

HOLIDAY

Gifts, Entertaining, & Decor



**Shur
& Save**

Happy Thanksgiving



By Emilio Aritz
C & S Wholesale Grocers/Shursave Markets

Thanksgiving is a special time of year in the supermarket business. It is a time when we shift gears, so to speak. Every day, every week, our job is to provide our loyal customers with excellent customer service, competitively priced goods and fresh quality products. During the holiday season, we get a chance to step it up a notch.

Whether you read our weekly circular, check us out online at shursavemarkets.com, or recently received our In Season

magazine, you will find recipes for that special turkey dinner.

I encourage you to take the time to visit your local Shursave for all your family favorites – from homemade baked goods and delicious salads to trimmings made fresh in our kitchens.

Shursave is truly your locally owned neighborhood supermarket, conveniently located in most towns in the Northeast. Shursave owners are committed to serving their local communities in many ways. During this time of year, Shursave promotes its Best Wishes program for the entire month of November which is designed to provide food for those less fortunate. We have also continued our long-lasting support of the local Feed a Friend program.

Over the most recent years I have written about traditions and challenged readers to think about what really matters. As I sit at my desk this year pondering what my message should be, I thought about one of our family traditions. At Thanksgiving we always sit around the table and have conversation about being thankful for what we have. Trust me, I am thankful. I am thankful for my wife, Lisa, who keeps the tradi-

tions alive and – need I say – is a fantastic cook and baker. I am very thankful for the life I have, surrounded by my children, Kate and Mike, and my nephew, Justin. I am thankful for all other family members, sister and in-laws, nephews and extended family and friends. I am thankful that I can remember those who have passed and remain in my heart every day of my life.

This holiday season when you are out shopping or when you're sitting around the table enjoying the Thanksgiving feast, let's think about **GIVING!** Ask yourself when is the last time you gave someone a smile, when did you give a hug, or did you give a second thought about someone else's feelings? Giving is not always about money; it can be as simple as giving someone your ear or simply giving that special person in your life a good night kiss! Maybe it's just about giving something extra of yourself!

So, as we give thanks this Thanksgiving Holiday, know that every owner in the Shursave family of supermarkets will always be working every day to give you, our loyal customers, the best service and shopping experience we can.

From the Shursave family to all our loyal customers.

Happy Thanksgiving!

Inside

- Gifts for everyone in your life
- Recipes and tips for those hosting this season
- Decorating ideas for the holidays





Gifts for the pet lover

By Joe Soprano
jsoprano@timesleader.com

Extra large bouncy Santa ball

Who doesn't love Santa Claus, right? We're betting your dog or the dog of the pet lover on your list will love this bouncy version of the jolly old elf. The ball is covered with a plush outer shell, making it look like Santa, of course.



Santa Claus bouncy ball

Any dog would have hours of fun playing with this ball after finding under the tree this holiday season. You can get your Santa ball – or a Rudolph the Red-Nosed Reindeer version – at Pet Supply Plus on Kidder Street in Wilkes-Barre. It goes for \$15.98.

Star Wars pets toys

There is no reason your furry friend can't get in on the hype for the latest installment in the Star Wars saga.

Yoda, Chewbacca and company have all been made into dog and cat toys.



Star Wars-themed pet toy

We found this Yoda stuffed-character at Pet Supply Plus in Wilkes-Barre for \$8.98. It would be perfect for just about any sized dog that loves playing with stuffed-animal type toys.

But don't fret if your four-legged friend is a cat. There are plenty of Star Wars-themed toys for cats too. Prices vary and the items can be found at just about any pet store and online.

PetSafe SlimCat Food Dispenser

Do you have that one friend whose cat just won't leave you alone every time you visited their home?

Well, then you just might want to get them the PetSafe SlimCat Food Dispenser this holiday season.

The 3 1/4-inch plastic ball holds the favorite cat food and encourages exercise while reward-

ing the feline with food. It will give the cat a good source of play and exercise while helping the cat maintain an optimum weight.

It will also keep the cap occupied for hours, meaning you can enjoy your holiday visit without needing the entertain your pet-loving friend's cat.

The food dispenser is available at Petco or on the store's website petco.com for \$6.95.

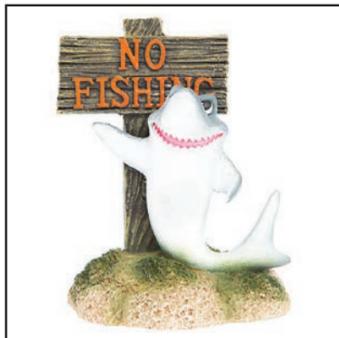


Slimcat Food Dispenser

Fish-tank decor

If the pet lover on your holiday gift list fish lover, perhaps a little decor for their tank is the way to go.

You can stop by any area pet store to pick up something for the tank.



Fish tank decor

The little underwater tchotchkes come in a varieties of styles and prices. From a couple of dollars for a small treasure chest to a \$50 castle, there is an unlimited number of choices. Perhaps check out your friend's tank on the sly the next time you are at their place to figure out what would go best in their tank.

The "No Fishing" sign shown is available at Petco for \$4.99.

Healthy treats

Is the pet lover on your list a bit of a health nut? Perhaps then you should help their pet join the health-food craze.

Village Pet Supplies & Gifts in Hanover Township offers a wide variety of healthy options for pet treats and foods for just about any one of our furry friends.



Healthy treats

The store specializes in natural and holistic foods.

Subscription services

Everyone loves to get a little something of a surprise in the mail from time to time. (As long as that surprise isn't an unexpected bill.)



BarkBox

Pets are no different. Trust us, we have seen it firsthand.

And their are a host of services to choose from, all offering treats and toys the pet or pet lover on your list will love at a variety of prices. A few of our favorites include BarkBox, Cat Lady Box, Loot Pets and Purr Packs.

Bark Box is a pretty typical pet subscription service. Each month a box will be delivered containing two different kinds of snacks, two chew toys and a chewy. Prices start at \$29 a month and are available at barkbox.com.

If BarkBox isn't for you, just take some time and do a quick internet search. You are sure to find a subscription that will fit your pet or that pet lover on your list perfectly.

Cuddle Clones

Do you have a pet lover on your holiday gift list who just can't stand to be away from their favorite Fido?

Well then, Cuddle Clones may just be the perfect gift for them.



Cuddle Clones

The company produces handmade replica's of our favorite pets. You provide a photo and description of the animal and the company will send you a stuffed animal that will have you wondering which one is the real pet and which one is the replica.

The company also produces figurines, golf club headcovers, slippers, blankets and coffee mugs.

The plush clone retails for \$249 and is available at cuddleclones.com. Don't delay, though, as it does take some time to produce the adorable look-a-likes.

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What To Cook

When You're Hosting Family For The Holidays

BY ERIK J. MARTIN
CTW FEATURES

You've decided to take one for the team and summon the entire clan over for dinner and festivities on Thanksgiving or Christmas. The invite was the easy part. Now you've got to figure out what will be on the menu — not an easy task, you deduce, considering your kin's different palates and preferences.

But prepping, cooking and serving the holiday meal doesn't have to be a dreaded or frustrating endeavor. With the right food planning and ample lead time, you can ace this banquet, sidestep the stress, and conquer the kitchen with culinary cleverness. This positive process starts with the right mindset.

"This is a chance to be creative, to brainstorm, to really think about what you

want the experience of a holiday meal to be. This is a chance to make a memorable gathering for your friends and family, to create a day worth reminiscing about," says Quelcy Kogel, Pittsburgh-based author of "The Gluten-Free Grains Cookbook" and a freelance food stylist.

Jamie McFadden, executive chef for Cuisiniers Catered Cuisine & Events in Winter Park, Florida, agrees.

"All too often, we find ourselves in a panic because we procrastinate on projects that can alleviate entertaining stress and kitchen nightmares," he says. "Advanced meal planning, recipe research, prepping items that can be frozen or refrigerated a few weeks prior to an event, as well as utilizing detailed shopping lists that can be delegated are just a

few examples of proper planning techniques that will reduce stress and anxiety."

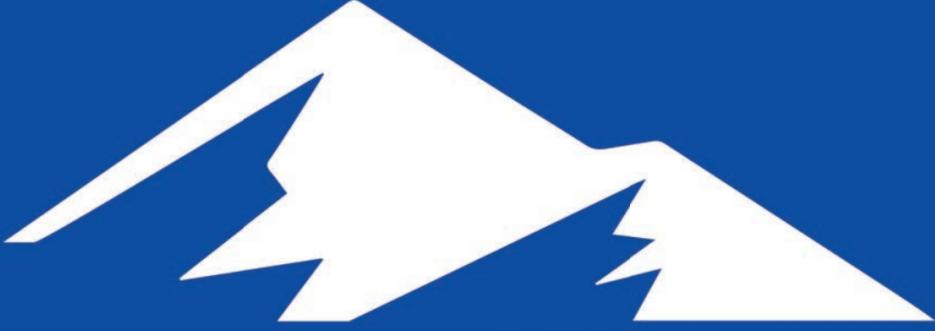
Allison Stowell, a Bethel, Connecticut-based registered dietitian for the Guiding Stars Licensing Co., suggests that the key to holiday meal success — and taste bud and gastrointestinal congruence — is to start planning at least a few weeks ahead of time and communicate with guests about the foods you plan to serve.

"No one wants to visit a host who seems overwhelmed. You also want to ensure your menu allows for adequate cooking time and that your kitchen can support your menu," notes Stowell.

"Planning menus that have something for everyone is crucial for keeping harmony.

See 'COOK' | 5

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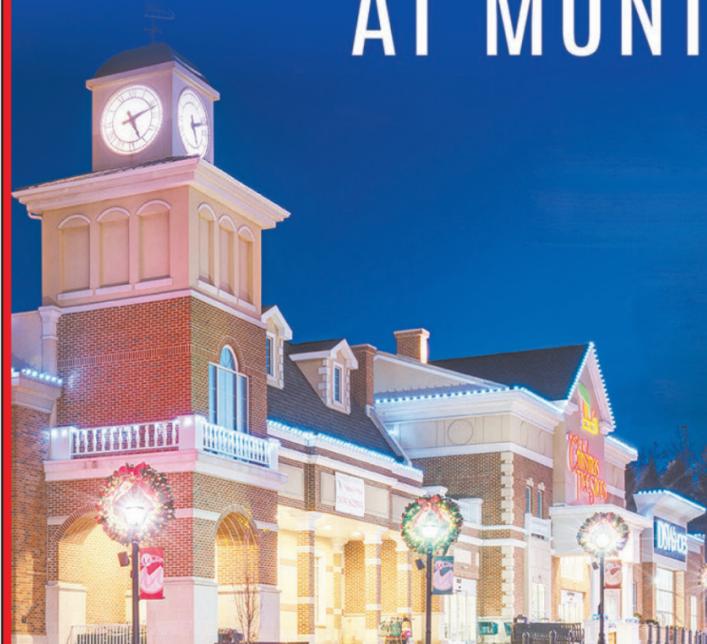
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'COOK'

from 4

When hosting others, it's nice to take traditional foods into consideration, as well as any food-related concerns such as allergies or certain eating styles."

Once you've ruled out any ingredients that could disagree with guests, it's time to narrow down the dishes. Kogel recommends a menu filled with classic cuisine choices as well as a few unique flavors. Her ideal holiday meal starts with an appetizer cheese board with savory parmesan-herb granola. The latter "pairs best with a soft cheese like burrata, and the granola

can also be used as salad topper instead of croutons. Be sure to include vegetarian options on the board such as nuts, olives, and artichoke hearts."

Next up is a fall harvest soup with quinoa and crispy sage, which is "easy to make — it's creamy and comforting with fall spices, so it's especially amenable to feeding a crowd," adds Kogel.

For her main course, Kogel opts for roasted turkey, surrounded by a perimeter of root vegetables like golden beets, turnips, carrots,

rutabaga, and sweet potatoes. Side dishes on Kogel's table also includes a roasted squash and grape salad with bacon and burnt honey vinaigrette; mashed potatoes; garlic green beans; stuffing; cranberry sauce; and roasted

Kitty Broihier, a South Portland, Maine-based registered dietitian and adjunct faculty member of Southern Maine Community College's Nutrition Department, recommends spotlighting fall colors and healthy food

choices on your holiday table. She suggests kicking off the eating event with a grand salad loaded with baby arugula, sliced fennel, grapefruit or orange segments, and thinly sliced red onion — served with a citrus-based dressing on the side.

Broihier's prime entrée is either beef rib roast or ham, complemented by a vegetable lasagna; sautéed garlicky green beans or sliced Brussels sprouts with slivered almonds and dried cranberries;

oven-roasted beets tossed in olive oil and garnished with chopped pistachios and goat cheese; and a pumpkin cake roll for dessert.

CTW FEATURES



carrot cheesecake with a ginger oat crust for dessert.

McFadden's menu, meanwhile, forgoes the gobbler in exchange for a main course of beef tenderloin with horseradish sauce.

He would preface that with roasted butternut squash soup with cinnamon churros and escarole Caesar salad with gingerbread croutons, and fill out the sides with green bean casserole, twice baked potatoes, and a palate-pleasing chocolate Kahlua cake.



Timesaving Tips



To make your big day run more smoothly, don't be afraid to cut a few corners. Try these suggestions:

- Prep and freeze a few dishes well ahead of time.
- You don't have to start from scratch, but you can make it look like you did. "Start with some prepackaged foods, like a can of cranberry sauce that you top with a bit of

orange zest and a sprig of rosemary," says food stylist Quelcy Kogel.

- Ask family for help. Get volunteers to make some of the side dishes and bring a bottle of wine.
- When in doubt, trust a pro. Get a quote from a local caterer, "because it's often more affordable than you'd think," Kogel adds.
- Set the table the day prior to avoid feeling

rushed.

- Keep your guests out of the kitchen before the meal. "Give them something to do, like grab a lite bite at an appetizer station or indulge in a drink while you put the last dish in the oven," says Kogel.

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Gifts for the sports enthusiast

By Joe Soprano
jsoprano@timesleader.com

Meteor Pain Reliever

If the sports enthusiast on your holiday gift list likes to participate as much as spectate, the Meteor Pain Reliever may be just the thing to spread some holiday cheer.

Anyone who participates in sports – whether jogging, racquetball, cycling, basketball or anything else that requires intense physical activity – is bound to find themselves in pain from time to time. This is especially true for those of us that have reached a certain age.

That's where the Meteor comes to the rescue. What is it? A vibrating, self-heating message therapy ball designed to facilitate muscular recover, increase flexibility and help reduce chronic pain. All that packed into a device about the size of a softball ball. Think of it as a foam roller on steroids.

The makers of the device were on ABC's "Shark Tank" and landed a deal with QVC queen Lori Greiner. The Meteor is available at www.myostorm.com for \$150.

College football bowl merchandise

The holidays mean one thing for college football – bowl games.

And if the person on your holiday wish list is a college football fan, you will want to make sure they can watch their favorite team in style.

While the bowl bids won't be out for another



The Meteor Pain Reliever



College football bowl t-shirt

couple of weeks, there will be still plenty of time between then and the holidays to get your gear.

Boscov's in Wilkes-Barre always has a selection of Penn State and Notre Dame bowl shirts and sweatshirts. You can expect to pay around \$20 for a T-shirt and a bit more for a sweatshirt, but at least you will know that college football fan on your list will look sharp come game day.

NFL-themed bowling ball

If you have someone on your holiday gift list who loves bowling and the NFL, then this item is for you.

Let your favorite bowler make sure everyone at the lanes knows who his favorite NFL team is with a team logo bowling ball. The Strikeforce NFL Bowling Ball comes in a variety of teams and weights.

(However, we are pretty sure that the Philadelphia Eagles ball we have shown here will be the most popular in North-



Eagles bowling ball

eastern Pennsylvanian.)

The ball is available at Dick's Sporting Goods through its website dickssportinggoods.com. It costs \$179.95 and is sure to have your favorite bowling NFL fan smiling this holiday season.

Team license plate

Help those on your gift list keep their cars looking shop this season with a team license plate.

Whether those on your gift list enjoy college football, the NBA, the NFL, or even ... gasp ... soccer, they will be sure to enjoy driving around with their favorite team proudly displayed on the front of their cars.

See 'SPORTS' | 23

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Gifts for the jewelry lover

By Lyndsay Bartos
lbartos@timesleader.com

Everyone knows the old adage, "Diamond's are a girl's best friend," but you don't have to be Marilyn Monroe to appreciate lustrous jewels. A classic pair of round-cut diamond studded earrings will have any girl singing. The Diamond Earrings 1/10-carat round-cut sterling silver are available at Kay Jewelers in the Wyoming Valley Mall or on their website, www.kay.com. Item number 182387100, \$149.99.

Maybe she's not one for diamonds, no problem. Kay Jewelers also offers many beautiful pieces featuring freshwater pearls. The Freshwater Cultured Pearl Necklace in 10K Rose Gold, strikes an eye-catching contrast between the creamy white pearl and the rose gold chain. Item number 350849509, \$143.99.

Often underrated, shimmering rose gold captures the beauty of a rose in this Disney-inspired necklace. Women's Enchanted by Disney Belle Rose Diamond Pendant Necklace is available at Boscov's Wilkes-Barre location, or



The Diamond Earrings 1/10 ct tw Round-cut Sterling Silver.

Submitted



The Freshwater Cultured Pearl Necklace in 10K Rose Gold.

Submitted



Women's Enchanted by Disney Belle Rose Diamond Pendant Necklace.

Submitted

on its website www.boscovs.com. Item number 603858, \$140.38.

Does your loved one have a big personality? Trying gifting her these gold hoop earrings. The Swirl Hoop Earrings in 14K Gold have an air of sophistication with a fun swirl detail. Available at Zales in the Wyoming Valley Mall, or on its website www.zales.com, item number 20138396, \$119.00.

If you're looking to gift a glam ring, look no further. The Love + Be Loved Blue Topaz Ring, provides a modern design with heart-felt symbolism. The interlocking sterling silver links represents an inseparable bond. With multiple color options — amethyst, sapphire and blue topaz — this ring will show your loved one how much you truly care this holiday season. Available at Kay Jewelers in the Wyoming Valley Mall, item number 376120109. \$79.99.

Don't want to break the bank? This two-toned necklace is perfect for letting her know

she has the key to your heart. The Diamond Accent Lock and Key Pendant in Sterling Silver and 14K Gold Plate, is an online exclusive from Zales, item #20022093. The necklace is on sale for \$36.75, shipping is free.



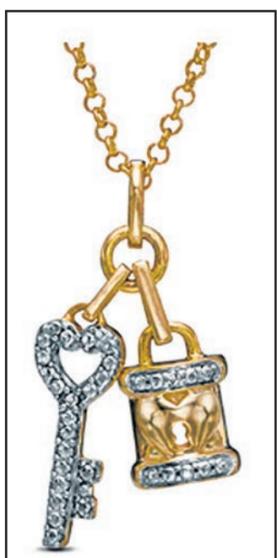
Swirl Hoop Earrings in 14K Gold.

Submitted



Love + Be Loved Blue Topaz Ring.

Submitted



The Diamond Accent Lock and Key Pendant in Sterling Silver and 14K Gold Plate.

Submitted

Along that same price is the Claddagh Bangle in Stainless Steel. This 7.5-inch bracelet is sure to warm the heart of any lucky lady. Available at Zales in the Wyoming Valley Mall,

or on their website. Item number 17826561, \$36.75.

Ochman's Jewelry in Dallas has a large selection of unique jewelry such as this Pearl Necklace with matching Bracelet. The set is unique as not only is the closure adjustable, but the pearls on the set are adjustable as well. This way the set can be worn several different ways.



Claddagh Bangle in Stainless Steel.

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Submitted

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Pearl necklace with matching bracelet

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Last-Minute, Go-To Recipes

These are quick and easy favorites

BY BEV BENNETT | CTW FEATURES



Cornmeal Muffins

- 1 1/4 cups yellow cornmeal
- 3/4 cup all-purpose flour
- 1 tablespoon baking powder
- 1/2 cup sugar
- 1/2 teaspoon salt
- 2 large eggs, beaten
- 2 tablespoons honey
- 3/4 cup milk
- 6 tablespoons unsalted butter, melted
- 1 cup corn kernels, thawed if frozen and well drained

Spray a 12-cup muffin pan with nonstick cooking spray. Set aside. In a large bowl stir together cornmeal, flour, baking powder, sugar and salt.

In a smaller bowl, whisk together eggs, honey, milk and melted butter. Pour over cornmeal mixture and stir quickly to blend; batter doesn't have to be smooth. Stir in corn.

Spoon batter into pan, filling indentations about 3/4 full. Bake in preheated 375-degree oven for 17 to 20 minutes or until muffins are golden and small knife inserted into a muffin comes out clean.

Remove from oven. Set aside to cool on rack 5 minutes. Turn out of pan. Serve warm.

Makes 12 muffins.

Pecan Pie

Crust:

- 1 cup all-purpose flour plus extra for work surface
- 1/4 teaspoon salt
- 6 tablespoons cold unsalted butter, cut into small pieces
- 1 egg yolk
- 2 to 3 tablespoons very cold water

Filling:

- 1/2 cup dark corn syrup
- 1/4 cup maple syrup
- 3 eggs
- 1 cup sugar
- 2 tablespoons unsalted butter, melted
- 1 teaspoon vanilla extract
- 1/4 teaspoon salt
- 2 cups raw pecan halves

For piecrust, stir together flour and salt in large bowl. Cut butter pieces into flour using a pastry blender. Stir together egg yolk and 2 tablespoons water; sprinkle on flour mixture and gently toss to evenly moisten. If dough is dry, add the remaining tablespoon water and gather pieces into a ball; shape into disk. Cover with plastic wrap and refrigerate 1 hour (or 1 day).

Lightly flour a work surface. Arrange dough on surface and roll out to 12-inch circle with lightly floured rolling pin. Gently fit into bottom and up the sides of 9-inch pie pan. Trim off overhanging dough. Make decorative pinches in top of crust.

Refrigerate while preparing filling.

In a large bowl beat together corn syrup, maple syrup and eggs. Beat in sugar, melted butter, vanilla and salt. Stir in pecans.

Pour into piecrust. Place on baking sheet. Bake in preheated 350-degree oven for 50 to 60 minutes or until filling only slightly quivers and crust is lightly browned. Remove from oven. Cool on wire rack 1 hour before serving.

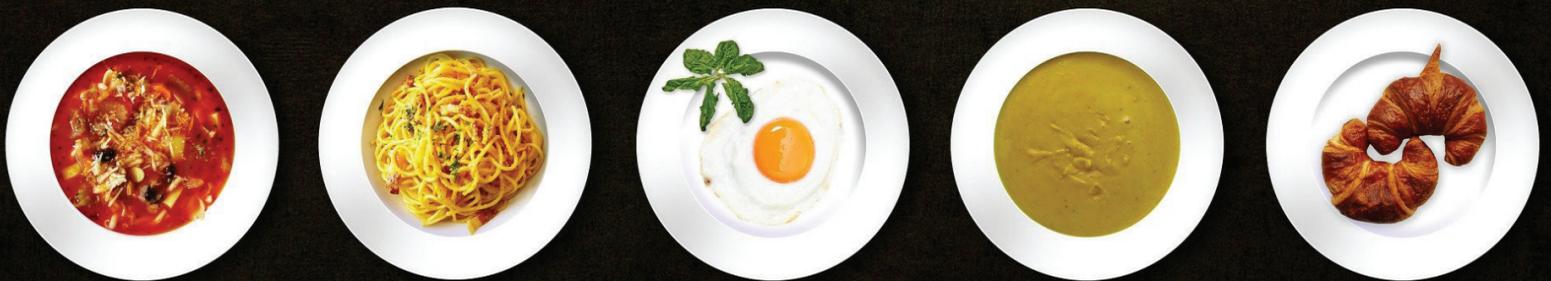
Makes 8 servings.



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Don't miss the star of Thanksgiving - the turkey! - on page 11

Gifts for the foodie



By Geri Gibbons
For Times Leader

Air fryer

An air fryer is the perfect gift for the foodie who has an eye for health. For about \$50, the recipient can get busy making healthier versions of fried foods, including French fries, chicken and even ravioli! The Dash Air Fryer can be purchased online at Bed, Bath & Beyond at <https://bit.ly/32SumJ9> For those who prefer shopping at a brick-and-mortar store, Wilkes-Barre Township's Bed, Bath & Beyond offers a variety of air fryers in various styles for the healthy foodie in your life.



Air fryer

Juice extractor

Juicers are trending among foodies these days, providing both taste and nutrients gleaned from both fruits and vegetables. At Walmart, an Automatic Electric Home Fruit Juicer Juice Extractor can be had for about \$40. Reviews of the gift indicate that buyers used it often and felt like it provided a chance for a healthy start to the day or a snack that provides taste and energy. In addition, users often experimented with new flavors or painlessly added extra nutrients to their family's diet.

Kitchen items

For those of us on a budget with "foodie" friends, a trip to Dollar Tree can provide a chance to be lavish, even with limited resources. The store provides a whole area full of kitchen items for \$1 – use your imagination and pick up a spatula, whisk, potato masher, a vegetable peeler and more. To finish off your purchase, grab a holiday-themed dish towel that sports a recipe for gingerbread! What could be any better than being presented with a chock full of kitchen items and a decorative holiday themed towel for use through the season.

Honey

Small businesses provide quality products and services that support the community. For "foodies" who would like to add sweetness and flavor to their culinary creations or even to their tea, The Beekeeper's Daughter on Maffet Street in Plains Township provides a variety of choices that a "foodie" would be happy to receive on Christmas morning. In addition to more traditional honey, Fall Blossom, Orange Blossom, Buckwheat Blossom and Wildflower honey, serve as a conversation starter as well as a sweetener. Products from the hive-to-table business is sure to delight foodies who appreciate fresh



Juice extractor



Honey

quality products. A mix-and-match honey gift assortment is \$20, a great deal for a quality gift.

Wine

For your food-loving friends, wine is a must. Northeast and Central Pennsylvania wineries provide a chance to purchase a good wine, while benefiting from the expertise of winery staff. In Luzerne County, Honey Hole on Honey Hole Road in Drums, offers a variety of wines that will not just please the palette at the end of the day or at the end of a



Wine

night, but serve as a conversation starter. A bottle of such flavors as Banana Pineapple, Green Apple, Watermelon and Cranberry, can serve as the perfect hostess/host gift and jive with the holiday theme. A wines start at about \$20. Even better - give the woman in your life the gift of a trip to the winery, nestled in the mountains, and spend a few hours relaxing and enjoying the holiday season.

Baked goods

A tray of fresh baked goods is the perfect gift for a hostess or the foodie in your life who craves sweet, well-made creations that they can share with holiday guests. Bakery Delite on River Street in Plains Township offers a variety of mix-and-match goodies, which mean you can make your sweet treat a thoughtful one.

Does your foodie like chocolate? There are a variety of cookies and other baked goods artfully filled with it, including delicious brownies that are a favorite of many.

What about nuts? You can choose from a variety of rolls and cookies that showcase them.

Favorite colors? Many of the treated at the bakery are iced with colors that make them appealing to guests and fit for any holiday table.

Stop in at the River Street Bakery and pick up a treat as a gift for a foodie friend.

Better yet, pick out some extra items to take home for snacking or completing a meal.



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Gifts for women

By Geri Gibbons
For Times Leader

Vera Bradley

Vera Bradley has something for every woman in your life – whether a college student, professional or mother toting newborn essentials. Purses, backpacks, wallets – perfect for adding color and style to any outfit – are a sure hit under the tree on Christmas morning. The designer often offers new patterns that trend for the holiday and become favorites. Purses start at about \$59 and are available at Dundee Gardens, Sans Souci Parkway, Hanover Township. To find other retail stores which offer Vera Bradley to their website at <https://bit.ly/2qZemI6>.



Vera Bradley bags

One Step hair dryer and volumizing brush

Revlon's one step hair dryer and volumizing brush is a perfect gift for the on-the-go woman who needs to look polished on the go. The hair dryer/hot brush combo comes in at about \$40 and is the perfect gift for your mother, girlfriend, sister or spouse. This gift is available at Walmart and other retail stores. Its sleek back look will be a perfect addition to any woman's beauty tool kit. For those wanting to pump up the gift a bit, Suave offers a full line of oil-based shampoos and conditioners for about \$3, also available at Walmart.

Books

Books are always a great idea for a holiday gift, providing a chance for the woman in your life to spend hours indoors on a cold day with a good read that can transport her thoughts to a warmer climate and add some excitement to a quiet afternoon. A Barnes & Noble gift card tucked inside a miniature stocking, provides the special woman in your life a chance to get out to the store and choose among romance, drama, mystery or even a cookbook. Barnes & Noble website also offers a variety of books and gifts. An average book costs about \$15, so a \$30 gift card would cover two and bring hours worth of enjoyment to a friend or family member.



Books

Stopays chocolate

Chocolate is the perfect gift for a "Secret Santa" or for a hostess who would appreciate setting out for the treat during a holiday party. Jon L. Stopay Chocolate at 17 N. River St. in Plains, offers a variety of chocolate that is sure to please the special woman in your life. The store

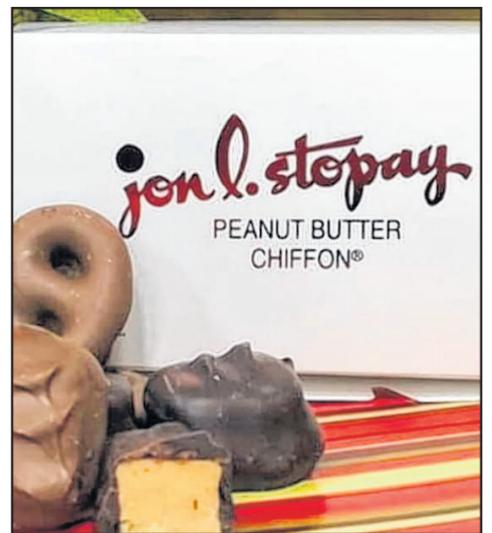
offers a variety of chocolates, with such choices as Peanut Butter Chiffon, non-pareils covered with sprinkles and chocolate covered nuts. Prices start at about \$20 for a boxed assortment. Many people make the gift of chocolate their "signature" and recipients look forward to the sweet treat every year. For those who would rather shop online, the store's website at <http://bit.ly/6QoD>.

Pajamas

Pajamas are the perfect gift for the woman in your life who wants to stay both cozy and stylish during the upcoming colder months. Old Navy provides a wide selection of colorful pajamas that start at about \$25 and are perfect for Christmas morning photos in front of the tree. The store offers a line of special flannel plaids for the holiday season, that are also available in kids and men's sizes, for family-themed sleepwear. Shoppers can visit the business's Arena Hub store or the store's website at <https://tinyurl.com/w7qfx6>.

Weighted blanket

A weighted blanket is the perfect gift for the busy woman in your life who wants to relax and get a good night's sleep. Weighted blankets have been trending for about a year – they come in a variety of colors that add to the décor of any bedroom or cozy area of the home. To complete the gift of sleep, add a bottle of lavender spray at Kohl's for about \$7. The woman in your life will be asleep in no time and thank you in the morning. An UGG-brand weighted blanket is available online at Bed, Bath and Beyond for just over \$100. <http://alturl.com/495vj>



Chocolate



Pajamas



Weighted blanket

Basic Roast Turkey With Gravy



- 1 fresh or frozen, thawed 8-to-12-pound turkey
- Salt and pepper
- A few sprigs fresh sage plus a few leaves for gravy
- 2 tablespoons melted butter or olive oil
- 1/4 cup flour
- 2 cups chicken broth
- Sage, rosemary and thyme sprigs for garnish (optional)

Pat turkey dry with paper towels.

Remove giblets from turkey cavity. Use for another dish such as turkey broth.

Season turkey cavity with salt and pepper. Add sage sprigs.

Place turkey breast-side up on rack in roasting pan. Add 1/2 cup water to the pan. Tuck wings back. Brush turkey skin with butter; season lightly with salt and pepper.

Roast in preheated 325-degree oven, allowing about 2 3/4 to 3 hours for an unstuffed bird (according to the U.S. Department of Agriculture timetable; you may want to start checking the bird temperature after 2 1/4 hours). When a meat thermometer inserted in the innermost part of the thigh, not touching bone, reaches 165 degrees the turkey is done. If the bird becomes too dark before it's done, place a sheet of aluminum foil lightly over the bird.

Continue roasting.

Remove turkey from oven, when done. Lift onto a platter and tent with foil. Set aside 15 to 20 minutes.

Meanwhile, skim and discard excess fat from drippings in roasting pan leaving about 1/4 cup drippings. Stir in flour. Place on stovetop burner over low heat. Cook over low-medium heat, stirring constantly until mixture is thick and browned bits are scraped up. Gradually stir in chicken broth. Bring to a simmer, stirring constantly until thickened and smooth. Season with 1/4 teaspoon each salt and pepper. Sprinkle with 1 teaspoon minced fresh sage if desired. Makes about 2 cups gravy.

Carve turkey at the table; passing gravy separately.

Makes 10 servings.

Note:

For a timetable on turkey roasting visit the following websites:

<https://www.foodsafety.gov/keep/charts/turkeyroastingchart.html>

https://www.fsis.usda.gov/wps/portal/fsis/topics/food-safety-education/get-answers/food-safety-fact-sheets/poultry-preparation/turkey-basics-safe-cooking/ct_index

To thaw a frozen turkey allow 1 day (about 24 hours) for each 4 to 5 pounds of turkey in the refrigerator at 40 degrees, according to the U.S. Department of Agriculture Food Safety and Inspection Service.

A 12-16 pound bird requires 3 to 4 days

For more tips on safely thawing turkey visit the website:

https://www.fsis.usda.gov/wps/portal/fsis/topics/food-safety-education/get-answers/food-safety-fact-sheets/poultry-preparation/turkey-basics-safe-thawing/CT_Index



Gifts for the young at heart

By Mary Therese Biebel
mbiebel@timesleader.com

My Size Playdate Sven

Most reporters — darn the luck! — weigh more than 70 pounds, so unfortunately we can't ride Sven. But the My Size Playdate Sven, who stands more than 3 feet tall from hoof to antler, could be a perfect gift for a younger fan of Frozen II, perhaps someone 3 to 7 years old. You can hear



My Size Playdate Sven

Mary Therese Biebel | Times Leader

him chomp when you "feed" Sven his carrot, hear him gallop when you pull on his reins and listen to various other sounds, including Kristoff's "Sven voice." We spotted him for \$99.99 at Boscov's.

My Friend Olaf

Frozen II fans as young as 18 months will likely enjoy the huggable "My Friend Olaf" snowman doll which comes with a "Play a Sound" book. You



My Friend Olaf

Mary Therese Biebel | Times Leader

Try something new this holiday season, with one of
ShurSave's Delicious Recipes



Healthful Advice from our Registered Dietitian/
Nutritionist, Debra Heverling, MA, RD/LDN

Dietitian's Dish

Have you ever put so much emphasis on cooking the perfect turkey that your side dishes are forgotten?

It's time to break away from the same boring sides and try something new.

Skip the prepared and boxed options and start with fresh ingredients. Level up on flavor and nutritional benefits for your Thanksgiving dinner!

Skip the mashed potatoes and add some extra color to the table.

For these and more recipe ideas, go to inseasonzine.com.



Spinach, Pomegranate & Orange Salad

INGREDIENTS:

- 1/2 cup apple cider vinegar
- 1 Tbsp. granulated sugar
- 2 tsps. kosher salt
- 1 cup water
- 1/2 cup thinly sliced red onion
- 3/4 cup prepared balsamic vinaigrette
- 1 container (5 oz.) baby spinach
- 1 medium navel orange, peeled and sliced (crosswise)
- 1/2 cup pomegranate arils
- 1/3 cup chopped & toasted pecans

DIRECTIONS:

1. In medium bowl, whisk apple cider vinegar, sugar, salt and water until sugar dissolves; stir in onion. Cover and let stand 1 hour; drain.
2. Toss spinach with balsamic vinaigrette to combine. Top with orange, pomegranate arils, pecans, and onions to serve.



Hasselback Potatoes with Horseradish & Roasted Red Peppers

INGREDIENTS:

- Nonstick cooking spray
- 8 medium potatoes (about 4 pounds)
- 1/2 cup olive oil
- 1 tsp. salt
- 1 tsp. ground black pepper
- 1/4 cup coarse ground mustard
- 1/2 cup refrigerated prepared horseradish
- 1 Tbsp. fresh lemon juice
- 1/2 cup drained, chopped roasted red peppers
- 1/2 tsp. smoked paprika
- 1/4 cup chopped chives

DIRECTIONS:

1. Preheat oven 350°. Spray rimmed baking pan with nonstick cooking spray. Cut crosswise slices, about 1/4- to 1/2-inch apart, into each potato, cutting only 3/4 of the way through potatoes. Rinse potatoes under cold water.
2. Place potatoes, cut side up, on prepared pan; brush cut sides of potatoes with oil and sprinkle with salt and pepper. Bake potatoes 45 minutes.
3. In small bowl, whisk horseradish, mustard and lemon juice; fold in red peppers. Evenly spread horseradish mixture over potatoes and in between slices; sprinkle with paprika. Bake 30 minutes or until potatoes are tender. Serve potatoes topped with chives.

Find these recipes and thousands more on Shursavemarkets.com

**Shur
Save**



By Joe Soprano
jsoprano@timesleader.com

DoorDash gift card

Who doesn't like food delivered right to your door? A DoorDash gift card is the perfect stocking stuffer.

If you are unfamiliar with DoorDash, it's a food delivery service that will allow your favorite student to choose from a bevy of restaurants. Everything from big chain restaurants to local mom-and-pop shops. And even better yet, your favorite student will be able to order their meal right from that mobile device they are never without.

And who can't use a quick, no-hassle meal?

The giftcards come in a variety of denominations and are available where ever gift cards are sold.

Smidgens

A stocking isn't officially stuffed unless there is some candy inside it, and nothing says the holidays more than a box of Gertrude Hawk's Smidgens. The chocolate treats come in a variety of flavors in both dark and milk chocolate. While the peanut butter-filled ones may be the most popular, our favorites are the milk chocolate caramel-filled Santa Smidgens. You can pick up a 14.5-ounce box of the Santa Smidgens for \$11.99 at any of the Gre-



DoorDash gift card

trude Hawk retail locations or online at gertrudehawkchocolates.com.



Smidgens

Credit Card Tool Set

Even if you're not a Boy Scout, it's always a good idea to be prepared. And whomever you give this credit card tool set too will certainly be prepared for just about anything. This set includes a bottle opener, knife, screw-driver and compass among other tools.



Credit card tool set

It's available at Amazon.com for \$12.97.

Rub-Away odor remover

If you know someone that spends a lot of time working in the kitchen, then the Rub-Away odor remover may be just the thing to put in their stocking. The Rub-Away will remove any odor from your hands. It's great for use after working with onions, fish, garlic or anything that tends to leave behind an unpleasant aroma. You simply rub it between your hands, as you would with a bar of soap, and the odor is gone. The Rub-Away is available at Amazon.com for \$8.90.



Rub-Away odor remover



Bottle socks

If the person you're filling a stocking for is a wine-lover, then the Primitives By Kathy Adulting Bottle Cover would be the perfect thing for them to find their stocking. They can be found online at Boscovs.com for \$5.24.

Tiny arcade game

Everyone likes to find a little something to play with among



Tiny arcade game

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Gifts for the outdoor enthusiast

By Kevin Carroll
kcarroll@timesleader.com

Lew's Carbon Blue GT Baitcasting Combo

If you're an outdoorsy type of guy or girl, fishing is probably one of your favorite recreational hobbies. Is your old rod not getting the job done anymore?

Well then, consider splurging this holiday season on any of Lew's fishing rods, featuring state-of-the-art design and a reel combination that will take care of everything you need to land the catch of a lifetime.

Lew's Carbon Blue GT Baitcasting rod and reel combo is available on sale for just \$89.98 and could be picked up online or in person at Dick's Sporting Goods.



Lew's GT Baitcasting Combo

Yeti Rambler Tumbler

Everyone gets thirsty. Whether you're hunting, fishing, camping, or even just enjoying the outdoors, it's crucial that you keep your drink of choice fresh and protected.

For that, look no further than the Yeti brand Rambler Tumbler.

Yeti products are specially designed to keep your beverage fresh, and to keep the heat or coolness trapped inside the container.

The Rambler is made from stainless steel with double-wall vacuum insulation to protect the drink.

You could purchase a Rambler tumbler for just \$29.99 on the Yeti website or at just about any outdoors store.



Yeti Rambler Tumbler

Oakley Ski Goggles

Ready to hit the slopes this season?

Make sure you're protected and ready to go with a pair of Oakley Ski Goggles, the finest in protective eyewear for your run down the mountain this winter.

The lenses not only look cool, but provide plenty of protection from the elements, and use wide-lens tinting to make your ride clear and comfortable.

You could purchase these at Top of the Slope



Oakley Ski Goggles

on South Main Street in Wilkes Barre at prices ranging from \$150-280.

Fishing tackle storage bag/backpack

This water-resistant backpack/tackle box is perfect for any angler. Made of high density nylon fabrics, it is abrasion resistant and features indestructible buckles and zippers. It can be used as a shoulder bag, backpack, handbag, chest bag, fishing tackle bag or travelling bag and features two rod belts to hold your fishing rods. It is available from amazon.com for \$33.98.



Fishing tackle storage bag/backpack

Vintage pocker handwarmer

Outdoorsmen of a certain age will love this vintage pocket handwarmer. The chrome plate original accompanied famed 1962 Antarctic expedition. This one provides toasty in-your-pocket warmth no matter the weather. Up to 8 hours of cold and damp comfort for skiers, skaters, golfers, hikers and all manner of inclement weather outdoor enthusiasts. Fueled by standard lighter fluid. It sells for \$14 at sundancecatalog.com.



Vintage pocker handwarmer

Camping sleeping pad

There's no reasons those night's spent sleeping under the stars have to be uncomfortable. This ultra-light, inflatable sleeping pad will make sure you wake up feeling great – just place it under your sleeping back and get a good night's sleep. It's available for \$44.95 from outdoorsmanlab.com.



Camping sleeping pad

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3 Ways To Decorate Your Holiday Table

BY ERIK J. MARTIN
CTW FEATURES

You've trimmed the tree, festooned the windows and bushes with lights, hung up your stockings with care, and strategically positioned the mistletoe up high. But there's still one item waiting to be crossed off your Christmas prep checklist: Your holiday table.

Whether you plan to provide a festive feast on it or have it simply serve as a decorative focal point noticed by visitors, a handsomely appointed holiday table can make all the difference in December, the experts contend.

"Typically, the layout of a home has the table or dining room as a center of attention. Much like the centerpiece on a table, the table itself is the centerpiece of the house where everyone gathers when not in the kitchen, so it pays to make it visually awesome," says Brian Worley, owner and creative director of B. Worley Productions, an Atlanta-headquartered event planning company.

Karen Crouse, a Napa, California-based vintner and who often hosts elaborate gatherings for clients, says the large and flat dimensions of a family table provide an excellent platform for making a Yuletide statement.

"The dining table in particular is where stories are shared and memories are made," says Crouse.

But simply plopping down a pot of Poinsettias, a couple of decorative candles, and ceramic snowman salt and pepper shakers atop your table isn't necessarily a good seasonal strategy. To create a more tasteful and impactful impression, the pros recommend adopting a carefully considered decorative scheme.

"It's important to plan properly because you want your table to reflect any guests you invite as well as the tone of the occasion. Plus, you want to think about the type of function you may be preparing for — is it a formal dinner or a more relaxed and casual occasion?" asks Brian Gluckstein, interior designer with Gluckstein Design Planning in Toronto.

Three popular adornment approaches for your holiday table are:

Earthy And Casual

This esthetic, also known as "casually rustic," incorporates natural elements from the outdoors, including branches, fur, plaids, and pinecones, in order to set a relaxed tone without too many synthetic frills. To accomplish this look, Crouse suggests using a farmhouse style table, if possible, along with burlap or linen placemats, stone or pottery dishes, hobnail glassware, wood-handled



flatware, and twine to tie a small ornament onto each place-setting napkin.

Worley advises using a table runner rather than a tablecloth if you plan to have an extensive centerpiece "so that you don't have to constantly take everything off the table to wash it."



Sophisticated Glam

Yearn for a more chic and stylish approach that spotlights shiny objects and brightens up your table? Sophisticated glam is just the ticket.

"To get a sophisticated and glamorous look for your table, use pieces like silver candlesticks, silver or glass chargers and embroidered napkins. Add sparkle with crystal place card holders, and decorate the table with glittering ornaments," says Gluckstein. "A classic center floral arrangement would also work well here."

Worley's version of this table would minimize color variety and instead emphasize white, ivory, and champagne hues complemented by gold and silver metallic sheens.

"I would use lots of candles, both tapered and pillared in different heights within glass cylinders to reflect the light. Mix in inexpensive ornaments, and then pepper in some very nice, expensive ornaments that have detail and embellishments.

Aim to keep it simple, yet styled and tailored," notes Worley.

Mercury glass chargers with white dishes and silver, gold, and white marbled napkins with red napkin rings deserve a place on this table, too, insists Crouse.

Kid-Friendly

Christmas merrymaking isn't all about indulging adult preferences. If your home

is host to young'uns, make them feel more welcome by creating a kid-themed seasonal table.

"Incorporate some of your children's favorite toys into the design of the table," Worley suggests. "Use whimsical colors, and play up some decorations that evoke a youthful feel.

Wrap some boxes with fun printed wrapping paper, and stack a few on your table with a stuffed animal resting against the box. Then, accent with a few ornaments that harmonize with the color scheme you're working with."

Get the kids involved in the fun, as well.

"Have them make the place cards for everyone," recommends Gluckstein.

"Also, add oversized nutcrackers, use table linens

in Christmas-themed colors and patterns, and finish the table with little twinkling low-voltage holiday lights mixed into garland that you can run down the table for a whimsical touch."



Candle Considerations

Selecting the right candles is a kind of art unto itself. But you don't need to be a wax-wick wunderkind to top off your holiday table with the right candle selections. Try these tips:

- If you use colored candles, stick with one color for the most impact. "Soft pastels such as pink offer a beautiful glow and make everyone around the table look a little rosier. And darker colored candles offer a more dramatic effect," says Lydia Menzies, owner of The Party Wagon in Athens, Georgia.

- Use unscented candles when serving food. "Scented candles and food often don't marry well. You want your guests to have a wonderful meal around your table with the aroma of a beautiful meal taking center stage," Menzies says.

- Keep them contained. "Place them in a hurricane or glass cylinder to keep wax from getting all over the place," recommends Brian Worley with B. Worley Productions. Also, be sure the flames aren't in close contact with any other items that can burn.

CTW FEATURES



Gifts for the music lover

By Patrick Kernan
pkernan@timesleader.com

Subscription to a music streaming service

This one might go without saying, but a year's subscription to a music streaming service could be the perfect gift for music lovers everywhere. There are many different music streaming services, but perhaps the biggest ones are Spotify, Apple Music and Tidal. Each one has millions of songs and albums to listen to, all available to listen to limitlessly after you get a subscription. All three of the major streaming services sit at \$10 per month, while Tidal offers a "premium" service that boasts CD-quality audio for \$20 a month, making it a

See 'MUSIC' | 17



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'MUSIC' from 16

good gift for the serious audiophiles out there.

Audio-Technica turntable

With vinyl records suddenly back at the forefront of music collecting, chances are better than in years past that the music lover on your list would appreciate a good turntable. But skip out on cheaply made turntables made by companies like Crosley



— cheap turntables can damage your records overtime — and pick up a good one. Audio-Technica sells great, high quality turntables, perfect for those beginning to assemble a stereo system. At only \$100, they won't set you back too far, and you'll have the satisfaction of knowing you got a good quality turntable. All you'll need is some speakers...

Sony Bookshelf Speakers

And why not get some of these? Sony is known for good sound quality, and



these with a stereo mixer or connect them directly to your turntable and you'll be golden.

And at only \$75, you can't go wrong.

Wireless headphones

If your music lover is the on-the-go type, you might want to consider getting them some wireless headphones. Bluetooth technology has come a long way, and cutting the headphone cord no longer means a loss of quality. While many companies make them at various price points, you can't go

wrong with either the Apple AirPods (starting at \$140) or the Samsung Gear IconX (starting at \$120). Both headphones come jam-packed with features besides just playing music, especially if you pair them with the Apple iPhone or Samsung Galaxy phone, respectively.

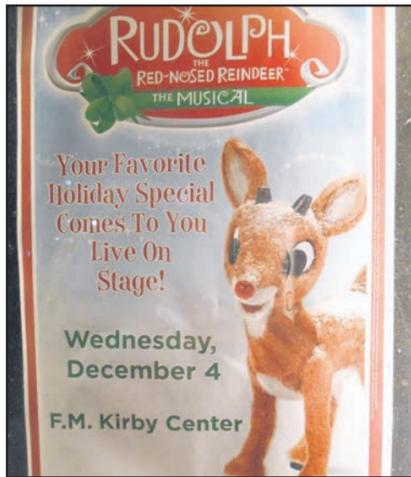


'YOUNG' from 11

can find the doll and the book at Barnes & Noble Book Store in downtown Wilkes-Barre for \$14.99. (There's a Sven version, too.)

Rudolph the Red-Nosed Reindeer

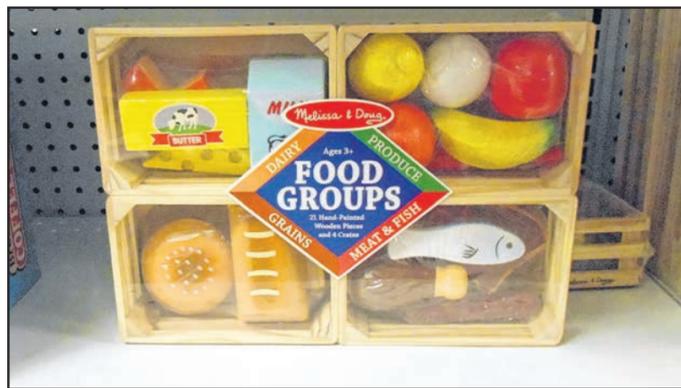
Nostalgia fans of any age — as long as they're young at heart — may enjoy a virtual trip to the Land of Misfit Toys and the North Pole, where they can see the story of Rudolph the Red-Nosed Reindeer and his friends performed by live actors Dec. 4 at the F.M. Kirby Center for the Performing Arts in Downtown Wilkes-Barre. If you'd like to give an early holiday present, tickets starts at \$29.50 plus fees.



Mary Therese Biebel | Times Leader
Rudolph the Red-Nosed Reindeer

one comes in mixed berry and candy apple flavors. We spotted these kits, designed for ages 6 and older, in Boscov's basement, for \$19.99.

Food Groups by Melissa & Doug



Mary Therese Biebel | Times Leader

Food Groups by Melissa & Doug

Milk and cheese, fish and chicken, fruit and bread — they're all part of the traditional basic food groups, and they're part of another educational toy, the Food Groups by Melissa & Doug that offers 21 hand-painted wooden pieces. Kids can play store, play nutritionist and play home cook with toy foods, the perfect size for little hands to hold. This one was \$19.99 in Boscov's.

Harry Potter's Wizarding World LEGO set



Mary Therese Biebel | Times Leader
Harry Potter's Wizarding World LEGO set

How can you resist a LEGO Pegasus? Yes, this kit also comes with Hagrid the gameskeeper and some other friends from Harry Potter's Wizarding World, plus a carriage. But, really, how can you resist the winged horse? This kit can be found at Barnes & Noble Book Store for \$49.99.

Thames & Kosmos Gummy Candy Lab

If you're looking for an educational gift, here's a sweet one: Thames & Kosmos Gummy Candy Lab teaches kids the science behind making gelatinous candy. The pretty variety comes with cherry and lemon flavors. The "gross"



Mary Therese Biebel | Times Leader
Thames & Kosmos Gummy Candy Lab

Little Red Accordion by Schylling



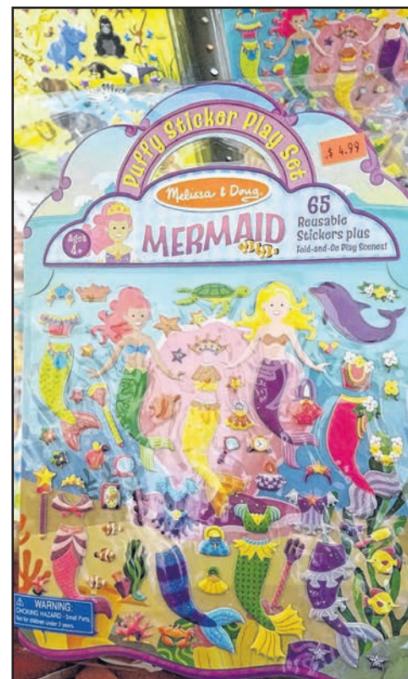
Mark Guydish | Times Leader

Little Red Accordion by Schylling

For the budding musicians on your holiday list, consider a Little Red Accordion by Schylling, and perhaps a pan flute by the same company. We spotted them, for \$29.99 and \$6.99, respectively, at the Mauch Chunk 5 & 10, located at 9 Broadway in Jim Thorpe.

Puffy Sticker Set

And, for more fun from Melissa & Doug, consider a Puffy Sticker Set, with 65 reusable stickers. The one we spotted, for \$4.99 at the Mauch Chunk 5 & 10, would encourage a young person on your gift list to plan all sorts of mermaid adventures for a set of tiny mermaid dolls.



Mark Guydish | Times Leader

Puffy Sticker Set



Gifts for men

By Mike McGinley
For Times Leader

When it comes to shopping for the man in your life, it can be tough. Men are finicky and don't always require a lot of "stuff" to make them content. Here are some top picks, though, that the hard-to-buy-for boy in your life can appreciate.

Skullcandy Riff Wireless Bluetooth Headphones

Whether he's working around the yard or working out in the gym, he could use a pair of these. While he could listen to his favorite tunes to pass the time, many men these days are opting to listen to podcasts and other content that educates them. \$49.99 at Kohl's, 445 Wilkes-Barre Township Blvd., Wilkes-Barre Twp.



Skullcandy Riff Wireless Bluetooth Headphones

Toro Power Shovel

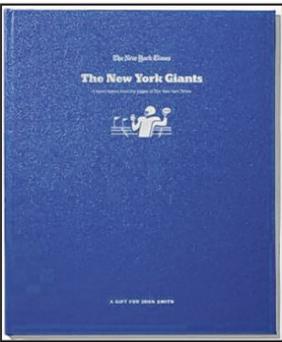
Make his life a little easier this winter with this maintenance free, lightweight shovel that you simply plug in and blow snow with. It's ideal for clearing sidewalks, walkways and driveways with its electric motor. It can throw snow up to 20 feet! \$109 at Valley Power Equipment, 701 Wilkes-Barre Township Blvd., Wilkes-Barre.



Toro Power Shovel

Football History Book

Most every man has a team. Retrace his favorite's glory days from the last 90+ years. The journalists at the New York Times have covered NFL teams, their games and their celebrations – and it can all be found in this book of reprinted newspaper pages, with an



Football History Book

option to personalize. \$80 at www.store.nytimes.com.

Monthly Sock Subscription

Guys love to show off their latest socks, I'm telling you! A new pair of fresh and stylish socks complete an outfit. A subscription box that introduces him to new styles is sure to be a winner. If you want to pick out the style yourself, stop by Boscov's on South Main Street, Wilkes-Barre, and check out their selection. \$19 per month from stance.com.



Monthly Sock Subscription

Gift Card to the shop

Classic and contemporary cuts for gentleman found here. Also give him the gift of a straight-edge razor shave that will keep him handsome. You can find a plethora of other services there – hair removal, hand and foot treatments, spa services – that men might otherwise be too shy to indulge in. Visit the shop at 900 Rutter Ave., Forty Fort.



Gift card

North Face Campshire Pullover Hoodie

It's warm and fuzzy and totally worth a spot on the list. And I'm sure he'll love it. It'll keep him super warm on the chilliest of days, and he'll look stylish and comfortable, too. \$149 from Top of the Slope, 100 S. Main St., Wilkes-Barre



North Face Campshire Pullover Hoodie

Patagonia jacket

You can't go wrong with a classic Patagonia jacket. Choose a full zip down or a pullover,



Patagonia jacket

whichever you think he'd prefer. \$139 or \$99 from Top of the Slope, 100 S. Main St., Wilkes-Barre.

Blundstone boots

Your guy will appreciate a super durable boot with unmatched quality. Stop at Humphreys to see



Blundstone boots

their Blundstone selection. Blundstone has made its mark on the shoe community by providing a boot that takes you everywhere life does. Visit Humphreys Bootery & Bags, 1900 Memorial Highway, Shavertown. 1-800-49-SHOES.

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By Patrick Kernan
pkernan@timesleader.com

While not all hobbies have a high barrier of entry, gaming is one of the ones that does, as it often caters toward people who have been involved in the hobby for years.

So if you aren't a gamer, but there's someone on your shopping list who is, what should you get to know you're getting your loved one the best there is?

Easy: keep reading. This list has some of the best releases of the year, sure to make your gamer smile.

Death Stranding

There are few individuals involved in the production of video games who have reached the level of quality needed to be considered an auteur, and Hideo Kojima is undoubtedly one of them. The legendary Japanese game designer who is perhaps best known for his excellent work on the Metal Gear Solid series recently released his first work after leaving his former home studio, Konami, and creating his own. The mysterious "Death Stranding" comes after years of cryptic, hauntingly cinematic trailers, and it stars Norman Reedus as Sam Porter Bridges, who the player guides across a post-apocalyptic United States, helping him complete deliveries to former American nationals after a supernatural mass-extinction event crippled the world. A contemplative, thoughtful and thought-provoking game, it's best for the gamer on your list who believes games can tell compelling, artful narratives. "Death Stranding" is only playable on the PlayStation 4, and costs \$60. It's rated M for Mature, so it's recommended only for players 17 and up.



Death Stranding

Pokémon Sword & Shield

There will always be a Pokémon game in lists like these, and that's both because Pokémon come out like clockwork and because the games always have a certain level of quality. If you've been paying attention to modern media at all over the past 25 years, there's a good chance you already know the basics of Pokémon: you play a young Pokémon trainer, tasked with exploring the world and catching as many of the cute creatures as you can, battling other Pokémon trainers along the way. "Pokémon Sword & Shield" are no different, tweaking the franchise's classic formula in some big ways — most notably being marking the first time the game series has been on a home console and not a handheld game system in its long history. If you're stymied by the fact that there are two versions of the game, with "Sword" and "Shield," don't worry: that's a series staple. The two games are ostensibly the same, with some of the Pokémon being exclusive to each version. If you've got two Pokémon trainers to buy for, why not buy each one a different version so they can trade Pokémon with each other? "Pokémon Sword & Shield" are exclusive to the Nintendo Switch, and cost \$60 each. They're rated E for Everyone, which means there are no inappropriate themes whatsoever and they're perfect for any age group. Speaking of the Switch...



Pokémon Sword & Shield

Nintendo Switch Lite

A slimmed-down, budget-friendly version of the console was just released this year. While Nintendo's groundbreaking hybrid console — meaning it can be played on the TV like a standard game console or handheld like the classic GameBoy — is a gaming force to be reckoned with, offering an experience that can't be had elsewhere, its \$300 price tag might prevent some from getting it. That's where the Switch Lite comes in. At \$200, the Switch Lite packs less of a punch to your wallet, offering a more portable handheld console than the standard version. Buyer beware, though: the Switch Lite can't, well, switch between being a handheld and a standard console, and is a dedicated handheld system. But it plays all the same games, and you could get a copy of "Pokémon Sword & Shield" with the \$100 you save.



Nintendo Switch

An online subscription to their favorite console

Gaming unfortunately comes with hidden costs. If your gamer likes to play online with their friends, they're going to have to pay for that. But that's where you come in, right? No matter what console they play in, they'll have to buy a subscription to their console's online service, but those services all come with free games and other goodies, so it's actually a pretty good deal. Ask your gamer what console they play on before you buy! PlayStation Plus and Xbox Live Gold both cost \$60 for a year of the service, while Nintendo Switch Online is only \$20 for the year.

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4 hot holiday trends

Add sparkle, pastel colors and back-to-nature pieces

BY ERIK J. MARTIN
CTW FEATURES

Before long, it will be time to get in that attic or crawlspace and pull out that box of beloved Christmas decorations. Problem is, many of those beloved baubles and adornments are worn, weathered, and likely seriously outdated. They've got you through many a Yuletide season, but it's probably time to deck the halls with something different — a new approach that calls for fresh yet festive décor.

"Upgrading your holiday décor is a fun way to incorporate your current design style with a holiday that is largely based on traditions," says Stephanie Purcell, interior designer and owner of Redesigned Classics in Los Angeles. "I love my grandmother's handmade ornaments, but not everything from the 1940s is going to look great in my current home."

Fawn Ostriak, vice president of concept and development for Bristol, Pennsylvania-based Lenox Corporation, says it's smart to stay current with Christmas decorating trends.

"While it's important to incorporate those family or sentimental items that are part of the yearly decorating tradition, it does tend to get stagnant year after year. You want to keep things fresh and create a new twist each year," says Ostriak.

Curious what creative styles are in vogue this year? Christmasworld, the leading international trade fair for seasonal decorations, has identified four worthy trends to pursue this upcoming holiday season: tender festivities; essential ceremonies; sweet traditions; and luminous celebrations.

Tender festivities

This movement is meant to evoke a calm and peaceful mood. Christmasworld's website describes tender festivities as being inspired by "moon, moonlight, stars and stardust" and "moving structures, delicate transparency, amorphous forms and reductionist designs."

"This style uses delicate pastel colors and the features of pool to convey a celestial, otherworldly feel — like how it feels walking into a fairy tale realm," notes John Linden, a Los Angeles-based interior designer. He recommends keeping your color scheme subdued and avoiding clutter to incorporate this trend properly.

Additionally, "choose light neutrals with materials that shimmer," recommends Purcell. "Try white snowball ornaments, silver and

gold garland, and soft shimmery fabrics for table runners and tree skirts. Stick to elements with clean lines, like tall vases and simple glassware."

Essential ceremonies

Want to convey an authentic and natural look post-Thanksgiving? Invoke this design scheme.



"It's all about a connection to nature. Essential ceremonies is a great way to slow down and appreciate the beauty around us and bring the outside into our homes," explains Ostriak.

Jennifer Stagg, owner of Stagg Design in Salt Lake City, envisions an essential ceremonies aesthetic as "natural, rustic, raw and unfussy — emphasizing materials in earth tones and unfinished edges like burlap and raw cut greens."

To achieve this look, gather natural-found objects like branches, pinecones, and berries to use in table centerpieces, on your gift wrapping, and with simple white candles on a tray or bowl, Ostriak suggests.

Sweet traditions

Christmasworld uses two words to best describe contemporary theme No. 3: effervescent and joyful.

"Sweet traditions focuses on the nostalgia of tradition and adds creative charm through cute motifs and Norwegian patterns. It's a new take on the old, using traditional colors and themes like red, green and gingerbread but implementing them in new ways," says Linden.



Purcell appreciates this trend's whimsical appeal.

"If you are into more eclectic Bohemian design styles, then this is a great décor approach for you," she says. "With lots of vibrant colors and mixing and matching of patterns, your home will be anything but boring."

One recipe for successfully implementing sweet traditions is to choose traditional Christmas colors in a more vibrant hue.

"Instead of just green and red, think about a bright cherry red and a lime green. Mix Christmas plaid with festive polka dots. You can also line tree skirts with rickrack and pillows with pom-poms," adds Purcell.

Luminous celebrations

If you crave a more unique and glamorous esthetic that spotlights vibrant hues and elegant surfaces, opt for the luminous celebration style.

"I love the sparkle and drama of this trend, which is great for creating a sophisticated, memorable celebration. Think holiday cocktail parties and glitzy New Year's celebrations," says Ostriak, who advises pairing moody dramatic dinnerware with glittery linens, iridescent glass, and heavy cut crystal.

Additionally, "don't be afraid to mix metals and go for gold, copper, silver and any combination you can dream up," adds Stagg.

Lush fabrics like velvet, satin and jewel tones such as royal blue, deep purple and emerald green can help top things off, Purcell notes.

CTW FEATURES

How to pick a perfect artificial Christmas tree

Your faux fir should feel right and fool everyone

BY NANCY MATTIA
CTW FEATURES

In some ways, buying an artificial Christmas tree is similar to buying a real one: In both cases, you need to find a tree that you love and will fit in the space you've allotted it. But that's where the similarities end. Unlike live trees, the artificial variety never sheds needles, needs to be watered, or dies. They can't be beat for reliability and convenience either: When you want to decorate it, just pop into your attic or wherever it's stored and there it is, ready to go! Many are now earth-friendly too and have a more favorable effect on the environment than real trees if reused for at least five years, according to the American Christmas Tree Association. Interested in buying one? The following are pointers on what you need to know:

- Decide where to put the tree.

First, you've got to pick a good spot. Is it in front of a window, in the corner of a room, or in a place where it can be seen from multiple rooms? Where not to put it: in a well-traveled area where it could easily get bumped and ornaments broken. Also avoid a spot that's less than three feet from a heating source, such as vents, radiators, and fireplaces.

- Figure out what size to get.

How tall a Christmas tree to buy is



determined by the ceiling height of the room you've chosen to display it in. Get a tree that's at least six inches lower than the ceiling and whose tip doesn't touch the ceiling. According to Thomas Harman, founder and CEO of Balsam Hill, an artificial tree manufacturer, if you have a standard eight to nine foot ceiling, you should buy a seven and a half foot tree. To

With so many needle varieties, how do you decide? Many people buy the same type of tree they remember from childhood. "If you grew up on the West Coast you probably had a Douglas fir or Noble fir that was trucked down from Oregon," says Harman. "East Coast families may have had a Balsam fir or a Norway spruce."

- Consider the lighting.

figure out how wide a tree to buy, measure the width of the available space then check it against the widths of the trees you're considering.

Determine the type of needle to get.

If you find stringing lights a hassle, buy a pre-lit artificial tree with clear or colored lights already installed. All you have to do is plug the tree into an electrical outlet and you're done with lighting duty. Pre-lits come in several lighting sizes: traditional mini bulbs, LEDs (Balsam Hill's LED lights can now be synched with an app to control colors), and fiber optics, which make the trees look like they're decorated with thousands of lights. Whether or not you choose pre-lit, "the recommended number of lights [bulbs] per foot of tree is 100. A standard seven and a half foot tree should have at least 750 lights," says Harman.

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Gifts for the home

Akam dinner set

Frequent party hosts - or lovers of sparkly things - will swoon over this dinner set from Akam at TJ Maxx. Hand-crafted from Turkey and infused with a metallic sheen over a dark grey base, the stunning pieces caught my eye despite being close to floor-level. The collection is divided up into two sets of 4 bowls, one set of 4 smaller plates and 4 larger, individual serving plates. Each set is only \$7.99 though - so its a win whether you want just a sliver or the whole enchilada!



Akam dinnerware

Coffee Mugs

Catchy coffee mugs have become quite the collectible in recent years, and these cute sets at Ross will make any coffee lover smile in the morning. These little mugs full of positive quotes (great for groggy mornings!) and fun colors are not only stackable, but have their own holder as well! Did I mention it's just \$9?!



Coffee mugs

Teapot

Those that prefer a nice spot of tea over coffee can fear not - Ross also carries trendy teapots! Choose from bright pops of color, metal tones and even marble kettles, and some even have catchy phrases! They won't break the bank either, with prices ranging from \$13-\$15 each.



Teapot

Key holder

Say goodbye to misplaced keys, and say hello to this farmhouse-style spoon hook key holder. The base has all different kinds of keys and washers laid across it with pops of teal, and the hooks themselves are made from spoon handles! These statement home pieces are hand-crafted locally at Fly Me Home in Pittston for \$39, so you're also supporting a local business!



Spoon key holder

Ross Quartz

Crystals have become a home staple to many in recent years, and The Strange & Unusual Oddities Parlor in Kingston has your fix! Lovers of the stones use Rose Quartz to soothe negative energy and allow for healing and forgiveness - plus its beautiful hue adds a warm and welcoming touch to any space. The shop is currently selling 8-inch Rose Quartz points for \$70, as well as Amethyst Tea Light holders for \$30 and coasters for \$10.



Crystals

InstaPot

If you don't have an InstaPot in your home yet you're seriously missing out. The devices are basically beacons of hope for people who either lack basic cooking skills or just can't remember to take something out in the morning to defrost. Not only can an InstaPot take a frozen meal and turn it edible in minutes, but it can also function as several other cooking tools such as slow cookers, rice cookers, cake and yogurt makers ... the list goes on and on. This 6-quart, 10-in-1 InstaPot at WalMart is currently on sale for \$108 - and it's worth every penny.



InstaPot

Glassware

There's something so beautiful and mesmerizing about the glasswares from Simon & Co. in Kingston. The world-renowned company offers a stunning array of international glasswares in all shapes and sizes - and that can cater to anyone's personal tastes and finances. The company gets bonus points due to their expertise in jewelry and giftwares, too!



Glassware from Simon & Co.

See 'HOME' | 23

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'HOME' from 22

ChomChom Roller

Pet owners will love this simple device for a gift! The ChomChom Roller is a hand-held device that picks up any type of pet hair from a variety of home surfaces. The device is reusable (no more lint rollers, sticky tape or power cords) and made from a special brush that attaches to the hairs and moves them into a small compartment. When the compartment becomes full just empty it in the trash! It has more than 5,000 rave reviews on Amazon, and will save you a lot of time –and headaches – for \$25.



ChomChom Roller

MiaBella Candles
Keep your home smelling fresh while supporting local business with MiaBella Candles this holiday season! The company both makes and sells home fragrance out of their Scent-Sations Plains Township location, with items starting around \$6. They have dozens of scents and collections, along with customizable gift baskets!

Holiday decor
Decorate your holiday home or give the season's poshest gifts inspired by timeless hand paintings and elegant settings from Jane Leslie & Co., right here in your neighborhood in Kingston, 570-714-9955.



Mia Bella Candles



Holiday decor from Jane Leslie & Co.

'SPORTS' from 6

These metal license plates come in a variety of teams and sell for \$9.99. You can find many of them at Schuykill Valley Sports in the Wyoming Valley Mall or on the store's website, www.svsports.com.

RailRiders and Penguins tickets

What's better than seeing a game line and in person ... and in your own backyard?

Residents of Northeastern Pennsylvania are lucky enough to have the AHL's Wilkes-Barre/Scranton Penguins and the International League's Scranton/Wilkes-Barre RailRiders right in town.



Wilkes-Barre/Scranton Penguins and Scranton/Wilkes-Barre RailRiders tickets



Team license plate

While the Penguins' season is already underway, there are still plenty of games left to choose from. The season runs through April, so there are plenty of chances to send that sports fan on your list to Mohegan Sun Arena at Casey Plaza for a game. Ticket prices start at \$26 a ticket, and their are group packages available. There are also partial season ticket plans still available. Find out more at wbspenguins.com.

The RailRiders' season is still a few months off, but that doesn't mean a baseball fan wouldn't be thrilled to find RailRiders tickets under the tree this holiday season. Full and partial season ticket packages are currently available, along with mini-plans, which include five games and the 2020 All-Star Game at PNC Field in Moosic. More information is available www.milb.com/scranton-wb.

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