



Your Award Winning Hometown Newspaper

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Gazette Christmas Shopping Trip # 3

By Mary Masonholder Wilson

Have you ever wanted to go shopping in such places as Los Angeles, CA; Chicago ILL; or even another country, such as Japan? However, you knew it was an impossibility. Well, weep no more. You can shop at these exotic places without even leaving town. Yes, right here in Columbus Junction you can find goods from these places. Melanie DeVore, one of the vendors at Pride of Iowa Marketplace, has a friend in Japan who has been sending her fabric. It is beautiful fabric—my favorite is a black background with subtle floral colorings in white and shades of purple. Melanie made this fabric into potholders, but they are pieces of art that could be hung on a wall or used on a table to make a beautiful trivet. Then go across the street to Espuella De Oro and the owner here lives in Chicago, ILL and brings many items from there plus ships in items from Los Angeles, CA.

We have a wide variety of businesses for you to visit today and many ideas for your Christmas shopping or shopping every day.

Economart (113 E. Walnut): You may be used to going to the Economart for groceries, but did you ever think of getting a gift there? First of all, they have something new—a gift card that is reusable. It is just like a gift card from anywhere else. You put an amount in it, say \$100, and the person just takes the card in each time and swipes it until the full amount is gone. What a wonderful idea for anyone, but especially for those who may be short on cash. The Economart also puts together special fruit baskets that can be ordered. They have lots of candy, or you could put together a basket of meat for the receiver to use or freeze. Another new item at the store is collectible beer steins. Budweiser has made several steins with all of them shown on the side of the box and some people would enjoy collecting these. Don't forget the Economart has the ingredients for your holiday meals and baking.

Dollar General (225 Access Dr.): Naming everything in this store would be impossible. But certain items caught my eye as good gifts. They have picture frames, candles (some are flameless LED candles), and perfume fragrance sets. They also have a new line for the coffee lover. They have mugs, cups, bowls, place mats, dishes, etc. that say cappuccino, etc. in cute and colorful printings. This place is full of toys and many small items for stocking stuffers. They have lots of candy, Christmas gift-wrap, and decorations. They have in-home decorative waterfalls, jewelry organizers, and calming votive candles with pebbles in a set. There are a few electronics such as an e Reader and digital cameras. You just have to look around to see it all.

Fandango's Erika (223 Main St.): There are some beautiful items in this store and some of them too are imported. They have many formal dresses for special occasions and dresses and other items that could be used or worn to a quincenera. They have leather coats and Western Wear. They have cowboy boots in "regular" colors and other colors—my favorite were the lime green cowboy boots. They had coats, jeans, tops, belts, shoes, and jewelry. John told me that he and Donna got some bracelets here as First Communion gifts, and the girls loved them.

Paul Duncan Verizon—Shop here for your cell phone needs. Paul has both phones and phone plans. What a great gift for anyone!

Plants and Things (208 Main Street): It is just fun to go into this shop. There are so many beautiful and interesting items. As always, there are flowers. Wouldn't it be great to send someone a beautiful

floral arrangement for their table centerpiece. Or order one of the poinsettias that bring glamour to any home. Plants can be kept year around and are both fun and healthy to have. There are so many other items you must go in. To name a few: wine, jewelry (lots of "bling" here), picture frames, Willow tree ornaments, tablets, potpourri, Isabel Bloom statues, candles, and decorations for Christmas and keepsakes. One of my favorites here are the framed pictures of the swinging bridge. There are other decorative wall items to spruce up a house. Check out the picture taken in this shop and see just how much is in this store.

92 Roadhouse (Highway 92): This restaurant is a favorite of many and gift certificates are available. There is much good food here, but I give special mention to some of their evening specials: Wednesday—8 oz. sirloin; Thursday—taco bar: all you can eat; Friday—catfish and prime rib; and Saturday—marinated pork chops. Their bread pudding dessert is a real taste pleaser!

Pride of Iowa Marketplace (211 Main Street): There are 17 vendors in this shop and the variety and creativity is amazing. As you can see in the picture, John and Mary are modeling some of them. John has on a knitted turtleneck that can be pulled up over the ears or head if the weather calls for it. Mary is cuddling in a "quillow", which is a quilt that has a pocket at the bottom for your feet, or the quilt can be folded and stored in this pocket and it now becomes a pillow. Wow! Then there are quilted squares that look like they should hold a pillow—instead you fill it with your pajamas and put it on top your bed to look like a pillow! All items are handmade, and some new ones include covers for Ipads and Kindle readers. There are also noodles, granola, dog treats, jewelry, baby items, wood crafts, aprons, bread mixes and soups, soap, and lots and lots of candles, lotions, scent warmers, and so on. Another favorite of mine are the leaves made out of cement. They are painted and the veins are usually a different color: great idea for the nature lover. Lots to find here!

Max's (on Highway 70 in Conesville): This is a restaurant in Conesville in the former El Charro's building. They serve breakfast, lunch, and dinner. During the week they open at 7:30 A.M. and close at 11:00 P.M. On Friday and Saturday they stay open until 2:00 A.M. and Mexican food is served both those days. Sunday hours are 2 P.M. until 10 P.M. with no breakfast served that morning. Hamburgers and tenderloins are a real favorite. After the first of the year, on Wednesday's, senior citizens will be given a reduced rate at lunch and card playing will take place in the afternoons. Gift certificates are available.

Espuela De Oro (223 Main Street): As mentioned, the owner lives in Chicago and brings much merchandise from there; however, she is only open on weekends, so plan around this. She also orders from Los Angeles, CA, and you can let her know if you have a special request. She showed me a special order for a quincenera that was done in white and shocking pink. It was beautiful. I was surprised to find she has wedding gowns and dresses for the mother of the bride. Can you imagine buying your wedding dress in Columbus Junction? Think about it. She also has clothing for all ages, jewelry, and accessories. There is a large inventory and much to see!

CJ Auto Supply: Car Quest (75 E. Walnut): For the car lover in your life, Pat Rees, local owner, suggested some gift ideas: vehicle jack stands and drive-on ramps for working on your cars; also trailer light kits, specialty tools, tow straps, spray paint for cars, oil, grease for boat trailers,



oil absorbent, and much more. Sockling stuffers could be snow and ice scrapers. Get ice melt here too.

This concludes our shopping trip for this week. We hope you have gotten some great ideas. You may think things are more expensive in CJ, but give these businesses a chance and compare. Also if we want businesses in CJ, we need to buy from them or they will be gone. Then think

of the gas money and stress you'll save by shopping in town. What fun to get a group of friends together, hit these shops, and eat out!

Next week will be our last shopping trip. If your business has not been contacted by Wednesday, December 7, then we forgot you. If so and you want to be included, call the Gazette at 728-2413 and remind us, we want to include everyone.

THREE GREAT HOLIDAY SHOPPING AREAS.



Don't forget to bring a canned good or goods to Family Night and leave it off at any participating Family Night business. The food will be used to help replenish local food pantries.

Briefly -

Blue Christmas Service

Whether you are feeling blue, have lost a loved one to death, divorce, or illness, or are unable to recover your health, job, or identity as you once knew it, the Blue Christmas Service provides a coming-together of people who understand that life has seasons of sadness, and that grief needs room to breathe in safe places. Please join us on Sunday, December 11 at 3:00 pm at the Columbus Junction United Methodist Church for an Ecumenical Blue Christmas Service for all those who have suffered loss of any kind.

Family Night Soup Supper in Columbus City

The City of Columbus City will hold its Family Night soup supper on Wednesday, December 14, 2011 from 5-7 p.m. at the Columbus City Mason Lodge.

Christmas Cantata at CU United Presbyterian Church

Everyone is invited to "Shine on Us," a cantata for Christmas, to be presented at the Columbus Junction United Presbyterian Church by the Church's Adult Choir (and Friends), on Sunday, December 18, 7:00 p.m. The cantata will be directed by Jay Hauenstein; accompanied by Jill Bowen; narrated by Rev. Faye Fedlam.

Christmas Potluck at Colonial Manor

Please join us for a Christmas potluck on Friday, December 16th, 2011 at Noon in the Resident Dining Room. Meat, rolls, beverages and table service will be provided. Please bring a dish of your choice to share. We hope you are able to celebrate with us.

Early Childhood Board to meet

The Des Moines/Louisa Early Childhood Iowa Area Board will be meeting at the First United Presbyterian Church, 801 Middle Street, Mediapolis today, Wednesday, December 7, 2011 at 10:00 a.m.

Elvis to be at Colonial Manor

You are invited to attend an "Evening with Elvis," presented by Junior Talley of Monmouth, Illinois. Be sure to mark your calendar for Tuesday, December 13th at 7 p.m. in the Resident Dining Room. We look forward to seeing you.

Conservation Board to meet

The Louisa County Conservation Special Board will hold a meeting on Monday, December 12, 2011, at 5:30 p.m. at the Louisa County Conservation Office.

Legion Christmas Potluck set

Attention: American Legion members, Auxiliary, and Sons of the Legion and families, don't forget our annual Christmas potluck and party on Tuesday, December 13th. Please bring a covered dish, your table service, also a \$5 gift for the exchange. Dinner will start at 6 p.m. Hope to see you there, we always have a good time.

Blood Checks at Senior Center

There will be glucose, cholesterol, and blood pressure checks at the Columbus Community Senior Center on Wednesday, December 14, 2011 from 9 a.m. till 11 a.m. Stay healthy for the holidays and have your blood checked.

Shellbark Club to meet

The Shellbark Club will meet at the home of Larry and Judy Prior for a potluck dinner on Thursday, December 8th at 11:30 a.m. Please bring a dish to pass. Election of officers will be held.

United Methodist Women to hold Christmas Potluck

The United Methodist Women will meet in the lovely home of Marilyn Thomas for their Christmas potluck on Thursday, December 8th at 6 p.m. Installation of 2012 officers and special remembrance will be held. Plan to attend this holiday season!

Columbus Day 50 Year Souvenir cups available at the Gazette

Souvenir 50 Year Columbus Day coffee cups will be available at the Columbus Gazette on Family Night. A limited number of cups remain and they will be available at no charge to the first 12 people who sign up for the Family Night Treasure Hunt and return their completed forms after the hunt