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Pure Detroit New Center
Fisher Building Lobby
3011 W. Grand Blvd /Suite 101/
Detroit 48202



CONSUMER GUIDE: *Last-minute local finds*

Christmas is five days away, who's still left on your list? Here are some items available in Metro Detroit or online for all the people you happened to have neglected thus far.

By Marie Bourke, Kristen Kaled & Maria Liddane
WEB CONTENT EDITOR, DESIGN EDITOR & EDITOR-IN-CHIEF

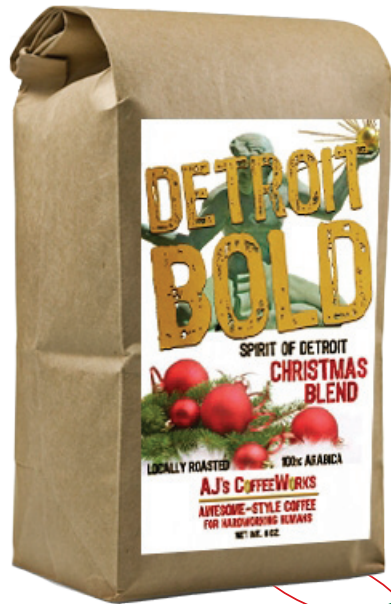


PURE DETROIT FLEXIT CAP IN YELLOW AND KHAKI

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\$6.99
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MY GREAT LAKE SHIRTS

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Bivouac Inc
336 South State Street
Ann Arbor, MI 48104
(734) 761-6207
bivouacannarbor.com

\$35.00



\$25.00



AMERICAN SPOON FRUITS OF MICHIGAN GIFT PACKAGE

Includes six flavors of preserves and two types of crackers

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*Packages ship within Michigan in 2-3 days.

\$66.00

DETROIT DENIM DENIM TOTES & DOG LEASH

Purchase at Detroit Mercantile Co.

3434 Russell St., Detroit, MI

\$145



\$27.50

\$65.00

REVIEW

Elf in life: just as sweet as the movie

By Mora Downs
INTERN

A gigantic blue curtain covered in snowflakes sparkled and shimmered as the lights of the Detroit Opera House dimmed and the angelic sounds of the beginning overture drifted from the orchestra. When the theater became completely dark, Santa appeared.

Elf, the 2003 film that banked over \$225 million is not just a movie anymore. In 2010, *Elf the Musical* premiered on Broadway. Since then, the show has been stopping in cities nationwide, including Detroit. *Elf the Musical* was at the Detroit Opera House Dec. 3-15.

The singing in the show was phenomenal, but one voice rose above the others. Tyler Altomari, who played Michael Hobbs, had a beautiful voice and sounded more impressive than the others because of his young age. The musical number "Nobody Cares About Santa," also included great vocal performances and incredible choreography to match.

The acting was amazing as well, especially that of Gordon Gray, who played Buddy. Gray's interpretation of Buddy was more perky than Will Ferrell's and made him seem much more "elf-like." It worked well for the musical and gave it more life. The actors playing both Buddy and Walter performed the scene in which Buddy runs away with great emotion that could be felt by the audience.

Viewers roared with laughter at the jokes in the musical which included a jab at Columbus, Ohio. This particularly amused Michigan natives because of the Big Ten Championship football game rivalry. Many of the jokes in the show were not from the movie, which made them better because they were not recycled.

In fact, many parts of the musical weren't like the movie, but this wasn't always an improvement.

In the first scene, while building toys in Santa's workshop, Buddy overheard a conversation between two elves and discovered that he was really a human, and that his real dad was on Santa's naughty list. This whole part happened quickly, and unlike the movie, the first scene did not offer any context about Buddy's life at the North Pole.

When Buddy reached New York in the fourth scene, his experiences were rushed. Many of Buddy's hilarious adventures from his first day in New

York are not featured.

In the musical, Walter, Buddy's father, was an extreme workaholic – even more so than in the movie. This character flaw set up opportunities to enrich the relationship between Walter and his family. His wife, Emily, and son, Michael, later wrote letters to Santa. The scene added heart to the story because all they ask for is a day with Walter, whose life revolves around work, rather than family. Later in the show, Walter quit his job, as he did in the movie, but the scene in the musical proved more meaningful as it showed Emily and Michael's wish to Santa come true.

When Buddy talked to Jovie, a female "elf" in Macy's, he did the famous "I'm in a store and I'm singing" bit, which did not hold the same humorous effect as in the movie, due to the actor being a professional singer. Nothing is funnier than Will Ferrell's awkward, cracking voice.

Buddy's date with Jovie, though, was better in the musical because unlike Zooey Deschanel, who portrays Jovie in the film, Katie Hennies convinced the audience that she was truly falling in love with Buddy.

When "Santa" came to Gimbel's department store (Macy's in the musical) and Buddy exposed him as a fake, the expected belly laughs were absent. This scene was less enjoyable in the musical because it again lacked Ferrell's comedy in his titanic concern that "Santa" was an imposter.

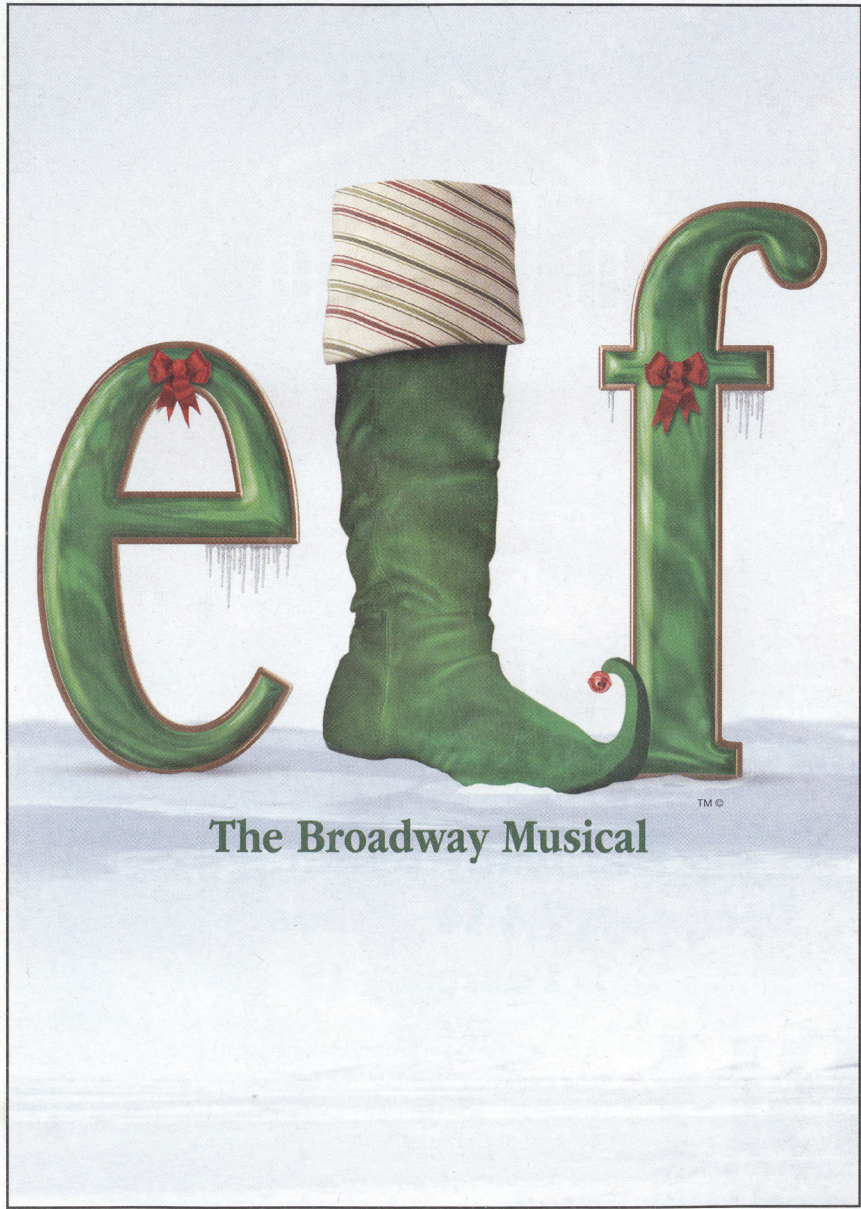
When Santa's sleigh fell from the sky in Central Park, Buddy and his family went to help Santa, but they realized the only way they could help him was to raise Christmas cheer in New York. This part is identical to the movie, even including "Charlotte Dennin, New York One," but instead of reading from Santa's book, Buddy read people's Christmas wishes from Santa's iPad.

This worthwhile musical was whimsical and warm-hearted. Die-hard *Elf* fans may disagree with the lack of Will Ferrell's knee-slapping comedy and the exclusion of several laugh out loud scenes in the film (the shower-singing duet was rejected), but *Elf the Musical* provides a new perspective on a contemporary holiday classic.

Grade: A-

BROADWAY IN DETROIT

OFFICIAL PROGRAM FOR BROADWAY IN DETROIT AT THE DETROIT OPERA HOUSE



The Broadway Musical