

# Holiday Gift Guide

*A Special  
Supplement to  
the Seaford  
and Laurel Stars*

## How to support small businesses this holiday season

The holiday season is an important one for small businesses every year, and it figures to take on heightened importance in 2020. The outbreak of the novel coronavirus COVID-19 in late 2019 and early 2020 hit small businesses especially hard, with many being forced to close their facilities to customers in an effort to prevent the virus from spreading.

Estimates regarding the effects of the COVID-19 outbreak on small businesses varied, but many small business owners were forced to let go employees as they confronted steep declines in revenue. A ZenBusiness survey of more than 1,000 small business founders, senior managers and decision makers found that 37 percent of small businesses that employ between 11 and 25 people were considering laying off more than one-fifth of their workforce.

As small businesses face difficult challenges, it's no surprise that many consumers want to support locally owned small businesses this holiday season. Such support not only can help small businesses, but also can help to revitalize local communities.

- Shop online. Online shopping has

traditionally been dominated by big box retailers. However, many small businesses increased their e-commerce capabilities to generate revenue. Shoppers concerned about shopping in person this holiday season should explore the delivery and curbside pickup options available at locally owned small businesses. Even businesses that have not traditionally been allowed to deliver, such as breweries and wineries, have been able to do so during the outbreak, giving consumers unlimited online shopping options.

- Purchase gift cards. Gift cards take the guesswork out of holiday shopping, and such cards are easily shipped or even emailed to loved ones. That's a significant benefit during the 2020 holiday season, when delivery times are expected to be lengthy. Gift cards to local businesses simplify holiday shopping, support small businesses and help shoppers avoid potential delivery delays.

- Share your experience. Word-of-mouth is vital to small businesses at any time, and can be especially valuable as these companies try to overcome the challenges posed by the COVID-19 outbreak. Holiday shoppers can share their experi-



ences with local businesses via social media. Share information about the lengths local small businesses have gone to in regard to safety measures, order fulfillment and their delivery and pickup efforts. Such sharing may compel neighbors and friends to follow your lead and provide vi-

tal support to local businesses in need this holiday season.

Small businesses are the backbone of many communities, and the holiday season provides a great opportunity to support such firms as they look to recover from a difficult year.

## Home holiday decorating ideas

The holidays often involve purchasing gifts for close friends and loved ones as well as making a delicious meal the entire family will love. But nothing sets the holiday scene and overall mood more so than beautiful decorations and other seasonal accoutrements.

Many people leave no room untouched for the holidays, meaning color schemes or trinkets may carry through from top to bottom. Decking the halls this season can be made even easier with some of these handy ideas.

### Holiday timeline

If you keep holiday photo cards each year, put them in chronological order and hang them from a piece of garland from the mantel or drape on a staircase banister. This can be a fun way to see how your own children or other members of the family have grown.

### Make mini evergreen displays

Clip your favorite pieces of evergreen and push the stems into floral foam. Display in small vases or other containers and place in groupings to emulate an evergreen

forest.

### Plan the outside

Exterior illumination and other exterior decorations share the holiday spirit with others. It can be overwhelming trying to visualize it all without a plan in place. Take a photo of the house and map out where you want lights and decorations to go. Then with your "map" in hand, you can more readily purchase supplies and start decorating.

### Go for a specific natural color scheme

If you desire an overall holiday feel but aren't interested in Santa figurines or kitschy elements, decorating with color in mind can be key. It's easy to tie things together with some natural elements in your desired palette. For example, white, gold and green may look beautiful. Put boxwood clippings and white amaryllis flowers together. Pine cones, twigs and holly pieces also can add touches to mantels, doorways and table centerpieces.

### Ornaments elsewhere

Who says ornaments only have to go



on a tree? Display antique or favorite ornaments by hanging them from beautiful ribbons throughout the home.

### Scent the scene

Hang something aromatic on the tree to mingle with the pine. Fresh cinnamon sticks tied with twine or ribbon can be nestled among the boughs. Another scent idea is to make pine cone candles and

use pine or cinnamon scents to make them smell just like the season.

Holiday decorating gets a hand from some creative ideas. Always follow safety precautions, especially when using candles, hanging lights and plugging in multiple items to electric sockets. With ingenuity and safety in mind, holiday decorations can be extra special.



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# Sussex County Holiday events

## Town of Laurel to hold annual Christmas parade

The town of Laurel has received approval from the state to hold its annual Christmas parade. The date of the parade is Friday, Dec. 4 (no rain date). The following requirements must be followed: Social distancing between those watching the parade and participants of the parade and masks are required for everyone.

The town is asking for cooperation from those that participate and attend the parade in order to have future events approved by the state.

includes a handwritten tag, in honor of/ in memory of a loved one or a message of their choice. Those bells are available for \$3, \$5 and \$10, depending on size. Again this year, with the purchase of a bell, you will receive a set of Holiday Specs, while supplies last. They are 3D Glasses that magically change the lights on the tree.

Collection boxes will also be available at the tree lighting for the City's Community Food Drive. Mayor David Genshaw is asking the community to support our local food drive by donating non-perishable, non-expired food items to be distributed to those in need through our local charities.

## 27th Annual Tree Lighting set for Nov. 30 in Seaford

The Gateway Park Committee and the city of Seaford will be hosting the 27th Annual Tree Lighting event on Monday, Nov. 30 at 7 p.m. in Gateway Park, with a rain date of Friday, Dec. 4.

Although this year's event will be a bit different with the exclusion of some of the portions from years past, such as group caroling, live music performances and the arrival of Santa, the committee still plans for a magical night, with the tree lighting officially kicking off the holiday season in Seaford. All attendees and staff will be required to wear masks and social distance. Hand sanitizing stations will be provided as well.

The annual "silver bell" ornament sponsorship will still be available this year. Individuals can sponsor a bell, which

## A Topsy Turvy COVID Christmas takes place in Georgetown

In celebration of the holidays, the Greater Georgetown Chamber of Commerce and the town of Georgetown invite you to a Topsy Turvy COVID Christmas parade, taking place on Tuesday, Dec. 15 from 7-8:30 p.m.

All floats and displays will be set up stationary on the four quadrants of the Circle in Georgetown. All you need to do is "stay in your car" and wave as you go around the Circle.

Sky Brady will be "spinning" holiday tunes in the Circle and Santa will be on the second floor balcony of the Brick Hotel waving to everyone.

Come celebrate in Georgetown and take a few laps around the Circle and put a little joy back into a very different holiday season.



Shown is the Live Nativity at Mariner's Bethel Church in Ocean View.

## Drive Up Live Nativity in Ocean View on Dec. 18

Mariner's Bethel United Methodist Church of Ocean View will present a Live Nativity featuring the Christmas story told and re-told every half hour from 6-8 p.m. on the church grounds at 81 Central Avenue in Ocean View. Enjoy an evening of music, carols, and storytelling while listening and singing along with the service broadcast over your car radio.

The event is free. For more information, contact Mariner's United Methodist Church at 302-539-9510 or visit [www.marinersbethel.org](http://www.marinersbethel.org).

day season.

For more info on how to participate call 856-1544 or email [director@georgetowncoc.com](mailto:director@georgetowncoc.com).

## Holiday house, business decorating contest, tour to be held in Georgetown

A holiday house and business deco-

rating contest and tour will be held in Georgetown, Dec. 4-15. Winners of the following awards will be announced Dec. 16: The Clark Griswold- brightest display; The Kevin McCallister- most creative; George Bailey- most traditional; Charles Dickens- most spirited; and People's Choice. If participating, contact the cham-

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# Events

Continued from page 3B

ber at [director@georgetowncoc.com](mailto:director@georgetowncoc.com) or call 856-1544.

## Gumboro to hold Third Annual Christmas Parade Dec. 12

The Gumboro Community Association recently announced that Gumboro's Third Annual Christmas Parade will be kicking off on Saturday, Dec. 12 at 5:30 p.m. There will be a few additions to this year's rules in order to encourage everyone to follow current state guidelines. If you have any questions at all please call Crystal at 302-381-6958.

## A Christmas Tour of Lewes goes virtual, offers outdoor festivities

The Lewes Historical Society will present the 47th Annual "A Christmas Tour of Lewes" this year in a digital format, sponsored by Schell Brothers and the Lee Ann Wilkinson Group. The Society will be showcasing nine Lewes residences and offering the public the opportunity to virtually visit these homes for a month. "We will bring you into Lewes' unique and historic houses while you sit in the comfort of your home" said LHS House Tour Chairman Jeff West. Tickets for the virtual tour will be available for purchase online now through Jan. 5, with the link to the tour becoming

available "live" at 5 p.m. on Dec. 5. The opportunity to view both the interiors and exteriors of the homes on tour will be accessible for up to a month. In addition to the Christmas Tour of Lewes, the Society will be hosting an outdoor Holiday Village and Market on their Shipcarpenter Street campus. The holiday event is scheduled for Saturday, Dec. 5 from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m., and will offer a little bit of everything for everyone. Visitors will have the opportunity to purchase some greenery and decorations and do some holiday shopping with more than a dozen unique vendors. Historic interpreters will roam the property or be sitting near the fire pit reading classic Dickens tales. The family-oriented event will have live sheep from Brittingham Farm from 10 to noon and will be demonstrating spinning techniques and other historic aspects of the early textile trade. Seasonal food and beverage will be available throughout the event. The Historical Society will be opening the doors to a few historic properties to allow visitors to pass-thru safely while viewing three decorated eras of Christmas past. The Hiram Rodney Burton House will display professionally decorated, handcrafted dollhouses. The stunning miniatures created by local designers and decorators will be raffled off at 3 p.m. on Dec. 8. To get a sneak-peak at the dollhouses in advance, they will be on display at the Citizens Bank, on 2nd Street, Lewes, for two weeks prior to the holiday event. Raffle tickets are \$5 per chance, available for purchase online or at the Society's Ryves Holt House. Art collectors will

want to buy a raffle ticket for artist Jean Doran's rendition of the LHS's historic building called the Doctor's Office, created in brilliant acrylic colors. The one-of-a-kind painting will also be raffled off on Dec. 8 as an additional fundraising effort for the Lewes Historical Society. Raffle tickets for the painting will also be available online as well as in all LHS Museums and stores. After a day filled with holiday festivities, the Society will be presenting a holiday movie, sponsored by Metz Capital Management, on a large outdoor screen, from 5 to 7 p.m. The public is invited to watch Albert Finney's SCROOGE, safely distanced from their neighbor's pod. Attendees are encouraged to bring their own blankets and chairs. Food, beverage and popcorn will be available for sale. The cost for the movie is \$5 per person. Tickets are only available online and space is limited. Tickets for the virtual "Christmas House Tour of Lewes" are \$25 and can be purchased online. A link to the tour will be emailed to buyers within 48 hours of purchase. Tickets for the Holiday Village and Market will be available at the gate for \$5, children 12 and under are free. Movie tickets must be purchased separately. With your ticket purchase you will be eligible to see the new exhibit of "Breaking Britannia's Grasp" at the Cannonball House located at 118 Front Street. This incredible exhibition along with the Lewes History Museum and the Ryves Holt House Museum Store will be open from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. on Saturday, Dec. 5 and is free with your "Holiday Village" ticket! The Lewes Historical Society asks you

to remember to social distance and to wear a mask at all times. Occupancy on campus will be limited to a maximum number due to COVID-19 regulations. For more information go to [historiclewes.org](http://historiclewes.org). **Wonderfest plans return to Hudson Fields** Festival of Cheer, Inc., the nonprofit organization which produces Winter WonderFEST at Hudson Fields, will produce the holiday festival in a limited capacity for the 2020 season. Organizers believe they can offer a safe and fun holiday experience at a time when it is so desperately needed, while continuing to raise money to support Sussex County charities. For the 2020 season, they are delivering an entirely "stay-in-your-car" experience entitled The Wonderfest Express: A Journey to the North Pole. WonderFEST will run daily from Nov. 21 thru Dec. 31. Ordinarily, the event would include the drive-through Light Spectacular and the Christmas Village. The Christmas Village typically consisted of Schellville, a carnival midway with rides and games, a lodge with dining services, an open air ice rink, and a Christmas tree farm. In order to keep all visitors in their vehicles, the following attractions will not be offered: the ice rink, the midway and games, Schellville, the lodge, hayrides, and restrooms. Instead, WonderFEST will feature an enhanced drive-through light show experience. This year's "North Pole" themed light show will include a climatic finale: a drive-through Santa's Workshop complete with Santa presiding over a number of

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# Christmas Open House

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**READ ALOUD TREE-** Frosty the Snowman stands ready to greet diners at Grotto Grand Slam in Lewes. Frosty is featured on Read Aloud Delaware's 2020 Christmas tree, continuing a long tradition of trees decorated with children's favorite characters. Patrons are invited to stop by to see the tree, enjoy a meal, and make a donation to support the children's literacy program. Donations can be made in the drop box at the restaurant's front desk through Friday, January 1 or mailed to Read Aloud DE, 108 N. Bedford St., Georgetown, DE 19947.

Read Aloud Delaware staff and county committee members (back row, l to r) Roxanne Nelson, Jan Benjamin, Katie Rappold, Jeanne Brennan and Linda Miller along with (seated, l to r) Stacy Penaranda and Loretta Ewell met to decorate the tree. For more information on Read Aloud Delaware, visit [readalouddelaware.org](http://readalouddelaware.org) or call the Sussex County office at 302-856-2527.

elves hard at work.

After the one-mile ride among nostalgic Christmas lights, visitors will arrive at the North Pole and drive through a tented Santa's Workshop. A glass box will be placed alongside the car route inside the workshop in which children can drop their wish lists. The children can then watch a Christmas elf take their list and hand deliver it to Santa himself.

While remaining seated on his throne, Santa will wave to each car acknowledging his receipt of their Christmas wishes. While children may not be able to climb

onto Santa's lap, the hope is that taking pictures from your car of this interactive experience will make the holiday season more complete. Each ticket purchase will include a North Pole themed blank list that children can fill out ahead of time or in their cars with their parents during their journey to the North Pole.

For more info visit [www.wonderfestde.org/](http://www.wonderfestde.org/) or call 727-0221. You can also find additional info at [www.facebook.com/wonderfestde/](http://www.facebook.com/wonderfestde/).

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# Dutch Country offers custom-made items

By Carol Kinsley

Whether you are looking for an unusual decorative piece as a gift or a custom-made, solid-wood table or cabinet that could become an heirloom, you'll find a wide range of furniture and accessories at Dutch Country Heirloom Furniture in Laurel, located behind Johnny Janosik's at 11233 Trussum Pond Road.

You may already be familiar with Dutch Country Market, now celebrating its 31st year, where deli meats and cheeses from Amish country are specialties. Sam and Glenda Petersheim moved to the Eastern Shore in the late '80s and started working at the Amish market on Rt. 13. Within six months, they'd become the owners.

After a decade or so of offering high quality food, they moved into their own building and offered crafts, quilts, lawn furniture, play sets and gazebos from a small shop at the edge of the parking lot. Nine years later, they decided they wanted a more comfortable setting for their customers to be able to browse, and they wanted to offer some of the handcrafted solid-wood furniture they'd seen built by some of the Amish and Mennonite craftsmen of Lancaster County, Pa. A post frame

building was begun in late 2006 and by August 2007, Dutch Country Heirloom Furniture was opened.

Glenda has always had an interest in furniture, especially antiques. "They've been around a while," she said. "They'll last." She had done some refinishing and knows that if you look at the edges of pieces, you can tell if it's real wood. With solid wood, all of the drawers are dove-tailed. A craftsman has taken time to make it, piece by piece.

Most of their furniture is made of cherry, oak, or brown maple, with some pine. Clients who want to match existing furniture in a room are invited to bring a leaf from a table or chair so the wood and color can be matched in a custom-made piece. Come look around in the store or browse online at [www.dutchcountryfurniture.com](http://www.dutchcountryfurniture.com) to see the various collections Dutch Country carries. Whether you opt for the straight, simple lines of the Shaker Collection or the classic elegance of the Colonial Collection, you can be assured these heirlooms are still handcrafted as they have been for centuries, one at a time by skilled craftsmen. Buy one piece or a room full, or order what you need.

Smaller pieces are available, too, like Stiffel lamps (made in the U.S.A.), jewelry

# People to tip and gift this holiday season

Are you making a list and checking it twice? If so, don't forget to add a few extra people to that list who are worthy of a gift this holiday season. Certainly friends and family are in mind for presents, but what about the service providers in your life?

After a challenging year, people in the service industry might benefit from a holiday boost this year more than ever. Here's who you may want to spread some cheer to this holiday season.

- **Hairdressers and nail techs:** It takes a lot of effort to look one's best, and these individuals help people put their best selves forward. Consider tipping the amount you would normally spend on one visit. If you get your hair or nails done frequently and consider this person a friend, opt for a gift instead, such as a gift card to a nice restaurant or a pampering service

for him or her.

- **Babysitter or caregiver:** This person is likely close with the family and may be deserving of more than a tip. Pick an age-appropriate gift you know this person will love. What about a coveted pair of Bluetooth-enabled earbuds or headphones? A gift card to a store you know this person frequents also can be fitting, or a year-long subscription to a streaming music or movie service.
- **Landscapers:** If the same person or crew services the lawn most of the time, a tip of \$20 each is an appropriate amount.
- **Teachers:** Class parents may take up a collection for the teacher and offer one class gift. If your student is educated by multiple teachers and the school staff is top-notch, consider stocking the staff lounge with snacks and beverages or cater

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cabinets, and standing mirrors with built-in jewelry cabinet. "These pieces you will value for years," Glenda said.

There are decorative sayings such as "Never enough coffee" and "Worry ends where faith begins" as well as quilts, embroidered doilies in different sizes for table or dresser, beautiful framed pictures that look like paintings because of the finish, and six-hour LED timer candles. Choose from six-inch, five-inch, or four-inch taper or voice. It looks like a flame. Add a berry ring around the base and voila, the table's decorated.

In addition to gazebos and our lumber

buildings, we have outdoor furniture in recycled plastic. Recycled plastic containers will not only look beautiful but will provide years of care-free enjoyment.

The rockers, chairs, tables, gliders, pub bars, and stools are maintenance free, termite resistant and will not crack, split, warp, or rot.

Delivery is available. Hurry to make your selection before the holidays. The furniture store is open from 9 a.m. until 6 p.m. Thursday through Saturday; the food market is open the same days, from 9 a.m.-3 p.m. For more information, call 875-1608.

# Dutch Country Market

and Heirloom Furniture

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# Events

Continued from page 5B

## Some Holiday events to take place in Milford

Downtown Milford, Inc. (DMI) and the city of Milford are pleased to announce the events scheduled for the 2020 Holiday Season. In an effort to prevent overcrowding, events have been modified, reduced and in some cases cancelled. COVID courtesies – masks (the merrier, the better), social distancing, etc. – will be in effect for all events.

Shop Small Saturday is Nov. 28. Help your community by shopping local – money spent at small businesses stays in your community!

In lieu of the traditional Holiday Stroll on the first Friday of December, DMI will host an outdoor Christmas Market from 5 to 8 p.m. on Friday, Dec. 4. Artisan vendors selling holiday gifts, decorations and goodies will be set up in the Farmers Market area. Artisan vendors can file an online application at [bit.ly/DMIXmasMarket](http://bit.ly/DMIXmasMarket) for \$35. Due to COVID limitations for this type of event, artisan applications will be handled on a first come, first serve basis. Downtown businesses will also be open late for holiday shopping. Sadly, the wagon rides and s'mores at the fire pit are cancelled.

One-of-a-kind Santa visits will take place from the comfort and safety of ve-

hicles via the drive-thru window at the Milford Customer Service Center at 119 S. Walnut Street in downtown Milford. Two separate lines will form: one will enter on SE 2nd St. and Pearl Alley behind the Milford Museum; the other will enter on SE Front Street and Pearl Alley behind the First Presbyterian Church. Watch for traffic elves for help and directions. Santa visits are free – donations are always appreciated – and will occur from Nov. 28 until Dec. 20 on Fridays from 5 p.m. to 8 p.m. and Saturdays and Sundays from 11 a.m. to 3 p.m. Santa's schedule and hints for additional dates and spontaneous events can be found on Facebook at "Santa's House, Downtown Milford, De." Watch the DMI Facebook page for volunteer opportunities to be a Santa Elf or at the Christmas Market.

Santa will not be able to make his usual grand entrance on Walnut Street, but will schedule multiple roadside appearances throughout the holiday season. He may be joined by Mrs. Claus and some elves too. Check Santa's Facebook page for these announcements.

A life-sized image of Santa will randomly pop up in local businesses where families can visit and take pictures. Mrs. Claus will post "Flat Santa" clues on Facebook.

Santa & Jingle will also host a pre-recorded reading of 'Twas the Night Before Christmas on Facebook in December.

Santa's House in downtown Milford will be decorated for kids of all ages to

# A&K Enterprises gift shop in Laurel features crafts, Christmas candles

By Carol Kinsley

Thirty-two years ago, Alan Littleton and his wife, Kim, launched a tackle business, A&K Enterprises, in Laurel, Del., just south of the Central Avenue Bridge. From there, the shop at 301 North Central Avenue evolved into a gift shop with a broader inventory. "We got into crafts, furniture, custom pieces, custom signs and custom shirts," Kim said.

The couple also works closely with Laurel schools to provide school uniforms, including "spirit wear" for Fridays. Kim explained students can wear tops that have something to do with Laurel along with the official uniform bottoms on Fridays. They carry jackets that are approved to be worn in school all day, as well as hoodies and other jackets.

Crafts, which are handmade, include signs for all seasons, ornaments, mesh wreaths, decorative wine glasses, decorative flags and garden flags. They stock Keeper of the Light candles in various

fragrances.

Corn hole boards and bags are custom made, and replacement bags are available if mice — or in one case, a bear — dines on your corn-filled bags during the winter.

Christmas candies are due to arrive in early November. These are the candies her grandparents enjoyed, Kim said, including homemade fudge, orange slices and bonbons.

In the spring, there will be specially made Easter eggs.

A&K Enterprises is family owned and operated by native Delawareans. The Littletons' daughter, Sarah Hastings, helps out with graphic design and printing. Customers rave about the treasures they have found, the great atmosphere, great prices and friendly service.

The shop is open at 8 a.m. every day except Tuesday, closing at 5 p.m. weekdays; 3 p.m. on Saturday, and 2 p.m. on Sunday. Call (302) 875-5513 for more information, or visit on Facebook.

peek in and see the magic of the season from Thanksgiving until Christmas!

These events would not be possible without generous donors and DMI is ap-

preciative of the support.

Contact Cat at DMI for any questions or to donate at 302-839-1180 or [director@downtownmilford.org](mailto:director@downtownmilford.org).

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# Stargate Diner offers good home cooking

Looking for good home cooking, good service and reasonable prices? Look no farther than the Stargate Diner at 23415 Sussex Highway in Seaford. The family-owned and operated Stargate Diner is open at 7 a.m. seven days a week, closing at 10 p.m. daily except for Sunday, when closing is 9 p.m.

An all-you-can-eat breakfast buffet is available Saturday and Sunday, but you can order breakfast at any time, any day. Watch for daily specials like the “2-2-2.”

Duray Salman opened the Stargate Diner eight years ago, following the successful opening of the Stargate in Harrington.

“I’ve been working in restaurants since 1993,” Salman said. “I started washing dishes, busing, cooking, working as a chef, then owned my own restaurant, starting in

2001.”

The Stargate Diner serves American dishes, Italian specialties, steak and chops, seafood, sautéed delights, hot pressed paninis, hot and cold sandwiches and wraps. The soup is homemade, with a different special every day. A salad bar is available.

Catering is available for any special occasion, or bring your party in — there’s a separate room that holds 75 to 80 people for banquets, birthday parties, business meetings, holiday gatherings, baby showers and weddings. Customers can arrange a buffet meal with a choice of menu items.

Call (302) 629-4894 to schedule your holiday celebration. Or drop in any time for a good home-cooked meal.



## Gifts

Continued from page 6B

a lunch.

- Mail carrier: The mail is delivered six days of the week in any and all weather. Treat your mail carrier to a nice gift, but stick to the rules of the U.S. Postal Service. Mail carriers are not allowed to ac-

cept cash, checks or gift cards that can be used like credit cards. Stick to a gift of no more than \$25.

- Cleaning person: You rely on this person to keep your home tidy and clean. He or she is deserving of the cost of one visit, according to Roseanne Thomas, author of “Excuse Me: The Survival Guide to Modern Business Etiquette.”

Individuals can use their discretion concerning service providers in their lives who may be worthy of some extra cheer this holiday season.



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# Tips to simplify shopping and wrapping

The holiday season is a busy time of year. People devote many hours to generating gift lists and planning their shopping excursions. Shopping can be all-encompassing during the holiday season, but it is only half of the gift-giving equation. After all of those toys, articles of clothing and other goodies are purchased, those items will need to be wrapped and hidden away. Gift-givers may be looking for ways to make these tasks just a little easier.

## Shop early

The sooner you begin shopping, the more time you will have to purchase everything you need and then get it prepared for giving. While Black Friday and Cyber Monday sales feature great deals, there are discounts to be had all year long if you keep your eyes open. Grab an item here and there when there is something that catches your eye and fits the needs of a gift recipient.

Shopping early also affords shoppers a greater buffer if they plan to do some of their shopping online. Shipping times have changed due to COVID-19, which has disrupted some supply chains and put added pressure on shipping companies. The U.S. Postal Service says products and packages may require more time to be delivered due to limited transportation availability, so shopping early can help ensure everything arrives on time.

## Tackle the kids' gifts first

Watching children's bright grins and all their excitement opening presents can

make all the hard work worth it. Be sure that you shop for all of the gifts for children in your household first, especially if you play Santa's helper. Use opportunities when the kids are in school or at daycare to bring gifts into the house and then wrap them. Wrapping as you go can help to ensure there are no "spoiler alerts" prior to the holidays.

## Create a wrapping station

A dedicated area for wrapping can streamline the process. Gift wrapping supplies can be tough to keep organized because they're usually awkward sizes and can eat up a lot of space. That's where a wrapping station can come into play. It can be custom-made or you can use items already around the house. A laundry room or a large closet can be the ideal location for a wrapping station. Because wrapping paper rolls are the most cumbersome wrapping supplies, find a way to corral them. A tall laundry hamper works, or consider hanging wrapping paper rolls horizontally on thin curtain rods attached to a wall or the back of a door. Simply pull off the amount of paper you need and cut.

Organize other supplies in a nearby drawer or organizational caddy. Store gift bags and tissue paper in a fabric tote bag. Having everything within arm's reach cuts down on time spent searching for supplies.

It's that time of year for shopping and wrapping. Ensure it is a low-stress experience with some time-saving tips.



# The bright side of small holiday celebrations

To say the novel coronavirus COVID-19 changed life would be an understatement. Due to COVID-19, the way people interact with one another has changed dramatically over the last several months. Despite this, the public has proven very resilient and adaptive, often finding a silver lining while confronting challenges that might once have seemed insurmountable.

The holidays are one aspect of life that have been modified as people continue to navigate the new normal. It's easy to lament the fact that extended family may not be able to travel or celebrate the holidays

together. However, there is something to be said for small celebrations. The following are some of the positive aspects of scaling back holiday festivities.

- More personal: Certainly it can be great to see distant cousins or old college roommates for the holidays. But the more people who you see each holiday season, the less personal interaction you get. When the holidays are scaled back, dinner becomes more intimate and everyone can exchange gifts and see their loved ones' reactions.

Continued on page 11B



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# Warm up with a rich, chocolate beverage this holiday season

Nothing beats sipping a hot, soothing beverage after a day of choosing the perfect Christmas tree or lobbing snowballs in the backyard. Teas, hot toddies, coffees, and mulled ciders certainly can fit the bill, but a mug of rich hot chocolate is a holiday season staple.

Hot chocolate can be whipped up quickly from premade packets, but many such packets are loaded with sugar. Chocolate lovers should have a reliable hot chocolate recipe to lean on when the moment is right. This recipe for “Real Hot Chocolate” from “Chocolate” (Parragon) by the editors of Love Food is sure to please.

- 1 1/2 ounces semisweet chocolate, broken into pieces
- 1 1/4 cups milk
- Chocolate curls to decorate

Place the chocolate in a large, heatproof pitcher. Place the milk in a heavy-bottom saucepan and bring to a boil. Pour about one-quarter of the milk onto the chocolate and leave until the chocolate has softened.

Whisk the milk and chocolate mixture until smooth. Return the remaining milk to the heat and return to a boil, then pour onto the chocolate, whisking constantly.

Pour into warmed mugs or cups and top with the chocolate curls. Serve immediately.

Real Hot Chocolate- Serves 1 to 2

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# Antique Alley of Bridgeville has a gift for everyone

Antique Alley of Bridgeville has been part of the local community for 20 years. The climate-controlled, 20,000+ square foot antique mall has over 125 booths and 70 different dealers offering a unique antique and treasure hunting experience. You can't find anything else like it in the Sussex County area.

When you visit you will discover a diverse marketplace that has something for everyone, whether you are searching for furniture, primitives, clocks, shabby chic, home décor, jewelry, railroad items, antique tools, neon signs, custom made wreaths, super scented Thompsons candles, gifts and more!

Antique Alley of Bridgeville is also a premier retailer for Dixie Belle Paint Company. Carrying the entire line of chalk mineral paint, they also offer paint work-

shops.

Jane Houtman of Bridgeville was at the right place at the right time in 2015 when the business was up for sale. Using her accounting background and love of home decor, she has made a mark on the resale retail industry.

In 2016 she took an empty retail space in downtown Bridgeville and dubbed it Downtown Alley. Downtown Alley has more of what the highway store has plus a wide selection of K-Cups, the perfect stocking stuffer for coffee lovers! Along with antiques, the Downtown Alley carries wares by local artisans, Lavender Fields soaps, Vanderwendes ice cream, Eagle Wingz sauces, veteran-made goat milk lotions and Bubba Bobs Kettle Corn. All under one roof!

## Continued from page 9B

- Reduced expenses: Putting out an extensive holiday spread and entertaining 10 or more people can be expensive. Small gatherings are less expensive because there's fewer mouths to feed.

- Ability to splurge: On the other side of the financial coin, having fewer people for the holidays means one can indulge on items that may not be possible when hosting a crowd. Therefore, if chicken was

normally on the menu, it could be possible to upgrade to a roast or something indulgent like lobster and other seafood. In addition, a small holiday celebration may free up the budget to spend more on gifts.

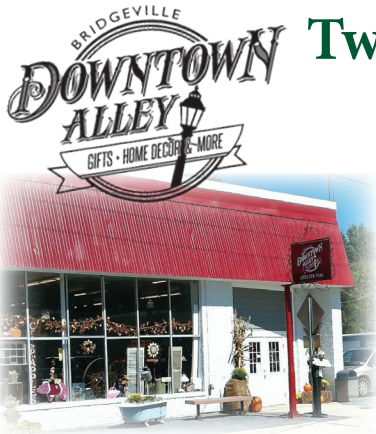
- Special touch: When there are only a few people celebrating, hosts can go the extra mile to give celebrations a special touch. Create a special holiday dessert even if the recipe is time-consuming. In addition, immediate family can pile into the car to tour the neighborhood decora-



tions, something that may not be as manageable with a motorcade of relatives.

While holiday celebrations may need to

be scaled back this year, small gatherings can produce some pleasant, unanticipated benefits.



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# Must-haves to achieve a holiday wonderland

The end of the year marks a period of heightened festivity. Come the holiday season, homes and businesses are decorated and everyone seems to have an extra spring in their step.

The sight of snowflakes, candy canes, evergreen wreaths, and Christmas trees can elicit nostalgia for happy holidays of the past, as well as excitement for what is yet to come. When it comes to decorating for the holidays, there are certain items that set the scene.

- Christmas trees: Germany is credited with starting the modern Christmas tree tradition. It dates back to the 16th century when devout Christians brought trees into their homes and decorated them. German settlers brought Christmas tree traditions to America upon their arrival in Pennsylvania in the 19th century.
- Mistletoe: Mistletoe is known as the “kissing plant” and it is customary for couples to kiss while standing beneath the plant, typically hung in doorways and arches. Mistletoe was once hung to drive off evil spirits and ensure fertility. Kissing under the mistletoe was first found associated with the Greek festival of Saturnalia and later with primitive marriage rites.
- Lights: Lights are commonly seen during the holiday season. The custom of having holiday lights dates back to when Christmas trees were decorated with candles, which symbolized Christ being the light of the world. These traditions evolved from pagan rituals that would celebrate the return of light of the sun as the days grow longer after the winter solstice.



## Six ways to stick to a holiday budget

The holidays are an exciting, fun and joyful time of year. And for many people, the holidays also are expensive.

According to the Motley Fool Company, a financial wellness resource, the average American spent \$882.45 on Christmas gifts, food, decorations, travel, and other holiday-related expenses in 2019. Around 56 percent of gift shoppers set a budget for holiday spending, but only 64 percent stuck to it. In addition, 21.5 percent of respondents went into debt due to holiday shopping.

Who doesn't want to have a super holiday with delicious foods on the table and lots of presents to share with family and friends? While that's tempting, such a bounty should never result in financial peril. These six strategies can make it easy to establish and stick to a budget this holiday season.

1. Budget for everything. When working out holiday spending plans, factor in all of the expenses associated with the holidays — not just the most obvious, like gifts. Costs for gas, parking lot fees, greet-

- Yule log: Many families burn a yule log in the fireplace and watch it burn while listening to Christmas carols. The familiar custom of burning the log dates back to solstice celebrations and the tradition of bonfires. The Christmas tradition called for burning a portion of the log each evening until Twelfth Night, also known as the Epiphany, which takes place on Jan. 6.
- Poinsettias: Poinsettias are a tropical plant that originated in Mexico. Joel Roberts Poinsett was the first Ambassador from the United States to Mexico. He became enamored with the plants, and brought them back to his native South Carolina. An old Mexican legend suggests a poor girl had nothing to offer baby Jesus at Christmas Eve services, so she picked a handful of weeds and put them at the bottom of the nativity scene. These weeds burst into bright red flowers and became known as “Flores de Noche Buena,” or “Flowers of the Holy Night.”

Holiday decorations borrow traditions from all over the world to help establish a festive wonderland.



# The First Christmas

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# The Live vs. Artificial Debate Budget

Continued from page 12B

The Christmas tree conundrum: real or fake?

The kind of tree that adorns a person's home during the holidays can provoke debate as much as Coke vs. Pepsi or Chevy vs. Ford.

When it comes to Christmas trees, do you choose live or artificial? Do you cut your own at Nichols or P&J Tree Farm or do you prefer the convenience of a tree bought from Target that won't shed its needles, doesn't need water and already has lights?

Both live and artificial trees have their advantages and disadvantages, and we here at Avery Hall Insurance Group certainly aren't going to try to convince you that one is "right." But in the spirit of giving, we thought we'd provide some information to help you make the best decision for you and your family.

## Artificial trees

According to the North Carolina Consumers Council, artificial trees pose fewer safety concerns than live trees, but that's not to say they don't have risks of their own. Even fake trees can catch fire when sockets are overloaded with Christmas lights, and it only takes seconds for any tree to become completely engulfed in flames. And yes, flame-resistant artificial trees will eventually succumb to a fire.

When using a pre-lit tree, always follow instructions, and place the tree in

an open area where a fire won't quickly spread to furniture or other things in close proximity.

The benefits of artificial trees, of course, are well-known. They're convenient and often less messy than real trees. You can re-use them year after year, saving money and saving the environment. And there's no need to spend time searching for the perfect tree, since it's usually easy to adjust the "branches" to your liking.

## Live trees

OK, so you want the real deal. That's great! But you're going to have to take a little more care than you would with an artificial tree. First of all, pick a tree that's in good shape. If needles come off easily when you give it a shake or a quick pull on a branch, find another one.

When you get it home, cut off the bottom two inches of its trunk, and fill the tree stand with water regularly. This is the best way to prevent a fire. Remember not to overload it with lights and decorations. And the longer you keep your tree up, the drier—and the more dangerous—it will become.

Dispose of your tree properly as well. Don't burn it or put it in your fireplace, as a burning Christmas tree can be harder to control than other types of fires.

If you're a fan of real trees, you probably don't need us to tell you the benefits.

ing cards, postage, travel expenses, and much more should be included in your final number.

2. Determine how much you can spend. Money for gifts and other holiday expenses should ideally come from your disposable income. Look at your finances in advance of the holiday season and figure out how much extra cash you have for the holidays, and use that figure to determine how much you should spend. Find ways to make up any deficit by curtailing expenses like dining out or entertainment extras. Many people plan to use credit cards to pay now and worry about the aftermath later. Only use credit cards if you have the money in the bank and can pay off the entire bill when the balance due is in January.

3. Set a spending limit for individuals. Based on your numbers and how much

Just take in that smell and enjoy the season!

No matter what tree you choose, the important thing is to keep safety in mind as well. If you do that, your holiday enjoyment will be real, even if your tree isn't!

## Contact Us!

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you plan to spend overall, start allocating money to categories, including gift recipients. Come up with a spending range for each person and stick to it.

4. Pay in cash as much as possible. It's easy to know what you're spending when using cash as opposed to credit. There is some risk with carrying around cash, but that risk may be offset by the benefit of spending only what you can afford to spend.

5. Track all purchases. Save the receipts and keep a running total of expenditures so you can see how your spending is measuring up to your budget. If necessary, scale back on one category if you've tipped the scales in spending on another.

6. Shop sales and deals. High-end stores may have the impressive tag, but their prices can set you back. Instead, look for comparable gifts at discount stores and other retailers. Also, if you must use a credit card, use one that earns you a cash-back bonus for added savings.

A holiday budget is a must to avoid overspending and finding yourself in debt early next year.

you need, while at the same time using all possible credits and discounts to make that coverage affordable. Just give your local Avery Hall Insurance Group office a call or visit our website [averyhall.com](http://averyhall.com). We want to help you meet your goals, and make sure what's important to you is protected! Coverage and service from Avery Hall is the gift that keeps on giving!

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# Star holiday season bulletin board: upcoming events, activities

## Seaford Christmas Parade

Seaford's Christmas Parade will be different this year thanks to the coronavirus. This year the parade entries will be stationary on High Street/Pennsylvania Avenue. The spectators will be driving through to view the entries. They will enter Nylon Boulevard from Stein Highway beginning at 7 p.m. and proceed down Nylon Boulevard to Pennsylvania Avenue down High Street to Market Street. The entries will end at Market Street in front of City Hall. Porta potties and sanitation stations will be spread through the parade route. Approval for this year's parade was received from the Delaware Department of Health and Social Services.

This year marks 35 years Downtown Seaford Association, Inc., along with the city of Seaford, will be sponsoring the parade. The theme for this year's parade is "Seaford's Drive Through Snowflake Christmas Parade" to be held Saturday, Dec. 5, step-off 7 p.m. Check-in will begin at 5 p.m. at West Seaford Elementary School (Sussex Avenue off Stein Highway) where you will be assigned a parade number to be used for judging. The rain date is Dec. 6.

For registration and Christmas Parade rules, go to [www.seafordde.com](http://www.seafordde.com), and click on Christmas Parade on the left side. Registration must be done by Tuesday, Dec. 1 by website or mail. For questions, contact Tracy at the Seaford City Office at 629-9173.

## Christmas Cash Calendar

Members of the Delmar Fire Department Ladies Auxiliary are now selling tickets for their Christmas Cash Calendar. Cash drawings every day in December. Pay outs are: weekdays \$25, Saturdays and Sundays \$50, Christmas Eve \$75 and Christmas Day \$250. Every ticket is eligible to win more than one time during the month. Tickets are \$10 each. Must be 18 years old to purchase a ticket. To purchase a ticket call 410-896-3280 or see any auxiliary member.

## Star office is Toys for Tots dropoff location

The Seaford and Laurel Star office, located at 951 Norman Eskridge Highway in Seaford, is a Toys for Tots dropoff location. Items can be dropped off at the Star, which is open Monday through Thursday from 8:30 a.m. to 5 p.m., through Dec. 15.

## Toys for Tots collection

The DE Devil Dogs, Detachment 780, Marine Corps League, will be setting up in front of the Seaford Wal-Mart on Saturday, Dec. 5 from 9 a.m. to 2 p.m. to collect toys and/or donations for Toys for Tots. Members of the detachment will be present and have collection boxes available. The group will be asking for new toys.

## Toys for Tots donation location

Seaford Presbyterian Church, located at

701 Bridgeville Hwy. in Seaford, is a Toys for Tots donation location. Now through Dec. 13, please donate new, unwrapped toys for families in our community. Toys from infant through age 12 will be appreciated. Drop-off times are: Thursdays, 11 a.m. - 2 p.m. Call 629-9077 for information or to arrange drop-off at a different time.

## Food Bank of Delaware holiday food drive goes virtual

Amid the pandemic, the Food Bank of Delaware announced last week that its annual holiday food drive has gone virtual. To maximize resources, ensure driver and donor safety and collect much needed resources for Delawareans struggling with hunger, this new interactive virtual food drive fundraising tool will allow donors to create a personalized virtual food drive page and invite friends, family or coworkers to donate. Thanks to the Food Bank of Delaware's wholesale purchasing power and efficient distribution model, food donations through the virtual food drive are stretched even further. For every dollar donated, the Food Bank can provide three meals to Delawareans in need. "We are excited to launch our new virtual food drive," said Food Bank of Delaware Interim CEO Sanjay Malik. "The virtual holiday food drive will allow us to be efficient with our resources. Traditional

food drives are an expensive undertaking and take an immense amount of staff and transportation resources. The virtual food drive will allow us to address our most urgent food needs, while ensuring staff safety, preserving valuable staff and transportation resources to conduct more food distributions directly to the community." The new virtual food drive mirrors an online shopping experience where shoppers can select food items and place them in a shopping cart to check out and make a secure tax-deductible donation to the Food Bank. To host a virtual food drive, please visit <https://fbd.fenly.org>. For individuals and businesses still interested in conducting physical food drives, donations may be delivered to the Food Bank of Delaware in Newark (222 Lake Drive) and Milford (1040 Mattlind Way) Monday-Friday from 8:30 a.m. - 4 p.m. (due to the pandemic, collection barrel and donation pickup will not be available this year) Most-needed items include: applesauce, cranberry sauce, oatmeal, cold cereals, pudding mix, canned pumpkin, graham cracker pie crust, canned gravy, rice, macaroni and cheese, mashed potatoes, stuffing, hearty soups, corn muffin mix, canned sweet potatoes and yams, canned peas and green beans, 100 percent fruit juice, hot chocolate, coffee, tea, evaporated milk, turkey pans, and frozen turkeys. Contact-free donation zones have been set up at both the Newark and Milford facilities. Newark donors may drop off non-

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perishable donations to collection boxes set up under the Food Bank barn on the far side of the front parking lot, and Milford donors may drop off to the collection box by the door marked donations and agency pick-ups.

## Sussex County announces changes for Caroling on The Circle food campaign

Sussex County's annual Caroling on The Circle will strike a much different chord this holiday season because of the global coronavirus pandemic.

County Administrator Todd F. Lawson announced Tuesday, Oct. 27 that the annual December gathering of singers, musicians and community members in downtown Georgetown – the marquee event for the County's annual food drive campaign – is suspended this year. Lawson said the decision to forgo the 37th annual celebration was made out of an abundance of caution to ensure public health, as the event usually draws several hundred people, many of them families with school-age children and senior citizens, who could be susceptible to community spread of the contagion in a mass gathering setting.

The County hopes to raise the curtain again on Caroling on The Circle in December 2021.

"These are certainly different and unusual times, and circumstances being what they are, we believe Caroling on The Circle must adapt just as so many other events have had to do in 2020," Lawson

said. "But as they say in the entertainment business, 'the show must go on,' and it will go on, at least in part, in the form of our annual 'Pack the Pod' food drive. Our mission to help those less fortunate remains the same, and we need the public's help now more than ever."

Beginning in mid-November and lasting through Dec. 31, the County will collect donated non-perishable items to distribute among nearly 20 pantries serving the public here in Sussex County. To make donations convenient for the public, this year's campaign includes two different options for citizens to lend their support:

**Food donations.** These can be made anytime, 24 hours a day, outside the County Administrative Offices building, located at 2 The Circle, in downtown Georgetown. Receptacles, including a 14-foot-by-7-foot portable storage unit, will be placed outside the County complex, allowing the public to make 'no contact' drops throughout the holiday season. Staff will routinely collect items and 'Pack the Pod' before delivering food to pantries;

**Monetary donations.** For those who prefer to limit their public travels to make a physical donation, the campaign this year will accept monetary contributions as an alternative. Funds raised will be used to purchase food items through local suppliers to distribute among local pantries. Checks should be made payable to 'Sussex County Council' and mailed to Sussex County Government, c/o County Administration, PO Box 589, Georgetown, DE 19947. Donors should note 'Caroling on The Circle/Pack the Pod food drive' in the memo line.

In 2019, the food drive collected more

than 28,000 items for various organizations. Since its inception in the 1980s, Caroling on The Circle has raised more than 750,000 items for local families.

Lawson said to reach a similar level this year, the county will have to depend heavily on the general public and the business community to dig a little deeper in their cupboards and pockets. Every item collected and dollar raised will go to support families in Sussex County.

"We know these are hard times, we know what the pandemic has done to many of our great small businesses and our friends and neighbors," he said. "That's why it's imperative we do everything we can to pull together, to give a little more for those with a little less, to Keep Sussex Strong. I am confident that giving spirit that we all know and love here in Sussex County will shine bright this holiday season."

For more information, visit [www.sussexcountyside.gov/food-drive](http://www.sussexcountyside.gov/food-drive).

## Holiday Gifts for Delaware Children

To kick off the holiday season, DNREC Natural Resources Police are teaming up with the U.S. Marine Corps Reserve Toys for Tots program to provide toys as gifts for children in local communities.

The U.S. Marine Corps Reserve Toys for Tots program collects new, unwrapped toys suitable for boys and girls of all ages and distributes those toys as Christmas gifts to less fortunate children in communities nationwide.

Toys will be accepted through Friday,

Dec. 11 at the following drop-off locations with Toys for Tots donation boxes, with donors required to wear masks and practice social distancing when dropping off toys:

- All Delaware State Park offices statewide, including the Brandywine Zoo, Monday through Friday, 8 a.m. to 4 p.m.
- Natural Resources Police office in Sussex County at 23530 Campbell Circle, Georgetown, Monday through Friday, 8:30 a.m. to 4 p.m.
- Environmental Crimes Unit offices at 715 Grantham Lane, New Castle
- DNREC Richardson & Robbins Building, 89 Kings Highway, Dover, Monday through Friday, 8 a.m. to 4 p.m.
- Various locations and events throughout the state attended by Natural Resources Police officers.

For more information, or for the dates and locations of upcoming events where toys can be donated, contact officers with DNREC's three Natural Resources Police units:

- Master Cpl. Andy Manning, Environmental Crimes Unit, [andrew.manning@delaware.gov](mailto:andrew.manning@delaware.gov), 302-739-9401
- Sgt. Brooke Mitchell, Division of Fish and Wildlife, [brooke.mitchell@delaware.gov](mailto:brooke.mitchell@delaware.gov), 302-739-9913
- Cpl. David Redgraves, Delaware State Parks, [david.redgraves@delaware.gov](mailto:david.redgraves@delaware.gov), 302-272-3534

For more information, visit [toysfortots.org](http://toysfortots.org). To donate toys locally or make local monetary donations online, visit your county web page: New Castle, Kent or Sussex.

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# How to create a durable gingerbread house

Gingerbread cookies and houses are one of the many symbols of the holiday season, alongside Christmas trees and twinkling lights. In fact, few confections symbolize the holidays more so than gingerbread.

Many a child (or a child at heart) has spent hours carefully trying to create decorative gingerbread houses. Although gingerbread recipes span various cultures, gingerbread houses originated in 16th century Germany. The fairy tale “Hansel and Gretel” helped solidify the popularity of gingerbread, which became part of Christmas traditions.

Even though gingerbread houses can be

fun to make, there’s no denying it can be exacting work — especially for those who strive for perfection. Prepackaged kits attempt to take some of the guesswork out of the equation, but those who are crafting from scratch can employ these tips as they build their gingerbread houses.

- Go for form and not flavor. Few gingerbread houses ever get eaten, so focus on finding a dough that will bake up rock hard as opposed to one that tastes good.
- Get the right icing texture. Pastry artist Catherine Beddall says royal icing is the preferred “glue” to adhere gingerbread pieces. Beddall says icing should be thick like peanut butter and not runny.



## How to involve kids with holiday baking

The holiday season is steeped in tradition. Many holiday traditions are centered around food, with much of the focus on all of the decadent treats and desserts taking center stage at many family gatherings.

Many parents hope to involve their children in as many family holiday traditions as they can. Holiday baking is one kid-friendly tradition, and parents can make it even more so by taking a few simple steps before they get started.

- Purchase kid-friendly baking equipment. Bakers rely on lots of tools to make cookies, cakes and other delicacies. That equipment is even available in kids’ sizes. Kids may be more excited about baking if they have their own equipment, and such

gear also can make it easier for them to lend a hand. A spatula made for youngsters can make it easier for kids to move cookies from a baking sheet to a platter, while colorful measuring cups and their own whisk can excite youngsters about baking.

- Plan ahead. Seasoned bakers know that it’s imperative to have the right supplies, including ingredients, on hand before beginning a baking session. That’s even more necessary when baking with kids, who might not be as patient as moms and dads hope if a baking session has to be paused to run to the store for a missing

- Mind the dough. Do not roll out the gingerbread dough too thin or it may become brittle after being cooked. Always cut out shapes before the gingerbread is baked. Let the baked pieces sit overnight to cool completely before using them to build.
- Patience is key. Allow the icing to dry for at least a couple of hours after adhering each piece and before moving and handling the house, says Beddall. Work in stages so that individual items can be decorated and allowed to dry. Then the walls can be put together, followed by the roof pieces.
- Kids likely will need help. Children

may not have the patience or steadiness to handle complete gingerbread construction. They can decorate the separate pieces of the house while the components are laying flat, which is easier for kids. Adults can do the main assembly later on.

- Utilize a template. Free-handing may not be easy. Cut out templates using cardboard or posterboard for various gingerbread pieces.

One of the most important tips is to have fun. Don’t take gingerbread house making too seriously as a novice. Rather, enjoy the experience and the centuries-old tradition.

Continued on page 17B

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# Forrest in Seaford offers respite from tension, stress

By Carol Kinsley

If the tension and stress of dealing with COVID-19 has gotten to you, head to Forrest in Seaford for a relaxing massage or mani/pedi pampering. After the year we've had, you deserve it!

Forrest was just an idea, a vision, in 2017, developed as Ashley Sharp of Bridgeville traveled all over the country to educate and inspire users of essential oils. Sharp wanted to offer everyone in her community a unique opportunity to experience the benefits of a luxurious environment, plant-based products and consistent massage therapy.

She shared the idea with her mother, Nina Backes, and sister, Jenna Beard, who are now partners in the new business. Early this year, they found suitable property and began complete renovations. New flooring and lighting was installed. A patio and landscaping add to the ambiance.

It wasn't easy to open a spa in the middle of a pandemic. The original start date was planned for March, but such businesses were then shut down by the governor.

"We just kept waiting," said Beard. "We try to follow all the restrictions and keep everyone safe."

Forrest opened in August, with certified, licensed professional therapists and nail technicians.

A variety of massage treatments are available, using different essential oils ac-

cording to individual needs. "The Restore" includes a 90-minute deep tissue full-body massage to restore tired, sore muscles, a cool eye mask, gentle stretching and warm towels. Copaiba essential oil, derived from a Brazilian tree, reduces inflammation while peppermint and thyme oils soothe muscles.

Melt away tension with "The Rest," a 90-minute full-body light pressure massage with emphasis on the face and scalp for ultimate relaxation. Black spruce, lavender, and frankincense essential oils blend together to balance the body and calm the mind. Hot stones, warm towels and a warm eye mask ease stress and tension.

Table massages include a traditional Swedish massage, prenatal massage, raindrop style or a massage designed to target headache and sinus relief. A variety of enhancements can be added to table massages, from CBD muscle cream, hot stones, peppermint foot treatment or hydrating body butter.

Choose a seated massage, which you can enjoy fully clothed in a special chair that gives your therapist access to your sacral-lumbar region. Unwind for 30 minutes with a Swedish massage and aromatherapy that will let you return to work feeling refreshed.

Get a full manicure or pedicure, or just a touch-up, according to your needs and time constraints.

## Kids

Continued from page 16B

ingredient or to dig out some tools from the back of the pantry. Plan ahead by setting everything out and assembling all the necessary ingredients the night before you plan to bake.

- Delegate wisely. Young kids may want to do everything mom and dad do, but baking is a delicate science that requires careful attention to detail and a strict adherence to recipes. So it's important that parents delegate wisely when involving children in holiday baking. Whisking, stirring and topping off cookies with frosting and sprinkles are fun, kid-friendly tasks.

- Add some fun foods to the menu. If you plan to bake holiday cookies, purchase kid-friendly holiday cookie cutters before your baking session so youngsters have as much fun as possible. Kids may have more fun if they get to make Santa Claus, Frosty or Rudolph cookies.

- Make a mess. Don't be afraid to get a little messy when baking with children. Moms and dads may love a clean kitchen,



but kids tend to have more fun in the kitchen when things get a little messy. Douse each other with a little flour and make a joke of things if some ingredients find their way onto the counter or the floor instead of into your mixing bowl.

Parents can make the holiday baking that much more fun by letting their kids pitch in this year.

A special seasonal massage is available for the winter, using a special body butter made in-house using peppermint, orange and pine essential oils.

"Our gift certificates feature this winter message," Beard said. "Gift certificates are available in any amount. Come in, get pampered, and give a certificate to pamper someone else. It makes a perfect Christ-

mas gift."

Forrest, located at 411 North Shipley Street, is open Tuesday through Friday from 8 a.m. to 6 p.m. and Saturday, 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. Call (302) 990-5073 for an appointment, or email [relax@spaforrest.com](mailto:relax@spaforrest.com). Visit [spaforrest.com](http://spaforrest.com) for a complete list of services available.



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Steps for hanging holiday lights outdoors

Express season’s greetings with thoughtful décor

It begins to look a lot like Christmas when twinkling lights brighten up homes inside and out. Few things liven up the season more than holiday decorations, particularly clear and colored lights.

Prior to taking out the lights, ladder and thermos of coffee to get you through the job, it’s important to note that there are right and wrong ways to hang holiday lights.

- Sketch out your plan. Start by taking a few photos of your home from various vantage points. Print out the photos on regular paper so that you can draw your lighting arrangement and decoration placement right on the photos to see how things will look.
- Measure the area. Use a measuring tape to roughly measure the width and height of eaves or other areas of the home where you plan to hang light strands. Calculate how much overall footage you will need so you can purchase all of the lights in one shopping trip.
- Test the lights first. Plug in the lights to be sure all strands are operational.
- Begin where the lights will be plugged in. Start where the lights will be plugged in and then work your way around the house.
- Add to shrubs and trees. Lights also can adorn shrubs and trees. Lowes Home Improvement says a good rule of thumb is 100 lights for every 11/2-feet of tree or shrub to cover. A 6-foot evergreen needs at least 400 lights for a basic level of lighting.
- Exercise extreme caution. Accidents



can happen when stringing lights. While many professionals use harnesses, homeowners are not always so cautious. Utilize a spotter to hold the ladder and make sure things are safe. Never set foot on a wet or icy roof. Do not attempt to string lights in inclement weather.

- Know the wattage. Each outlet can generally hold about 17 amps or 1,870 watts if the lights are not sharing a circuit with another outlet, says Parrish. Plan

The holiday season is upon us, and it’s time to express a heartfelt “Season’s Greetings” with thoughtful décor that’s sure to put you in the holiday spirit. Whether you’re hosting family and friends, or taking your holiday on the road this year, you’ll certainly find all the festive details you are looking for to give your home the warmth and glow that makes this season bright at Lindenmere Market.

Looking to make an entryway statement? Browse dozens of beautiful holiday flags in home and garden sizes or our sweeping garlands and bountiful wreaths. Don’t stop there! Pull guests in from the cold with the smell of Tree Trek, Christmas Bliss or Cup of Cheer, features of our new Bridgewater candle line known for their contributions to the Rice Bowls organization that works tirelessly to provide food for children in need. Scandinavian,

accordingly to ensure you have enough power to handle your lights.

- Use plastic clips. Plastic light clips hang strands along eaves and gables. They’re specially designed for hanging lights over the gutters. Some slip under the edges of roof shingles. Lights can be hung without staples or nails, which can damage exterior surfaces. Plastic zip-ties or deck clips also can attach lights along a

handrail.

- Use only outdoor extension cords. Be sure the extension cords you use are designed specifically for outdoor use.
- Use a timer. Timers can make sure the lights turn on and off even if homeowners forget.

Once lights have been safely strung, sit back and enjoy the splendor of a well-decorated house.

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# Holiday gifts to spark home improvement ideas

People have spent more time at home in 2020 than they likely have in years past. This has provided homeowners with plenty of time to ponder potential upgrades to their homes. After taking inventory of their lifestyles, surroundings and furnishings, people have embarked on construction projects or home interior design renovations in record numbers.

Holiday gifts that cater to projects around the house are likely to be highly valued this holiday season. Here are some ideas for home improvement-related gifts.

- **Home improvement retailer gift card:** Home improvement centers are one-stop shopping for do-it-yourselfers. To help offset the cost of supplies, gift-givers can give a gift card to a neighborhood hardware store.

- **Magazine subscription:** There are plenty of ideas on the internet, but a subscription to a home remodeling or interior design magazine puts inspiration right in homeowners' hands. Pages can be marked or cut out and used on idea boards.

- **Tools and supplies:** Homeowners just starting out may benefit from the basics. Stores often sell starter tool kits that can be used in home improvement-themed baskets. Experienced DIYers may have a special tool in mind that is outside their budget right now, like a chop saw or cordless power drill. Purchasing one of these items can help projects move along more smoothly.

- **Expert consultation:** Who can't use a little help with their home remodeling efforts? Give the gift of a consultation from



an interior designer or professional contractor to help complete plans that may be a little out of reach for the average DIYer.

- **Big-ticket item:** Some friends and family members may want to pool their resources and offer loved ones an over-the-top gift. This can include a backyard playset for children, a storage shed, a pool installation, or even a new appliance package. Gift ideas are endless and only

limited by budget.

- **Room re-do:** All it may take is some new linens or accents to transform a room. From throw pillows to curtains to wall art, give the gift of an easy room makeover.

Riding the momentum of increased home improvement projects from the past several months, holiday shoppers can choose home-related gift ideas to keep the projects and ideas flowing.

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