

TIRED OF HIGH FUEL PRICES?



Part of the  **canada.COM Network**

Jump to: Newspapers, TV, Radio

[classifieds](#) [jobs](#) [cars](#) [obituaries](#) [celebrating](#) [shopping](#) [homes](#) [dating](#)



3°C
Partly cloudy
Detailed Forecast

Oceanside Home

Search for in the Oceanside Star

go!LOCAL
OCEANSIDE
PARKSVILLE
FIND LOCAL BUSINESSES

Site Index

- News
- Opinion
- Letters
- Community
- Entertainment
- Driving
- Health & Fitness
- Money
- Adventure
- Contact Us
- Back Issues
- Live Green

Classified

- classifieds
- driving (autos)
- working (jobs)
- homes
- personals
- shopping

Island Papers

Select...

Spotlight



Advertise with the Vancouver Island Newspaper Group

Bookmarks

- City of Parksville
- Parksville Chamber of Commerce
- Town of Qualicum Beach
- Qualicum Beach Chamber of Commerce
- Regional District of Nanaimo
- Oceanside Tourism Association
- Qualicum Beach/Parksville School District
- Vancouver Island Health Authority
- Oceanside Seniors Advisory Network
- Oceanside Volunteer Association

'Tis the season for sustainability

Michele Deakin, Special to Oceanside Star
Published: Monday, December 01, 2008

Only 25 days until Christmas and I've almost completed my shopping. So far it has been low stress and quite enjoyable.

I took a few hours and walked around town with my list in hand. I stopped at several stores. I chatted with store owners and people along the way. I saved gas, got some exercise, and worked my way through several items on the list.

I avoided the busy parking lots, line-ups, crabby shoppers and that awful drained feeling after time at the mall. I returned home feeling somewhat energized and socialized.

Shopping locally is part of creating a sustainable community. As we've seen the global economy decrease and the current financial crisis increase, it's a good time to look closer to home. By shopping locally we keep those funds circulating in our own community through the taxes the businesses pay to the town or regional district.

The wages of people working in local businesses are also spent on groceries, restaurants, movie rentals and other local shopping. The positive impacts go on with money spent locally having up to three times the impact on the community.

Simplifying Christmas giving is another way to make the season sustainable. The media often carry stories about how stressful the season is. Much of that stress comes from not being able to afford that perfect gift.

This drive for more "stuff" has helped create the situation we currently have of peak oil, climate change and dire economic straits.

For an entertaining and easy-to-follow visual story of how our shopping impacts our world, see The Story of Stuff at www.storyofstuff.com. This video explores the connections between environmental and social issues and our shopping habits. It describes how our consumption levels are twice what they were 50 years ago.

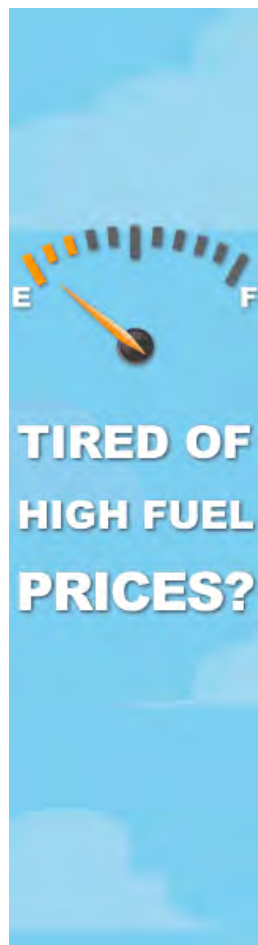
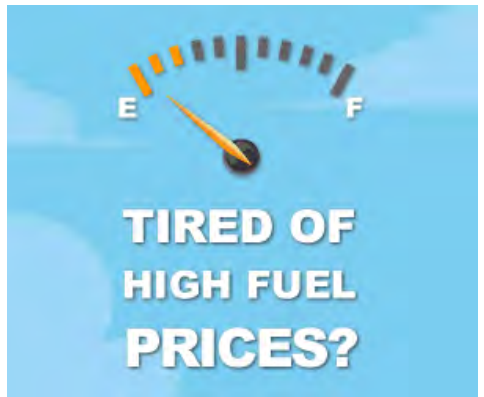
It was about then that U.S. President Dwight Eisenhower's council of economic advisors chairman stated that the ultimate purpose of the government was to produce more consumer goods – not to provide health care, education, a healthy environment, care for seniors or the poor. Since then, not only has our consumption increased but along with it our waste.

In the 1950s planned and perceived obsolescence became important buzz words, and a new way of doing business. As a result, 99% of the materials that we now buy wind up in landfills or recycling depots within only six months of purchase.

It was after a screening of The Story of Stuff at a local school that some teenagers came to understand the impacts of their consumption on the very issues that are concerning them: their future. Without a healthy environment, supplies of fresh water, clean air and sufficient energy, it doesn't look that promising.

I asked one local teen her thoughts on Christmas. This young woman said she was "fully aware of its damage to the environment." She felt that people didn't need to spend lots on stuff that others didn't need, including teenagers.

When I asked her for shopping suggestions, she suggested people do it in one trip, buy environmentally friendly things, look for less packaging, and buy local. Rather than things, she suggested people give gifts of time, to take people places and do activities with them, or buy them tickets to local theatrical productions or a local concert.



SPoil THE SURPRISE

click here for a chance to **WIN** with Intel and Toshiba this holiday season



TOSHIBA
Leading innovation >>>



Part of the **canada.COM** Network

Jump to: Newspapers, TV, Radio

[classifieds](#) [jobs](#) [cars](#) [obituaries](#) [celebrating](#) [shopping](#) [homes](#) [dating](#)



3°C
Partly cloudy
Detailed Forecast

Oceanside Home

Search for in the Oceanside Star

go!LOCAL
OCEANSIDE PARKSVILLE
FIND LOCAL BUSINESSES

Site Index

- News
- Opinion
- Letters
- Community
- Entertainment
- Driving
- Health & Fitness
- Money
- Adventure
- Contact Us
- Back Issues
- Live Green

Classified

- classifieds
- driving (autos)
- working (jobs)
- homes
- personals
- shopping

Island Papers

Select...

Spotlight



Advertise with the Vancouver Island Newspaper Group

'Tis the season for sustainability

Michele Deakin, Special to Oceanside Star
Published: Monday, December 01, 2008

Asked about what makes a good Christmas season, she replied it is about more than the stuff. It is also the sharing of hot chocolate with a friend while volunteering on the Salvation Army kettle; buying gifts for the SOS Christmas fund for those teens; donating some of her money to the food bank and going shopping to buy treats for somebody she doesn't know,

Gifts don't have to cost a lot to mean a lot. Many alternative gift-giving websites suggest we consider gifts of our time -- chores for people, visiting people, doing things that they would appreciate because they can no longer do them for themselves. Making things is becoming popular again. Some of the many ideas include creating a recipe book, creating a book on tape, teaching someone a skill you have, or baking special treats from the kitchen.

Alternative gift-giving has also become a favorite. You can donate to conservation groups that are working to protect your local environment, or donate to groups working on community social issues, or the food bank. You can help give people back their sight, support local drop-in centres for teens or help provide for needy families. The list goes on.

This holiday season, I find I'm having a bunch more fun deciding how best to give to my family here, by giving something useful and sustainable to others in my community. And, when I need a break from the daily routine, I think I'll head back to town and drop in on some more local shops. Perhaps shopping locally is the gift that keeps on giving.

Michele Deakin has an education in business and parks management and is involved in watershed planning, coordinating field work and public discussions related to healthy shorelines, and recovery work in local watersheds and estuaries. Contact her at mdeakin@qualicuminstitute.ca

Email to a friend

Printer friendly

Font:

BOOKMARK

THE NEW AMERICAN EXPRESS™ BUSINESS GOLD REWARDS CARD.

Earn a ticket almost anywhere in North America.

TRY IT FOR A YEAR. FREE.

BUILT FOR BUSINESS OWNERS

TIRED OF HIGH FUEL PRICES?

© Oceanside Star 2008