

## **Made in America Gifts – the birth of a new tradition...**

As the holidays approach, giant Asian factories are kicking into high gear to provide Americans with monstrous piles of cheaply produced goods -- merchandise that has been produced at the expense of American labor.

This year can be different. This year Americans can choose to give the gift of genuine concern for other Americans. There is no longer an excuse that, at gift giving time, nothing can be found that is produced by American hands. Yes there is!

It's time to think outside the box, people. Who says a gift needs to fit in a shirt box, wrapped in Chinese produced wrapping paper?

Everyone -- yes EVERYONE gets their hair cut. How about gift certificates from your local American hair salon or barber? Gym membership? It's appropriate for all ages who are thinking about some health improvement.

Who wouldn't appreciate getting their car detailed? Small, American owned detail shops and car washes would love to sell you a gift certificate or a book of gift certificates.

Are you one of those extravagant givers who think nothing of plonking down the Benjamins on a Chinese made flat-screen? Perhaps that grateful gift receiver would like his driveway sealed, or lawn mowed for the summer, or driveway plowed all winter, or games at the local golf course.

There are a bazillion owner-run restaurants -- all offering gift certificates. And, if your intended isn't the fancy eatery sort, what about a half dozen breakfasts at the local breakfast joint. Remember, folks this isn't about big National chains -- this is about supporting your home town Americans with their financial lives on the line to keep their doors open.

How many people couldn't use an oil change for their car, truck or motorcycle, done at a shop run by the American working guy? Thinking about a heartfelt gift for mom? Mom would LOVE the services of a local cleaning lady for a day.

My computer could use a tune-up, and I KNOW I can find some young guy who is struggling to get his repair business up and running.

OK, you were looking for something more personal. Local crafts people spin their own wool and knit them into scarves. They make jewelry, and pottery and beautiful wooden boxes.

Plan your holiday outings at local, owner operated restaurants and leave your server a nice tip. And, how about going out to see a play or ballet at your hometown theater.

Musicians need love too, so find a venue showcasing local bands.

And do you REALLY need to buy another ten thousand Chinese lights for the house? When you buy a five dollar string of light, only about fifty cents stays in the community. If you have those kinds of bucks to burn, leave the mailman, trash guy or babysitter a nice BIG tip.

You see, Christmas is no longer about draining American pockets so that China can build another glittering city. Christmas is now about caring about US, encouraging American small businesses to keep plugging away to follow their dreams. And, when we care about other Americans, we care about our communities, and the benefits come back to us in ways we couldn't imagine.

THIS can be a new American Christmas tradition... and birthdays, anniversaries, etc.

Remember: "The most important things in life ... are NOT things!"