

<P class="MsoNormal style=MARGIN: 0in 0in 0pt; TEXT-ALIGN: justify; tab-stops: .25in"><FONT face="Times New Roman" size="3">◆◆◆◆ In past years, I have published our family◆s birthday parties to give ideas to other families. This year for Sonia◆s 18th birthday, she woke up to the usual beautifully decorated table, bountiful breakfast, and lovely wrapped packages at her place. However, instead of having a birthday party this year, we planned a day of shopping and dining. But before we left, she opened her gifts, which included a rose colored sweater jacket, a two-piece royal blue top and jacket, a flower fairy decorative bag, a crystal platter, a crystal bowl, a tiny pink vase, a cloth covered floral box with pastel colored candles, a fairy rabbit, an elegantly shaped mug displaying flowers and cats, a spring attired mother bear holding a little baby girl bear, a silver pearl necklace, green decorative balls for her to hang in her window which match her drapes, a peach hanging candle holder, green summer sandals, green capris, and a peachy pink sweater top. (An extensive list of gift ideas for girls is contained in my book <I>There◆s No Place Like Home</I>.)</FONT></P> <P class="MsoNormal style=MARGIN: 0in 0in 0pt; TEXT-ALIGN: justify; tab-stops: .25in"><FONT size="3"><FONT face="Times New Roman"><SPAN style="mso-tab-count: 1">◆◆◆◆◆ </SPAN>After opening her gifts, we all dressed up and headed out to all the places we had planned for her special day. We started by taking her to a floral shop that we have always wanted to visit. Next we took her to the Women◆s Exchange tearoom in Clayton for lunch. (Although we liked that it was a non-profit restaurant that sells items women have created, and although we had a good time, it was not a tearoom that we could heartily recommend. It was nothing like Josephine◆s in Godfrey, Illinois that we have highly recommended several times.)</FONT></FONT></P> <P class="MsoNormal style=MARGIN: 0in 0in 0pt; TEXT-ALIGN: justify; tab-stops: .25in"><FONT size="3"><FONT face="Times New Roman"><SPAN style="mso-tab-count: 1">◆◆◆◆◆ </SPAN>While there, she found a green leaf dish that she liked, so we purchased that for her. After lunch we shopped at a clothing store nearby. Next we went to Dillard◆s to look for a dress. We did not find a dress but found two beautiful sweaters on clearance◆one cream with pearls, the other a sea foam beaded one. Then we headed over to Famous Barr and looked for spring hats, shoes, purses, dresses, and jewelry. From there we shopped at several of our favorite antique stores in Clayton. Then we went to Dress Barn where we purchased a lavender floral dress and a lovely sea green sweater.</FONT></FONT></P><SPAN style="FONT-SIZE: 12pt; FONT-FAMILY: 'Times New Roman','serif'; mso-fareast-font-family: 'Times New Roman'; mso-ansi-language: EN-US; mso-fareast-language: EN-US; mso-bidi-language: AR-SA"><SPAN style="mso-tab-count: 1">◆◆◆◆◆◆◆◆◆◆ </SPAN>For dinner we took Sonia to Eleven Eleven Mississippi on Mississippi Ave., one block from Lafayette Square. Our meals were delightful. After dinner we drove around Lafayette Square and then the Central West End to look at the majestic homes and identify the location of other restaurants that our waitress had suggested we try. If any of them turn out to be favorites of ours in the future, we will let you know. We then finished the lovely day at home with a mystery movie, popcorn and soda.</SPAN>