

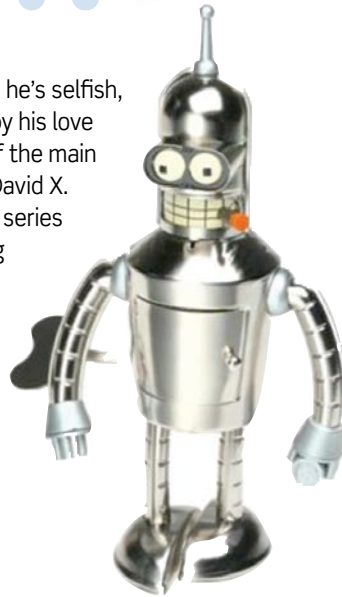
The Animation Lovers' Holiday Gift Guide

We have taken the leg work out of your shopping this holiday season and picked a Dy-No-Mite selection of books, DVDs, toys, tech tools and trinkets that are bound to please those picky toonheads in your lives. Or you can simply put these goodies on your must-have list so Santa Claus, Hanukah Harry, All-forgiving Allah or Kwanza Kenny will know exactly what to bring you this year!



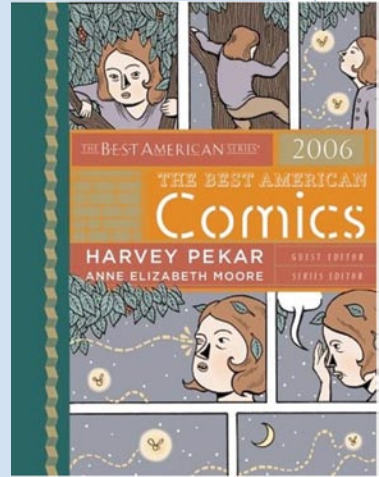
Heart of Steel

Like many of our most popular cartoon characters, he's selfish, childlike, greedy, annoying and completely driven by his love for himself! Yes, we're talking about **Bender**, one of the main reasons we all fell in love with Matt Groening and David X. Cohen's original Fox show, *Futurama*. Now that the series is in production again, you can celebrate by getting your hands on a beautiful nine-inch **Bright 'n Shiny** version of the metallic monster. Packaged in a killer blue-and-silver edition box, this must-have toy comes with Bender's familiar stogie and a new can of Mom's Old-Fashioned Robot Oil. Now who wouldn't want to find this wind-up, walking, metallic monster (priced around \$24.99) under the old Christmas tree?



Mind Candy

There are very few animation lovers who don't have a special place in their hearts for comic books. That's why one of the best gifts for animators this holiday season may very well be the crisp new inaugural volume of Houghton Mifflin's **The Best American Comics** (\$22) series. Edited by Harvey Pekar (*American Splendor*) and Anne Elizabeth Moore (*Punk Planet* magazine), this 382-page joyride offers a mind-blowing collection of graphic faves, from Rebecca Dart's *Rabbithead* and Alex Robinson's *Tricked* to Justin Hal's *La Rubia Loca*.



This sampler gives us both established artists such as Crumb, Lynda Barry, Chris Ware and Jaime Hernandez and newcomers such as Lillie Carre and Jesse Reklaw (who shares the tale of a torn childhood and the author's relationship with 13 ill-fated pet kittens). These smart, fantastic and, at times, quite poignant tales may very well be the antidote to those nightmarish holiday family gatherings!

Raiders of the DVD Vaults

This holiday season, there are so many new animated DVDs to pick from, you really need a little pet robot to keep track of all the titles. Several of this year's feature releases—Disney/Pixar's *Cars* and Fox/Blue Sky's *Ice Age: The Meltdown*, Nickelodeon/Paramount's *Barnyard*, Warner Bros.' *The Ant Bully*, Warner Indie's *A Scanner Darkly* and Sony's *Monster House*—hit the stores one after another. Then, you have the classic TV shows bowing out for collectors: For example, Disney TV Animation's original series *The Gummi Bears* (circa 1985) comes out on DVD for the first time. Other hot packages include the second volumes of the Warner Bros.' *Animaniacs* and *Pinky and The Brain* series. Prime-time auds will welcome the release of *The Simpsons: Season Nine* and *Family Guy: Season Four*.

In a complete class of its own is Warner Bros.' *Looney Tunes Golden Collection, Vol. 4* (see page 16) as are three glorious *Walt Disney Treasures* packs arriving in December: *The Complete Pluto Vol. 2*, *More Silly Symphonies* and *Your Host Walt Disney*. Oh, and did we mention the Mouse House has also prepared a new remastered version of its 1973 feature *Robin Hood* (dubbed the *Most Wanted Edition*) and a sequel to the 1981 feature, *The Fox and the Hound*? You can really blow your whole year's salary on all these entertaining discs, so make sure your pet robot is keeping an eye on your wallet as well.





Digital Box of Delights

We know when it comes to software and tech tools, animators have a tendency to be early adopters. But if your friends or family members aren't working with a **Toon Boom Storyboard**



program, then you may consider purchasing this hot little item this holiday season. With a price tag of \$899, this easy-to-use software is ideal for anyone who likes working with a digital storyboard. It features a flexible layer-based panel display with mo-cap abilities, a complete set of drawing tools (including a pressure-sensitive brush tool for digital graphic tablet and pen), customizable caption fields to insert searchable textual content, advanced timeline and real-time animatic creation with dynamic camera moves. In addition, Toon Boom's Storyboard has export capabilities including printing, image sequences and Harmony/Opus/Solo, EDL SWF and QuickTime file formatting. To find out more, visit www.toonboom.com and see for yourself how this handy package can speed up the storyboarding process beyond belief.

Ten New Trinkets

Check out this list of Entertainment Earth's (www.entertainmentearth.com) newly arrived toys for that special collector/geek in your life!

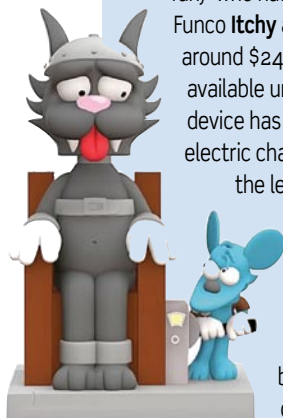


- Batman Two-Face 13-Inch Collector Figure (DC Direct, \$69.99)
- Buffy/Angel Vampire Plush Puppet (Diamond, \$49.99)
- Disney Magic Kingdom Game (Hasbro, \$24.99)
- Looney Tunes Golden Collection Series 1 Case (Diamond, \$109.99)
- Lord of the Rings Checkers, Tic Tac Toe in a Tin (Usaopoly, \$14.99)
- Marvel Minimates Series 13 Case (Diamond, \$104.99)
- Rat Fink Deluxe Figure & Skateboard Case (Jonzo, \$179.99)
- Star Wars Cartoon-Style Coffee Mug Set (Encore, \$29.99)
- Superman Returns Daily Planet Weta Statue (DC Direct, \$374.99)
- The Simpsons Treehouse of Horror Monopoly (Usaopoly, \$35.99)



Electric Shock Therapy

What do you get for that spoiled rich kid (or *Simpsons* fan) who has everything? How about the new Funco **Itchy and Scratchy Bobble Bank** (priced around \$24.99) which hasn't even been available until this month? This diabolical device has poor Scratchy positioned in an electric chair with Itchy, well, just itching to flip the lever. The 12-inch-tall bank also plays a nerve-racking electrocution sound every time you add a coin to your savings—and of course, Itchy and Scratchy's heads nod in approval. Why didn't they have banks like these when we were kids, darnit!



Back to Bikini Bottom!

It's Christmas Eve and not a creature is stirring in the house—except you and your spanking new **SpongeBob SquarePants Creature from the Krusty Krab** game (\$39.99). Designed by the folks at Blitz Games, this new THQ release (for GameCube, PS2, Game Boy Advance, Nintendo DS, and, yes, Wii!) offers four types of play: flying, destruction, racing and walking all over nine imaginary worlds in the mind of our hero. If you're lucky enough to play on the Wii, you can use the controller like a real plane stick! There's even a giant-sized Plankton to get rid of in the destructive levels. We can't think of a better way to spend those sweet, restful hours surrounded by the comforts of home and Stephen Hillenburg's resilient, yellow, porous creature.



Those Magnificent Mutants

Our hat is off to frequent *Animation Magazine* contributor **Michael Mallory** who has spent a big chunk of his time researching and writing about Stan Lee and Jack Kirby's classic Marvel characters *The X-Men*. The result is a wonderful coffee table book that will be the envy of anyone who has even a passing interest in these fascinating mutant superheroes and heroines. Mallory, the man behind the equally essential *Marvel: The Characters and Their Universe* tome from a few years back, looks at the history and evolution of the X-Men and gives us valuable insights into the development and artistic inspirations of the group. Included in this handsome 300-page compendium are all kinds of facts, trivia and beautiful pictures of key covers, movie stills (director Bryan Singer is a contributor) and illustrations. Simply put, you can't really call yourself a real X-fan until you have this book in your library. ***X-Men: The Characters and Their Universe*** (published by Hugh Lauter Levin Assoc.) has a listed price of \$75, but you can get it for much less on amazon.com or at a Barnes & Noble store near you! It's bound to erase the memory of this past summer's underwhelming movie from your mind.



LICENSING



Scent of a Prince

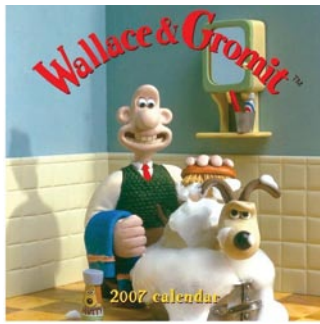
For over five decades, Antoine de Saint-Exupéry's charming fable **Le Petit Prince** (The Little Prince) has won the hearts and minds of millions of fans all over the world. Not only has the book been translated to over 70 languages, it has spawned animated features and even a live-action musical retelling starring Gene Hackman. We noticed that this year, fans can even get their hands on Le Petit Prince colognes, citrusy eau de toilettes, soaps and lotions, china, t-shirts and unisex birthday sets (available both via amazon.com and at Fred Segal's and other specialty boutiques around the country).

So if you've ever wondered what a blonde-haired prince from a distant star smells like, all you have to do is buy this beautiful 3.4 oz. bottle of eau de toilette (priced at \$18). And that's a steal considering how popular it will make you with the other aliens from his corner of the world.



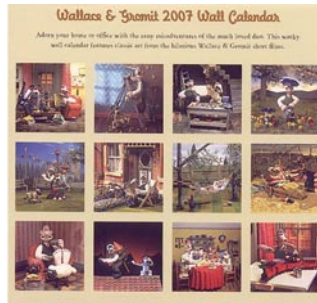
A Claymated Calendar

Finding a calendar in a book store in November is as easy as finding a corrupt politician in office. Last time we checked, there were numerous colorful 12-month and 365-day calendars featuring anything from *The Simpsons* and *Peanuts* to *Cars*, *Over the Hedge*, *Ice Age 2*, *Open Season* and that old reliable, Gary Larson's *The Far Side*. The one that always makes us reach for our wallets is the delightful 12-month **Wallace & Gromit 2007 Calendar** (\$12.95).



There's something about the shiny colors, the whimsical humor and the sheer appeal of Nick Park's characters that makes turning the pages an absolute

joy. As much as we love the CG-animated rodents of *Flushed Away*, the photos in this 2007 calendar make us anticipate the next *W&G* adventure even more. We hope it's soon, Mr. Park!



Bald and Beautiful

We didn't lump *Avatar: The Last Airbender's* glorious six-disc collector's item with all the other DVD picks this month, because this Paramount release really stands out in a cluttered field. Nickelodeon's anime-influenced series has been slowly building a faithful following in many countries, and although it's worlds apart from the cabler's other big hits (*SpongeBob SquarePants* and *The Fairly OddParents*), it's clear to see why both kids and



adults are drawn to its textured and deeply addictive universe. Created by Michael Dante DiMartino and Brian Konietzko, the show centers on a reluctant 12-year-old (Aang) who must face his destiny and master his latent powers to conquer the Firebenders, evil wizards who threaten the world. All 20 episodes of *Book One: Water* are included in this handsome DVD package which comes with a whole disc of extras. The official price is \$64.99, but you can definitely pick it up for \$45 on amazon.com and program your own eight-hour viewing marathon.

Alien Toy Invasion

An animated show about a brave 10-year-old who can unleash a variety of cool alien heroes via his intergalactic watch is a total natural for cool toy tie-ins. That's why this holiday season, the young adventurous fan in your household may be pining for a wide selection of **Ben 10**-themed Bandai toys. We love the Metamorphigures lines (\$19.99) which features awesome two-toys-in-one packages: The Greymatter Alien figure, for example, morphs into a pair of binoculars; the DNA Alien has a light-up head, glow-in-the-dark slime AND launches missiles with his arms. We also know a lot of young kids who are crazy about the actual

Omnitrix watches and alien ships. Yes, the alien toy industry has come a long way since the days of *Star Wars* and *E.T!*

