

HIGH-TECH PRESENTS FOR THE MODERN MOM

BY ANNA MARIE KUKEC akukec@dailyherald.com

Consumer sentiment is down. Prices for food, gasoline and other products are up. And just when you've paid off your Christmas and Easter bills, here comes Mother's Day this Sunday. Despite the economy, you are still likely to buy a gift for mom, according to a survey by the National Retail Federation and BIGresearch. The survey said 84 percent of consumers celebrating Mother's Day will likely invest in just one major gift, instead of several smaller gifts.

So even if she says "it's the thought that counts," you might want to think about something totally different.

What about a robot? Or an outfit made of special fabric that fends off heat and perspiration? Or any number of techno gadgets?

Here are some possible gifts for moms of all ages and in many price ranges:

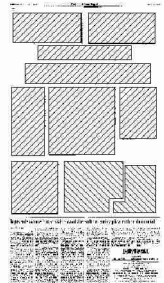
Product: Orbit speaker
Why it's cool: Palm-sized speaker can be tossed in a purse or pocket and taken to the park, beach or just the yard with your MP3 player. Runs for 24 hours on three AAA batteries.

Cost: \$29.95
Find it at: Altec Lansing
Web site:
www.alteclansing.com



Product: DVDirect
Why it's cool: The VRD-MC5 model can quickly transfer high-definition or standard home videos or digital photos to DVD discs without using a computer.

Cost: \$229.99
Find it at: Online, Sony Style stores, Best Buy, Circuit City
Web site:
www.sonystyle.com





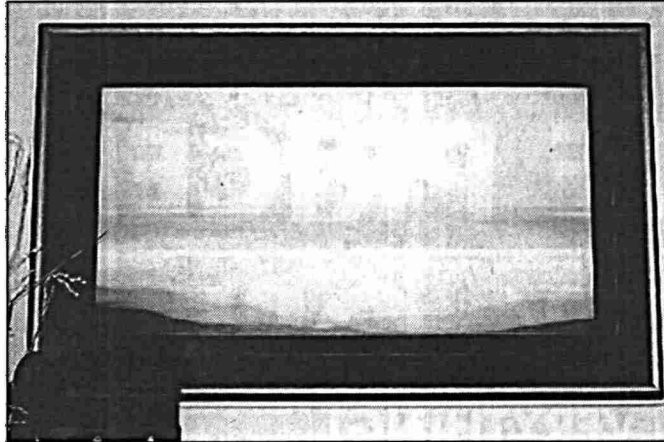
Product: Vita-Mix 5200

Why it's cool: OK, so we're going to provide at least one appliance for the die-hard gourmet cooks. This blender goes up to 240 mph and can blend the entire fruit or vegetable, including skin, core, seeds and stems. It doesn't contain bisphenol-A, the plastic chemical that is under investigation for leeching into food and has "copolyester," a plastic-like material that is shatterproof and dampens noise.

Cost: \$449

Find it at: Online

Web site: www.vitamix.com



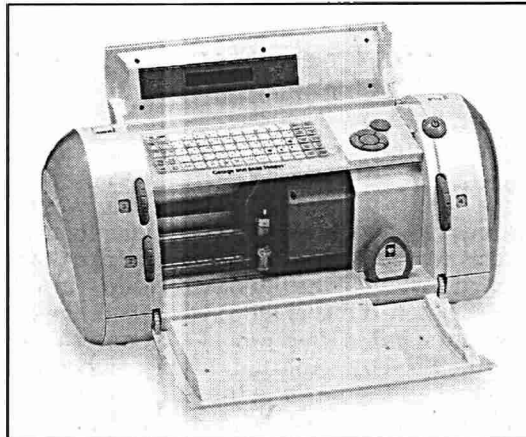
Product: Framed art screen

Why it's cool: This framed work of art is printed on canvas so a touch of a remote can automatically roll it behind the frame to reveal your plasma TV. Comes with an infrared remote. Or get a radio frequency-controlled remote for \$90 more. Various works of art and 40 frames for any décor. Fits 42- to 60-inch screens.

Cost: \$2,595 to \$4,395

Find it at: Online

Web site: www.cableorganizer.com



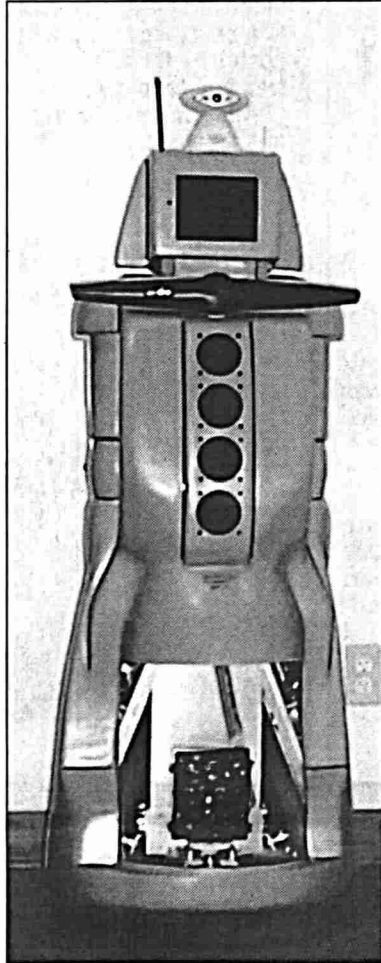
Product: Cricut home die cutting machine

Why it's cool: For lovers of crafts and scrapbooks, this machine creates millions of shapes on paper, card stock, vinyl, vellum and more, without using a computer.

Cost: \$299 to \$499

Find it at: Online, Wal-Mart, Joanna's Fabrics, craft shops

Web site: www.cricut.com



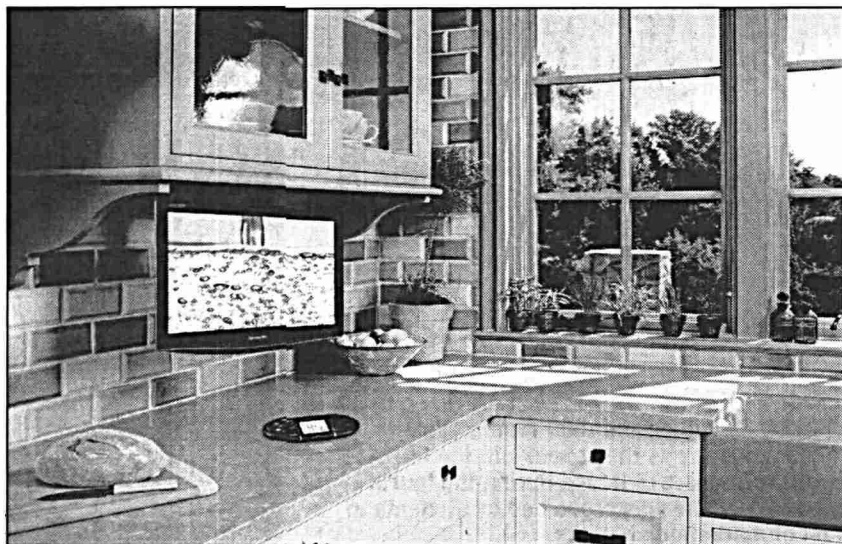
Product: CareBots

Why it's cool: Lucy, Kelly and Eve are CareBots that can be Rosie-like companions ala "The Jetsons," provide medication reminders, talk and tell jokes. Its Web cam provides a visual link to family to keep tabs on mom or grandmother.

Cost: \$19,950, includes delivery and two-day training

Find it at: GeckoSystems Inc.

Web site: www.geckosystems.com



Product: Kitchen LCD TV

Why it's cool: Spark Electronics' Aquos LCD TV is 19 inches, high-definition, ultra-slim and offers a magnetic remote that can be placed on the refrigerator or other metal surface. Mom doesn't have to interrupt cooking since the remote has three transmitters that allow



users to operate the TV without pointing at it.

Cost: \$400-\$650

Find it at: Online, Abt Electronics, Fry's Electronics and Allnet/AVAD Central

Web site: www.sharpusa.com