



Inspire • Encourage • Network • Share

CapeWomenOnline serves as a venue for the women of Cape Cod to share their ideas, experiences and resources while inspiring each other in their life's journey.

Going Green for the Holidays

by Myka-Lynne Sokoloff

Are you wishing for a white Christmas (or Kwanzaa, or Chanukah, or Winter Solstice?) You can have your snowy holiday and make it green, too! With a bit of thought you can both lesson your carbon footprint and save money as you face down the annual gift- giving orgy.

In the real estate business, the three rules for success are location, location, and location. Similarly, to create a green holiday season, consider keeping it local, more local, and most local.

KEEP IT LOCAL

As you begin to pencil that holiday gift list, consider shopping on Main Street in your own hometown. Any Cape Codder knows that a mall expedition in December requires the endurance of an Indy 500 driver as you wait to make your way around the Airport Rotary and find a parking spot. Consider also the savings in fuel and stress you'll realize by patronizing neighborhood shops.

Most every town on the Cape has art or crafts galleries, antiques or chocolate shops, and other retail businesses that offer interesting, locally made products or one-of-a-kind items. Even flea markets and thrift shops can be a goldmine for giftees who appreciate vintage accessories and clothing.

And don't overlook school bazaars and church fairs that crowd the calendar in November and December. (Check out the SheArt Network website for details on their showing of unique handmade items in early December.)

By shopping locally, you will also add tax revenues to your hometown. You benefit directly in so many ways.

KEEP IT MORE LOCAL

Shop at Home

Start by dumping the catalog habit. Just think of how many cubic feet of landfill get filled with those redundant tomes that flood the mailbox this time of year. If you want to order catalog items, most every print issue has an online corollary.

Opting out of paper copies of catalogs will cut down the carbon footprint in paper manufacture, ink, printing, and mailing. You can also find the exact same information online. And if e-shopping is too confusing, some of those mail order places have really nice customer service folks just waiting to keep you company by phone around 11:00 p.m.

While you're trying to find the perfect gift for the person who has everything, consider giving a charitable gift in their name. Some charities create opportunities with lasting impact. Heifer International, for example, provides livestock that can help small farmers around the world end cycles of hunger and poverty.

Project Peanut Butter treats malnourished children in Africa for 15 dollars a child. Whatever your personal value system—and that of the giftee you are honoring—there is a related nonprofit foundation doing good work.

10 Tips for a Green Holiday

- Skip the mall.
- Shop Main Street.
- Opt out of catalogues.
- Shop online.
- Get creative.
- Make it yourself.



- Give a gift of time.
- Use natural or recycled wrappings.
- Decorate with natural objects.
- Donate to a sustainable charity.

Holiday Shopping? Easy & fun,
at...Coastal Craft Gallery



Coastal Craft Gallery
2 Main St. Square, (next to Oceana) Orleans

Open every day all day all day year
www.coastalgallery.com



Project Peanut Butter

www.projectpeanutbutter.org



Make It Yourself

Most of us have some hidden talent (or not so hidden) that would be appreciated by friends and family. My daughter and I invented blueberry jalapeño jelly a few seasons back, spurred by the garden's bounty. We found it pretty tasty, and it impressed the foodie crowd she hangs out with in Boston.

If your talents lie in the kitchen, think pickles, jams, cookies. (If baking is not your *métier*, skip it. I shudder to recall the lumpy, inedible brown loaves of friendship bread ubiquitous in the 80s.)

Knitters and quilters, we know you've been working on projects since last December. Fancy yourself rather a writer? Write your memoirs, if you're old enough to have lived half a life worth telling. Or pen a letter or poem telling someone what they mean to you.

Are you a procrastinator? Now's the time to finally sort out the shoebox of old photos in the attic and make photo albums for everyone in the family.

EVEN MORE LOCAL

What even more local than gifts you make with love as you sit by the fire? How about some face time?

- Along with a new Scrabble set or playing cards, attach a promise to play once a week. We plan to give our daughters minicamera for their computers, so that we can read stories to our grandchildren via Skype. (Selfish, I know.)
- Remember the coupon booklets that kids used to make in school? Tailor your offering to the recipient. Give a lover organic oils, scented candles, and a coupon book for massages that you will provide personally. Babysit for your sister's kids for the night or a weekend, so she can get away for a romantic moment with hubbie.
- Offer to hold your best friend's hand while she cleans out her Collyer Brothers closet/attic/basement. Be her mirror as she decides which items to toss or recycle to the Salvation Army.

WRAPPINGS AND OTHER TRAPPINGS

Gift Wrap

For many years, my wrapped holiday presents looked awfully boring: flimsy, inexpensive printed wrapping paper topped with gaudy premade bows or curling ribbon. One year I discovered a trash bag of ribbons that had been saved by mistake. Determined not to buy any new ribbon until I used up the old, I found more creative ways of combining ribbons and curling them with artier results.

Although I have a dear friend (in her nineties) who actually irons wrapping paper that she likes for reuse, this is hardly an environmentally friendly practice. Think brown. Try reusing brown paper shopping bags (unless you are one of those thoughtful few who remember to take your own string or canvas bags with you into the store. Mine are often neglected in the trunk of my car.) Have the kids decorate the paper with potato stamp prints or tie them up with rustic twine. Tuck a sprig of holly and a cinnamon stick in the bow.

Decorating

Instead of buying manufactured items from China, look around for more natural objects to decorate for the holidays. Our bounty of grape vines is perfect for making wreaths, as are boughs of cedar with

those lovely blue berries. Look no farther than the nearest marsh for lovely dried seed pods. Pick dried hydrangea blossoms now and store them carefully to hot glue onto the grape vines. And when the season is done, toss the dried decorations into your compost pile. You just saved a trip to the dump!

Look at all the time and energy you just saved. Now you may breathe, and pat yourself on the back for going green for the holidays.

Myka-Lynne Sokoloff is a writer of children's books & educational materials. She lives in Brewster when she's not out exploring the world. What would she like to find in her stocking? Frequent flier miles.