

'Where it's made' does matter

To the Editor:

I was both pleased and disappointed to see the responses to your recent story on the Buy America Foundation. Pleased because of the strong reader interest in the subject, and disappointed at how well your readers' letters illustrate the difficulty in reaching Americans on this extremely complex issue.

In particular, the letter from Reginald Snyder, in which he lifts out of context my comment, "Never buy something simply because it's American-made," suggests a failure to grasp the point of the story and certainly a failure to understand the mission of the Buy America Foundation. I wish more people felt as passionate as Mr. Snyder does on this subject, but it is one that is not well-served through necessarily brief letters to the editor.

Those of us who have toiled long and hard in the Buy American vineyards learned very quickly that the most certain way to turn off the great majority of Americans is to bellow at them about the "sins" of buying imported products. Most Americans today are struggling with the immediate problems of earning a living and putting the kids through college. Gaining their interest in a long-term issue that will affect their children and grandchildren more than it will affect them requires at the very least a discreet effort and a deft touch.

The mission of the Buy America

Foundation" is to make as many Americans as possible understand the critical importance of stopping the steady erosion of America's manufacturing base. Five hundred years of history has taught us that prosperity, a high standard of living and economic leadership for a modern nation demand dominance in the manufacturing industries of the day. We have been steadily losing that dominance for some years now, partly, but not entirely because of our reckless buying of imported products when American-made products of equal or better value are often readily available.

In context, my comment was meant to point out that there are critically important reasons to look for the made-in-America label other than simply the fact that the product was made in America. Americans won't "and shouldn't respond to that simplistic justification.

America's destructive "trade deficit, the naivete of our leaders in world commerce, the huge amounts of money, being spent to keep Americans thinking that "it doesn't matter where it's made" and the apathy of the public all add up to an exquisitely complex crisis in our country. Well-inten-

tioned but strident letters to the editor serve to do little but cause most people to turn their attention to other matters.

For those who sense the importance of this subject, I urge you to write for your free subscription to the Buy America Newsletter. (P.O. Box 82, Abington, PA 19001). For those who want to take an in-depth look at this subject, I recommend that you get a copy of any of a number of excellent books on this subject at your local bookstore. One of the best is "Agents of Influence" by Pa Choate. You may not sleep well the night you first read this one but you will at least be on your way to an understanding of where "where it's made" matters far more than you have ever imagined.

William J. Lynott, *president*
Buy America Foundation

School needs breath of fresh air

To the Editor:

I was not surprised to read that the air quality at Titus Elementary School (Warrington Township) was not what it should be.

How to get a letter published

The newspaper welcomes letters. Address them to "Your Turn," The Intelligencer, 153 N. Broad St., Doylestown, Pa. 18001, or FAX them to (215) 345-3100. Letters can also be sent via e-mail to: skerr@california.com

Letters must be signed and include a home address and telephone number. We reserve the right to be published. The editor reserves the right to reject, condense and edit all letters.

THE
Buy America®



Newsletter

Published Quarterly As a Public Service by Buy America Foundation

Vol. 6 No. 3

Summer, 1997

Fellow American:

Overalls and jeans -- products that are identified the world over as symbols of the American culture. But guess what? NAFTA has succeeded in luring our most famous overalls and jeans makers to foreign shores.

Early this year, Oshkosh B'Gosh announced that it was closing its Oshkosh, WI plant, a factory that has produced overalls worn by generations of Americans. The plant, which employs about 75 workers, is the last in the city where the clothing manufacturer was born more than 100 years ago. The jobs of Oshkosh workers in this and other company plants are being ceded to workers in Central America, South America, the Philippines, and the Far East.

And you've heard of those slick and sexy Guess jeans. That company has recently begun quietly shifting a hefty portion of its manufacturing to Mexico and South America. A bit more than three years ago, 97% of clothing bearing the Guess label was manufactured right here in the United States.

Nowhere is the destruction of America's manufacturing base more evident than in the apparel industry. And nowhere is the consumers' potential for changing current trends any stronger. Retailers MUST carry merchandise that quickly moves off their shelves if they are to survive.

The most powerful message that consumers can send to retailers is through unsold merchandise that languishes on their shelves. If you have trouble finding American-made products, please let store management know how you feel . . . and why you are passing up their merchandise. Buy American. It really does matter.

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"Once upon a time we were encouraged to buy American. It was considered patriotic and common sense to support American companies and give jobs to American workers. But now it's considered politically incorrect and bold-faced chauvinism not to boost world trade". World trade is supposed to be a win-win situation for all concerned; that's what we keep hearing. But it is not a win for us if we keep doing what we're doing -- buying more and more of other countries' stuff while they're buying less and less of ours."

--Charles Osgood on his radio program "The Osgood File."

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State and federal officials were red-faced in June of last year when an elaborately staged raid on garment factories in Orange County, CA proved to be a fiasco. Apparently psyched up by publicity alleging sweatshop operations similar to those found in overseas factories, the raiders found no violations of any kind in the four raided factories, no citations were issued . . . and all were properly registered.

The raids, involving a team of 15 inspectors from as far away as Northern California, were supposed to be one of the largest crackdowns on alleged sweatshop operations in this country. The raids were triggered when two of the 700 employees involved lodged complaints with the Labor Department.

Buy America Hall of Fame

A few more American-made products that are among the best in the world

AUTOS

Chevrolet Corvette. The fifth generation "**vette**" was introduced at the Detroit Auto Show last January to rave reviews. With new styling, body structure, and a new aluminum small block V-8 under the hood, the '97 **Corvette** is being hailed by many critics as the rebirth of the "**vette**" as America's true sports car . . . a true American-made beauty.

Pontiac Bonneville. Although it sells for as much as \$10,000 less than such luxury cars as BMW, the Bonneville is regarded by many as a true competitor in that class. Made in America like its twins Buick LeSabre and **Olds** 88, the Bonneville is a relatively painless way to climb up a couple of notches from basic transportation.

Saturn by General Motors. The popularity of this superb car continues to soar. Developed by **GM especially** to compete with small-car imports, the Saturn was the first American car in about 20 years to be awarded Consumer Reports' "**much** better than average" reliability rating -- a distinction that had gone mostly to Japanese cars until **recent years**. The Saturn (priced from about \$9,000 to \$14,000), and other American-made cars elected to our Hall of Fame, offers you sensible alternatives to imports when you are ready to buy a new car.

CLOTHING -- WOMEN'S FASHIONS

Anthony Richards. We've heard from a number of our readers who are very pleased with the Anthony Richards line of moderately-priced women's fashions, all of which are designed and manufactured in the U.S. Their catalog is relatively small, but nicely done. **(800) 359-5933**

HEALTH CARE

Rotadent Electric Toothbrush. As far as we can determine, the Rotadent is the only electric toothbrush made in America. It is regarded by many dental professionals as the best in the world, but you won't find it on your retailer's shelves. The Rotadent is sold only by dentists.

HOME APPLIANCES

Carrier Air Conditioners. Carrier air conditioning and refrigeration equipment is known throughout the world as among the best the industry has to offer. This fine American company manufactures its products at five different locations throughout the U.S. In addition to its own name, Carrier also manufactures products under the brand names Bryant Heating & cooling, Day & Night, and Payne.

MISCELLANEOUS HOUSEHOLD ITEMS

Mag-Lite flashlights. We've received many recommendations from readers about this unusually high quality product. Says one reader, "Until you've used a **Mag-Lite**, it would be hard to describe the difference between it and any other flashlight." Mag-Lites are made of high-grade aluminum, are water resistant, and made to take a beating. They are widely available, come in a variety of sizes, and each includes a spare bulb. **Mag-Lites** are a bit more expensive than cheap imports, but they're made to last a lifetime.

All **Mag-Lites** are made in the U.S.A.

Buy America[®]

FOUNDATION

Statement of Purpose

1. To educate and inform the American public of the harmful impact on our economy, our citizens, our workers, and our society in general by the purchase of foreign-made products *in those cases where American-made products of equal or better quality and value are readily available.*

2. To seek out and identify American-made products of equal or better quality and value than the foreign-made products with which they are in direct competition; to publicize those products, and to encourage their purchase.

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Buy America

FOUNDATION

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A BAF reader writes, "A friend who owns a beauty shop says he is unable to buy professional-quality scissors, curling irons or blow dryers from his supplier who claims that nobody in the U.S. makes them anymore. I contend that this supplier is busy peddling foreign products because the profit is higher -- foreign scissors cost around \$350. Worse, they are constructed poorly. The pivoting rivet on one pair recently fell out. I told him I would ask you for a source. Can you **help?**"

How about it readers? Anyone have any ideas on this request?

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For those readers who have inquired, we have been assured by a representative of the VFW that the VFW BuddyPoppy is made entirely in the United States. Those who want more information may write directly to: James R. Rowoldt, VFW National Headquarters Building, 406 West 34th St. Kansas City, MO 64111.

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A reader wrote to tell us about a product incorrectly labeled as made in the U.S.A. We wrote to the company, Fox Run Craftsmen, of Ivyland, PA, maker of kitchen utensils. Here is their reply:

"Thank you for bringing to my attention the incorrect use of our card with regards to the Peeler and Bean Slicer. This product is purchased from both a domestic and a foreign supplier. Unfortunately, our warehouse staff used the Made in the U.S.A. card when packing merchandise purchased abroad.

"As a domestic manufacturer of products ourselves, we can appreciate your concern with regards to the proper country of origin on products. I can assure you the error will be rectified immediately.

"Once again I thank you and your organization for advising our company of the error."

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Several readers have written to tell us that not all products from Chicago Cutlery, recently elected to the Buy America Hall of Fame, are made in America. Watch for the phrase, "Designed and Marketed by Chicago Cutlery" on some of their products. This, we are told, identifies imported items.

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Food for thought: Mexico now exports more cars to the U.S. than the U.S. exports to the rest of the world.

Many recent visitors to China are coming home with the same opinion: In China, America is seen as the enemy.

Despite America's increasingly conciliatory attitudes toward trade problems and Chinese abuses of human rights, the Chinese continue to flatly reject our attempts to establish FAIR trade between the two countries. No matter what our administration does, including the controversial renewal of Most Favored Trading Nation status for China, Beijing seems determined to assign ulterior motives to our every move. Our openness to Chinese goods and our wide acceptance of exchange students is dismissed by some Chinese leaders who argue that America NEEDS cheap Chinese products, and we are simply trying to "infect" exchange students with our own philosophies.

Some of this feeling is understandable. China is in a state of transition and internal political strife. That always makes for suspicion and a degree of paranoia. Some observers point out that the Chinese fear us because they feel that we are trying to change their country. There is little doubt that Chinese government leaders foster this notion in order to have a "convenient enemy" to distract citizens' concerns with internal problems. Given the emergence of China as a major player in world markets, it is important to both countries that we establish a mutually beneficial relationship. The key phrase here is "mutually beneficial."

Unless and until the Chinese display a reasonable degree of reciprocity and reasonable concern for human rights, American government leaders should reject their one-sided trade philosophies. And American consumers should think twice before buying a product that bears the "Made in China." label.

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In the latest round of administration madness, the federal government now wants to relax the 50-Year-old rule that "all or virtually all" of a product be made domestically before it can be labeled "Made-in-the-U.S.A."

If the Federal Trade Commission gets its way, manufacturers will be able to claim their products as made in the U.S.A. without qualification if, "U.S. manufacturing costs accounted for 75 percent of the products cost and the product was substantially transformed into a different product in the United States." Pushing for this change are manufacturers using a combination of foreign and domestic parts and labor in their products. The proposed changes would not cover autos, wool, fur or textiles.

In our view, the FTC's recommendation and its Orwellian doublespeak amounts to nothing less than a fraud on the American public that will eventually result in even more American jobs lost to foreign countries.

Made in the U.S.A. is a simple, easily understood concept. American consumers have a fundamental right to know the truth; it should be the role of the Federal Trade Commission to protect, not compromise, that right.

If it has become necessary to accommodate international changes in manufacturing and trade, why not simply state the truth? If 75 percent of a product's cost is domestic, then label the product 75 percent made in the U.S.A. - or 60 percent or 90 percent or whatever the case may be. "Made in the U.S.A." should mean only one thing: that all or virtually all of the product was made here. Perhaps all this is too simple and direct to satisfy the bureaucratic appetite for obfuscation.

The FTC decision is not final yet. It will accept written comments from the public until August 11. After hearing from the public, it can accept, reject, or modify the original proposal.

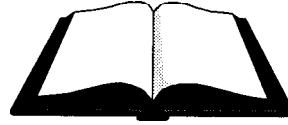
Please let the FTC know how you feel about this. FTC, Made in USA Policy Comments, No. P894219, Room 159, Washington, D.C. 20580

*

c/a Jim Greenwood
Sen. Arlen Specter

THE BOOK NOOK

How Americans Can Buy American
by Roger **Simmermaker**
Rivercross Publishing, Inc.
203 pages; \$12.95 (softcover)



Is this an American-made product?

Not an easy question to answer in some cases. While many products fall clearly and obviously into either the domestic or foreign category, many others fall into a murky, gray area. When some parts of a product are domestic and some are foreign, how should it be classified? And what about the question of company ownership? Is a product American if it is made in this country by a foreign-owned corporation? These are some of the questions addressed in *How Americans Can Buy American*.

This handy little guide lists hundreds of consumer products and brand names, indexed alphabetically. Both brand names and **companies are** identified as either foreign or domestic-owned.

With thousands of manufacturers and hundreds of thousands of products on the market, no single listing can hope to be complete and up-to-date on a permanent basis. With this qualification in mind, *How Americans Can Buy American* is one of the most current and easiest to use guides for those consumers who want to make a conscientious effort to buy American.

We do not sell the books we review. They are available in book stores or direct from the publisher.

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By now, everyone has heard of the stunning revelations of possibly illegal political contributions made by Chinese officials and businessmen. Make no mistake. These huge sums of money have not found their way into the campaign funds of our politicians because of the Chinese love of the American political system. When you ponder the mystery of why our political leaders are making so many trading concessions to the intransigent Chinese, you may want to keep all of this in mind. Then we suggest you monitor the voting records of your own representatives in Washington.

Among the most obvious of the imponderable in this affair is the recent agreement, worked out with the help of President Clinton, to lease an historic California naval base to a Chinese shipping company. This astonishing action places prime U.S. port space in the hands of a foreign shipping company that is in direct competition with U.S. shippers.

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Comments by U.S. Representative and BAF Advisory Board member James Traficant, from the **Congressional Record**, March 12, 1997:

"Mr. Speaker, it is no wonder that millions of Chinese dollars have popped up in American politics. I mean, check it out; China alone gets \$45 billion from American taxpayers in a sweetheart deal known as **most-favored-nation** trade status.

"Now, to me, that is absolutely disgusting, with the 17 cents an hour labor wage. But if that is not enough to rip one of those false Made-in-America labels on one of those Chinese imports, check this out: The **United States Air Force** just issued military combat boots to our troops that were made in China. That is right. American military personnel are wearing combat boots made in China . . . "

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Between 1980 and 1993, more than eight million American workers lost their jobs -- the equivalent of laying off the entire city of New York.

—from Corporate Executions by Alan Downs

Hot off the press. We've just received a review copy of the latest edition of *Made in the U.S.A.* In our opinion, this is the best overall reference book for consumers who want to buy American. Published by National Press Books and the Made in America Foundation, it sells for \$15 including shipping and handling. We'll give it a full review in our next issue. To order: National Press Books (202) 822-6060

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FROM READERS

* "Squadron Mail Order of Carrollton, TX is a nationwide supplier of military models. In their catalog and monthly sales sheets, they identify country of origin of every kit, tool, and bottle of paint. Their address is 1115 Crowley Dr., Carrollton, TX 75011-5010." *E.S., Chadds Ford, PA*

"Don't know if you have seen the Wal-Mart ads lately. They have eliminated all references to Buy American, and all Buy American signs in the stores are gone. Sam must be spinning in his grave." *L. C., Winchester, TN*

"I have found two American companies that produce quality ladies wear: Sloppy Joe's Casual Wear, Kentucky Textiles, Inc., Paris Ky. (800) 637-1374. Their catalog features fine quality lady's cotton/poly knit casual wear. Also, Bodyslimmers by Nancy Ganz (800) 426-7547. This New York City-based company produces high quality ladies' undergarment foundations. They are expensive but well worth the price." *C.W., Harrisburg, PA*

"What is more American than football? In my humble opinion, football is what America is all about, with the exception of their marketing. Try and find NFL logoed merchandise made in the U.S. You can buy NFL clothing in stores across the nation for any team you desire, but try and find some made in the U.S. I finally found a line of NFL clothing made here by an American company. Their price is higher but I was more than happy to pay extra. I sometimes wonder if stores don't intentionally mark up products made here so they can shift the buyer to less costly but more profitable imports. By the way, the line of American-made NFL clothing is Pro-Line." *J. M., Franklin, TN*

"Thought your readers might like to know where they can find American-made luggage. Four years ago, we searched and searched for some for our eldest son and finally gave up. Just recently, we discovered two mail-order companies that sell American-made luggage: Land's End, very reasonably priced (800) 356-4444 and Orvis (800) 541-3541, more expensive but very good quality. Both companies have a good amount of USA.-made goods in their catalogs. Thank you so much for the work you do." *M.C., Staatsburg, NY*

"Dexter makes the best golf shoe I have ever had. I've had mine for about four years now and they're as good as the day I bought them. They're called Dexter Drytecs, are American-made, and they come with a full two-year warranty to stay waterproof. They sell for around \$99. Years ago, before I found Dexter's, I had Nike and Greenjoys. Neither came close to the quality of these shoes." *B. S., Philadelphia, PA*

"I have wanted to buy a good plastic rain hat but could only find ones made in China. I finally found one made by Betty Dain Creations in a beauty salon." *D.C., San Luis Obispo, CA*

"My wife just purchased a very attractive table lamp manufactured in the U.S.A. by Hi-Lite Industries of Greensburg, PA, 15601. We also purchased a Hunter "Original" ceiling fan. It was a little more expensive than the foreign-made fans but we consider it our investment in America. Who wouldn't pay a few dollars more to keep America ticking?" *F.G., Salem, NJ*

✓ **MORE FACT WITHOUT COMMENT**

Australian politicians, the Australian Council of Trade Unions and a long list of Australian corporations have put their support behind a new "Buy Australian" program. The program, launched last March, is backed by 30 retail chains and 60 food and hardware manufacturers. The program is described as similar to the "Buy American" program launched by **Wal-Mart** in the late 1980s.

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✓ **ORCHIDSANDONIONS**

ORCHIDS to Ford Motor Co. Ford has begun selling the popular Taurus sedan in Russia where it is expected to be a strong competitor in Russia's "executive class," challenging such European-made cars as the Saab, Mercedes-Benz and BMW.

ORCHIDS to QVC Home Shopping. In their "97 Quest for America's Best" series, this popular cable TV show is holding a year-long showcase for American-made products. Featuring a different state each week for 50 weeks, the program is highlighting American-made products produced by small businesses within the state. Each **weekly** program **is** being broadcast from a scenic location within the host state, interspersing travelogue information with product presentations. This project offers thousands of small American businesses a chance to get their products on the map with national exposure. The series began in January and will run through the end of this year.

✓ ONIONS to TV star Tim Allen . . . on his signature line of tools made by **Ryobi** (Japan). Some of the finest tools in the world are made right here in America by American companies. We wish that Mr. Allen had chosen to lend his celebrity in support of one of those companies and their products.

✓ ONIONS to the United States Postal Service. Their "Salute to America" program was launched with the opening of a pilot "Postmark America" store near Minneapolis, MN last year . . . featuring such items as key chains made in Taiwan, mail truck reproductions, coffee mugs, caps, and stuffed toy bears made in China, and T-shirts assembled in Jamaica and Mexico. Perhaps USPS should consider renaming their program. Something like "Eat Your Heart Out America" would seem appropriate.

ONIONS to officials of Boy Scouts of America. Our Boy Scouts, perhaps one of America's finest icons, wear uniforms manufactured in a foreign country. So far, not even the entreaties of a number of their own scout masters have been able to change the minds of BSA management.

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✓ **IN MEMORIAM**

Many Americans will be surprised to learn that there are no **American-**owned companies manufacturing television sets **in** the U.S. today. That's odd, isn't it, considering that television was invented and refined here?

Now, the largest of the foreign-owned companies making TV sets in America is calling it quits. In recent years, French-owned Thomson Consumer Electronics has been making sets with the RCA, GE, and ProScan names. The company has announced that it is closing its Bloomington and Indianapolis, IN factories, resulting in the loss of more than 1,500 jobs. The company will shift production to . . . Mexico.

✓ Sadly, it now appears that America is destined to sit back and watch as American television technology and creativity is transferred completely to other countries. The inevitable result has been the total destruction of our TV manufacturing industry -- a devastating blow to the American economy and an indirect loss to every American.

Many of our readers have asked us to provide merchandise trade deficit figures for our major trading partners from time-to-time. Because of the time needed by government agencies to compile these statistics, the figures are several months behind.

Annual **U.S. Trade Balances**
(in \$ billions)

	Year 1996	Year 1995	Year 1994
Japan	-47,683	-59,280	-65,668
China	-39,517	-33,807	-29,505
Canada	-22,838	-18,157	-13,967
Mexico	-16,202	-15,393	+1,350
Germany	-15,469	-14,470	-12,515

As you can see from the above chart, our overall trading status with Mexico has gone from a surplus of \$1.350 billion in 1994 (before NAFTA) to a deficit of \$16.202 billion last year. The figure is still climbing.

While Japan still ranks as #1 in lopsided trading with the U.S., China is rapidly closing in on the top spot. In 1994, our trade deficit with China was less than half of the deficit with Japan. By some estimates, the Chinese trade deficit with China will be #1 in 1997.

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U.S. law requires that all agricultural commodities served in the school lunch program be grown domestically. Despite this, frozen strawberries imported from Mexico are believed to be the cause of an outbreak of Hepatitis-A among 187 Michigan students last March.

A few days after the outbreak, F.D.A. inspectors visited the Mexican fields where these strawberries were grown and found what was described by Fred Shank, director of the Food and Drug Administration's Center for Food Safety as "troubling problems."

"These included open and unlined privy pits (toilets) immediately adjacent to the fields." according to Shanks. "There were too few facilities for the crews to practice proper sanitation practices. There were no hand-washing facilities."

USDA officials have said that they are working with the Justice Department to determine if there was any criminal fraud in the case. Providing false statements concerning the origin of a product is a criminal offense, punishable by up to five years in prison plus heavy fines.

Buy American . . . it matters.

Yours truly,



William J. Lynott
for Buy America Foundation