

“Oh, what a

Recycled briefs
and other gifts
that got around

The Juicer

My husband and I have been happily married for three years. On our second Christmas together, my then boyfriend was called out of town on business. He wouldn't return until after New Year's, so he left my gift and made me promise not to open it until Christmas morning.

Of course I couldn't wait until Christmas, so I opened my gift a few days early. To my utter disappointment my loving boyfriend had bought me a juicer—the most unromantic gift of all time. I was almost in tears at the thought of it.

A day before Christmas Eve my mom mentioned her interest in a new diet which involved drinking plenty of juice. I decided to re-gift the appliance and give it to my mom.

On Christmas morning my boyfriend called. I pretended to open my gift, and I faked surprise. That was when I got the shock of my life. My boyfriend asked me to marry him.

Of course I said yes to the love of my life.

At that same moment my mom walked into the room. She held the juicer in one hand and a black velvet box in the other. My boyfriend had put my ring inside the juicer, and I had given it to my mother!

Christine Williams | Sherrills Ford | EnergyUnited

“Sleeping Beauty”

While I was growing up, my mother was the head of a single parent household. I think this fact led my mom to become resourceful in response to every situation.

One weekend I was excited to be able to go to a schoolmate's birthday party. Everything was going wonderfully—games, eating excessive amounts of sweets and stashing away party favors. Then came time for the birthday girl to open her gifts. Nothing could be more shocking and troubling to me once she opened my “gift.”

She unwrapped one of *my* Disney books, “Sleeping Beauty,” I think, which was also my favorite. Needless to say, I pitched a fit and made a scene. I even demanded that she open the front cover to see my name posted and that she give it back.

Tiffany Ward | Yadkinville | EnergyUnited



“nice surprise!”

The Blue Sleepers

My husband had been married previously with children. In love and respect for my ready-made-family, I made a conscious effort to get along well with the ex-wife. When she and her new husband delivered another baby I ran right out to Zayres and bought two beautiful blue sleepers. I was so happy to hear how pleased she was to receive my gift.

About a year later on the arrival of my child, my husband's ex-wife presented us with a gift as well. As I opened the gift I silently reflected on how mature we had been about getting along so well. My thoughts were short lived after all the paper was removed, and I recognized the same blue sleepers I had bought her just a year prior.

I removed the clear lid from the prepackaged box and sure enough—unbeknownst to either of us—was a Zayres tag attached to the sleeper from the inside. I knew then that she had recycled my gift because Zayres had closed its doors shortly after I made my purchase. I never confronted the ex on her tacky error, but I sure confronted my husband about it!

Angie Womack / Sanford / Central EMC

The Snake Light

My husband, Gene, was admiring the January birthday gift he just opened: a snake light. Little Annah walked in the room to see the presents and said, “Oh, you got a snake light, too. My daddy got four of those for Christmas.”

Her mother's and father's faces turned red because the gift was from them. We all laughed and agreed that the truth always comes from a little child.

Gene said, “I'm glad that y'all received so many snake lights during the holidays so you could share one with me.”

Mary Kay Cox / Four Oaks / South River EMC

The Ladies Briefs

A few years ago my daughter gave me some lovely briefs for Christmas. Since they were too brief for my mature figure, I wrapped them and gave them to my daughter-in-law for her birthday.

Imagine my surprise when the following Christmas my daughter opened her present and surprise, surprise, there in the box were the same ladies briefs—a gift from my daughter-in-law to her!

This gift had come full circle. From my daughter, to me, to my daughter-in-law, then back to the original purchaser. But she didn't know that she had bought them in the beginning. This was truly a gift that was recycled.

Margaret McManus / Wadesboro / Pee Dee EMC

The Calendars

One Christmas Eve I had a Christmas party and invited some friends over to dinner. After dinner my husband suggested we play games to win prizes and entertain our guests. But we had not planned it. All we were going to have was dinner and drinks and a little dancing. I thought about this case of calendars that I had ordered. So I started giving them out as prizes.

The next day one of the ladies who had been at the party called me and said, “Thank you so, so, so much.”

“For what?” I asked.

She said, “For that \$100 bill that you put in my calendar.”

All I could do was drop the phone and scream. If I could take it back I would!

Christal Rankins / Aulander / Roanoke Electric



Thanks to everyone who sent in stories about those awkward “re-gifting” experiences. You can see more at our Web site. Next month we'll publish stories about the diets that worked for you, or didn't. [Deadline was Nov. 15.] For other themes and rules of this series, see page 20.



The Fresh Fish

Years ago my cousin, Myrtle Outlaw, down in Camden, S.C., lived in a bad neighborhood. The people next door moved away and she prayed for a good Christian family to move in.

In a little while a family moved in, but she hadn't had time to meet them. On the next Saturday she came home from work and on the kitchen table was a dishpan of fresh fish. Her youngest son was a good fisherman, and this was the chance she was waiting for. She took half the fish out of the pan and went next door. A lady named Betty Thompson came to the door. Myrtle told her that she lived next door and had brought her some fish as a "welcome to the neighborhood" gift.

Betty burst out laughing and said that she had the same idea. It was she who brought the fish over to Myrtle's. From that day forward Myrtle and Betty were good friends, and they still laugh about their fish story.

Lula Grover | Fayetteville | South River EMC

The Cookbook

Not long after we moved into our home, family and friends gave us a housewarming. I received a lovely cookbook as a gift. I did not do much cooking back then, and I decided this would be perfect for re-gifting.

Sure enough, a couple of months later I was invited to a bridal shower. As the bride-to-be began to unwrap her gifts, she came to mine. Oh, she was so excited about her wonderful cookbook. She began to thumb through it and, lo and behold—unbeknownst to me, the person who had given it to me had written me a personal note on the inside cover. She began to read it aloud and soon realized the note had been meant for me! I began to pray for the floor to open up and for me to fall in and disappear forever.

She came to me after the party and gave the cookbook back, and we both got a good laugh. She said she had done the same thing but was fortunate enough not to get caught. I have not re-gifted since.

Pat Jarman | Jacksonville | Jones-Onslow EMC

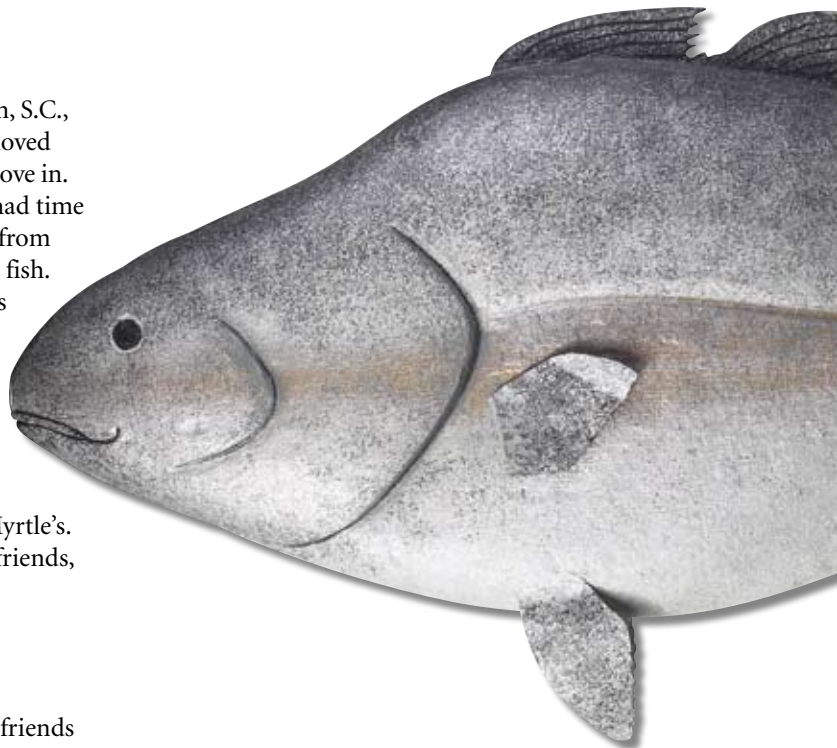
The Little Yellow Negligee

We have a downright hilarious family re-gifting tradition.

When I was only 12 or so my very conservative Southern Baptist grandma gave me a short yellow negligee for Christmas. It was a beauty with lace and a gigantic ribbon bow on the front. None of us could figure out what she was thinking, but the negligee became a longstanding family re-gifting opportunity. Eventually one of us added a large black pin to the front that said, "I have exactly what you need."

Now every few years or so we pass it around, so that one of us receives the negligee all wrapped up like a nice Christmas gift. For years we would only give it to the female members of the family. When it was opened, everyone cracked up! I am now 51, and last Christmas I decided to give it to my 76-year-old father. I want to tell you—that negligee was the hit of the gift giving at our house last year! 📌

Laura Lee Carter | Fort Collins, Colo.



Send us your best **Earn \$50**

Here are the themes in our "Nothing Could Be Finer" series. Send us your stories and pictures about these themes. If yours is chosen for publication, we'll send you \$50. You don't have to be the best writer. Just tell it from your heart.

February 2007 The Way We Were
Pictures from the old days, and the stories that go with them.

Deadline: December 15

March 2007 Pests and Weeds
Tell us how you control them in your garden.

Deadline: January 15

April 2007 The Dumbest Souvenir I Ever Brought Home
Where did it come from and why? Send photos, if you have them.

Deadline: February 15

May 2007 How We Saved Energy
Good ideas for home, at work, or on the road.

Deadline: March 15

June 2007 One Time at Summer Camp
Your best summer camp story. Send photos, if you have any.

Deadline: April 15

July 2007 Before Farmers Markets
Your stories of buying and selling farm products in the old days.

Deadline: May 15

The Rules

1. Approximately 200 words or less.
2. One entry per household per month.
3. Photos are welcome. Digital photos must be 300 dpi and actual size.
4. E-mailed or typed, if possible. Otherwise, make it legible.
5. Include your name, electric co-op, mailing address and phone number.
6. If you want your entry returned, please include a self-addressed, stamped envelope. (We will not return others.)
7. We pay \$50 for each submission published. We retain reprint rights.
8. We will post on our Web site more entries than we publish, but can't pay for those submissions. (Let us know if you don't agree to this.)
9. Send to: Nothing Finer, Carolina Country, 3400 Sumner Blvd., Raleigh, NC 27616
Or by e-mail: finer@carolinacountry.com
Or through the Web: www.carolinacountry.com