

# Great Truths about Christmas Gifts



## Tips from the Posse

By Mark Rackay

One of the Great Truths of Christmas gifts is outdoor people are nearly impossible to buy gifts for. My wife of many years will gladly testify in open court that I am the poster child of this truth. She tries diligently every year, and fails, every year. She claims part of the reason is that everything I ask for requires a government grant, creative financing, and pledging away family assets, to afford. I usually ignore such comments in the interest of marital bliss, especially around the holidays.

As a kid, my grandmother who raised me, had the same complaint. Her excuse was usually centered around money when it came to fulfilling my Christmas wishes, leaving me with fancy wrapped packages containing things an outdoor kid has absolutely no use for.

Oh, the horror on Christmas morning as I opened that fancily wrapped package to see it contained an expensive dress shirt and a necktie. Necktie? Geez, I didn't even have a neck yet. "This is the worst Christmas ever," I complained to my grandmother.

"Shut up and put on your new shirt and tie and come down for dinner," was her gentle response.

The second Great Truth of Christmas is that I cannot wrap presents. Starting as a child, the process of cutting the wrapping paper, folding it gently around the present, taping it perfectly straight, and adding ribbons, bows, and gift tags, has completely eluded me. It has only become worse as I aged, possibly because of my diminished patience.

When I wrapped a present, it looked like someone had already opened the present, and balled up the torn and shredded wrapping paper, threw Scotch tape all over it, and did this heinous act with their feet. It got worse after I married my wife. Our first Christmas, she saw my present to her under the tree, and chewed out the dog, accusing her of trying to tear open a package.

No longer does my wife wish me to wrap my presents. She says I should leave them in the bag I brought them home from the store in. She also claims there is no reason for me to put gift tags on presents any longer, because everyone knows who it came from, just by looking at the wrapping job.

The tradition of giving gifts didn't start with the modern holidays we celebrate each winter. Many ancient cultures celebrated various holidays that involved the giving of gifts. The desire to hide the identity of a gift until just the right moment led people to wrap gifts long, long ago.

The barbaric (to me any-

way) practice of wrapping presents has roots in many ancient cultures. Possibly starting in China around 100 BC, wrapping gifts began using hemp wrapping paper, as paper was invented about a hundred years earlier. In the Southern Song dynasty, monetary gifts were wrapped in paper, forming an envelope known as a chih pao.

The idea spread worldwide as time passed. In Japan, a reusable cloth fabric was used for wrapping gifts, called a furoshiki. This practice started around 1600 AD. In Korea, a fabric wrapping method was used during the Three Kingdoms period. Their fabric, called the bojagi, was reusable.

In the Victorian era, wrapping gifts in decorative paper and tying them with ribbons became fashionable, seen as a way to show care and thought. The Vietnamese often used colorful boxes; no wrapping involved. The colors of red and gold were particularly favored as they symbolize luck and good fortune.

The fancy wrapping paper we use today probably started by accident. The two brothers, Joyce Hall and Rollie Hall are to blame. The pair was running a stationery store in Kansas City, Missouri, back in 1917. They ran out of the traditional tissue paper during the holiday season and began using fancy French envelope lining paper instead. This led to the creation of an industry in decorative wrapping paper. These boys founded the Hallmark Corporation.

It is not just about tradi-



Another great truth is that everyone gets into the Christmas spirit around our house, including the dogs — or else. (Photo/Mark Rackay)

tion either. There is money involved, like 2.6 billion dollars in the U.S. every year on wrapping paper. That equates to enough paper to reach out to the moon from the earth, some 108 million rolls. Some 2.3 million pounds of the stuff wind up in our landfills each year.

In Britain, it is estimated that 226,800 miles of wrapping paper is thrown away annually at Christmas. While in Canada, some 6 million rolls of tape are used and discarded annually for Christmas gift wrapping.

Some people attempt to avoid this waste by very carefully unwrapping and removing the tape gently, so the paper can be reused the next Christmas. My wife is one of these, and she will even have a separate bag to save the bows in. I have never been successful in removing a piece of tape

from a piece of paper with the consistency of toilet paper. Again, it is probably a patience issue.

A study from the Southern Methodist University in Texas, back in 1982, found that wrapping the gift enhances the anticipation and that the recipients tend to value the wrapped gifts more than an unwrapped one. Seems like the tradition is here to stay.

Possibly I have gained a little wisdom as I aged. I no longer spend hours attempting to wrap Christmas presents. I accept the fact that it is beyond my capabilities. I found another way. My granddaughter is solicited annually by me, and for a generous handful of cash, she will beautifully wrap all my gifts to others. For a few bucks extra, she will even tell my wife that I wrapped them.

As I look under the tree

this year, I notice there is not a wrapped present for me, large enough to be the new boat, motor, and trailer I asked for. Perhaps one of the smaller boxes contain a set of keys. She is getting older and probably didn't have the energy to wrap the entire outfit.

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## Fish salvage orders lifted for Summit, Narraguinnep Reservoirs

SPECIAL TO THE MDP

CORTEZ, Colo. — Emergency fish salvage orders for two reservoirs in southwest Colorado were rescinded this week by Colorado Parks and Wildlife.

Both Narraguinnep Reservoir and Summit Reservoir in Montezuma County were drained during the summer for necessary dam outlet work. To prevent the imminent loss of fish, CPW enacted an emergency fish salvage at both reservoirs. With repair work now complete and the reservoirs beginning to refill, the salvage orders were lifted effective Monday, Dec. 15.

All regular bag and possession limits have been restored in concurrence with CPW's fishing regulations.

"We want to thank the public for helping prevent any wasted fish that may have occurred when these reservoirs were lowered," said CPW aquatic biologist Kade Jackson. "The reservoirs are slowly beginning to fill, and we will closely monitor both waters to determine

a timeline of fisheries recovery."

While water levels remain low and slowly recover, Jackson has planned habitat improvements to benefit the fisheries as they are rebuilt.

"We have been looking into design options tailored to species selective refuge and spawning habitat," Jackson said.

Regular stocking of Summit Reservoir will resume in 2026. The reservoir is located at CPW's Summit Reservoir State Wildlife Area, roughly nine miles northwest of Mancos. Fishing opportunities include channel catfish, crappie, largemouth bass, perch and rainbow trout.

Separate outlet repair work still needs to be conducted at Narraguinnep Reservoir, which is operated by Montezuma Valley Irrigation Company and leased to CPW for the purpose of recreational fishing. MVIC has suggested additional work will take place in the next one to five years.

Because of this planned construction that will once again require the lake to be drained, CPW will determine a plan to adjust

stocking practices until all work is completed.

"We do not want to pour resources into stocking certain species only for the reservoir to be drained again," Jackson said. "We can allocate those resources to other neighboring fisheries, including Summit. We look forward to continuing our work to provide diverse sportfishing opportunities at Narraguinnep once all repair work is completed by MVIC and there is more certainty around the restoration of water levels in the reservoir."

The reservoir is located at CPW's Narraguinnep Reservoir State Wildlife Area, roughly 11 miles north of Cortez. Narraguinnep provides a wide range of fishing opportunities for species including bass, crappie, northern pike, perch and walleye.

Anglers seeking additional fishing opportunities in the immediate area will find enjoyable fisheries at Joe Moore Reservoir State Wildlife Area, Puett Reservoir State Wildlife Area, Mancos State Park, McPhee Reservoir and Totten Reservoir State Wildlife Area.