

THOMAS KATKALDE

Painter of Light



Paints of Serenity

Available in three sizes



Brightened Lights, Paris

Available in two sizes

One of our best gifts in 1999



It puts me a bit on edge knowing that friends in both the computer and hospital business have been mandated to work on New Year's Eve. No parties, no rounds of Auld Lang Syne, no "Live from Times Square." They'll be waiting for the dark double-0 cloud to pass overhead leaving them, hopefully, completely bored and undisturbed.

At our house, the motto is "We are Y20K." Hunkered down on December 31 with a cord of wood, bottled water, candles, a can of corned beef hash, and a battery-operated CD player that we'll quickly switch from Prince's "1999" to R.E.M.'s "It's the End of the World As We Know It (and I feel fine)" should mayhem erupt, we'll be the model of suburban survivalists.

Yes, millennium madness has seized us all in a big way. Nowhere is that more evident than with holiday gifts this season. Millennium ornaments, suspenders, cuke plates, jewelry, socks, blenders - you get the picture. And plenty of Roman numeral "MM" items - a bonus if your name happens to be Marsha Mason or Michael Moore.

But rather than let this turn-of-the-century mania muddle the holidays, retailers have chosen to embrace it. At the Observer & Eccentric Newspapers, we decided to ring in the holidays by offering you a gift guide with ideas that span the generations. Whether you're looking for clothes for that hard-to-buy-for teen or want a special something for a discerning tot, we've got a universe of gifts.

And since this is the season of giving, we've also included a list of many charitable organizations that can use your time, talent and even, a spare twenty. Perhaps you'll include one or more of them on your gift-giving list.

With these pages, your search through the galaxy of holiday gifts should be far less nebulous. We hope you will enjoy the brilliance of this holiday season, and wish you the best for the new year...and beyond.

Alice Rhein

Alice Rhein
Special Editor

On the cover: The intrepid Nick sports a Space Shuttle cap, \$8.99, hooded sweatshirt, \$26 and corduroys, \$27, from OshKosh B'Gosh, Somerset Collection, Troy, and Stride Rite boots, \$28, from Richard's Stride Rite, West Bloomfield; Rocket Glider, \$120, available at FAO Schwarz, Somerset Collection, Troy and the Doll Hospital & Toy Soldier Shop, Berkley; 3D Glow Moon, \$15.95, Store of Knowledge, Somerset Collection, Troy.



Credits

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Holidays on the highway

Bundling up the family and stuffing the gifts into the car? You must be getting ready for the annual trek to the relatives' place for the holidays. Before you buckled your loved ones in their seat belts, did you do a safety check? Quick, make sure the following are operational (or present):

- Heater and defroster.
- Tires - how's that spare?
- Wiper blades and washer fluid.
- Braking system.
- Turn signals, headlights, tail lights, brake lights and hazard lights.
- Battery and ignition system.
- Jumper cables.
- Antifreeze.
- Emergency kit, including flares.
- First-aid kit, blanket and survival equipment.