

Over-the-housetop GIFTS

■ Have 20-foot reindeer guard home for holidays

By Brett Johnson

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Wacky is getting popular. A 20-foot-tall reindeer is generating hot air and selling like hot cakes.

The two-story inflatable reindeer might be a tough find this Yuletide season, but we've got more than enough to fill your lonely stocking from our 2011 annual wacky gifts guide.

We've got a sporty plane that exceeds 100 mph and cruises comfortably into six figures. We've got an unusual meaty treat for the dog, as well as a game that might be a primer for what to do when said dog unburdens itself of unsightly droppings at the local park.

We've got a stuffed kitty that sings a song from a hit TV show. We've got furry slippers, a highfalutin coffee maker billed as doing the work of a handful of similar appliances, and a book stuffed with off-the-wall feats — such as the fastest time ever to open a bag of Skittles and sort them by color (that's 21.95 seconds, by the way).

All this and more. We offer our usual caveat: Take these with good holiday cheer and more than a few grains of salt.

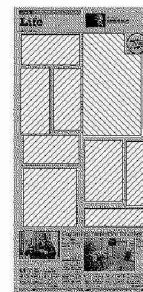
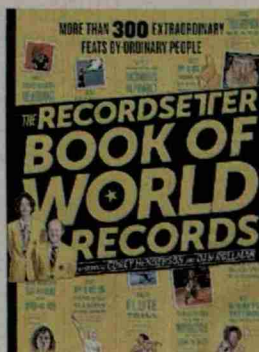
Without further fuss, let's rip these things open.

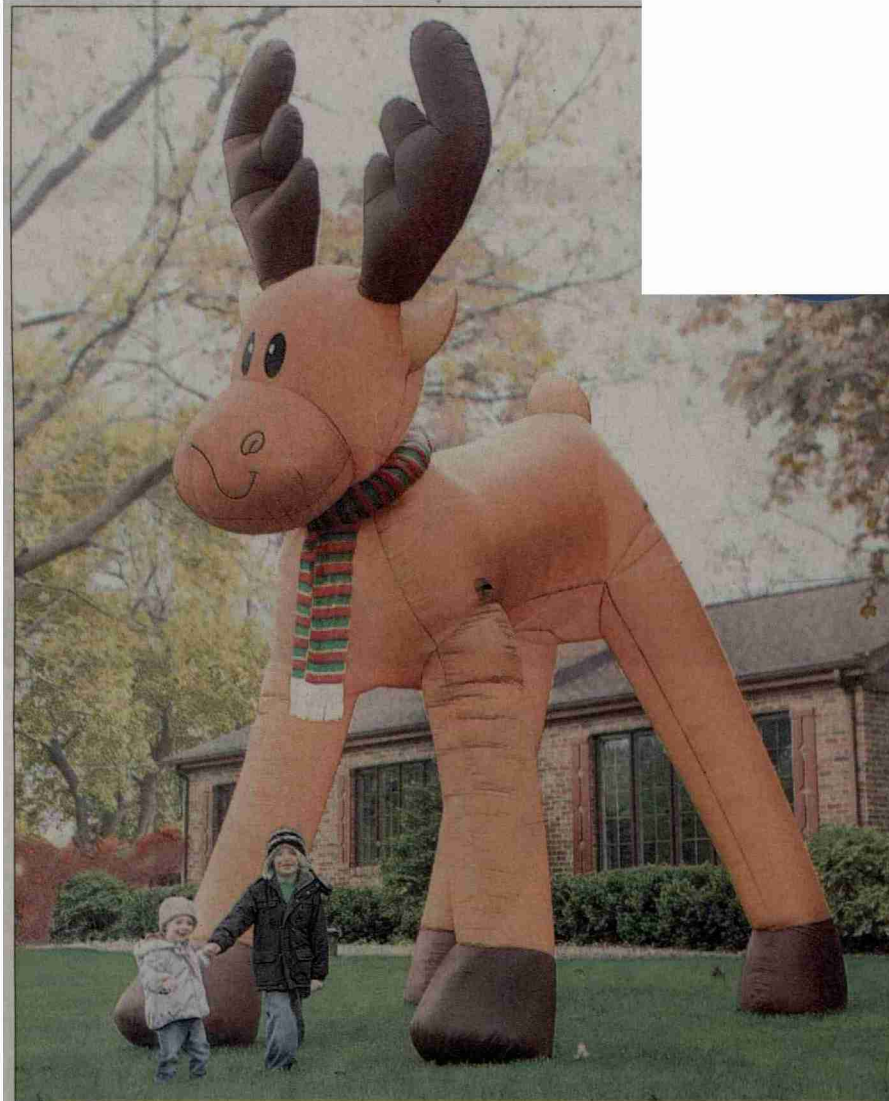
THE RECORDSETTER BOOK OF WORLD RECORDS

The pitch: More than 300 extraordinary feats by ordinary people.

Availability: Generally wherever books are sold. Cost is \$12.95. Learn more at www.workman.com or 800-722-7202.

The buzz: Co-author Dan Rollman said he did this because he got tired of all the red tape involved in getting something in the Guinness Book of World Records. His list is completely mindless and we love it: Categories include most T-shirts put on in 30 seconds (13); largest lip balm collection (415); most quarters fit inside a nose (18); most spam emails in an inbox (96,899) and the always hypercompetitive largest toothpick beard (2,222 of 'em on one hirsute mug).





TWO-STORY INFLATABLE REINDEER

The pitch: Scare the bejeebers out of Santa and his eight reindeer when that magical sleigh gets final runway clearance to bounce down on your roof.

Availability: Alas, our good friends at Hammacher Schlemmer say this item, marketed at \$349.95, is at least temporarily sold out as of this writing. Our time-honored advice is to keep checking (www.hammacher.com or 800-321-1484). If no dice, it's never too early to have hopes for next Christmas.

The buzz: Huff and puff your lungs to the verge of puncturing and you'll have this thing blown up by, say, sometime in 2019. Kidding — it comes with a fan that inflates it in five minutes. The air-filled reindeer stands almost 20 feet tall, each of its hooves is roughly the size of an armchair, and a 6-foot-tall person can walk underneath it without scraping their head. Think Donner or Blitzen on steroids.

LICKETY STIK DOG TREATS

The pitch: For the dog that longs for the lost art of liquid meat.

Availability: \$7.99 each or \$21.99 for a three pack. 866-738-4379 or www.petsafe.net/licketystik. Comes in savory chicken, smoked bacon and braised liver.

The buzz: The Lickety Stik's ingenious roller-ball dispenser (patent pending) delivers rich, savory flavor with every lick. And there's just one calorie in every 10 licks.

All without the sticky mess of other treats. Our loyal beasts deserve yet another helping from the bottomless pit of pet pampering, don'cha think?



SOFT KITTY PLUSH TOY AND T-SHIRT

The pitch: Learn a lullaby and cuddle up closer to a hit CBS comedy.

Availability: Prices range from \$18.88 for the shirt alone to \$29.99 for the plush toy alone, as well as \$44.99 to \$47.99 for combo packages. All options can be had at www.stylinonline.com or via 855-411-8337.

The buzz: Press a paw and the 10-inch-long Soft Kitty plush toy sings the "soft kitty" ditty that was featured in "The Big Bang Theory" episode where Sheldon teaches Penny (played by Ventura County native Kaley Cuoco) the lyrics to a song his mom sang to him when he got sick. It quickly went viral and became a fan favorite.

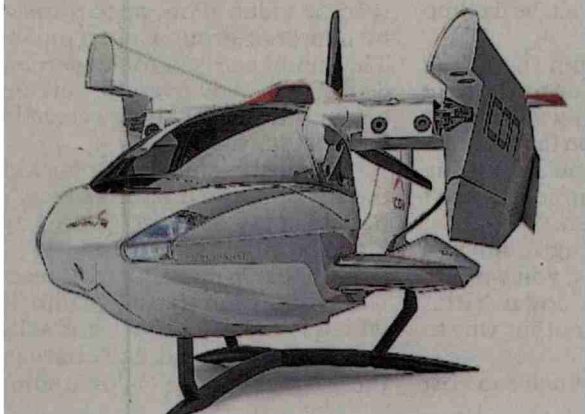


ICON A5 SPORT AIRCRAFT

The pitch: Your sports car in the sky.

Availability: Customers can secure a "delivery position" using a credit card. The aircraft's estimated cost is \$139,000. Call 424-201-3505 or see www.iconaircraft.com.

The buzz: That's right — \$139,000. Hey, you know those people who use "summer" as a verb ("I typically summer on Martha's Vineyard"), own land on five continents and have more estate help on staff than most people have relatives? They need their toys, too. This sleek two-seater sports a 34-foot wingspan, tops out at 120 mph and has a range of 300 nautical miles. It's a lightweight carbon fiber airframe with folding wings and "an intuitive, sports carlike cockpit," and can be hauled by trailer. It's also amphibious.



FUZZY FRIENDS SLIPPERS

The pitch: Silly slippers for stocking stuffers.

Availability: Slip an animal on your tootsies for \$20 a pair (\$19 for kids). See www.aromahome.com or call 866-68A-ROMA.

The buzz: Any gift with the word "silly" in its marketing instantly pricks up our ears. And how often do you have the pleasure of wearing tigers, poodles, frogs or ducks on your feet? C'mon now.



DOGGIE DOO GAME

The pitch: "Scoop up three No. 2s and you'll be No. 1!"

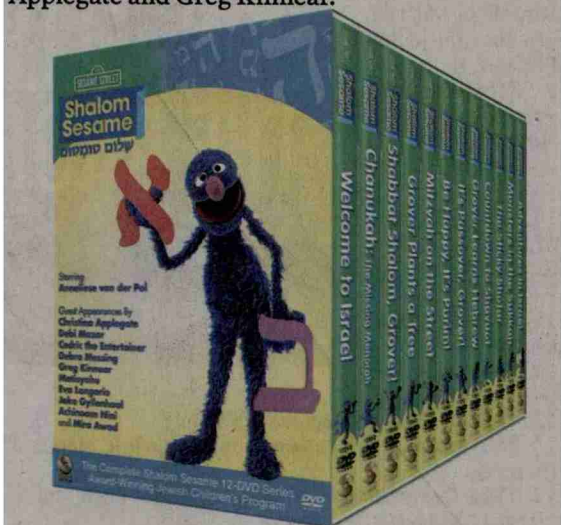
Availability: Generally \$29.99 and sold at Target, Walmart, Toys R Us, Amazon.com and other usual suspects. See www.doggiedoogame.com or call 214-295-2953.

The buzz: The game, for kids of all ages, comes complete with sound effects. It's all about getting the pooch to poo; you "feed" him and then take turns walking him with shovel in hand, ready to clean up after he does the deed (that would be No. 2). The website has a link to a "walk the dog" demonstration video.

SHALOM SESAME

The pitch: For the Hanukkah crowd among us.
Availability: The 12-DVD set (each one is a half-hour) from the Sesame Street gang can be had via www.sisuent.com or by calling 800-223-7478. Suggested retail price is \$149.95.

The buzz: Lovable Grover and host Anneliese van der Pol ("That's So Raven") travel to Israel to learn Jewish culture and tradition. Sample DVD title: "It's Passover, Grover." No word on whether Bert and Ernie don yarmulkes, or whether Oscar the Grouch mopes around kvetching and muttering "oy vey." The gang does sing the famous "Rubber Duckie" song in Hebrew. Celebrity guests include Jake Gyllenhaal, Eva Longoria, Christina Applegate and Greg Kinnear.



ESPRESSERIA AUTOMATIC LUXURY COFFEE MAKER

The pitch: Get a java jolt in more ways than one.
Availability: See www.krupselite.com. Other suggestions include Amazon.com and Macy's. Cost is \$799.95.

The buzz: For \$800 (it was once \$1,200), we want a machine that goes to South America and selects shade-grown beans, brings them to our doorstep on a pack horse, and grinds them up to our nit-picky specifications for a tasty blend that evokes the nectar of the gods. OK, maybe we're a little too demanding and cranky because we haven't had our morning cup of Joe yet.



LEGENDS WITH PETS NOTECARDS

The pitch: See 1960s sex symbol Brigitte Bardot in bed ... with a dog.

Availability: These fine-art notecards, black-and-white mini-prints of photos of pop legends with their pets, cost \$20 a set (10 note cards with envelopes) and can be had at <https://www.morrisonhotelgallery.com>. For more information, call 212-941-8770.

The buzz: John Lennon chills with his cat in one shot. Others featured with their pets include Bob Dylan, Billie Holiday and Neil Young. This one's for a good cause: 100 percent of sales go to Rational Animal, a New York-based nonprofit organization that endeavors to improve the lives of at-risk animals.

NERF VORTEX NITRON BLASTER

The pitch: Fire some plastic discs at your real, or imagined, enemies.

Availability: Local Kmart stores or www.kmart.com, or 866-562-7848. Cost is \$42.49.

The buzz: We don't have a joke here, we just wanted to use the phrase "vortex nitron blaster." A removable clip holds up to 20 discs, and an electronic targeting scope is among the accessories. Rated for ages 8 and up. Really, who can do without one? The folks also have a WWE Crashdown Arena for \$39.99.

DEVO YELLOW SUIT AND ENERGY DOME HATS

The pitch: Get your post-punk freak on with these duds from Devo.

Availability: See <http://giftguide.warnerbrosrecords.com>. The Devo yellow full-body jump suit is \$49.99; the plastic energy dome hat (red or blue) sets you back \$32.

The buzz: Whip it up good as you channel your inner 1980s pop child. Wearing this says you're through being cool, to borrow another of the band's song titles. For the more modern crowd, the folks at Warner Bros. Records also have My Chemical Romance jackets (\$89.99 to \$99.99), Michael Bublé greeting cards (\$24.99) and a dress-up kit (\$20) that lets you mimic The Black Keys.

