

AN ETHICAL HOLIDAY SEASON

The holiday season – a time for good cheer!
For egg nog, for parties, for friends to be near.
But I must be careful
Lest I accept free
A gift not permitted, no matter how wee.

Part two six three five of the 5 CFR
Explains in detail the relevant bar.
It defines the term gift
To mean all things worth money.
That's NBA tickets or jars full of honey.

Some gifts may be taken but some are verboten.
The source is the key – it's the rule that I'm
quotin'.
When from me or others
The source seeks some act,
I must find an exception or I could be sacked.

Even others who give can cause problems for me.
If my job prompts the giving – my position, you
see.
But lucky for me,
Some exceptions exist.
They're in subpart B and should not be missed.

I can pay market value if the gift I do like,
Or I can at my option say "go take a hike."
I can always say no,
But I need not decline.
If worth twenty or less then the gift can be mine.

This exception has prompted some very loud
hollers.
It says gifts are okay if worth twenty dollars.
But surely the public
Is certain to see,
I could never be bought for a sandwich and tea.

Restrictions apply so it does not suffice
To pay twenty bucks for a gift twice the price.
And in any one year
I can't use it, of course,
To go over the limit – fifty dollars per source.

For gifts that a friend or my sister might send,
The rules recognize I don't want to offend.
Regardless of value,
It only must be
That their motive to give wasn't business, but me.

The rule's much the same in the case of my spouse
Who happens to work as s/he can't stand our
house.
Although his/her employer
Is one of those sources,
I can go to their fete and avoid more divorces.

In the case of most parties, the rule's not so clear
As the agency must have an interest, I fear.
If worth more than twenty
And it's no friend true,
Then I'd better seek guidance or I could be blue.

When foreign officials are giving the gift,
The rules are less strict so I don't cause a rift.
I can take it if
Fair market value U.S.
Is three hundred ninety dollars or less.

I can give to my boss to a limit of ten –
A baseball, a cap, or a blue ballpoint pen.
If not to my boss
Or my chain of command,
To a friend I can give more without being canned.

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I always look forward to my office party.
We're all in good moods and the food is so hearty.
If no arm is twisted,
Collecting is okay
To make sure that everyone has a good day.

But finally, how would these rules affect me
If I served the President as "appointee"?
I know that appointees
Must sign when they're hired
A short ethics pledge (or they risk being fired.)

The same rules apply to a person who signed
Except there's an extra gift rule that's enshrined:
No gifts from a source
Listed as "lobbyist" –
Though no friend or kin is required to be dissed.

So go forth with good cheer and know there's no
reason
To think that the gifts rules will ruin your season.