

Bring in a 'kid consultant'

As we emerge from the rubble of wrapping paper, pine needles, and empty wine bottles, and find our way back to the post-Christmas world, it's a time to exchange stories about procuring certain gifts.

For example, The Sidekick and I had major challenges deciding what to buy each other this year. I think it comes with age, as we get older, we need less.

I'm quite content where I am, and I really want for nothing.

Same with her— there's really nothing she needs. But we still want to be able to exchange gifts at this time of the year.

I decided she needed earrings. I went to my regular jewelry store to see what was available. After some thought, I decided upon a pair that I thought she'd like.

That night, at supper, we talked about trying to find the 'perfect gift'. In passing, I admitted it was tough at times.

"Well, I've given you enough hints," she said. "Ages ago I said I needed earrings, and also..."

It was really tough to keep that smile inside.

Then there were the little mix-ups that are part of Christmas, like The Sidekick's son calling me to say that he'd bought a certain gift from her Christmas list, so I could let my daughters know that it had already been taken.

About a week later, one of my daughters called to let me know that she'd bought a certain gift for The Sidekick.

Yup, you guessed it— the same gift.

You know, I have a great memory, it's just a bit short.

Then there was the best story of the bunch.

One of my grandsons had listed Beyblade Packs and Arena on his Christmas list.

If the list had been written in Greek it would have been the same. I once prided myself at knowing what every new toy was like and how it worked.

But Beyblade? No idea.

The Sidekick was about the same as me, so we decide to swing by the toy aisle at one



Ted Brown

of the local stores to investigate.

As I scanned the display, the name Beyblade came into view. In front of it was a small boy, maybe 8 or 10 years old.

"Can you tell me how this Beyblade stuff works?" I asked him.

He looked up at me, decided I wasn't a child abductor, then went into a long detailed explanation about how 'this model attacks in this way, they fight in this arena,' and pretty much a full blown review on the ins and outs of the Beyblade system.

His mom came around the corner of the toy aisle, and asked what was going on. I could see her potential concern, with two grown adults questioning her son.

"Well, your son is working as a consultant," I explained. "It's a bit like when the town needs more information for a project, they call in a consultant for more up to date, detailed information."

"Well," the mom grinned, "you've certainly come to the right person. He knows more about Beyblade than any adult."

We thanked our young consultant for his time, and he and his mom hurried away to their next shopping adventure.

Armed with our new-found information, (and feeling quite cocky about having a working knowledge of the Beyblade system) I called my daughter to clarify which models of the system my grandson had.

Seems I was too late— someone had already bought some Beyblade battle robots for him.

But I learned one thing from this exercise.

Next time I'm shopping for a kid's gift, I'm bringing in a consultant— even if he is only 8 or 10 years old.

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PUZZLE of the week

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	
14							15				16		
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Across
 1. Small Asian arboreal ape with no tail
 7. "___ Smile" (1976 hit)
 11. Inspection Test Date (acronym)
 14. Attraction
 15. Complain
 16. "___ any drop to drink": Coleridge
 17. Loud harsh noises
 18. "God's Little ___"
 19. "So ___ me!"
 20. Ollie performers
 23. Famously
 25. Eats up
 26. 1969 Peace Prize grp. (acronym)
 27. Common Market inits.
 29. Parish council
 30. "That's ___"
 32. Small Australian parrots with brush-tipped tongue
 34. Excessive eagerness in offering unwanted services
 39. Closed, as a business
 40. Abstruse
 42. Game keeper?
 45. Animal house
 47. Fold, spindle or mutilate
 49. Cache
 52. Procedure of assigning names to kinds and groups of organisms (pl.)
 55. Adaptable truck, for short
 56. "Beg pardon ..."
 57. Blue book filler
 60. "Seinfeld" uncle
 61. "Go, ___!"
 62. Foreign dignitaries
 63. Driver's lic. and others
 64. Edible root of taro plant
 65. Cover over

Down
 1. Blah-blah-blah
 2. "___ say!" (2 wds)
 3. Launch
 4. Murder without leaving a trace

on the body
 5. Companion of Artemis
 6. Get cozy
 7. Fink
 8. "Giovanna d' ___" (Verdi opera)
 9. Curiosity (2 wds)
 10. City in NE Scotland on the North Sea
 11. Supplement
 12. Someone who travels for pleasure
 13. Fancy
 21. Lens cover?
 22. Slept, Brit. slang
 23. Bubkes
 24. Assortment
 28. Murmured
 31. Do away with

33. Most uncouth
 35. Combine with 53 (chemistry)
 36. Closed tightly
 37. Academic term
 38. Accommodate
 41. Grand ___ ("Evangeline" setting)
 42. Rings
 43. Took part in turbulent disturbance
 44. Brief appearances of a prominent actor
 46. Fix
 50. ___ brulee
 51. Alter
 53. Detective's need
 54. BBs, e.g.
 58. Victorian, for one
 59. Clairvoyance, e.g. (acronym)

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MARTIN is 75!

Happy Birthday to a wonderful husband, Dad and Grandpa!

Happy 30th Anniversary
Paul and Heather Dickinson
 December 28, 1981-2011

The greatest thing you will ever learn is simply to love and be loved in return. Congratulations on 30 happy years of marriage, the love you share each and every day is a perfect example of what we all hope to achieve.

Best wishes on your special day from your children, Ryan and Trista, Thomas and Natalie