

# What to do when Santa comes too soon

By JAY BLINDERMAN  
Staff Writer

It seems Christmas comes earlier and earlier each year. I realize the date to celebrate Christmas is the same every year, but retailers try to extend the holiday season by promoting Christmas as early as October.

As a frustrated shopper and a quasi-problem-solving reporter, I decided to consider some possibilities of reversing this early Christmas trend.

Generally, in the middle of October I'm not in a Christmas mood, and I suspect a lot of people feel the same. It would be nice to go trick-or-treating on Halloween or eat turkey and dressing on Thanksgiving without worrying about Christmas. I'm not a traditionalist, but I do like the old custom of no Christmas garb in store windows until the week of turkey day.

So I propose legislation that would prohibit the display or advertisement of Christmas items or the promotion of Christmas specials until the week of Thanksgiving.

But Don Tomlinson, a visiting assistant professor of journalism and an attorney, informed me that my proposal would be unconstitutional because it would violate the freedoms granted by the first amendment.

Bummer deal.

My second idea is similar state legislation, in hopes that if Texas passed my proposal into law, other states would follow the example of our great state.

Once again my legislation wouldn't be permis-

sible, Tomlinson says. In order to make my bill a law, Texas would have to show a legitimate state interest in overcoming the rights of retailers and advertisers, which would not be possible or permissible, Tomlinson says.

Double bummer deal.

My third proposal is as unconstitutional as the first two, but I thought it worth mentioning.

Since the constitution gives us the right of equal representation, I suggest that Christmas advertisements and promotions would have to be matched with an equal amount of Hanukkah advertisements and promotion.

Proportionally, there aren't as many Jews in the United States as Christians. Retailers wouldn't want to adjust their advertising proportionally to the amount of Jews and Christians in the nation, so hopefully they would cut down overall.

My fourth solution involves changing the gift-giving holiday to Thanksgiving. Doing so would help re-establish Thanksgiving as a holiday and also would alleviate the commercialization of Christmas.

But if that were to happen, retailers would probably start to advertise Thanksgiving gifts on the 4th of July, which would de-emphasize another important American holiday.

It seems obvious I won't be able to accomplish my goal through legislation, and I don't think I'll be able to persuade people to give gifts on Thanksgiving, so my final proposal is the suggestion of protest.

Protesting problems is part of the American way and skipping over Thanksgiving is an American problem, therefore I propose an American-style solution.



Caught up in Christmas.

My suggestion is that people bitch about the problem until a change is made.

To accomplish this goal, protests would have to take place at the heart of the problem — the managers' offices at major retail outlets. If you get the big stores, the small stores are going to follow their lead or retreat.

I can't beat the problem, but I'm not going to join the cause. I'll just sit home, refusing to buy Christmas gifts until I finish my final morsel of turkey and dressing. □

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