



KEVIN O'NEILL / STAFF ARTIST

Hot gifts for mom

Website devoted to moms is full of ideas

My sister is getting a new furnace for Mother's Day. That's one of the few gift ideas you won't find on **MothersDayCentral.com**. The website is a treasure trove of all things Mother's Day.

Usually when searching for websites devoted to holidays I come across many that are nothing more than thinly veiled collections of ads. MothersDayCentral does have advertising and links to commercial sites, but they are more subtle and don't completely dominate the site. Much of the site is devoted to helping families make Mother's Day special.

Even Anna M. Jarvis, who led a successful campaign to have the day officially recognized as a national holiday by President Woodrow Wilson in 1914, might approve. She spent the rest of her life in a futile battle against the floral industry's efforts to commercialize Mother's Day. She died poor, blind and childless, never knowing that The Florist's Exchange had anonymously paid for her care.

Organization of information

The site is loaded with information but doesn't feel crowded. This is the result of a well-organized design, and skillful use of typography that establishes a clear hierarchy of information. A soft palette of earthy greens also helps to keep the site from feeling too busy. The flower art in the banner is equally subdued.

There are nine tabs across the top of the site that take you to the various categories:

■ **Flowers:** In this section the floral industry's victorious commercialization of the day is on full display. It's mainly links to retail florists. Generous discounts are advertised, but with the steep markup on Mother's Day flowers, it's unlikely that you're saving any money.

■ **Gifts:** This section is also a collection of links to retail sites with many "discounts" offered.

■ **Top Ideas:** This is the last of the sections that offers mostly suggestions on where you can buy gifts for mom online.

■ **Cards:** There are links to online services that let you create cheap, custom cards using your own pictures and words. There are also links to sites that will send free personalized e-cards. Finally, there are free, color card templates that can be printed from the site.

■ **Poems:** 101 Mother's Day poems that can be used to make homemade cards more poignant.

■ **Crafts:** The craft ideas range from simple projects the kids can make to more involved ones requiring sewing or artistic skills.

■ **Activities:** From the traditional breakfast in bed to more exotic adventures like hot air balloon rides, there are suggestions for every price range and activity level.

■ **Recipes:** From French toast to mimosa to filet mignon, there are many recipes for brunch and dinner. Each recipe has a list of ingredients, preparation instructions and a picture of the finished dish.

■ **Checklist:** This printable list is

designed to help you plan mom's special day, and to make sure you don't forget anything.

In addition to the tabs across the top of the page, there are links in the left side column to areas of the site containing all kinds of interesting information on mothers and Mother's Day.

Ask your mother

One section lists the dates of worldwide celebrations of mothers. Another section traces the origins of the holiday and its variations throughout history and around the world. The Fun & Trivia section has lists of "motherisms" (those sayings mothers everywhere always say, such as 'I'll give you something to cry about'). Right after that is a "Myth-Busting Motherisms" section that debunks many of mom's favorite admonitions, like "wait an hour after you eat to swim," or "if you keep playing with it, it will fall off someday" (thank goodness she wasn't always right!).

There are lists of the top television moms, tips for moms, videos and more. One section features contests with prizes ranging from gift baskets to iPads. Blogs, Twitter and Facebook keep the site current.

If you need ideas or want to help the kids come up with a project, this site is worth visiting. Of course, if you want the easy way out you can get the mothers in your life what my wife requested — just leave them alone for the day.

KEVIN O'NEILL is a graphic artist for The Times-Tribune. Contact him at koneill@timeshamrock.com with links to your favorite websites.



KEVIN O'NEILL
InSites