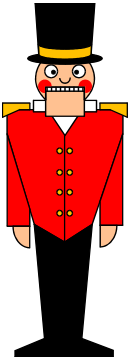


Post-Holiday Planning

by John Farrow



The holidays have come and gone, and if you're like most of us, all that's left is a big mess in the house and an even bigger mess on your credit card statements. Indeed, the cost of the traditional "12 Days of Christmas" is now a whopping \$55,086.26, according to The Asset Management Group of Philadelphia. While inflation added only 1.1% last year, the biggest increase, from \$127.30 to \$3,309.87 for lords a-leaping, came as a result of a new contract signed by the Pennsylvania Ballet (true royalty lost both the desire and the ability to leap about years ago).

But perchance there might be one more gift under the tree that you overlooked. Or your significant other just passed these by, not realizing their import, and you're looking for an excuse to hit the post-holiday sales.

Perhaps it's one of those software training packages like PC Coach™ (800/52COACH). For only \$59.95 (plus shipping and handling, of course) this little puppy will calculate your individual and cumulative pace, time and distance, no matter the unit, split times and paces, shoe mileage, even your estimated finish time (I guess you have to haul your PC along).

You also get to select one training plan with the software: either a 10k program by Arturo Barrios, Uta Pippig's marathon program, Mike Pigg's triathlon or Roy Benson's heart-rate plan. It probably even plays *The Star-Spangled Banner* before each workout or race.

For the hardcore, you can even get a program called The Joy of Downloading. This is for those of you who have always wanted to develop a closer personal relationship with your heart rate monitor.

Another possibility is the Sector Diving Team watch that comes with enough dials and timing functions to run a training session for the entire Kenyan national cross-country team.

The watch is water-resistant to 3,300 feet and the bezel is advertized as bomb-proof. Just the thing for that Armageddon Marathon. \$2,450. 800/994-3452.

If chopping up a frozen waterfall is your idea of a good time, Black Diamond has what they describe as the sexiest ice axe ever made. Now, far be it for me to question what does it for ice climbers, but if that is your gig, then maybe this little carbon-fiber shafted number is just the thing for you. \$295. 801/278-5533.

For the dirt-bike triathlon on your schedule, Bianchi offers its B.O.S.S. (Bitchin' Orange Single Speed) mountain bike. In true post-modern retro style, it has one gear and comes in one color, orange (with celeste green tires and grips). \$850. 510/264-1001. I don't know about you, but I need every gear I can find.

Then there's nothing like coming in after a long run or hard track session for a cherry phosphate at your very own 1950s-style diner replete with juke box, soda fountain and spinning counter stools, all housed in an Airstream-like aluminum shell. A steal at \$195,000. From Nieman-Marcus (who else?). 800/825-8000.

And finally, pick up an essential item for the bathroom of that diner, soon to be auctioned off at Nashville's Swine Ball: none other than the urinal from Tootsie's Orchid Lounge, the popular bar next door to the Ryman Auditorium, long home of the Grand Ole Opry. Just think of the stars who probably used it: Willie Nelson, Ernest Tubb, Porter Wagoner, Johnny Cash. Maybe even (gasp) Hank Williams. Maybe even Tanya Tucker. Pity that Elvis never played the Opry.

But after some sober reflection, I guess that paisley tie from Aunt Mildred isn't so bad after all. I even hear paisley's coming back in style.

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