



Because Everyone Loves a List

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## SHOPPING

### Last minute gifts from left field

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 John DeFore  
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By John DeFore

This is the hour of desperation. Brains have been wracked, stores ransacked and yet some holes remain in your Who's Getting What list.

We feel your pain, and would like to introduce a few oddball suggestions for that loved one who simply doesn't need a conventional gift. Consider some of these items to be little talismans of inspiration as much as literal suggestions . . . If you're reading this past the deadline to order online, look upon these ideas to guide you in your final burst of mall frenzy.

- The String Doll Gang (\$10):** Adults who wouldn't be caught dead with a doll can always claim these tiny misfits are Christmas-tree ornaments — we'll look the other way when they stick around after the tinsel comes down. Hand-made in Thailand from a single piece of string, each little guy has his own personality and a card describing his unique purpose in life. (For example, Safety Boy "will help you recover from your injuries quickly," while Monster Man "helps you to see the beauty inside the not-so-beautiful.")
- Bird Songs and its companion Bird Songs from Around the World (\$45 each):** You don't have to be a dedicated birder, or even a naturalist, to appreciate the neat gimmick of these two books, which combine single-page illustrated profiles of different bird species (250 in the first book, 200 in the second) with recordings — played by an audio device attached to the book — of the distinctive song each makes.
- Domo X Mimobot (\$49.95):** Anybody with a computer can always use a USB Flash Drive, which is like a keychain-sized hard disk that lets you transport big chunks of data with ease. But it's a pretty dull stocking stuffer on its own — unless dressed up like the Mimobot line, which combines the craze for designer vinyl toys with office utility. Our favorite takes the form of Domo-kun, the cheery monster mascot of Japanese TV station NHK. (Domo comes pre-loaded with some software goodies as well, including icons and a screen-saver for your desktop.)
- The Gorillapod (starting at \$24.95):** A step or three up from the standard tripod, this creature-like device has bendable arms that allow shutterbugs not only to stabilize cameras on uneven surfaces, but to attach them to tree branches, bicycle handlebars and all sorts of odd places.

Annoy-a-tron | Bird Songs | Gifts | Gorillapod | Hammerpress Collection | House of Cards | Smart Mass | String Doll Gang | TV-B-Gone | Ugly Doll | Vling

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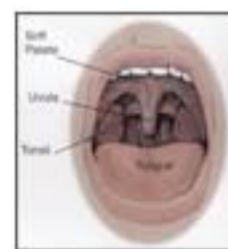
- > America's Healthiest Cities
- > *Rivals* top high school football teams
- > Best Christmas Gifts 2008
- > Winningest NCAA football programs
- > Top Haunted Houses
- > Best Horror Film Scenes
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