



DECEMBER 2001 NEWSLETTER

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BRIGHT IDEAS:

Spokane Valley, WA

One of our customers suggested that when parents tell you that they don't want to buy a toy because it is too noisy, they might be able to use her little trick. She cuts out a small piece of thin foam and places it over the speaker on the inside or outside of the toy. It muffles the noise just enough so it is not irritating to the parents, but the children still enjoy the toy. However, it's out of the question to use this same muffling technique on two year old children that come into the store and throw screaming fits!

Waterbury, VT

Another idea from Toni that didn't fit in last month's newsletter: Apparently on the Discovery Health Channel-Healthy Home Magazine -they recommended the purchase of secondhand clothing for children. They felt gently used clothes that have been washed many times are preferable to new clothing with "sizing" and stiffness still in the clothing.

This months gift certificate goes to Toni in Vermont. Thanks!



GRAPEVINE:

The Brentwood store owners, Sharon and Leon, as mentioned before are expecting their own little one.

While on a trip Sharon had to have emergency gallbladder surgery. Leon and the employees minded the store, and all is well with mom and baby.

Randy and Laureen's new little one, Miranda is doing just great. They hope to have her home from the hospital by Christmas. Randy says she is a porky 3 lbs. plus.



SHOP NEWS:

In addition to the usual slowdown in December, a few stores have noticed a very different mood this year. Some stores have indicated their exchange credit sales are higher than usual and gross sales are down. Usually this would be an indication of "price creep" or taking too many items that are not very sellable. This year it doesn't seem to be the case. We think customers are holding on to their money a little tighter in areas where the economy is effected by recession. Hang tough, we're not alone. In fact, we will weather this better than most full-price retail stores.

Toys sales went pretty well this year. The totals ranged any where from \$1,300 for new stores to \$4,000 for more established stores.



TIME TICKLERS:

December and first two weeks of January are blue tags then purple tags through February. For those stores with the room, go ahead and start putting out your summer clothes anytime soon. Usually, we wait until Feb. 1st, but it can be an extra source of revenue for some stores. Inventory needs to be done late December or early January. (We like to do it on Jan. 1st when the store is closed.) New store owners call us with questions about what to do.

OPPORTUNITIES:



Nancy and Val have this to say: "We've caught up on trade-ins for the first time in two years thanks to the clothespin system. We would never have believed how much more efficient it is than the old way. Customers come in and are more than pleasantly surprised that we can take their trade-ins right away. The girl's are actually doing some badly needed cleaning projects, because everything is caught up!"

Cole's famous candy is on it's way. Enjoy!