



## Inside

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- Antique Niche
- Centerpiece Ideas

# Holiday

# GIFT

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# GUIDE

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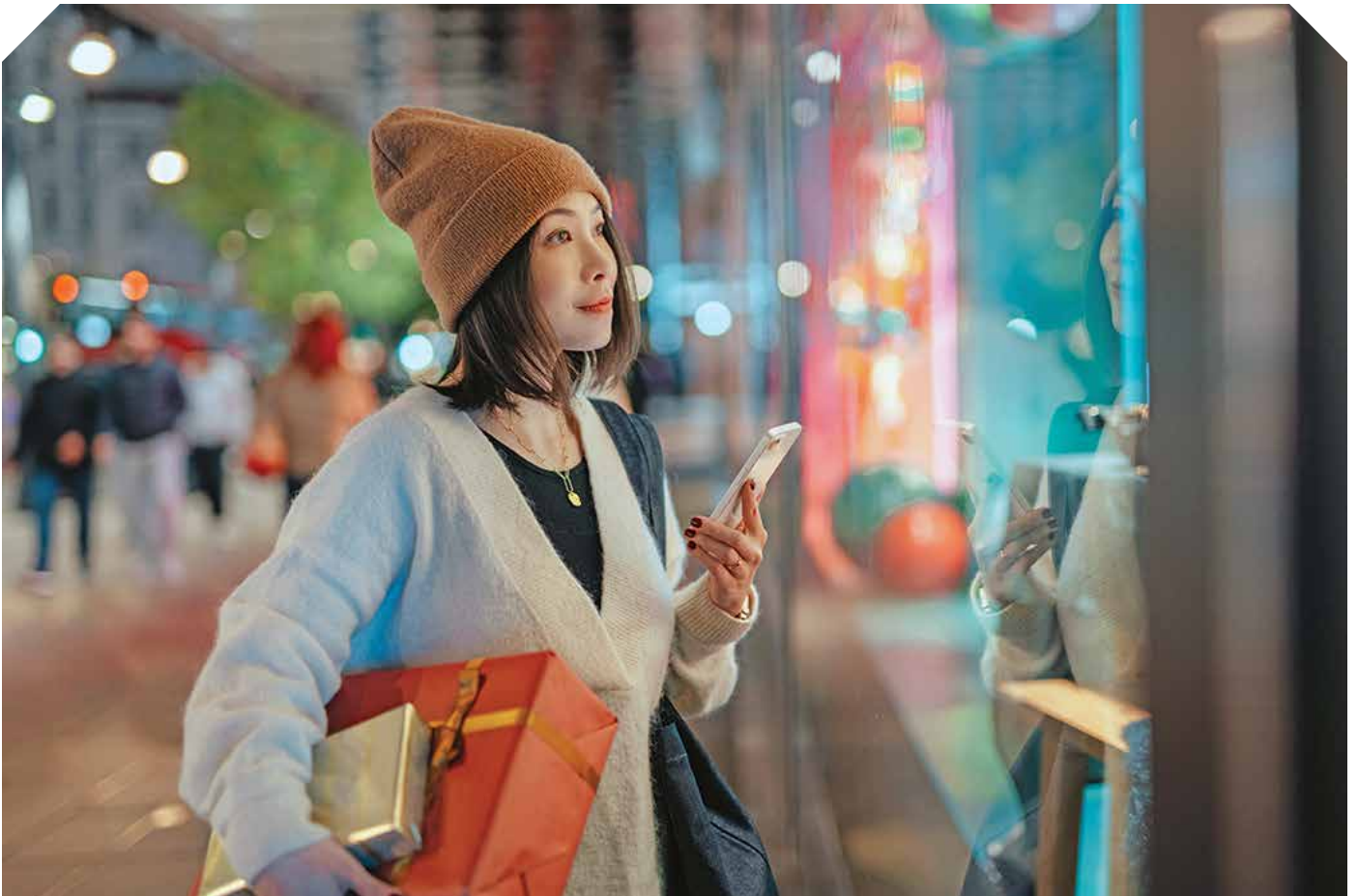
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## THE BENEFITS OF SHOPPING LOCALLY

# Small shops still reeling from pandemic

The importance of shopping locally has been emphasized with increasing urgency in recent years.

Events like Small Business Saturday and Plaid Friday have brought some much-needed attention to the importance of shopping local, which is even more crucial now as so many small businesses try to survive in the wake of the pandemic.

A poll from the trade group the National Federation of Independent Business reported that about half of all the businesses in the survey reported a 25% drop in sales since the outbreak of the COVID-19 virus, and roughly one in five businesses have seen sales decline by more than 50%. If the economic climate does not radically improve, 20% of small businesses won't survive.

According to NBC News, small businesses employ 60 million people in the United States, almost half of the nation's private-sector employees.

In addition, small businesses generate tax revenues that help communities by funding schools, maintaining parks and contributing to public safety programs. However, based on research from the Federal Reserve Bank of New York, even before COVID-19 spread across the world, only 20% of healthy small businesses had sufficient cash reserves to continue to operate if they experienced a revenue loss for two months. Some have been shuttered for much longer.

Individuals looking for everything from clothing to home improvement services to office supplies can look to small businesses to fill those needs:

- Look for small businesses for any and all of your shopping needs. Chances are items sold by big box retailers also are sold by small businesses. When the options are the same or similar, purchase from a small business instead of its big box competitor.
- Readily provide recommendations

of small businesses with which you have done business. Too often people are quick to complain about places that have failed them, but those same people don't think to say kind words about companies that went above and beyond. Share great experiences on social media or through word of mouth.

- Talk to small businesses owners first if you have an issue. It's tempting to go directly to social media to complain about something, but such complaints can have a dire impact. Always take issues to the manager or business owner first to see if a resolution can be reached. A manager may not be aware of an issue at all. Give small businesses a chance to make it right before taking things public.

- If you own a small business, rely on other small businesses to fulfill your needs. Order supplies from fellow small business owners, seek the help of local financial advisors and tax professionals and use local suppliers and delivery personnel.

Holiday shoppers can help local, small businesses by frequenting local stores and buying gifts. Small businesses are still recovering from the COVID-19 pandemic shut downs. By supporting small businesses, communities can help them regain stable footing for the future.

STOCK PHOTO *Holiday Gift Guide*



# Recycle and reduce waste for the holidays

The holiday season is a special time of year. Individuals often spend a little more on gifts, indulge a little more on rich foods and treats and make a concerted effort to enjoy more time with their loved ones during the holidays.

The tendency to overdo things during the holiday season can create a lot of waste. In fact, Americans produce 25% more garbage from Thanksgiving through the end of the year, according to Waste Advantage magazine, a publication of the waste and recycling industry. That uptick equates to one million tons of extra trash per week throughout the holidays.

Extra food, plastic and paper waste is generated this time of year, but people can be mindful of the potential to go overboard and take some steps to be more waste-conscious as they entertain.

## Reuse wrapping

Reuse a small portion of wrapping paper or look for other wrapping items. Sunday comics, newsprint, colorful magazine pages, and even pieces of fabric can be

used to wrap gifts in lieu of purchasing new wrapping paper. Otherwise, collect used wrapping paper and reuse it next year, doing the same with boxes and bows. According to researchers at Stanford University, if every American family wrapped just three presents in reused materials, it would save enough paper to cover 45,000 football fields.

## Skip disposables

Skip disposable party items. It's certainly easy to use disposable plates, napkins and cups when hosting holiday parties, but that is very wasteful. Opt for durable, reusable products that can be packed away and used each year during holiday events.

## Mark recycling

Set up marked trash and recycling receptacles. Remind party guests to recycle the appropriate materials by clearly marking a pail designed for collecting recyclables, such as cans, plastic beverage bottles and glass wine bottles. Most hard plastics can be recycled.

## Buy reusable gifts

Buy durable and reusable items as gifts. Avoid fad gifts and focus on items that will have staying power. Homemade gifts, such as foods, knitted scarves, artwork, and more, are generally eco-friendly.

## Unsubscribe

Remove your name from catalog lists. Call companies and ask to be taken off promotional mailing lists to reduce paper waste.

## Send a photo

Mail holiday card recipients photos of the kids or the entire family in lieu of cards. They're apt to save the photos and display them, helping to keep even more paper trash out of landfills.

## Research new recipes

With an abundance of food remaining after entertaining, turn leftovers into new meals by exploring recipes from friends or by doing a little research online.

(METRO CREATIVE)



# Finding her antique niche

## NEW STOREFRONT FULFILLS OWNER'S PLANS

By **Jason Arndt**  
STAFF WRITER

For five years, Luberry's owner Lauryn Mattilla sold her antiques, vintage items and more at area markets in Kenosha, Waterford and Antioch, Illinois.

Mattilla, however, always had interest in opening a storefront in Burlington, where she lives with her husband and three children.

When local card and collector store Campaign Plus relocated from Pine Street to 208 Chestnut Street, Mattilla found an opening and seized the opportunity.

"I just decided to jump at the chance and do my own things because this space opened up," Mattilla said in her new storefront at 532 N. Pine St. "It was great timing, so I just felt it was right to bring my brand to Burlington."

Luberry's is a curated home decor store consisting of vintage items, antiques, primitives, and handmade decor.

Additionally, she plans to offer classes on seasonal decor and furniture as well as interior design services as she specializes

in painting/restoring furniture and home staging, the Burlington Area Chamber and Commerce wrote on its Facebook page.

### Early inspiration

Growing up in Oconomowoc area, Mattilla recalled spending time with her grandmother, who demonstrated a passion for home decor.

Her grandmother's passion soon became a multi-generation family activity, spreading to her mother, before passing it on to Mattilla.

"I have such a passion, I guess for decorating and seasonal items. My mom as well and we both got it from her mom," Mattilla said. "I remember growing up, she would let me make stuff for her sales. It is kind of in the family."

In 2017, Mattilla decided to follow her own passion, opening up booth spaces in Kenosha, Waterford, Antioch, and other area artisan markets.

She opted to call her new business, Luberry's since Luberry was her childhood nickname.

While she has been to many markets, residents in Waterford likely know Luberry's products the best, she said.

"Those were great. Those were really fun because it was a great way to market your business," she said.

Mattilla, who eventually moved to Racine with her family, relocated to Burlington about four years ago.

For the next four years, she found the downtown area charming, and often had an interest in becoming a bigger part of the community.

"We haven't been here super long, but we love it. Opening up a store down here is my dream," she said. "I know there is so much traffic down here and really busy, it is just so cute."

### Refine and revive

Mattilla typically receives her inventory through barn sales, flea markets and a network of other antique collectors in both northern Illinois and southern Wisconsin.

• CONTINUED ON PAGE 15

Lauryn Mattilla, owner of Luberry's, recently opened a new storefront in downtown Burlington at 532 N. Pine St. She specializes in home decor, vintage and antique items, and even offers home staging services.

*Treat her to a little holiday surprise!*



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Encourage children to leave their screens behind and get active with smart gift choices.

STOCK PHOTO Holiday Gift Guide

# Screen-free holiday gift ideas for families

Holiday shopping for families with children? Check out these five totally screen-free gift ideas that are sure to brighten the season by getting families to spend some much-needed quality time together.

## Upgraded outdoor games

Give outdoor play an upgrade with KidiGo NexTag from VTech, designed for ages 5 and older. Way more than just tag, it's a high-tech spin on 20 different backyard games including capture the flag, freeze tag and hide-and-seek. To play, all you need are the four included electronic units and adjustable arm bands.

A friendly voice explains the quick and easy-to-learn rules and no referee is required – the game lets you know who got tagged, who's safe and who's it. With single- and multi-player options, the whole family can get in on the fun, especially when you combine two systems. Play indoors or out with a 135-

foot range between units. All you have to do is press the big button and tag, you're it.

## Kitchen assistance

Introduce adults and kids alike to the fundamentals of baking with a family-friendly baking kit subscription. Each month, a new kit is mailed to your recipients' home with recipes, activity booklets and all the ingredients needed to create something delicious.

## Swim time

The weather may be frightful, but that's no reason why families can't enjoy a delightful day at the pool. Consider gifting your favorite family with a day pass to an indoor aquatic center or water park. For families with young children, look for a facility that offers splash pads and swim lessons. For those with older kids who are already proficient

• CONTINUED ON PAGE 15

## Featured Brands:

- Birkenstock
- Cobb Hill
- Dansko
- Haflinger
- Hey Dude
- Merrell
- New Balance
- Red Wing
- Twisted X
- Bogs
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# Gift ideas that save energy

## (AND DO A WORLD OF GOOD)

When checking your holiday list, you're searching for gifts that inspire joy and delight, and electronic items often fit that description. But what if that gift also happens to have a positive impact on your loved one's life and the world at large? With all that has happened in the last couple of years, many of us have a greater appreciation for the things that protect the health of the planet for everyone.

Whether you're shopping for a shiny new appliance or gadgets to make someone's life easier, here's how your gift can do a world of good – look for products that have earned the Energy Star label. These are independently certified to use less energy than standard products, which not only saves money on energy costs, but also makes a difference for the climate.

To inspire you, here are a few holiday shopping list ideas:

### Cool savings on hot electronics

Did you know the average household owns 24 consumer electronics products? The more you invest in items designed to save energy, the more the savings will rack up. That has become even more important these days as families continue to use multiple electronics for work and school. For catching up on favorite shows, tablets use four times less energy than streaming to a laptop and 15 times less than a desktop computer. An energy-efficient sound bar offers a sleek solution to achieving that rich stereo effect, but uses 70% less energy than a conventional model.

### Save on heating costs

Families are still spending more time at home and energy bills have skyrocketed. Smart thermostats take the guesswork out of maximizing energy efficiency, and choosing an ENERGY STAR certified smart thermostat means savings you can trust. Plus, they make great gifts. Were everyone to make the switch, we'd save 56 trillion BTUs of energy and \$740 million a year, offsetting 13 billion pounds of annual greenhouse gas emissions.

### Appliances that save

Even when the purchase price is nice, don't overlook this hidden cost of owning appliances: the cost of operating the product. So, if you're eyeing a new washer/dryer set as the perfect holiday gift, make sure it's energy efficient. You'll feel good helping your loved one realize more than 20% savings on their electric bill while using one-third less water compared to the



Do the world a favor and shop with energy savings in mind this holiday season. From rechargeable batteries to Energy Star appliances, look for ways to give green this year.

STOCK PHOTO *Holiday Gift Guide*

standard models.

### Stocking stuffers

Here's a small gift that can light up their lives and save some serious bucks. Just one energy-efficient, LED light bulb can save more than \$50 in electricity costs over its lifetime. If each American home replaced just a single bulb with one that earned the Energy Star certification, we'd prevent more than 7 billion pounds of greenhouse gas emissions.

### Charge it up

And if big gifts are part of your holiday plan, remember to check out electric vehicles and an Energy Star certified charger. EVs are the future of driving and you (or your loved one) can save an average of \$800 to \$1,000 a year on fuel and an average of \$4,600 on maintenance over the lifetime of the vehicle. An Energy

Star certified charger completes the gift and uses 40% less energy in standby mode than the standard. Be sure to check for federal tax credits and utility rebates to sweeten the deal.

Still looking for a great gift that is both innovative and energy efficient? Check out [energystar.gov/holiday](http://energystar.gov/holiday) for everything you need to help your loved ones save money and protect the climate all year long.

(BPT)





## EXPERIENTIAL GIFTS FOR SENIORS

Holiday shoppers know that, seemingly every year, there's one person on their shopping list who's hard to shop for. Seniors may fit that bill, as many have already accumulated a lifetime's worth of goods and gadgets. That's why experiential gifts can be such a good fit for seniors come the holiday season.

Experiential gifts are wildly popular. In its 2021 Winter Holiday Shopping Report, the market research firm Mintel revealed that nearly half of individuals surveyed for the report felt that experiential gifts are superior to tangible items.

Seniors who already have everything they need might be even more enthusiastic about experiential gifts, which may encourage them to get out of the house or pursue passions they've long had a passing interest in. This holiday season, shoppers can consider these experiences as they look for something new and unique for the seniors on their shopping lists.

### Biplane flight

Few experiences are as exhilarating as a flight in an open cockpit biplane. Biplane flights are unique to each company

that offers them, but some planes can accommodate two passengers (in addition to the pilot), making this an ideal gift for senior couples who aren't afraid of a bird's eye view.

The length of a flight depends on shoppers' budgets, but no matter how long seniors are in the air, they're sure to return to the ground having enjoyed a truly unique experience.

### Hot air balloon ride

If riding shotgun with a pilot in a tiny plane is more adventure than your favorite senior may be seeking, a hot air balloon ride may be more suitable.

Hot air balloon rides provide a truly stunning way to experience idyllic settings and a calm way to take to the skies on a beautiful day. Rides tend to last around an hour, but companies typically offer various packages and may even let shoppers customize rides for their loved ones.

### Theatre tickets

The COVID-19 pandemic hasn't been easy for anyone, but seniors were among the groups most vulnerable to serious

infection if they caught the virus. As a result, many seniors strictly adhered to social distancing guidelines prior to getting vaccinated.

Now that seniors are eligible to be fully vaccinated and even receive two rounds of booster shots, a trip to the theatre can reignite their passion for live entertainment and make for a memorable night out.

### Cycling tour

Modern seniors are among the most physically active demographics. A 2020 study published in the *Journal of Medical Internet Research* found that, within months of the pandemic being declared, adults age 65 and older averaged 100 more minutes of physical activity than the next closest cohort.

A cycling tour can make for a perfect gift to active seniors. Tours may be designed to visit local places of historical significance, idyllic natural settings or local eateries. Wherever the tours ultimately end up, they're sure to put a smile on active seniors' faces.

(METRO CREATIVE)





# Great gifts for school-aged children

Successful shopping for adults on a holiday list often involves identifying a loved one's favorite hobby and then finding something that makes that hobby even more enjoyable. For example, a new e-reader can be just what the family bookworm needs to make reading even more immersive.

School-aged children may not be so simple to shop for, as their interests are always evolving and they tend to outgrow toys as quickly as their growing bodies outgrow their clothes. No two kids are the same, but these gift ideas can appeal to school-aged youngsters at a time in their lives when their curiosity is always piqued.

## STEM gifts

Parents know that the term **STEM** is an acronym for Science, Technology, Engineering, and Math. These academic disciplines have gained heightened importance over the last couple of decades, and many toy manufacturers now make products that reinforce STEM lessons kids learn in the classroom in a fun way. STEM-

based toys are available for kids of all ages, including children who are still in diapers.

## Nature-based gifts

Many parents do everything they can to reduce the amount of time their kids spend looking at screens, which is a tall order in the digital era. But various manufacturers produce toys designed to help kids be more physically active in the great outdoors.

From age-appropriate binoculars that encourage kids to explore natural settings to birdhouses and fairy gardens kids can build and paint in their favorite colors, shoppers can choose from a host of nature-based gifts that encourage kids to get away from their screens and enjoy the great outdoors.

## Board games

Board games remain a wonderful way for kids to learn and have fun doing it. Board games are made for kids of all ages, and they're not just fun, but also beneficial to early childhood development.

For example, clinical psychologist Beatrice Tauber Prior, Psy.D. noted to the children's book publisher and distributor Scholastic that board games requiring strategy help the frontal lobes of the brain develop. Those lobes are responsible for planning, organizing and decision-making. Board games also provide opportunities for families to spend quality time together free from distractions.

## Cookbooks

Cookbooks are another great gift for school-aged youngsters, who can learn a lot from pitching in at dinnertime. Children who cook with their parents can learn valuable lessons about nutrition and measuring ingredients can reinforce lessons learned in the classroom.

Shoppers can choose from any number of cookbooks designed for kids, and even children as young as two can pitch in when baking cookies or preparing family meals.

(METRO CREATIVE)

Shopping for school-aged children during the holiday season can be made easier with some suggestions that can reinforce classroom lessons while keeping the focus on fun.

STOCK PHOTO *Holiday Gift Guide*

# Safety first when buying toys for children this holiday season

December is a special time of year for children, millions of whom await the arrival of Santa Claus and the bounty of toys he delivers each year. When buying holiday gifts for youngsters, adults must consider safety.

According to the Alliance for Children and Families, about 217,000 children are treated at hospital emergency rooms for toy-related injuries each year.

Holiday shoppers are urged to stick to age-related recommendations on product packaging and avoid toys that do not contain the American Society for Testing and Materials label.

(METRO CREATIVE)





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# Easy holiday centerpiece ideas

The holiday season is a great time to make any home a bit more merry and bright. Most individuals let their personalities show through their home decor, and holiday decorating is just as personal as decorating throughout the rest of the year.

The main living areas of a home get the most decorating attention, with a Christmas tree or menorah taking a prominent position in the front window. Garlands, candles and other accoutrements also may dress up spaces. However, when it comes to holiday hosting, attention also should be given to the dining table, which can benefit from a festive centerpiece.

Premade centerpieces are undeniably attractive, but adding a homespun touch can be a fun creative pursuit and become a family tradition. Explore these eight simple ideas to dress up your holiday table.

## Frosted pine cones

Take advantage of a crisp winter's day to venture into a forest or park that is rich with evergreen trees. Gather pine cones from the forest floor and, if possible, a few evergreen boughs. Give the pine cones a touch of winter whimsy with a little faux snow in a can or even white paint. Nestle the boughs and pine cones into a wide-mouthed vase or bowl in the center of the table. Individual pine cones

can later be turned into place cards for seating guests.

## Holiday thanks

Cut many strips of paper roughly 6 inches in length from various colored pieces of paper to match the holiday theme. When guests arrive, ask them to write a favorite holiday memory or two, or what they're thankful for.

Twirl the paper strips around a pencil to curl them, and then place the curlicues into a decorative bowl in the center of the table. Later in the evening, the host or hostess can read some of the sentiments.

## Magical forest

Use green and silver conical party hats to turn a table or sideboard into a veritable evergreen forest. Arrange them on a blanket of faux snow or white confetti.

## Freshly cut

Select attractive flowers in vibrant holiday hues from a florist or even the supermarket floral section. Cut the stems and place them into an unusual display container, such as holiday themed mugs or a punch bowl.

## Glass baubles

Who says ornaments should be exclusive to the tree? A crystal or glass cake stand can

be transformed into an icy delight when topped with silver and clear glass ornaments.

## Birch wood

The crisp white coloring of birch bark is right at home with holiday decor. Go stark with pieces of the cut wood in varying heights intermingled with white candles that mimic the shapes and scale of the wood.

## Fruit and vegetables

If guests are coming over and the race is on for a fast centerpiece, look no further than the kitchen. Lemons, artichokes, pears, or pomegranates look festive in a bowl interspersed with some greenery and baby's breath.

## Cornucopia

The horn of plenty can be customized to any holiday. Purchase a horn in wicker or woven grapevine and fill with flowers, fruit and greenery, or even painted gourds or miniature pumpkins.

(METRO CREATIVE)

Holiday hosts and hostesses should not neglect the dining table when they decorate. Festive centerpieces can be handmade without much effort on the part of hosts.

STOCK PHOTO *Holiday Gift Guide*

# When did Christmas lights become so popular?

Holiday lights are now everywhere come the holiday season. Private homeowners tend to hang the holiday lights outside their homes around Thanksgiving weekend and keep them up through New Year's Day.

Though it might seem like a tradition without a deep history, decorating a Christmas tree with electric lights can be traced all the way back to the nineteenth century.

In 1882, Edward Johnson, who was a friend and colleague of the man who invented light bulbs, Thomas Edison, replaced candles, which had traditionally been used to briefly light Christmas trees, with light bulbs. But at the time of Johnson's innovation, the high cost and relative infancy of light bulbs ensured the idea did not catch on.

And though U.S. President Grover Cleveland used electric lights to illuminate a Christmas tree in the White House in 1895, it would be another eight years before General Electric would begin selling Christmas light kits. Those kits cost \$12 in 1903, which equates to several hundred dollars today. The first outdoor Christmas light shows started to become popular in the 1920s, and this is the same time when commercial sales of Christmas lights picked up.

In the 1960s, GE's decision to begin manufacturing Christmas lights overseas helped reduce the price of outdoor lights even further, thus paving the way for the tradition of decorating home exteriors with string lights during the holiday season to take a firm hold. And that tradition remains wildly popular today.

(METRO CREATIVE)



Decorating for the holidays with lighted displays is a tradition in the United States.

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# Need a holiday gift idea?

## TEACH YOUR CHILD A DIY SKILL

It's true at any age: The more do-it-yourself skills we can develop, the better control we'll have when it comes to maintaining our homes, vehicles and the other material assets that help us lead productive and enjoyable lives.

That's why it's so important to keep teaching our children such practical skills as they grow into adulthood. As kids learn how to handle their own tasks surrounding home maintenance, small engine repair, auto mechanics and other elements of day-to-day life, they develop confidence in their own abilities and hone the problem-solving skills that will help them succeed.

Further, when you take an active role in imparting such valuable "garage logic," you can create bonding experiences that strengthen intergenerational relationships.

"Sharing a mutual goal, combining strengths, helping each other and negotiating decisions together can foster a sense of teamwork and bring people closer," advises Kristen Mosier on BobVila.com. "And, of course, admiring a finished project is sweeter when shared."

This holiday season, you may wish to invest in your child's future by giving them the gift of practical DIY knowledge. Here are suggestions for making that happen.

### Explore their areas of interest

Be proactive by talking to your child ahead of time about the skills he or she would most like to learn. Your teenager may wish to seize independence by learning how to repair her own car, while your green-thumbed youngster may be most enthusiastic about mastering the mechanics of your yard and garden equipment.

### Share areas of expertise

If you're skilled in a certain category,



you might feel especially proud and happy to pass that specific knowledge on to the next generation. Tell your child the story of how you acquired your own abilities, and explain why you're excited to be sharing them with the next generation.

### Establish good habits

Teach kids to prioritize a safe work environment by insisting on protective gear such as safety glasses, earphones, masks and gloves. Make sure everyone involved in the project participates in keeping floors, counters, tools and other elements cleared off, hazard-free and well organized.

### Make tools part of your gift

When the majority of your lesson is finished, consider passing the tools you've used on to your child - or, buy them their own new set they can continue using once they leave your household. With its huge span of machinery, tools and equipment, Northern Tool + Equipment is a great place to walk the aisles and explore tools to help your child fill up their tool belt.

"We're in the business of providing the essential tools and gear that people need

to handle any tough job that comes their way, whether they're pros or DIYers," said Suresh Krishna, President and CEO of Northern Tool. "The gift of high-quality tools is one that can keep on giving for years to come, and can help instill pride in working with one's hands at an early age."

### Create maximum fun

Make sure to create positive memories by making your experiences enjoyable for everyone involved. That means anticipating mistakes, remaining patient, explaining how errors can be corrected and making sure your child knows they're not expected to know everything right away. Ideally, you'll both look back on your experience with fondness, not confusion or regret.

### Celebrate achievements

Once your child has mastered a skill, praise them for having the patience and attentiveness to see it through. Remind them of how the knowledge they've learned can serve them well in the future, and celebrate their new achievement as a family however and whenever that's appropriate.

(BPT)

This holiday season, helping your child learn a new and practical skill could be a wonderful alternative to a more traditional gift. Consider a present of your time and expertise that could make your child more knowledgeable, confident and self-sufficient as they face life's everyday challenges.

STOCK PHOTO *Holiday Gift Guide*



# PREVENTING SCAMS AND FRAUD THIS HOLIDAY SEASON

Scams and fraud are more deceiving these days, reaching you in more ways than ever before. The FTC reported 2.8 million fraud reports from consumers in 2021 alone, with reported fraud losses increasing 70% from 2020 and more than \$5.8 million.

Scammers begin their traditional uptick at the start of the holiday season, and identity theft protection expert Carrie Kerskie says being aware of what new cyber and phone fraud trends to look out for is your biggest defense against unwanted fraud.

“The more that we can get this information out there the better,” Kerskie recently told T-Mobile Stories, “Unfortunately when it comes to technology, privacy and identity theft, the same old advice that was given 10, 15 years ago is still the gospel of what you’re supposed to do. And that is outdated. None of it works. It’s not true, it’s not relevant anymore.”

Scammers have expanded from targeting consumers with only traditional email and phone calls. The most recent trending scams are occurring using person-to-person payment platforms or P2P, remote access software and even public Wi-Fi.

Kerskie says the most desirable

accounts to criminals include bank accounts, mobile phone accounts, credit card accounts and Amazon accounts. Now, with P2P payment platforms, criminals can get access to your bank account and use it to transfer money within moments.

The latest tactic that concerns Kerskie is using remote access software to gain access to everything on your computer without having to directly ask you for things like your social security number, bank account or credit card number. While many workers use remote access software safely from their companies’ IT departments, criminals are also using this software in their scams.

Criminals also try to access your information in settings like coffee shops or libraries using public Wi-Fi. A laptop or smartphone using public Wi-Fi can easily fall victim to scams. An easy fix is to use your smartphone’s wireless data and hotspot to help keep your personal information secure.

Kerskie says there are ways to keep scammers and fraud at bay ahead of the holiday shopping season.

## Prioritize privacy

Kerskie says, if it’s easy for you, it’s easy for a criminal. Privacy means

having strong and unique passwords with a minimum of 12 characters, and for pins using random numbers and taking advantage of extra security. Enabling multi-factor authentication on your various apps and accounts will also protect yourself from potential threats.

## Use available resources

Take advantage of the free anti-fraud safeguards offered by your mobile carrier. In the case of T-Mobile’s Scam Shield, services include enhanced caller ID, scam ID and blocking, which flags suspicious calls and gives customers the option of blocking those numbers. Additionally, customers can get a free second number to keep their personal number personal, or even change their primary number completely.

## Validate or eliminate

Whatever potential threat you come across via email, text message, letter or even a phone call, try to validate the information. If you cannot confirm the information is true or confirm the senders’ validity, throw it away, block the phone number or email address and report it as spam or junk

(STATEPOINT)

# Tips for a safe New Year's Eve

New Year's Eve is one of the most festive nights of the year. Despite its reputation for revelry, New Year's Eve also can be dangerous, which underscores the need to celebrate responsibly when ringing in a new year.

American Addiction Centers surveyed 1,000 Americans regarding their alcohol consumption habits on certain holidays. The survey found that the average person consumes 4.4 alcoholic drinks on New Year's Eve, making the holiday second only to Mardi Gras in terms of drinks consumed.

Alcohol lowers individuals' inhibitions and adversely affects their judgment, which could make them vulnerable to criminals and more likely to make bad decisions, including driving after a few drinks. In fact, the National Safety Council estimates that 427 people may die on U.S. roads during the 2022 New Year's holiday period.

A new year is worthy of celebration, and the festivities can be even more enjoyable when individuals take these safety tips to heart.



New Year's Eve is a time for celebration. Taking steps to ensure celebrations are safe can make the night even more fun.

STOCK PHOTO *Holiday Gift Guide*

## Recognize the risks

Recognition of the potentially serious threats that can be lurking on New Year's Eve is vital to celebrating safely. In 2016, leaked documents indicated that more than 1,200 women were sexually assaulted on New Year's Eve in various German cities.

A 2011 report from the Bureau of Crime Statistics and Research in the United States noted a significant spike in the rate of assaults, murders, sexual assaults, and robberies on New Year's Eve, linking that increase to higher levels of alcohol consumption. Individuals who recognize how vulnerable overconsumption of alcohol can make them may be less inclined to overdo it this year.

## Avoid the roads

Data from the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration indicates that 68

percent of drunk driving traffic fatalities on New Year's 2016 involved drivers with a high blood alcohol concentration.

One of the safest things individuals can do on New Year's Eve is to avoid the roads. Consider celebrating at home or staying in a hotel or the home of a loved one. If you must be on the road, call a cab or book an Uber when you need to get to and from a party.

## Be careful

New Year's Eve celebrants also must be vigilant if they're hosting a gathering at home. Laws vary, but social host liability laws generally hold hosts who serve alcohol responsible for the actions of their guests after they leave their homes.

So hosts could conceivably be vulnerable to criminal or civil proceedings if they serve alcohol to guests who are then involved in traffic accidents or other incidents after they leave hosts' homes.

(METRO CREATIVE)

## SCREEN-FREE HOLIDAY

• CONTINUED FROM PAGE 6

swimmers, check for amenities like water slides and wave pools.

Want to take it a step further? Sign your recipients up for an indoor pool membership until summer returns.

## Inspiration

Give families all the ideas and inspiration they need to beat boredom, create new traditions and make memories with "The Adventure Challenge: Family Edition." This journal offers 50 adventures in different categories, along with space to share thoughts and photos about each experience.

## Board - not bored

Encourage some good old fashioned family fun with board games. From chess and checkers to modern classics to the latest trendy games, this is a gift option that's sure to engage family members of all ages.

(STATEPOINT)

## ANTIQUE NICHE • CONTINUED FROM PAGE 5

While she offers multiple home decor items, and other products, antiques have always piqued her interest.

"I really like the antique pieces, I like the charm that they have, so I usually gravitate towards that," she said.

Additionally, she spends time working on handcrafted products, including finding new purposes for items.

For example, she used an old headboard, and transformed the piece as part of a chair.

During her explorations, Mattilla often finds quality beneath older items, like pieces of wooden furniture.

"The wood is really, really worth it and it just brings that back to life," she said.

Luberry's, 532 N. Pine St., is accessible online at [luberrysproductions.com](http://luberrysproductions.com) and on Facebook.

For more information, visit the website or email [luberrys523@gmail.com](mailto:luberrys523@gmail.com).

Luberry's also has a store found at [www.etsy.com/shop/Luberrysproductions](http://www.etsy.com/shop/Luberrysproductions).

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