



# HOLIDAY TREASURES Gift Guide

Your guide to shopping local this Christmas

## Gifts that inspire children's creativity

BY HOLLY NEUMANN

This Christmas, you can bring out the creativity of those on your holiday shopping list by stopping at Mouse's Art Supply and Studio, located at 115 W Fulton St., in Waupaca.

Owned by Melissa and Patrick Verner, the couple wanted to give kids and adults something to do and get them off their phones.

"Doing art gets your creativity going and makes you think outside the box," said Melissa. "I wanted to create a safe place for kids to make messes and learn how to use art supplies as well as showcases what we have available to purchase."

This holiday season, no matter what your shopping needs are, there is definitely something for all ages and abilities at Mouse's Art Supply and Studio.

"We have a lot STEAM and STEM products," said Melissa. "A lot of hands-on activities for the kids. For the adults we have stained-glass supplies, acrylic, oil, and water paint and pens, pencils and markers for adult coloring and more."

There are even art supplies for the toddlers in your life as well, which are non-toxic and safe to use.

This Christmas, there will also be opportunities for young, budding artists to come in and make a gift for their parents, grandparents or someone special in their lives.

"We will be working on decorating

plates for Santa, that they can take home and bake," said Melissa. "There will also be holiday ornaments to decorate for their trees and Christmas cards to be created."

They will also be creating Christmas pour paintings and hand/foot print reindeer.

All of their pop-in activities have a fee of \$15 or less and are open to all ages.

"Give experiences this year for Christmas," said Melissa. "Give the gift of art to the loved ones in your lives."

Gift certificates available for pop-in activities, art supplies and to play games like PacMan, Space Invaders and Pinball in the attached arcade.

"I think art is huge for the community and I want to play a big role in that," Melissa said.

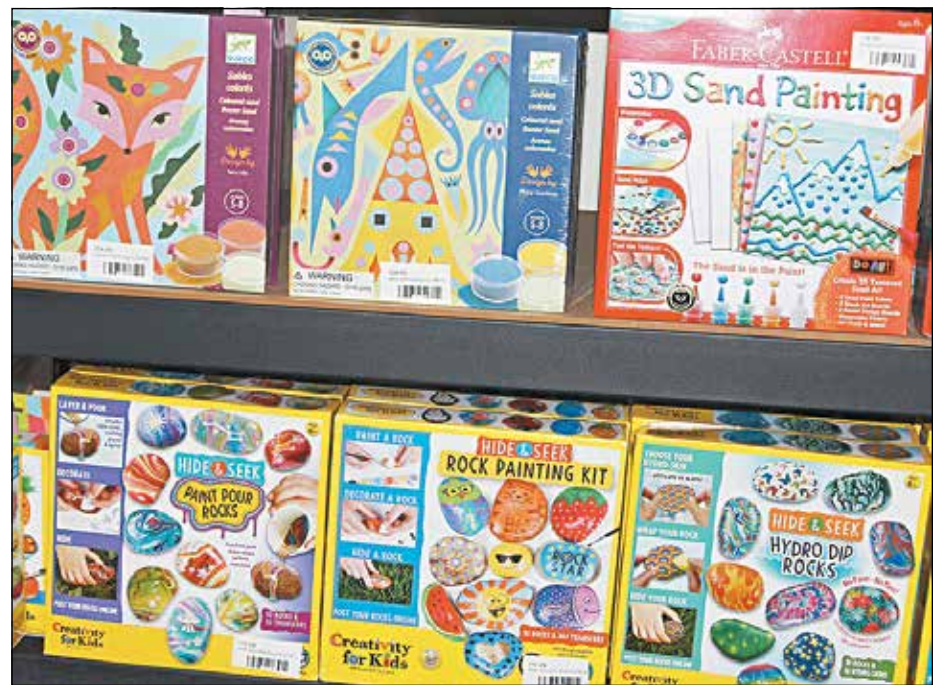
Gift wrapping is also available.

Melissa reminds everyone to shop local.

"That is what keeps our little towns alive," she said.



There are plenty of beads to choose from for the jewelry maker on you shopping list.



A wide variety of art kits are available at Mouse's Art Supply and Studio in Waupaca for the youngsters on your shopping list.

Holly Neumann Photos



Whether you want to build a bug or paint by sticker there are many choices at Mouse's Art Supply and Studio.



Latchkit Yarnimals from Mouse's Art Supply in Waupaca are fun to make.





# Go Western Chic this Christmas

BY HOLLY NEUMANN

Are you looking for a western twist on your holiday gift giving?

If you are, you need to visit The Back Forty, located at 307 N. Main St., in Scandinavia. It's a one of a kind store.

"Curating the brand with my family farm in mind has been so rewarding," said owner Sydney Brozik. "It's like I'm reliving my childhood on the farm. We

hope you feel it is a tip of the hat to the farmers of the Midwest!"

The shop offers a range of western-themed gifts.

"Like we say 'boots to barbecue,'" said Brozik. "There is quite literally something for everyone."

For the women on your list you can find boots, hats, handbags, jewelry and more.



There is always a wide variety of clothing to choose from at The Back Forty in Scandinavia. **Holly Neumann Photos**



**Left:** Give the gift of fragrance for Christmas. **Right:** There is a wide variety of jewelry to choose at The Back Forty in Scandinavia.



Barbecue sauces and grilling/cooking seasonings are local to Wisconsin and a perfect item to add to your gift baskets this Christmas season.

Also available are men's and children's items for those who want to get the western look on.

"We have cowboy boots for all your favorite people," said Brozik. "Even all of the little kids in your life. There is nothing cuter than a kid in cowboy boots."

The Back Forty is open 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. Wednesday through Friday, 10 a.m. to 3 p.m. Saturday, and 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. Sunday.

Check the store's Facebook page to see extended holiday shopping hours.

Gift wrapping is available and they are able to ship most items and gift cards too.

Brozik thanked shoppers for all their support.

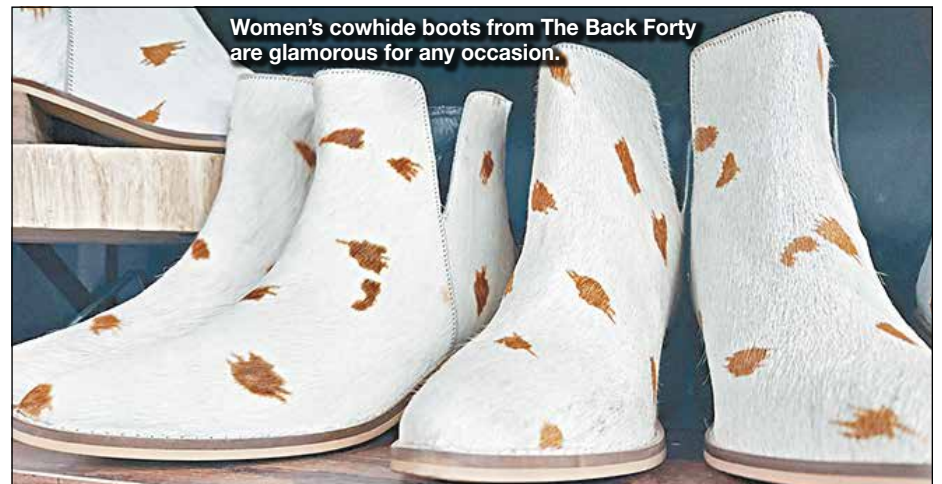
"Our family is so appreciative of all of the love and support we've received," she said. "We absolutely couldn't do it without you."



Western style bags are a hit at The Back Forty.



Turquoise bracelets from The Back Forty will add a little style to your outfit this holiday season.



Women's cowhide boots from The Back Forty are glamorous for any occasion.

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# HOLIDAY TREASURES Gift Guide



## 81 Market offers simple pleasures

BY JAMES CARD

On the main drag in King there are numerous gift shops and some are geared towards women shoppers.

At first glance, that might seem to be the case at 81 Market but it is not. There is something for everyone in the store and if the store had a theme it would be "adding simple pleasures for living a good life."

"This isn't a cutesy store," said owner Lori Sasse as she scooped out a dollop of bacon jam. "Try this."

The bacon marmalade had a jelly texture and for a moment the brain expects strawberry, grape or cherry and then the bacon kicks in with a savory taste. If the holiday hunt includes shopping for men, the 81 Market has many stocking stuffers and under-the-tree gifts that guys would like.

Sasse walks over to a wooden whiskey barrel and pulls out a bottle. Great Northern Distilling in Plover privately barreled a special batch of bourbon for them under the label: "Waupaca Chain O' Lakes Bourbon Whiskey, Spirit of the North."

There is a small bar in the shop and all liquors can be sampled before purchase.

Along those shelves are a number of other whiskeys of various makes. Near there is a stack of wood spindles, the kind that hold metal cables that linemen string out. These are stacked three high and make shelves for the Bloody Mary section. It holds everything needed to make the ultimate Bloody Mary. Sasse recommends the Wisconsin-made Nan's Naughty & Nice mix. Most of the other items are also made in Wisconsin.

There is a grilling section with tools, barbecue sauces and dry rubs. There are



The Bloody Mary tower at 81 Market in Waupaca has all of the fixings for making Bloody Marys. A Bloody Mary gift basket could easily be assembled here. Most of the products are made in Wisconsin.

James Card Photos

also beer bread mixes and pretzel and mustard packs. For clothing, there are t-shirts, sweaters, ball caps and the super handy Night Scope stocking caps that have a tiny LED flashlight embedded on the forehead. There are some fun sasquatch-themed clothes and Sasse pulls out a bestseller, a pair of pajama pants patterned with every beer produced in Wisconsin.

For stocking stuffers, 81 Market offers coffee mugs, and men's soaps and grooming items. For larger gifts, a slam-dunk would be the form-fitted Olukai slippers. They sold out last year. This footwear is so in demand that the 81 Market was visited and vetted by company representatives to be sure the 81 Market was a good fit with their brand.

Another is the Wisconsin-made BenShot glassware which are eggnog-ready mugs or glasses with a bullet embedded in the side.

After the dining room table is cleared after the Christmas dinner, their Chain O' Lakes 1,000-piece jigsaw puzzle would be a fun to piece together.

The shop is located at N2728 on County Trunk QQ in King. The store is closed Monday, Tuesday and Wednesday and is open from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. Thursday, Friday and Saturday. It is open from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m. on Sunday.



The ultimate stocking stuffer might be a jar of bacon jam. On the tongue, it feels like any other jelly but the taste buds are taken over with a savory bacon flavor.



## Chamber promotes local shopping for Christmas

BY ROBERT CLOUD

One present guaranteed to be appreciated is a gift certificate from the Waupaca Area Chamber of Commerce.

Chamber gift certificates are good at more than 315 local businesses.

"You can spend it on clothing, groceries or gas, or you can use the certificate to pay utility bills or hospital bills," according to Terri Schulz, chamber president. "You can go out for dinner or you can use it to help buy or repair a furnace."

Schulz said the certificates are recognized by all chamber members.

Members range from antique stores and auto dealers, to book stores, bait shops and banquet facilities, clothing stores and carpet cleaning, department stores and dentists, fabric shops, fitness centers, gift shops, golf courses, home repair, hair salons and health services, restaurants, veterinarians and just about everything in between.

"If you don't know what to give somebody, the gift certificate gives them a lot of options of where they can spend it," Schulz said.

She noted that every certificate has a list of participating businesses.

Chamber gift certificates can be made

out for any amount. However, Schulz recommends buying them in increments of \$20 or \$25 dollars.

"The goal is to get people to shop locally and to spend the entire certificate at one place," Schulz said.

She said that every dollar spent at a local business turns over within the community about seven times.

"When I buy a meal at a local restaurant, they pay their employees, who in turn shop at the local grocery store, whose employees then use it to buy gas or clothes," Schulz said. "The money circulates throughout the community, creating more jobs."

The program has been encouraging local shopping for more than 35 years.

Schulz says the Waupaca Area Chamber of Commerce sells more than \$40,000 of gift certificates every holiday season.

The program has been encouraging local shopping for more than 25 years.

A lot of businesses will use these certificates as Christmas gifts for their employees," Schulz said.

Schulz encourages those who want large numbers of certificates to call ahead so the chamber can have them ready when they come to the office.

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# HOLIDAY TREASURES Gift Guide

Fletcher's offers gifts that sparkle



Spruce up your home for the holidays with some silver and gold decorative pieces for your dining room. **Holly Neumann Photos**

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**BY HOLLY NEUMANN**

As the old saying goes, diamonds are a girl's best friend and Fletcher's Jewelry offers unique gifts for the ladies on your list.

Fletcher's Jewelry has been a part of the Waupaca community since 1937.

The uniqueness of their jewelry makes them stand above others.

"We take the time to hand pick all the jewelry that we have in stock," said Pat Fletcher, who owns the business along with her husband Jeff. "We have a wide selection of fine quality of jewelry at a lower price and so you don't need to leave town."

Some of Fletcher's popular Christmas gifts for women include rings, necklaces, bracelets made with diamonds, gem stones and sterling silver.

They can also do special orders.

"There is something to fit everyone's budget," Pat said. "We assist you in picking out something with a personal touch that will make memories for year to come. Not only will get personalized buying, we also do repair and service on jewelry in one stop."

Women are encouraged to come in and fill out a card for the wish list program this holiday season.

"That way when the men come in they can get what you have already picked out," Pat said.

To do so, visit Fletcher's Jewelry at 118 N Main St., in Waupaca.

Business hours are from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. Monday through Friday and 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. Saturday. On Sundays in December Fletcher's will be open noon to 2 p.m.

They can also be reached at 715-258-5265

Aside from jewelry, they also have porcelain serving pieces, bowls, dishes, watches, men's money clips and key chains, children's jewelry, earrings and more.

"Shop local," said Pat. "We have seen the downtown evolve to what it is today and we are grateful that it continues to remain prosperous."

Free gift wrapping and layaway are available.



Glassware and serving dishes are also good for holiday gift giving.



Diamonds are a girl's best friend at Christmas time.



'Tis the season for holiday gift giving.



Necklaces are also good for gift giving for that special someone on your list.



These necklaces are great for holiday gift giving.





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## Treasure hunting at Olde Country Store Antiques

BY JAMES CARD

About halfway between Waupaca and New London, the Olde Country Store Antiques is the kind of place that beckons a driver to pull over for a quick stop to stretch the legs and have a quick look around.

The problem is the stop will not be quick. It's like walking into a living museum and no two visits will be alike since they add new merchandise every day.

The store is co-owned by two husband and wife duos, Mike and Becky Drechsler and Rachel and Luke Stern.

The front part of the store is filled with rustic decor and country-living decorations but if you are looking to buy gifts for men, then proceed to the back half of the store and that is where the museum really comes alive.

The merchandise is grouped into small rooms and little nooks by themes, including the bathroom where there are also things for sale such as antique beer cans. There is one room with an outdoor theme and it holds buck antlers, fish mounts, old Coleman lanterns, fishing rods, wicker creels, duck decoys and other goods that would fit well in any hunting cabin or fishing shack.

Another area is loaded with tools from a bygone era. There are old hand tools, oil and lubricant cans from businesses that no longer exist, block and tackle pulleys, and contraptions that must be studied to figure out what they were once used for. Throughout this back half of the store are some items that cost only a buck or two such as paper matchbooks advertising long-gone businesses, old postcards, and church-key bottle openers with some having the obsolete can piercer on one end.

The further back you go, the better it gets as you enter the new addition that was opened in May.



A recent hot-selling item are these beer-distributor jackets. The fabric is durable and it has the feel of a heavy work shirt or a light jacket. There are a number of beer brands to choose from.

"It's been a dream of mine for many years to have a shop like this and I finally made it happen," said Mike Drechsler.

He spent the past year building it himself.

This has more of a garage theme and the focal point is a boat bar (on sale for \$1,900). It's the upper third of a boat that was cut in half and transformed into a bar. The V-angle of the bow is set into a base that doubles as a foot rest for those that pull up a bar stool.

This garage area is loaded with neon signs, automotive paraphernalia from yesteryear, and many other old oddities such as a barber chair, a dentist chair, a pinball machine, old fashioned lose-a-finger electric fans, ash trays, vintage barware and vinyl records.

Not all of the items are antiques. The store is a dealer for Neonetics, a neon-sign maker that replicates antique signs. Drechsler pointed out to a Ford sign hanging on the wall.

"If that were an original sign, you're talking 20 or 30,000 dollars, where this is \$2,000. This is for guys that want to decorate their shops or garages but don't



Some sections of the store are themed such as this outdoorsy up-north cabin room loaded with hunting and fishing items. There are also a section with old tools and a country kitchen-type place loaded with vintage cast iron cookware.



The Olde Country Store holds lots of nostalgia and has a museum-like quality. Pinball machines are a high-ticket item but also the shop is loaded with inexpensive stocking stuffer items.



The focal point in the new addition at Olde Country Store Antiques is the boat bar. A boat was cut in half and refitted as a bar. The new addition opened in May. **James Card Photos**

want to spend a fortune on it," he said.

Drechsler also pointed out a big seller. On a circular clothing rack were beer-distributor work jackets. They were new jackets but with a retro look. The jackets had beer brand patches stitched on and had pockets in the right places. The

fabric was sturdy and the jackets were handy for three-season use.

The store is located on E6690 State Highway 54 near Royalton and is open from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. daily. They also buy antiques as well, so consider hauling in some items for a possible offer.

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# HOLIDAY TREASURES Gift Guide

## Playing games at Four Myths

BY ROBERT CLOUD

Located on South Main Street, across from Waupaca City Hall and the public library, Four Myths Games and Hobby doesn't just sell games, it provides space for a community of game enthusiasts to play and socialize.

"It's a great way to spend time with friends," according to Joe "Bacon" Kosmerchock, who co-owns the store with his wife Angie.

"You can express yourself creatively. And you can get competitive and scratch that itch because you have played better than your buddies," he said, regarding the social aspects of playing interactive table-top games.

Kosmerchock said as a kid growing up in Iola, his father introduced him to video games. Then his best friend discovered the Pokemon card game.

Pokemon is a Japanese franchise that includes video games, animated series and films, a trading card game and other media. Since its inception in the mid-1990s, Pokemon has sold more than 52.9 billion cards worldwide, according to the company's English-language website.

Typically, Pokemon is a two-person game where the players use their "pokemon" to battle each other.

Another fantasy role-playing game card game is Magic: The Gathering. Usually two players, acting as wizards, battle each other by casting spells and attack-



Left: Joe "Bacon" and Angie Kosmerchock are the owners of Four Myths Games and Hobby in downtown Waupaca. Right: Four Myths offers a gathering space for a community of game enthusiasts. Robert Cloud Photos



ing with creatures that damage the other player's "life total."

Four Myths opened on Sept. 1, 2020.

Warhammer is a role-playing fantasy table-top game that uses miniature pieces that represent soldiers, trees, buildings and terrain for medieval battles that feature wizards and dragons. Outcomes are determined by rolling dice and adding up points.

Warhammer 40,000 is a sci-fi fantasy table-top game set in the distant future.

"Humanity is kind of locked into a Middle Ages of sorts," Kosmerchock said. They use advanced technology, but they don't really understand it."

Four Myths hosts Yu-Gi-Oh and Magic: The Gathering game nights, as well as ongoing Dungeons and Dragons events every weekend.

Angie Kosmerchock explained that Dungeons and Dragons has a Game Master.

"The Game Masters host the game and tell the story," she said. "They foster a welcoming environment."

On Saturdays, there are two sessions of Dungeons and Dragons and one session on Sunday.

"At the end of the day, we're here to have fun," Joe said.

The store is open 2-10 p.m. Wednesday through Friday and 10 a.m. to 10 p.m. Saturday and Sunday.

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