

Giving smart presents they'll enjoy

Calendars, books, videos entertain and educate

by Jason Zappe

Elves. Small, fast-moving elves. You only need them once a year, but everyone could sure use some elfin help when it comes to holiday gift-buying. We all vow to shop early, but if you've ever been to the mall around the holidays, you know that can't be true.

However, it does help to have in mind a few subjects before you prepare to squeeze like a sardine into that only can of a shopping mall.

Below are a few guides and suggestions when it comes to finding thoughtful gifts. Unfortunately, there aren't any outlets selling elves.

CALENDARS

Calendars are the perfect gift when it comes to long-lasting. Months after you've given one, you will still hear how it is bringing joy to the receiver. They are truly gifts that keep on giving.

Large, beautiful calendars can

be found on just about any topic imaginable. From full-color dogs and cats to oily pumped-up body-builders to luscious garden landscapes.

For animal lovers there's plenty of calendars meeting the needs of dog and cat lovers. Workman Publishing delivers a bounty of furry friends in its "365 Puppies a Year Calendar" and "365 Kittens a Year Calendar." These two gems offer pictures of puppies and kittens each and every day of the month. These wall calendars are perfect for adults and children. However, more adults will be hanging these up.

In addition Workman also offers "Greenpeace: Stepping Lightly on the Earth," which is filled with a year's worth of animals in the wild and explains why they should remain that way and what you can do to help.

A behind-the-scenes look at animal wildlife is also available in a wall calendar. The San Diego chap-

ter of the American Association of Zoo Keepers produced a calendar with a look at wildlife not usually found hanging around on a wall. "Animal Buns" is a tongue-and-cheeky calendar that pokes fun at all those human buns calendars. Animals range from the feathery to the furry, all caught in natural positions.

For those on your buying list who would rather have something in the artistic world, something a little more serious and not as cute, there's plenty of those from the Neues Publishing Co. Some of the offerings include:

- Art: "African American Masters," "Elton Porter's America," "Louvre," "Impressionism: Sunlight & Shadow," "Museo del Prado," "Dali" and "Kandinsky."

- Photography: "Mapplethorpe," "Anne Leibovitz," "Marilyn," "Louis Stettner's New York" and "Bertram Bahner."

- Various: "First Love," "The British Country Garden," "Navajo

Textiles," "Botanicals," "Keith Haring" and "Keith Haring Coloring Calendar."

If you want to keep the visual theme of gift-giving constant, you may also want to look for your receiver's favorite videos.

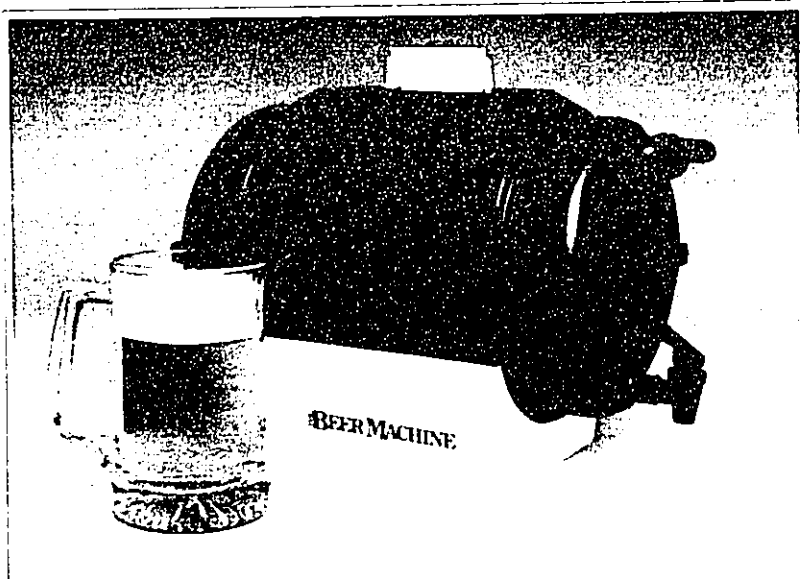
VIDEOS

Video collection packages have become increasingly popular. Selecting a video as a gift is almost 100 percent guaranteed, since most people have VCRs in their homes.

From Buena Vista Home Video there's "The Best of Broadway Musicals." It's filled with musical numbers from some of Broadway's better known shows, such as "Camelot," "My Fair Lady," "Hello, Dolly!" "Oklahoma!" and several more. In addition to putting all these marvelous performances together, there is also plenty of rare footage.

Buena Vista also offers "Johnny Carson: His Favorite Moments from

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BREWING
GOOD
CHIEF:

This beer machine is the perfect gift for those who might like creating and enjoying making their own unique, home beer. This machine creates a fine brew with little effort (\$79.95). At Sharper Image, the Somerset Collection, Troy.