



Procrastinators' Survival Guide

You can get it all done ... you just need to know where to shop!
BY ADRIENNE VAN DER VALK

Christmas comes but once a year ... but gift-related panic attacks strike over and over again. If you give a cranberry mini loaf to your child's homeroom teacher, do you have to include math and social studies as well? What if you *receive* a gift from a coworker known only to you through disgruntled water-cooler chat sessions? "A homemade trivet!" you exclaim, voice cracking with feigned sincerity. "You shouldn't have! I'll be sure to bring *your* gift tomorrow!"

My recommendation is to shop strategically: Pick variety stores and stock up on a few random, under \$20 items as you browse for your A-list people. One of the easiest places to find something for everyone is **Letterhead** on 8th Avenue, purveyor of items from artsy stationery to exotic soaps to kids' toys to all kinds of "little gorgeous, fabulous things." I like the **String Doll Gang**, funky handmade dolls constructed out of one continuous piece of string, OK for kids but better for quirky grown-ups. They have a punk doll, an alien, a mummy and a few other unrecognizable little dudes. Letterhead also has a wide assortment of practical yet attractive items, including luggage tags ranging from trendy and sassy to stately and classy and cool oversized matchboxes featuring gorgeous reproductions of nature drawings.

Across from the downtown post office lives **Feinstein's Museum of Unfine Art and Record Store**, a music and pop culture shop featuring local artists and an assortment of used clothing and accessories. There I found a dazzling selection of **vintage ties** that any modern man or woman with an iota of wardrobe retro-chic would love to receive as a gift. Feinstein's also carries many reproductions of work that has been displayed in the store. At \$10 a piece, you can give the gift of beauty and support the local business and art scenes.

If you want to spice things up this year, a trip over to the **Castle Super Store** by the Gateway Mall could be just the ticket. Obviously, porn is not everyone's thing, but Castle is so large you can easily browse the novelty, book and game sections without getting too close to the hardcore T and A. I was drawn to a fun and inexpensive game for couples based on the Kama Sutra and Nerve.com's **Position of the Day Playbook**, designed to remind lovers of all the unexplored possibilities just one page-turn away. There's also lots of silly, cheesy stuff (the masturbator's tool kit can be yours for only \$6!) and any kind of lotion, oil, lube or body paint a girl or guy could want to slather on a sweetie.

Last but not least, a place like **Coastal Farm & Home Supply** on 6th Avenue offers some inexpensive items among the saddles and ten gallon hats. Coastal's belt buckle selection is quite large, and it also carries all kinds of Dickies accessories and biker gear (leather head scarf for under \$20! That's hot!). Definitely worth a trip off the beaten path if you're shopping for someone who wouldn't be caught dead in day-glo body paint.

Multitasking is the name of the game here. Keeping an eye out for random-yet-desirable stocking stuffers is good for your anxiety levels *and* good for those of us who would rather eat a box of matches than another dang cranberry mini loaf.



(Clockwise from top left) Fish matchbox, puzzles and luggage tags from Letterhead; *Position of the Day Playbook* from Castle; vintage ties from Feinstein's Museum of Unfine Art; String Doll Gang, notecards and album from Letterhead; local art reproductions from Feinstein's Museum of Unfine Art



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