

‘One of the difficulties of video games in general is there is sort of a lack of consequence.’

— Randy Nichols

Justin D. Field, owner of Big City Gamin', states that in the past several years, new games have been released that center around wars in the Middle East, terrorism, and the hunt for Osama bin Laden. "Terrorist Takedown," "Desert Thunder," "Fugitive Hunter" and "SOCOM: US Navy Seals" are just a few of the military-themed video games currently available. In these games, the terrorist enemy is "definitely portrayed in a stereotypical way," said Field, citing turbans, dark complexions, raggedy clothes and a simulation of Arabic language as just a few of the stereotypes.

"There are more war video games out now because we are at war," Field said. "Our society and our culture promote war games."

In an Iowa State University magazine article, "Violent Video Games: The Newest Media Violence Hazard," Douglas A. Gentile

and Craig A. Anderson cite the participatory element of video gaming as one of the main causes of increased aggression. In many first-person shooter games, the player is "forced to identify with a violent character." Because of this increased identification with characters and immersion in plot, violent video games may have more of a negative effect than violent television or movies, said Gentile and Anderson.

Contradictory data leaves studies on video game violence inconclusive, however; the U.S. Department of Justice data shows that youth violence actually declined from 1994-2000, while NPD Funworld data reveals soaring video game sales during the same time period.

While many parents use the rating systems to decide what games are appropriate for their children, war games are rated both

M (mature) and T (teen) for small discrepancies in format and the amount of violence. The difference between the two ratings, Field said, can be slight. Tom Clancy's "Ghost Recon 2," which was banned in South Korea because of its portrayal of a war between North and South Korea, had its rating lowered from M in the first game to T, although there was little change in the format.

"You're still hunting people, but there is no blood," said Field. The change was made, said Field, to make more sales. It is not the violence, however, that makes war games problematic. "There are other games out there more violent than war games," he said. Instead, it is the unrealistic portrayal of war that contributes to glorification of the military. "No game will portray the reality of war," said Field. One glaring absence in

many war-themed video games, he notes, is the absence of civilians and civilian casualties in war-themed games.

"One of the difficulties of video games in general is there is sort of a lack of consequence," Nichols said. "In most military video games, there isn't the attempt to link war with the tragedy of war." He also holds the media accountable, stating, "The media has gone out of its way to avoid linking the war on terror with the horrors of any kind of war."

The unreality of war games, said Field, is dangerous because it does show a more positive side of war. He also places most of the blame on the media as a whole, stating that the media "glorifies war" and does not show the horrific reality. "The news does more than video games," said Field. "Video games are just a by-product of our society and culture as a whole." **EW**



Games include Candyland, Clue and more. Many of the bags sell for \$30 or more, but some are on sale for \$15-\$20.

The Two Cheeky Monkeys also make cute purses out of Capri Sun juice containers that are \$15 and up. Also available at this stand are **journals** made from old board games and children's books by Dr. Seuss as well as classics like *The Pokey Little Puppy* for under \$20 (the books are even included in the back of the journal).

The Somerset Toiletry Company makes divine **soaps, lotions, body wash and body butters**. These fresh scents include Ginger-Lime, Apricot-Honey and Fig-Pear, and all products cost in the range of \$10-\$14. Pick them up at Uncommon Scents.

Sundance sells a calendar titled "**Barbie's Dreamhouse and the Pink Poison Problem.**" This 2005 wall calendar, by Stella Marrs, features parody collages of Barbie with "over-the-top" home furnishings while providing information about environmental illness and dangers in consumer chemical products. This fascinating calendar sells for \$11.95 at Sundance.

Men

Perhaps a fellow you know could use a **Buck Knife**. McKenzie Outfitters carries one of Buck's small stainless steel knives that also includes a bottle opener and can attach to a key chain. The locking blade is easily resharpened. Pick it up for \$15.

Fast, Cheap & Easy

A guide to good last minute gifts.

By Alexandra Arch

It's always the same song and dance — you do it every year. You are acutely aware that Christmas is rolling around, but you haven't sprung into action yet to actually purchase gifts for friends and loved ones. If you need some inspiration on where to find presents that say something big without breaking the bank, read on, last-minute shoppers.

Women

The Secondhand Saints, found at the Holiday Market, make **belts, magnets, jewelry, ornaments, and book marks** out of bottle caps donated by local businesses. The bracelets and magnets are especially attrac-

tive, featuring vintage photos and colorful designs. The force behind the Saints, artist Ruby Colette, often portrays people who are her personal role models in her bottle cap art including the Virgin Mary, pirate women and historical figures such as Marilyn Monroe, Audrey Hepburn, Frida and Oscar Wilde. There are a plethora of "naughty" and "nice" designs. Bracelets are on sale for \$10 and magnets are \$6.

Candee Cole and Michelle Chaves, founders of Two Cheeky Monkeys (also at the Holiday Market), have created **recycled purses** made from old records and game boxes. The purses feature bands such as Fleetwood Mac and the Village People.

