

We are about to arrive—or, in many cases, be dragged kicking and screaming—into that glorious, festive time of year now known as “the winter holidays.” Some symbols of childhood memories remain in our nuevo-enlightened culture, while others have been banished to the trash bin of political correctness.

Candles remain a bright and cherished symbol of all cultures and holidays. They are useful, decorative and cost-effective; make excellent gifts; and play a role in many honored traditions.

And if that's not good enough for you, consider that candles obviously are an integral part of our mayor-mandated home emergency kits. Why



Radiance's Mark Tynan waxes nostalgic about holidays of yore

THE MELTING POT

Mass-produced votives can't hold a candle to Radiance creations

THE QUEER PROFIT
by
Marty Davis

have boring white votives sold at Blahco when you can go to Radiance and choose from a bazillion colorful and scented decorative candles?

If you're stuck in your damp and dreary basement because of floods, power outages, stalkers, earthquakes, terrorism or—yes, it's true—Mount St. Helens is rumbling again, then at least make the lighting part of your ordeal pleasant and sensual. And here's a bonus: Remember, a scented candle can work wonders with alleviating that annoying wet dog smell.

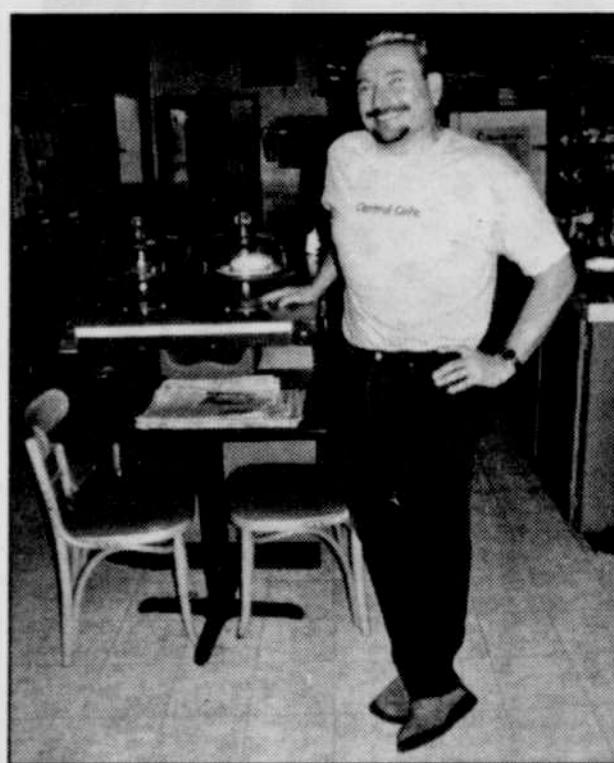
Emergencies aside, Radiance also offers a personalized candle-dipping experience. You can color your creations to your own unique desires.

Candle dipping is a great activity for dates, especially first ones. And if everything goes well, you can return to Radiance for unity candles to light at your commitment ceremony.

See? Candles make memories! Go buy one today.

If the mere thought of shopping makes you feel weak and faint, then butch up. I have the answer for you: food.

You need to eat, get strong, then head back out to spend money and support the local gay economy. And no, there's no time for napping.



Cafe owner Robert Meeker shows off his grand Central station

So, to ensure you're up to the task of spreading holiday joy, I recommend you get yourself a good breakfast. And I have just the place for you to go.

The Central Cafe has a wonderful morning spread waiting for you. Located smack-dab in the heart of Starbucks-free downtown Gresham, the establishment is the crowning glory in the 24-year career of Robert Meeker.

From the age of 17, he has been an employee

or manager of other people's restaurants. Now, all of his skills, ideas and energy are headed right into his newly acquired business.

Meeker took over ownership of the cafe in March and jumped into the local economy headfirst. Many of his 10 employees are recruited from area schools. The work of local artists adorns the walls, and his space is available for community meetings, dinners and fund-raisers. Meeker is openly gay in the business community and is happy to report his sexuality has been a nonissue.

The cafe serves breakfast and lunch and features delightful treats such as raspberry cinnamon french toast and homemade double/triple/quadruple chocolate brownies. Yeasty cinnamon rolls dripping with orange cream cheese frosting will get you fueled up for all of the shopping that lies ahead.

I must issue a warning here, though: No matter what, don't try to eat the brownie and the cinnamon roll in one visit. Sorry, Robert, even in the name of investigative journalism it can't be done.

In a final business note separate from shopping, gubernatorial candidate Beverly Stein was the featured speaker at the November luncheon meeting of the Portland Area Business Association. Proclaiming herself to be an advocate for the small-business owner, she spoke to more than 50 professionals and touched on pressing issues such as the rising costs of health care and utilities as well as topics relating to gay and lesbian rights.

Yup, folks, only about 40 shopping days remaining until the holiday formerly known as Christmas—and a mere 365 days until the general election. Eat. Shop. Vote. **JM**

Business news with a queer bent should be reported to MARTY DAVIS at marty@justout.com.



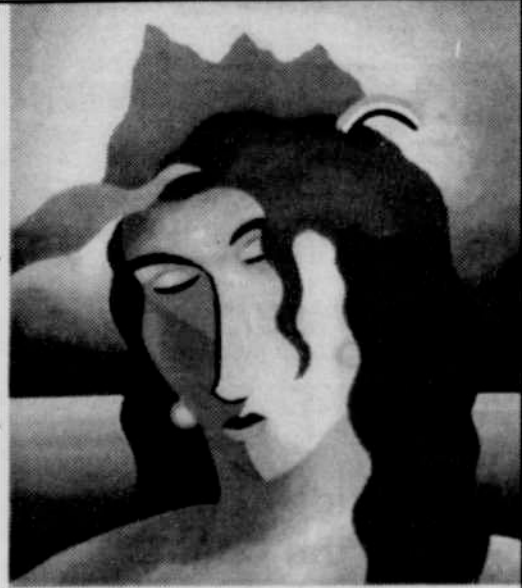
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