

Local Holiday

Gift Guide

By Kitty Mayo

We are all getting familiar with the "buy local" movement, and what's not to love? Put money in the pockets of your neighbors, support small businesses run by people who live near you, and help the economy that you live in thrive. Not to mention, increasing your odds of quality, accountability and, plus, it really resonates as the right thing to do.

But, where to start? Among the myriad ideas you can find in these pages for local businesses, here are a few stellar ideas to satisfy your urge to find local gifts this holiday season:

"Wakanda Whooper: The curious cinnamon crane" is a children's book illustrated with the beautiful paintings of Two Harbors resident Lisa Kosmo. Written by her aunt, Sandee Kosmo, the book is a lovely story of a curious, young whooping crane with educational information tucked throughout.

Published in 2016, "Wakanda Whooper" tells of the tallest birds in North America that were at the brink of extinction in the 1940's, with only 17 cranes left in the wild. While the cranes have made an impressive comeback through conservation efforts, the book can serve to inspire young nature lovers with Lisa's amazing illustrations. Lisa earned her Bachelor of Fine Arts from the College of Visual Arts in St. Paul, and this book has received four Purple Dragonfly Book Awards, including second place for illustrations, plus a Moonbeam gold medal award in the environmental issues category.

You can find "Wakanda Whooper" for sale at: <https://www.amazon.com/Wakanda-Whooper-Curious-Cinnamon-Crane/dp/1592987133>.

If you're looking for an ultra-unique gift for that someone that's hard to buy for, consider Daniel Paulson's octopus goblets. (Yes, there's a stunning glass octopus staring at you, or reaching for you, out of the glass's stem!).

Daniel Paulson lives in Two Harbors and is a multi-talented artist, working in glass and clay to create objects and decor that reflect his unique perspective. Wine goblets with spinning marbles in the stem, pendants, bowls, mugs, and display items are all part of his repertoire.

If you spend any amount of time talking to Daniel, you rapidly find out that he loves to give credit to his mentors for the cool skills he's learned. However, what shines through most genuinely in his work is Daniel's energetic personality and his enthusiasm for creating interesting art. Find him on facebook at: Art by Daniel Paulson.

Hammocks have never been out, but now they are really in! At Tree to Tree Hammocks, owned, operated (and sewn) by sisters Brenda Swanson and Leah Bott (both of Two Harbors), you will find what they swear are "the most comfortable hammock you have ever laid in". (If you have never had the pleasure, I suggest you begin immediately.)

If you are stumped for what to get that young adult in your life (you know, the one who subtly sneers at every idea you think is "cool"), here's your chance to get them something to do what all the kids are doing: "hanging".

Really a great idea for people of all ages, Tree to Tree hammocks are all fleece-lined for super coziness, durable and have a weight capacity of 400 pounds. A Tree to Tree hammock comes with a pillow, tree slings (straps and hardware for hanging), and a carrying pouch.

Check out all their nifty colors and patterns at: <http://treetotreegear.com>, or find them at Buddy's Mercantile and Cedar Coffee Company in Two Harbors.

Celebrate the Holidays Ely Style

We invite everyone to enjoy the magic of the holidays in Ely Style. You won't want to miss these special and memorable holiday traditions mixed with plenty of small town charm.

FESTIVAL OF TREES

This annual fundraiser for Northwoods Partners features decorated trees and wreaths donated by local businesses and community members that are auctioned off from November 23 through December 3. There are also hand-made gifts available for purchase as part of the fundraiser. It all kicks off with a Tree Lighting Ceremony on Thanksgiving evening at 5:00 p.m. followed by refreshments and music until 6:00 p.m. Join us on Thanksgiving Evening at the Grand Ely Lodge for a magnificent yuletide display of trees and wreaths and enjoy refreshments and entertainment.

THANKSGIVING NIGHT SHOPPING

Many communities have longstanding traditions that are part of small town culture and Ely is no different. Since the 1980s, Ely merchants have been opening their doors for Thanksgiving Night Shopping at 6:00 p.m. This is a social occasion in which friends come out to see their neighbors and celebrate the holiday together. After attending the Tree Lighting Ceremony for the Festival of Trees, people bundle up and take a stroll downtown to socialize and to start their holiday shopping. A visitor described it as a Hallmark moment during a hectic shopping season. Ely merchants welcome people with goodies and holiday cheer and invite friends, neighbors and our out-of-town guests to share the holiday spirit with them.

HOLIDAY FANTASY

The Ely Arts and Heritage Center presents Holiday Fantasy, a two-day event that is a celebration of gifts, art and winter. On Friday, November 24 from noon to 4:00 p.m. and Saturday, November 25 from 10:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m., Miners Dry Building at the Pioneer Mine will be turned into a Christmas Fantasy with carolers, kid's crafts, and sleigh rides. Mr. and

Mrs. Claus will be there too! Many artists and craftsman showcase and sell their art, handcrafted jewelry, wood, pottery and much more – a perfect opportunity to find a great gift for that special someone.

SMALL TOWN CHRISTMAS

There is something special about Christmas in a small town - walking down the street, darting in and out of beautifully decorated shops and talking with merchants who really want to help people find that perfect gift from a great selection of unique items and quality gifts. On Saturday, November 25, Ely merchants invite everyone to experience the quaint, neighborly atmosphere of holiday shopping in a small town. The Ely Chamber of Commerce sponsors this event, which includes multiple chances to win \$20 in Chamber Bucks – just sign up at each participating merchant. The more merchants visited the greater chance to win! No purchase necessary. After everything has been crossed from their list, folks can enjoy a relaxing dinner at one of our great restaurants as they wait for the holiday parade to start.

"DANCING SNOWFLAKES" CHRISTMAS PARADE AND CITY TREE LIGHTING

The Ely Chamber of Commerce and City of Ely join together to celebrate the holidays in true Northwoods style. After an enjoyable day of shopping, residents and visitors will be treated to another special Ely tradition – the Christmas parade, this year named the Dancing Snowflakes Christmas Parade. At 5:00 p.m. kids, holding empty bags in anticipation of getting some goodies, line the streets with their parents, neighbors, and visitors to see the beautifully decorated and sometimes quirky floats and other entries go past. The parade ends at Ely's beautiful Whiteside Park where the festivities continue as Mayor Chuck Novak turns on the City's Christmas Tree Lights, carolers sing about the joys of the season and everyone enjoys complimentary hot refreshments and cookies.

For more information visit the events calendar at www.ely.org.

Earth-Friendly Ways To Celebrate The Holidays

by Kate Jackson

With the holiday season now well underway, most everyone is busy planning parties, shopping for gifts or packing up for a trip to visit loved ones. In the midst of all the fun and festivities of this exciting time of year, it can be easy to forget the impact our celebrations might have on the health of the environment. But being eco-conscious doesn't have to get in the way of your merry-making - there are a few very simple steps anyone can take toward having a greener holiday season.

One simple way to make a dent in our undesirable impact on the earth this Christmas is to look a little closer at some of the things we tend to take for granted, even something as simple as the way we wrap our gifts.

Believe it or not, half of the paper consumed in America annually is used for wrapping purposes, which produces over 4 million tons of waste every year. If even a few of us made an effort to recycle their paper waste during the holidays - like wrapping paper, boxes and packing materials - this amount of waste would be dramatically reduced.

These days, most store-bought wrapping paper can easily be recycled and some are even made out of recycled materials. Better yet, look for creative ways to package gifts that leave the paper out altogether, like placing them in reusable fabric bags or wrapping them in scraps of pretty fabric.

Of course, finding ways to reduce our holiday waste isn't the only path to becoming good stewards of the earth all throughout the year.

Consider creating some new family traditions that do something good for the earth, while at the same time celebrating the season. Try participating in a local annual bird count, potting a tree to be planted in the spring or even decorating a tree in your yard with snacks for the birds; these are all festive ways to do some good for the planet

that can be repeated year after year.

Let's not forget that Christmas time, with all its joy and fun, revolves around children most of all. Getting your kids involved in the effort toward a more earth-friendly holiday can make it that much more enjoyable. Kids often love working on crafts and making baked goods, great activities that focus on giving and create little waste. The product of these fun and festive activities can serve as beautiful and meaningful gifts for friends or family.

Reduce environmental impact by considering taking the focus off buying products and putting it back on the real meaning of the season: giving. For many, receiving a handmade gift or baked good can mean so much more than a store-bought item. You might also consider making a charitable donation in honor of a friend or even simply offer to give the gift of your time to a busy loved one. Gifts like these have little to no impact on the environment and are often much more valuable to the recipients.

Of course, most of us will purchase at least a few store-bought gifts for others this holiday season. So, as we rush to find those perfect gifts this year, bear in mind that shopping locally is not only good for our area economy - it's also great for the earth. Buying products that are made locally means limiting or eliminating the negative impact that transporting goods long distances can have on the environment. Local products also tend to be made more ethically overall and are often of much better quality.

No matter how you and your family choose to celebrate this festive season, the ways to make your celebrations more eco-conscious are seemingly endless. Even the smallest steps can make a huge difference to the planet in the long run; incorporating these habits into our traditions now ensures that future generations will continue to think green for the holidays and beyond.