

Our 'carbon footprint' comes from the stuff we buy

EDITOR: I was delighted to read about the Conservation Committee of the [Garden Club of Madison](#) asking residents to be more pro-active on climate change by cutting their greenhouse gas emissions ("Garden Club: Help mitigate climate change," Madison Eagle, Dec. 1, page 6). The Conservation Committee's article focused primarily on transportation emissions, which are important. When I lived in Madison, I appreciated being able to walk to the train to get to work in New York City, and my husband biked to his job in Murray Hill. However, not everyone can ride a bike, and it's important to emphasize that our direct use of car fuels, heating fuels or electricity are typically only 36 percent of an average American household's carbon footprint.

The majority of our carbon footprint comes from our purchases of manufactured goods: 64 percent of our carbon emissions are embedded in stuff we buy. This holiday season -- and until Congress motivates foreign manufacturers to "green" their manufacturing -- please buy less stuff and lower your greenhouse gas emissions.

For gifts, instead of buying new climate-harmful products, buy used items, antiques, or tickets to events at Madison Square Garden. And discuss your reasons for your gifts with the recipients -- your kids, grandkids, and friends will appreciate hearing your thinking, and eventually your purchasing decisions will push Congress to enact better climate legislation.

For more information about embedded carbon emissions, contact [Citizens' Climate Lobby](https://citizensclimatelobby.org) (<https://citizensclimatelobby.org>).

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