



JOSETTE PLANK

7 ways to stop being a holiday Grinch

Every year, the December holidays bring out too many Grinches and too few Santas, am I right? And at times, the stress and pressures of shopping and decorating and being constantly commanded to “Have yourself a merry little Christmas” only make you feel like the biggest Grinch of all.

The holidays can be a hassle. When it feels as if your Grinchy heart is two sizes too small, well, first of all, you should call your doctor, because chest pain should never be ignored. But if the sight of mistletoe and candy canes makes you want to slug an elf, don't despair. Try a few of these handy-dandy tips for resuscitating your holiday spirit. Maybe you, too, can enjoy this most wonderful time of the year.

1. Turn off your computer.

Half the people on the Internet are bragging about their perfect partners, beautiful children, gleaming homes and fulfilling jobs. The other half are cranky, pushy know-it-alls who aren't happy until everyone else is arguing, exercising and not eating bacon or ice cream.

In the real world, far more people are far less perfect, and these imperfect people

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WISH LIST 2015

PennLive/The Patriot-News is helping you help area nonprofits; not only for the holidays, but throughout the year. Items needed range from the small and inexpensive — a bag of cat litter, paper towels, canned goods — to pricier items such as computers.

Some wishes won't cost more than your time. Please read the list of wishes and consider adding one (or more) organizations to your gift list this year.

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MAN YOUR BOTTLE STATIONS



How to have a better bar experience at home

BY MICHELLE LOCKE | The Associated Press

The cocktail renaissance has transformed happy hours across the country. Now, it's time to raise your home bar game. No more slapping a bottle of bottom-shelf vodka and a six-pack of tonic on your kitchen counter and calling it a party. This holiday season, you're going to master the fine art of the better home bar experience. But before you start stressing over your holiday get-together — or wondering if your budget will stretch to a butler — here are a few tips on creating a stress-free soiree.

SIPPING SPOTS

Open bars are for weddings. To keep your event manageable, limit your guests to a handful of drinks, and let them do the mixology work.

Liz Brusca, spokeswoman for San Francisco's Anchor Distilling Co., which makes and imports liquors, suggests starting by picking a handful of cocktails to serve, shopping for and prepping the ingredients, then arranging each in its own location.

For a recent event at San Francisco's Gotham Club, she set out four cocktail stations, each equipped with the tools, glasses, liquor and mixers needed for one drink. When appropriate, she included a framed recipe.

Not only does this approach help you buy only what you need, it also gives your guests something to do — and talk about — during those awkward first moments of acclimating to a room full of strangers.

So, if you've decided to have guests make their own French 75s, you'd get Champagne, a good gin, lemon juice, sugar or simple syrup, depending which recipe you



ERIC RISBERG, The Associated Press

A Negroni cocktail station is set up at a holiday party in San Francisco. The beverage stations, once created, mean that guests can help themselves, while the hosts don't need to lift a finger and can enjoy the party without refilling glasses all night.

favor, and a twist of lemon for the garnish. Add glassware, and you're good to go.

Even simpler, a whiskey station with different takes on the brown

spirit — think scotch, bourbon and rye — high-quality ice, glasses and water droppers (adding a drop of

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Local artists offer twist on traditional gifts

BY JEWEL WICKER | jwicker@pennlive.com

If you struck out in the gift department during Black Friday shopping, no worries. We have a few ideas. Here are five items from midstate artists that would make great gifts this holiday. All of the artists' works are for sale at The Millworks, 340 Verbeke St., Harrisburg, which houses a restaurant, bar and art gallery.

IF YOU GO

- » The Millworks, 340 Verbeke St., Harrisburg
- » Hours: 11 a.m.-10 p.m.
- » Info: 717-695-4888, millworksharrisburg.com



HARRISBURG ART

If you have a family member or friend that is in love with Harrisburg architecture, Paul V Studios is selling photographs of popular bridges, buildings and scenery within the city. Prices vary. Much of the artwork can be bought online or by visiting Suite 211 at The Millworks. Call Paul at 717-877-2244 for store hours.



CLAY POTTERY

Erin Dean has several items from her pottery collection for sale. The clay cups cost \$20 and are in Suite 212. Visit millworksharrisburg.com/artist/erin-dean for photos of her work. For more details, including when her studio is open, contact her at 717-802-2960 or erinleedean@gmail.com. A hostess can let customers into her studio and help them to purchase her pottery throughout the week.



COMIC PAINTINGS

Modern pop-infusion artist Gianna Venio reimagines popular comic book art using sand, gel, molding pastes, oils and acrylics. An original copy of the art can be made by Venio for \$325, but she is also selling prints for \$25. Her work is for sale in Suite 212, and she is typically there 6 to 9 p.m. Wednesdays through Saturdays. A hostess can let customers into the studio and help them purchase art. For details, contact her at gveno678@gmail.com.



HANDMADE 'CRAZY' QUILTS

Tami Bitner is selling her handmade “crazy” quilts for \$65 each. This quilt will make a great gift for family members or friends who are looking for something cute and cozy to keep them warm during the winter. Bitner is usually at The Millworks during the evenings on Fridays and Saturdays. For details on her art and specific hours, contact her at 717-566-1744 or tamibitnerart@gmail.com.



SMOKE-FIRED DOLL HEADS

Ceramic sculptor Rachele Lowe is selling her smoke-fired doll heads in Suite 212 at The Millworks. Individual doll heads are \$60 each. A set of three can be purchased with a wooden display for \$250. For hours and details about her art, contact Rachele Lowe at rachele.lowe@gmail.com.

