on Unsplash

idea and look for where it is in your life and how it could become more a part of your existence.

Holidays, for instance, "are not about being physically together but the experience of feeling together," she said.

You can have conference calls. Zoom parties. Mail holiday gifts and open them together, connected by Zoom.

"It's not the same, it's not as good, but it's about getting through this tough time," she said.

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HANUKKAH: THE JEWISH CHRISTMAS?

By JONATHAN CHARLES FOX

Is Hanukkah really the Jewish equivalent of Christmas? Growing up in a traditional suburban Jewish household circa 1960, I'm fairly sure that my sister and I both thought so, even though there were some glaring deviations. As my friends visited with Santa and decorated trees with lights and tinsel, I demanded that Mom explain (over and over) why Hanukkah was "no fun at all."

As a child, I was oblivious to the intricacies of religious doctrine, yet couldn't help but notice fundamental differences in the holidays. In the spring, my family gathered to honor Passover while my friends celebrated Easter. But at the age of 6, all I knew was that my Gentile (non-Jewish) pals got chocolate bunnies and jellybeans presented in a beautiful basket that they later gleefully filled with brightly colored eggs found hidden amongst the shrubbery dotting their family's well-manicured suburban lawns.

We got saltwater and a burnt egg bleakly garnished with parsley and horse-radish during an hours-long, interminable, never-ending meal. While the rest of the adults sipped glass after glass of disgusting kosher wine, my father slugged scotch and we children ran around the house, hunting for a giant dry cracker wrapped in a napkin, which even the dog didn't want. But I digress.

Little did I know then that Hanukkah wasn't much of a holiday at all, and it certainly had nothing to do with gift-giving. I have since learned that "originally, the holiday was intended to parallel the eight-day harvest festival of Sukkot. The Books of the Maccabees made no mention of the legend concerning a small jar of oil that unexpectedly lasted for eight days. Only centuries after the Maccabees' defeat of the Syrians did the story of the jar of oil—which has come to be associated with Hanukkah—appear in the Talmud" (www.reformedjudaism.org). Hmm.

I also read that "although the practice of lighting the menorah was common throughout much of the 19th century, North American Jews tended to neglect most of the other traditions and practices associated with the holiday." By the 1920s, however, "Jews increasingly added gift-giving to their Hanukkah celebrations, prompting some people to refer to Hanukkah as the 'Jewish Christmas.'"

According to the same website, "the elevation of



A menorah from Tommy Gelb's collection housed in the Stray Cat Gallery in Bethel, NY back in 2018.

Hanukkah to a major holiday was partly the result of Jews acculturating themselves to a North America that was overwhelmingly Christian in population and symbols. Although Hanukkah had become an important holiday among Jews by the 1920s," the article informed me, "it would be incorrect to regard it as an imitation of Christmas with an emphasis on the exchange of presents."

"It's important to recognize that it is an American Jewish phenomenon, this gift-giving that's part of Hanukkah," Rabbi Menachem Creditor, scholar in residence at the UJA-Federation of New York, explained to TIME magazine in 2019. "It's not historically part of Hanukkah at all. In that, gift-giving on Hanukkah is not unlike gift-giving on Christmas," he said. "It has little, if anything, to do with the religious requirements of the celebration."

That sentiment explains the palpable holiday disappointment hanging in the air in the Fox household circa 1960, as we sullenly accepted one gift per night, knowing what was likely to be revealed. The Rabbi's somewhat terse observation explains a lot, including why so many of our gifts were practical. Disappointing? Sure, especially to a kid who wants to sit on Santa's lap—but useful, no

doubt. "Great," I'd think, slowly unwrapping something sure to make me sad. "More underwear," I'd sigh. "Thanks, Mom."

The way 6-year-old me saw it, my friends excitedly anticipated a magical sleigh brimming with presents delivered by flying reindeer and a jolly old man, while my sister and I recited Hebrew prayers in hushed tones, lighting tiny candles night after night, metaphorically representing a bloody battle and an old oil lamp that may (or may not) have miraculously burned for eight days and eight nights. Big whoop.

Giving presents like socks and tee-shirts, my mother tried to keep it low-key when we were young ("it's not part of Hanukkah at all"), but over time, she caved as my sister and I incessantly whined (well, I whined anyhow) about not having a tree and being "forced to spin a dumb top."

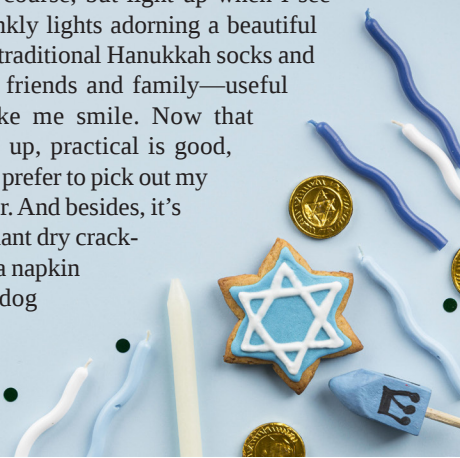
I reluctantly looked forward to "Hanukkah Gelt" (tasteless chocolate coins wrapped in golden foil) but still got books and pajamas. As the years passed, Mom would, thankfully, up the ante a little with a coveted Howdy Doody marionette, maybe an Etch-a-Sketch and,

by the last night of each Hanukkah, something really cool like a pair of skates and, one year, a bike.

In hindsight, it's not like we were deprived. Yes, we got gifts, and yes, it went on for a week, but... trust me, it ain't Christmas. "North American Jews use this holiday as a celebration of family, reinforcing Jewish identity in a place whose population may be overwhelmingly Christian but, in which, Jews feel at home."

These days, I understand the religious significance of Christmas, of course, but light up when I see tinsel and twinkly lights adorning a beautiful tree. I still get traditional Hanukkah socks and pajamas from friends and family—useful gifts that make me smile. Now that I'm all grown up, practical is good, although I still prefer to pick out my own underwear. And besides, it's better than a giant dry cracker wrapped in a napkin that even the dog doesn't want.

Happy Hanukkah.



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GIFTS for an unsettling time



Photo by Martin Sanchez on Unsplash

Perhaps the ultimate gift of 2020: a roll of toilet paper.

By ANNEMARIE SCHUETZ

Usually, around this time, we're thinking winter. We're thinking holidays.

But in this bizarre, frightening year, we're also considering coronavirus and its limitations.

We may not be going to stores.

Sure, summer was fabulous for a lot of store owners. Business boomed and sales tax receipts have eased municipal budgets. But now we're coming into winter. Our shops survive the cold, tourist-less season on what they earn now, too.

Before COVID-19, you could plan beautiful meals with the whole family or take your loved ones out to a local restaurant. You could wander through shop after shop, looking for the perfect gift.

Shopping is different now, but it's broadly still the same. You're looking for the perfect gift: You can start by writing down your favorite local businesses. Where did you shop in the past? Check to see if they have an online store; maybe you can wander virtually.

If they don't have one, give them a call and see what their protocol is right now. Maybe you can schedule an appointment. Maybe you can phone-shop.

But talk to them. Reach out. Don't just go to the big, impersonal online store. This is a tough time for businesses, too, and they'll appreciate the contact and the opportunity to work with you.

Who's out there, what's available

Wondering where to start and not getting anywhere with asking Google "find toys near me"? Here are some ideas to get you shopping.

In Pennsylvania, try www.bit.ly/waynecountyshopping and www.bit.ly/pikecountyshopping.

In Sullivan County, NY, start at www.bit.ly/sullivancountyshopping.

In Delaware County, NY, go to www.bit.ly/delawarecountyshopping.

An easy answer

Don't know what to give but want to support a business? Gift cards are the way to go.

Miss trips to the movies? A restaurant meal not possible right now? Buy a gift card for the business you love. It supports them and promises that better days lie ahead.

Now, more specifically. Are you looking for...

Masks

Check with your local clothing shop. For example, Callicoon boutique Pip-Squeak Chapeau has been making masks throughout the pandemic. Visit their store or check their site, www.pip-squeakchapeau.com.

Toys

Because it's still the holidays.

You can buy amazing toys locally. Board games are old-fashioned fun for a family that's scrambling for something else to entertain kids when activities are closed. Puzzles are a great gift for the bored or for seniors who want to do something different and are stuck inside.

Check the aforementioned lists for local toy stores and give them a call; you don't need to go big-box on this one.

And don't forget vintage toys. Yard sales, antique stores, small roadside shops. You never know what you'll find.

Medical items

Presents from a pharmacy? Well, this year is this year. If someone needs equipment or just a first-aid kit restocked, your pharmacy can help.

You may have to give the order at the door, but they offer more than just meds. Find hand sanitizer, gloves, eye protection and face shields, pulse oximeters, thermometers, and first aid kits. Make up a box for someone you love and let them know you're thinking about their health, too.

Music

Does your giftee have a favorite local band? Check their site and buy some music.

"Some musicians have online tip-type accounts like paypal.me or patreon.com, some sell their CDs online," said Ramona Jan, from the band JANTURAN. "Locally speaking, however, venues—Rafter's Tavern for example—are beginning to open indoors." Ask about gift certificates, she suggested. "This way, people can support the local musicians as well as the venue."

Books

Are you looking for the latest bestseller or a vintage find? Stores like Narrowsburg's One Grand Books (www.onegrandbooks.com) sells new books, and our area has many used bookstores, too: Read it Again in Monticello, Monique's Books Boutique in White Sulphur Springs and Past Perfect in White Lake. While you're at it, check thrift shops, yard sales, and more! You never know what you'll find.

Art

Does your loved one have a favorite local artist? Give a present and support the arts, too. Check the artist's site. No website? Ask their county's arts association for help. Or you can support the mission of the association in the name of your giftee: our arts organizations give us a little extra beauty.

In Sullivan County, there is the Hurleyville Arts Centre (www.hurleyvilleartscentre.org), The Narrowsburg Union (www.narrowsburgunion.com), the Delaware Valley Arts Alliance (www.delawarevalleyartsalliance.org) and the Catskill Art Society (www.catskillartsociety.org).

In Wayne County, find the Wayne County Arts Alliance (www.waynecountyartsalliance.org) and the Art Factory of White Mills (www.theartfactoryofwhitemills.com).

In Pike County, there's the Artists' Market Community Center in Shohola (@artistsmarket114 on Facebook) and The Pocono Arts Council (www.poconoarts.org).



Photo contributed by Ramona Jan

Homemade masks are effective and colorful, and buying them locally helps support your neighbors. These are made by local artist Ramona Jan.

Wellness

It's the gift of peace and tranquility, drug-free.

Reflexologist Caroline Verdi, for one, sells hand sanitizer made with 190-proof alcohol and her own blend of essential oils. "When I chose the oils, I chose three that are uplifting and anti-anxiety," she said. "You're not merely protecting yourself from germs, you're lifting your mood."

Caroline works at the Beach Lake Wellness Center (@beachlakewellnesscenter) but you can also find her @reflexologybyTSUBO on Facebook. There are other centers too, like Callicoon's River Family Wellness (riverfamilywellness.com) and The Sanctuary (www.thesanctuaryheal.com), and Body, Mind & Spirit Wellness in Mongaup Valley (845/583-6151).

Charity is a gift, too

Charity as a gift isn't just making a donation in the name of someone else; it's also helping our nonprofits through a tough time. And for our soup kitchens and shelters, the need is increasing while the funding is sometimes scattershot.

This matters so much right now. If you have surplus to give, take a look at these links that will take you to lists of organizations doing a lot of good in the area: Pike County (www.bit.ly/pikenonprofit), Wayne County (www.bit.ly/waynenonprofit), Sullivan County (www.bit.ly/sullivannonprofit) and Delaware County (www.bit.ly/delawarenonprofit).

We need them more than ever.

Thrift shops

Usually the funds they raise support organizations helping people in need. They're worth checking out regularly; you never know what you'll find! Some of them also run soup kitchens or food pantries.

The serious part

Holidays are all about joy, but remember this: there is always, always someone who is worse off. Maybe that person is a family member who needs help. Maybe it's a stranger.

Sometimes you're the person who needs help.

If you're having a tough time with the world right now, talk to someone. Please.

Help is out there, and while it's starting to open up to in-person counseling, it might be easier to find phone or video therapy.

You can Google "therapists near me" if you have your location enabled online. You can ask your doctor, too.

Recovery

In many ways, the pandemic has worsened the opioid crisis. In NY and PA, help is out there.

Starting the recovery process, for yourself or a loved one, is giving people a future. It doesn't get better than that.

In NY, start with the opioid hotline, H.O.P.E. for Sullivan County, at 866/832-5575.

In PA, contact the Wayne County Drug & Alcohol Commission at 570/253-6022.

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From a distance

By JUDE WATERSTON

How do we narrow the gap and bring people closer when, for various reasons, we are distanced from them? Just as the pandemic has forcibly detached us from each other, there have been other times in my life when I had to make an extra effort to draw others near. For 10 years, I worked in a small neighborhood shop selling freshly made pasta, homemade sauces, appetizers and entrees for take-out, as well as imported Italian products. The Italian owners represented three generations, and the entire kitchen staff, who prepared their specialties, was Hispanic. I was the odd man out, working at the front of the store in sales, often feeling like an island unto myself, as I was neither family nor among compadres.

Food has always been my means of attempting, if unconsciously, to draw folks in. I brought in dishes to share with the staff and owners, but the matriarch was a hard one to win over, seeing my offerings as a challenge to her sovereignty in the kitchen. After a while, it wasn't seen as competition, and the workers (from the Dominican Republic, Colombia and Venezuela) particularly loved when I arrived with my take on a dish of Spanish or Latin descent. Even "the mother," as I referred to her, accepted my offerings and praised me.

Every Christmas, my sister, Janet, and I spent days baking an assortment of unusual and visually inviting cookies: coconut macaroons with grated orange zest dipped in dark chocolate, shortbread sandwich cookies filled with apricot or berry preserves and drizzled with that same intense bitter-sweet chocolate, crisp-edged, chewy spiced cookies in which were hidden tiny bits of crystallized ginger. I packed my Christmas treats in individual containers, placed them in holiday shopping bags, each with a name tag and handwritten note in the language of the recipient, and brought them round to co-worker on the morning of Christmas Eve. It was my way of trying to bridge the cultural gap between me and those I worked with. The distance between us narrowed over time.

Upstate at our house, our tradition of baking for the holidays includes a box of homemade cookies placed in our mailbox for Kathy, who has delivered our mail for years. A few days later, along with the magazines and letters, we find a handwritten note thanking us for the confections. Other friends and neighbors receive gifts of spiced nuts, tea cakes, or assorted cookies.

And now, to the present: We have spent the past seven months trying to maintain relations with family and friends while the world caved in and crumbled around us. Before the summer arrived, we were ensconced in our own world, reaching out by phone or email in an attempt to remain connected. Once again, food played a part in my trying to remain in touch if at arms-length. If I had made too much of some dish and had leftovers, we would jump in the car and drive it around the corner to deliver it, warm, to our neighbors. Sometimes, I would simply prepare another whole portion of whatever I was cooking, say a savory vegetable bread pudding, called a strata, in its own casserole dish which we would drop off at our friend's place.

I was thrilled when the weather cleared, the sun came out and the temperatures rose. Though we were forced to be ever-mindful each time we got together to socialize with anyone, moving furniture about on our front or back porch, and supplying myriad serving utensils for each wedge of cheese or bowl or dip, it felt so great—so right—to be with people again. Though we couldn't sit near each other or embrace at the beginning or the close of our time together, something heavy and imposing was momentarily lifted.

Recently, on what we supposed might be one of the last days we'd be free to eat *al fresco*, a friend stopped by the house while Janet and I were having lunch on the front porch. We were savoring the early autumn sun above us and digging into broiled swordfish steaks topped with a chunky tomato (rosemary flecked) compote served on buttered orzo pasta and a creamy gratin of Tuscan kale dusted with crunchy, sautéed breadcrumbs and parmesan cheese. Our friend walked up the stairs leading to where we sat and commented on our meal. "Do you like swordfish?" I asked. "I love it!" he responded. I fixed him a leftover chunk, complete with orzo and a spoonful of gratin. To my surprise, he requested a small amount of wine, eyeing my glass of Cabernet. "It just looks right with this gourmet meal," he said in response to my raised eyebrows. He ate with gusto as we discussed the state of the world and more mundane subjects, as well. I got great satisfaction drawing my friend near that day. I know that once again, as winter approaches, we will have to find ways to keep those we care about close, from a distance.



RR photo by Jude Waterston

Swordfish (or halibut) fillets broiled with rosemary tomato compote

Serves 2

This dish is nice served with buttered orzo pasta and sautéed kale or Swiss chard.

- 2 8-ounce swordfish steaks
- 3 tablespoons extra-virgin olive oil
- 1 tablespoon unsalted butter
- Juice of 1 lemon
- Salt and freshly ground black pepper
- 2 shallots, minced
- 1.5 teaspoons tiny capers in salt, rinsed and drained
- 1-14.5 ounce can chopped tomatoes
- 1 teaspoon sugar
- 1 tablespoon fresh rosemary (or tarragon, or a combo) leaves, chopped
- 2 tablespoons chopped fresh flat-leaf parsley or snipped chives (for garnish)

Combine 2 tablespoons olive oil with the lemon juice, salt and pepper. Brush the mixture on the swordfish and marinate for one hour at room temperature.

Preheat broiler to high. Meanwhile, sauté the shallots in the remaining tablespoon of oil and the tablespoon of butter over low heat. Add the tomatoes, sugar and rosemary and season with salt and pepper. Bring to a simmer and cook for about 8 minutes, stirring occasionally.

Remove the swordfish from the marinade and broil 5–6 minutes, turn and broil for about 3 minutes longer. Meanwhile, pour the marinade into the tomato mixture, add the capers and continue cooking for about 3 minutes until well-combined. Cover sauce and keep warm.

When the swordfish steaks are just cooked through, remove them to a platter. Top them with the warm tomato compote, garnish with parsley and serve immediately.

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WHEN SHOPPING LOCAL MEANS EVERYTHING

This is how you keep your neighbors afloat

By ANNEMARIE SCHUETZ

Really, it was just a Facebook thing, Lori Schneider said.

One of those posts that everyone passes on—a bit of inspiration to start your day off right.

But the message resonates these days. It went something like this:

I would like to buy as many gifts as I can from Facebook pages this year! I would love to buy from my friends, as I know how much every sale helps.

Whether it's makeup, handbags, jewelry, small goods, pampering products, kitchen gadgets, clothes, photography, art, flowers—why not buy from those we know? I have several friends who have their own businesses. We all have goals that we are trying to reach... paying off bills, saving up for something special, supporting families as a full time job...

Let's help each other out!

Maybe you've seen one, maybe you've cut-and-pasted and passed it on, too.

"It's just about doing gift giving that would help individuals," Schneider said.

She sells Pampered Chef products and is impassioned about the company and the items she sells.

Whether you know a small business owner, someone planning a yard sale, or someone who has an Etsy shop, it's more important now than ever to buy from them if you can. Where you target your dollars can keep your neighbors fed, can keep people in work.

You can make a difference.

Helping our small businesses

This includes the *really* small ones.

Some make art and sell it. Some are doing repair work. Some have regular yard sales.

And, of course, there are so many small brick-and-mortar shops here just trying to keep going. Some have opened online stores.

Retail spending has rebounded, says the US Census Bureau's tracker of retail sales, back up to more than \$500 for the month of August. Toy company Mattel's stock prices are up, which is promising for the holiday season. But the threat of more lockdowns and the fear of a resurgence of the coronavirus (along with the flu) has people worried.

And unemployment, for September, is 7.9 percent nationwide.

If you have the money to spend, you can use it to help people we know, like in the Facebook post.

Our local businesses

We sing praises for our small businesses, the mom-and-pop stores that line our Main Streets. But then when push comes to shove, or we want something specific, we tend to head online to a big retailer or in-person to the big-box store.

Small Business Saturday, the Saturday after Thanksgiving, really drives this point home.

On www.communitybusinessfinance.com, Bill Ebersole lists 10 reasons to shop small... which, here, translates into shopping local, too.



An array of tools for sale at Route 652 Roadside Finds in Beach Lake, PA.



RR photos by Joe Cooke

You never know what you'll find in tiny shops like Sometimes a Great Notion in Callicoon, NY next to the post office. Find them on Facebook @sometimesagreatnotion.

Among his points:

- "For every \$100 spent at a small business, \$66.53 stays in the community."
- Our local business provide jobs.
- Buying local keeps the money in the neighborhood.
- Local business owners care what decisions are made here. They're involved in the community.
- Products are often locally sourced.
- Customer service is more personal, especially if you keep going back. The business owners know you and know what you like.

And as you're looking at shops, don't forget the tiny ones.

Buying your joy

You might still find a yard sale. Or maybe one of those roadside pop-ups, open for just a few months out of the year. Don't forget

to stop and look; you never know what you might find!

If you know someone who sells art or handcrafted items, if the work appeals, please consider a purchase. In these days, when others can easily copy your work that then turns up, unattributed, at big-box stores or on large sites—few things can help our local artists, Abby Glassenberg wrote recently for the Craft Industry Alliance:

"Pour your energy into loving your customers. Show them how special your product is and how different it is from that imitation big box stuff. Keep innovating to delight them. What you have that the big box can never have is your story. You are a maker, a person with ideas, and a relationship with your customers. As Lilla Rogers says, people buy your joy."



A table set for the holidays at Spruce Home Goods in Callicoon, NY.

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RR photo by Joe Cooke

A recent Sunday at Route 652 Roadside Finds. The pop-up shop in Beach Lake, PA sells items from tools to vintage clothing—including coats!

The really small business

BEACH LAKE, PA — Steve and Terry Breiman own and run Route 652 Roadside Finds. “We moved up to Beach Lake full-time this year,” Steve said. His job had switched to working from home, Terry explained, and it seemed like a good time to go.

And so they packed up and moved to the small Beach Lake house they’ve had for a few years.

They went from a 3,900-square-foot house to an 1,100-square-foot house. There was not room for all their stuff—so they decided to sell the stuff.

“We wanted a place like a pop-up store,” Steve said, but with unusual products that reflect their hobbies and jobs.

There are tools, from Steve’s woodworking and metalworking, and lots of vintage clothes, from Terry’s career at J. Crew and interest in vintage fashion.

Come winter, the Breimans, like many people who run similar businesses, will still be open, just maybe not outside. 652 Roadside Finds, for one, is planning on an Instagram page. If there’s a similar place you like, ask the owner if they’ll still be open—one way or another—when the really cold weather hits.

Stop by Route 652 Roadside Finds in the red shed next to Francesco Mirror & Glass.

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Seeking wellness in pandemic times

By ANNEMARIE SCHUETZ

It's a stressful time, and all that anxiety has repercussions on our bodies.

But it doesn't have to be that way, says Caroline Verdi, who works at Beach Lake Wellness Center in Beach Lake, PA.

Verdi is a reflexologist; she uses pressure on the ears, hands and feet to relieve pain or stress elsewhere in the body. "It can increase circulation and lower blood pressure," she said. "It helps the body come into balance on its own."

This matters because "when you're reducing stress, it can help prevent disease."

She also uses an infrared sauna. "In most cases, when I'm done, you are in such a deep relaxed state," she said.

An infrared sauna uses infrared panels to warm the body; they've been credited with many health effects, from better sleep to pain relief. Stress aggravates the sympathetic nervous system, Verdi said, "and what I love about the infrared sauna is that it calms [it down]."

You don't need access to an infrared or water-type sauna



Photo contributed by Caroline Verdi
Reflexologist Caroline Verdi works on a client's feet, using pressure on specific spots to reduce stress elsewhere.

to use natural methods to manage stress, though, especially if you're confined at home because of the pandemic. Verdi offered some suggestions.

Essential oils, for instance, are available, although you should be careful of what you choose and how you use them—always combine them with a carrier oil, for instance; don't use them straight.

And always, be cautious. Work with a professional if you want to explore essential oils more deeply. "Oils are potent," Verdi said. In particular, do not take them by mouth.

"People think that because they're natural, they don't need to be cautious."

True essential oil is extracted from plants, retaining their beneficial properties. They can be anti-microbial, anti-inflammatory, or sedative, she said.

Pay attention to labels. Some oils that call themselves "essential" are really just perfume, according to www.healthline.com.

Verdi, who creates and sells a line of essential oils locally and on her website, notes that oregano and clove are known to have antimicrobial effects; they're best used in cleaning. A study in the Journal of Applied Microbiology found that oregano had antimicrobial effects when added to detergent for handwashing and surface cleaning.

"Never use oregano and clove oils straight," she said.

Here are some other tips:

- Use a diffuser for essential oils, but "don't choose willy-nilly," she said. Lavender and lemon oils are generally safe. Lavender is sedative and lemon is uplifting; both have other helpful properties, as well.

- You don't have to be a trained reflexologist to try some techniques at home, Verdi said. "Just rubbing each other's feet or learning basic techniques. It's so helpful." She has videos on her Facebook page (@reflexologybyTSUBO) to get people started. "You're helping each other get rid of that fight-or-flight state," she said.

- Baths or showers. Hot baths are relaxing, and a hot shower immediately alternated with a cold one improves circulation. (My great-grandmother apparently swore by hot-and-cold baths for a long, healthy life.)

Contact Caroline Verdi at Beach Lake Wellness Center on Facebook or at www.aromatsubo.com.



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Choosing the perfect gift

By ANNEMARIE SCHUETZ

Stumped for gifts this year?

Lifestyle expert and interior designer Alessandra Maria Iavarone has suggestions.

“This is an exciting question,” said Iavarone, who is also the owner of The Velvet Maple lifestyle shop in Narrowsburg, NY.

The most important thing to keep in mind? “People are nesting,” she said. “People are doing home projects that they kept putting off.” Stores that sell building and renovation supplies have done very well during the pandemic.

But maybe you want to give something smaller than a truck-full of flooring.

An ideal gift this year would relate to “anything that has to do with keeping the home comfortable,” said Iavarone.

Much of Iavarone’s career has been devoted to interior design and hospitality, and she’s been able to keep going, creating an online store. “I had to think on my feet,” she said. But “my clients [are] so loyal.”

So, what gifts does Iavarone recommend this year?

- Think soothing, think comfort. A silk sleep mask. A blanket. Bath products.

- A new tablecloth or table setting. “You’re eating at home all the time,” whether it’s home-cooked food or takeout.

- Kitchen equipment. “I’ve seen a rise in kitchen items.” People are cooking at home. And back in the spring, when grocery store shelves were empty as supply chains were reconfigured, people tried making food or ingredients they’d normally buy.

- Office items, Iavarone suggested, for the person newly working from home. “Visit Tess in Narrowsburg,” she said. Among many home items, Tess sells stunning outlet converters: style and utility combined. “If you’re remote learning or remote working,” you probably need one.

- Lighting. Because we’re home more, and working so much online demands quality lighting.

- Home organization items. When you’re home more... well, let’s just say that it’s harder to ignore disorganization.

- Keep the kids busy. “For kids, I’d say craft items,” Iavarone said. Give a project “that takes up a lot of time,” and parents can work on it with the children.

- Think small, wonderful things. You can find little surprises at Narrowsburg Proper or the Delaware Valley Arts Alliance shop, both located on Main Street in Narrowsburg, she said. Consider “aromatherapy, candles, scent diffusers.”



Photo contributed by Alessandra Maria Iavarone
Candles promise better days ahead.

- Maybe it’s time for small changes to your interiors. Have you been home, staring at your grimy rug? Consider a new one. “Rugs get a lot of wear and tear,” Iavarone said. And replacing one is a great way to change the look of a room. “When you’re home for eight months, you realize you need a change,” she said.

- And always, gift certificates. The Velvet Maple, for example, is offering one that will give back: buy over a certain amount of their items and the shop will give \$20 to a charity of your choice. “It’s a commitment between you and me,” she said, “that one day this will be over.”

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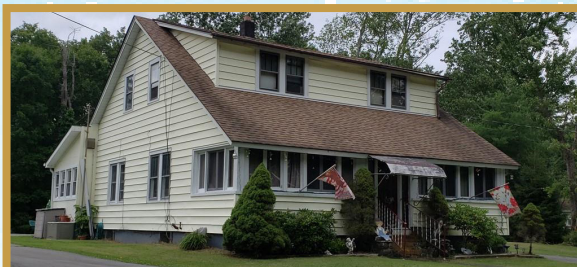
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