

Going Green in Londonderry

Reducing Waste at the Holidays

As the holiday season approaches, we are caught up in the hustle and bustle of buying gifts, wrapping them up, and sending cards. This is also a time of year when we seem to create more trash than any other time. However, there are lots of ways to not only reduce waste, but save money at the same time.

Gifts

- **Give and request coupons for chores, or assistance.** Offer to babysit, run errands, make a meal, walk the dog, wash the car, take someone to the doctor, mow the lawn, shovel the driveway, promise an outing to a favorite place...you get the idea. These are often more valuable than any store-bought gift.
- **Share your expertise.** Offer lessons on the computer, how to cook, knit, or sew, or how to play an instrument.
- **Give and request practical gifts** so that the gift will be more likely to be used rather than tossed in a drawer or tossed away such as everyday clothing, favorite food items, music CDs, books, picture albums, a magazine subscription, tickets to the movies or a show, gift certificate for a restaurant, for a haircut, or stamps and stationery for an elderly shut-in.
- If you have a large extended family or a large circle of friends, **initiate a Yankee Swap** where everyone only buys one gift. Exchange names, or pick numbers out of a hat to see who gets to pick the first gift from the pile. The next person gets to choose to keep the gift they have or trade. Set a maximum price for gifts. Make up fun rules – make them all gag gifts, or pick a category that suits your group, or better yet, make them all re-gifts (gifts that you've received in the past that you don't want).
- **Donate to the person's favorite charity.**
- **Downsize** – in this economy maybe this is the right time to scale down and make the holiday more about love of family and friends and less about material things. One family I know has decided that spending time together in a special place is the gift they are giving to each other.

Cards

- **Start by reducing your list.** Are there some people that a phone call would be more cherished? Are there others you no longer want to send to? Can you send a special holiday greeting by email? It's easy to include pictures of the family along in an email.
- **Instead of cards, purchase holiday stationary** or just use colored paper to write your holiday greeting instead of sending both a card and a letter.
- **Reuse last year's cards** by cutting off the front and writing your greeting on the back.

Wrapping Paper

- **Save those gift bags and tissue paper** from gifts that have been given to you and reuse those.
- **Eliminate the wrapping paper** and just add a bow or ribbon (reused, of course!)
- **Use what you have** - wrap a gift for a child in the comics pages, for the business person, wrap it in the Wall Street Journal or the business section, for the sports fan, wrap it in the sports pages. Wrap grandparent's gifts in pictures drawn by the grandkids.
- **Make the wrapping part of the gift** – use a pretty scarf.

Recycle and Reuse

- **Wrapping paper (no foil, plastic or bows), cards and envelopes, both corrugated and gray cardboard can all be recycled in our curbside program.** You can re-purpose one of your old trash cans or any bin by putting a sticker on it that says the contents are papers for recycling or containers for recycling. The stickers can be picked up at Town Hall or the library. Or call Public Works at Town Hall at 432-1100 ext.193 to have one mailed to you.
- **Bring clean packing peanuts** of all types to mail or packaging stores.
- **Set up a special can** at your holiday party to recycle all the cans and bottles instead of throwing them away.
- Wash and **save all that plastic ware** for next year's party.

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