

Getting first dibs on the lists

I'm not sure what's come over me.

It might be my age, or perhaps I've just become weakened. Whatever the case, The Sidekick convinced me to do something I would say is completely foreign to me.

We started Christmas shopping Monday night.

That might sound innocent enough, but there's one thing that bothers me—it's not December yet. Geez, it's not even double digits dates in December.

It was Monday night and I was in a weakened state. I should have been more careful.

At the office, I'd edited what seemed like a billion images from both Georgetown and Acton Santa Claus Parades. I'd also waded through a couple hundred images from the United Way House Tour, and I'd even briefly checked out some fashion show photos taken last Sunday.

To top it off, I was out of the office twice to cover two MVCs (motor vehicle collisions).

So I was weak, much too weak to be able to stand my ground. Too weak to be the least bit cognizant of the dangerous precipice towards which I was wandering.

The Sidekick, on the other hand, had taken the day off to attend a dentist appointment, and run a few other little errands about town, taking full advantage of her day away from her desk.

After running the errands, she'd gone home to put up her feet, probably watched *Ellen* on TV, and basically rested up until I dragged myself in the door.

She even gave me a hand with the chores, which includes her checking out and feeding the kittens in the barn, and then we had supper.

Then she made her move, followed by 'the look' to back it up.

"Wanna do some Christmas shopping?" Earlier in the day, she'd mentioned in passing that 'maybe going shopping' would be a good thing. The 'look' was the final straw.

I caved in.

But she did have a logical argument.

Ted Brown



Every year, the Brown family members create and distribute Christmas lists, to give each other an idea what that member of our family would like.

Over the years, the lists have become more and more ornate, especially with one of my daughters—she inserts clip art—yet the real purpose of the lists is to make sure we pick up the right size and colour so there's a minimum of returns.

So far this year, we've only had a couple lists handed in. There's still many more to come—including mine.

And The Sidekick was hot to trot on getting the first shot at the newly-released lists.

I agree we have, in the past, found ourselves settling for the last remaining items on the lists, simply because the other items had already been purchased.

I've maintained it was better that way—everyone else had first dibs at the list and our job was the easiest. We just picked up what was left.

In theory it makes great sense. But in The Sidekick's eyes, it stinks.

So, Monday night, armed with a relatively healthy bank card, we headed out to do battle with the items on the lists.

And I'm happy to say we did score six major hits on the aforementioned lists. As we drove home, she was about as contented as the cat that had swallowed the canary.

We hauled the gifts into the house and parked them in their regular hiding place, ready to be wrapped and placed under the tree.

Of course, I'm betting that the wrapping part of the equation will likely happen around December 23.

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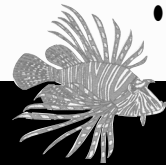
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30	11.25	14.85	19.80	23.40	27.00	45.00	30	8.82	11.43	14.31	16.56	18.33	27.90
35	11.43	16.11	19.17	23.31	26.10	45.45	35	9.63	13.41	15.59	19.58	20.25	35.10
40	13.50	20.07	24.03	29.79	34.65	62.55	40	11.43	16.83	19.58	24.39	24.75	44.10
45	17.19	27.27	33.75	42.75	51.75	96.95	45	13.74	20.97	25.42	32.31	34.65	63.90
50	22.45	37.44	49.95	64.35	78.30	150.33	50	18.27	28.02	36.00	46.80	54.00	101.25
55	34.07	60.75	84.51	110.43	135.00	262.35	55	26.10	45.00	60.84	79.47	86.40	167.40
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As you shop for the youngest names on your list, keep in mind that many toys can become potential safety hazards to children. Here are a few important guidelines to help you select the best gifts:

- Choose age-appropriate toys. Many toys have labels with age recommendations on them.
- Avoid toys with sharp edges and points or small parts. Also avoid toys that fly, shoot projectiles or produce loud noises.
- Look for toys that are durable, well-constructed and easy to clean.
- When choosing a fabric toy, make sure it is labeled flame-retardant or nonflammable.
- Check stuffed toys for secure stitching of eyes and other small parts.



Alyssa Taylor
Congratulations
on your graduation from Carleton University with a Doctorate in Psychology (PhD.) conferred in Nov. 2011, with guidance from your supervisor Dr. Craig Bennell.

Love from Mom, Dad, Greg, Anne-Lise, Davina and Justin

Alyssa is now a professor in the Criminal Justice degree program at Humber Institute in Toronto.

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