

So what are you buying this holiday season? How will you stretch your budget and make your shopping time more efficient?

Simple answer: plan ahead. My advice is to sit down with a cup of tea and make a green list. Keep this list in a place that you see every day, so you can add to it or check off completed tasks. Consider the life of the gifts you have on your list. Will they still be in use next year, hidden in a closet, or buried in a landfill?

When you look at your completed list, consider the global and local foot print of each item. Then factor in your transportation impact. Are you getting these gifts by driving to the mall, buying locally or letting UPS deliver online purchases?

The Vallejo Chamber of Commerce will soon launch a shopVallejo first campaign. Watch this paper for more information.

If you are giving an electronic item such as a computer or television, include a list of places that will recycle the old ones. Local E-waste recyclers are listed on the Solano County Recycling web site, www.recycle-guide.com. You can find out-of-state recycling centers by calling 1 800 CLEANUP or logging onto www.earth911.org.

About 40 percent of all battery sales occur during the holiday season. Buy Nickel Metal Hydride (N-MHI) rechargeable batteries along with a charger to accompany electronic gifts. This is a good thing since batteries are banned from California landfills. You can recycle household batteries at VALCORE Recycling or Vallejo Garbage Service.

Consider wrapping your gifts in a reusable shopping bag. Google "cloth bags" and be surprised at the variety out there. A Maine company uses old canvas sails (www.seabags.com); others use oil cloth, bamboo, recycled cotton or Eco Spun which is made from recycled water bottles.

Local Global Holiday Faire

The First Christian Church (1135 Indiana Street, 707 552-2900) is holding their annual Global Holiday Faire on December 6 from 9:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m.

This "alternative gift" event raises both money and awareness for nonprofit organizations in our community and around the world.

At the faire, one can purchase an item (farm animal, blanket, tools) through an international agency. That item will be given to someone in need.

Volunteers from several local churches organize this event and all the proceeds go to charitable organizations such as Heifer International, Church World Service (hurricane relief), and local groups. including the Amador St.

Hope Center, DePaul Women's Center and Milestones of Development.

Last year their efforts raised close to \$11,000 that was split between 20 different local and international groups

Lunch is available during the Faire along with holiday music provided by several choirs.

This writer has walked over to the event several times and has been impressed with the diverse community participation.

Local Green Efforts

Recently, a church group asked for donations of leftover fabric through Freecycle. They are sewing holiday toy sacks for disadvantaged children in our area. How creative is that?

Kudos to the local Boy Scouts "Scouting for Food" drive on November 15. This is the second year that they have put paper door hangers on homes instead of plastic bags. In the past, they have delivered plastic bags for the food donations that could become litter on windy days. Paper is recyclable and biodegradable (if the wind catches it). Using paper instead of plastic is better for the planet.

Holiday Travel Tip

Are you picking up relatives for the holidays? Do you hate driving round and round the terminal waiting for them to get their luggage and come out? Give your guests your cell phone number and park in the free cell phone parking lots that are available at the San Francisco, Oakland and San Jose airports. The Sacramento airport offers 30 minute free parking in their hourly areas for you to wait.

Confidential Paper Shredding

The City of Vallejo is sponsoring another paper shredding event on Saturday, November 22 at the VALCORE Recycling Site from 11:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. There will be charge of \$5 per box of paper shredded. Please call VALCORE for more details.

VALCORE Recycling Board Member Jane Bogner's "A Sorted Affair" is published every other week in the Times-Herald. For recycling information call VALCORE Recycling at 645-8258 or visit www.VALCORErecycling.org.

E N D