

For Whales' Sake
By Jackie Hilderling

Giving

It's soon to be fa-la-la-la time again when we enjoy an increased focus on family, friends and generally – the good stuff in life.

While quality of holiday certainly does not equate to quantity of spending, the fact is that many of us do buy more around Christmas. This makes it a very potent time to reflect on the impact of our consumer choices. The good news is it **is** the thought that counts.

Thoughts that count when choosing a product:

Who made it? By putting thought into who made the product you purchase, you can empower fair-trade (socially and environmentally responsible practices) and companies whose ethics you believe in. If it was made close to home, you have made a choice to benefit your own economy with the comfort of knowing less fossil fuels were spent in getting it to you.

Does it keep on giving? By choosing for durable products with efficient energy consumption, you ensure there is ultimately a lower cost to the recipient and to the planet.

How is it wrapped? The volume of garbage that comes from under the average Christmas tree is shocking. By considering the amount and type of packaging (including choice of wrapping paper), we can easily reduce the garbage we give to one another and to the Earth's landfills.

How meaningful is it? In our spending and our giving, we deliver messages about what we believe in and what we wish for the future. There's a message attached to every dollar we spend and it certainly isn't "the more you spend, the more you care". There are so many creative and thoughtful ways to truly be "giving" and honour the recipient without overtaxing the planet. Donate to a cause you both believe in, make something, share your skills or the gift of your time.

So give with thought this season. Use less of the Earth's resources and let in more of the really good stuff in life.

Jackie Hildering is biologist, avid diver and marine educator living on Northern Vancouver Island. She is dedicated to creating environmental awareness and positive change. With BC's killer whales being laden with chemicals of human origin, they indicate the repercussions of our consumer lifestyles. For more of what's at stake: www.earthlingenterprises.ca.