

History, Rules & Procedure for the Williamsburg Rotary Club Annual Holiday Yankee Swap

History

Long a spirited, holiday gift giving tradition in the Williamsburg Rotary Club we've never really understood from whence the name, Yankee Swap, and the tradition came. An odd name for a gift exchange game, the Yankee Swap supposedly derived its name from the Civil War days. It seems that the Yankees and the Confederates at some point swapped prisoners as a sort of game to lighten up the atmosphere, hence the name "Yankee Swap." How the term was adopted to gift giving is up for speculation.

Rules

1. Gift must be wrapped, but remain tagless.
2. Only those who bring a gift to the meeting may participate.
3. Alcoholic gifts are allowed, but if the seal is broken on the bottle it may not be repossessed/re-swapped.
4. A gift may be swapped no more than three times (with the initial unwrapping counting as the first swap).
5. Whoever's name is drawn first may swap their gift after the very last name has been called,..... if so desired.
6. Gifts must have a minimum value of \$35.00.

7. There will be a Club donated gift that will be raffled or auctioned off as the last activity in the Yankee Swap.
8. The Yankee Swap gifting celebration will begin after dinner.
9. Christmas related, festive attire is strongly recommended.

Procedure

Upon arriving at the meeting room and after placing a gift under the tree, each member will print their last name on a piece of paper provided by the Swap Meister, fold it, and place it in the Swap Meister's bowl. The Swap Meister will draw names from the bowl and announce the name.

The first member whose name is drawn will pick a gift from under the tree (not the gift they brought), visually inspect it, smell it, gently shake it, then unwrap it (or model it, read it, or demo it) in front of the membership for all to see, then return to his/her seat with the gift remaining always visible. The Swap Meister will then draw the next name and that person, and each person whose name is drawn thereafter, will have the option of either going to the tree for a gift or taking a gift from any other member whose name was previously called.

Opening of gifts and swapping takes place until all the presents have been chosen. Finally, the person who picked first gets to choose from all the gifts or keep what he/she has already received. In the end, the gift you are holding is the gift you take home.