

A Household Word: Wii Wish You a Merry Christmas

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By Carol Band

It's 4:30 a.m. on a December morning. It is dark outside and I am pulling sweatpants on over my pajamas, zipping up my parka and grabbing a travel mug for my coffee. What rouses me out of a warm bed to greet the chilly dawn on what could have been a luxurious Saturday to sleep in?

The search for a Nintendo Wii.

Every year, my youngest son, Lewis, makes a Christmas list. It's an exercise in greed and it's a chance for him to cling to the possibility that there just might be a Santa. He usually asks the big guy for the stuff he knows I hate. Stuff like video games.



Most years, Lewis' list has 10 or 15 items ranging from comic books to an Enzo Ferrari. Last year, however, there was just one thing he wanted:

A Nintendo Wii.

For those parents whose kids only play with wooden toys and rag dolls, the Wii, pronounced "we," is an interactive video-type game. Lewis explained that although the Wii was expensive, he wouldn't want anything else for Christmas or ever again.

"We'll see," I said and began checking the flyers in the Sunday papers. But the Wii was not only sold out in every store, there were long waiting lists, inflated Internet auctions and entire Web sites devoted to tracking rumored deliveries of the Wii system at stores in our area.

I paid \$10 for a password and access to one of the prophetic Web sites and drove to the store that was listed as having the coveted Wii. "Sorry," the kid at Best Buy said. "We had a few, but you have to get here before the store opens. People line up outside at 5 o'clock in the morning."

He was right. The next Saturday, when I pulled into the store parking lot at 4:45 a.m., there was already a clutch of rabid, would-be Wii owners lined up on the sidewalk.

They say that people who share intense life experiences develop deep and lasting bonds. This is how I felt about my new friends as we waited outside the store in the frosty morn. We stamped our feet to keep warm, talked about our families and swapped stories of the Wiis that got away. We shared coffee and rumors of deliveries and collective disappointment when the store manager stuck his head out of the front entrance and said "Sorry, no Wiis today."

For several Saturdays, I did the pre-dawn schlep to the parking lots of Target, Best Buy, Costco and Wal-Mart. The

faces of the desperate parents, grandparents and geeks were different each week, but the story was always the same.

No Nintendo Wii.

I'd like to say that on Christmas morning a Nintendo Wii somehow appeared under our tree. But it didn't. Instead, Lewis got Legos, a clock radio, a bathrobe and the gift of disappointment, which I firmly believe builds character, but doesn't produce joyous squeals of delight on Christmas morning. Somehow though, he survived the season and muddled through the year.

Then, just a few weeks ago, I walked into my neighborhood video store and lo and behold - there was a stack of sleek white boxes. "Are those Wiis?" I asked the teenage clerk. "Yep," he said, "just got 'em in."

"I'll take one!" I said and shelled out what seemed like a lot of money for a box that seemed too small to deliver a big impact on Christmas morning.

This year there will be shouts of delight, Kodak moments and a renewed belief in the power of Santa. This year I won't have to stand in line with the lunatic fringe of the consumer culture. This year I will be The Mom Who Saved Christmas!

I hid the Wii under my bed and reveled that my Christmas shopping was basically done until Lewis handed me his wish list. There was only one item on it:

An Xbox 360.

"It's way more fun than the Wii," Lewis said. "If I get one, I won't ever want anything else."

Like the song says, it really is the most wonderful time of the year ... to give, to receive and to save your receipts. Wishing you and your family a Happy Holiday.

Carol is looking through her house for presents to re-gift. Write to her at band_carol@hotmail.com. To read more of Carol's Household Word columns, [Click here](#).