

ting them. That is where our local artists and pop-up shops come in. Since the ad hoc venues literally just pop up, here are several places to look for them and get going. Lots of pop-ups use last-minute signs on street corners, and many are pointing the way online and we can search for them just by remembering to use the words “local pop up shops” and your town to zero in on them. Perusing Facebook, nextdoor.com, and even the Etsy and eBay sites offers a glimpse at what is available, and you can ask loved ones and clients for hints or wish lists to help support your search.

One of the best ways to figure this out is to simply ask. Either the personal gift or the corporate gift can be more meaningful and appreciated, so asking what the person’s hobbies or likes are will be appreciated. In art circles, we often help clients create a wish list for a business as well as for spouses, family and friends. This time of year, we can host gift parties with the wish list hints as central to the event while having fun shopping for creative gifts such as art, cards, jewelry, pottery, etc. Wish lists are a thoughtful way to help family and friends get thinking and enjoy their efforts to please.

And, add the personal touch of handmade cards; you can buy them from local artists and add a handwritten note to share your thoughts. Most galleries, many stores, and every artist I know make greeting cards for sale. At my own pop-ups, I even plan the size of the artwork and packaging to fit easily for shipping—so convenient for the patron that that aspect can make the sale.

The impact on the community of buying local, especially with local artists, can be immense. Of course, the artists generate the artifacts and maintain the quality, but the buyers are supporting this and so much more. Buying local creates community, personal interaction and, satisfying experiences and interactions right at home. Buying locally is not limited to giving locally, either, and a quality local gift has tremendous cultural value worldwide. Our community artists and shops participate in the national Small Business Saturday event, too.

The quality of the gift represents the quality of the relationship across all cultures, and that factor is not as much related to money spent as it is to thoughtfulness and appropriateness. And, it’s possible

business gifts are tax deductible up to \$25 per person for the tax year, but not the wrapping or shipping, so consider delivering the gift personally if possible. That benefits you by keeping you top-of-the-mind with the clients.

Shoppers now care as much about the shopping experience as the gifts they get, according to auditors PricewaterhouseCoopers. This puts holiday markets and small-business owners at an advantage. The statistics for dollars spent shopping on Small Business Saturday may also surprise. According to a study from Civic Economics in Michigan and data from Forbes and PricewaterhouseCoopers:

- If you spend \$100 at a local business, roughly \$68 stays in your local economy. If you spend the same amount at a large business, only \$43 stays in the local economy.
- Americans spent big on Small Business Saturday 2015, topping \$16.2 billion, a 14 percent increase from the previous year.

Our world is increasingly distant and technical, so the human touch of handmade gifts and thoughtful design is tremendously popular now (a fact proven by data for

Etsy and Amazon Handmade). Happily, local artists, craftspeople and small businesses help us define our community and create a powerful social sensibility, an infrastructure known as “love of place.”

As new pop-up shops, holiday markets, church bazaars, and trunk shows spring up all over town and in our favorite local brick and mortar shops, our local artists and craftspeople have an advantage over any big box store for thoughtful, beautiful, and fun gifts. I typed in a Facebook search, “local holiday pop up shops” and got a top hit for our local Tri-Lakes.

This season, do seek out and visit these tiny venues of local artists and shops, for you are keeping the dollars local and circulating in our community, a fact that strengthens every dollar you spend with the little guys in town. Besides, it’s such fun to meet the artists and you might just get some tasty treats when you go.

Janet Sellers is a local fine artist, writer, and art teacher. She has public art and sculptures in many Colorado cities, local drawing and painting classes for all ages, and welcomes your art questions. She can be reached at janetsellers@ocn.me.

Snapshots of Our Community

TLWC Harvesting Hope, Sep. 22

Right: On Sept. 22, the Tri-Lakes Women’s Club (TLWC) held its new fall fundraiser called Harvesting Hope. Numbers tell some of the story—17 food vendors, 13 beverage vendors, 10 celebrity guests, 299 sold tickets, 200 silent auction baskets, 140 home-baked harvest breads by their very own “Happy Harvesters,” and over 350 people in attendance. The Ponderosa Room at Spruce Mountain Ranch in Larkspur was transformed into a fall landscape. The music, line dancing, and square dancing added entertainment. Donations that made the evening unforgettable included those from Front St. Square, The Wine Seller, PieZanos, Eagle Engraving Awards & Trophies, and Purple Mountain Jewelry. The first Harvesting Hope event with so much TLWC and community support added \$23,000 to the TLWC’s granting fund. All proceeds benefit qualified nonprofit service organizations and public schools in the Tri-Lakes area. *Photo courtesy of Tri-Lakes Women’s Club.*



Poverty Simulator, Sep. 27

Right: Tri-Lakes Cares, in coordination with the Pikes Peak United Way, hosted a Poverty Simulator event Sept. 27 at Lewis-Palmer School District 38’s administration building. The simulation enables participants to view poverty from different angles and then discuss the potential for change within local communities. It’s designed to create a broader awareness among community members.

As part of the simulation, volunteers took on the role of family members trying to make ends meet and had to try to get to the bank, interfaith services, food-arama, mortgage company, pawn shop, school, etc. in a four-week period covered in an hour. Comments afterward about the frustration, trouble with transportation and child care, survival mode instead of parenting, and tension showed how much volunteers immersed themselves in this experience. United Way will offer this simulation to any large group that is interested. **Pictured above:** Kelly Bryant, left, Tri-Lakes Cares’ volunteer coordinator, played the role of the banker. *Photo by Lisa Hatfield.*



RMMA Concert, Oct. 1



Left: On Oct. 1, the Rocky Mountain Music Alliance held its 10th Anniversary Season Concert at Tri-Lakes United Methodist Church. The audience heard the Mozart Violin Sonata, Ravel-Tzigane, and Prokofiev Sonata No. 1 in f minor performed by Geoff Herd, violin, and Zahari Metchkov, piano. See www.rmmaonline.org. *Photo by Barbara Taylor.*

Phil Keaggy at TLCA, Sep. 30

Right: On Sept. 30, guitar virtuoso Phil Keaggy entertained a sold-out audience at the Tri-Lakes Center for the Arts (TLCA). Keaggy’s musical career formally started with the Youngstown, Ohio, based band, Glass Harp in 1968. After five years in this influential trio, he turned toward Christian-oriented music for the next 40-plus years.

On this evening, he blended songs from his Christian-oriented albums and a number of instrumentals, along with songs as George Harrison’s Here Comes the Sun. For any guitar player, a night watching Keaggy masterfully utilize the instrument and draw out every conceivable note with clarity and variable speed up and down the neck is an opportunity to gain inspiration for how the guitar can and should be played. Upcoming events at the TLCA are at www.trilakesarts.org. *Photo by David Futey.*

