

# Booby Awards and Dubious Gifts

**San Diego's Vengrai Parthsarthy takes a look at the year gone by tongue, firmly in cheek**

It was an international gathering of youngsters—of six and seven year olds assembled under the canopy of the United Nations for the Annual Christmas Awards ceremony. Seven year old Bill Clinton was romping with John Major, and odd name for someone who was still a minor. And then there were Bob Dole and Boris Yeltsin, Narasimha Rao and Hosni Mubarak, Saddam Hussein and Mohammar Qaddafi, all playing and generally having fun. Benazir Bhutto and Chandrika Kumaratunga were in a corner, building sand castles. Boutros Boutros Ghali dressed as Santa Claus thundered Ho-Ho-Ho! Ho-Ho-Ho! to draw the attention of all the children. "Children," he said, "here are the surprises you have been waiting for. Please form an orderly line and come over, one by one." Saddam and Qaddafi elbowed out everyone and tried to be the first in line. A Kuwaiti boy got hurt in the melee. The Secretary General chided them for breaking the queue and causing confusion. Volunteers brought some order to the proceedings and Santa started announcing the names. There was humongous basket filled with goodies for distribution.

The first name to be announced was that of Clinton who was presented with an army fatigue and a "How to Wear Your Fatigue" manual of instructions. He was also given a map of Bosnia and a bottle of Irish root beer. Next came Arafat who was handed over a

universal silence when Saddam who was known as a bully went up and was given a book on "How to Control Your Son-in-Law." A similar copy was given to N.T. Rama Rao who managed to sneak in ahead of his turn. Dole was also given a book—one on "How to Stay Younger" and a pass for a guided tour of the White House. Pete Wilson was given a scroll giving the title "Would-Have-Been Incumbent of the Might-Have-Been Presidency." For Newt Gingrich a whip for rounding up horse, democrats and dissidents was presented. Benazir Bhutto walked up and took a bottle of "Arkansas Come-hither" perfume. Chandrika Kumaratunga too got a perfume—"The Jaffna Magic."

The boys and girls from India were a vociferous lot. With their cries of "Murdabad" reaching the skies the organizers decided to deal with them early. Jayalalitha was given an assortment of toys ranging from carrots to sticks, and a book on "How to Cut Down Marriage Expenses Drastically." While Karunanidhi was given a pass for the Chief Minister's waiting room, Veerappan smelling of sandalwood, was presented with a word processor for writing ransom notes. Joshi the CM of Maharashtra was the recipient of a fresh draft of the Enron agreement and a Mumbai plaque.

Chandraswamy got a pair of golden handcuffs while Subramanyam Swamy was given a catapult with which he started pelting Jayalalitha and was admonished. Narasimha

Rao who was speaking in French to a Quebec boy when he was called up to receive a huge bottle of glue to keep the disparate elements of his party together. Atal Behari Vajpayee was the recipient of the Babri Masjid mosque in miniature, and he was seen trying to trade it for a miniature crown with Arjun Singh. Amitabh who was tall for his age was presented with a book "How to Dethrone the Usurpers," autographed by Sanjay Dutt.

Hershey's chocolates and See's candies were then distributed. The function came to a close with a vote of thanks (to the jury in particular) by O.J. Simpson.

A special award in absentia went to the People of India—a gigantic red triangle to be installed atop the Parliament.