

Christmas Gifts - It's A Wrap

In this issue:

- *Christmas Gift Ideas*
- *Laying Down The Law*
- *Holiday Shopping Tips*
- *Eating Habits of a parent*

Top 5 List

Classic Christmas Movies:

- *It's A Wonderful Life*
 - *Home Alone*
- *Miracle on 34th Street*
- *National Lampoon's Christmas Vacation*
 - *Scrooged*

**Don't forget to share!
Forward this
newsletter to a friend.**

Are you tired of racing out to the store to buy batteries, or of the high piercing noises emitted from toys, or of the sheer amount of time your child wastes in front of video and computer games? Why not join in the battery boycott and unplug Christmas? Some brave parents have decided to ban electronics this holiday season which is forcing them to think outside the battery pack. This is a noble endeavour as it involves turning a blind eye to commercialism, top toy lists and standing up to kid pressure.

Here are some ideas for gifts that provide good old fashion play and imagination:

- A box of arts & craft supplies like the "I'm not bored anymore art jar" from www.landofnod.com
- Building materials like Lego or Crazy Forts (see the OTC's "I Love This")
- Puppets and a puppet theatre
- Books, puzzles
- Dolls and Doll house
- Board games
- Dinky cars
- Musical instruments

If you're in the market for non mainstream toys, check out toy stores like Moncton's *Scholar's Choice* www.scholarschoice.ca; Charlottetown's *Owl's Hollow* www.owlshollow.com; or Oromocto's *Hot Toads* www.hottoads.com.

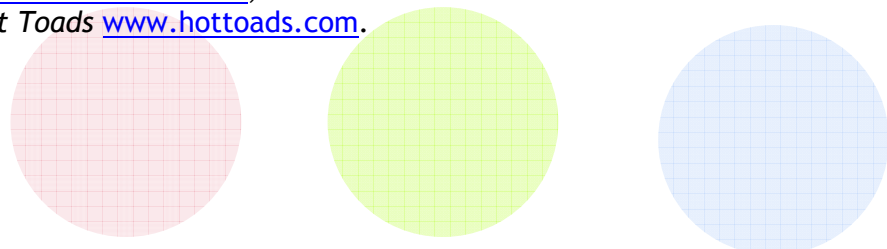


Now this approach may not be for everyone and I'm not here to judge, so here are some other gift giving ideas for everyone.

Think about local attractions or physical fitness. Consider:

- Equipment for a non-organized sport like snow shoes or cross-country skis
- Memberships to the YMCA, Bulldog Interactive Fitness, or My Gym Children's Fitness Centre
- Passes to Crystal Palace, Magic Mountain, or the Magnetic Hill Zoo.
- Tickets to a Wildcats game or a show at the Capitol Theatre.
- Movie theatre and movie rentals coupons.

For those of us who have decided to embrace the electronics and are obsessed with having "that top toy", check out some 2008 toy testing sites listed on page 3 to help you with your decisions!





Cool Sites To Surf:

www.mommytrackd.com:

a working mother's guide to managed chaos

www.pbsparents.com: a great companion to www.pbskids.org

www.coolmompicks.com:

a few moms who track down cool, non-mainstream products and services, particularly those from indie or emerging designers and mom/women-run companies.

www.thedressupclub.com:

order costumes year-round

www.onemorestory.com:

an online library of the best of children's literature.

December Events

Visit the OTC's [Family Fun Calendar](#) for details.

3rd-6th - Beauty & the Beast @ Capitol Theatre

5th - Gingerbread House Workshop @ Superstore

6th - Christmas Storytime @ Moncton Library

7th - Christmas Skate @ Byron Dobson Arena

13th - Free Movie: Wall.E @ 145 Lakeside Dr., R'view

16th - An Enchanted Christmas @ Capitol

20th - Narnia @ Capitol Theatre

I Object, Your Honour... by Tracey Stephenson

Parenting a child who is ADHD is often like being involved in a court room drama. My son Nathan is an extremely headstrong child, which is a wonderful quality that will take him far in life. In fact my husband and I often tell him that he would make an excellent lawyer someday. Nathan is argumentative, very strategic in his thinking, extremely persistent and smart. In fact he can really be a pit-bull sometimes. Unfortunately, at this point in his life, we don't always (or ever) agree on the things that he chooses to dig his heels into. And usually by the end of the day, I often feel like I want to enter the witness protection program just to escape the constant cross examination.

A common day in our house may start with a "hit and run", most likely involving a sibling. It's not a pre-meditated event but more of a crime of passion related to a coveted monster truck or other favourite toy. After the incident, the accused flees the scene of the crime and takes refuge in a safe haven, also known as his bunk bed. Once the search is complete, the accused is apprehended and read his rights. During the trial the accused pleads his innocence, but unfortunately

does not have a solid alibi to fall back on. Evidence is gathered, witnesses are badgered and objections are overruled. When the jury finally reaches a verdict the accused is read his sentence.

In the case of my son, we the people try to make the punishment fit the crime. If the offense involves an altercation over TV or video game privileges then the punishment will involve the removal of these privileges. For a first time offender, the loss of privileges usually lasts a day.

Much like a court room, I find that parenting an ADHD child, or any child for that matter, is most effective in a calm and controlled manner. Removing emotion from the situation is the best way to avoid contempt of court. I find that a lot of the same strategies that I use on my son with ADHD also work and benefit my son who does not have ADHD.

Once his sentence has been served and the guilty party is released back into society the peace and calm comes back to our home...until the next run in with the law.

Tracey is mom to two boys. She's putting her computer science background to good use in an advertising career. You can contact her at traceygs@hotmail.com



"2008 Top Toy" Sites:

www.toy-testing.org;
www.todayparent.com
www.parents.com
www.hottoys2008.com

Parenting Quote:

"Most of the time...we judge to validate our own choices. Judging others convinces us that we're valuable and important, and that we're doing a really good job"

-I Was A Really Good Mom Before I Had Kids by Trisha Ashworth & Amy Nobile

Got Something to Say?

*The OTC newsletter is looking for different takes on various parenting issues. Don't be shy, put those witty comments, keen observations, or frustrating pet peeves on paper. The pay isn't great but you'll get to tell people you've been published!
 Simply email
outsidethecrib@rogers.com*

Holiday Shopping 101

Ah the holidays - baked goods, decorations, friends and family and shopping. In a perfect world you would be able to shop early, shop without children and shop when you're fully rested, and not in a rush. But since we don't live on Fantasy Island here are some more realistic tips:

1. My favourite tip is to make a list. Live by the list. If Santa does it, so should you! At a glance, know who you're buying for, where you should go and if you start a buying frenzy let the list re-focus you! Keep track of everything you buy including the price.

2. Have a budget. Especially in today's economic times, you may need to be extra careful this year. Don't be pressured to buy those big ticket items. Think of that January credit card bill - not exactly a good way to start the New Year!

3. Shop online. There's nothing like shopping in your jammies with snacks. Just be careful of return policies and shipping fees.

4. Repeat the gift. If you happen to find a cool gift or a great deal, check your list to see if the gift would suit someone else.

Confessions of a Hot Fudge Mama by Alison Davidson

I recently observed how poor my eating habits are, especially since giving birth for the third time. Sure having children changes your life but my dietary regime? Yes.

I used to absolutely hate eating cold food. Now it's standard fare. And I never ate my crusts, as a child or as an adult. Now, it's about the only part of bread I get.

We've all read healthy eating tips and know how we should conduct ourselves nutritionally, but how realistic are these tips when you have a young family? Here is my take on these helpful tips:

When breastfeeding, be sure to maintain a healthy diet to supply your baby with proper nutrients and maintain your energy level. Translation: eat whatever fits into your mouth in one bite. Chewing and tasting the food are optional.

Set a good example for your toddlers. Translation: sneakily eat chocolate and junk food behind your children's backs.

Get plenty of fruits and veggies. Translation: Give the children vegetables, when asked why you don't have any respond that you didn't cook enough.

The newborn days are hectic days, showering and eating are luxuries. So you do what you can when you can and eating is more aligned with convenience and emotions than nutrition. But it is short term. Before this last pregnancy, I had lost quite a bit of weight and my girlfriend and I started referring to ourselves as "hot mamas". Now after just giving birth again, I'm referring to myself as "hot fudge mama". And you know - that's ok. For now.