



117 E. 5th Street, Marysville, Ohio—less than a block from the center of town!
Exit off of U.S. 33 at Delaware Avenue, where it says, “Historical District,” head to the west and about a mile later, you’ll be smack-dab in the middle of town. Park on the street or behind the buildings to your left in the municipal parking lot, all the parking is free.

Do You Want Wonderful Holidays?

It’s not too early to start planning. And first part of that is to sit down and use the old noggin. Close your eyes and think back to the very best Thanksgiving and Christmas you’ve ever had, go back as far as you can remember, when you were a little tyke stumbling around in footie pajamas or a flannel nightie. Think about the people around you, the gifts you received, the foods you enjoyed, the little details that make you remember and smile.

For that’s where it is, that’s where the “wonderful” comes in. The little details. One friend remembers receiving a gift that was beautifully done up in a wrapping paper that had her favorite toy printed on it—Barbie—and a big, fancy bow, and a shiny gift tag. She opened it slowly, just enjoying the first gift she ever received that was so carefully attended to. She can’t remember what was inside! Just how beautiful and enjoyable the wrapping paper was to her.

When I was first married and working at Sears as a switchboard operator, my first husband was laid off, and seriously ill. The holidays were very “tight,” financially, and there was neither much food in the house nor enough money to have the heat on at a comfortable level. An older woman at work, Mary, working long into her retirement years, brought each of us girls in the switchboard room a small, recycled box, with five or six chocolate covered cherries in it, laying in a clean paper napkin, with a recycled folded stick-on bow on top. That gift meant a great deal to me, knowing that Mary was even worse off than we were, sacrificing a box of candy she had received, sharing it so we could all have some, packaging it up so it was as attractive as possible with the resources that she had. My husband and I remembered that little gift for years.

Think about those elders no longer with us, special dishes they prepared, the little wood puzzle they taught us to play with. The smell of cinnamon in the mulled cider and on the apple pie, the pretty dishes of cookies and treats. Remember ribbon candy, and licorice laces? How about the smell of a fresh wreath or Christmas tree? The way people’s doors start to jingle around the holiday, because they attach bells? Pretty cards drift in with the mail; holiday music catches your ear and you find yourself humming along. You think of more people to add to your list. You’re running out of butter every week, now that you’re baking cookies and breads more often!

I remember doing chores one Christmas Eve with Grandfather Max, and I sort of knew that Grandmother was putting the gifts under the tree while we were outside working. It was snapping cold that night, even with sensible clothing on, so we did the chores and then Max took me in by the woodstove in the barn workshop and we sat there on crates under a single dangling light bulb, and he said, “Okay, twenty questions.” I was allowed to ask twenty questions that had either a “yes” or “no” answer. I didn’t get very far, being unskilled at the game, but tried to figure out what he’d given Grandma for Christmas and if a particular Uncle was coming the next day for dinner with us. I still smile when I remember that half-hour of my Grandfather’s undivided attention, playing that game of words with me, sitting in that old barn with our knees and hands up close to the warm woodstove. I can close my eyes and remember the mixed smells of burning wood, neat-foot oil on the nearby harness, the bags of onions drying above tied to the beams. I think if you remember long and hard, you’ll realize the memories were made by playing with the gift, not the gift. By being in the midst of family and friends, not by what you were wearing at the time or the conveyance that got you there. The best memories are the simple ones. The ones you can freely create for yourself and others again.

Start planning well. Many of our friends would rather have a nice shared-dish dinner with us and a wander down memory lane beside a warm fire or cuddled on a couch under a throw, than another dustcatcher or kitchen gadget. Think about a shared pot of tea with a bit of cake, instead of goofy coffee mugs or car scenting tags. (continued on page 4)

Some Good News, and some Bad News

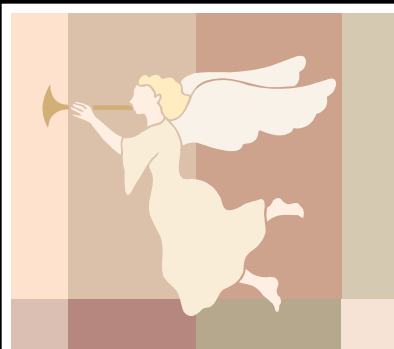
We’re sorry to announce that the PNP brick-and-mortar store will be closing on Christmas Eve for the last time. The astoundingly high electric and other utilities, not the rent from our kind landlord, was the real clincher, and downtown doesn’t seem to have as much traffic as it did back in the summertime. There are few things in life as sobering as opening an \$877 electric bill, that’s the truth.

We’ve found homes to donate the unwanted items that are left over, worthwhile charities that are all within a few blocks right here in town, so there won’t be any sales or discounts (our usual policy, sell at a good fair price, no gimmicks).

The suppliers, our farmers and those who helped us with sewing, were told a few weeks ago, so they could make other plans as soon as possible. We’re sorry, we know people are disappointed, but I did well enough spinning and sewing from home and taking my goods to the post office and mailing them off to people situated in stronger economic areas of the country. I’ve gotten in touch with four stores that carried my yarn and wool quilts, and have booked a convention for April for fiber kits and supplies. I’ll re-open my Etsy store, apronsrecycled, and we’ll put contact information onto my blog:

www.plainandpractical.typepad.com The facebook page will stay up for people to exchange useful information, so as long as there is interest and participation, it will be there.

Thank you to all the kind customers, new friends I’ve made here in Marysville, our shop neighbors who worked hard with us to help us get started. Many good things (and quite a few business lessons) resulted from our eight months here on 5th Street, and we are grateful to have met everyone who came across our threshold. Peace.



December 2011 Twelveth Month

S	M	T	W	TH	F	S
				1	2	3
4	5	6	7	8	9	10
11	12	13	14	15	16	17
18	19	20	21	22	23	24
25	26	27	28	29	30	31

December 21: Winter Solstice, Hanukkah
December 24th, Christmas Eve
December 25th, Christmas
December 26th, Kwanzaa

Full Moon: 10th
New Moon: 24th

Marysville Christmas Parade will be on December 4th from 2:00 to 3:00 pm.

Richwood Christmas Parade is December 3 from 4:00 to 5:00 pm

Tickets for "It's A Wonderful Life" are \$10.00 and \$8.00 for Seniors and Students. For more info call 937-209-1339.

We’ll have our charity cookie baking on December 14th, from 1:00-5:00ish, and December 21st, from 9 a.m. to ??? Done. We seem to have plenty of volunteers for both, but if you are walking by, do stop in and smell the gingersnaps and thank the folks doing all the hard work.

Reminder: Christmas Eve is on Saturday, December 24, and it’s our last day here at the PNP. We’ll be closing at 4 p.m.

Do You Want Wonderful Holidays, Con't from page one

Offer to do some chore for that older neighbor or friend. Watch some family kids one overnight so the young parents can be a romantic couple for a few hours. Be there to listen. Sit with the ill so caregivers can get a break, and the ill person gets a new conversationalist.

One friend was struggling after her divorce, the ex-husband took a job working under the table and wouldn't pay child support for their infant, and although she babysat other children and did some light housecleaning, she couldn't afford to stay in their apartment and had to move back in with her parents a few days shy of Christmas. Things had to be left at the curb and abandoned; she lived in a new town and had not made new friends yet to help. It was a time of loss, and she was filled with a sense of failure. Shoving herself and her baby into a spare bedroom at her parent's home, she sat on the bed and wept for days.

Her mother came and knocked at the bedroom door on Christmas Eve, and said, "I want to give you one of your Christmas gifts early." She opened the end of a tiny square box, and withdrew a plastic candle, plugged it in and set it on the window sill, and in a moment, the sensor realized it was night, and it glowed on. "What is that stupid thing for?" asked the depressed, unhappy daughter. "For the lost and wandering stranger, so he can find his way home." The daughter was struck silent, suddenly remembering the old Christmas tradition they had done together long ago. As a child, she had helped her mother go room to room in the old farmhouse they had lived in, placing battery-operated candles, one single one in each window to shine upon the darkness outside, visible from across the barren, snow-covered stubble on the cornfields.

"We're leaving for midnight service in ten minutes, you should come," offered the mother. They all four went, mother and baby too, and during that service the young mother rediscovered the meaning of Christmas. She remembered what really mattered, and began to reshape her life around Love, Peace, and Hope, rather than dwell upon her anger, resentment, and perceived shortcomings in life. Her parents were on either side of her, shoulder to shoulder in the crowded pew, and she knew that they loved her. Holding her sleeping infant in her arms, she saw a future stretching out before her, a purpose and a challenge, and was filled with His Strength as she was surrounded by the beautiful voices singing, "Whose Child Is This?" And she realized the stranger the candles in the windows beckoned to, was herself.

**Neither do men light a candle, and put it under a bushel, but on a candlestick; and it giveth light unto all that are in the house.
Matthew 5:15**

A telling of the Birth of Jesus: Luke 1:26—80

All God's angels
come to us disguised.
~James Russell Lowell

Angels shine from without
because their spirits are lit from within
by the light of God.
Eileen Elias Freeman

Angels can fly because they
carry no burdens.
Eileen Elias Freeman

Friends are angels
who lift us to our feet
when our wings have trouble
remembering how to fly.

Be not forgetful to entertain strangers:
for thereby some have entertained
angels unawares. (Heb. 13:2)



We shall find peace
We shall hear angels
We shall see the sky
Sparkling with diamonds.
Anton Chekov

The golden moments in the stream of life rush
past
and we see nothing but sand;
the angels come to visit us,
and we only know them when they are gone.
~George Elliot

I wear a coat of angels' breath
and warm myself with His love.
~Emme Woodhull-Bäche

Pay attention to your dreams –
God's angels often speak directly
to our hearts when we are asleep.
Eileen Elias Freeman

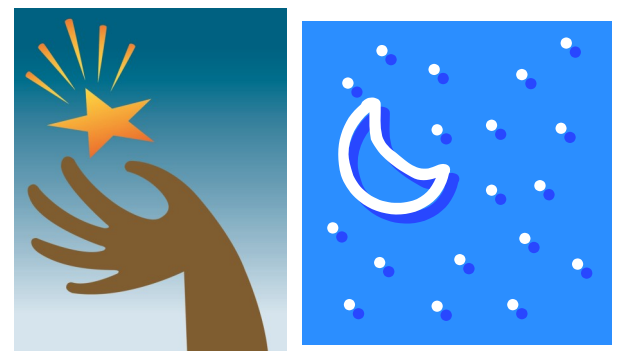
"God gave us our memories so that we might have roses in December."
J. M. Barrie

I wish we could put up some of the Christmas spirit in jars and open a jar of it every month. ~Harlan Miller

Our Tradition: sit with husband in a room lit only by tree lights and remember that our blessings outnumber the lights. Happy Christmas to all. ~Betsy Cañas Garmon

I sometimes think we expect too much of Christmas Day. We try to crowd into it the long arrears of kindness and humanity of the whole year. As for me, I like to take my Christmas a little at a time, all through the year. And thus I drift along into the holidays - let them overtake me unexpectedly - waking up some fine morning and suddenly saying to myself: "Why, this is Christmas Day!" ~David Grayson

Editor's notes
Owners: Craig and Valerie Hibbard. Email comments to valerie@plainandpractical.com, or mail us after December 25th, at our home: 216 S. Plum Street, Marysville, OH, 43040. our Facebook page will be staying up as long as people participate in it:
Plain Andpractical
there's the blog with three years of goodies:
www.plainandpractical.typepad.com



Between November 1st and Christmas, any purchase of \$10 or more will allow you to select one of our baskets from the shelf for only \$1.00. We'd love to see more folks packing their own gift baskets for holiday gifting—filling one with teas, spices, jams, candies and other nice consumables insures your gift will be put to good use in the upcoming long winter!



We are focusing our donations strictly to the Marysville food pantry located just blocks away, keeping in mind transportation costs and keeping our gifts as local as possible. "And thy shalt not glean thy vineyard, neither shalt thou gather every grape of thy vineyard; thou shalt leave them for the poor and strangers: I am the Lord your God." Leviticus 19:10.