

Ron Paul to turn up heat on Fed

Republican Rep. Ron Paul, who will take over as the head of the subcommittee that oversees the Federal Reserve when the new Congress is seated in January, said yesterday that he will seek greater transparency but will not be sending subpoenas to the chairman of the central bank, Ben Bernanke, from Day One.

He said he'll send requests for information to the Fed's accountants, "and say this is what I want, and to see what happens," Paul said.

(REUTERS)

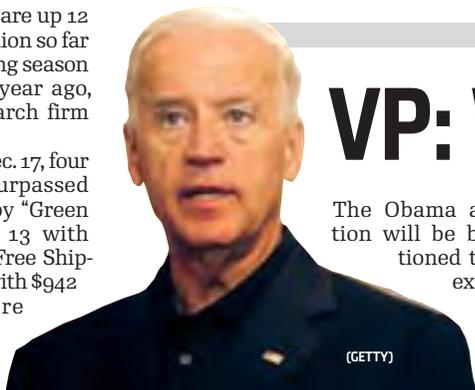


Online sales see jolly \$27.5B take

U.S. online sales are up 12 percent to \$27.5 billion so far this holiday shopping season compared with a year ago, according to research firm comScore.

From Nov. 1 to Dec. 17, four individual days surpassed \$900 million, led by "Green Monday" on Dec. 13 with \$954 million and "Free Shipping Day," Dec. 17, with \$942 million, comScore said.

(REUTERS)



(GETTY)

A bookish retreat in Harlem

BY LANA BORTOLOTT
Special to amNewYork

If you stay at the Jumel Terrace B&B, you won't have to look far for some nightstand reading. The elegant and erudite accommodations share the English basement of a brownstone with a specialty bookstore, the main point of business in Harlem's historic Sugar Hill neighborhood.

Proprietor Kurt Thometz, an anti-quarian bookseller, added the garden apartment lodgings to supplement the unpredictable business of a bookstore specializing in local history. But it's the books upon which he's built his reputation as an arbiter of tastes.

Thometz, 57, started selling books out of high school — he's curated libraries for

the likes of Calvin Klein, Diana Vreeland, Diane Sawyer and Mike Nichols, and Brooke Astor. Thometz, a Minnesota native who fell in love with New York as a teenager, and his wife, Camilla, bought the 1891 house in 2004, and set up shop with his personal collection of books.

3,200

Number of volumes

\$3,000

Most expensive book in the store — a first edition, signed copy of Bruce Davidson's "East 100th Street"

\$250

Cost of a one-night stay

"There was a crying need in the neighborhood for a place that showcases its 20th-century history," he said. "It's an overwhelming history of people in the arts."

Open "by appointment, invitation or serendipity," his shop specializes in micro-local history and literature. There's a keen focus on Harlem and the Morris-Jumel Mansion (right across the street).

Thometz still sources books for private collectors. His most challenging mis-



Kurt Thometz's Jumel Terrace B&B houses a fine collection of Harlem books. (TIFFANY L. CLARK)

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sion was finding a wedding gift for a bodyguard to give to his betrothed billionaire employer. For him, Thometz procured an early-16th-century German prayer book encasing a painted miniature. Price: \$15,000.

Sugar Hill resident Eric K. Washington, an author and

historian, said there isn't another store like it.

"He has a unique compen-

dium for Harlem audiences. I think he provides a service for people who are hungry for literature" he said.

And then there's the bookseller himself. Said Washington, "He's fascinating and informed and funny — not just another bookseller."

VP: We can reverse tax deal in 2012

The Obama administration will be better positioned to fight the extension of tax cuts for the

wealthiest Americans when they are set to expire in two years, Vice President Joe Biden said yesterday.

Appearing on NBC's "Meet the Press," Biden said the

administration will be able to make a better case ahead of the 2012 presidential election that continuing the benefit for high earners "does not make sense."

The provision benefiting the

richest Americans was a centerpiece of compromise legislation backed by the White House and approved last week by Congress to extend Bush-era tax cuts for two years.

(REUTERS)



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