



STREETWISE

Medford Square

Looking for authentic ethnic food, the latest Anita Shreve novel, or wicked cool toys? This town square has it.

- 1. TOT LOT** The smallish Medford Toys has a varied selection, but shoppers who favor classic playthings will be especially pleased with its Legos, stuffed animals, puppets, and wooden puzzles. There's also plenty of Red Sox and Patriots attire for young fans. (66 High Street, 781-306-0000)
- 2. A COOL SCOOP** Chrome bar stools and soda-fountain glasses evoke the atmosphere of an Art Deco diner that fits the old-fashioned menu at Colleen's Ice Cream and Sandwich Shop. Finishing your meal with a sundae or frappe made with Brigham's ice cream will sweeten the nonretro prices. (61 High Street, 781-395-9575)
- 3. BOOK SMART** At Bestsellers Cafe, you can grab a latte, pick out a great read, and rest by the wall of windows overlooking the Mystic River. This independent bookstore has a noteworthy collection of local interest and children's books and offers 30 percent off current *New York Times* bestsellers. (24 High Street, 781-391-7171)
- 4. CURTAIN CALL** Sugarplums, anyone? From December 10 to 19, see the Northeast Youth Ballet's performance of *The Nutcracker* at the historic 2,161-seat Chevalier Theatre. With tickets only \$18 to \$20 - compared to \$25 to \$100 for the Boston Ballet's *Nutcracker* at the Colonial Theatre - you can afford to bring every member of the family. (30 Forest Street, tickets at 866-468-7619, www.chevaliertheatre.com)
- 5. SPICY BITES** If you're in the mood for Sichuan food, with its pungent hot and salty flavors, you can't beat Chilli Garden. It also offers more familiar, milder Mandarin dishes, but the low prices (most under \$10) and creative specials should persuade you to try something fiery. (41 Riverside Avenue, 781-396-0817) - *Julia Tolliver Maranan*

ON THE STREET

Man on a Mission

Thirty years ago, pastor Tom Michael moved to Medford with his wife and two young children to start the New England Baptist Church, because he felt the area needed a "church that believes the Bible is literal." The congregation bought and moved into its current building in Medford Square in 1978, and Michael's family has grown to seven children. Michael, 61, originally from Middletown, Maryland, says the location is ideal, with nearly "every kind of food in the world within a block or two" and the Mystic River just down the street. And despite the church's very conservative stance on some controversial issues, he says, "We've always felt accepted . . . although people do tease me about my Maryland accent."



TOM MICHAEL leads a conservative church in Medford.

- J.T.M.

ELIZABETH GRADY

GIFT WRAP



An Elizabeth Grady gift certificate for everyone on your holiday gift list when you choose a relaxing facial, an entire year of beauty, because each certificate is presented in an elegant complete with ribbon, and sent the day after purchase. Call now and your shopping will be

Call 1-800-FACIALS or visit www.elizabethgrady.com for nearest location, services, products & more.

*just ten minutes
of peace a day*



HOLIDAY SALE

COMPETE
OUR DISCOUNT
FURNITURE
IMMEDIATELY

SEASONS FOUR  FURNITURE

SEASONS FOUR 1265 MASSACHUSETTS AVE.
THE OUTDOOR LIVING STORE LEXINGTON, MA 01846
DESIGNERS WELCOME TEL 781-851-1111
OPEN 7 DAYS

selection value