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*Holiday
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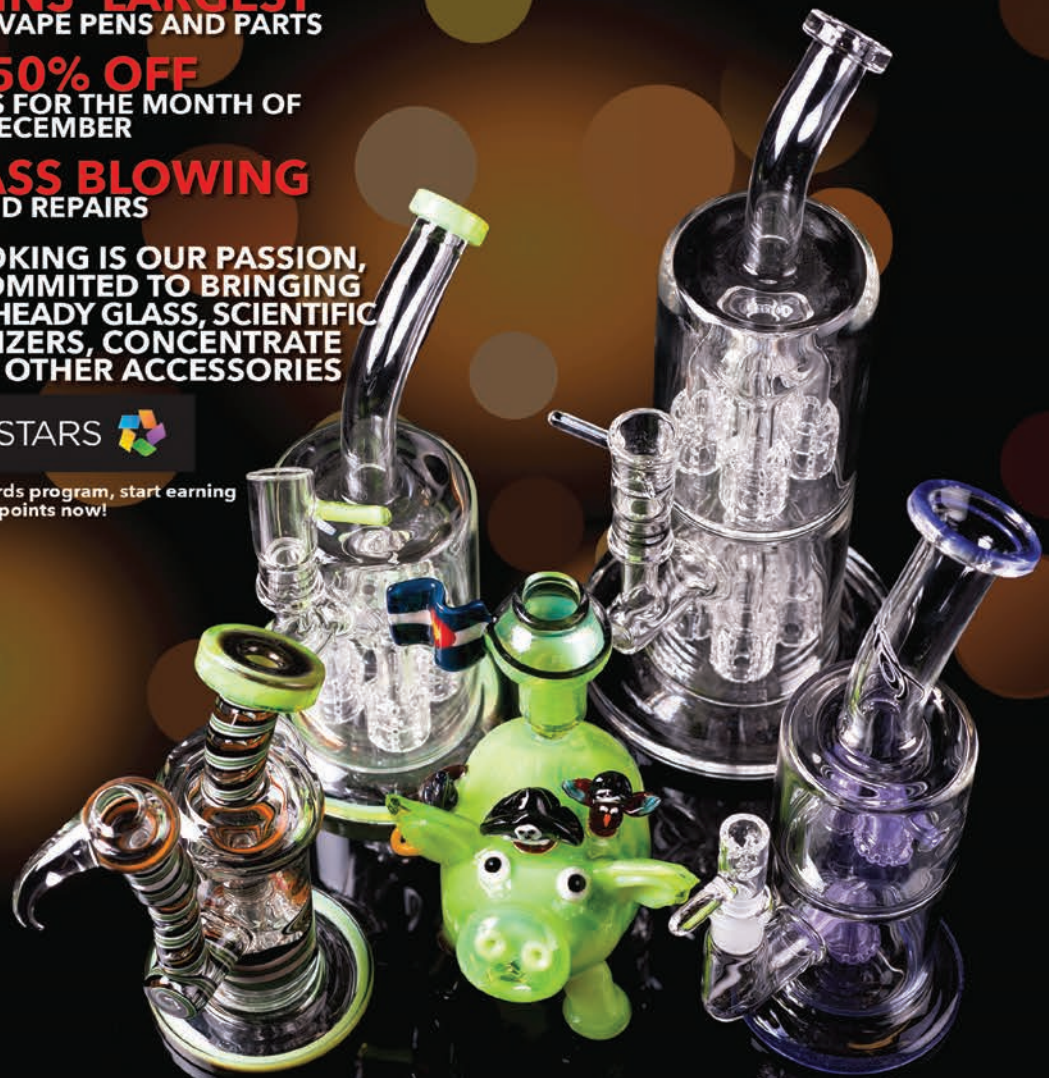
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College Avenue is a magazine produced and operated by CSU students. Our mission is to serve the CSU and Fort Collins community with engaging and informative coverage of relevant topics. Our staff is dedicated to providing balanced and accurate reporting, as well as visually stimulating design and photographic elements. We also seek to provide an outlet for entertainment with the opportunity for audience interaction and feedback. Above all, we strive to maintain journalistic integrity through professional excellence.

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EDITOR'S NOTE



It is that time of year again.

The lights are on the trees in Old Town, KOSI 101 is playing Christmas music, and Starbucks is serving Peppermint Mochas.

That also means that it is time for our annual Holiday Gift Guide issue of College Avenue.

I will be frank with you: Christmas is my absolute favorite time of the year. I alternate watching the Hallmark Channel and ABC Family's 25 Days of Christmas with my mom as the snow is falling and a fire is lit in the fireplace. I bake obsessive amounts of holiday treats to share with my friends and enjoy myself. I get giddy seeing all the lights that adorn trees and houses alike. But most of all, I love the reason for the season.

I am a Greek Orthodox Christian, so the idea of what Christmas is and what it represents is so important to keep in mind as we go through the holiday season.

It is not about the physical gifts we give and receive, but rather the gift of time spent with one another.

After losing a friend earlier this year, it made me realize just how much we take the company of our friends and

family for granted. We think everyone is going to be around year after year, but in the back of our minds, we know that could change at any moment.

As written in my editorial in this issue, I made the bold decision not to give gifts this year. It is the first year I am deciding to do this, but I want to make a statement and prove that the holidays do not just have to emphasize the idea of gift giving.

Instead, I want to spend quality time with my friends and family, to create new memories that will last a year from now, because guaranteed, that will be remembered more than a gift.

I encourage you to take a step back from the stores and spend that time with friends and family this holiday season. Celebrate and create new traditions. Live in and enjoy the moment.

I know I will – on the Gulf Coast of Florida with my family.

Happy Holidays and a Happy New Year!

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SEASONAL STYLE

By Lexi Elio

College Avenue Magazine

Winter is a subzero season of snow, skiing and a silly debate about the color of Starbucks' cups. When you can see your breath while walking from class to class among the snowbanks, the last thing you want to do is

put on the dress you thought was cute in the 60 degree haven of October. Here are a few tips to help revamp your wardrobe and keep winter chic from head to toe.

Boots do not have to mean just over the knee boots that cover your whole leg.

"Booties are so in," said

biomedical sciences major Maddie Gardner.

Pairing either of these styles with thick, warm socks will keep your feet pleasantly warm while out and about. Tall stockings up to the thigh keep legs warm even when you choose to wear a dress, and many boot-length socks come in chunky knit materials of assorted weights.

In the colder season, dressing down is far more acceptable.

"Flannels and jeans are my answer to everything," said health and exercise sciences major Madi Flynn.

Fancy occasions, however, demand something dressier. When it comes to dresses, long sleeves are stylish. These usually include a flowy skirt, along the lines of a skater skirt, which allows you to layer Spanx or tights beneath for an added aspect of warmth. You can even pull on a pair of thermal leggings when the temperatures really start to plunge.

When it comes to men's

fashion, it is all about clean colors and lines. Peacoats are especially stylish, as is layering sweaters and shirts.

"Some guys can really pull off the flannel with a sweater over it, or layer long sleeves," said biomedical sciences major Cam Lynch.

Many accessories like chunky knit cardigans and infinity scarves can keep you warm, too. When it comes to texting in the winter, almost all gloves today have special material along the pads of the fingers that are touch screen compatible. Beanies are popular on a casual level to keep you warm, and knit headbands can be dressed both up and down.

"People still dress cute when it's cold out because it's important to still make a good impression on teachers and other students. You can use more accessories like scarves, socks, and boots," said equine sciences major Megan Corgan.



Photos by Dalton McMillan



Time To Get on Santa's Good List

By **Alexandrea Rager**

College Avenue Magazine

Once the semester kicks off and the arduous academic, personal and work related pressures mount, community service can become secondary. That does not make you a bad person, it means you, like the rest of us, are busy.

Warning: It is the holidays, the time of year notorious for its ability to make you feel responsible for stray animals, homelessness and the flu.

Volunteer organizations are ready, with open arms, to accept your help in aiding others. Santa is checking his list, and all of those weekend 'what happened' nights, class naps and days you did not call home are looming.

Volunteering is a great way to earn some holiday 'brownie points' towards the American flag Chubbies and Kate Spade bag you have been eyeing since October.

"Be the change you want to see in this world," said Gandhi. This is a sentiment that has withstood the test of time and is applicable to everyone.

As college scholars, we have a duty to uphold excellence, not only in our personal aspirations but in our community.

Encourage others, once you find the organization or cause you care about, get friends, family, and neighbors involved. Change can start, but does not end, with only you.

"My family has made a tradi-

tion of volunteering together every year before Christmas with a rescue mission... it makes the holidays just a little more special," said engineering major Jordan Pontious.

Get on Santa's good list this year by helping out your community whether you are in Fort Collins as a resident or student, it does not take much to help your community. Even if you cannot, spread the word so others you know who might have a spare hour here or there can make a difference.

If you are not sure where to start or want to donate your money to a good cause, here are a few suggestions:

■ Fort Collins Habitat For Humanity Restore on South Taft Hill Road.

■ The Fort Collins Rescue Mission is in need of volunteers year round, but during the holidays, the mission can get short staffed.

■ Colorado State University and the City of Fort Collins host and promote opportunities to get your hands a little dirty and make people's lives a little better.

■ Visit: greatnonprofits.com.

Holiday Traditions Around the World

CANADA

Canadians celebrate "Sinck Tuck," a tradition where families dance together and have a gift exchange after church.

MEXICO

Mexicans celebrate "Three Kings Day," a Christian holiday festival celebrating the three wise men who presented Christ with three gifts. Mexicans eat a 1.2 mile long "King's Cake" to celebrate.

RIO DE JANEIRO, BRAZIL

There is a firework show over a giant Christmas tree. Santa Claus is known as "Papai Noel," and was created in the late 50s. Because of the rigid heat of summertime, Papai Noel wears silk clothing, unlike the American Santa Claus, who comes from the North Pole.

LONDON, ENGLAND

Children leave mince pies and brandy for Father Christmas while Americans leave milk and cookies for Santa Claus.

FRANCE

Christmas in France is known as 'Noel.' "Les bonnes nouvelles" means "the good news" in French. This is where "Noel" came from.

AUSTRALIA

The Christmas holiday falls during summertime. Australians are typically seen going camping during this time or decorating their homes with Christmas lights. They also plant the "Christmas Bush," an Australian tree with green leaves and red flowers.

UKRAINE

A spooky tradition with a good reason, Ukrainians put spider webs on their Christmas trees. This strays from an old tale about a poor woman and her children who could not afford to decorate their tree, so spiders put webs all over it. The next morning, it sparkled in the sun.

GERMANY

The holiday season is celebrated with advent calendars, typically with boxes hanging from trees.

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The *Curse* of the Cards.....

.....Why Gift Cards are the Cop Outs of Christmas

By Sarah Ross

College Avenue Magazine
As a college student, I will readily admit that I do not have an aversion to gift cards, especially if they mean I can peruse and obtain that buyer's remorse from the comfort of my pajamas, at home on my couch.

I am about as broke as they come, since I both work and live on campus here at CSU, so it is definitely not the idea of free money that bothers me about gift cards. It is the execution of them that bothers me.

It is not the gift card in that scenario that bothers me. I love getting gift cards from my grandma to places like Subway, and I will eat at Subway, and use that gift card happily because it is not dining hall food.

However, getting gift cards sometimes shows that my relatives, like many others, play the game of caring about you and your holiday wishes without actually caring.

Gift cards are the cop outs of Christmas. It is like saying,

"You are worth a monetary value to me, but not the effort it takes to spend that monetary value on something I know you will like."

It is the shortcut to gift giving, like shooting a stressed friend a text instead of showing up at their door with Starbucks and a chick flick. Both are responses, but one shows you care.

For some cases, gift cards are tolerable. If you have only been friends with someone for less than a year, a generic gift card is acceptable.

You both know that you do not know each other well enough to find something meaningful that you may want to exchange, so a gift card is the safe and acceptable bet.

This idea changes when you are either related to this person, you have known them for a while, or most especially, if they have told you what they want.

If you give a gift card at this point, you are sending the message that you either do not know them well enough or do

not care enough to put in the effort of trying.

The only time a gift card is acceptable in this case would be if you could not afford the thing this person wanted.

At this point, getting a gift card and writing that it is intended to help them get the thing they wanted, makes getting the gift card acceptable.

It shows that you put thought and effort in, even if you came up short, and it gives it a personal touch.

You may be wondering what the distinction between all these are. You see, it is the thought behind the gift that counts.

Gift cards have given us an easy way out, an end all solution for all of our Christmas shopping needs. However, by only getting gift cards, you take away from the whole point of the Christmas gift exchange.

That being said, Christmas is not about a monetary exchange; It is about putting in the time and effort to show your love

ones that you love them by finding something that makes them smile.

Even a gift of small monetary value can be as, if not more, important than a plastic piece worth \$25, because behind the first gift there was time, effort, and thought from a person intended on making that person happy.

That is what the season is about—making others happy.

So put down that 10 pack of pre-packaged Target gift cards, fire up that laptop of yours, and send some emails to your family to ask what they want for Christmas.

Or use it as an excuse to stalk your friends on Facebook for things they may want. We will not judge.

The Gift Card Industry.....by the numbers.....

Gift Cards accounted for:

5%

of all retail spending in the U.S. in 2014.

\$200

billion dollars of retail purchases were made with gift cards in 2014.

60%

of merchants said increasing customer loyalty through gift cards is a priority.

Statistics courtesy of Forbes.com



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Drinks to fill you with holiday cheer



By Alexa Minter
College Avenue Magazine

Alcohol is a must around the holidays, but only if you are of age. It lets you unwind and relax and it lets you tolerate your family for just that much longer. Boozy holiday drinks are a way to liven up any party and bring you, your friends and your family together.

“There’s nothing better than hot cider,” said biochemistry major Lindsey Brookbank. “It warms your tummy on a cold day!”

If you are looking for something that is seasonal, but not loaded with liquor, check out the seasonal beers from local breweries. New Belgium’s seasonal IPA, Accumulation, is a festive white IPA loaded with hops and a smidge of wheat. According to the brewery, Accumulation pairs well with Mexican food.

New Belgium also recently collaborated with Ben & Jerry’s to create the Salted Caramel Brownie Brown Ale. This beer has hints of chocolate, caramel and vanilla that mixes perfectly with the ale.

From Odell Brewery, you can find the Isolation Ale. A caramel malt ale paired with the right amount of hops. Fort

Collins Brewery also offers Big Shot, a wintery ale complemented by flavorful hazelnuts.

“My favorite alcohol is beer, so I’m a big fan of the white IPAs,” said biomedical sciences major Lindsay Dutch. “They’re light and unique, but they still do the job.”

Classic holiday drinks often include hot chocolate or eggnog mixed with some kind of scrumptious liquor. Business major Logan Hicks prefers eggnog and rum.

“Eggnog is my favorite thing to drink around the holidays and rum is my favorite alcohol,” she said. “It doesn’t get much better than that.”

Journalism major Courtney Meredith sticks to a holiday classic: hot chocolate and peppermint schnapps.

“It’s the ultimate Christmas drink,” she said.

If you are trying to get fancy this holiday season, Pinterest has millions of recipes to offer. Drinks like coffee and cream martinis, champagne punch, Grinch spritzer and candy cane cocktails are some of the various drinks you can try at home.

Photo by Dalton McMillan

Santa’s Magic Potion

Ingredients:

4 parts eggnog
2 to 4 parts Baileys, to taste
Ice cubes, optional
Nutmeg
Cinnamon

Directions:

To a large glass add the eggnog, Baileys to taste, and optionally add ice. Stir to combine.

Evenly and lightly sprinkle with nutmeg and cinnamon. Serve immediately.

Recipe is intended for those for whom it is legal and appropriate to drink alcohol, always drink responsibly.

Kahlua Hot Chocolate

Ingredients:

2 cups milk
2 tablespoons sugar
1 1/2 tablespoons Dutch-processed unsweetened cocoa powder
1/4 teaspoon cinnamon
Pinch of nutmeg
1 ounce Kahlua
Mini marshmallows
Salted caramel
Chocolate syrup

Directions:

In a medium saucepan, combine milk, sugar, cocoa powder, cinnamon and nutmeg over medium heat until heated through, about 2-3 minutes. Remove from heat and stir in Kahlua. Serve immediately, garnished with mini marshmallows, salted caramel and chocolate syrup, if desired.

Coffee & Cream Martini

Ingredients:

2 tablespoons coarse sugar
1 teaspoon finely ground coffee
Ice cubes
1-1/2 ounces vodka
1-1/2 ounces Kahlua
Chocolate syrup

Directions:

Sprinkle sugar and coffee on a plate. Moisten the rim of a cocktail glass with water; hold glass upside down and

dip rim into sugar mixture. Fill a mixing glass or tumbler three-fourths full with ice. Add the vodka, Kahlua and liqueur; stir until condensation forms on outside of glass. Drizzle chocolate syrup on the inside of prepared martini glass if desired. Strain vodka mixture into glass; serve immediately.

Festive Coffeehouse Favorites



by Sarah Ross

College Avenue Magazine

It is that time of year again; the time of year for cuddles, cookies and your favorite seasonal coffee drink served in a festive cup.

Whether you are a pumpkin spice fan or a patron of the peppermint mocha, hot drinks have become a part of the holiday celebration no matter what holiday you recognize.

However, baristas want you to know that they have even more holiday drinks than the

PSL, and they are eager to share their holiday drink secrets with the world.

“The holiday season is usually ruled by mochas, but there is so much more out there,” said George Sanchez, a former Starbucks barista. “When it comes to holidays, I like to recommend a vanilla Frap [Frappuccino] with cinnamon in it, just to help people mix it up.”

Around the Thanksgiving and the December holidays, people go pretty crazy for sweeter hot

espresso beverages,” said Skyler Stanley, a current barista.

“Peppermint mochas, or something of a similar nature, seem to be the most widespread and common holiday beverage.”

Because of the popularity of drinks like the Pumpkin Spice Latte, both baristas expressed that many other holiday specialties are overlooked.

When asked, they each had their own holiday suggestions for those wishing to stray away from the traditional in pursuit of the unknown festive drinks popular places have to offer.

“Try some of the chai teas that they have, both the bitter and the sweet,” said Sanchez.

“Most shops will also have an expanded tea selection over the holidays, so look for those.”

If you are more a fan of coffee, the baristas recommend looking for the limited edition holiday coffee blends many shops seem to offer this time of year.

“Several coffee shops will

specially select a roast of coffee to use for the holidays,” Stanley added. “I automatically have to suggest trying a cup of black coffee if the coffee shop has some sort of seasonal or particularly selected roast.”

If coffee and tea is not your thing, they have one more suggestion that may have you feeling in the festive mood.

“I can’t help but recommend some sort of eggnog variation to an espresso drink, namely something like an eggnog latte,” Stanley said. “It’s caffeinated, it’s delicious, it’s loaded with sugar, what more could you want on a cold winter night?”

Next time you are at a coffee shop, remember that there are more holiday options than the ones printed in bold on the ads outside.

Try something new this season, and who knows, you may have a new favorite that will keep you excited until next holiday season.



Photos by Rachael Worthington and Dalton McMillan

Holiday Decorating: College Style

By Rachael Worthington
College Avenue Magazine

The holiday season is quickly approaching, and with it comes the urge for festivity. Decorating an apartment or dorm room can be a challenge, especially with limited funds, but it is definitely possible to bring holiday spirit into any space.

The first thing to consider is what to set aside in terms of time and money. There are affordable ways to make a room feel homey for the holidays with minimal effort, but there is also a lot of fun to be had in crafting and repurposing materials that are already lying around.

One of the first places to scope out when in search of

affordable and easy decorations is the dollar store. It has a wide variety of snowflakes, wreaths, and do-it-yourself craft sets. A couple of really simple ways to decorate is to hang up Christmas lights and just add a simple wreath on the door.

Lighting always adds some charm. Stringing some lights along the ceiling is a staple, but another idea could be filling used bottles or jars with lights for a candle-like glow. A Christmas tree silhouette can even be made from string lights if there is not space for a full-sized, real one.

Alternatively, half trees can be bought at places like Target. Miniature wreaths can be made from sprigs of rosemary with a small ring and some thin wire. Washi tape can be used to

make holiday designs on empty wall space.

A simple, but effective idea is to hang ornaments at varying levels in the window. Snowflakes can be made out of painted popsicle sticks, or cut out of paper and hung as well. Snowflake designs can even be drawn onto windows with a hot glue gun and be removed easily.

If crafting sounds more appealing, Pinterest has hundreds of clever Christmas crafting ideas. Some examples include placing lace over a styrofoam cone and using Mod Podge, letting it dry, then removing the cone and spray painting the “tree” whatever color is preferred.

Other crafty ideas could be to find some pinecones and spray paint them in silver, gold, and

white for a glamorous vibe. They can be displayed in a vase or just around the room.

If there are wine corks around, bits of evergreen can be taken from outside and wedged in to make mini “trees.”

A big part of the holiday feeling comes from ambiance. Aside from decorations, other ideas to consider could be scented candles, like balsam or peppermint, and plush throw blankets and pillows give off a cozy feeling.

A stock of hot chocolate or apple cider mix on hand will make the room welcoming to guests, and keeping baked goodies around never hurts either.



Daily Horoscope

Nancy Black

TODAY'S BIRTHDAY

(12/16/15). Personal projects flourish this year. Give it everything you've got! Domestic renewal over springtime anticipates the year-long social phase (after Jupiter enters Libra on 9/9). New professional levels appear after autumn, which could shake things up at home. Balance for maximum passion and play. Collaborate.

To get the advantage, check the day's rating: 10 is the easiest day, 0 the most challenging.

ARIES (March 21-April 19)

- 5 - Pay attention to your dreams today and tomorrow. Meditate and stretch. Clarify your direction with friends. It may feel like the world is on your shoulders. Talk with someone you trust. Get support to maintain health.

TAURUS (April 20-May 20)

- 7 - Your team pulls through today and tomorrow. Set your goals high, and believe it can be done. Check public opinion, and discuss what you see possible. Listen to what they want, and work together. Hidden benefits unveil.

GEMINI (May 21-June 20)

- 8 - Career matters emerge for your consideration. Compete for more responsibilities over the next few days. Pass the test by preparing for it. Push your own limitations. Go beyond "reasonable" to "extraordinary."

CANCER (June 21-July 22)

- 8 - Plan your itinerary today and tomorrow. Travel and romance both look good. Reserve tickets early for best rates. Study your options, and schedule priorities. Embark on a bold adventure. Bring along someone interesting and fun.

LEO (July 23-Aug. 22)

- 8 - You're gaining valuable resources that you can draw upon later. For the next two days, handle financial matters. Go over the numbers in private with your partner. Check out an interesting suggestion.

VIRGO (Aug. 23-Sept. 22)

- 7 - Get into a fun project. A far-fetched idea might work. Imagine perfection, and get expert assistance. Focus on commonalities. Recent changes can be used for mutual advantage. A new associate could become a valuable partner.

LIBRA (Sept. 23-Oct. 22)

- 9 - Fulfill promises over the next two days. Checking tasks off your list feels satisfying. Rely on your schedule, to avoid dropping stuff out. The rules seem to change mid-game. Take a refreshing pause when big commitments are handled.

SCORPIO (Oct. 23-Nov. 21)

- 8 - Beauty surprises unexpectedly. Love is in the air today and tomorrow. Take time to play with family and friends. Dress with style. A dream could be coming true. Talk about love. Stir up passions.

SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 22-Dec. 21)

- 7 - Get fully into household projects. The next two days are excellent for interior decoration. Necessity requires creativity. Get into the planning. Arrange safer storage. The two of you can solve anything. Combine two old ideas into one new.

CAPRICORN (Dec. 22-Jan. 19)

- 8 - Come to a new understanding. You're especially clever today and tomorrow. Bargain for what you want. Negotiate and wrangle the best price. Haggle with grace and humor. With creativity, you can realize a dream.

AQUARIUS (Jan. 20-Feb. 18)

- 9 - New profits become available today and tomorrow. Take a deep breath and jump in. Stick to your budget. The piper will have to be paid, and soon. Write your dream like an affirmation. Believe in your team.

PISCES (Feb. 19-March 20)

- 9 - Handle personal issues today and tomorrow. Conditions are changing in your favor. Action over the next two days depends on your will power. Take charge. You're ready to make changes. You can have what you go for.



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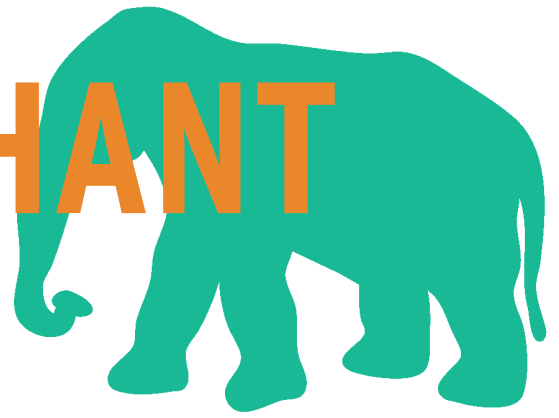


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the WHITE ELEPHANT in the room



By Jenna Fischer

College Avenue Magazine

Whether it be with coworkers, friends, or family, 'tis the season for holiday parties. One tradition that often goes hand in hand with these parties is the white elephant gift exchange. Often times, white elephant gifts are unconventional, even ridiculous.

"It's more of a gag gift," said business major Michael Skattebo. "You're just trying to find the most bizarre and crazy things."

According to journalism major Zoe Jennings, "The ideal white elephant gift is completely random and

unexpected."

Journalism major Willis Scott received one of these unexpected gifts in a white elephant exchange. "The best I've ever gotten was a leopard print vest," Scott said. "I received that right after Macklemore's 'Thrift Shop' was really popular. After the gift exchange I went to Chick-fil-A and the girl behind the counter said I looked like Macklemore."

There are several stores that are gold mines for finding quirky gifts. "I would recommend that someone looking for a white elephant gift should go to a thrift store," Jennings said. "You never know what you'll find there."

Other options include the "As

Seen on TV" section of Walmart or Walgreens. Here you can find products like "Pajama Jeans," "Shake Weights," and nose hair trimmers. These infomercial inventions make the perfect gag gifts.

However, a white elephant is not always synonymous with gag gifts. The serious presents are often the ones that all the party-goers want to steal during the game.

Engineering major Morgan Buchanan said, "It adds competition to the game because everyone is vying for the good gift."

When thinking of ideas for serious gifts, Buchanan applies the Golden Rule. "Look for something that you would like

to receive," he said.

Some popular serious gifts might include CDs, DVDs, and gift cards. Opting for a more serious present ensures that the recipient will actually enjoy and use it when the game is over.

"It's kind of cool because everyone wants your gift, it makes you feel very good," Buchanan said.

Whether serious or silly, the white elephant gift exchange is a tradition that lives on at holiday parties. So pass, steal, trade, and hope that the gift you end up with is as good as the one you brought.

Silly Gift Ideas

- 1 Tacky ties, ugly sweaters, and crazy socks. An outrageous article of clothing is a gift the recipient can wear to their next holiday party.
- 2 Crazy kitchen gadgets like hot dog slicers, pancake pens, and oreo dippers. They may only get used once a year, but at least everyone will get a kick.
- 3 Barnes & Noble offers an array of ludicrous literature. Chuck Norris jokes, "How to Poo at Work," or "Cows Doing Yoga" are all great options.
- 4 Age-inappropriate gifts are always appropriate. Think older and buy denture cream, or younger, and buy the latest Barbie doll or Transformer.
- 5 You can never go wrong with technology accessories. The cheeseburger phone from "Juno" is the perfect example.

On a Serious Note



A holiday scented candle is a gift exchange classic. Check out Bath & Body Works or Yankee Candle for the season's best scents.



A soft winter scarf and mittens will keep anyone warm and toasty. Target has a great selection of winter accessories.



A movie bucket complete with a DVD, popcorn, and candy is a gift everyone will want to steal.



Baked goods are a go-to gift. Spend the afternoon baking a tin of holiday cookies for the tastiest gift of the party.



If party-goers are over 21, a nice bottle of wine in a holiday sleeve makes the perfect gift. Otherwise, a gourmet hot chocolate set with a festive mug is the way to go.



PULLING TOGETHER LAST MINUTE GIFTS

By Lexi Elio

College Avenue Magazine

Planning gifts for the special people in your life can be one of the most fun parts of the holiday season; gifts are often physical tokens of our appreciation and love.

However, this celebration of giving dances dangerously close to finals. While your mom would forgive you for foregoing department store shopping in favor of cramming for your final, everyone appreciates gifts that go the extra mile.

If you are really in a pinch, like you planned to exchange

this gift in an hour pinch, there are a few generic gifts that work for everyone.

Make sure to include a card with some kind words to give your gift a personal touch. Easy feminine gifts are lip balms, nail polish in their favorite color, or wintertime accessories like scarves and gloves.

Cool lighters, wallets, or a watch if you are willing to spring for it, can make nice gifts for the special guys in your life.

Gender neutral gifts include movies, technology accessories, or gag gifts.

TREATS

Another easy to make gift is one you can eat. The holidays are associated with a myriad of sweet treats that are easy to make.

Chocolate covered pretzels can be made in under a half hour: store bought pretzel rods, melted baker's chocolate, and sprinkles for decoration.

Sugar cookies and gingersnaps are simple to bake as well. Homemade chocolates take a little extra skill, but come out absolutely delicious!

Eggnog Snickerdoodles

Whisk together 1 cup flour, 3/4 tsp baking powder, 1/2 tsp cinnamon, 1/4 tsp nutmeg, and 1/8 tsp salt.

In a separate bowl, whisk together 2 tbsps butter, 1/4 cup eggnog, and 1 tsp vanilla. Stir in 1/4 cup sugar and 1/4 cup brown sugar. Add the flour mixture and stir until barely incorporated.

Chill dough for 30 minutes. Roll cookie balls in sugar and cinnamon mixture. Bake for 9-12 minutes at 350 degrees and let cool.

Photos by Sydney Izienicki

DIY

The DIY, or do-it-yourself, trend has been popular for the past few years. Here are a few suggestions handpicked from Pinterest:

A homemade fort kit. This basket brings its recipient back to their past, and is complete with a clothesline, clothespins, sheets, and a flashlight.

Sharpie anything you want onto a ceramic mug. These can range from a simple illustration, your giftee's initials or lines from an inside joke. Bake your mug for two hours at 350 degrees to set the ink, and take care when washing.

Make your own bookends. Begin by picking out small figurines representative of your decor style and personality. For example, animals from the dollar store or dollar section of Target work well. Spray paint them a bold or metallic color. Find two large rocks from outside and glue your figurines on top of them. Let the bookends dry for a few hours, and you have an incredibly personal and handmade gift.

DIY Sharpie mugs



1) Gather Sharpies and mugs with cheap glaze



2) Draw design with colorful Sharpies



3) Bake two hours at 350 degrees



4) Enjoy!

not dishwasher safe

Photos by Lexi Elio

Readin' Around the Christmas Tree

10 books that are sure to satisfy any reader's taste.

By Meagan Loyd
College Avenue Magazine



"Go Set a Watchman"

by Harper Lee



Set in Maycomb, Alabama, 26-year-old Jean Louise "Scout" Finch returns home from New York City to visit her aging father. This story is set among the Civil Rights Movement tension and political turmoil that impacted the South. This story takes a journey that can only be guided by one's own conscience. If you enjoyed Harper Lee's previous works, this might be the one for you.

"What Pet Should I Get?"

by Dr. Seuss



This newest book from Dr. Seuss is never seen before, depicting that making up one's mind is the literary equivalent of treasure. This children's book tells the story of a brother and sister who go to pick a pet. But they cannot just pick one. This tale about choosing a pet is a childhood moment and teaches readers a lesson about making up your mind.

"Enchanted Forest: An Inky Quest & Coloring Book"



This is not a normal novel; this book is a coloring book made specifically for adults. This coloring book allows people to color an enchanted forest to see what is within the castle. Recent studies that show coloring can help with stress, anxiety and depression, so a coloring book should be in your cart the next time you shop.

"In the Unlikely Event"

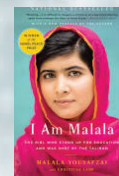
by Judy Blume



Judy Blume has been a childhood favorite with classics like "Are You There God? It's Me, Margaret." Blume's storytelling portrays a picture with characters who struggle with loss, reminisce about old times, and find the joy that keeps them going.

"I am Malala: The Girl Who Stood Up for Education and Was Shot by the Taliban"

by Malala Yousafzai



As the Taliban took control of Pakistan, this girl spoke out. She fought for her rights to have an education. When she was 15, she almost paid the ultimate price: her life. She was shot in the head at point-blank range while riding the bus home from school. Her memoir tells readers the story of her recovery and her journey to the halls of the United Nations in New York.

"All the Light We Cannot See"

by Anthony Doerr



This novel takes you on a journey with a blind French girl and a German boy whose paths cross in Nazi occupied France, as both try to survive the devastation of World War II. Doerr lights the path for these two, reminding readers to try to be good to one another.

"The Girl on the Train"

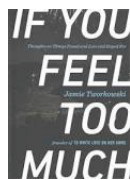
by Paula Hawkins



This book is a thriller similar to "Gone Girl" with twists and turns along the way. The story is about a girl who takes the same train every day and encounters the same couple riding the train. One day, she comes across something that changes her experience on the train forever. It is an eerie tale for those who are interested in reading something different.

"If You Feel Too Much: Thoughts on Things Found and Lost and Hoped For"

by Jamie Tworkowski



From the cofounder of To Write Love On Her Arms, brings the readers a story of how the nonprofit was founded and the stories behind some people who have had their hearts broken and experienced the devastating. Tworkowski brings difficult stories to new life and new hope.

"Finders Keepers"

by Stephen King



King has brought three new stories this year, each with gripping details and horrific backstories. This suspenseful story is about a reader whose obsession with a writer goes too far, to the point where the obsession gets dangerous. Read a suspenseful story about how literature shapes a life for good, for bad and forever.

"The Martian"

by Andy Weir



Astronaut Mark Watney has become one of the first people to walk on Mars. Now, he is sure he will be the first to die on the planet. After encountering a dust storm, his team evacuates thinking he is dead, leaving him all alone. Through his relentless abilities, he confronts obstacles one after the next. But will his resourcefulness be enough to overcome his impending doom?

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Sleighs, Screams & Stoners

Christmas is coming to theaters

By Alexa Minter

College Avenue Magazine

'Tis the season for love, snow and gift giving. This time of year also sees Hollywood rolling out movies left and right. This holiday season, prepare yourself for raunchy and feel-good comedy and horror Christmas films.

"The Night Before," stars Seth Rogen, Joseph Gordon-Levitt and Anthony Mackie in, what else, a stoner comedy set around the holidays. The film is written and directed by Jonathan Levine, known for his other works such as "Warm Bodies," and "50/50," another Rogen/Gordon-Levitt comedy.

The film explores Rogen's last Christmas with his friends before the birth of his first child. His wife, played by Jillian Bell ("Workaholics"), recognizes his need for one last hurrah and supplies him with a plethora of drugs, which will clearly end badly.

"The Night Before" has a killer cameo list, featuring Mindy Kaling, Lizzy Caplan and Miley Cyrus. The film hit theaters Nov. 20.

If you want to see a feel-good Christmas movie this season, check out "Love the Coopers."

The film stars Diane Keaton and John Goodman as a couple on the verge of divorce trying to keep it together on Christmas for their family.

Ed Helms, Amanda Seyfried and Alan Arkin fill the roles of the dysfunctional family members.

"Love the Coopers" demonstrates the flawed familial life that we all know too well. "Love the Coopers" is in theaters now.

On a weirder and more twisted note this holiday season, we are being gifted a horror themed Christmas film.

"Krampus" is a tale about a demon that comes into homes on Christmas and wreaks havoc. The legend goes that if a

child misbehaved on Christmas, a horned demon with human characteristics would appear to punish the child. Much creepier than receiving coal.

"Krampus" stars Allison Tolman, Adam Scott and Toni Collette. The film premieres on Dec. 4.

This holiday season, we cannot talk about movies without discussing the anticipated continuation of one of the most beloved sagas: "Star Wars: Episode VII The Force Awakens."

This film is set 30 years after "Return of the Jedi," and features some new faces: Daisy Ridley as Rey, John Boyega as Finn and Adam Driver as Kylo Ren.

Fear not "Star Wars" fans; Harrison Ford, Carrie Fisher and Mark Hamill reprise their roles as Han Solo, Princess Leia and Luke Skywalker. "Star Wars" beams into theaters Dec. 18.

The Classics

To ensure you have a very merry Christmas...

- Meet Me in St. Louis (1944)
- It's a Wonderful Life (1946)
- Miracle on 34th Street (1947)
- White Christmas (1954)
- Rudolph the Red Nosed Reindeer (1964)
- A Christmas Story (1983)
- National Lampoon's Christmas Vacation (1989)
- Home Alone (1990)
- The Santa Clause (1994)
- Dr. Seuss's How the Grinch Stole Christmas (2000)
- Elf (2003)
- The Family Stone (2005)



Photo by Dalton McMillan

When Do You Play *Holiday Tunes?*

By Sarah Ross

College Avenue Magazine

It is either the best time of year or the worst time of year, but whether you like it or not, holiday music is hitting the airwaves. While you prepare to get your “Jingle Bell Rock” on, let’s take a look at how CSU students feel about holiday jams.

Some students cannot get enough of holiday music. The moment “Baby It’s Cold Outside” comes on, they grab their onesie and hot cocoa mugs and turn up the radio to

full blast.

“Holiday songs bring back so much childhood memories,” said health and exercise major Danielle Quintana.

“From staying up late Christmas Eve waiting on Santa to those late nights of just watching holiday movies, to the food, to laughter, to opening gifts, and most important family. These are the days I crave for each year and I can’t wait to spend the holidays with my loving family.”

However, not everyone gets the warm and fuzzies every

time “Let It Snow” hits the radio. Some people think that holiday music has a time and place, and that time and place should be right around the holiday season.

“I think that Christmas music has begun to start playing too early,” said music major Caleb Smith.

“There are other holidays to celebrate before it. Sure, there are no Thanksgiving songs, but that doesn’t mean we get to skip right to Christmas. If we start too early, it becomes less special, and I like to celebrate Christmas music on

Christmas Day.”

It is a polarizing debate, but it seems that for many stations, Nov. 1 is the first day of the holiday music season.

Which side are you on: the team that plays holiday music through November and most of December, or the team that plays holiday music starting a week before and not a minute after the holidays?

Either way, whenever you decide to turn on the holiday tunes, here is a playlist to get you in the holiday mood.

Our Holiday Playlist

1. “Jingle Bell Rock” - Daryl Hall and John Oates
2. “Sleigh Ride” - The Ronettes
3. “White Christmas” - Bing Crosby
4. “Where Are You Christmas” - Faith Hill
5. “Silver Bells” - Brooklyn Jazz Trio
6. “It’s Beginning to Look a Lot Like Christmas” - Michael Buble
7. “Do You Hear What I Hear?” - Mary J. Blige and Jessie J
8. “Santa Claus Is Coming To Town” - Frank Sinatra
9. “I’ll Be Home For Christmas” - Josh Groban
10. “I Saw Three Ships (Come Sailing In)” - Christmas Piano Music
11. “Baby It’s Cold Outside” - Idina Menzel and Michael Buble
12. “All I Want For Christmas Is You” - Mariah Carey

A Winter Rendezvous

By Jenna Fischer
College Avenue Magazine



Photo by Jenna Fischer

Denver Zoo Lights

Price: \$26

Lions and tigers and bears, all created from thousands of Christmas lights. Bundle up and explore the beautiful displays of animal sculptures at the Denver Zoo. Other activities and entertainment offered during Zoo Lights include Santa's village, ice carvers, and choir performances. Zoo Lights is open from Dec. 4 to Jan. 3 between 5:30 and 9:00 p.m.

"My very first date I ever went on we went to the Zoo Lights. It was the perfect date because it's so pretty and so romantic just walking around," said journalism major Sierra Cymes.

Carriage Rides in Old Town

Price: \$30

Cozy up with your sweetheart on a horse drawn carriage ride. The beautifully lit streets of Old Town Fort Collins provide the perfect setting for a romantic evening. Colorado Carriage & Wagon will be offering rides until Feb. 14. Go to their booth on the south side of Old Town Square along Mountain Avenue or visit their website at <http://www.coloradocarriageandwagon.com>

"You get to ride around and see all the lights they have in Fort Collins. You can talk and just enjoy each other's company," said biochemistry major Christasia Chavis.

Build a Snowman

Price: Free

The next time snow covers campus, bundle up and head out to the Oval with your significant other to build a snowman and have a snowball fight. This fun date allows you to see each other's playful side. It is a great way to get to know the other person while spending some time outdoors. Afterward you can come in to drink hot cocoa together and warm up.

"It's a great date because it's free and eliminates the opportunity for awkward lulls in conversation," said construction management major Stephen Wheeler.

Baking and Decorating Holiday Cookies

Price: \$4.50

Do not let a small budget limit your dating experience. Staying home to bake and decorate holiday cookies is a fun and inexpensive way to spend time with your significant other. This simple date offers a great opportunity to explore your creative sides and work together to make something festive and delicious.

"Baking cookies is a cute date because you can have fun with it and make a mess. Plus afterward you get to eat the cookies together," said health and exercise major Parisa Ghamari.

Ice Skating

Price: \$14-\$20

The ice skating rink is the ideal setting to spark your winter romance. You do not have to be as good on the ice as Chazz Michael Michaels to have fun on this energetic date. Also if you are a little shy, you have the perfect excuse to reach out and grab your date's hand. There are several local ice rinks with public skate hours:

- Edora Pool Ice Center
- NoCo Ice Center
- The Ice Rink at the Promenade Shops at Centerra

"When you go on a date you're looking to see people out of their comfort zone; it's more fun," said business major Angela Brehmer.

"You get out there and you're both a little awkward and you can just have fun together," said computer science graduate Andrew Turbes.



Photo by Sydney Izienicki

Why I'm Not Giving Gifts This Christmas

By Alexa Phillips

College Avenue Magazine

That's right, you read that correctly.

Recently, I got into a conflict with a friend about purchasing gifts for Christmas. He felt like he was obligated to purchase gifts for everyone in our friend group. He expressed he could not afford it, and would rather do a Secret Santa to cut down on the amount of gifts he had to purchase.

My low-cost alternative was to do away with gifts for our friend group, and to throw a holiday party instead, where we could all enjoy each other's company.

In light of this, I made the decision to not give Christmas gifts this year.

Giving gifts over the holiday season is practically unheard of nowadays, but I have further reasoning than just being a decision out of anger.

The harsh reality is that

materialism has become a problem in this country, especially around the holidays

People are consumed by what they give and receive. It is a major stress point for several people physically, emotionally and financially.

Materialism has grown to become a key characteristic of the American culture over the last 60 or so years, starting with the economic boom of the 1950s.

Since then, we as a culture have been obsessed with things. "Keeping up with the Kardashians Joneses" has become the new reality and the holidays are no exception.

The question then becomes how much do we really need? In today's world, we have access to more wants and needs than humanly possible. We have closets full of clothes and every electronic possible. Do we really need to use the holidays as an excuse to receive things we do not need?

There used to be a time when holiday commercials used to start the week of Thanksgiving

Now, we see holiday commercials in September. All for retailers get an advantage over others to get a head start on fourth quarter profits.

In the old days, the holiday season used to be a time of gathering with your loved ones to celebrate the holiday together, not about what you are going to give one another

Many feel like they are obligated to give gifts, when really giving gifts should be a matter of want rather than obligation.

Obligation is when it becomes a matter of stress in finding the "perfect gift."

As an avid lover of the holiday season, I will be the first to admit that it becomes difficult for us to focus on the holiday season itself without constantly being surrounded by promotions on TV and in stores.

I try to block the noise of the promotions and focus on what really matters: spending quality time with loved ones, enjoying each other's company. We need to enjoy the present moment while we have it.

Having experienced the loss of a friend this year, it made me realize we do not know how or when this could change.

This holiday season, we need to shift our focus to spending time with our loved ones, creating and practicing traditions, as opposed to worrying what is on everyone's Christmas list.

And at a very minimum, keep in mind the reason for the season, without which there would be no holiday in the first place.

So this Christmas, I am not giving gifts, but rather aiming to spend time and create memories with the ones I love.

And I encourage you all to think about doing the same.

GET YOUR UGLY SWEATER ON

By Sarah Hansen
College Avenue Magazine

As the holiday season approaches, another prominent season nears us: ugly holiday sweater season. To most people, ugly holiday sweater parties are a time to let loose and be silly, but to one Fort Collins business woman, it is a lifestyle.

Nancy Agnew, owner of Get Your Ugly On Christmas Sweater Store, has found a way to make a living off creating these holiday fashion essentials. From years of running her own nonprofit business, Arc Thrift Store, Agnew caught on to customers' needs for ugly holiday sweaters and knew just where to get them.

"Most ugly Christmas sweaters come from the 80s because they were fashionable back then," Agnew said. "After that phase, when everyone was donating their sweaters, the thrift stores couldn't sell them so they were taken to stockpiles. That's where we get the majority of ours from."

This year, the store has collected over 10,000 sweaters for the holiday season. However, before they can be put out on the racks, Agnew and her team make sure they are ready-to-wear.

"We begin washing the sweaters in January," Agnew said. "I've noticed that most of the kids who come in here to buy a sweater are getting it for an event that evening. I want to make sure it looks nice for them."

Next, Agnew and her team of crafters spend months crafting sweater after sweater. Their collections range from sweaters that light up, to featuring naughty innuendos, to even being Hanukkah themed. In fact, there is so much designing to do that Tiffanie Hutcheson, Agnew's right-hand woman, has become an ugly

holiday sweater creating pro.

"It used to take us about 45 to 50 minutes to create each sweater," Hutcheson said. "We've done so many now though that the process is a lot faster. It only takes about 15 to 20 minutes to make each one now."

Both Agnew and Hutcheson agree that their greatest demographic of customers falls in the category of college-aged kids, seeing that they have many shoppers who are students at CSU. Undeclared student Heather Poage, weighs in on why she believes ugly holiday sweaters are so popular among college students.

"I believe ugly Christmas sweaters have become such a huge fashion statement because of the ironic nature of them," Poage said. "I think people wear the sweaters because of the whole hipster movement of making seemingly uncool things, cool, just by wearing them."

Whether Agnew believes the sweaters are hipster or not, she greatly appreciates how supportive and involved the CSU and Fort Collins community have been with making her store such a great success. She loves the happiness the holiday season brings and the enthusiasm her customers bring into the store.

"Some of the comments from them [customers] are really funny," Agnew said. "Sometimes I don't get why they think a sweater is ugly. I believe ugly is in the eye of the beholder though, because I think most of them are cute."

Be sure to put Get Your Ugly On Christmas Sweater Store at the top of your list for all your ugly sweater needs. With over 10,000 sweaters to pick from, alongside DIY options, hats and leggings, you will be able to get your holiday season fix in just one trip.



Their collections range from sweaters that light up, to featuring naughty innuendos, to even being Hanukkah themed.



Photos by Dalton McMillan

New this year! Drop-off center at Fossil Creek Park!

RECYCLE YOUR CHRISTMAS TREE

DECEMBER 26, 2015 – JANUARY 18, 2016

Watch for instructions about where to place your tree, posted at each location, which will enable City crews to do more efficient on-site chipping. When it's time to recycle your Christmas tree, drop it off at these free sites.

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(tennis court parking lot)

Rolland Moore Park 2201 S. Shields St.
(southeast corner of parking lot)

City Streets Facility 625 Ninth St.
(southwest corner of Lemay and Vine)

NEW! Fossil Creek Park 5821 S. Lemay Ave.
(enter from Lemay Avenue)

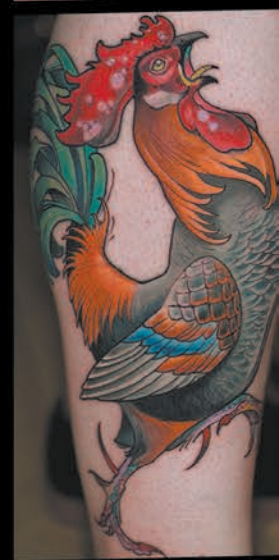
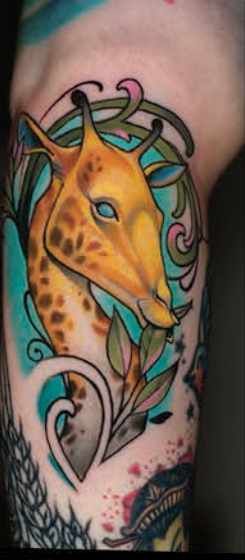
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fcgov.com/recycling

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