

September 2008

Dear ~~Very Smart~~ Brilliant Editor/Producer:

With the harried, hectic holidays fast approaching, you're probably wondering how you can help your readers/listeners/viewers weather the trials of the season with a minimum of hassles/property damage/recidivism.

What a coincidence! In this very press kit lies the answer to your prayers: **PETERSON'S HOLIDAY HELPER: FESTIVE PICK-ME-UPS, CALM-ME-DOWNS & HANDY HINTS TO KEEP YOU IN GOOD SPIRITS** (Clarkson Potter: 10/14/08).

Of course, you will thoroughly read all the enclosed materials and pore through each page of the book. But just in case you're not going to get to it for another half hour or so, here's a synopsis:

**The secret to holiday cheer is to  
keep good spirits in you.**

Yet it's not just a book of holiday drink recipes! Nay! It is an essential guide to holiday problems and the cocktail antidote specifically developed for each.

To give you a sampling of how Valerie Peterson can address your audience, her ~~highly paid~~ brilliant publicist thought the following would be helpful:

#### VALERIE PETERSON ANSWERS COMMON HOLIDAY QUESTIONS

**My family is Republican and my in-laws are Democrats. I'm afraid there will be sore losers at my Thanksgiving table. Help!**

Unfortunately, the bounteous season brings together friends and family of disparate backgrounds and beliefs—and so may also bring about an abundance of conflict. Especially in a heated election year, why not serve *Peterson's Holiday Helper's* Thanksgiving Cooldowns, made with chilled hard cider, cranberry juice and orange bitters? Combined with the tryptophan in the turkey, your guests will be snoring in no time. Of course, as a precaution, do keep the carving knife out of easy reach.

**My boyfriend always says he wants to help out during the holidays, but at the end of the day, he's useless at shopping, cooking, cleaning, decorating, or wrapping. What can I have him do that he can't possibly make a muck out of?**

Men like "projects" —so why not have him infuse some vodkas for your holiday beverages? It's easy to do, requires a minimum of ingredients and equipment (sources are in *Peterson's Holiday Helper*), and the tasty, all-natural results can be used in a variety of drink recipes or bottled for gift-giving. Or drunk straight up when nobody is watching.

**I've always prided myself on my no-nonsense straightforwardness, but I've gotten skunked with coal the past few years. How do I get on Santa's good side?**

A change of tactics is clearly in order. For maximum success with the Jolly One, avoid the following when writing your letter:

- The phrase "Even though I've been pretty bad this year..."
- Demands, such as "I have to have..." or "I'll die if I don't get..."
- Any references to past gift disappointments and/or compensation one feels due for such
- Thinly veiled threats to reindeers'/elves'/Mrs. Claus's well-being

For added insurance, why not leave St. Nick a little Nice 'n Naughty chocolate and coffee liqueur–spiked hot cocoa along with the cookies? Couldn't hurt, might help.

**I am still bitter about getting a baby brother for Christmas when I wanted a puppy. Any therapeutic advice?**

Ah, the unfulfilled holiday desire! Who didn't long for Barbie's Dream House? A Cher doll? Jarts? A *real* AK47? Unfortunately, many of us had well-meaning parents who prevented us from having those cherished items, which they deemed "too expensive for a toy," "unhealthy for a boy," "dangerous," or "only for Daddy to use." If your anger-management classes haven't done the trick, temper your residual disappointment with a Christmas Consolation, made with raspberries, elderflower syrup, and sparkling wine. And remember, there's always eBay. Or Automatic Weapons "R" Us.

**After a string of misfortunes this year, I need all the help I can get in 2009. What do you suggest?**

There are a number of customs believed to bring good luck in a New Year. For example, the Ancient Britons subscribed to the ritual of "First Footing" —that is, they made sure that the first person to step over the threshold in the New Year would be a tall, healthy, handsome, strapping man. The belief is still widely held today—especially among the author's circle of friends, who further require that the man be single and carrying a bottle of bubbly, so they can concoct a few I Get a Kick cocktails, or a bowl of Forget Me Not punch.

**Gosh, it's New Year's Day and my head is pounding and I'm a little sick to my stomach. I must be coming down with a cold or the flu. Can you recommend something to take?**

Feeling under the weather is quite common after a night of being under the table. I suggest you try Peterson's Hangover Helper: the Italian bitters, Fernet Branca, with ginger-infused simple syrup and club soda. The taste takes some getting used to but, rest assured, by the third, you'll feel better.

**Wait just a minute, here! I see a pattern! You couldn't possibly be suggesting that "liquor" can solve all my holiday quandaries?**

Certainly not! For example, a Green Elf gin and apple liqueur cocktail cannot do your holiday shopping for you. The idea is just plain silly! But when you get home after eight hours at the mall—three of which you spent looking for a parking space—well, a few sips might be just the "Santa's assistant" you need. And, come to think of it, a bottle of homemade Emergi-Gift Coffee Liqueur does make a great present.

**Is there really a "Valerie Peterson" and, if so, what qualifies her to write this book?**

Yes, Virginia. And *she* is actually very much like *you*—only with a publisher who, inexplicably, allowed her to put her name in the book title. With specific regard to the holidays, Valerie is overcommitted, overworked, overwhelmed and undermedicated. A writer descended from a long line of therapeutic concoctionists, she realized that if she committed holiday drink recipes to a handy and useful volume, she'd be bringing joy to untold others, and her liquor bills would be tax deductible. For more information, visit [www.petersonsbackstory.com](http://www.petersonsbackstory.com).