



FLATOW: Welcome back to TALK OF THE NATION SCIENCE FRIDAY. I'm Ira Flatow.

We're talking this hour about holiday gifts, and some suggestions you might bear with us, and suggest for us, the kinds of things you might want to give to people who are hard to find gifts for.

And before we continue our discussion, I'd like to now offer some off-beat suggestions for the holiday season, and here to do that is Henry Galliano. He is owner of Maxilla and Mandible, in New York City. It is an unusual store that specializes in selling items from the natural world. He's also an adviser to -- he was an adviser to Sotheby's on the T-Rex auctions, so he knows a lot about these kinds of wonderful collectibles.

Welcome to the program. Hi there.

HENRY GALLIANO, OWNER, MAXILLA AND MANDIBLE: Hi, how are you?

FLATOW: Hi, Henry. When someone walks into your store, and they know nothing except that they want to get a gift, any kind of gift, how do you point 'em at buying something?

GALLIANO: Well, we need to know the age of the individual, whether they're a young collector or a older collector, but young at heart, whether they're interested in natural history or not.

Lately, we've been getting a strong interest in natural history gifts, past few years, especially this year, we've sold quite a bit of meteorites and things like that, and Mars rocks this season, and I think it's partly due to the awareness in nature.

I think with the animal shows and -- and just generally people are reacting to all the computer...

FLATOW: So there's like -- there's like a backlash against the computer stuff to more natural stuff. That's interesting.

GALLIANO: Yeah. Yeah, yeah, it's -- there's sort of a reaction to all the high tech, an equal reaction to it.

FLATOW: Now, if someone wanted to get a genuine bit of dinosaur for their kid, can it be done without breaking the bank?

GALLIANO: Oh yeah, yeah. We have, I mean, dinosaur teeth from \$45, and we have little broken bones for \$5 and things like that, and we can get very elaborate, like a dinosaur egg, for \$800. So yes, someone can buy fossils, dinosaur fossils, or other kinds of fossils, like fossil

sharks' teeth, or fossil fish, and little invertebrates like trilobites and starfish and things like that, which make wonderful gifts.

FLATOW: Yeah. I've been in your store, I've seen it, and your store is just loaded with this stuff. It's just wall to wall.

LAUGHTER

And you have lots of skeletons there of reptiles and things, things a kid would have love to have and look at, don't you?

GALLIANO: Yes. But those are -- but those are a little pricey, and they're usually for the big kids, not for the little kids. What we have for the little kids would be reproductions of human skulls and things like that, which inspire the learning of anatomy, human anatomy, and we have these visible man and visible woman model kits too, for them.

FLATOW: Mm-hmm. Now, you mentioned that the people, you think, are buying this stuff because there's a -- is a backlash against high-tech gifts. Do you find people dragging their kids in there, and the kids are kind of reluctant to come in, they don't want to go into this store 'cause they're looking for that computer gift?

GALLIANO: The kids -- they want everything. I mean, no. We don't -- we don't have any parents dragging in their kids, screaming and crying -- "I don't want a tarantula, I don't want -- I don't want a piranha..."

LAUGHTER

No, we don't have that. I mean, they want that, but it's a fad, I mean, and the parents cater to the fad sometimes.

FLATOW: Yeah. Well Harry, thank you very much for joining us.

GALLIANO: Sure, you're welcome.

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