

# A Few Wishes: No Carolers and a Gift Certificate From Mom

It's the holiday season, the time for giving and receiving. I want to get one thing straight right away. The person who said it was better to give than to receive either was smoking a lot of crack or has never had the joy of unwrapping a box of Knockem Sockem Robots.

Personally, I think that getting free loot is an occurrence that transcends religious lines. Heck, I'd shave my head and wear a robe if I thought it would help me get more gifts. Luckily for me, it only took 10 years of Sunday school and a whole lot of kneeling and standing, kneeling and standing. Anyway, the "exchanging-of-gifts" aspect of religion is really crucial; that's why I devote a lot of thought to what I want to get and what I want to give.

I really don't want a lot of items this year; I just would like a few things to change. This year at home, we'll have a big family dinner with a bunch of relatives. I just wish that I didn't have to sit at the kiddie table. I mean, I'm 21 years old, and I'm going to graduate from college before I graduate from the kiddie table.

Actually, I think I'll never move up to the grown-up table. I keep waiting for someone to pass away, but not even death will help me. I have five older brothers and sisters, and it seems like every time I move up on the waiting list, another one of them gets married and all hope is lost.

I think the fear of the kiddie table is the only reason why anyone would ever host a holiday dinner. Otherwise, no one would want to cook and clean for a bunch of ungrateful relatives. They put up with this because of the unwritten rule that you never have to sit at the kiddie table if it is your house. Without this rule, holiday dinners would cease to exist.

Unfortunately, holiday dinners do exist, and that means relatives. This year, I hope my Aunt Esther with the mustache doesn't catch me underneath the mistletoe and give me another kiss on the mouth.

I also hope my grandfather doesn't get too much holiday spirit in the form of gin and go around begging anyone in ear shot to punch him in the gut to prove he's still in fighting shape.

I also hope that this year, no Christmas carolers will come to my door. To begin with, I'm not all that big on Christmas music. If I were, I think I would probably

prefer to listen to Frank Sinatra belt out some holiday classics than 12 of my neighbors who are so buzzed on spiked egg nog that they think they're the Vienna Boys Choir in snow boots.

There is one request I would like to address specifically to my mother. I hope that this year she won't buy me any clothes.

My mother is cursed by the inability to buy me anything that fits unless I hold her hand through the store until she gets to the cash register. I've even given her my measurements myself to take to the store. Through some strange twist of logic, she came up with jeans so big that even Dom DeLuise would have needed a belt. Mom, two words: gift certificate.

Oh, yeah—because the holiday season corresponds with the football bowl season and the basketball season, I have a couple of sports requests.

First, while watching the Tar Heels play in the Gator Bowl, I don't want any of the announcers to mention our basketball squad.

If this doesn't seem like a large request to you, think about how many times our basketball team was mentioned during Bill Clinton's University Day address.

Hello, World, there's more to this school than 12 guys in shorts and Dean.

I must admit that I do watch our basketball team, however, and I enjoy it, although I do have one small wish. I wish

Derrick Phelps could play a full game without getting hurt. I have seen mummies that have been taped up less. I mean, I would give him some Flintstone Vitamins myself, but I think it might be an NCAA rules violation.

I have a funny feeling I won't get everything I want this year. I know I'll get socks—I always get socks. I think it is some kind of law that a certain percentage of holiday spending must be devoted to socks.

I have a plan, though: I never open them up. I figure I only need a few more Christmases and I'll have enough to open up a little shop, and because of the proven popularity of sock-giving during the holidays, I know it will be a success.



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## Gift That Keeps On Giving: Donate in Friend's Honor

BY STACIE LORRAINE  
STAFF WRITER

If you still haven't found the right gift for that special someone in your life, you might want to check out your favorite charity.

A common complaint when it comes to shopping for holiday gifts is that it is so hard to find the right gift for someone who has everything.

An alternative way to demonstrate thoughtfulness is slowly catching on with local social-service organizations.

Some organizations, such as Habitat for Humanity, are providing what they call "alternative gifts." They are asking people to make donations to them in honor of someone else as a gift to that person and to those benefiting from the donation.

Robert Kraus, office manager for Habitat for Humanity, said, "This program allows people to participate in the spirit of

Christmas, and it is more than just donating."

This is the second year that Habitat for Humanity has solicited alternative-gift giving. Kraus said it worked well as a part of fund raising and had been very successful.

Another organization in the area that solicits donations given in honor of others is the Inter-Faith Council for Social Service. Jane Humm, a volunteer at the Inter-Faith Council, said it was a very big program around the holiday time.

The council sends out a newsletter twice a year to solicit donations made in honor of others. But for the most part, people donate throughout the 50 churches in the Chapel Hill area, she said.

Both organizations alert the receiver of the gift with a holiday card sent in the mail. The Inter-Faith Council also sends a card

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