

# Holiday bonus\$ time

## THE INSIDE VIEW

## Smart ways to spend that little extra

By Sunny Logsdon

If you are one of the lucky few who received a holiday bonus, count your blessings. Before you start planning your Las Vegas vacation, consider a few wise investments for your windfall. Sure, the grownup thing to do would be to put it into an IRA or 401(k), but you're already diligent about those, right? Face it, those extra funds are burning a hole in your pocket. If you'd like something you can see and touch now, go for items that will enrich your work and/or private life, that aren't too fleeting, and that have lasting value.



### INVEST IN YOURSELF

Start the New Year with a new look. Discern what's important to you. The pleasure of a seaweed wrap won't last much past the treatment. So use that \$200 towards getting a great cut and color instead. For long-term results, splurge on laser hair removal or cosmetic dental work. Time with a personal trainer is also a good bet.

it will last forever. Black cashmere turtlenecks or crewnecks are luxe necessities. Saddle tan cowboy or equestrian boots never go out of style. Shop around and don't settle for less than a perfect fit. Be willing to pay for the dry cleaning or leather conditioner to care for better goods. Check out boutiques that are out of your price range, too. It's good to know what distinguishes quality in your chosen item. It's better to know elements you would choose if price were no object.

### STOCK UP

Buy in quantity what you usually pick and choose. This is a good opportunity to fill your home bar. For liquors, choose some top-shelf treats that you can savor straight. For wines, triple up on your favorites, and then choose a wide array of vintages. Even if you don't know exactly what to pair with each meal, with enough options you'll figure it out.

Building a home library is also satisfying. Fill those empty shelves so it looks like

someone actually lives there. Choose classics that you've always wanted to read, not any you were punished with in school. Also, include several current titles that have good buzz. When you want to come home and decompress, you'll have some literary options. If you're not inclined toward literature, build your DVD or CD library. Remember, anything that makes you more comfortable in your home is a sure to be a good investment.

### GET CREATIVE

Forget the posters left over from dorm days — don't try framing them, either. Spend unexpected dollars on original artwork. Theoretically, no price is too high for unique art to which you respond emotionally. Don't worry too much about a piece's value appreciating; however, make sure the work is covered by your renter's insurance. It's better to invest in a painting by an unknown than a (no offense) "painter of light" print. Large, unframed oils and acrylics become signature items in your space. With the work of local artists, value is increased, because you have stories of their personal influences to enhance the art. Art glass also adds color and character. Don't try to match the sofa!

### MAKE LIFE MORE CONVENIENT

If you can invest in technology that will buy back time, or less time at work, pursue it! A stocked notebook with a WiFi card may allow you to telecommute. An extra phone line or home fax, a scanner, a color printer, or faster Internet service may do the same. If you have to physically report to the office, maybe now is the time to upgrade your wheels.

However you decide to spend the bonus check, remember, it's your money. So do what you want with it. Also remember, if you were smart enough to earn a bonus in this tight economy in the first place, you probably know not to squander it on a few rounds of drinks for your friends at the local pub.

The confidence you gain from small acts of self-improvement encourages more resolution-keeping.

### BUY CLASSICS

Rather than buying more candy-colored sandals, choose one piece that you'll keep in your closet for five to 10 years. A new briefcase or handbag will get daily use. A camel hair coat works over suits and jeans, and with Dallas' mild winters



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