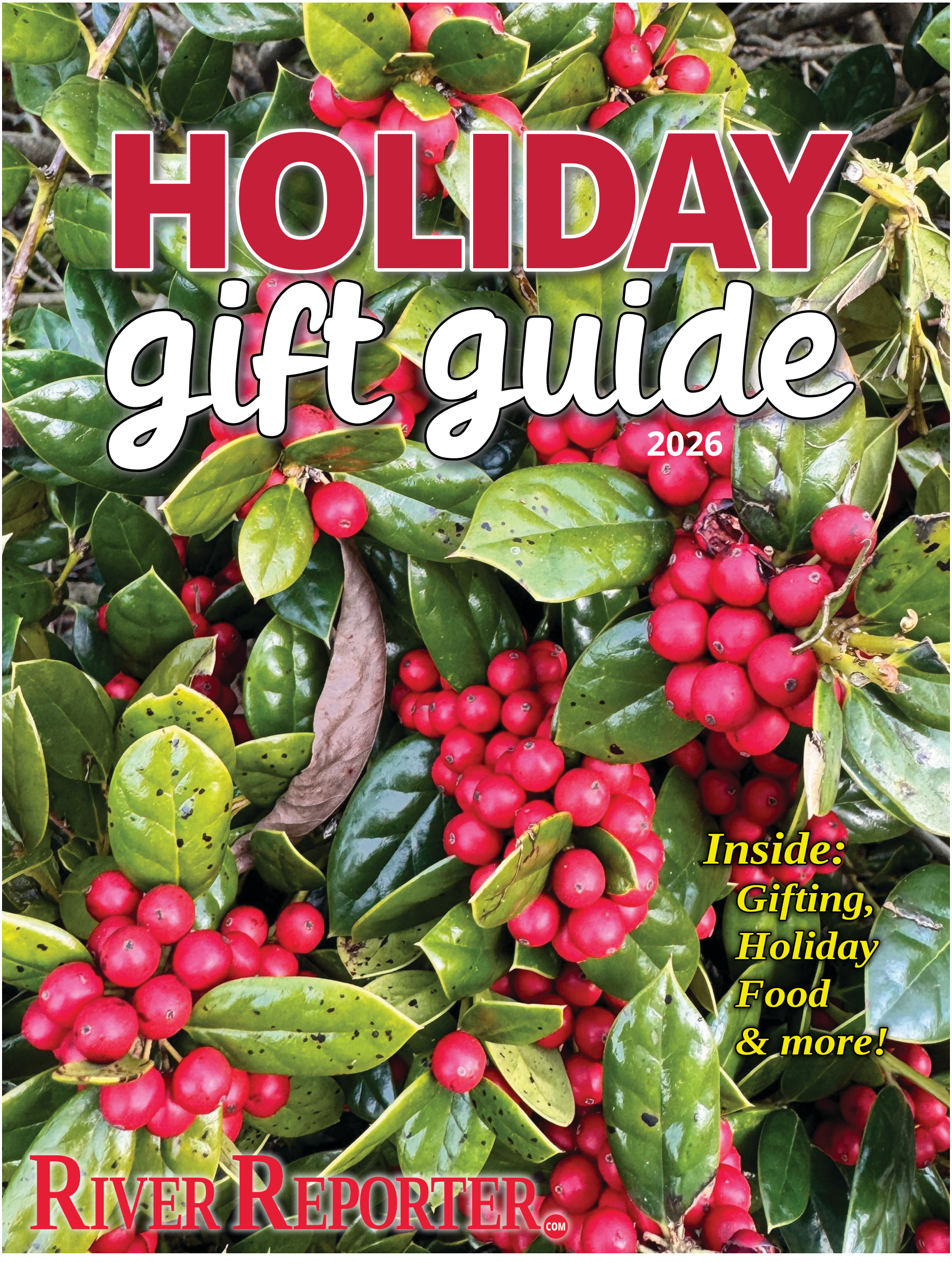

HOLIDAY gift guide

2026

Inside: Gifting, Holiday Food & more!

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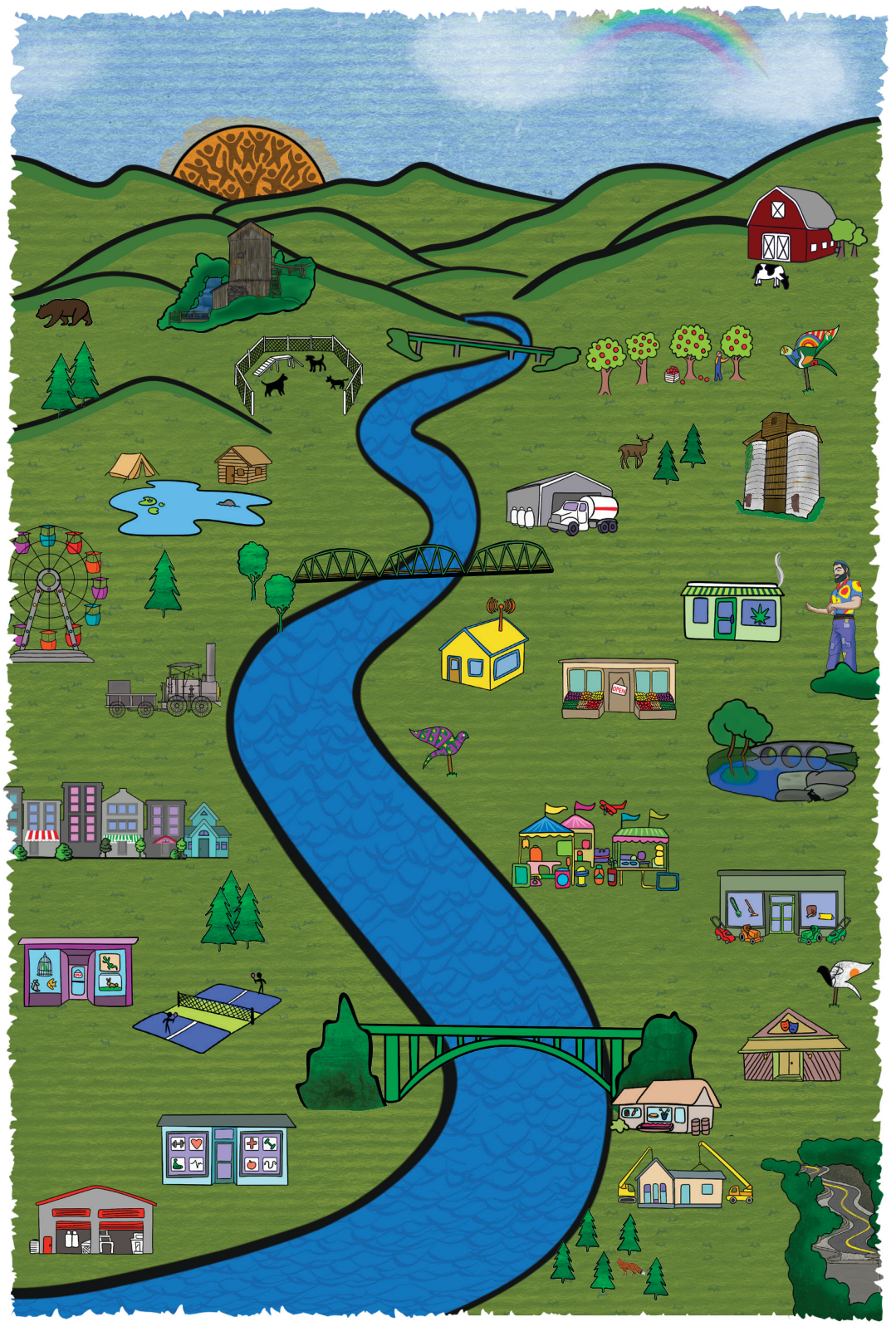

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Editor's letter:

Winter settles in

I'm writing this in early November, when temps still reach 60 degrees Fahrenheit and there's no snow on the ground.

But the region is gearing up for the busy holiday season, and the **River Reporter** is here to help you navigate gifts, giving and any budgetary constraints you might have.

First, Benita Goldstein visits the market at Bethel Woods and talks to the makers who create beautiful items you can bestow on your loved ones. Shopping at a makers' market means you're helping your neighboring artist, not supporting an item from a big box store.

Then Hunter Hill shares the ABCs of Christmas—those are food-related letters, because what are the holidays without something delicious to eat? (Or drink, in the case of Chelsea's hot cocoa.)

If you want to relax and not spend too much, consider watching a movie. We've collected holiday movies for you to try.

And while you're watching, don't forget to tackle our coloring contest! Amanda Reed has outdone herself (again) this year.

Back to shopping. Rita Catinella Orrell and Nonna's Pantry in Narrowsburg, NY, bring you gift ideas—purchased locally, supporting a small business—that cost less than $20. Not only is Nonna's Pantry worth a visit, but so are the Main Street businesses where you live.

Again, help your neighbors, and keep your dollars close to home.

Speaking of those dollars, Sandra H. Shichtman reminds us that your neighbors and others in region might need help. She suggests ways to donate. If you have something to spare, please consider helping others.

And finally, Sonia Ahmed is here to highlight the joys of crafting and giving. Check out the coaster she made for her mom! Would someone in your life appreciate a gift, handmade by you, with love?

Giving, love, generosity. Sharing food. That's what the holidays are really all about, whether or not we have snow on the ground.

Annemarie Schuetz, editor, Holiday Gift Guide

RR photo by Amanda Reed

On the cover: Holiday magic is universal. Welcome a little more into your life.

CONTENTS

Art, health, light and more 5
By BENITA GOLDSTEIN

Christmas ABCs 9
By HUNTER HILL

Holiday events 2026 12
By JENNY SNEDEKER AND ANNEMARIE SCHUETZ

A chance to relax 15
By ANNEMARIE SCHUETZ

Holiday coloring contest 16

Mediterranean-inspired gift ideas 17
By RITA CATINELLA ORRELL

A time to think about our communities 19
By SANDRA H. SHICHTMAN

Hooked on handmade 21
By SONIA AHMED

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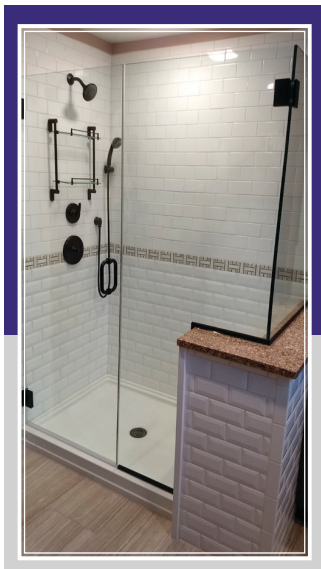

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DEC 7
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Art, health, light and more

Shopping at makers' markets helps both you and the artisan. Here's a sample of what's on tap at Bethel Woods.

By BENITA GOLDSTEIN

BETHEL, NY — It is never too early to celebrate the holidays, and Bethel Woods Center for the Arts is ready with its Holiday Market, to be held Friday through Sunday, November 27-29 at the center, 200 Hurd Road. Hours are 11 a.m. to 7 p.m. on Friday and Saturday, and noon to 6 p.m. on Sunday.

Enhancing this event is the Peace, Love & Lights Drive Thru exhibition from 5 p.m. to 10 p.m., November 27 to January 1. The center also offers pop-up markets on three Saturdays, December 5, 12 and 19 at Market Shed 2 from 2 p.m. to 9 p.m.

According to operations and events coordinator Katie Kmalenczako, the Holiday Market is in its 17th year and features 75 local craftspeople offering unique products as gifts for the holidays. Attendance, per Katie, is usually around 5,000 people for the three days, most coming in the first two days. The vendors are located at the Event Gallery Space and in the two Market Sheds, which you see as you pass through the entrance.

There is no charge for parking when you're attending the Holiday Market. The Peace, Love & Lights event does have a charge of $27 per vehicle, and then you wend your way through the festive light show across the historic Bethel Woods grounds. You, of course, have the option to go to the pop-up markets while you're there in December; approximately 25 vendors will be present.

For more info, go to www.bethelwoodscenter.org.

As a way to introduce you to the Holiday Market, here are some participants who offer a treasure trove of special gifts, some of which you could give as gifts—or gift yourself too.

Clean beauty, by Lila

First off is By Lila, a company Lila Frodesen created after doing research on clean beauty products after years in the fashion industry. She started the company after COVID, creating products for skin, hair and beauty, made (by Lila, in fact) from natural, organic oils. The products, which are 99 percent organic, include body butter (the most popular fragrance is lavender and orange), facial serum, body oils and more. She is introducing a new product—hand and body scrubs. Her website is bylila.net.

Healing spaces through harmony

Next up is Harmony in Art, a business founded by Paula Lily over 12 years ago to address the impact of chaotic energy from the likes of cell phones and other mechanical devices on positive life energy. She works with Orgonite and stone quartz crystals, and the goal is to curb the negative energy around you in a room, bringing harmony into one's life. Whether you choose a pyramid, pendant or another shape, go to Facebook at P.lilydesigns.

Custom-scented soy candles

The Chloe Sasha Candle Company is the name of Jesse Cruz's business, and it offers a diverse and eclectic range of natural soy candles that offer custom scents like amber and delicious cedar wood. Imagine the delectable scent of coconut and vanilla rum in a candle. Her products are devoid of toxins and for the holidays will offer an evergreen one that is very popular at this time. She waited three years to be part of Bethel, and loves the community's returning vibe. Her website is chloesashacandleco.com.

¬ Page 7



Photo contributed by the Chloe Sasha Candle Co.

Candles from Jesse Cruz's Chloe Sasha Candle Co.


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ART ¬ Page 5

Art in wood and tile

Standing in front of Standing Impressions, I had no idea what art form was created by Margaret and Chris Helthaler. Margaret has been a graphic designer and taught college-level courses in the field. As Chris was doing woodworking and crafting tables, she thought to design tiles as coasters, trivets and decorative pieces.

Doing photography on tile came naturally to her, along with digital illustrations. Margaret has learned that people gravitate to what is meaningful to them. When asked for an example of a popular coaster, she said, "The eagle." At this market, she'll introduce paintings to the mix, both original and prints.

Her typical joke to viewers is, "Is this a gift for you or someone else, or do you think you'll just keep it?" Learn more at StandingImpressions.com.

Pure serenity

How fitting to have a name like Serenity & Co. It is a business created by two women, each with their own focus: Jewels & Knits creates handcrafted jewelry with natural semi-precious stones and cozy hand-knitted accessories, and Serene Flame offers goat's-milk body and bath products, along with fragrance products. Caroline McGrath, co-owner with Diana Vega, loves the "iconic destination" that Bethel Woods offers and looks forward to returning. The website is thisisserenity.com.

Stained glass and Woodstock

Joan Nicole and Nick Clemente have different artistic concentrations, but that doesn't stop them from sharing a space at the Holiday Market.

Light Curves was once a hobby in stained glass for Joan Nicole while she worked as a set designer for theaters. She began to make jewelry using glass, sourced from all over the world, in the Tiffany method. "We do traditional painting on glass with grisaille and enamels as well as the oldest method, silver stain," she wrote on purecatskills.com. "Light Curves also produces an original line of jewelry consisting of stained glass from all over the world and set with sterling silver."

Meanwhile, Clemente, her husband and the founder of Design Lab, had a career in photography.

It was 2018; the 50th anniversary of Woodstock was coming up, and Clemente was searching for photographers who had taken photos there when he came across Mark Goff.

Goff had taken hundreds of pics and had sadly just passed away. Undeterred, Clemente found Goff's daughter's cellphone number and reached out. She turned over all the film, which had been in storage for 50 years, and he used his skill set and technology to bring Woodstock back to life. He also provided the daughter with a percentage of any sale he made.

Joan Nicole's website is LightCurves.etsy.com. Reach Nick Clemente at Nick@Designlabny.com.



RR photos by Benita Goldstein

Harmony in Art was founded by Paula Lily over 12 years ago to address the impact of chaotic energy from the likes of cell phones and other mechanical devices on positive life energy.

Shop your makers' markets this weekend

New and future craft market dates are listed in the calendar, pps. 12 and 13, and online at riverreporter.com/calendar/.

New York

Bethel Woods Holiday Market, 11 a.m. to 7 p.m. on Friday and Saturday, November 27 and 28, and noon to 6 p.m. on Sunday, November 29, 200 Hurd Road in Bethel, NY. Seventy-five-plus local artisans and specialty food makers. Facebook: Bethel Woods Center for the Arts.

Christkindlmarkt in downtown Port Jervis, 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. on Sunday, November 29. portjervisny.gov/events.

Christmas Craft Show, sponsored by the Hancock Community Education Foundation, Saturday, November 29 from 9 a.m. to noon at the Hancock Elementary School, 206 Wildcat Dr. 607/637-5262.

Delaware Youth Center Craft Fair, Friday, November 27, 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. at 8 Creamery Road in Callicoon. https://delawareyouthcenter.org/holiday-craft-fair-1.

Kauneonga Lake Farmers' and Makers' Market, indoor pop-up market at the Duggan School, 3460 State Rte. 55, White Lake. For upcoming dates, follow on Facebook: Kauneonga Lake Farmers & Makers Market.

Pennsylvania

Holiday Craft Fair by the Beach Lake Volunteer Fire Company, 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. on Saturday, November 28 at the fire house, 1033 Beach Lake Hwy. Call Jen at 570/325-5672.



Margaret and Chris Helthaler of Standing Impressions



Chloe Sasha is the name of Jesse Cruz's company, and it offers a diverse and eclectic range of natural soy candles that offer custom scents like amber and delicious cedar wood.

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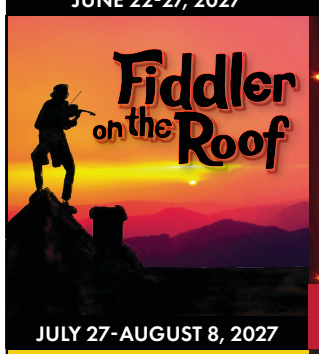

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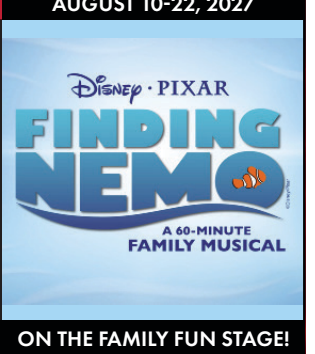

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Christmas ABCs

Appetizers, Beverages & Charcuterie



By HUNTER HILL

Sometimes the holidays come up faster than we planned, and even if you thought about things last year, you still find yourself without a strategy.

Where does one even start? You saw a post on social media about some sort of bacon-wrapped something; you have a big ham in the freezer that you planned to make, only now the cousin's family has decided to become vegans, and you're trying to remember if you have canned vegetables, pickled ones or frozen, and yet somehow you actually have none.

Take a breath. There's still time. And just in case you need a start, let's go over the ABCs of Holiday Hosting.

Appetizers

If we're thinking of where to start, there is nothing better to begin with than an appetizer. If it goes over well, folks don't have to fight for that last piece of meat when the entrée is served.

Appetizers can be complicated, but it's important to remember who your main guests will be: family. Family is forgiving, and even if you botch the attempt, the holidays are a good time to have fun trying. Invest in the mustard greens to make a special salad; try the little potstickers you saw on Pinterest. Crack open one of those cookbooks you got for Christmas five years ago and see what strikes your fancy.

If you want to keep your ingredients low and your prep time quick, I would personally recommend a caprese skewer. Popular almost any time of year, the skewers are fresh and savory, with enough color to ring relevant to the theme of Christmas in particular, sporting the white for snow, the red and green of Christmas and a drizzle of balsamic just to tie it all together.

To make them, just grab a pack of skewers, mozzarella balls, cherry tomatoes, balsamic vinegar and some fresh basil. Skewer the cheese and tomatoes in alternating order, sprinkle with basil and drizzle with balsamic.

If you're making them in advance, leave out the basil and balsamic until you are ready to serve. These can be kept under wraps in a fridge and made very quickly in a pinch. You can make them long for big eaters or short for light pickers. If you really want to have fun with it, you can add other fresh ingredients to the skewer like mushrooms, avocado, olives or arugula.

Beverages

Although wine is famously popular during the holidays, it is not a panacea for the beverage debacle. I've always heard if you want to impress someone, impress their kids.

With that in mind, let's just act like alcohol is the backup option. Not everyone likes to drink, but almost everyone can enjoy one ingredient in particular: chocolate.

My wife has concocted her own recipe for the hot chocolate she enjoys the most over the box mixes and even other recipes she's tried. I cannot stress enough, though, that her recipe is grounded in good ingredients. Inexpensive chocolate powder isn't going to give you the same result. Instead, she uses a pure cacao powder in combination with raw milk and local honey. It's a simple combination that can be adjusted to your taste by adding cacao powder to or subtracting it from the ratio.

It's also important to note that this recipe is based around approximately 1 cup of milk as opposed to the informal "mug" size. If you use these measurements with a larger or smaller mug, it will affect the results.

Cacao powder by itself can be a tad bitter; likewise, honey can become potent before you've realized it's too late. Before you entertain, try this in a smaller size for yourself to dial in the flavor you want before making a batch of 10 cups or more. The beauty is you can heat it up in the microwave if you don't have time, but to be thorough, a stovetop helps, especially when making more than a few cups at a time.

It's a good idea to be prepared with the standard options for drinks, but a special option makes it all feel more intentional and distinctive.

Charcuterie

Charcuterie may seem like a repeat of appetizers, but to many it's an entire realm unto itself. While appetizers can be cooked or raw, like salads, charcuterie is typically served in its base-ingredient forms. The best part? All you have to do is some basic prep. You don't need a fancy board or serving tray; you don't even have to spend your time slicing cheese and meat if you don't want to.

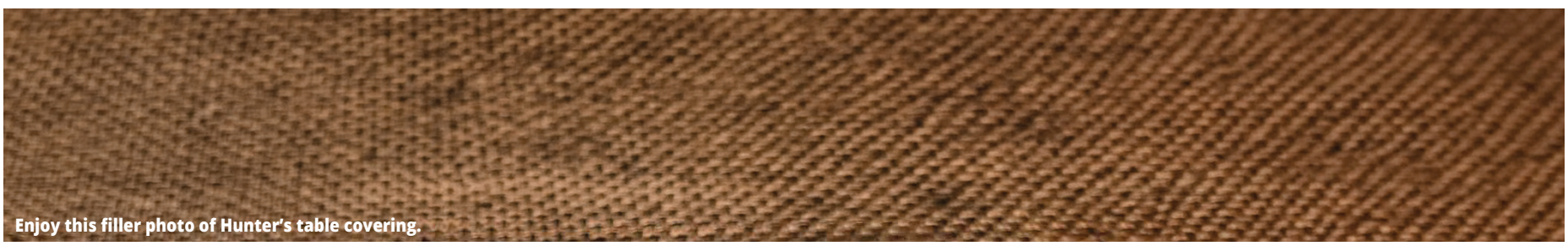
Although I will say it's a good way to sample everything before it's served.

Pick your cornerstones. Don't get overwhelmed choosing a hundred cheeses, pairing crackers, or questioning salami vs. pepperoni. Get two or three kinds of cheese and the same for meat. Cheddars, goudas and Havarti are the standards for those new to choosing cheese. Another popular contrast is chèvre, which is a spreadable cheese most often from goats and comes with any number of flavors added to it, including berries or dill.

When it comes to crackers, try to resist the Ritz. There are plenty of variety boxes which have three or four kinds of crackers each and can add depth to your platter without any effort other than opening a sleeve and spreading them out like a deck of cards. I should note, though, that it's always a good idea to have some containers ready for after your gathering to save the remaining bites.

If you are a cheese annihilator, by all means savor the leftovers for yourself, but if not, it makes a great party gift to hand out as your guests are leaving.

¬ Page 11



Enjoy this filler photo of Hunter's table covering.

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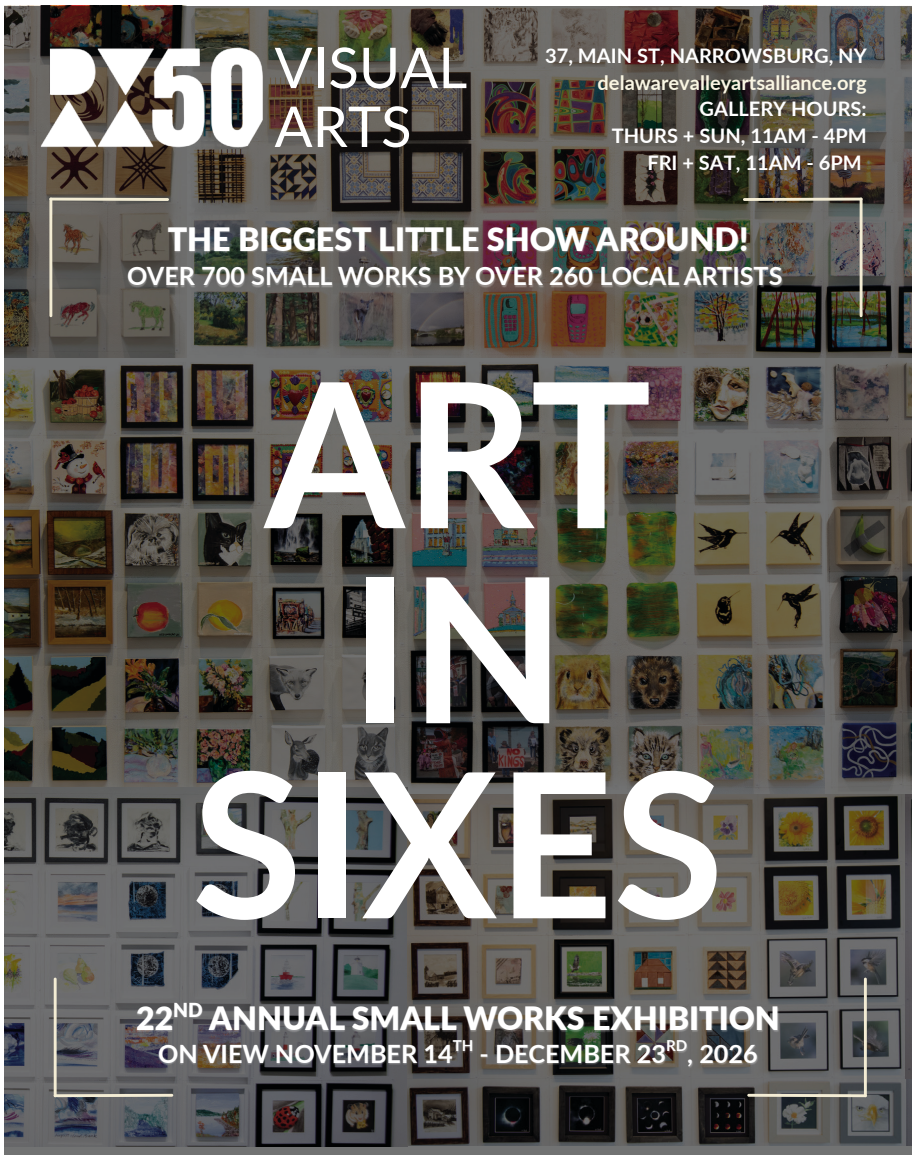



ABCS

¬ Page 9

Circling back to meats, we are living in a time when dry cured meats are being rediscovered as a go-to snack. I mentioned salami and pepperoni as simple options for a mild palate. If your guests are known to appreciate a more robust flavor or even heat, I would also suggest looking for a capicola or soppressata. These tend to have more heat due to being coated in peppercorns or paprika, but pair wonderfully with sharp cheese, fresh fruit and good wine.

Speaking of fruit, the last fresh touch that makes a complete charcuterie board is just that. Grapes, apples and citrus are bright acidic breaks to the heavy cream of cheese or the more robust taste of meat. Alternatively, pickled options balance against the fresh option if you are unable to source fresh fruit. Pickles, pickled beets and carrots, and even cheese-stuffed peppers in oil or pickle give that much more variety.

For many, these little touches are the magic that makes an event. Sure, there are those who look forward to Grandma's sweet potatoes, or Uncle Joe's green bean casserole. But we've all been to a dinner or a party with one of those unforgettable snacks that felt more satisfying than the meal itself.

And if it all seems like too much hassle for your get-together, just remember, these all make good personal snacks for the hungry introvert as well. Happy Holidays and bon appétit!



RR photos by Hunter Hill

Caprese Skewers

Recipe by Hunter Hill

Skewers

Mozzarella balls

Cherry tomatoes

Balsamic vinegar

Basil leaves

Mushrooms, olives, avocado, arugula, roasted red peppers (optional)

Skewer cherry tomatoes and mozzarella balls in an alternating pattern. Include additional ingredients per your preference.

Chill until ready to serve.

Sprinkle basil and balsamic vinegar over skewers when ready to eat.



Chelsea's hot chocolate keeps us warm as winter sets in.

Chelsea's Pure Hot Chocolate

Recipe by Chelsea Hill

1 1/2 tablespoons cacao powder (pure, not artificial)

1 cup milk (raw is preferred)

1 tablespoon honey

Cinnamon, nutmeg, peppermint stick (optional)

Heat milk in a saucepan until desired heat for drinking, i.e., not quite simmering.

Add cacao powder and stir until thoroughly mixed, then add honey and continue to stir.

Remove and serve with your preference of cinnamon, nutmeg or even a peppermint stick.

Note: This can be multiplied to accommodate groups.

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Holiday events 2026

Compiled by JENNY SNEDEKER and ANNEMARIE SCHUETZ

New events are being added all the time. Check the calendar at riverreporter.com/calendar.

November 27-December 28

Mansion open house at Grey Towers

MILFORD, PA — Grey Towers National Historic Site will hold a Holiday Mansion Open House and self-guided tour Fridays through Mondays from noon to 3 p.m. 151 Grey Towers Dr. greytowers.org.

November 28-December 31

Collectively gifted

ROSCOE, NY — The Roscoe Collective will host Collectively Gifted, a holiday art market, at 57 Stewart Ave. Saturdays, 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. and Sundays from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m.

December 2-12

Holiday Book Sale at WSPL

JEFFERSONVILLE, NY — The Jeffersonville Branch of the Western Sullivan Public Library will hold its holiday book sale at 19 Center St. during library hours. wsplonline.libcal.com.

Ends Tuesday, December 1

Sixth annual Christmas Toy Drive

MONTICELLO, NY — Hope Alive 845 is holding a Christmas Toy Drive. Register or learn more at HopeAlive845.com.

Fall 2026 Art Show

HAWLEY, PA — Art show featuring Stephen Geldman, Norman Seider and Carey Weiss at the Lodge at Woodloch, 109 River Birch Ln. kiesendahlcalhounart.com.

Ends December 20

'White Christmas'

MILFORD, PA — The Milford Theater & Performing Arts Center will show "White Christmas" Saturdays at 7:30 p.m. and Sundays at 2 p.m. at the center, 114 E. Catharine St. themilfordtheater.com.

Ends December 23

'Art in Sixes'

NARROWSBURG, NY — Display of small works of art by local artists. Thursday through Sunday, 11 a.m. to 4 p.m. 37 Main St. delawarevalleyartsalliance.org.

Ends December 27

Holiday Art Sale

HONESDALE, PA — The annual Art Under $100+ Sale takes place at the Wayne County Arts Alliance, 959 Main St., Wednesday, Thursday and Sunday from 11 a.m. to 4 p.m. and Friday and Saturday, 11 a.m. to 6 p.m. Learn more at waynecountyartsalliance.org.

Ends January 2, 2027

Peace, Love & Lights at Bethel Woods

BETHEL, NY — Peace, Love & Lights, Bethel Woods' annual light exhibit, will be held nightly from 5 p.m. to 10 p.m. Last entry is at 9 p.m. 200 Hurd Road. bethelwoodscenter.org.

Ends January 3, 2027

Holiday Group Art Show at Hall Space

ELDRED, NY — Hall Space by Nonneta holds its holiday group art show at the gallery, 550 Rte. 55. Twenty artists plus a pop-up shop. hallspaceny.com.

Ends April 11, 2027

Newfoundland Farmers' Market

NEWFOUNDLAND, PA — Newfoundland will hold its farmers' market Saturdays 11 a.m. to 1:30 p.m. It's located at the library, 954 Main St. 570/676-4518.

Ends April 24, 2027

Main Street Farmers' Market

HONESDALE, PA — The Cooperage Project will hold its Main Street Farmers' Market from 11 a.m. to 1 p.m., and will be held through April 24. The Cooperage Project, 1030 Main St. thecooperageproject.org.

Thursday, November 26

Thanksgiving Dinner

MILFORD, PA — Hotel Fauchere will hold a Thanksgiving dinner from 3 p.m. to 8 p.m. at 114 E. Catherine St. Reservations 570/588-7900.

Friday, November 27

Holiday Craft Fair

CALLICOON, NY — The Delaware Youth Center will hold its annual craft fair from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. at the youth center, 8 Creamery Road. facebook.com/DelawareYouthCenter.

Holiday Market

MILFORD, PA — Living Upriver and Milford Hospitality will hold a holiday market on Friday and Saturday from 11 a.m. to 6 p.m. at 214 Broad St. foresthallmilford.com.

Holiday Market at Bethel Woods

BETHEL, NY — Bethel Woods Center for the Arts will hold its annual Holiday Market from 11 a.m. to 7 p.m. at 200 Hurd Road. bethelwoodscenter.org.

Saturday, November 28

Callicoon Holiday Tree Lighting

CALLICOON, NY — The Callicoon Business Association will hold the annual tree lighting from 5 p.m. to 6 p.m. at the Callicoon Depot, 40 Lower Main St. facebook.com/VisitCallicoon.

Christmas Craft Show

HANCOCK, NY — Hancock Community Education Foundation, 9 a.m. to noon at the elementary school, 206 Wildcat Dr. Vendors needed. Call 607/637-5262.

Hawley Tree Lighting

HAWLEY, PA — Downtown Hawley Partnership will hold the borough's annual tree lighting at 5 p.m. at Bingham Park on Main Avenue. facebook.com/VisitHawleyPa.

Holiday Craft Fair

BEACH LAKE, PA — The Beach Lake Volunteer Fire Company will hold its annual holiday craft fair from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. at 1033 Beach Lake Hwy. Call Jen at 570/325-5672.

Holiday Market at Bethel Woods

BETHEL, NY — Bethel Woods Center for the Arts will hold its annual Holiday Market from 11 a.m. to 7 p.m. at 200 Hurd Road. Visit bethelwoodscenter.org.

James Dworetsky Holiday Parade

JEFFERSONVILLE, NY — Annual holiday parade down Main Street at 7 p.m. Call Sue at 845/796-6966.

Joy to Wurtsboro

WURTSBORO, NY — Wurtsboro Board of Trade will hold Joy to Wurtsboro from 1 p.m. to 4 p.m. at Veteran's Park, 3rd & Sullivan St. wurtsboro.org.

Turkey Plunge

LACKAWAXEN, PA — A turkey plunge and breakfast will be held from 9 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. at the Mast Hope Mountain Beach House, 349 Falling Waters Blvd. 570/685-7288.

Visit Santa

JEFFERSONVILLE, NY — The Jeffersonville Area Chamber of Commerce and the Village of Jeffersonville will welcome Santa at the Jeff Bank, 4864 Rte. 52, from 12:30 p.m. to 3:30 p.m.

Winter Wonderland Open House

HONESDALE, PA — The Wayne County Historical Society will hold its annual Winter Wonderland Open House from 11 a.m. to 4 p.m. at the main museum, 810 Main St. waynehistorypa.org.

Sunday, November 29

Christkindlmarkt

PORT JERVIS, NY — The Port Jervis NY Tourism Board will hold Christkindlmarkt from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. in downtown Port Jervis. portjervisny.gov/events.

Holiday Market at Bethel Woods

BETHEL, NY — Bethel Woods Center for the Arts will hold its annual Holiday Market from noon to 6 p.m. at the center, 200 Hurd Road. bethelwoodscenter.org.

Thursday, December 3

'A Charlie Brown Christmas' live on stage

WILKES-BARRE, PA — "A Charlie Brown Christmas" performed live at 6:30 p.m. at the F.M. Kirby Center. Tickets at kirbycenter.org and ticketmaster.com or call 570/826-1100.

Friday, December 4

'Christmas Show'

DINGMANS FERRY, PA — The Dingmans Ferry Theatre performs "The Christmas Show: A Trip Back to the Golden Age of Television" at 7 p.m. 108 Shepherd's Lane, dingmansferrytheatre.com.

'A Christmas Story'

PORT JERVIS, NY — The iconic movie "A Christmas Story" will be shown by the Act Group at 7 p.m. on Friday and Saturday, and at 2 p.m. on Sunday. Premium ticket holders should arrive one hour early. 134 Pike St. theactgroupportjervis.com.

Holiday activities from CCE Orange County

MIDDLETOWN, NY — Create a holiday wreath, tabletop tree and/or a kissing ball at Cornell Cooperative Extension (CCE) Orange County. Fees, limited registration. Afternoon session from 2 p.m. to 4 p.m., and the evening session 6 p.m. to 8 p.m. 18 Seward Ave., Ste. 300. cceorangecounty.org/events.

Holiday open house

MILFORD — The Pike County Developmental Center will hold a holiday open house from noon to 2 p.m. at 107 West Ann St. 570/296-6319.

Sundaes with Santa and the Mrs.

WHITE SULPHUR SPRINGS, NY — The White Sulphur Springs Firehouse will host Santa and Mrs. Santa at 7 p.m. at 3352 Rte. 52. facebook.com/WSSFD36.

'Tinsel & Trains'

ROSCOE, NY — The Roscoe O&W Museum will hold a fundraiser from Friday through Sunday, 11 a.m. to 3 p.m. at 7 Railroad Ave. roscoerailwaymuseum.org.

Saturday, December 5

Children's Make & Take Holiday Party

CALLICOON, NY — The Delaware Youth Center will host its annual Children's Make & Take Holiday Party beginning at noon. Photos with Santa are available. 8 Creamery Road. Register at delawareyouthcenter.org.

'A Christmas Carol'

KINGSTON, NY — The Ulster Dance Company will perform "A Christmas Carol" at the Ulster Performing Arts Center on Saturday at 7 p.m. and Sunday, December 6 at 2:00 p.m. 601 Broadway. ulsterdancecompany.com.

Christmas Market

PORT JERVIS, NY — New Century Festivals will hold a winter wonderland/Christmas market from 3 p.m. to 8 p.m. at 517 Neversink Dr.

'Christmas Show'

DINGMANS FERRY, PA — The Dingmans Ferry Theatre will perform "The Christmas Show: A Trip Back to the Golden Age of Television" at 2 p.m. and 7 p.m. Features favorite songs from the '50s and '60s. 108 Shepherd's Lane, dingmansferrytheatre.com.

Christmas Wreath Making

HANCOCK, NY — Adults can make Christmas wrteaths from 10 a.m. to noon at the Robert W. Nichol Nature Center, 404 W. Main St. Register 607/637-5262.

Dinner and movie with Santa

GREELEY PA — Greeley Volunteer Fire & Rescue will hold Dinner and a Movie with Santa. Spaghetti dinner at 5 p.m. and the movie starts at 5:30 p.m. 245 Rt.e 590. facebook.com/greeleyfire23.

Holiday Artisan Market

WURTSBORO, NY — The Mamakating Environmental Education Center will host a holiday artisan market from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m. at 762 South Road. 845/644-5014.

Holiday Bows & Boughs

DINGMANS FERRY, PA — The Pocono Environmental Education Center will hold a Holiday Bows & Boughs workshop at the center from 1 p.m. to 3:30 p.m. at 538 Emery Road. Register at 570/828-2319.

Holiday Craft Fair

GRAHAMSVILLE, NY — The Grahamsville United Methodist Church will host a Holiday Craft Fair from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m. in the Fellowship Hall, 356 Main St. Call 845/985-7427 or 845/985-7222.

Holiday Craft Fair

WAYMART, PA — Holiday craft fair from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m. at the Ladore Retreat & Conference Center, 50 Camp Ladore Way. ladore.org.

Holiday magic and tree lighting

NARROWSBURG, NY — The Tusten Youth Club will offer holiday magic, activities and games, 2:30 p.m. to 5 p.m. on Main Street. facebook.com/TustenYouth.

Holiday market at the Union

NARROWSBURG, NY — The Narrowsburg Union will host its Holiday Market from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. at 7 Erie Ave. facebook.com/narrowsburgunion.

Holiday party for Collectively Gifted

ROSCOE, NY — The Roscoe Collective, 57 Stewart Ave., will host Collectively Gifted's holiday party from 5 p.m. to 8 p.m. A wide variety of art gifts are offered, including framed prints, holiday cards, art-making kits, home decor, small artworks and more.

Holiday Potluck

LIVINGSTON MANOR, NY — The Catskill Fly Fishing Center and Museum will hold a holiday potluck from noon to 3 p.m. at the museum, 1031 Old Rte. 17. Register at office@cffcm.com.

Holiday tree display

HURLEYVILLE, NY — The Sullivan County Historical Society will hold its annual display of decorated holiday trees from 11 a.m. to 4 p.m. at 265 Main St. 845/434-8044.

Murder at the Mansion

GLEN SPEY, NY — Santa needs a new elf, but one of the candidates ends up dead. "Elf on the Edge" will take place from 6 p.m. to 9 p.m. at Burn Brae Mansion, 573 High Road. Purchase tickets at burnbraemansion.com.

Museum Open House

EQUINUNK, PA — The Equinunk Historical Society will hold its open house from noon to 4 p.m. at the museum, 1972 Pine Mill Road. equinunkhistory.com.

Tinsel Trot 5KRun/Walk

ROCK HILL, NY — The Monticello Teachers' Association will hold a Tinsel Trot 5K run/walk beginning at 8:30 a.m. Reindeer Dash starts at 9:30 a.m. 204 Rock Hill Dr. facebook.com/MCSDMTA.

Sunday, December 6

2026 Operation Toy Train

DELAWARE RIVER VALLEY — Operation Toy Train and Toys for Tots will collect toys in Hancock, NY at 12:30 p.m., Callicoon, NY at 2:55 p.m., Narrowsburg, NY at 3:05 p.m., Lackawaxen, PA at 3:50 p.m. and Shohola, PA at 4:20 p.m. operationtoytrain.org.

Christmas Market

PORTJERVIS, NY — A Winter Wonderland/Christmas Market will be held by New Century Festivals from 3 p.m. to 8 p.m. at 517 Neversink Dr. newcenturyfestivals.com.

'Christmas Show'

DINGMANS FERRY, PA — The Dingmans Ferry Theatre will present "A Christmas Show: A Trip Back to the Golden Age of Television" at 2 p.m. Favorite songs of the '50s and '60s. 108 Shepherd's Lane, dingmansferrytheatre.com.

Craft and sip at Bethel Woods

BETHEL, NY — Make a wreath while you sip at the Bethel Woods event gallery at 6:30 p.m. Ages 21 and up. 200 Hurd Road. Make a reservation at bethelwoodscenter.org/events.

Ghosts of Christmas Past

GLEN SPEY, NY — Burn Brae Mansion will hold "Ghosts of Christmas Past" at 3:30 p.m. at 573 High Road. Purchase tickets at burnbraemansion.com.

Menorah lighting

BETHEL, NY — Chabad Jewish Monticello will light the menorah at 4 p.m. at the Market Sheds at Bethel Woods, 200 Hurd Road. bethelwoodscenter.org/events.

Museum Open House

EQUINUNK, PA — The Equinunk Historical Society will hold an open house at its museum on Sunday from noon to 4 p.m. Live music, refreshments. 1972 Pine Mill Road. equinunkhistory.com.

Santa Breakfast

SHOHOLA, PA — Santa arrives at the Shohola Fire Department. Breakfast will be served from 8 a.m. to 11 a.m. and Santa arrives at 9 a.m. 325 Rte. 434, shoholafd.com.

Friday, December 11

'Feast of the Seven Fishes'

BETHEL, NY — The "Feast of the Seven Fishes" takes place at 6 p.m. in the Bethel Woods event gallery, 200 Hurd Road. Reserve a space at bethelwoodscenter.org.

Hanna Q winter performance

MILFORD, PA — The Hanna Q Dance Company will hold its winter performance at 7 p.m. at St. Patrick's Event Hall, 112 E. High St. Purchase tickets, learn more at hannaqdancecompany.com

Hawley Winterfest

HAWLEY, PA — Downtown Hawley Partnership will sponsor Winterfest, held Friday through Sunday throughout downtown Hawley. See schedule, facebook.com/VisitHawleyPa.

'Holidelic' revisits the holidays

STROUDSBURG, PA - Everett Bradley performs "Holidelic" at the Sherman Theater. Doors open at 7 p.m. and show starts at 8 p.m. 524 Main St. Call 570/420-2808 or visit www.shermantheater.com.

'Christmas Show'

DINGMANS FERRY, PA — The Dingmans Ferry Theatre will present "A Christmas Show: A Trip Back to the Golden Age of Television" at 2 p.m. Favorite songs of the '50s and '60s. 108 Shepherd's Lane, dingmansferrytheatre.com.

Craft and sip at Bethel Woods

BETHEL, NY — Make a wreath while you sip at the Bethel Woods event gallery at 6:30 p.m. Ages 21 and up. 200 Hurd Road. Make a reservation at bethelwoodscenter.org/events.

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Museum Open House

EQUINUNK, PA — The Equinunk Historical Society will hold an open house at its museum on Sunday from noon to 4 p.m. Live music, refreshments. 1972 Pine Mill Road. equinunkhistory.com.

Santa Breakfast

SHOHOLA, PA — Santa arrives at the Shohola Fire Department. Breakfast will be served from 8 a.m. to 11 a.m. and Santa arrives at 9 a.m. 325 Rte. 434, shoholafd.com.

Saturday, December 12

Brass Madrigals holiday concert

HONESDALE, PA — A (Candle)-Lit Brass Madrigals performance will be held at the Cooperage Project from 6 p.m. to 8 p.m. Brass Madrigals is the NEPA Philharmonic Brass Quintet and the Marywood Chamber Singers. 1030 Main St. thecooperageproject.org.

Christmas in the Village

BETHANY, PA — The village of Bethany will hold its annual Christmas in the Village from 9:30 a.m. to 1 p.m. at the Bethany Public Library, 8 Court St. 570/253-4349.

Christmas party and toy drive

SHOHOLA, PA — Pike County A.B.A.T.E. Chapter #41 will hold a Christmas party and toy drive from 8 p.m. to 1 a.m. at 6 West Bar & Grill, 875 Rte. 6. facebook.com/pikecountyabate.

'Cozy Catskills Holiday Revue'

NARROWSBURG, NY — The Delaware Valley Arts Alliance will sponsor "A Cozy Catskills Holiday Revue," to be held from 7 p.m. to 9 p.m. at the Tusten Theatre, 210 Bridge St. delawarevalleyartsalliance.org.

Craft Fair and Bake Sale

LIBERTY, NY — The Liberty Elks Lodge will hold a craft fair and bake sale from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m. at the Liberty Elks Lodge #1545, 21 John St. facebook.com/libertyelks1545.

Dickens on the Delaware

CALLICOON, NY — Callicoon Business Association sponsors Dickens on the Delaware, turning the hamlet into a Victorian wonderland. Noon-6 p.m. visitcalicoon.com.

Dinner with Santa

BETHEL, NY — All are welcome to Dinner with Santa at 4 p.m. and 6 p.m. in the Bethel Woods event gallery, 200 Hurd Road. Reserve a space at bethelwoodscenter.org.

The Geminid meteor shower at PEEC

DINGMANS FERRY, PA — The Pocono Environmental Education Center (PEEC) offers a "telescope viewing session of celestial wonders," including the Geminid meteor shower, from 8 p.m. to 10 p.m. at 538 Emery Road. peec@peec.org.

Hawley Winterfest

HAWLEY, PA — The Downtown Hawley Partnership will hold Winterfest throughout the borough. See schedule, facebook.com/VisitHawleyPa.

Roving 'Christmas Carol' Play

CALLICOON, NY — Farm Arts Collective will perform a roaming rendition of "A Christmas Carol" at Dickens on the Delaware, from noon to 6 p.m. visitcallicoon.com.

A Very Bublé Christmas

STROUDSBURG, PA — The Michael Bublé Experience presents A Very Bublé Christmas at the Sherman Theater. Doors open at 7 p.m. and the show begins at 8 p.m. 524 Main St. Call 570/420-2808 or visit www.shermantheater.com.

Winter musicale

LEW BEACH, NY — A celebration of Irving Berlin at the Lew Beach Community House from 5 p.m. to 6 p.m., 32 Shin Creek Road. info@beaverkill.org.

Winter Wonderland & Vendor Market

LAKE ARIEL, PA — A Winter Wonderland and vendor market will be held at Evergreen Elementary, 739 Easton Tpk., from 11 a.m. to 4 p.m. 570/321-9973 ext. 3.

Sunday, December 13

2026 Operation Toy Train

PORT JERVIS, NY — Operation Toy Train and Toys for Tots are collecting toys for kids. The train will be stopped in Port Jervis from 5:35 p.m. to 6:15 p.m. operationtoytrain.org.

Hawley Winterfest

HAWLEY, PA — The Downtown Hawley Partnership will hold Winterfest throughout the borough. See schedule, facebook.com/VisitHawleyPa.

Holiday gift-wrapping fundraiser

GREELEY PA — A gift-wrapping fundraiser will be held for Greeley Volunteer Fire & Rescue at 11 a.m. at 245 Rte. 590. facebook.com/greeleyfire23.

Wreaths Across America

ROSCOE, NY — A wreath-laying ceremony will take place at noon at Roscoe's Westfield Flats Cemetery, 1955 Old Rte. 17. wreathsacrossamerica.org/NY0414.

Tuesday, December 15

Dinner, bingo and toy drive

LACKAWAXEN, PA — The Central Volunteer Fire Department will hold a dinner from 4 p.m. to 6 p.m., followed by bingo at 6:15 p.m. A holiday toy drive will also be held. 574 Westcolang Road. facebook.com/CVFD27.

Friday, December 18

Big Band holiday at Bethel Woods

BETHEL, NY — Big Band music, featuring Remember Jones and a 17-piece band, plus a pre-show dinner at 5 p.m. at Bethel Woods Center for the Arts, 200 Hurd Rd. bethelwoodscenter.org.

Saturday, December 19

Dinner with Santa

BETHEL, NY — All are welcome to Dinner with Santa at 4 p.m. and 6 p.m. in the Bethel Woods event gallery, 200 Hurd Road. Reserve a space at bethelwoodscenter.org.

Farmers' and Makers' Market

KAUNEONGA LAKE, NY — The Kauneonga Lake Farmers' and Makers' Market will be held from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. at the Cornelius Duggan School, 3594 Rte. 55. kauneongalakefarmersmarket.org.

Holiday gift-wrapping fundraiser

GREELEY PA — A gift-wrapping fundraiser will be held for Greeley Volunteer Fire & Rescue at 1 p.m. at 245 Rt.e 590. facebook.com/greeleyfire23.

Sunday, December 20

Photo with Santa

MONTICELLO, NY — Hope Alive 845 will offer a photo with Santa at 5 p.m. at 5 Prince St. Ste. 5. facebook.com/HopeAlive845.

Winter Solstice celebration

HAWLEY, PA — Celebrate the winter solstice with the Wayne County Historical Society at 5 p.m. in the D&H Canal Park, 179 Texas Palmyra Hwy. waynehistorypa.com.

Monday, December 28

Winter Day Camp at Kettle Creek

STROUDSBURG, PA — The Monroe County Conservation District will hold a day camp exploring the wonder of winter at Kettle Creek Environmental Education Center, 8050 Running Valley Road. Register at mcconservation.org. For more information, call 570/629-3061 or visit www.mcconservation.org.



graphic by Amanda Reed

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A chance to relax

Find peace and joy in holiday movies

By ANNEMARIE SCHUETZ

Why do we spend the holiday season camped out in front of a screen, watching it snow, fictionally, somewhere else?

The films can be corny. They're predictable. They will usually have happy endings.

Back in the Great Depression, going to the movies was inexpensive entertainment, inexpensive escapism. Shirley Temple. "The Wizard of Oz." Busby Berkeley. Endless cartoons.

You could settle down in the theater and not think for hours.

The region is still home to movie theaters—and television or a tablet or a computer or a phone give us access to films too.

Why do people love holiday movies? We asked Jonathan Charles Fox, who knows more about movies than the rest of us put together.

"I would imagine that there are dozens of acceptable answers," he said. "It's a season to 'think happy thoughts,' as Peter Pan would say, and holiday movies tend to make us feel all warm and fuzzy, serving as a reminder that it's a perfect time to practice being kind, embrace happiness where we can find it, and let the little kid in all of us come out to play."

As for "my people," he continued, "I've just learned that the fine folks at Hallmark didn't want us to feel left out, so they've come up with alternative TV movies like 'Hanukkah on the Rocks' and 'Hanukkah on Rye.' Oy vey!"



The meaning of the season

(also see "The season, animated," at right)

"A Charlie Brown Christmas" (1965): Charlie Brown struggles with the commercialization of Christmas and the focus on unimportant things.

"Christmas Child" (2004): A low-key movie about an adopted man struggling in his marriage and his trip to find answers.

"It's a Wonderful Life" (1946): Timeless, classic. Jimmy Stewart at his best. An angel helps an anguished human realize how much he means to the people around him.

"The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe" (2005): Surprised? Don't be. Christian themes run through the whole series, although this movie is set at Christmastime.

"The Little Drummer Boy" (1968): Fits in the animated section too. A heartbroken, bitter child in ancient Palestine takes his drum and his animals on a journey that ends with the Magi in a stable. There he finds joy.

"The Man Who Invented Christmas" (2017): Charles Dickens writes "Christmas Carol" and contemplates redemption.

No (spoken) words

Filmwise, holidaywise, it doesn't get older than this! If your life feels too noisy, relax into a movie in which no words are spoken. A surprising number survived into the present. Search the internet for videos.

"The Adventure of the Wrong Santa Claus" (1914): A burglar steals the presents and the amateur detective (doesn't every neighborhood have one?) has to get them back.

"A Christmas Accident" (1912): Unhappy old man meets happy family.

"The Insects' Christmas" (1913): Stars an ornament and some dead bugs. The ornament (Father Christmas) invites the bugs to a Christmas celebration.

"A Little Girl Who Did Not Believe in Santa Claus" (1907): What can be done?

"A Message from Mars" (1913): Self-centered man reforms himself after a visit from a Martian.

"Santa Claus" (1898): Santa Claus delivers presents.

"'Twas the Night Before Christmas" (1925): The poem becomes a movie. There was a version in 1905 too.



graphics by Amanda Reed

The season, animated

"Arthur Christmas" (2011): He's Santa's younger son, and the role is actually a family business, handed down. Arthur wants to make sure a mislaid present goes to the child for whom it's meant.

"How the Grinch Stole Christmas" (1966): Yoicks, the Grinch is 60! He wants all the presents, but...oh, you know the story. Note the live-action version with Jim Carrey is really popular too.

"Klaus" (2019): An alternate origin story for Santa.

"Olive, the Other Reindeer" (1999): Olive, a Jack Russell terrier, believes she is supposed to be one of Santa's reindeer and heads for the North Pole. A postman tries to stop her.

"Rudolph, the Red-Nosed Reindeer" (1964): Poor Rudolph's nose makes him a target, but its shininess ends up saving the day.

"The Snowman" (1982): A snowman comes to life and carries a boy off on an adventure.

The rest of the Rankin-Bass films. Aren't they still on holiday rotation?





The opposite of traditional

"Anna and the Apocalypse" (2017): A British Christmas musical zombie holiday film.

"Bad Santa" (2003): Professional thieves pose as Santa and his assisting elf. One takes a troubled kid under his wing. Cursing, crime, shooting, prison, happy ending—standard holiday fare.

"Brazil" (1985): A dystopia reminiscent of "1984." You are warned.

"Infinite Santa 8000" (2013): Post-human dystopia. Animated. Cyborg Santa vs. the Easter Bunny.

"Night of the Comet" (1984): Just before Christmas, a comet passes over the Earth; two sisters struggle to survive in the now-zombie infested world.

"Santa Jaws" (2018): A boy indirectly wishes a shark into existence and it goes after family and neighbors; in other words, be careful what you wish for. One reviewer called it "absurd."

"Violent Night" (2022): Santa is actually a Viking warrior, and he defends a family from mercenaries.



What we love

If you're at loose ends and looking for something new to watch, check out the movies listed below and then try the streaming platform of your choice. When in doubt, search the internet—some, like the silents, might only appear on fan pages.

Familiar and comforting

"Auntie Mame" (1958): "Auntie Mame," starring Rosalind Russell, is always at the top of Jonathan Charles Fox's holiday movie list. The film inspired the Broadway show, which begat the classic song "We Need a Little Christmas."

"The Bishop's Wife" (1947): A bishop wants a new cathedral and enlists an angel for help in getting it funded. But his focus on money has nearly ruined his family life.

"A Christmas Carol" (1951, although it's been filmed many times): Greedy Scrooge is warned by four ghosts about what will happen to him after death.

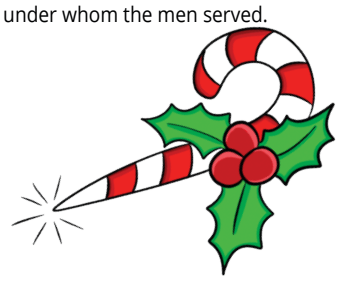
"A Christmas Story" (1983): The story of Ralphie's quest for a Red Ryder BB gun, full of 1940s period details and a lot of humor.

"Miracle on 34th Street" (1947): Is he Santa or is he not?

"A Muppet Christmas Carol" (1992): Michael Caine is perfect as Scrooge; Kermit is Bob Cratchit and Statler and Waldorf are the ghosts. Except for the rubber-chicken factory, it's your basic, wonderful "Christmas Carol."

"The Polar Express" (2004): A boy finds the spirit of Christmas on a train to the North Pole. Do read the book (by Chris Van Allsburg) too; the illustrations are stunning.

"White Christmas" (1954): A pair of WWII vets form a song-and-dance partnership and become famous; they and two sisters work to honor the general under whom the men served.



Go watch a movie

Movie theaters have been vanishing, both nationally and in the region. But there are still a few left:

New York

Callicoon Theater

30 Upper Main St., Callicoon

845/887-4460; thecallicoontheater.com and Facebook: The Callicoon Theater

Winner of the 2025/2026 **River Reporter** BEST award, this traditional movie theater has old-time vibes, and shows first-run and unique films as well as Metropolitan Opera broadcasts.

AMC Crystal Run 16

1 Galleria Dr., Middletown

845/695-1724; www.galleriacrystalrun.com/tenants/amc-theatres/

The theater can be found inside the Galleria Mall. First-run movies.

Pennsylvania

Milford Theater

114 E. Catharine St., Milford

https://themilfordtheater.com/; Facebook: The Milford Theater

Classic movies, plays, live music and more in a restored Art Deco theater. The theater also hosts talks during the Milford Readers and Writers Festival.

Regal Dickson City

3909 Commerce Blvd., Dickson City

844/462-7342; https://www.regmovies.com/theatres/regal-dickson-city-1515, Facebook: Regal Dickson City & IMAX

Standard and IMAX first-run films.

Coloring contest



graphic by Amanda Reed

To enter, simply color the image above and drop your entry
at the River Reporter on Erie Avenue in Narrowsburg by December 19.
(Or mail to PO Box 150, Narrowsburg, NY 12764.)
Be sure to include your name and contact information with your entry!

Yes, even adults can enter!
The winners will be announced in print and online in a future edition.

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Mediterranean-inspired gift ideas under $20

By RITA CATINELLA ORRELL

NARROWSBURG, NY — Nonna's Pantry, which opened on Main Street earlier this year, has shared some Mediterranean-inspired suggestions for readers who are holiday shopping for family, friends, teachers and more—all for $20 or under.

Find Nonna's Pantry online at www.nonnaspantryny.com, on Facebook at Nonna's Pantry and on Instagram @ nonnaspantry_narrowsburg. The shop is located at 25 Main St. in Narrowsburg.

Contributed photos by Nonna's Pantry



This heirloom tomato patterned bowl cozy is machine washable and microwave safe. The 100-percent-cotton quilted design helps keep hands safe from hot plates. $14



Dishwasher and microwave-safe, these handcrafted ceramic dipping bowls are hand-painted with a lively lemon design. $14.95

Add a rustic touch to the table with these olive wood and cork bottle toppers. $9.50

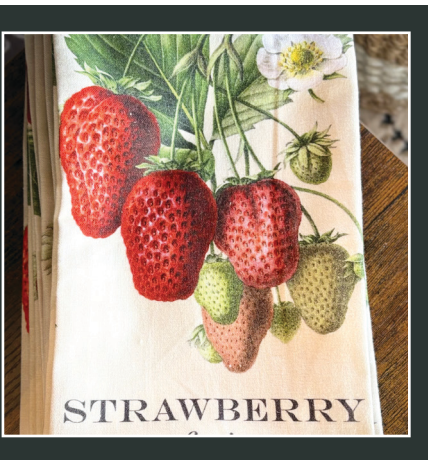


Made of 100 percent Italian olives, Angelino extra virgin olive oils come in flavors including orange, chili pepper and lemon. $20





Arsai moisturizing olive oil soaps are all natural, and are handmade in scents including Chamomile, Lemongrass and Green Tea, and Lavender. $8.50 each.



These 100 percent cotton dishtowels come in charming patterns including Edible Flowers, Strawberry and Italian Honeybees. $14 each

More 100 percent cotton dishtowels, these in the Italian Honey Bee patterns. $14 each



These small wood utensils—a Jam Spoon, Mini Spoon, and Honey Dipper—are handcrafted from sustainably sourced olive trees. $10



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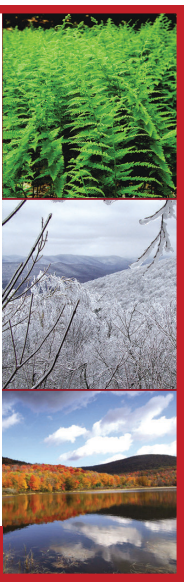

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A time to think about our communities

By SANDRA H. SHICHTMAN

REGION — With the cost of groceries, health care and gas increasing and government aid decreasing, many of our most vulnerable neighbors turn to local charity organizations for help with day-to-day living.

In the upcoming holiday season, when we give gifts to our family and friends, it is also a time to think about those in our community who are not so fortunate and depend on charitable organizations to help them survive. These organizations rely on donations from people who are more fortunate.

You can donate directly to nonprofits, or you can give to your local community foundation, which in turn makes grants to other groups.

Wayne County, PA

Ryanne Jennings is president/CEO of **The Wayne County Community Foundation** (WCCF). "As a community foundation, we accept gifts in all shapes and sizes for all of the different funds that we manage—about 200 of them," she said. Usually donations are made with cash, checks or credit cards, but WCCF also accepts other gifts, including stock transfers and insurance policies.

"The donor can designate what funds they want to support or donate to our general fund, which supports a variety of programs and activities at the Foundation, including grant making, community leadership and civic engagement," Jennings explained.

The WCCF's board of directors are volunteers, and the foundation also has volunteers on its committees and, currently, with the Honesdale Community Heart & Soul program.

Find out more at www.waynefoundation.org or call 570/251-9993.

Hamlin Hopes, affiliated with the Assembly of God church, is another Wayne County charity that accepts cash, checks and credit card donations, all of which stay within Hamlin Hopes. It also accepts donations of food and clothing. Amy Gearhart, Hamlin Hopes' director said, "We feed 185 families a month," adding "We go through about 14,000 pounds of food a month. We also give clothes away twice a year, in April and October."

People who want to donate time can do so as well. "They have to be cleared first for the food pantry," Gearhart said. "Help is also needed for sorting and distributing clothes."

Cash can be donated at givebutter.com/Hamlin-Assembly-of-God. More information is available at www.hamlinhopes.com or at 570/229-3419.

Pike County, PA

The Greater Pike Community Foundation accepts all kinds of donations, including cash, checks, credit cards and donations of stock, according to Rick Little, the foundation's executive director. "We do not accept donations of food or clothing," and at this point, the foundation does not need volunteer help.

Little explained how the foundation disburses the donations it receives. "We provide grants to our community. Each year we provide grants to approximately 50 or so local nonprofits as well as scholarships."

Find more information at greaterpike.org or send an email to info@greaterpike.org.

Sullivan County and the Hudson Valley, NY

In New York, the **Community Foundation of Orange, Sullivan & Rockland (CFOSR)** accepts donations that include cash, appreciated stock and IRA rollovers. Elizabeth Rowley, its President & CEO, said, "Donations can go to any one of our over six hundred named charitable funds, with each one having a specific mission or purpose." She added that there are also CFOSR-established funds including the Make a Difference Fund, which makes annual grants to support a wide variety of emerging community needs, often with a focus on women and children.

Two other CFOSR-established funds are the Community Harvest Fund, which supports food pantries and food programs throughout the region, especially those run by small or volunteer-based organizations and the Community Perspectives Fund, which offers accessible and inclusive programs to underserved communities in the three-county region.

Rowley added that many of the funds have volunteer opportunities.

For more information, email Rowley at Elizabeth@cfosrny.org or call 845/769-9393.

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Making Spirits Bright



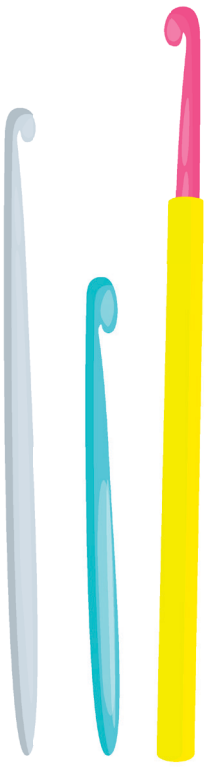
Each holiday season, the Monteleone HydroFarm in Eldred shines bright with thousands of lights and music-synchronized magic. What began as a family project has grown into a cherished community tradition.

This year's show, Making Spirits Bright, opens on November 28, after the Tree Lighting in Eldred.

See you there!

MONTELEONE Hydrofarm GARDENS

Hooked on handmade



By SONIA AHMED

HAWLEY, PA — Handmade fiber gifts are a great way to put a smile on your loved ones face and create something unique. Local businesses like Yarn Over the Falls in Hawley can help with that.

Two-year knitter/crocheter and owner of Yarn Over the Falls Carrie Genzlinger told the **River Reporter** that what's great about handmade gifts is that they are personalized to the gift-receiver and unique to any other present.

"It's not just something that anybody could have," she said about crocheted and knitted gifts.

Genzlinger added that scarves, shawls and hats are typically her go-to as it doesn't require knowing someone's sizing.

¬ Page 23

RR photo by Sonia Ahmed

The yarn selection available at Yarn Over the Falls.

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¬ Page 21

One-skein projects are a great option for gifts as they finish quickly and "you can give someone a beautiful cashmere hat or pair of gloves and not break" the bank, she continued.

She added that a good handmade gift should keep the gift-receiver's preferences in mind in terms of color, material and use.

"You need to choose materials that they're going to be able to care for," Genzlinger advised. "It's a nice thought to make someone a cashmere baby blanket, but are they gonna be able to dry clean it routinely?"

Handmade gifts are special to both the receiver and the recipient. Besides clothing, crocheted plushies or small everyday items can be a good choice.

In October, I made my mom a crocheted silly lizard coaster for her birthday. Mom had sent me a reel on Instagram months prior saying I should make one, but forgot when October rolled around.

Mom is a coffee-lover, and now uses the coaster every day for her morning cup of coffee.

"My coaster makes me laugh every morning," she told me.

Genzlinger, much as I do, loves when her handmade creations are put to use.

"I made my daughter a sweater and routinely, when she wears it, she sends me a picture of wherever she's wearing it to," Genzlinger said. "It just makes me feel good many days later that she's still wearing it."

Crafters who don't know what handmade gifts to make their loved ones can shop for books with project ideas at the Hawley store. Yarn lovers that don't crochet or knit can buy premade fiber creations like pumpkin bag charms, or buy crafting accessories like crochet hooks and knitting needles for their crafty friends.



RR photo by Sonia Ahmed

Yarn lovers who don't craft can get a "pocket hug" at Yarn Over the Falls, which are small crocheted hearts with nice messages that could be put in a lunch box.

Yarn Over the Falls

After learning how to crochet and knit from her best friend two years ago, Genzlinger collected a lot of yarn, and thought it'd be a good idea to share this yarn with her community.

Genzlinger also saw a lack of yarn stores in the area, and started the shop to fulfill local artisans' needs.

"In small towns, sometimes you have to travel really far to get things, and with yarns specifically, it doesn't always portray well on the screen." she said, adding that feeling the texture of the yarn before choosing can be important for crafters. "I wanted to create a space where makers could come together and where they could find high quality products in their own town."

The store carries various types of yarn, from silk to cashmere to camel.

Genzlinger explained that the yarn comes from various countries like Italy, Scotland, England and Germany.

There are also many yarns that are locally sourced and dyed, she said, explaining that she has someone who drops yarn off that is made from sheep nearby.

Instead of creating granny squares for samples of yarn in her store, Genzlinger features her own clothing and other crafters' clothing as examples.

"We carry some unusual yarns, so it's not immediately obvious what you would do with them," she said.

Many of these pieces are for sale, and makers set their own prices.

"One thing I'm super fierce about is people being paid for the work that they put in. It takes many hours to create a finished project." she commented. "I'm a big believer in the price reflecting not only the price of the materials that went into it, but the maker's time, and the skill level. I want them to be compensated for what they've created, which are little works of art."

The joys of creating fiber art

Studies published in the National Library of Medicine suggest that crocheting and knitting can provide positive effects to mood and mental wellbeing.

In my own experience crocheting, giving myself something to do with my hands, can be relaxing, even if untangling yarn can be frustrating.

Carrie Genzlinger, owner of Yarn Over the Falls in Hawley, PA, echoed this sentiment.

"It's just such a calming activity," she said. "You start with literally a piece of string and you end up with a beautiful sweater or scarf or hat." And the nicer fibers, she said, are a pleasure to work with.

But most of all, "I love watching things come to be out of nothing."

Want more stitch time?

Of course you do!

HAWLEY, PA — Yarn Over the Falls offers paid courses for those wanting to learn to crochet or knit, but also offers a free Sip & Stitch for those who want to work on a project with other crafters.

Sip & Stitch is Wednesdays from 6 p.m. to 8 pm. See www.riverreporter.com/stories/stitch-sip-hawley-silk-mill,239953.

Carrie Genzlinger, owner of Yarn Over the Falls, said that attendees don't have to buy anything from the store, and that Sip & Stitch is welcome to all skill levels.

Find the courses and more info at yarnoverthefalls.com/collections/workshops-classes.

I went to the Sip & Stitch event prior to writing this article, and can confirm it brings a welcoming environment for crafters of all skill levels.

Yarn Over the Falls is a yarn and craft store at the Hawley Silk Mill, 8 Silk Mill Dr. The store is open Wednesday through Sunday from 10 a.m to 5 p.m. Contact the store at 570/390-4747.

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