



2011

Holiday

Gift Guide II

November 30, 2011

Times Community Newspapers
of the Hudson Valley
Walkill Valley Times
Mid Hudson Times
Southern Ulster Times

Holiday Lights in Bloom

Orange County Executive Edward A. Diana and Commissioner Richard L. Rose of the Department of Parks, Recreation and Conservation are pleased to announce that the Friends of the Orange County Arboretum will host their annual Holiday Boutique in conjunction with the "Holiday Lights in Bloom" display on the weekends from December 2 through December 18.

The Friends will be offering a wonderful selection of holiday items that have been hand crafted by the Arboretum's dedicated group of volunteer "elves," ideal for your decorating and gift giving needs. Handmade ornaments, wreaths, garland, centerpieces, kissing balls, miniature trees and honey collected from the Arboretum's bee hives are just a small sampling of items available. After a visit to the Boutique, shoppers are invited to take a walk through the beautiful "Lights in Bloom" display. The Boutique will be open in the Ottaway Education Center on Fridays, December 2, 9, and 16 from 5 to 8 p.m., Saturdays, December 3, 10, and 17 from 1 to 8 p.m. and Sundays, December 4, 11, and 18 from 1 to 8 p.m. All proceeds from the Boutique will

benefit the Arboretum for plantings and programs.

"Holiday Lights in Bloom" is a charming garden themed light display featuring a variety of flowers and 'critters' that illuminate the paths and gardens in the Arboretum. This fun family activity is FREE and will be open to the public on Fridays, Saturdays and Sundays from 5 to 8 p.m. from December 1 through December 24 and then daily during winter recess from 5 to 8 p.m., December 26 through January 1 (closed Christmas Day). Volunteers will be on hand in the Ottaway Education Center to serve visitors hot cocoa and answer questions about the Arboretum.

The Arboretum is located within Thomas Bull Memorial Park on State Route 416 in Montgomery (enter Campbell Hall for GPS directions) and is most easily accessed from the Grove St. entrance to the park. Just pull up to the motion activated gate to enter. For more information, please contact Tamara Moson at 845-615-3828, email tmoson@orangecountygov.com or visit www.orangecountynyparks.com.



Pat LeClair, Barbara Winans and Dora Wright (president of the Friends of the Arboretum) display their handwork at last year's Arboretum Boutique.

Museum Village's Christmas in the Village 2011

Museum Village invites the community to come and share in the music and festivities of our Christmas in the village on Saturday & Sunday, December 3 & 4.

There will be lots of activities for everyone to enjoy: Decorate cookies with Mrs. Claus in the Snack Bar; Participate in a treasure hunt; See a Punch & Judy Show in the Playhouse; Listen to the Carolers on the Green; Meet Santa's Helpers - The Elves; and make sure to stop and visit Santa in the Gift Shop! Plus more!

The entire family will have an opportunity to enjoy the village lit up and share in the history and charm of the 19th century.

Museum Village is a living history museum preserving a vast collection of eclectic, 19th century artifacts for educational purposes. Using these artifacts and reproductions, we provide hands-on experiences and exhibits

illustrating the transition from a rural to an industrial culture and economy in America, provoking thought and discussion about history. Visit www.museumvillage.org

Museum Village is a 501(c)(3) Non-Profit Educational Institution.

Museum Village Holiday Schedule

Saturday, December 3: 4PM – 8PM

Sunday, December 4: 2PM – 6PM

Punch & Judy Show • The Playhouse both days (all day)

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Online shopping means figuring out on-time shipping

When faced with the prospect of long lines at the store and hours driving around finding a parking spot at the mall, many shoppers turn to the convenience of their personal computers or smartphones to shop online for holiday gifts.

Today the array of businesses who offer online retail opportunities create boundless options. It's possible to find obscure gift items that are very unique or even personalized items not readily available in stores. Online shopping enables shoppers to price-check almost immediately, comparing the costs of one retailer with another. According to eMarketer estimates, from 2010 to 2015, nearly 30 million consumers will join the ranks of online buyers.

Another advantage to shopping online is the ability to have items shipped directly to you or to the recipient. However, this same advantage can also be a detriment if you do not understand shipping policies or lag times during the holiday season. Gifts may not arrive on time if you don't plan accordingly.

All shipping policies are different for online retailers and it pays shoppers to know their estimated shipping times. Otherwise items ordered for Christmas may arrive much later than desired. Shoppers should also factor in that shipping companies are often overwhelmed during the holidays. Although seasonal staff may be hired to help meet shipping demands, the fact remains that delivery dates cannot be set in stone. One way to secure a firm delivery date, though, is to pay for it. Outlets that offer next-day delivery often charge a premium for overnight shipping, but it may be worth it if the gift must be somewhere by a specific date.

Something shoppers can also consider is the ship-to-store option that some retailers offer. If a brick-and-mortar store has an online shopping site, it may enable shoppers to buy online and then have the

merchandise delivered to the store. Some stores have same-day pick-up option for items that are in stock. Not only does this ensure that items will be available on time, in many cases you can save on shipping costs. The retailers do not charge shipping fees if the items are delivered directly to the store.

When visiting a favorite online retailer, check to see if this option is available. Wal-Mart is one company ramping up ship-to-store efforts. It is sometimes offered as an option during the check-out portion of the sale. Stores that have the ship-to-store ability may also allow returns to be made at the store instead of having to ship back returns to a customer service department. Keep in mind that this type of shipping is not entirely customer-friendly. Retailers realize that once a shopper is in a store to pick up an item, he or she is more likely to do more shopping or make impulse purchases.

There are some shoppers who simply refuse to pay more for expedited shipping, even if that refusal means their gift will not arrive on time. Gift recipients are often forgiving of items that are in transit. A way around this is to offer a printed image of the gift inside of a gift bag to indicate your giving intention. Therefore, the surprise of the gift will still be there, but the actual item will arrive shortly thereafter.

Online shopping remains a convenient option for many shoppers during the holidays and year-round. Factoring in shipping times, which could take a week or more if standard options apply, will help you time when to make purchases so they arrive on time.

Simplify Your Holiday To-Do List

(StatePoint) Trying to get everything done on your holiday list can be tough for even the most organized among us. With a little smart planning you can simplify your holiday list and make your season go from hectic to jolly.

- Don't just remember to add big items to your shopping list. While nobody forgets the ham or turkey, it's easy to overlook essentials like vanilla, nutmeg, flour, butter, chicken stock and spices. You don't want to run to the store because you've forgotten the cinnamon for the cookies in your oven!
 - There is no such thing as too early! Take advantage of early bird discounts on Christmas cards and gifts so you won't worry if the item will arrive in time or be in stock.
 - Check out online stores for special discounts, but don't just buy anything. The worst gifts are those that look like you purchased the first thing you saw. Opt for personal gifts that look like you've thought a lot about the recipient.
 - Thanks to advances in photo printing technology, you now can add a personal photo to traditional items like calendars, journals, stationery and other inexpensive gifts. Why not streamline the process and choose one great gift you can customize for each recipient? You can visit an online store like Minted.com that lets you pick out personalized stationery designs for each recipient on your list. This saves you the trouble of stopping at many stores.
 - Stock-up on tape, wrapping paper, batteries, ribbons, bows and personalized thank you cards. Nothing's worse than remembering the gifts but forgetting the batteries or not having enough wrapping paper to wrap them.
 - Have gifts sent to your home and wrap them with festive paper. Buy one paper and one ribbon in bulk for a signature, yet affordable look. And remember the gift tags, so you can tag each gift as it is wrapped. If time is short, festive ribbons tied in bows along with your custom holiday cards go a long way.
- A little planning can go a long way in ensuring forgotten errands don't dampen your holiday spirit.



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Mount upholds a holiday tradition with Christmas Vespers

A Service of Nine Lessons and Carols, including works by Felix Mendelssohn, Benjamin Britten, Gustav Holst and Morten Lauridsen, will be presented during the Christmas Vespers music program on Sunday, Dec. 4 at Mount Saint Mary College.

The free public event begins at 7 p.m. in the Chapel of the Holy Rosary in the Dominican Center on campus, 330 Powell Avenue, Newburgh. Seating is limited.

The Mount Saint Mary College Choir, overseen by Dr. Durward Entrekin, and the college's Arts and Letters program will be joined by members of the St. Philip's Church Choir from Garrison. Professional orchestral musicians from the Hudson Valley and readers from the college community will also be featured.

Entrekin, professor of music, serves as director of the Mount Saint Mary College and St. Philip's Church choirs. Entrekin is a graduate of Stetson University and the Yale School of Music, where he received the Doctor of Musical Arts degree. He has studied with Thomas Murray, Paul Jenkins and Jane Douglas. While at Yale, Dr. Entrekin earned the Julia Sherman

Prize for excellence in organ performance. Only the second organist in Yale's history to win the Woolsey Sprague Concerto Competition, he was heralded by The New York Times as the individual "who set the competition's high tone with his exciting lead-off performance."

Entrekin was formerly Associate Organist/Choir Master of the Brick Presbyterian Church in New York City. From 1990 to 1992 he was Dean of the Central Hudson Valley Chapter of the American Guild of Organists. He has concertized extensively on the East Coast and has also performed in the Midwest, Canada, the Soviet Union, Czechoslovakia and Sweden. He can be heard with hornist Willie Ruff and organist Thomas Murray in a record-



ing of Hindemith's horn concerto on the Kepler label.

For more information, call 845-569-3273.



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The Holiday Wreath and Tabletop Tree

Making Workshop will meet on Friday, December 2 from 1-3 PM and 6:30-8:30 PM at Cornell Cooperative Extension in Middletown. (Snow date Dec. 7, 2011). The cost of the program is \$35 per person (Gardening in Orange County newsletter subscribers pay only \$31.50). For more information or to register, please call 845-344-1234. Seating is limited; make your reservation early to avoid disappointment.

Hill-Hold holiday wreath

Looking for a traditional, home-spun feel for your holiday decorations this year? Find out how to do it yourself at the make-your-own holiday wreath workshop on Saturday, December 3 from 10 a.m. to 12 noon with the Friends of Hill-Hold and Brick House at Orange County's Thomas Bull Memorial Park. The program will be held in the boathouse and is provided by Orange County's Department of Parks, Recreation and Conservation.

Instructors will provide easy-to-follow, step-by-step instructions on how to create a holiday wreath from various fresh greens. Tips for holiday home decorating

will also be shared.

"The Friends of Hill-Hold and Brick House do beautiful work at the County's historic homes each holiday season and throughout the year," said County Executive Edward A. Diana. "We're so fortunate to have them share their time and talent with our County residents. The wreath workshop is a great way to kick-off the holiday season," added Mr. Diana.

The cost is \$30 per person and includes supplies and refreshments. Participants are requested to bring their own clippers to cut the greenery.

Reservations are required to ensure adequate space and supplies for all participants. Please register by contacting Susan A. Tucker at (845) 615-3833, or by email at stucker@orangecountygov.com.

For more information about Hill-Hold, visit www.hillholdandbrickhouse.org.

Special events are co-sponsored by the Friends of Hill-Hold and Brick House and the Orange County Department of Parks, Recreation and Conservation. The Boathouse is located on the grounds of Thomas Bull Memorial Park located on Route 416 between Goshen and Montgomery.

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Gifts for the “foodies” on your list

Cooking is a rewarding hobby and meals, when shared with friends and family, are a great opportunity to sit down and stay abreast of all the goings-on in the lives of your loved ones. For some, however, food is more than just a hobby, it's a passion.

Those especially passionate about their food are affectionately known as “foodies.” Foodies can be meat lovers, vegetarians or even vegans. All it really takes is a love of food. This holiday season, gift the foodie in your life with any of the following food-oriented gift ideas.

Cooking class

Know a foodie who is just beginning a love affair with food? Or one who has recently discovered a particular type of cuisine, such as Thai or Indian? Help cultivate this newfound love by treating them to a cooking class that helps them learn all about the cuisine and how to make certain dishes for themselves. Such classes are not too difficult to find, and you might even be treated to a delicious, homecooked meal once your loved one has completed the class.

Club membership

Monthly clubs, such as pastry-of-the-month or coffee-of-the-month, are wildly popular among foodies. Memberships are relatively inexpensive, and each month your loved one will receive a new item, whether it's an old favorite or a new one they have never tried before. This is



a great way for foodies to try new things, and it truly is the gift that keeps on giving, as most memberships last a full year.

Gadgets

Not all foodies love to cook, but those who do may love to unwrap some gadgets that can help around the kitchen. A digital kitchen scale makes measuring ingredients a snap, while an electric wine opener makes it easier than ever before to uncork a bottle of wine to serve with dinner. Whatever a foodie's taste or personal preference, chances are there's a corresponding gadget that can make a meal that much easier to prepare.

A night out

Of course, some foodies love to eat but aren't so enamored with cooking. For those who prefer the restaurant route, peruse the local Sunday newspaper to learn about the newest culinary hotspots. Then purchase a gift certificate for two so your loved one can indulge his or her love of food without having to worry about who's washing the dishes.

Get your hands dirty

Perhaps nothing will delight a foodie more than a homecooked meal, especially after the hectic holiday season when most people want nothing more

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Vassar's Service of Lessons and Carols

The annual "Service of Lessons and Carols," a Christmas service of readings, choral anthems, and congregational carols, that culminates in a candle lighting ceremony, will be held at Vassar College in the Vassar Chapel on Sunday, December 4. This popular event, free and open to the public, will begin at 7 pm. A free will offering will be taken to support Dutchess Outreach of Poughkeepsie, via the college's "Community Works" campaign (see communityworks.vassar.edu). The doors will open at 6:30pm, with seating on a first-come, first-served basis.

Rev. Samuel Speers, the director of the Religious and Spiritual Life Office, said: "We encourage people to arrive early to this very popular event, which usually fills the almost 1000-seat Chapel to capacity."

The program, sponsored by Vassar College Office of Religious and Spiritual Life and the Department of Music, will feature the Lessons and Carols Choir, an ensemble of 150 singers, which features singers from the Vassar College Choir, Vassar College Women's Chorus, and the Cappella Festiva Treble and Chamber Choir. The choir will perform carols by Herbert Howells, Isobel Holst, Morten Lauridsen, Rosephanye Powell, and John Rutter, among others.

The Lessons and Carol Choir is under the direction of Drew Minter and James Ruff, members of the Vassar College Department of Music with Susan Bialek '86 and Ronald A. Bemrich, conductors of the Cappella Festiva Treble and Chamber Choirs. College organist and music faculty member Gail Archer will play the Gress-Miles organ. Archer is also the director of the music program at Barnard College and conductor of the Barnard-Columbia Chorus.

Vassar students and members of the Vassar community will give the Advent and Christmas scriptural readings.

Individuals with disabilities requiring accommodations at Vassar should contact the Office of Campus Activities at (845) 437-5370. Without sufficient notice, appropriate space and/or assistance may not be available. Directions to the Vassar campus are available at www.vassar.edu/directions.

Deck the Halls! Create Your Own Victorian Holiday Kissing Ball!

The holiday season is approaching so why not start thinking about decorating your home with a charming Victorian decoration for your doorway. Cornell Cooperative Extension of Ulster County's Master Gardener Program will provide the evergreen boughs and know-how at this hands-on workshop on Tuesday, December 6, 2011 from 5:30pm to 7:30pm at the CCEUC Education Center, located at 10 Westbrook Lane in Kingston.



Learn the secrets to making an old fashioned kissing ball. They're fragrant, beautiful and not as hard to create as they look. Please bring gloves and pruning shears or wire clippers if you have them, all other supplies will be provided. The fee is \$25 per person. Class size is limited; registration deadline is Friday, December 2. Pre-registration is required to participate.

Please call Cornell Cooperative Extension of Ulster County Master Gardener Program at 845-340-3990 for registration information, or visit our website www.cceulster.org and click on Registration Forms to download a registration form.

For more information about Cornell Cooperative Extension of Ulster County's community programs and events visit our online calendar at www.cceulster.org. Follow us on www.facebook.com. CCEUC provides equal program and employment opportunities. Please contact the CCEUC office at 845-340-3990 if you have any special needs.

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