

CAMBRIDGE and YOU

***Not Buying It: My Year Without Shopping* by Judith Levine**

reviewed by Robert Reed

Judith Levine and her partner Paul, after being trampled by the demands of another Holiday (read, Retail) Season, decide that for one year they will buy only necessities.

Great — just what we need: another book on how to live a life of eccentric frugality (“You can make great pillows from old sheets and clothes dryer lint!”). And there is that weasel word, “necessities.” In my household ice cream (my kids), chocolate (my wife), and Laphroaig scotch (me) are right up there with house payments and water.

But — good news — these people are not bizarre! They are regular folk who simply get fed up with consumer culture and decide to see how life might otherwise be lived. It isn’t easy. What they don’t realize is that “not buying it” is difficult. They must develop new (non-)spending habits while also resisting the



relentless pressure of Madison Avenue (Buy it! You deserve it!), the US government (Spending shows terrorists we are not afraid!), and the global economy (More stuff for everybody!). Luckily, this couple keeps their wits and good humor about them, and along the way Judith produces a wonderfully readable book. By the end of the year the money they have saved doesn’t interest them as much as the calmer, people-centered life they have created.

This is a good read. Not only does Levine write well (the “shrink-wrapped faces” of cosmetic surgery patients) but she also learns and teaches without hectoring. Do like I did. Check it out of the library and if you enjoy it, donate half its cost to the library. (If you must buy the book, read it and then donate it to the library. Don’t worry; they will keep it safe for you.) ■ ■ ■

Free Music and A Picnic in the Park

by Kathleen M. Rehl, Ph.D., CFP®

On a recent Friday evening, we took up our picnic basket to attend the Florida Orchestra’s fabulous free outdoor concert of symphonic music from Dvorak, Mozart, Berlioz, Lecuona,



Bizet, Sousa, and more. The spirited fare included selections from *My Fair Lady*, a salute to Dixieland jazz, and music from *Star Wars*, closing with Tchaikovsky’s ever-popular *1812 Overture*.

Hundreds of people gathered under the trees with lawn chairs, festive food, and beverages galore. We even ran into friends from our congregation at this glorious party, and it was absolutely free!

We like to make a game of finding inexpensive (or

free) fun activities. Upcoming events include art gallery hops, community festivals, educational seminars, and Fourth of July fireworks. Other options include walking tours of historic sites, poetry readings at local bookstores, strolls on the beach, and get-togethers with friends for dessert and conversation.



Look over the “weekender” section of your newspaper to find neat summer activities going on near you or use your computer to find enjoyable and inexpensive things nearby. (This is also a helpful way to offset the increasing gas prices.) In short, celebrate a great summer that’s easier on your wallet, too! ■ ■ ■