SAS promotes healthy, happy feet with comfortable shoes

From SAS Shoe Store

Everyone wants comfortable feet, and in order to have comfortable feet, it’s important to start with the right kind of shoes. SAS Shoes can help older adults achieve comfort, which means health and happiness.

SAS Shoe Store, which has been serving Contra Costa County for 25 years, is committed to providing its customers with quality shoes with the best fit and comfort. The goal of the staff is to make sure the customers get the right fit to ensure comfortable walks and good health.

SAS Shoe Store carries the largest selection of SAS shoes in the county, offering a wide range of sizes and styles for men and women. The store also carries comfort socks and shoe accessories.

The staff at SAS is customer friendly and takes pride in its high level of personalized, professional service.

The store is located at 1924 Contra Costa Blvd. in Pleasant Hill (in the Pleasant Hill Plaza near Starbucks). The store is open from 10 a.m. to 5:30 p.m. Monday through Saturday and 11 a.m. to 4 p.m. on Sunday. For information, call the store at 676-2918.

SAS Shoe Store is an advertiser in this week’s Holiday Gift Guide.

Send Eight Days’ worth of gifts almost anywhere in the world, without a worry.

The UPS Store

Want everyone to enjoy a happy Hanukkah observance? It starts with giving yourself a stress-free one. Small or large, heavy or fragile, The UPS StoreSM will expertly pack and ship your gifts to their destination, whether it’s across the country or around the world. Trust us — the Menorah won’t be the only thing that lights up their faces.

New Holiday Hours, Starting December 1

HOLIDAY GUIDE

The Rossmook News Holiday Guide was produced by the News staff and features a variety of articles to help you through the holiday season. Articles are on the following categories:

GIFT GIVING 2 - 13
HOLIDAY DECOR 14 - 16
HOLIDAY TIPS AND IDEAS 17 - 19
HOLIDAY RECIPES 19 - 20

Don’t stress about holiday gift giving — here are tips

From Emilypost.com

You should feel good about the gifts you give. Keeping in mind that it truly is the thought behind the gift and spirit of generosity with which it is given that matters most, here are tips for giving gifts without succumbing to stress.

1. Get their wish list. Ask people for hints or even a wish list. Gather ideas during the year, and write everything down.

2. Trust your judgment. Forget about being afraid the gift isn’t “perfect.” If you think the person will like it, chances are they will.

3. Stick to a budget. Spending more than you should takes the fun out of gift giving. There’s nothing more stressful than overspending — and feeling uneasy about it.

4. Buy it when you see it. If you’re shopping in July and see a sweater your daughter would love, buy it. It probably won’t be there in December.

5. Start a gift closet. Stash a few gifts that will work in a pinch: copies of a favorite cookbook, a good bottle of wine or boxes of beautiful note cards. That way you’ll be ready if you need a gift on the spot.

Gift ideas for health- and fitness-minded people

By Sharon Naylor

If you have a health- or fitness-minded person on your holiday gift list, it’s easy to choose a present that will be appreciated and used. Check out these following categories for some of our favorites.

Tech: Fitness and sleep trackers are available as a wristband or a necklace that delivers daily data to an app, showing daily mileage, nutrition and even sleep patterns. They are even “smart” water bottles that keep a person hydrated on the go and reminds him when he hasn’t met his daily water goal. And believe it or not, there is a smartfork (HAPIfork) that lights up when the person holding it is eating too fast.

Yoga: Yoga is mainstream, and top yoga gifts include yoga mats, carryall bags, blocks, and stylish clothing and grip yoga socks. Add in yoga DVDs and gift certificates to the recipient’s nearby yoga center, and she can personalize her practice even further, perhaps now having the funds to attend a special sunrise yoga or meditation class taught by a visiting notable yogi.

Cooking: Health-minded gift recipients know that wellness happens from the inside out, so consider health-themed cookbooks and cooking gadgets such as spiral vegetable peelers to help make meal preparation healthier. And small appliances such as yogurt-makers, blenders and even pizza stones help get home-cooked nutrition on the menu.

Deliveries — A monthly delivery of fresh fruit, veggies and herbs makes healthy cooking convenient. If the recipient is ultra-healthy, she’ll probably prefer organic produce, so look into the company’s organic specifications before ordering these deliveries in weekly, monthly or quarterly packages.

In addition to these four categories, consider some of the other health and fitness gifts this year:

Slackline gear — In slacklining, a bouncy, high-tension board, balancing from side to side and atop a round middle piece. The exercise then stands atop the board, balancing from side to side. On some Indo boards, yoga may also be practiced.

Jump-ropes — Jumping rope can remind the fitness buff of childhood play, but it’s a hardcore workout. And today there are cordless jump-ropes to add some tech to the workout.

Hands-free dog leash — can help loved ones jump start their pet’s exercise.

Hiking supplies — Fitness-minded friends who hike or camp will enjoy new outdoor activity gear such as hydration backpack or a personalized flask and carrier. Camping enthusiasts will know the intricacies of top-model camping gear, so if you’re not an experienced camper, a gift card to an outdoors store such as REI is a safe bet.

As with any gift, know that there’s always a risk that the recipient may return the item. Maybe the gift is not within their fitness abilities, something in a style that’s not their personal taste (like a yoga mat in a busy pattern) or a DVD that they already own.

According to the National Retail Federation, shoppers returned more than $46.28 billion worth of gifts in 2013. So it’s now considered gift-giving etiquette to include a gift receipt with any present given.

This gift allows a dog to run alongside his owner, his leash clipped securely to this piece of gear.

Gift card to an alternative energy healing session with a licensed practitioner, or perhaps an adventure the gift recipient has been longing to experience.

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Gift-giving does not have to be a daunting task for grandparents

From Edina Magazine

No one would argue that in pioneer days the holidays were much easier. Gifts were simple and minimal. Grandma didn’t have to wonder, “Should I knit my granddaughter a pair of wool mittens and give her an orange, or will my daughter think that I am upstaging her or being too extravagant?”

In a world that has traded in yesterday’s oranges for today’s Apple computers, gift-giving at the holidays may seem like a daunting task for many grandparents. But as Happi Olson, director of sales and marketing at Creative Kidstuff can attest, holiday presents from grandparents don’t have to mean giving gifts that might not be appreciated or end up re-gifted.

While we may traditionally think of grandparents as being older and out of touch, the 50- to 60-year-old grandparents of today are actually active and engaged,” said Olson. “They know about technology and media.”

Today, the biggest challenge for grandparents has more to do with how quickly grand-children are growing up, and the need to remember that idea might have stayed in a child’s mind at ease.”

“I wuv you beary much” teddy bear or golf-themed tie. “In a more traditional mar- ket, or in the past, a girl might have wanted a dollhouse, and that idea might have stayed in her mind for a very long time until she finally got it at Christmas,” she said. “But since every- thing moves so quickly in today’s world, kids are con-stantly changing their minds.”

“Giving a gift that affords the grandparent and grandchild the opportunity to make or do something special together is a means that there’s the physical gift itself, but also the experi- ence of doing it together.”

Instead, spend some time reflecting on the interests of the person you are buying a gift for and get a gift card to an approp- riate place. This shows some thoughtfulness without the worries of trying to imag- ine exactly what the loved one really wants or needs.

Gift cards are nifty because they allow the recipients to treat themselves. When giving cash as gifts to people, they of- ten end up blowing it on mis-celebratory daily expenses, or they responsibly choose to toss the cash into the bank. That’s no fun! Gift cards force them to buy themselves a treat they might not normally get. How cool is that?

A Best Buy gift card is perfect for the tech lover. A Red Bank Gift Card is perfect for the homemaker or decorator in the family. A Trader Joe’s gift card is a great cash value for the struggling college student or young pro-fessional; free groceries are pretty much a given, and the recipient might get to splurge on some sweets, as well.

Alternatively, if you do not have the time or energy to go out and find the perfect gift, there are plenty of Web sites where you can order gifts online, such as Zazzle or Amazon.

A new trend is to give grandparents the gift of time. Some grandparents are aware of this and are looking forward to the opportunity to do something special together with a grandchild.

“Giving a gift that affords the grandparent and grandchild a chance to work side by side, and these experiences can be a won- derful way for them to bond.”

In conclusion, gift cards are the greatest gift ever bestowed upon humanity. They make the life of the gift giver much eas- ier by reducing worries about giving a bad gift. They make the life of the gift recipient easy because that person gets to choose how to spive. Gift cards are a gift to all.

Gift cards can take the stress out of holiday giving

By Pete Kaminski
Creators.com

While it’s a parent, sib- ling, niece, nephew or lover, we all have that person on our holiday gift list for whom it seems to be impossible to shop. I’m here to remind you. Don’t stress out about what to give that special someone. Get a gift card.

Nothing says “I have been learning to give you the best gift ever, but then I had no idea what I should get, and I finally ran out of time but still care about you” like a gift card.

Sure, they may seem a bit impersonal at first glance. However, gift cards allow the recipient to choose exactly what they want to buy and are being more personal than any “I wuv you beeary much” teddy bear or golf-themed tie.

The main thing to remem- ber is that the gift card should be to a store that interests the loved one. One you do that, you are home free.

For instance, if your sis- ter is a vegetarian, do not get her a gift card to a butcher shop. If your son hates sports, avoid giving him a gift card to Sports Authority. That would be a waste of time and resourc- es for all involved.

Collect ‘em all

Another idea is to buy a gift that has collectible pieces that can be expanded over the years, such as Play Mobile, Calico Critters or dollhouse accessories. “With a collect- ible gift a grandparent might want to buy their grandchild a smaller piece to start with, and if they like it, then buy bigger pieces to add on to later,” Olson said.

If there’s no question the grandchild will like the col- lection, grandparents might want to buy a big anchor piece, which will give them some- thing to build on to for lat- er gift-giving opportunities throughout the year, such as birthdays, she said.

Collectible toy suggestions:

Calico Critters, $8-$140; Jelly- cats, $12-$60; Playmobil, $4-$210; Lundby Dollhouse, $100; and Lottie, $20

The gift of time

In a more traditional mar- ket, or in the past, a girl might have wanted a dollhouse, and that idea might have stayed in her mind for a very long time until she finally got it at Christmas,” she said. “But since every- thing moves so quickly in today’s world, kids are con-stantly changing their minds.”

Grandparents to talk to the fam- ily about what’s at the top of their grandchild’s holiday list.

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Suggestions on what to give coworkers, household help, service providers

From Emilypost.com

Can’t figure out what’s appropriate to give to the different types of people in your life? Here are some suggestions.

Coworkers and business associates: Generally, gifts aren’t appropriate to give to the different types of people in your life. If you wish to exchange gifts with a colleague whom you see socially, do it outside the office to avoid offending others.

Doctors, lawyers and other professionals: While professionals aren’t given gifts for services rendered, a patient or client may wish to express special thanks for extraordinary consideration or to give a holiday gift. In such cases, the following gifts are appropriate: a fruit or specialty food basket; homemade cookies; a bottle of wine or spirits; or a gift certificate for two to a nice local restaurant.

Nurses: Gifts of money should never be offered to hospital nurses, but cookies, candy, fruit or flowers that can be shared or enjoyed by everyone at the nurses’ station is always welcome. If the nurse or caregiver is an independent, then the choice of gift, including cash, is up to you.

Clergy: It’s appropriate to give a member of the clergy a gift at holiday time, for a birthday, for an ordinance or when he or she leaves for another post or retires. Any of the following would make suitable presents: books; a magazine subscription; tickets to the movies, theater, symphony or sporting event; specialty or homemade food items; a gift certificate; a wristwatch; or a leather diary or address book, wallet or briefcase.

Household help: Holiday gifts are given to live-in housekeepers and other household help, usually as an accompaniment to any bonus or cash gift. Typical gifts include articles of clothing; soaps or lotions; items related to a special interest; or something for their rooms. A nanny or au pair would receive a present from the children in addition to any gift or bonus from the parents.

Service providers: During the holiday season it’s customary to thank the people, seen and unseen, who help your life run smoothly throughout the year. While you might choose to give cash to a doorman or newspaper delivery person, a gift may be more appropriate for someone with whom you have a personal or long-term relationship, such as a hairstylist. Choosing a gift that’s personalized, but not too personal.

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Cutting-edge gifts: how to choose the best knives

By DiAnne Crown
Creators.com

A well-chosen knife that’s used correctly makes short work of every cutting function from kitchen to campfire. But take one look at the options and prices and you may decide to skip it again this gift-giving season and keep using what you have. We turned to Chef Jordan Coffey for help.

First of all, purchase a knife made of high-quality steel. “Most chefs use German or Japanese knives,” said Coffey, chef of American Harvest Eatery, who recommends looking at Forchner (now part of Victoriainox), Wusthof and Shun brands.

Typically, he said, German knives are made of hard, heavier, fortified steel and that Japanese knives are lighter and softer, which makes them more durable but easier to sharpen, wear down or ruin the edge angle. “For home use, the integrity of a good quality German knife will be easier to maintain,” Coffey said.

Coffey does occasionally go to a big-box kitchen store to purchase a knife, but he suggests to only get the ones in the glass case that are sold individually and not the sets in boxes on the shelf. To get started, Coffey recommends an 8- or 10-inch chef’s knife. “I have nine or 10 knives for boning, fileting, paring and so on, but the chef’s knife is the one you have to have,” he said. “If you have the skills, you can pretty much do anything with it. I use a simple knife (style), flat, no pivot, in the $100 to $200 range.”

That doesn’t exactly narrow the field down way, though. For information, both Consumer Reports and America’s Test Kitchen provide excellent online information about brands and styles, including such features as edge angles, composition of the steel, grip material and design, blade shape and tang (basically, how much blade is in the handle, and the more the better) balance and bolster, price and more.

Ultimately, the choice comes down to personal preference, usage requirements, hand size and willingness to maintain the blade,” Coffey said.

To protect your investment, he also said to make sure to sharpen it correctly, at the right angle, with the right tool. Watch a YouTube how-to video to put a proper edge on the knife and not ruin it trying to make it better.

For information, go to www.americanharvesteatery.com; www.consumerreports; and the “Equipment Reviews” tab at www.americaestkitchen.com to watch the current season’s four-minute chef’s knives video.
Give the grandchildren the gift of imagination: books

By Joanna H. Kraus
Contributing writer

Here are some suggestions as you search for holiday gift books for the young members of your family.

“Max And The Won’t Go To Bed Show” by Mark Sperring, illustrated by Sarah Warburton (Scholastic Press, $16.99, ages 3-5): This is a charmer, guaranteed to delight adults as well as the listener. Using a circus motif, Max, the ringmaster delays going to bed as long as possible.

With the confidence of a born showman he does trick after trick with a flourish: making cookies disappear, a rabbit appear and pajamas float in the air. Humorous, exuberant illustrations complete the entertainment.

“Star Bright, A Christmas Story” by Alison McGhee and Peter H. Reynolds, illustrated by Peter H. Reynolds (Simon & Schuster, $16.96, ages 6-9): Based on an actual civil war event, this is the story of how three slaves escaped from the south and became protected by the Union Army as “contraband.”

Told in lyrical free verse the acrylic, pastel and colored pencil art work heighten the danger and tension and create a moving backdrop for this little known and intriguing bit of history. An author’s note details the actual facts of the Emancipation Oak.

“Pay it Forward” Young Readers Edition by Cathrine Ryan Hyde (Simon & Schuster, $17.99, ages 8-12): This may be one of the most significant books any young person may read. It’s a revised Continued on page 7
The holidays are going to the dogs

By Anica Wong
Creators.com

Dogs, cats, birds and rabbits are no longer just pets. They are part of our families. They go on vacation with us, sleep with us and, in some cases, eat the same food we do. Because we consider them furry (or feathered) family members, it’s no wonder that we also include them in our holiday gift giving. It would be rude to leave them out.

Whitney Trayer, a sales associate at Quality Paws Natural Pet Inc. in Denver, says that more and more people are buying Christmas gifts for their dogs and cats. “Things that are Christmas-y or a hat, like reindeer ears, sell really well,” she says.

Danielle Jarock, the owner of the store, says she sees a 20 to 30 percent increase in sales during the month of December. And she’s not alone in this growing trend.

According to the American Pet Products Association, Americans are projected to spend more than $38.5 billion in 2014 on their pets. This number has increased by about four to six percent annually since the association started keeping track in 1994. To compare, the craft beer industry will reach $20 billion in 2014, according to Mintel, a market research group.

In 2013, people spent $55.72 billion on their pets, most of which went to food ($21.57 billion), followed by vet care ($14.37 billion) and then supplies/over-the-counter meds ($13.14 billion). That last category lends itself to a lot of Kongs, tennis balls and catnip toys, especially around the holiday season.

And not only are our four-legged pals getting gifts placed under the tree, but they also are getting stocking stuffers like little John and Suzy. “People come in to fill a (pet) stocking,” says Trayer. She points to a treat display case on the counter.

Dog treats of all shapes, sizes and colors are artfully placed. She says they order a lot of Santa treats that seem to fly out of the store. They’re pretty popular stocking stuffers.

While it may seem that all of the goodies are going to the dogs (pun intended), Trayer also noticed that along with shopping for their own pets, owners typically buy for others once they are in the store. “People stumble upon the store,” she says, noting that the location on a new up-and-coming main street helps drive traffic to the storefront.

And then once inside, shoppers think about all of the other people for whom they wouldn’t necessarily buy a gift but would be happy to buy their dog or cat a little something. “People love that – ‘You got something for my dog!’” Trayer says, mimicking an excited pet-gift recipient.

Gifts can be as diverse as the animals you are shopping for. For some, a rope toy and a big bone will do just fine. For those with fancier tastes, a blinged-out collar and high-end kibble might be the ticket.

And high-tech gadgets aren’t just for humans anymore. The Tagg pet-tracker device, which can be affixed to your dog’s collar, tracks his every move and can even send notifications to your phone when he gets out of the safe zone, usually the backyard.

The options are endless, and there’s no doubt that whatever you pick out for your favorite furry companion, you’re sure to get some extra-slobbery kisses or deep purrs.

How to make holiday treats gift-worthy

From womenshealthmag.com

Handing out holiday treats this year? Forget the Tupperware or foil and even the pricey disposable bags that your gift receiver can’t ever use again. Instead, present delicious presents in something a little more creative—and reusable!

These three packaging tips—all from Catherine McCord, founder of Wellicious—will give your goodies an extra dash of fun.

Gift them straight in the tins or pans: Making a dozen muffins or a quick bread? McCord gives your goodies an extra dash of fun. More and more people are spending money on their pets during the holidays, as well as those who don’t have pets who are buying for their family’s or friends’ pets. How to make holiday treats gift-worthy

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Holiday book selections for the grandkids of all ages

Continued from page 5 edition of the popular adult novel but shorter, with an open-ended discussion and a guidance guide at the end.

With the same characters and roughly the same plot line, it is masterfully written. Twelve-year-old Trevor takes on an extra credit social studies assignment. "Think of an idea for world change and put it into action."

His brainstorm is not to return a favor but to pass on an act of kindness to three other people, who in turn will do the same. But in this world that's not so easy to accomplish. Both a provocative and inspiring novel.

"A Snicker of Magic" by Natalie Lloyd (Scholastic, $16.95, ages 8-12): A novel that is imaginative, unusual and believable. "A Snicker of Magic" is the first of a four-part series.

"The Bridge From Me To You" by Lisa Schroeder (Point, An Imprint Of Scholastic, $17, ages 12 and up): An appealing novel about two teens who try to help each other find themselves. Lauren is temporarily living with her aunt and uncle after a traumatic incident with her mother and Colby is a high school football star pressured by his father but who secretly wants to give up the game.

"Subway Love" by Nora Raleigh Baskin (Candlewick Press, $16.99, ages 12-14): A lyrical and mesmerizing love story employing time travel. Two teens, both trapped in an unhappy home, discover one another on a subway platform. But one lives in 1973 and the other in contemporary times.

There's homage to graffiti art, but mostly it's about two souls that connect despite coming from different decades and generations.

"Edge of the Water" by Elizabeth George (Viking, $18.99, ages 12 and up): This is the first of a four-part series and it is set on Whidbey Island in Washington, where Becca King is hiding out from her cruel and vicious stepfather. Strange occurrences involving a seal, a Uganda orphan and Becca's paranormal powers combine to make this a page-turning mystery.

"The Fire Artist" by Daisy Whitney (Bloomsbury, $17.99; ages 12 and up): A fabulous fantasy. Aria is an elemental artist, who creates fire with her hands. But this isn't a natural gift. Instead it's borrowed from the elements, which in her world is a crime. Her abusive father cruelly trains her and she soon is recruited to perform in the most prestigious room.

But since her gift isn't natural she desperately seeks help from a Granter (a kind of genie). She can have her wish but the price is extraordinarily high. Impossible to stop reading this unusual and surprisingly romantic novel.

"If I Stay" by Gayle Forman (Puffin/Speak, $10.99, ages 14 and up): In an instant, a car accident leaves 17-year-old Mia without a family and hovering between life and death. But in her coma she mysteriously knows what is happening in the hospital.

Forman skillfully weaves in Mia's life before the accident and beautifully portrays her deep love of classical music, the cello and her boyfriend, Adam, who plays rock guitar.

Forman writes with assurance, integrity and eloquence. Although the topic is tough, Forman makes you care about Mia and respect Adam's devotion and the enormous sacrifice he is prepared to make. The sequel "Where She Went" (Speak, $10.99, ages 14 and up) picks up their successful but separate lives three years later. Their anguish and their love is palpable. The two books combined would make an excellent holiday gift for the favorite young woman in your family circle.

Joanna H. Kraus is a Rossmoor resident, playwright and author. For information, visit her website at www.joannakraus.com.

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By Loel Miller,
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Dispelling the myths
“Cats groom themselves.”
Due to the kind of coats we have created through domestic breeding, our house cats have created through domestication – especially in older cats – provides far more comfort than before the groom.

“Cats hate water.”
Cat saliva is heavily laden with bacteria and is not an effective cleaning agent.

“Cats hate water.”
Cats, when correctly handled by a qualified and experienced cat groomer often become docile when gently bathed in warm water. After being bathed and dried, cats preen themselves and clearly relish the removal of dead skin and undercoat.

“My cat would never let you groom her.”
If your kitty is whisked into a serene and secure mobile grooming vehicle readied for her at her own home and handled lovingly and efficiently by a groomer experienced and skilled in feline management and feline grooming techniques, professional grooming will very likely be possible and virtually always followed by expressions of great appreciation.

Going mobile
My regular feline (as well as canine) clients come to respond positively to being greeted at their own home by a familiar friend who they see on a regular basis. They are spared the stress of being transported and crated with other noisy and frightened animals as they await their groom and then again as they await the return of their master. Your own stress and time for transport, delivery and pick up is also eliminated.

Cat groomers vary markedly in their training, so it is prudent to inquire as to what training a groomer has received before using them.

I am a Certified Master Groomer who has trained with the president of the National Cat Groomers Institute of America. I am also a member of the organizations such as the National Dog Groomers Association of America, National Cat Groomers Institute of America and California Professional Pet Groomers Association.

For information or to schedule a visit, call 925-934-8737 or go to www.mobilegroomingbyloel.com.

Loel Miller maintains her home and business in Walnut Creek where she has lived with her family for 30 years.

Mobile Grooming By Loel is an advertiser in this week’s Holiday Guide.

Certified Master Groomer Loel Miller with one of her feline friends

Tech gifts for boomers
By Catherine McNulty

It’s ridiculous to think that the baby boomer generation doesn’t like technology. This is the generation that witnessed televisions becoming commonplace, the rise of the personal computer and ATMs pop up on every street corner. Baby boomers have developed much of the technology we use today.

As the boomers move from working to retirement, they are not letting themselves be put out to pasture and slowly slide into doddering old age. No, they are continuing to be tech-savvy, and now they have more time than ever to use new gadgets. There are even websites devoted to boomers and technology, such as Boomer Tech Talk; even the AARP has a section on its website for it.

The holidays are the perfect time to get your favorite boomers – be they parents, other relatives or friends – some new technology. It’s a great way to see how far technology has come since they were young. It’s fun to see how they react to their new device.

Continued on next page
Anything tech makes great gifts

Continued from page 8

ogy and help them learn to use it. But what tech makes the best gifts for boomers?

Let’s start with the basics: a smartphone. Most people wouldn’t know how to function without their smartphone, but a smartphone can be intimidating if you’ve never used one. What makes a smartphone the perfect boomer gift is it enables so many different forms of communication. You can call (and yes, people still make phone calls!), text, share photos, FaceTime or Skype, and even use social media. As families are spread out farther and farther, the ability to contact your loved ones in so many different ways is key to staying close.

Speaking of social media, how about a gift that doesn’t cost anything but would be a great way to spend time together? That’s right; it’s time to get your parents or grandparents on Facebook—or any other social media platform you think they would enjoy.

Think about it; the boomer generation grew up tracing the country, chasing the good weather and seeing the sights. For someone who grew up tracing the high-school classmates she hasn’t seen in 30, 40 or even 50 years?

Some boomers are already smartphone/social media adopters. In fact, some boomers haven’t slowed down in retirement; they’ve sped up—and hit the road. It’s the perfect way to spend your retirement, driving around the country and seeing the sights. For someone who grew up tracing the high-school classmates she hasn’t seen in 30, 40 or even 50 years?

A charming Norman Rockwell scene enhances holiday gifts whose purchase will help provide 1 million meals to families. Limited Edition Kiehl’s Greatest-Hits Collection, a gift box that includes an assortment of Kiehl’s most iconic products, including Creme de Corps and ultra-facial cream.

These holiday gifts are all at Kiehl’s freestanding stores, at www.kiehls.com/Norman-Rockwell, 800-543-4572 and select specialty retailers. To help hungry children, go to www.feedingamerica.org.

We are grateful to everyone who has joined our clinic family and wish a happy and healthy holiday season for all.

Dr. Mimi’s Audiology Clinic

Dr. Mimi, a Rossmoor resident, has a Ph.D. in Clinical Audiology and 30 years of experience. She is independent and free to prescribe ALL brands of hearing aids.

Mention this Ad for a $200 Discount on Your Hearing Aids

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Locksmith Lic.No LCC 6004

Contractor’sLic No 99227

Dr. Mimi really cares about her patients. Not only did she ensure that I was fitted with the right hearing aids but she also spent time making sure that I felt comfortable and really understood how to use them. It sure worked for me!” - Janet Oppenheimer, Rossmoor Resident

Take the Rossmoor Green Line Bus to our parking lot.

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“If I didn’t have my hearing aids, I just couldn’t hear the things I need to hear.”

“My audiologist, Dr. Mimi, is wonderful. She is independent and free to prescribe all brands of hearing aids. She really understands the needs of people and has a special interest in pediatric hearing loss.”

Susan F., Rossmoor, CA

A lot of boomers spruce up their houses as they head into retirement. Why not? The kids are gone, and they’re probably sick of looking at the same furniture. So what kinds of technology can make the home life of a boomer better? It could be something as simple as getting keyless doors. They’re more secure, and it’s one fewer key to keep track of.

Another simple gift: getting all of a boomer’s entertainment technology—TV, cable, stereo, surround sound, etc.—on one remote. No one actually enjoys having a basket of remotes on the coffee table and trying to remember which one does what.

As much as technology can supplement our lives and make them easier, it can also help save and prolong lives. As many boomers age, health concerns become paramount. Many have to take more medications than they are used to, or ailing health can make it difficult for them to take care of themselves. Some solutions are easy. There are automated medication dispensers to ensure someone is taking medication at the right time and with the right dosage. There are wall clocks, and reminders to remind someone to take medication, as well. But remember those old “I’ve fallen and I can’t get up” commercials? Life Alert, the company that made them, is still around, and all of that has gone digital now. There is, in fact, an app for that. Personal emergency response systems are a new type of technology aimed at helping those with questionable health.

Life Alert is one of the many companies that run such a service. What is provided through the service varies from company to company. Certain companies provide GPS to paramedics to get to your loved one faster; others keep digital medical records that can be forwarded to an emergency room or a doctor in another country if your loved one is traveling. So even if you have boomers on your list who are in poor health or juggling multiple medications, the holidays are a perfect time to get them on board with some helpful technology.

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If you have publicly traded stock that is worth more than you paid for it, but the returns are not what you’d like, consider giving it to us in return for a Charitable Annuity. Believe it or not, you can turn highly appreciated stock into an immediate or deferred Charitable Gift Annuity, receive a tax deduction for 2014, create a stream of income for yourself and make a difference for your community hospital.

Retired? An annuity with us may provide the supplemental income you need. Planning retirement? A series of deferred annuities can serve as a great retirement cushion.

Annuity rates are recommended annually by the American Council on Gift Annuities and are determined by the age of the donor(s). Two-life annuity rates are slightly lower than single life.

The 2014 rate for a single life immediate annuity at age 75 is 5.8%; 6.8% at age 80.

Contact us for more information and a no-obligation illustration.

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Barbie, Thomas the Train, Hotwheels are this year’s kids’ gifts

By Diane Schindwein Creators.com

Remember frantically scanning the store shelves for Cab-bage Patch Kids,Tickle Me Elmo and Furbies? That was a stressful time.

Well, shoppers beware. Now, with Christmas season 2014 under way, experts like Christopher Byrne and representatives from Mattel/Fish-er-Price are once again predicting what toys will be hot this holiday season.

According to Byrne, who are com-puter-savvy – and most kids are – Mattel’s representative recommends the Barbie Fash-ion Design Maker.

“Every parent knows how difficult it is to pull kids away from tech devices these days,” he said. “So why not strength-en their tech knowledge and supplement it with fun cre-ativity?”

The Fashion Design Mak-er helps fashionistas-in-training create custom designs on printable fabric paper with the use of an app, a tablet or a computer.

At over 50 years old, Barbie continues to “age well” and re-mains one of the most popular toys ever with girls ages 3 and up. Future hairstylists will love the new Barbie Endless Curls that allows girls to curl Bar-bie’s hair – sans heat or water – and adds streaks of color.

Of course, Mattel has re-leased the stunning 2014 Holiday Barbie Doll, who is wearing a gorgeous red gown and has dazzling holi-day details.

For girls who like their dolls a little more “freaky,” Byrne, who is content director for aNB Media Inc. and is known internationally as the Toy Guy, recommends the Barbie Fashion Design Maker.

Give treats

Continued from page 6

is all about giving treats in the tin or loaf pan that it was made in. She recommends buying reasonably priced tins or loaf pans to bake with, then wrapping them as gifts with ribbon and attaching the rec-ipe. “It’s like, ‘You loved my pumpkin bread? Well here’s the recipe and here’s the pan!’” she says. It’s a gift that keeps on giving.

Stack them on a beautiful serving dish. Pile goodies such as cookies on an affordable, festive plate or in a jar, sug-gests McCord. (For example, plates from Target are $1.99 for a set of four, and a jar from IKEA is just $3.99.) “It adds something extra special,” she says.

Pack them up in reusable bags. If baking dozens of treats sounds way too daunting, then fill baggies with just a few each, says McCord. But don’t go overboard. There are a few, she says, of reusable snack bags you can buy now,” she says. “My kids use them almost every day.” One option is cute and reusable snack bags from Etsy.com.

said that the whole Monster High Freaky Fusions line is go-ing to continue to be hot. “The big dollhouse (Monster High Freaky Fusion Catacombs) is going to be a hot ticket item, as are the dolls,” he said.

Parents and grandparents of the very young who want to give toys that focus on learn-ing will be excited about Fisher-Price’s brand-new Laugh & Learn Smart Stages line. This line of toys evolves with age-appropriate learning content as baby grows. Simply in-put a child’s age for automatic content updates or manually adjust the learning stage with a switch.

This line includes the new Laugh & Learn Stages Chair which is a child-sized seat that knows when baby sits, activat-ing learning songs and phrases when baby stands. The chair offers three levels of play that include fresh songs, phras-es and sounds that update to match a little one’s age and stage development.

Santa’s young friends will also be checking under the tree for their first Thomas & Friends train, which is the My First Thomas and Friends Motion Control Thomas. Kids can control Thomas with the wave of the hand, turning any room into the famous Island of Sodor.

2014 Holiday Barbie Doll

Barbie, a big kid at heart as well as a toy expert, recom-mends a few “blaster” toys for boys. The Zing Firetek Bow shoots well and is one of his fa-vorites this year. “It lights up!” he said.

And Nerf lovers won’t be disappointed with the “amaz-ing” Nerf Thunderbow. Just make sure kids have plenty of room to play with these ac-tion-packed toys, Byrne said.

One of the season’s hottest toys might just be as popular with parents and grandparents as it will with the kids. Hot Wheels Street Hawks are expected to fly off the shelves as soon as they are stocked, be-cause both boys and men are beg-ging for them. The highly sought-after flying car is both an RC vehicle, which allows the flying car to be steered along the ground, as well as in the air as a plane.

Byrne said the Street Hawk is incredible and agrees that dads might be borrowing the toy from their sons. “This toy really is terrific…It’s easy to use, and it brings a big “wow” when it takes off.”

Hot Wheels Street Hawks

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Happy Holidays to all of our Rossmoor clients!

Visit our Hunter Douglas Gallery showroom in downtown Walnut Creek and enjoy special savings and upgrades during our Season of Style Event!

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Hot Wheels Street Hawks

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Vacuums, air purifiers make great gifts

From Oreck Home Care Center

The Oreck Home Care Center in Walnut Creek is a family-owned and operated business. Since 1996, Jeff and Sheral Byram have taken pride in offering the best service in the industry.

The store carries the full line of Oreck upright and canister vacuums to fit any individual’s needs, and it also carries air purifiers, steam cleaners, carpet cleaners both wet and dry, orbiters, a full line of cleaning products and Miele vacuums and accessories.

Oreck has the best warranties and free tune-up programs available. Oreck’s Home Care Center’s highly-trained service technicians keeps customers happy. Oreck products in top working condition, plus they are only a phone call away for those who need assistance. The technicians also fully assemble each product and provide customers with the information they need to use the products properly.

Oreck Home Care Center appreciates the local support and looks forward to helping customers with their home care needs. Anyone who brings in his or her old vacuum will receive a trade-in value of up to $100 towards a new Oreck vacuum.

The store is open seven days a week, Monday through Saturday from 10 a.m. to 6 p.m. and Sundays from noon to 5 p.m. For information, call 925-780-9889.

Oreck Home Care Center in Walnut Creek is an advertiser in this week’s Holiday Guide.

Be creative, give homemade food or crafts as gifts

Continued from page 10

Cinnamon rolls that can be presented in a decorative tin and frozen. These gifts are easy to make in bulk, and they take some of the stress out of having houseguests over during the holidays. Urban suggests making personal care products. Items like lip scrubs, sugar scrubs, homemade body washes and shampoos, as well as soaps and lotions, are a great way to let someone indulge in a way that does not include extra calories or chemicals.

Surprisingly, these items are about as labor intensive as the infusions. Simply mix a few ingredients together and bottle or place them into a mold. But some recipes will require you to purchase specialty ingredients such as essential oils.

Anderson suggests making photo-based crafts for family and friends. “Instead of just framing the photo, get creative by creating a piece of art from the photo, such as photo coasters, photo collages or photo books.” By carefully selecting photos or colors, the gift can be personalized or designed to complement a room in the recipient’s house. Anderson also suggests “book letters,” a craft that transforms the text of a beloved book into a work of art.

But the real secret to making homemade gifts is proper planning and preparation. Anderson says, “The biggest mistake people make is not giving themselves enough time. Baked goods need to cool, glue needs to set, fabric needs to be ironed, and all these things take time. If you are making homemade gifts (especially non-food projects), start now!”

Urban echoes this, saying, “Just as you don’t want to be a last-minute shopper, you don’t want to be a last-minute crafter.”

Urban cautions that not only should you read through the recipe or instructions first, but also give some thought to presentation and storage, as well as ingredient cards in case your recipient might have an allergy or other food sensitivity.

Turkington notes that when making homemade gifts in bulk, expect to take far more time than the instructions state. Wrapping, packaging or bottling is easy when it is a few gifts. It is far more work when it is a few dozen gifts.

But don’t let that stop you from getting creative. Turkington suggests going to a thrift store to find unique plates and other dishware to add a touch of flair to your gift’s presentation. Start stocking up now before everyone else.

Homemade gifts are special because they are an opportunity to give a bit of your time and creativity—precious commodities in the modern age—to a loved one instead of something you found at the local mall. And by making your gifts instead of buying them, you may even experience a less stressful holiday.

Urban says, “DIY projects pull us out of the retail craziness.” So try making a few heartfelt gifts this holiday season. Do something special for others and yourself.

Santa’s only making one stop this year

The UPS Store

It’s no surprise more and more people are turning to UPS Store for their holiday packing and shipping. We’ve got everything you need to get your packages there without a hitch. With complete packing and shipping services, we can send just about anything. Big or small. Delicate or heavy. Even up to the last minute, as late as December 23. So this holiday season, come to The UPS Store in your neighborhood. It’s the only stop you’ll need to make, too.

New Holiday Hours, Starting December 1

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<td>Maria Napoli Eberle</td>
<td><a href="mailto:mariamaria@mariaeberle.com">mariamaria@mariaeberle.com</a></td>
<td>(925) 478-7190</td>
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Thank you Rossmoor – it’s my pleasure to serve you!

Maria Napoli Eberle

Santa Baby... hurry down the chimney tonight!

Dear Rossmoor friends it’s Christmas time

So I offer a gift of a simple rhyme ~

Thank you for making this a banner year;
I am grateful to all and wish you good cheer!

In the New Year if you are thinking of selling,
from Co-ops to Castles I’m here to help.
Please call me for a free, no obligation
Home Market Evaluation or a personal tour of Rossmoor!
Stocking stuffers are for grown-ups, too

By Jeanelle Horcasitas
Creators.com

Andy Williams hit it right on the mark when he famously sang that Christmas is the most wonderful time of year. With Christmas lights strung across the rooftop, a beautiful noble fir decorated to a T and carefully wrapped gifts under the tree, it’s easy to get caught up in the magic of the holidays. As a kid, I have plenty of these unforgettable memories. However, Christmas mornings were always the most fun. Before any wrapping paper suffered the wrath of a few overly excited kids, ripping their way to its contents, the first thing to look forward to was digging through the stockings. The fluffy red and white over-size socks with our names scrabbled across them in glittery glue were always full of the best candy, games and toys we could have ever wished for. 

But what happened when my siblings and I “grew up”? Well, lucky for me, my parents still kept the tradition alive with awesome little surprises to find in our stockings every Christmas. Therefore, I’m happy to report that just because you may be an adult doesn’t mean you have to give up the fun of the Christmas stocking. So go ahead and let out your inner child! Without further ado, here are a few stocking stuffer ideas for loved ones this year:

For the techies
Flash drive- Storage, storage, storage! Techies are always out and about, and this is the perfect bite-size gadget for them to back up any important data they may need. Find a super-cool flash drive that matches a loved one’s personality on the website Mimoco. Phone case- Techies are always rockin’ the latest and greatest - so a new case to show off their new Android, iPhone 6, etc., is always a great choice. For long-lasting durability, OtterBox and Speck Products are some personal favorites. They have a variety of colors and patterns to choose from. Portable charger- These work wonders for the techies who are always on their phones, with a battery life slowly dwindling throughout the day. Urban Outfitters has some fashionable portable chargers.

For the wine connoisseur
Wine glass charms- A glass of wine by itself is delicious, but a glass of wine with lovely dangling charms is the cherry on top. Wine glass charms can be found in many stores, but I absolutely love the assortment that Pier 1 Imports has to offer. Wine to wear- This is a great gift for anyone who isn’t afraid to flaunt his or her love of wine. Nylon’s “Less Whine More Wine” T-shirt is a definite must-have. Wine-to-go tumblers- These tumblers are just what the wine connoisseur needs for the beach, the park or even a tailgate party. Order the affordable and adorable pair of Vino2Go insulated tumblers from Amazon.com and no one won’t be sorry.

For the running junkie
Over-the-ear headphones- Running with regular headphones is always frustrating because of the constant cord twisting and tangling. Therefore, over-the-ear headphones solve the problem and allow the runner in your life to blaze his or her trails cord-free. Head over to a local Sports Authority or Sports Chalet to choose from a wide range of headphones. Armband- To complement the over-the-ear headphones, add an athletic armband to the mix. This will also help the running junkie to focus completely on the path ahead, with his or her cellphone and keys tucked safely around his or her arm. These can be found just about anywhere, such as the athletic stores mentioned above or even a local Target.

Comfy sole inserts- Sure, there are a ton of lightweight shoes advertised to make anyone faster, but comfort is always the most important. The runner in your life (and the runner’s feet) will be so grateful for these after those tough 10-mile runs. Purchase the affordable and adorable pair of Vino2Go insulated tumblers from Amazon.com and no one won’t be sorry.

For the spa lover
Candles- What’s better than one, two or three candles illuminating the corners of the bathtub with a sweet vanilla aroma filling the room? This is a must-have for spa lovers, and it also flawlessly sets up the relaxed ambiance they know and love. Candles are available anywhere and everywhere, but you can't go wrong with Yankee Candle or Bath & Body Works.

Soothing face mask- Get the full spa effect with a soothing face mask. It not only is great for the complexion but also will leave the spa lover feeling refreshed and wonderful. There are some great face masks at Ulta or Sephora. My favorite is The Body Shop’s tea tree face mask.

Tweezers and manicure set- A great pair of tweezers and a manicure set are extremely valuable for anyone’s beauty routine. The best tweezers are the ones by Tweezerman, which can be found at any beauty store. Plus, when the steel gets dull, send it back to be sharpened by the company itself. Moreover, Ulta sells a great travel-size manicure set to keep those fingers and toes looking lovely.

Last-minute gifts for foodies

From Real Simple
Looking for delicious gifts for the foodies in your life? Here are several ideas — just in the (saint) nick of time.

1) Teroforma Whiskey Tasting Set: This kit includes expert facts, tumblers and tasting note pads for four people — just pair with a bottle of Scotch. Great for aspiring connoisseurs.
To buy: $50 for one set, teroforma.com

2) Danny Macarons Chocolate-Caramel Macaroons: These are chewy and rich with a distinct cocoa flavor.
To buy: $26 for one pack of a dozen macaroons, dannymacaroons.com

3) Five by Five Tonics Co. Bitters (three-pack): Aromatic, Aged Citrus, Tonic Syrup — these three elegant glass bottles, which contain ingredients like aged tangerine peel, are fantastic for do-it-yourself cocktails.
To buy: $50 for three bottles, fivebyfivetons.com

4) Misto Coffee Gift Box: Four different varieties of whole beans, hand-selected by experts and packed with brewing advice into a cute compact box.
To buy: $20 for four 1.7-ounce bags, mistobox.com

5) Aviation American Gin: Unlike most dry gins, this liquor pairs juniper notes with lavender, cardamom, anise and sarsaparilla. Design fanatics will love the rectangular bottle and bold black and white label.
To buy: $30 for one 25.4-ounce bottle, at liquor stores

6) The Jam Stand Signature (four-pack): Consider unique and unexpectedly mouthwatering spreads, including raspberry jalapeño, banana-lime and rum; blueberry-vanilla and Kentucky bourbon; and red onions and red wine.

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Using fabrics for holiday decorations saves money

By Valerie Akcam
Plum Designs and Blinds

Oh the things you can do with just a few yards of fabric! Coming from a drapery gal, it must not come as a surprise that I turn to fabric as a natural inspiration to create seasonal decor.

The holiday season can be a very wasteful time of year, with endless and mindless purchases of throw-away paper products, anything from seasonally-decorated paper napkins to wrapping paper. If you’re looking to do things a little differently this year, here are some ideas to help you get on the right track.

When it comes to finding fabrics to use for decor, I love scoring treasures from thrift stores. It’s amazing what you can find for pennies: tablecloths, sheet sets and runners in every color, size and shape. Another local source for fabrics is JoAnn’s Fabrics. I am not a fan of big box stores, but around here, that’s the only source I know of with a decent selection. There are so many rolls of deeply discounted quilting or lighter weight fabrics with only a few yards left on them, and a few yards is all you need for major impact.

To transform your bounty into seasonal décor, here are a few ideas:

Tie colorful bands of fabric to the chairs, with a big bow in the back.

Cut out runners. Either run one along the length of the table or run a few along the width of the table, placing a plate on each end. There is no need to sew the hems, just fold and iron. If using burlap or linen, leave the threads loose to add playfulness.

Cut out squares to make napkins. Cut them with a zig-zag scissor to give them an instant finished look.

Tie bands of fabrics around each light on a light garland. It looks like a string of flowers. You can hang it on the tree, the mantel, around a doorway or run it on the table. Keep in mind that you will need to plug it in an outlet, unless you buy a battery-operated one. I like to use sheerer fabrics for these.

Wrap presents with it. It makes for very pretty eye candy. Use fabric ribbon to tie them. My favorite is to wrap a box or a piece of clothing the way a piece of candy is wrapped up. Tie each end with fabric.
Use fabrics to decorate

Continued from page 14

ribbons, leaving about six inches loose on the ends, and you have a

delightful present to offer.

After the holidays, gather up all the fabric props, throw them in the wash (gentle cycle as they are not hemmed) and re-invent your decor for next year. Use a napkin to wipe light garlands and runners clean.

And of course, if your windows need dressing up for the holidays and beyond, we at Plum Designs and Blinds will be happy to help you find the perfect look.

Valerie Akcam is owner of Plum Designs and Blinds. For information, call 925-935-2161 or go to www.plumdesignsandblinds.com.

Plum Designs and Blinds is an advertiser in this week’s Holiday Guide.

Helpful hints to prevent holiday decorations-related home fires

NAPS - According to the U.S. Fire Administration and the National Fire Protection Association, nearly 400 fires related to holiday decorations occur annually. Here are some hints to consider.

Christmas tree: When choosing a live tree, make sure the needles are green and hard to pull from the branches, and the trunk feels sticky.

Keep the tree stand full of water, and place the tree away from heat sources. Do not keep the tree up longer than two weeks. After the holidays, dispose of the tree at a recycling center or have it taken away. Do not put tree branches in a fireplace or stove.

If choosing an artificial tree, be sure it is labeled “flame resistant.” Trim the tree with flame-resistant items, such as plastic tinsel.

Holiday lights: Before using holiday lights, check for frayed wires, breaks in wire insulation, cracked sockets and excessive wear, and replace if needed. Follow directions and don’t combine more than three strands, unless the labels indicate it’s safe.

If using an extension cord, connect the lights to it before plugging it into an outlet. Check the wires regularly; they should not feel warm.

Be sure lights being used outdoors have been certified as appropriate for such usage. Unplug all lights before going to sleep.

Decorations: Use non-flammable or flame-retardant decorations, and keep decorations away from heat sources or vents.

Don’t let decorations block exits, don’t put wrapping paper in a fireplace and keep candles away from anything that can burn.

Extinguish candles when leaving the room and before going to sleep and don’t place candles on a Christmas tree.

Holiday cooking: Be sure to follow directions when using a turkey fryer. Remember general kitchen safety advice such as keeping children away from heat sources or vents.

Decorations-related home fires account for nearly 6,000 fires annually.

HELPFUL HINTS:

Holiday cooking:

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Spruce up home with new window coverings
By Fern Neiman
DS Window Coverings

It has been a joy working with Rossmoor residents since 1994. I have been inspired by my wonderful customers and it is my pleasure to offer the following tips that will assist you in making the best decision

Educate yourself
There is information on the internet and in magazines and books. Start a file for the type of window treatments you like.

Find your style
Decide on your goals: privacy, aesthetics, insulation or sun control.

Ask for referrals
Oprah said it best, “Get three estimates and never take the lowest one.”

With over 20 years of experience in the window covering industry, DS Window Coverings understands that its customers have varying needs that simply cannot be met by one product. DS Window Coverings philosophy is to provide exactly the right product to fit each customer’s needs. To fulfill that obligation, it offers friendly, knowledgeable, customer service without any pressure.

As the holidays rapidly approach we want to thank the Rossmoor Community for your business and appreciate your kind words and referrals.

For a free in-home consultation, contact Fern at 357-1255 or email dswindowcov@aol.com.

By Fern Neiman
DS Window Coverings

Avoid common holiday decorating mistakes

Between making travel plans and shopping for everyone on your Christmas list, there is enough to worry about besides bedecking the house for the holidays. Avoid these common decorating mistakes for a festive – and stress-free – season!

Don’t mix up presents:
It happens to the best of us: Niece receives a new golf club while your Uncle unwraps a pink tutu. To avoid confusion this year, write out gift tags or cards at the same time presents are being wrapped.

Don’t let Christmas lights become a safety hazard:
In order to have a safe holiday, first always inspect lights for any loose bulbs or protruding wire. Secure lights so there aren’t any loose ends that could be tripped over.

Don’t go overboard:
When it comes to seasonal decor, less is often more. Sticking with simple decorations will save time and money. Rather than a clutter of holiday craft projects, try an artful decorative

Write out the gift tags right after wrapping presents to avoid mixing up presents this year.

Don’t use disposable silverware for holiday dinners: And save the paper napkins for the Super Bowl. If there’s ever a time to break out the good china, it’s now. A beautiful table makes for a memorable family meal.

Don’t limit decorations to just red and green: Yes, it’s the classic color combination, but other hues like gold, pink, and navy blue can work, too. Try the hues for ornaments, wrapping paper and wreathe for a twist on tradition.

Don’t think that poinsettias are poisonous: It’s true that ingesting the plant in large quantities can produce an upset stomach, but it’s highly unlikely to cause a fatality. It turns out that this radiant, ruby flower first became associated with toxicity in 1919, when a child’s death in Hawaii was mistakenly attributed to the plant. So while it may not be a good idea to keep poinsettias in easy reach of children or pets, go ahead and keep them on the shopping list.

Don’t ignore the powder room:
With company dropping in, give the guest bathroom a quick once-over. Make sure there’s enough toilet paper, hand towels and soap. Try adding a candle or small bouquet of berries to add a festive touch.

Rossmoor resident Marilyn Allen discusses her window treatment options with Fern Neiman of DS Window Coverings.

Season’s Greetings

Thank You to my wonderful Rossmoor clients. The pleasure has been all mine.

MJ MADDEN
BRE #0079399
(925) 980-1664
mjmadden444@gmail.com

Rossmoor Realty

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WARM WISHES
AND
HAPPY HOLIDAYS
TO ALL

Thank you for a wonderful year. May your new year be all you’re wishing for.

Marsha Wehrenberg
Realtor® SRS®, BRE#0048014
Ready to help you... Call now!
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Wishing you and yours all the peace and joy the holiday season may bring!
We look forward to working with you in 2015!

Call the 2 Golden Girls,
Sheron and Yvonne
925.482.6311

THE STRENGTH OF OUR TEAM IS PROVEN BY OUR REPUTATION FOR RESULTS!
email: team@2goldengirls.com

Thank you for a wonderful year.

MJ Madden
Rossmoor Community for Realtor®, SRES®, BRE#0048014

Cal BRE # 00931939    Cal BRE # 01365641

Super Bowl. If there’s ever a time to break out the good china, it’s now. A beautiful table makes for a memorable family meal.

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ANNUAL BATTERY SALE
Just in time for the holidays our batteries are going on sale! December 2nd, 3rd and 4th we are offering a buy-one-get-one free promotion on our Power One batteries. Call for details.

Happy Holidays!
Leigh Kjeldsen, Au.D., Doctor of Audiology

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16 ROSSMOOR NEWS • HOLIDAY GUIDE • NOVEMBER 26, 2014
Tips for living organically this holiday season

NAPS- During the bustling holiday season, it can be challenging to balance an organic lifestyle with holiday parties, decorating, decadence and comfort food.

Here are five simple tips for living organically this holiday season:

1. **Decorate organically** - Skip plastic holiday decor and go with “do-it-yourself” handmade decorations. Get friends and family involved in making your own decor with organic flowers, bouquets, wreaths and fabric. Repurpose last year’s seasonal greeting cards into a festive banner by clipping them to a colorful ribbon, or recycle old papers into classic fold-and-cut snowflakes.

2. **Serve an organic holiday meal** - A delicious meal with family and friends is central to most holiday celebrations.

3. **Serve wine** - When hosting appetizers like a festive cheese plate, adorn an elegant cheese plate with SCO’s mango fruit spread. Include spiced nuts, dried fruits and antipasti to offer unique flavor pairings.

4. **For ideas on living organically during the holidays, visit www.santarucorganic.com**

The holidays – also a great time to buy or sell a home

By Maria Napoli Eberle

To sell or not to sell? Is this the right time to buy? Or maybe the Rossmoor buyers and sellers and knowing where to turn for help is critical. In a challenging market, it’s good to have an agent who loves a challenge.

One of the most enjoyable things about the real estate business is that everything is brand new – you just never know what’s going to happen today.

Are you thinking of selling and wondering if you should do so during the holidays? Here are some home-selling tips during the holidays in this robust market.

First of all, if you are committed to selling, coming on the market from Thanksgiving through the New Year makes excellent sense because there is less competition. Many homeowners take their homes off the market for the holidays.

Generally more homes come back on the market after the holidays and that means increased competition for the seller.

Buyers that take the time to look for homes during the holidays are usually more serious. Some may be relatives visiting town, while others may be relocation buyers that need a home before the end of the year. Some want to close before the year’s end for tax purposes.

All of these translate to serious buyers.

Tips on how to keep holiday spirits bright

From Emilypost.com

The holidays – the joy, the rush … the frustration, the bad tempers, the rudeness! Here are some tips to keep cool this holiday season, and even spread some cheer along the way.

- **Use “please,” “thank you” and “you’re welcome.”**
- **Say “thank you”** when they depart. Greet each and every person that they’re expecting – by name.
- **Place a nice note in front of your house** before it’s time to leave.
- **Serve at least one hors d’oeuvres** before the guests arrive.
- **Serve a cocktail at a moment’s notice** – before someone asks for one, it’s ready to be poured.
- **Greet your guests – David Titter**

Best way to make your guests feel welcome is to make sure you’re the first person they see when they arrive and the last person they see when they depart. Greet each guest warmly and personally. Challenge the salesclerk because a store is out of an advertised item. They’ll likely be easier to deal with if they’re already waiting for it. Be gracious: they were there first, so let it go.

Shopping with children. Sensory overload is common: too much noise, too many lights, too much color.

Be patient, little one. Remember, you’re the child, so let it go.

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- **Greet your guests – David Titter**
Volunteering at a soup kitchen with the grandchildren not only allows you to spend time with them, but it also teaches them the meaning of giving back.

Spend less money and more time with the family during holidays

NAPS—More, more, more! While the holiday season should beckon a spirit of joy, it can become stressful with increased demands on people’s time and money. But holiday traditions don’t have to exhaust anyone’s energy and financial resources. Sometimes, less is more. Here are ways to help trim time and money spending, so that you can focus on what’s more important.

Tips for saving time

Prioritize commitments. The festivities are endless, but an overcommitted holiday calendar can bring out the Scrooge in anyone. Make a list of the holiday traditions that are most important to you and the family. Then cut the list in half and focus on the traditions that are most enjoyable.

Limit shopping time. Forget those aimless shopping excursions and schedule only one day to complete all holiday shopping. Make a list and stick to one theme for all gifts to make it easier to choose. For example, get gifts for everyone — or a game or a specialty food item.

Make hostess duties easier. Ask guests to contribute an appetizer, side dish or dessert to the big meal. This will allow you to focus solely on the turkey or ham and spend less time in the kitchen.

To avoid last-minute hostess stress, set the table two days before with a non-perishable centerpiece. Include empty serving dishes and utensils, labeled according to intended foods, so the grandchildren can assemble the feast.

Tips for saving money

Give gifts from the heart. Reduce the gift budget with homemade treats and gifts of time. Consider framed photos from digital archives, homemade cookies or a coupon for pet-sitting.

Start early. The earlier you start shopping, the more you can take advantage of sales and be less inclined to over-spend out of desperation.

Shop smart. Take inventory and shop cupboards before buying anything. Then, shop discount retailers first, such as Grocery Outlet, to find brand-name items for 40-70 percent less.

Utilize leftovers. Save time and money by planning meals that make the most of leftovers.

Stay safe when shopping online for gifts

NAPS—According to a recent survey conducted by Nielsen, 72 percent of consumers prefer to shop online via their mobile device or computer versus shopping in stores. It’s clear why shopping online is the preference, as it saves time and eliminates stress. However, when it comes to safety, only one-third of respondents from Nielsen’s survey felt online shopping was the safest way to purchase.

With the holiday season just around the corner, millions of consumers will turn to the Web for holiday purchases. But how can shoppers stay safe and protect themselves from credit card and identity theft or compromised passwords? Here are a few tips to have the best online shopping experience:

• Buy from trustworthy online stores: Look for seals of approval given by third-party organizations such as TRUSTe or Better Business Bureau Online — if you’re not familiar with the site, reconsider purchasing from them.

• Keep Web browsers updated. Make sure any downloaded software on the computer or smartphone — including apps and add-ons — stays up-to-date. Check for updates in the menu options of most software.

• Look for the “S” for security: Never purchase anything from a site that doesn’t have SSL encryption. Make sure the site’s address starts with https:// instead of http://, and don’t provide credit card information via email.

• Keep personal information private. Most Web browsers, like Firefox, offer a “Do Not Track” feature that prevents personal information from being tracked by websites. This feature tells advertising networks, other websites and applications that you opt out of tracking for purposes like advertising.

• Secure passwords: Using a variety of upper- and lowercase letters, numbers and punctuation, create a unique password for each account.

Do’s and Don’ts for holiday tipping

From House Beautiful

Holiday tipping can feel very stressful, but it shouldn’t! says Lizzie Post, the etiquette expert and great-great granddaughter of Emily Post. “It’s just about saying thank you,” she shares her advice for giving (and getting) graciously.

DO:

• Consider your holiday budget. If you’re not able to do more, then simply write a note thanking a person for his or her help over the last year.

• Give what you feel comfortable giving: “Some people don’t feel comfortable giving cash, and therefore it’s okay to give a gift,” Post says. “It can be a very nice personal touch.”

• Send a thank-you card when you receive a tip. It lets the giver know that it didn’t get lost.

DON’T:

• Leave a tip where someone else could accidentally pick it up, such as taped to an outside door.

• Tip your postal worker. Per postal regulations, they can’t accept cash or gift cards. “I suggest giving something that the whole branch can enjoy, such as a box of cookies,” she says.

• Turn your nose up if you receive holiday candy and not cash. Accept gifts with the same generosity with which they were given.

• Wait too long to cash a check. You don’t want to affect the giver’s account balancing.

• Give wine if you’re not sure if the person enjoys it or not.
Inexpensive ideas for holiday party food

From Real Simple

Do it levy high food-and-drink bills crash your party? These affordable strategies let you scrimp without looking like a cheapskate. Serve:

1) Skip: a full bar
   Opt for: a single, memorable cocktail
   For instance: winter lemon-meringue. Muddle 1/4 cup fresh cranberries in 8 ounces of this traditional summer drink, then top it off with 2 ounces of vodka, or whiskey and a splash of seltzer. Presto – an instant mer-

2) Skip: champagne
   Opt for: cava or prosecco
   These affordable bubbles are available for around $10 a bottle. Find one that was produced within the past two years. For roughly half of the cost of a vintage bottle, you’ll get just as much fizzy flavor.

3) Skip: fancy flat breads and spreads
   Opt for: crostini
   Save a few bucks by buying baguettes (typically about $2 each) and make your own dip. A can of cannellini beans goes a long way: Rinse them, drain and put them in a small bowl. Place the grat-

4) Skip: aged cheeses, such as Gouda and manchego
   Opt for: fresh ricotta, moz-
  arella or feta
   These cheeses are more per-
   ishable, but less time and milk
   are required to make them, so you’ll find quality choices starting as low as $5 a pound or so – nearly $10 less than many aged cheeses.

5) Skip: tarts and soufflés
   Opt for: ice cream
   Yes, even though it’s winter. Pick up a tub – mint is a festive choice, but plain vanilla works, too – and brew a pot of coffee. Scoop the ice cream into cups, then pour in about 1/2 cup of hot java for a riff on the Ital-

6) Skip: shrimp or salmon
   Opt for: eggs
   This bargain protein isn’t just for breakfast, and a doz-

7) Skip: late night snacks
   Opt for: make your own dip.
   Use cannellini beans to make a simple, yet impressive dip for the holiday party.

8) Skip: latkes
   Opt for: make your own dip.
   Use cannellini beans to make a simple, yet impressive dip for the holiday party.

Enhance the flavor of ricot-

aa with a drizzle of honey, then serve with crackers. Or make toothpick kebabs with cubes of fresh mozzarella, prosciutto and fresh sage.

5) Skip: beef tenderloin or prime rib
   Opt for: less expensive cuts of meat such as short ribs, beef chuck, pork shoulder and chicken thighs
   Some of these cuts can retail for as low as $1 a pound. Stew them in a slow cooker or Dutch oven to give it a top-quality taste.

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Carol Ann Read Breast Health Center debuts

By Ronald Streitz, Better Health East Bay

Perhaps no medical intervention has been as well studied or validated over the long term as mammography. Regular use of this X-ray technique for women has frequently facilitated the early detection, diagnosis, and successful treatment of breast cancer, lowering mortality rates by as much as a third.

However, conventional 2-D mammography produces a single, flattened image of the breast, making it difficult for doctors to detect small cancers. A new FDA-approved technique has been developed called 3-D tomosynthesis, which provides the radiologist the ability to look at the breast in several different sections, instead of trying to look through the whole breast to find a small cancer.

Alta Bates Summit Medical Center in Berkeley and Oakland plans to add up to four of these cutting edge machines in the coming year.

With breast tomosynthesis, the medical center’s specialized breast radiologists will be able to manipulate the images to see areas of concern from all angles. The benefits of 3-D mammography include:

- Earlier detection of small breast cancers that may be hidden during 2-D mammography
- Greater accuracy in pinpointing shape, size and location of abnormalities
- Fewer unnecessary biopsies or additional tests
- Greater likelihood of detecting multiple breast tumors

Tomesynthesis, the newest FDA-approved 3-D mammography technique which occurs in 15 percent of breast cancer patients

In growing use at hospitals around the country, including hospitals in the Sutter system, this revolutionary technology has already been shown to increase cancer detection and decrease the number of confusing cases that require additional views.

Unlike computed tomography, which requires considerable time to set up and limits the number of patients that can be seen, tomosynthesis requires only a slight adaptation of the normal mammographic machine, and a slightly higher dose of radiation exposure—perhaps no medical intervention has been as well studied or validated over the long term as mammography. Regular use of this X-ray technique for women has frequently facilitated the early detection, diagnosis, and successful treatment of breast cancer, lowering mortality rates by at least a third.

Chocolate chip bread pudding

Continued from page 19

Pour over the chips, whisking until the chips melt. Whisk the sugar into the mixture; add the milk, eggs, egg yolks and vanilla.

Add the bread to the bowl, gently stirring to coat the cubes. Set the mixture aside to allow the bread to soak, tossing periodically (about 30-40 minutes or so).

Tooss the pecans into the soaked bread mixture, then pour into a baking dish (individual dishes can be used for single servings).

Place in 350 oven for about 45 minutes. Test the bread pudding to make sure the top is golden brown and the inside is cooked. Remove from oven and serve with caramel sauce.

Caramel sauce

(or use your favorite brand of caramel sauce)

1-1/3 cups sugar
1/2 cup water
1 tsp. corn syrup
6 tbsp. butter or margarine
2 tsp. vanilla extract

Pinch of salt

In a large saucepan, combine the sugar, water and corn syrup. Place over high heat and cook until the sugar dissolves and begins to boil. Note: Do not stir the sugar, as this could cause it to seize.

While the sugar is cooking, combine the cream, butter and salt in a saucepan over medium heat. Keep an eye on the sugar while heating the cream to keep it from scorching. Cook until the butter melts, stirring it into the cream. When the mixture comes to a simmer, remove from heat.

Continue to cook the sugar until it darkens to a rich caramel color, 9-15 minutes. Swirl the pan as the sugar darkens-watch carefully, as it can burn easily at this stage.

When sugar mixture is rich caramel in color, immediately remove the pan from the heat and add the cream mixture in slow, steady stream. The sugar will bubble and steam as the cream is added. Stir in the vanilla.

When the pudding is baked, spoon generous helpings into bowls. Drizzle the sauce over the portion and serve immediately.

This maple rib roast, along with a crowd-pleasing wine, is a great way to celebrate the holidays festivities.

A twist on classic recipes

Continued from page 19

Fall with Beaujolais Nouveau. Serve a range of cheeses and charcuterie. To please a large crowd, complete your holiday table with this Maple rib roast recipe.

Maple rib roast

(makes 12 portions)

5-lb rib roast, bone in
Salt and pepper to taste
1/2 cup pure Canadian maple syrup
1/3 cup Djion mustard
2 tablespoon fresh rosemary, finely chopped
2 tablespoon fresh thyme, finely chopped
2 tablespoon fresh black pepper, roughly ground

Maple syrup

Store-bought bordelaise sauce

Preheat oven to 400 degrees. Place roast bones side up in roasting pan. Score fat with knife. Season well with salt and pepper. Cover ends of bones with foil. In bowl, combine maple syrup and mustard; baste roast.

Separately, combine herbs and pepper; season roast. Roast for 30 minutes; reduce to 300 degrees and cook for 2 hours for rare doneness.

Wrap in foil and let rest for 10 minutes. Carve and serve with bordelaise sauce.

Starting on Nov. 20, in homes, restaurants, bars and bistros around the world, corks pop on the season’s first bottles of Beaujolais Nouveau, and continue to add joy throughout the holiday season.