

# He Said

## The Valentine's

By Jeff Harrell

VALENTINE'S DAY always brings with it a healthy dose of trepidation for most guys I know. Like a burrito past its prime, the thought of not finding just the right gift for that certain someone can give the most laid back dude heartburn.

Regardless of popular belief, we want to surprise our significant other with a thoughtful, creative gift that might just lead to a little romance, if you know what I mean. The tough part is finding that gift without putting in too much effort. Sure, there is always that guy

who spoils it for the rest of us by putting together a scavenger hunt that involves walkie-talkies, hidden roses and ultimately a trip to somewhere tropical. But that guy loses all credibility with his buddies and usually doesn't do it again. Which brings us back to the question, what to get your special someone this Valentine's Day?

Well, there is a list of old standbys, but you don't want to go there unless you are completely out of ideas. Take the "mani pedi." It was a great gift a few years ago because most ladies love a trip to the nail salon and were surprised that their husbands even knew what a mani pedi was. Guys loved it too because all it took was to stop at any shopping center in Frisco, walk into the nail salon and write a check.

Some of the salons even have a nice card you could put the gift certificate in, which eliminated a trip to CVS. Score! But after three straight years of getting the same gift, the thoughtfulness of the mani pedi started to wear off.

The last thing you want is for your wife's Facebook status to say something about how she just got flowers and candy from you for Valentine's Day. Don't get me wrong, flowers and candy are a great jumping off

point. But you want to give her something that makes everyone else think, "Wow, that was really thoughtful." You might even get some new Facebook friends out of the deal. But what is that something?

Any kind of appliance automatically makes guys go back to the movie

"Father of the Bride" when

Annie nearly called the wedding off because her fiancé gave her a blender. Don't want to go there. Clothes are always tough

because if you get the wrong size, it may take years to get out of that doghouse. Lingerie is a bit cliché

and again, the size thing. You could get the kids to make something, but that rarely leads to romance because it reminds her that that's how the kids got made in the first place.

Yep, I can already feel the acid creeping up the windpipe.

But then it finally hits you. If your significant other is anything like my wife, she doesn't want "stuff." In fact, she wants quite the opposite. She is so busy being mom, wife, chauffeur, cook, maid, etc, etc, that all she wants is a break from all that. So this Valentine's Day I'm going to give her a day off. I'm going to take the kids for the day and let her soak in the tub if that's what she wants to do. I'm going to get a babysitter so we can have a date night. Hey, I might lose some "man points" with the guys but it might just be worth it, if you know what I mean.



photo by Chris Fritchie



# She Said

## Day Dilemma

By Allison Harrell

**VALENTINE'S DAY** is almost here and despite the fact that stores now begin to display their Valentines wares while we're still browsing the aisles to the tune of "Rudolph the Red-Nosed Reindeer," I find myself once again unprepared. Ready or not, though, V-Day is around the corner, and it's time for me to give some serious (albeit last-minute) thought to my husband's gift. Where to go for great, last-minute gift ideas? The Internet, of course! Google won't steer me wrong! Or will it? Let's take a look:

**Floral bouquet:** Nope. Potential major loss of man points when they are delivered to his workplace. The cookie bouquet, being a yummy treat, is slightly more acceptable, but I'm going to throw a flag on this one and rule that anything labeled a bouquet is, by default, unmanly.

**Candy:** Yawn. Too boring. Also, as he is working hard at sticking to his New Year's diet, this would essentially be an extra large helping of sabotage in a foil-wrapped box.

**Lingerie:** Really? He's more of a plain white t-shirt guy. And at 6' 4" and 230 pounds, I think I'd have to special order something in his size. And then look into some serious therapy. Oh, wait – that's lingerie for me? I totally knew that...

**Jewelry:** While it may be true that nothin' says lovin' like a diamond-encrusted doodad hanging from a solid gold chain, this is a bit out of the budget. Although I have no doubt that I could find a passable fake at Sam Moon, that's not really

his style, anyway.

A weekend trip to our favorite exotic destination: OK, let's bring it back down to reality, folks. We have between us two jobs, four kids, and a recession – unless it involves driving to the Super 8 in Denton, a weekend trip isn't in the cards this year.

**Life-size stand up girl:** Yes, this is an actual gift suggestion. I could, if I so chose, present my beloved with a cardboard cut-out of a famous female celebrity – say, Jennifer Aniston. While the "ick" factor for this one is off the charts, I am intrigued.

Maybe we could compromise and get a cardboard cut-out of my favorite female celebrity, Emma Thompson. Classy! But still creepy.

**Egad.** While the Internet is a fantastic tool, in this case it has failed me completely. As happens too often, I'll turn instead to the source I should have consulted first, remembering the scripture verse that was read at our wedding: "Love is patient.... So maybe I could put aside my ever-present list of honey-dos and graciously encourage him to veg out in front of the TV for an evening. "Love is kind... Maybe I could make his favorite meal and serve it to him while he's vegging. Now we're getting somewhere! "... It is not self-seeking..." OK, so I shouldn't mentally file this away to be used as collateral the next time I want him to do something for me. And it wouldn't hurt to revisit the

lingerie thing, either... "Love never fails." Wow. Once you get past the marketing, Valentine's Day becomes an opportunity to hit the pause button on our crazy lives and remember the incredible truth that real love – the kind described in 1 Corinthians 13 – is worth celebrating.

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*Jeff and Allison Harrell are a happily married couple who make their home in Frisco.*

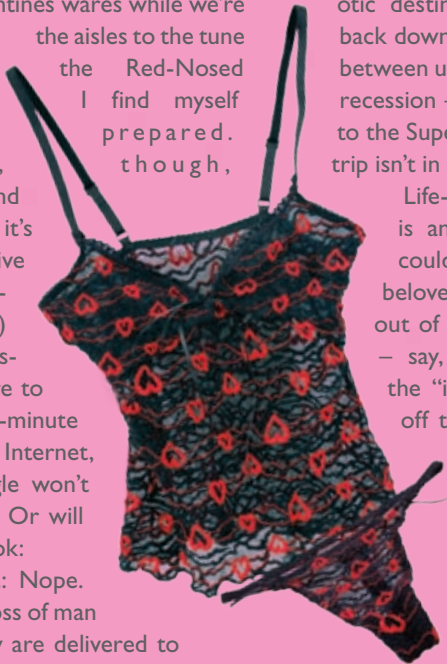


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