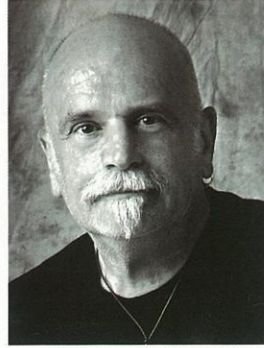


CONTRIBUTORS



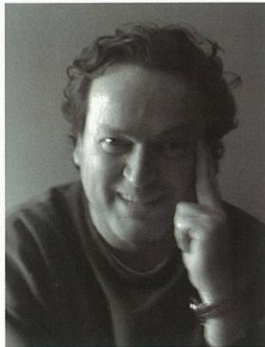
Mary Martens Phillips

Mary Martens Phillips worked as a journalist for 15 years, first as a reporter for the daily newspaper in Aurora, then as an editor at Lerner Newspapers in Chicago, and finally as a writer/editor at a travel magazine based in Los Angeles. She's now a stay-at-home mom with an eight-year-old son, a new puppy, and a charming husband.



Tony Soluri

Tony Soluri is a Chicago-based architectural photographer who had to buy a camera to photograph buildings while studying Architecture at UIC. He has never looked back and went on to become a contributing photographer to *Architectural Digest* and numerous other shelter magazines and books for the last 30 years.



Thomas Connors

Thomas Connors writes regularly about architecture and design. His work has appeared in a number of publications, including *Town & Country*, *House Beautiful*, *Architectural Record*, and *Interior Design*. His interest in older buildings (and a good martini) led him to write his book, *Meet Me in the Bar: Classic Drinks from America's Historic Hotels*. He is currently at work on a book chronicling modern tract homes of the '50s and '60s.



Patricia van Essche

Artist, wife, and mother of three, Patricia van Essche is on a mission to design, create, and inspire an artful life in those around her. She illustrates works with whimsy and style, and her obsession with lifestyle, homes, pets, shops, and more keeps Patricia busy trying to capture it all on paper.



Joy DuPuis

Joy DuPuis lives in Evanston with her husband, daughter, and 150-pound Leonberger. She is a freelance writer and classical homeopath and would happily spend her days discussing how to introduce more live food to your diet, if you let her.



Jon Cancelino

Photographer and fine artist Jon Cancelino has worked in the field for more than 15 years. His passion and drive for achieving the best possible images in everything from food, to fashion, to philanthropy, has landed him with a wide array of clients and publications over the years, including *Teen Vogue*, *VegNews*, and our own *Sheridan Road* and *Forest & Bluff*.

FROM THE EDITOR



FILL UP ON GIFT-GIVING TIPS FOR THE HOLIDAYS WITH THIS ISSUE'S *SR* AT HOME DEPARTMENT...EVERYTHING YOU NEED TO KNOW, FROM SOUP TO NUTS!

Aannndd...it's the holiday season. The for-real, no-fooling-around, ho-ho-blinking-ho, holiday season. How did that happen? It seems like I was just vacuuming up the Halloween candy wrappers and then—bam! Here we are. But I'm so happy to be here! People give me a hard time because I am such a completely, childishly (I prefer child-like-ly), unironically lover of the whole holiday season—from giving thanks with friends and family, to decking the halls of Crooked Towers, to setting out my son's nutcracker village each and every year...this is the time to revel in all the blessings we have here on our fantastic, magical, festive North Shore.

Sound effusive? Maybe so, but I don't care. We've been celebrating for a few months here at *SR*, planning the best holiday issue we could think of, and I believe that we've brought you some wonderful ideas, options, and fashion-fabulous concepts. Take our *Ice House* fashion story, for example, which we photographed at the amazing South Shore Cultural Center in Chicago—a landmark property belonging to the Chicago Park District and the place President and First Lady Obama held their wedding reception. Although the weather fought us at every turn (Seriously, we had *all four* seasons that day!), the results, shot by our wonderful new fashion photographer, Becky Hill, speak for themselves.

And you spoke for yourselves, too, in our *Little Black Book* feature, for which we asked you to open your *own* address books and reveal your North Shore (and city) favorite providers of everything from acupuncture to Zumba. We loved

the information some of the most stylish women in our towns were willing to provide (Thanks, ladies!), and we're definitely willing to bet that you'll be saving this story for future reference all 2011. This was a daunting feature to put together—to say the least! But we were all pleased to persevere, and we're thrilled with the fruits of our labor.

I'm also beyond excited to have had the opportunity to spend a weekend at Ragdale's "A Novel Affair" (see my exclusive story, *An Affair to Remember*, about the experience on our site, *SheridanRD.com*), and to have the chance to interview one of my absolute favorite authors of all time: Dennis Lehane. His new book, *Moonlight Mile*—the hotly anticipated sequel to his best-selling book (and smash-hit movie) *Gone, Baby, Gone*—is just out, and I was lucky enough to spend an afternoon on Ragdale's peaceful grounds, chatting with the author. Read the piece, and then hop over to our website to listen to the extended audio interview—fans will not be disappointed with Lehane's dish on everything from life and love, to writing for the socially marginalized.

But wait! Before you head over there, stop by our First Class department, where local mom and über-organizer Evelyn Vlahandreas shows us how to travel light: She took her entire brood *all over Europe* last summer with no checked bags at all. None! She shows us how she did it, just in time for our own busy holiday travel season. Thank you, Evelyn!

Meanwhile, back at the barn, I've tackled some holiday gift-giving do's and don'ts in my regular column, *SR At Home*. As usual, Patricia Van Es-

sche's illustrations add whimsy and charm to the words—I am so thankful to be able to work with such a talented artist every issue. Actually, I'm thankful to work with such a talented *team* each issue—we've been pushing ourselves (and our boundaries) day by day, and I believe the results are truly beginning to speak for themselves. What do you think?

As we roll into the new year, filled with good thoughts and high hopes, I'd like to give a nod to the year going out, which has been a ride like I never could have imagined. I can only contemplate what 2011 might bring...and, this holiday season, I wish you and yours all the health, wealth, and happiness you could dream of.

Ho ho ho,

Kate

kate@jwcmmedia.com

PS: We've had a marvelous response to last issue's *Great Admissions Guide*, but one omission has come to our attention: St. James School in Highwood was inadvertently excluded from our listing, and we apologize to the dynamic community at the school who are doing so much for the diverse, talented young minds they are teaching. For information about the school, or for admissions information, visit stjameschoolhighwood.org.



SHERIDAN ROAD HOLIDAY GIFTS
Gifts and giving

GIFTS AND GIVING, FROM SOUP TO NUTS

Hoo boy. It's here again: the time of year to bestow. To be bountiful. To give and keep on giving. Kate Ansell takes you through your paces.

ILLUSTRATIONS BY PVE DESIGNS

Tis the season...to feel financially put-upon by the siren song of gift-giving. This time of year, no matter what holiday or religion we observe, most of us have gifts on the brain, and somehow we feel compelled to bring gaily wrapped packages with us everywhere we go. Needless to say, this can quickly get out of hand, and before you know it you're handing out trinkets to everyone from the mailwoman to the milkman, which is fine if that's how you roll, but not necessary. (FYI: true capital-E etiquette types will tell you that it is not acceptable to give gifts, tips, etc., to your postal carrier, or to any other government employees with whom you interact—like, say, your parole officer or the tax man—because they could be construed as bribes. I personally don't think it's a problem, but you should know that *you have been warned*.)

But! Putting aside concerns about doing 2 to 5 as a reward for your generosity, what should you give? To whom should you give it? The answer, friends, is several-fold...

NICE TIP!

When it comes to anyone who provides a service for you, the holiday-gift solution is simple: money. If you get the vapors about the thought of proffering a call-it-like-it-is plain envelope, consider hole-punching the corner and looping a sweet ornament through it, or tying it to a pretty candle, with a festive grosgrain bow. But you *shouldn't* worry about it—I can assure you: No one ever got their feelings hurt by receiving cold, hard cash (and try to make it cash, too—not a check, which necessitates a trip to the bank and yet another hurdle to jump, these jam-packed days.)

How much you give is, of course, up to you—but in general, the amount of the tip is determined by the price of the service. For example, if you pay your eyebrow shaper 20 bucks a throw, toss in an extra 20 for the holidays. But if you're dealing with someone you don't directly pay, like the trash guys, it depends: My crew, for example, blithely ignores the rule which says that they don't have to take any trash which is not contained in an approved bin, and will kindly load up bags and boxes of barely wrapped rubbish and leave with a wave and a smile. And the doorman of my old building never failed to make life easier for me and any visiting relatives. And my mailwoman plays with my dog. So...think about how much all those services (and add-ons) are worth to you. This is a recession for *everyone*, and this is your opportunity to say thanks for a job well done. Or not! Don't forget that tips, and gifts, are optional, and if your manicurist has given you one too many botched paint jobs, you are in no way required to thank her in a special way (you'd also be better off changing your salon, too—vote with your feet!).



HOLIDAY TIPS

HOSTESS WITH THE MOSTEST

This isn't really a holiday-centric issue—technically, we're "supposed to" bring hostess gifts every time we are entertained in someone's home, although many of us don't (and shouldn't, especially with close friends: It's just another layer of potential inadequacy and one-upmanship and really, who needs that stress in their life?). But this time of year, we seem to feel that—much like a vampire needing to be asked in—we cannot cross a threshold without a little something for our host. Often (too often), this something is flowers. Now, flowers are fabulous and I love to have them around in almost every room of Crooked Towers, but when they arrive in those dreaded cellophane wrappers, they become a problem: Now your hostess has to deal with them, and most likely the sink is up to *here* with yet-to-be-washed cooking trays, and the pretty vases are all already in service...much better, please, to bring a potted orchid, or a divine

small topiary. Or a forced amaryllis or paperwhite narcissus. Anything, really, that doesn't have to be re-placed.

To my mind, the perfect holiday hostess gift is something that she can regift, herself, if she chooses—like a fun ornament, or a pretty teacup with a teaball and spice-scented tea leaves, or a Mason jar full of homemade Buckeye Balls. We're often going, going, gone all day long this busy social season, from school party to working lunch, to a quick stop at an open house...and I consider it an absolute pleasure when I can simply grab up a nicely wrapped hostess gift from my supply and go. Now, manners dictate that if you're going to regift, you should do it somewhere your pre-gifter isn't. And you can't regift too much, either: If that same tartan tin of toffee goes too many rounds, people will start to talk...



HOSTESS WITH
THE MOSTEST~



IT'S A WONDERFUL LIFE

It's easy to get cynical about the whole holiday thing—it's too commercial. It's too saccharine. It's too expensive. And, in some ways, all of those things are true...if you want them to be. But it's also a truly, honestly, magical time of year, and if you're ever in any doubt about it, just check out the way kids dive right into the whole thing: feet first, arms waving, eyes wide with wonder. There's nothing ironic or nudge-nudge with kids—this time of year *rocks* and don't you forget it.

Which is why I say it's so important, when kids write up their gift lists, to make sure that they understand that they will not be getting everything on it. Surprised? Don't be—the magical thing about the holidays for kids (well, *one* of the magical things—you kind of have to get in line with the magical items this season) is not opening their gifts. It's wondering what those gifts will be. And hoping—eternally!—that one of those packages contains *the* gift, whatever it may be. I still remember the year I got (against my parents' wishes—thanks, Aunt Sue!) the red-roofed Smurf Cottage. I tell you, you could have knocked me over with a feather. It was *everything*.

Which leads me to my final point—I know most kids' toys are overpriced, cheaply made, shoddily finished junk. But they're brightly colored, and often they make noise, and they're much, much cooler than those nostalgic wooden toys that we all (myself included) feel that we *should* be buying. But we struggle with our inner "good parent/godparent/friend" and our secret desire to be—even if only in the eyes of children—awesome. So here's an idea for this split-personality season: Buy both. And have a *wonderful* time.

Turn the page for delicious recipes for
Buckeye Balls and Holiday Spiced Nuts