

Stand Up Gifts: A Wrap Challenge

Last year, my sister sent me two pairs of plastic gloves, two plastic face shields and a travel-sized container of Lysol wipes - was this a gag gift? My daughter and I most definitely laughed when we opened all this, wrapped, mind you, in lovely holiday paper. Truth was, my sister was concerned that I was taking my daughter out to a restaurant for Christmas dinner. That was 2020.

A year later, the pandemic is calming down and we are all getting invited to proper holiday gatherings again: office parties, family reunions, dances and neighborhood open houses. And with all these parties come the traditions of secret Santa, white elephant swaps, and of course gag gifts.

The right gag gift is often harder to find than a sincere gift; it works best if it pokes fun with some respect, some love, with recognition of the recipient's talents. It also works best if the recipient has a sense of humor. Who better to deliver a gag gift to than a comedian?



Doreen Collins with her pretty and pink FUD.

What the FUD?

Local comedian **Doreen Collins** is the first (and only) female inducted into the RI Comedy Hall of Fame. One year a friend gave her a FUD (that's short for a female urination device). She laughed, saying, "if I'm gonna hang with the big boys, why not pee like one?!" You go girl! One brand of FUD is even named, "Stand-up."



Brad Pierce

The Great Fortune Cookie Crapshoot

Of course, a gag gift doesn't have to have a specific intention. It can just be surprising and odd. One year, when he was about 19, local comedian **Brad Pierce** got just that. His friends chipped in and bought him a toilet. And then his friends bought him a huge box of fortune cookies. Suddenly flush with good fortunes, he kept that toilet in his bedroom at his parent's house and filled it with the cookies, like a giant cookie jar or candy dish. Eventually, when Brad moved out to get married, the toilet was repurposed and used as the chair from which he co-hosted a public access show. There is a gag gift that just kept on giving!



Joanna Rapoza and her Designer Moose Poop Earrings

No Shit?

No story on gag gifts would be complete without noting the anonymous gag gift. That would be when the recipient is intended, but the giver is in hiding.

Several years ago, while local comedian **Joanna Rapoza** was living in Connecticut, a local paper ran an advertisement for a comedy open mic she was starting. Her old email was provided as contact information, and it had the word "moose" in it. The first night the open mic was to occur, an anonymous (annonymoose?) gift was left for her at the venue - matching earrings and a necklace made of petrified moose poop!

So if you're looking for the perfect gag gift for a friend or co-worker, try to think about who that person really is and what they can endure as humor. It can make the difference between a shitty gift, and a gift that's the shit.

Some places to buy gag gifts:

Spencer Gifts is everybody's favorite spot for fake dog poo, and that set of matching brass balls. Visit at the Providence Place Mall, 1 Providence Place, PVD.

Imagine Gift Store in Warren is locally owned. It's a small mall with an entire department of joke gifts. 5 Miller St, Warren.

Frog and Toad is known for its compact but robust selection of jokes and sarcasm, from magnets to aprons. 795 Hope St, PVD.

Pleasant Surprise, where venerated OOP used to be, has a pleasant selection of jokes, jabs and local references for your humor-supportive friends and family. 297 Thayer St, PVD.