

Holiday Shopping Help

Dear Tim:

I've always had a hard time coming up with creative holiday gift ideas for my family and friends. I must lack that shopping gene so many women seem to be born with. How can I find fun, imaginative gifts without getting bogged down by the holiday shopping grind?

—Challenged on Charing



DEAR TIM

Dear Challenged:

I'm sure the shopping gene exists, because I've tried everything short of surgery to get Glenda to stop. If you're like me and less than excited about a trying trek to the mall this season, the Internet is the hot ticket. Most stores have sites with inventive ideas and appealing prices, and they'll even wrap and ship your gifts for you. Santa should be so efficient. And if all that online shopping makes you hungry, surf over to www.huffmansmarket.com for a scrumptious selection of homestyle holiday meals. We'll deliver them right to your door with your full grocery order and we

won't make off with your milk and cookies.

Dear Tim:

Every year my obnoxious brother in law comes to our house for the holidays, has a few too many cocktails and makes a fool out of himself. While there's marginal entertainment value in his amateur antics, it's mostly just embarrassing. How can I keep him in check without providing the proverbial buzzkill?

—Teetotaler on Teeway

Dear Teetotaler:

Every family has its aspiring Jay Leno. Unfortunately, they become about as amusing as Paulie Shore once they start hoisting high balls. I'd suggest serving alcohol-free eggnog at your holiday get-together. We've got some chilling in aisle 1. It'll force your brother in law to actually be funny, which may be buzzkill enough.

Dear Tim:

What's the deal with fruitcake?
—Curious on Clifton

Dear Curious:

I wish I had an answer for you, but fruitcake remains a mystery. It would appear to be the result of a dare, because it doesn't seem possible such a concoction could come about naturally. Be that as it may, there are plenty of fervent fruitcake fans out there and we try our best to accommodate them around the holidays with an open-minded offering in aisle 3. If you get one and choose not to try it, I'm told they make marvelous masonry.

Dear Tim is presented as a public service by Tim Huffman, owner of **Huffman's Market** at Tremont Center in Upper Arlington. Tim is not a licensed psychologist, though it's been suggested he have his head examined. Write to him in care of Huffman's Market. If you do, Tim's wife Glenda says you're only encouraging him.