



Holiday Gift Guide



CLARENDON
MERCHANT SALES

BLACK FRIDAY
& **SMALL BUSINESS SATURDAY!**

NOVEMBER
29 & 30

SHOP LOCAL - SUPPORT YOUR COMMUNITY

Shop locally this holiday season

Shopping local this holiday season can benefit your community in various ways.

Shopping is a big part of the holiday season, when families and friends gather to reconnect and exchange gifts. While the popularity of shopping online has grown, such practices are not always eco-friendly or timely, as gifts bought online must be packaged and shipped, wasting valuable resources and time that last-minute shoppers may not have.

The benefits of shopping locally go beyond convenience and the chance to reduce your carbon footprint. The following are a few ways that shopping locally this holiday season can directly benefit

your community and the people who call it home.

COMMUNITY IDENTITY

Local small businesses go a long way toward creating a neighborhood identity, and that identity can create a stronger sense of community among you and your neighbors. In addition, a unique community identity can make your town more attractive to outsiders, and that appeal can improve the value of local real estate while also attracting more people to local businesses in your neighborhood.

LOCAL ECONOMY

When men and women shop locally, they are putting money

back into their local communities. Local small businesses may be owned by your neighbors, and it can be comforting to know that your holiday shopping dollars are going to support a neighbor instead of a large corporation. Local businesses also employ your neighbors, so shopping local can strengthen the local economy by creating jobs that may not exist if you and members of your community fail to support local small businesses.

CUSTOMER SERVICE

The accessibility of customer service is another oft-overlooked benefit of shopping locally. When buying from national chains, especially during the holiday season



when such businesses may be overwhelmed with orders, making contact with customer service departments can be a trying exercise. In addition, buying locally makes it more convenient for friends and family members who also live in your community to return their gifts.

Hardware for the Holidays!

Wrap up your winter projects and gift shopping in one place!

J&W Lumber
US 287 & Carhart • Clarendon, Texas

SHOP LOCAL - STAY HEALTHY

Bust Up the Stress of the Holidays

Many people find the holiday season can be stressful. Holiday hosts may bear the brunt of seasonal stress, but the season also may be challenging for those who have lost loved ones or do not have close families to celebrate with. When holiday hustle leads to frayed nerves, there are some things people can do to reduce their stress.

• **Hit the gym.** The American Society for Exercise Physiologists says exercise has been shown to increase one's sense of well-being, mood, self-esteem, and stress responsivity. Stress can rev up adrenaline, and exercise can help relieve any pent-up energy and frustration.

• **Eat the right foods.** Stay hydrated and eat plenty of fiber, fruits and vegetables. This can help stabilize blood sugar levels and decrease cravings for comfort foods. Do not turn to caffeine, sugary sweets and alcohol to reduce stress, as such foods and beverages may only

compound the problem.

• **Get ample rest.** Go to bed and rise at the same time each day. Many adults function best when they get between seven and eight hours of sleep per night, and a good night's rest can help in the fight against stress.



• **Engage in activities you enjoy.** Make time for activities that you like to do, such as crafts, hobbies and listening to music. Take time away from holiday tasks to give yourself a break.

• **Skip the need to be perfect.** Christmas movies and holiday ideals portrayed in advertisements can put undue pressure on the average person. Ignore any perceived pressure to have a perfect holiday season, instead resolving to enjoy the time with family and friends.

Stress can impact the ability to enjoy oneself during the holidays. But stress can be overcome, even during this busy time of year.

Deck the Halls, Walls, Tables, and More...

storewide discounts

up to 50% OFF!



311 E. 2ND ST
CLARENDON, TEXAS
806.874.1767
SHOWROOM HOURS
THURSDAY, FRIDAY, MONDAY 10:00 – 6:00
OR BY APPOINTMENT

 FOLLOW US ON FACEBOOK!

SHOP LOCAL - SUPPORT CHARITIES

Businesses give back

Information from the Small Business Administration and the U.S. Census Bureau's Annual Survey of Entrepreneurs says that small businesses, or firms with fewer than 500 workers, accounted for 99.7 of businesses in 2016, the most recent year for data. Firms with fewer than 100 workers accounted for 98.2 percent of companies.

Thanks to their influence and reach, small businesses have the potential to impact local communities in numerous ways.

- Small businesses employ local residents. According to the SBA's Office of Advocacy, small businesses accounted for 61.8 percent of net new jobs in the United States between 1993 and 2016.

- Small businesses are innovative. The SBA notes that small businesses represent about 96 percent of employer firms in high-patenting manufacturing industries. That suggests that small businesses are full of new ideas.

- Small businesses support local charities. Many local businesses give to charity, particularly local charities. Some donate money while others may offer their professional services or event spaces, each of which can be particularly helpful to local communities.

- Small businesses contribute



to community identity. Small businesses contribute to the charm and character of a town or city. Many local businesses make up the fabric of Main Street, and towns are known and loved for the businesses that have endured.

- Small businesses help the environment. Shopping locally means consumers do not have to travel far to get their goods and services. The United States Environmental Protection Agency's research report on walkable downtown centers found small businesses encourage walking and cycling, helping to reduce air pollution from vehicles.

- Small businesses keep money in communities. Local businesses keep disposable income and tax money within their communities. Business tax money remains local and can support schools, roads and municipal services.

Local small businesses are the life force that keeps cities and towns prosperous and humming along. Such establishments help build a sense of community and forge lasting relationships.

TOTALLY Locally CHRISTMAS in CLARENDON

SATURDAY, NOV. 30

TOTALLY LOCALLY BINGO... Win \$250!
AT PARTICIPATING CHAMBER MEMBERS • FRIDAY AND SATURDAY

CRAFT SHOW ARENA OF LIFE CHURCH • NOON TO 8 PM

FREE ENTERTAINMENT MULKEY THEATRE • 1 - 4 PM

SOUP DINNER SPONSORED BY VFW AUXILARY • ARENA OF LIFE CHURCH • 5 - 7:30 PM

SANTA DONLEY COUNTY COURTHOUSE • 5 PM

COURTHOUSE LIGHTING • 6 PM

COLORING CONTEST WINNERS ARENA OF LIFE CHURCH • 7 PM

BINGO DRAWING ARENA OF LIFE CHURCH • 7:15 PM

DECEMBER 5, 12, 19

LATE NIGHT SHOPPING DOWNTOWN
SIGN UP AT TOTALLY LOCALLY MERCHANTS FOR A CHANCE TO SPIN TO WIN!

GREAT GIFT IDEAS ONLINE AT CLARENDONTX.COM

PRESENTED BY

Clarendon
CHAMBER of COMMERCE

SHOP LOCAL - ENJOY FRIENDSHIPS

Spread the Word

Know a great local business? Don't be silent about it. Small businesses need your help, so open up and help spread the word any time you're impressed by a locally owned shop.

NOTICE THE DETAILS

In many ways, it's the small things that make the best local shops stand out. They might greet their frequent customers by name, stock products that no other stores offer, donate their time and money to worthy local causes and provide a more unique shopping experience that the cookie-cutter chain stores can't match.

Look for these things when you're out shopping, and let your friends know when you find them. You'll be helping your friends out and doing your part to keep your favorite businesses open and thriving.

SOCIAL MEDIA

Facebook, Twitter, Instagram and Pinterest have opened new doors for spreading the word about your favorite businesses. In fact, online is where a lot of word-of-mouth marketing happens these days as friends share and photograph their everyday shopping trips — for better or worse.

If you run across a local business that's doing a great job, snap a picture or write a post about it. A few good words on social media can have a positive impact for the "shop local" movement in your community.

IT MATTERS

Studies have shown that buyers trust recommendations from their friends and family far more than they do messages from strangers. Your opinion carries a lot of weight with the people you know, so you can play a big role in helping people avoid the bad shops and flock to the good ones.

So this Christmas, don't do your shopping in a communications vacuum. Look for the best products and experiences in your community this holiday season and share them with the people around you.

Your friends — and some small-business owners — will thank you.



Small Business Saturday
Nov. 30, 2019

\$10 DOOR BUSTERS

\$100 GIFT CARDS FOR \$90
\$50 GIFT CARDS FOR \$45
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Free Gift w/ purchase
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SHOP LOCAL - CONTROL YOUR FINANCES

Set and Stick to a Holiday Budget

The chance to give gifts and spend time with loved ones makes the holiday season a special time of year. But for many people, the holiday season often leads to overspending.

A 2016 survey from the American Research Group found that American shoppers anticipated spending an average of \$930 on gifts that holiday season. Data from T. Rowe Price confirms that parents are spending between \$400 and \$500 per child each year. In 2015, CPA Canada conducted a random phone survey of 1,004 adult Canadians and found the average adult planned to spend \$766 on holiday gifts.

Although these numbers can reflect an overwhelming sense of generosity, many times excessive spending is based on a desire to outdo gifting from the year prior - sometimes at the risk of personal finances. Some people are taking drastic measures to make holidays over-the-top, with some delving into emergency savings while others withdraw prematurely from retirement

accounts. Budgeting for the holiday season can help shoppers keep their finances in check.

DETERMINE SPENDING PATTERNS

An examination of receipts and spending habits from previous holiday seasons can help individuals establish budgets for the current year. Make a list of all expenses - even the ones that extend beyond holiday giving. These may include expenses such as gym service fees, homeowner's insurance, traveling expenses, gift exchanges at work, and more. Extra costs can add up and should be factored into holiday budgets.

Try to recall if your spending last year felt comfortable or if you were paying off credit cards long after the holiday season had ended. If it's the latter, resolve to make adjustments.

SET A BUDGET THAT FITS

There is no such thing as a one-

size-fits-all budget. Figure out if there is extra money this season or if times are tight. This will help you plan accordingly and avoid overspending. Shifting priorities can help free up some cash. If children are interested in this year's hot (and likely expensive) gift, cut back on holiday travel or entertaining. Instead of buying gifts for coworkers, buy a drink during a night out.

USE THE HOLIDAYS AS AN OPPORTUNITY TO SELL

Collectibles, gently used toys, video games, action figures - all of these items may be collecting dust at your home, but they might be coveted by other shoppers. Rely on the season for spending to make some extra income that can be cashed in for your own holiday purchases.

TRACK SPENDING

Establish a separate account strictly for



holiday spending. This can include a credit card only used for gifts and entertaining or a savings account at a bank or credit union. You won't know what is going out of your account unless you keep careful tabs on it. Tracking spending is the biggest key to sticking with a budget.

Holiday budgeting can be challenging. But with some effort, it is possible to avoid debt and still enjoy a happy holiday season.

GET READY TO ROLL THIS HOLIDAY SEASON



With New Tires!

Daytime: 874-2755

317 W. 2ND • CLARENDON

Nights: 336-1166



SHOP LOCAL - MAKE IT EASY

Keep holiday hosting simple and easy

Hosting family and friends for the holidays is a tall task. According to the Bureau of Transportation Statistics, during the Christmas/New Year holiday period, the number of long-distance trips (to and from a destination 50 miles or more away) increases by 23 percent compared to the rest of the year. While many of those traveling will stay in hotels, many more will enjoy the hospitality of loved ones.



pitch in any way they can. If guests offer to do some holiday baking or take the family out for dinner during their visits, allow them to do so. This takes a little responsibility away from hosts while also allowing guests to show how much they appreciate the hospitality of their hosts.

Holiday hosting can make an already hectic time of year that much busier, as hosts must prepare their homes for guests in the midst of holiday shopping excursions, office Christmas parties and social engagements around the neighborhood and at kids' schools.

Holiday hosting does not have to run hosts ragged in the days leading up to guests' arrival. The following are a handful of ways to simplify holiday hosting.

Plan menus well in advance of guests' arrival. One of the more time-consuming tasks associated with holiday hosting is cooking. Hosts who plan their holiday menus in advance can get started on prep work several weeks before guests arrive. Choose dishes that can be prepared in advance and then frozen, so dishes need only be defrosted and cooked once guests arrive.

Let guests pitch in. Some hosts may feel obligated to cater to all of their guests' needs during the holiday season. But many guests want to

Plan a night out. Another way to make hosting friends and family for the holidays less taxing is to plan a night out for everyone. In lieu of cooking at home, dine out at an affordable, family-friendly restaurant before taking everyone to a local holiday light display or trade days. This gets everyone out of the house and allows hosts to showcase their hometown pride.

Rotate hosting duties. The holiday season is full of tradition, and some hosts may feel beholden to tradition and offer to host each year. But family traditions are about getting together, not about getting together in a particular place each year. Families who rotate hosting duties each year can ensure one member of the family does not feel overwhelmed time and again. And sharing hosting duties means someone new gets to avoid the hectic holiday traveling season each year.

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DONLEY CO. COMMUNITY FUND

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GET READY TO BOARD!



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THEATRE

CLARENDONTX.COM/MULKEY

806-874-SHOW



SHOP LOCAL - KIDS IN NEED

Visit The Angel Tree

The economic circumstance of parents shouldn't keep children from experiencing the joy of having a gift to open on Christmas morning. Thanks to a local program, you can help make sure every kid has a Merry Christmas.

Angel Tree applications are currently available at the Burton Memorial Library in downtown Clarendon. Kids ages 12 and under, who might not otherwise have Christmas, are eligible for this program. The application period will close November 29, 2019.

Angels are on the tree now and available for adoption. Go by the Library and select an Angel that you can provide a gift to this Christmas. For more information, contact the Library at 874-3685.



Saints' Roost Museum Christmas Party

Sat., Dec. 7 • Donley Co. Activity Center
6:30 to 11:30 p.m.

\$50⁰⁰/couple

*Tickets at Every Nook & Cranny,
Donley County State Bank,
Saints' Roost Museum
or from any board member*

LIVE BAND:
Martin Band

**Chance to win
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CLARENDON, TEXAS**

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DEC. 7-8

9AM-5PM

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FUN!**

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GIFT GIVING MADE EASY



Elk Ridge Knives



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BITBRITE
EDC Task Light & Screwdriver



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RECHARGEABLE
SLIM



NEBO
RECHARGEABLE
SLIM



INSPECTOR RC



874-2755
317 W. 2ND • CLARENDON



SHOP LOCAL - MANAGE YOUR MONEY



Smart ways to pay for gifts

Entertaining, dinners, gifts, travel, and decorating may make for a festive time of year, but the holidays certainly can put a strain on personal finances. No one wants to experience a financial hangover come January. Therefore, making a plan for paying for holiday expenditures now can help the average person save and protect their finances.

Figuring out how to finance holiday purchases can be just as important as scoping out deals and cashing in on coupons. Here's a look at some of the ways to pay for holiday gifts.

CREDIT CARDS

Many consumers feel that credit cards are the safest way to make purchases, whether in-store or online. With credit cards, shoppers are using a line of credit. Should fraudulent purchases be made or errors in accounting occur, shoppers aren't responsible - the credit card company is in charge of tracking down or absorbing the error.

Now that spending has increased after the last recession, credit card companies are again offering deals to lure in new customers. Rewards cards are quite popular. Such cards offer points, cash back or travel miles to customers who meet certain criteria. For those who can pay off balances and meet the requirements, these cards can

help save substantial amounts of money. Keep in mind that regular cards carry an interest rate of 15 percent on average, while retail store cards may be as high as 24 percent.

LAYAWAY

Layaway is a safe way to shop for the holidays. Layaway entitles consumers to buy an item by making installment payments. The frequency of payments depends on shoppers' ability to pay. Failure to pay will not affect a credit score or negatively impact credit standing in any way - the consumer may just lose their down payment or be forced to pay a layaway fee. Paying in installments helps lock in a special sale rate and can discourage impulse buying as well.

CASH AND PREPAID CARDS

Paying in cash can help shoppers avoid overspending on gifts. After setting aside a cash limit, once the money is spent, shopping is done. Paying in cash does carry some risk if the money is stolen or misplaced. Plus, as opposed to paying with credit, which can offer some purchase protection or built-in warranties, cash may have no protective benefits.

As an alternative to cash, consumers may want to purchase pre-loaded cash cards in various amounts. Like cash, when the value on the card is depleted, shopping is finished.

SHOP LOCAL - NEIGHBOR TO NEIGHBOR

Don't Be A Stranger

There is no place like home, so why would you choose to leave it for Christmas shopping? By spending your time and money shopping locally, you are more likely to run into friends, family, co-workers and past acquaintances, allowing you to enjoy the season around those you love.

Both behind the counter and in the aisles, you will probably know more people within your local businesses in comparison to the stores 60 miles away. Familiar faces and friendly chats help enrich the already exciting experience of Christmas shopping.

TEACH THE KIDS

It's never too early to pass on the values that drive you to shop local and support your neighbors. Your sons, daughters, nieces and nephews will earn money and shop for themselves one day, and they may even be future small business owners.

Bringing them along for the shopping trip to your favorite downtown store will give them a

great understanding of the benefits of spending money locally and may spark an entrepreneurial spirit within them.

LEARN HISTORY

The next time you are perusing through a downtown business, ask yourself if you know the history of the building you are in. Odds are the owner does.

Small business owners are often excellent sources for local history. They can give you detailed information about their buildings or the services that used to be offered through it.

Shopping locally doesn't just enhance the local economy. It can also increase your knowledge of your surroundings.



Free Gift Wrapping • Layaway Available • Gift Certificates

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at great prices!

Let's be jolly

FRIENDS PUT THE "MERRY" IN CHRISTMAS

Every Nook and Cranny

Downtown Clarendon • 874-3335

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SHOP LOCAL - RELAX & ENJOY

How to make gift wrapping easier

The process of wrapping holiday gifts can go more smoothly when applying some time-tested tips and tricks.

While holiday shoppers are often enthusiastic about finding great gifts for their loved ones, many are decidedly less excited about wrapping those gifts. Many holiday shoppers spend hours wrapping gifts each year, and as gift lists grow, so does the amount of time needed to get all of those presents wrapped, hidden, packaged and/or shipped. Shoppers can employ the following strategies to make the process go much more smoothly and to reduce gift wrap-related anxiety.

- Relearn the basics. Some people

may think they know how to wrap gifts, only to realize it's harder than it looks once the paper, scissors and Scotch tape comes out. Relearn the basics by viewing online tutorials prior to wrapping gifts so the lessons learned remain fresh in your mind. Learn how to wrap standard clothing gift boxes and recognize that such boxes can often be used to house oddly-shaped items.

- Wrap as you buy. Instead of getting bogged down with wrapping all in one evening, wrap presents as you purchase them. This ensures that you don't leave everything for the last minute and reduces the likelihood that curious kids or inquisitive spouses discover gifts before the big day.

- Work on a hard surface. It may be tempting to lay everything out on your bed and wrap gifts while you're binge-watching the latest Netflix series. But hard surfaces make the best places to wrap gifts. This ensures there won't be any wrinkles in the paper and that you won't lose supplies in the bedspread.

- Rely on double-sided tape. For that professional look, invest in some double-sized tape so you will not have any unsightly tape lines.

- Keep all of your supplies together. Store wrapping paper, scissors, tags, tape, ribbons, and whatever else you may need to wrap gifts in one convenient location. This cuts down on time wasted hunting

for supplies around the house.

- Keep gift bags on hand. Gift bags work in a pinch and make it easy to conceal gifts that are hard to wrap. Curious loved ones can easily peak inside gift bags, so be sure to wrap gifts in tissue paper before placing them in the bags.



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SHOP LOCAL - GIVE LOCAL

Don't Forget Non-Profits

Some local organizations are focused not on selling products, but on improving the lives of disadvantaged community members. Non-profit groups organizations are all seeking help this holiday season.

And what they're asking for is simply a hand. They need more manpower to achieve their goals and spread the word on their efforts.

LOCAL FOOD DONATIONS

Why not spend your Christmas spreading some holiday cheer – and delicious food? Contact the Clarendon First United Methodist Church about the volunteer needs of its local **BREAD OF LIFE FOOD PANTRY** at 874-3667. Contact the Clarendon Lions Club to make a donation to its **ANNUAL CHRISTMAS BASKET** program at 874-2259. Call Clarendon Elementary School at 874-3855 about its **SNACK PACK FOR KIDS** program or call 874-2007 to make a donation or volunteer to help the weekly **CHRIST'S KIDS MINISTRY PROGRAM** as it seeks to nourish the bodies and spirits of local children. And it is a simple act of kindness that can be turned into a tradition, passed on to children or replicated by your friends and family members. Senior citizens groups in Clarendon and Hedley also need your support to continue to provide services to our local elderly.

CHARITABLE CONTRIBUTIONS

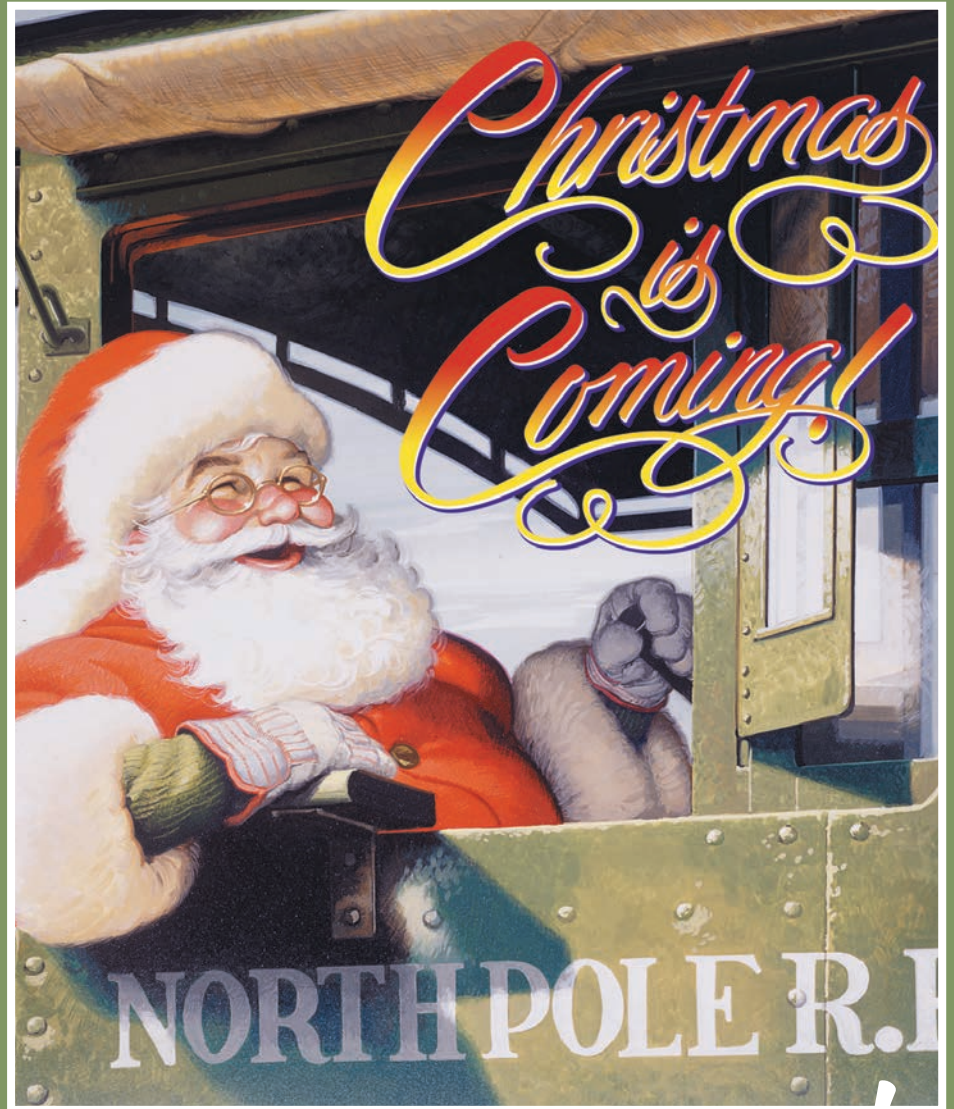
You may find yourself short on time this holiday season, but maybe you have a few dollars to donate to a local organization. Your contribution could go a long way toward furthering the cause of a group near and dear to your heart.

You can conveniently make online donations or in-person cash contributions. Either way, donating funds is a simple way to show your support while making a difference in the lives of those who need it.

LENDING YOUR SKILL SET

Can you spare a few hours every weekend in December? You may be asked to run errands or visit with people. Maybe deliver food or products to clients across town.

Professionals in the creative services field can offer their skills free of charge as a holiday contribution. Locals helping locals will strengthen the community this holiday season.



Gifts for everyone!
Come see Santa!
Dec. 7 & 8

**WHISTLE
STOP** **TRADE
DAYS**
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Whistop@hotmail.com

SHOP LOCAL - LIVE LOCAL

Cook Up Christmas Cheer

Holiday baking is a tradition that stretches through time. What person doesn't look forward to the treats the season brings? Cookies are often gifted to friends and family members, and they usually help complete the dessert offerings after the holiday meal.

Sugar cookies are an ideal holiday cookie because of their

versatility. They can be dressed-up however you see fit, whether iced, covered in sprinkles or enjoyed as they are dunked in hot cocoa. To make successful sugar cookies, try this triple-tested recipe courtesy of Monica Buck and Good Housekeeping.

SUGAR COOKIES

Yields 5 dozen cookies

1. Preheat oven to 350 F. In large bowl, with mixer on low speed, beat butter and sugar until blended. Increase speed to high; beat until light and creamy. On low speed, beat in egg and vanilla. Beat in

flour, baking powder and salt until blended.

2. Divide dough into 4 equal pieces; flatten each piece into a disk. Wrap each disk with plastic wrap and refrigerate 1 hour or until dough is firm enough to roll. (Or place dough in freezer 30 minutes.)

3. On a lightly floured surface with a floured rolling pin, roll 1 piece of dough 1/8 inch thick. With floured 3-inch to 4-inch cookie cutters, cut dough into as many cookies as possible; wrap and refrigerate trimmings. Place cookies, 1 inch apart, on ungreased large

cookie sheet.

4. Bake cookies 10 to 12 minutes or until lightly browned. Transfer cookies to wire rack to cool. Repeat with remaining dough and trimmings.

5. When cookies are cool, decorate with frosting if you like; use along with sugars and candies to decorate cookies. Set cookies aside to allow frosting to dry completely, about 1 hour. Store in tightly covered container (with waxed paper between layers if decorated) at room temperature up to 2 weeks, or in freezer up to 3 months.

INGREDIENTS	1 cup (2 sticks) butter, softened ½ cup sugar	1 large egg 1 tbsp vanilla extract	3 cups all-purpose flour ½ tsp baking powder	½ tsp salt Frosting (optional)
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SHOP LOCAL - ALL YEAR LONG

Shop Local Year Round

Sure, Christmas is a great time to shower your loved ones with locally bought gifts. But what about the other major holidays throughout the year?

Extend your yuletide joy to Mother's Day, Father's Day, birthdays and anniversaries for maximum impact on your local community and business owners.

Your effort in doing so may make more of a difference than you realize. A recent collaborative study by the Small Business Administration, United States Department of Labor and other major organizations found that small businesses employ about 77 million Americans and account for 65 percent of all new jobs over the past 17 years.

So by spending your money locally, you are helping keep your friends and neighbors employed during the holiday season and beyond!

Here are some of the other notable findings from the study:

- Eighty-nine percent of consumers agree that independent businesses contribute positively to local economies.
- Residential neighborhoods served by a successful independent business district gained, on average, 50 percent more in home values than their citywide markets.
- Independent retailers

return more than three times as much money per dollar of sales than chain competitors. Independent restaurants return more than two times as much money per dollar of sales than national restaurant chains.

- If independent businesses regained their 1990 market shares, it would create 200,000 new small businesses, generate nearly \$300 billion in revenues and employ more than 1.6 million American workers.
- If just half of the United States employed population spent \$50 each month at locally owned independent businesses, it would generate more than \$42.6 billion in revenue.
- For every square foot a local firm occupies, the local economy gains \$179, vs. \$105 for a chain store.



Make it Merry!

Fun for boys & girls!

NO AGE LIMIT

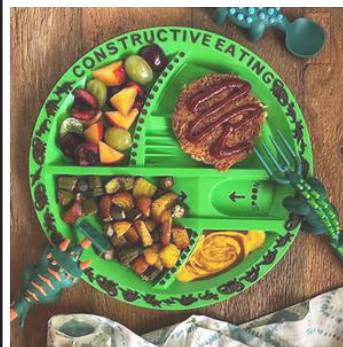


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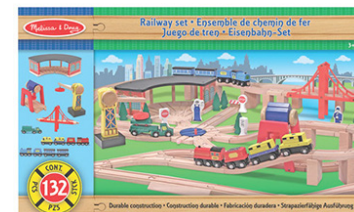


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SHOP LOCAL - MAKING MEMORIES

Make a Child's First Holiday Special

A baby's life is filled with milestones. First smiles, first steps and first words are just a few of the moments parents will treasure.



A baby's first holiday season is another special time to cherish. Shoppers seeking gifts to make a baby's first holiday special have many clever, cute and functional items to choose from. Several of these gifts can become keepsakes to be tucked into memory boxes for growing kids to look at later in life.

- Christmas pajamas: What better way to await for the arrival of Christmas than in a pair of snugly pajamas? Send pajamas ahead of Christmas Day so that new parents will have plenty of adorable photo opportunities as their baby boy or girl tears open the gifts. Stores stock several different fun and festive prints, or look into pajamas that can be personalized.

- Photo print package: Photography packages can involve the entire expanding family and will catalog special moments in time. Purchase studio or on-location time with a private photographer, or use one of the popular photography chains found in malls and department stores.

- Personalized framed print: Commemorate the first holiday season with your child by getting a print made with his or her name and age. Leave a space on the print so that the child's parents can customize it even further with their son or daughter's footprints. Include a

matted frame and child-safe ink or paint to complete the gift.

- Keepsake ornament: Some families embrace the tradition of adding a new ornament to their Christmas trees each year. Purchase an ornament for the new baby with the year so he or she can join in the tradition.

- Crochet or knit blanket: Crafty individuals can make a blanket that the newest addition to the family can enjoy during the chilly days of winter. These blankets often become treasured keepsakes that may be passed down throughout the family or kept tucked away for kids so they can give them to their own children once they start their own families.

- Piggy bank: Foster good saving habits by gifting a personalized piggy bank. Get kids off on the right foot by depositing a few dollars into the bank before giving the gift.

A new baby brings many changes and fun experiences. Gift-givers can make a baby's first holiday season one filled with joy and whimsy with creative gift ideas.

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SHOP LOCAL - STAY SANE

Clever Ways to Clear Out Unwanted Gifts

P lenty of holiday gifts hit the mark in terms of usefulness and desirability. But not every gift-giver has a knack for finding the perfect gift.

According to an ING international survey, 81 million unwanted gifts were received in 2015. One in four people didn't want, use or appreciate the gifts they were given. Even though it's the thought that counts, keeping duplicates of gifts or items that are simply not needed is wasteful and can create clutter around the home.

Rather than filling the dark crevices of a seldom-used closet with unwanted sweaters that don't fit or books you never plan to read, consider these clever ways to clear out unwanted gifts.

• **Return or exchange:** Courteous gift-givers often facilitate returns or exchanges by including gift receipts with the gifts they give. Without a receipt, chances are you cannot get a refund. But you may be able to exchange the gift for store credit at the price the item is currently showing. Something is better than nothing.

• **Swap:** Invite friends or family members over for a post-holiday swap party. Encourage everyone to bring a gift they can't use. Make sure you don't offer up something that one of your invitees may have given you.

• **Sell:** Find out the value of the item and then sell it

online or at a tag sale. What you find unnecessary may be a treasure to someone else.

• **Regift:** According to research by Menulog, a food-delivery service in Australia, 52 percent of people are expected to pass on an unwanted gift on to someone else. Toiletry products are often the first to go. If you choose to regift, try to find someone who will make good use of the item. Don't regift opened packages or used items. Also, be careful not to regift an item to the original gift-giver.

• **Transform:** Turn gifts into something else that can serve a purpose in your life. That itchy sweater may make beautiful doll clothing for a child's imaginative play sessions. Many items can be made to fit your style with a different finish, like a new stain color or coat of paint. Empty unwanted perfumes in decorative bottles and use them as decorative pieces around the house.

Unwanted gifts can be given new life by sharing them with others.



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SHOP LOCAL - QUICK SOLUTIONS

Last Minute Gift Ideas

Early bird shoppers may purchase and even wrap gifts before December, but eleventh-hour shoppers may need some help come the holiday season. For those last-minute folks, there still are plenty of ways to ensure your shopping list is checked off. The following gifts are quick to purchase and can still make for thoughtful presents.

Liquor or wine basket: Prepackaged spirits often come with decorative glasses and other accoutrements for entertaining. What's more, they're convenient to purchase if you're on a time crunch.

Gas station gift card: Drivers

will appreciate a gift card to their favorite fueling station. Such cards suit anyone who has a car and frequently travels or commutes.

Food basket: A visit to the supermarket or a convenience center can yield many tasty finds that can be packaged together into a gift basket. Pair foods with a gift card to that retailer.

Premade gifts: Don't overlook your local pharmacy as a place to find convenient gifts. Look for unique items in the seasonal aisle, where you might be able to find stocking-stuffer toiletries or cosmetic gifts that suit several people on your shopping list.



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