

Colorado State | Volume 10: Issue 3 | Dec. 2014

COLLEGE *avenue*

YOUR STUDENT MAGAZINE

Ridiculous

Gifts

pg 20

Giving the gift of
SUSTAINABILITY

pg 21

Find the ideal
FINALS WEEK

playlist
pg 4

ZODIAC
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How do you
WRAP IT?

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Letters to the editor

As the magazine produced by CSU students for the CSU and Fort Collins community, we would like to extend an invitation to our readers to submit letters to the editor ranging from 50-150 words with your feedback on the magazine. This is your magazine, and we would like to know what you think of the content, design or anything else. All letters to the editor must be typed in a word document and attached to an email sent to collegeavenue@collegian.com.

Mission Statement

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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College Avenue Magazine
CSU Lory Student Center Box 13
Fort Collins, CO 80523
(970) 491-1687
collegeavenue@collegian.com

College Avenue Staff

Editor in Chief

Ricki Watkins

Feature Editor

Hunter Goddard

Design Editor

Anne-Marie Kottenstette

Photo Editor

Megan Rakoczy

Blogs Editor

Alexa Phillips

Reporters

Abby Kurtz

Jessie Trudell

Sarah Ross

Valerie Vester

Sarah Hansen

Erin Douglas

Alex Teahen

James Cao

Octavia Perry

Sarah Feldman

Alex Rager

Photographers

Sydney Izienicki

Joe Tiner

Designers

Alison Bleser

Jessica Hayes

Joe Nunez

Advisor

Neill Woelk

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Notes from the Newsroom

We are so close, Colorado State! We just have to push through three more days and a week of finals and then we are done!

With all the craziness and stress that comes with the end of the semester, little time is left over to think about gifts for family and friends. Well, College Avenue is here to make your job a little easier. Meet the Holiday Gift Guide.

Short on money? Try one of our DIY gifts, as featured on page 22. I, for one, am looking forward to some Reinbeer after finals week.

Or, do you have someone in your life who is particularly hard to shop for? Flip to page 6 to find out what to buy that special someone based on his or her zodiac sign.

So you have got the gifts figured out, but maybe you are looking for a unique way to wrap them. Check out page 10 for some fun new ways to wrap your gifts this year.

Or maybe with all the stress of finals, you just need a laugh or some good music to listen to. Read students' accounts of the most ridiculous gifts they have received on page 20 or flip to page 4 for the perfect finals playlist.

Whether break for you means visiting family, skiing, a trip to someplace warm or just relaxing — myself and the rest of the "College Avenue" staff wish you a safe and relaxing winter break!

See you in January, Rams.

Ricki

Ricki Watkins, editor in chief



Finding the ideal finals week playlist

Little Monster's guide to the ultimate study playlist

Are you having a bad study day?
There's a Lady Gaga song for that.

1. **"Swine"** (for when you hate the world)
2. **"Gypsy"** (for when you need to love life again)
3. **"Just Dance"** (for when you need to take a brain break)
4. **"Born This Way"** (for when you are left wondering what your purpose is)
5. **"Dance in the Dark"** (for when you feel like the rest of the world has forsaken you)
6. **"Aura"** (for when all you feel like doing is screaming and breaking things)
7. **"Marry the Night"** (for when you are about to pull an all-nighter)
8. **"Scheisse"** (for when you feel like a rock star strutting down the catwalk after you finish a chapter)
9. **"The Queen"** (for when you have to cry)
10. **"The Edge of Glory"** (for the night before the test)

By Hunter Goddard
College Avenue Magazine

Listening to music while studying for finals is a common practice if for no other reason than that it makes the experience somewhat bearable, and the experts have their opinions about its effects on learning.

Dr. Karla Gingerich is a special assistant professor for the CSU psychology department; she also earned her Ph.D. from CSU in 1998. According to Gingerich, music triggers or else affects emotions and memories, and it cues us to past events as well, such as proms, weddings and funerals.

"It can relax some people, depending upon the music, like if it's dentist office music or elevator music," Gingerich said. "For me, I can't even have classical music, as in instrumentals with no lyrics, without singing or humming along to it."

Gingerich said that any

ideal studying environment has minimal distractions. Because studying requires conscious attention, televisions, cell phones, the Internet and friends can cause a person to slip in and out of that consciousness, Gingerich said.

"It's hard for college students because hustle and bustle makes us feel alive," Gingerich said. "It depends on the person. My husband can listen to music with his headphones in while studying, and it's not dentist office music, but music you can sing along to, and he still backgrounds it."

According to Gingerich, the ideal study playlist is individualized because what triggers emotions and memories for some that take away from the academic process, does not do the same for others. It demands a measure of self-awareness to know which is the case for you.

As for a student in the field, Emily Stewart, a music therapy junior, shared her own ideal study playlist.

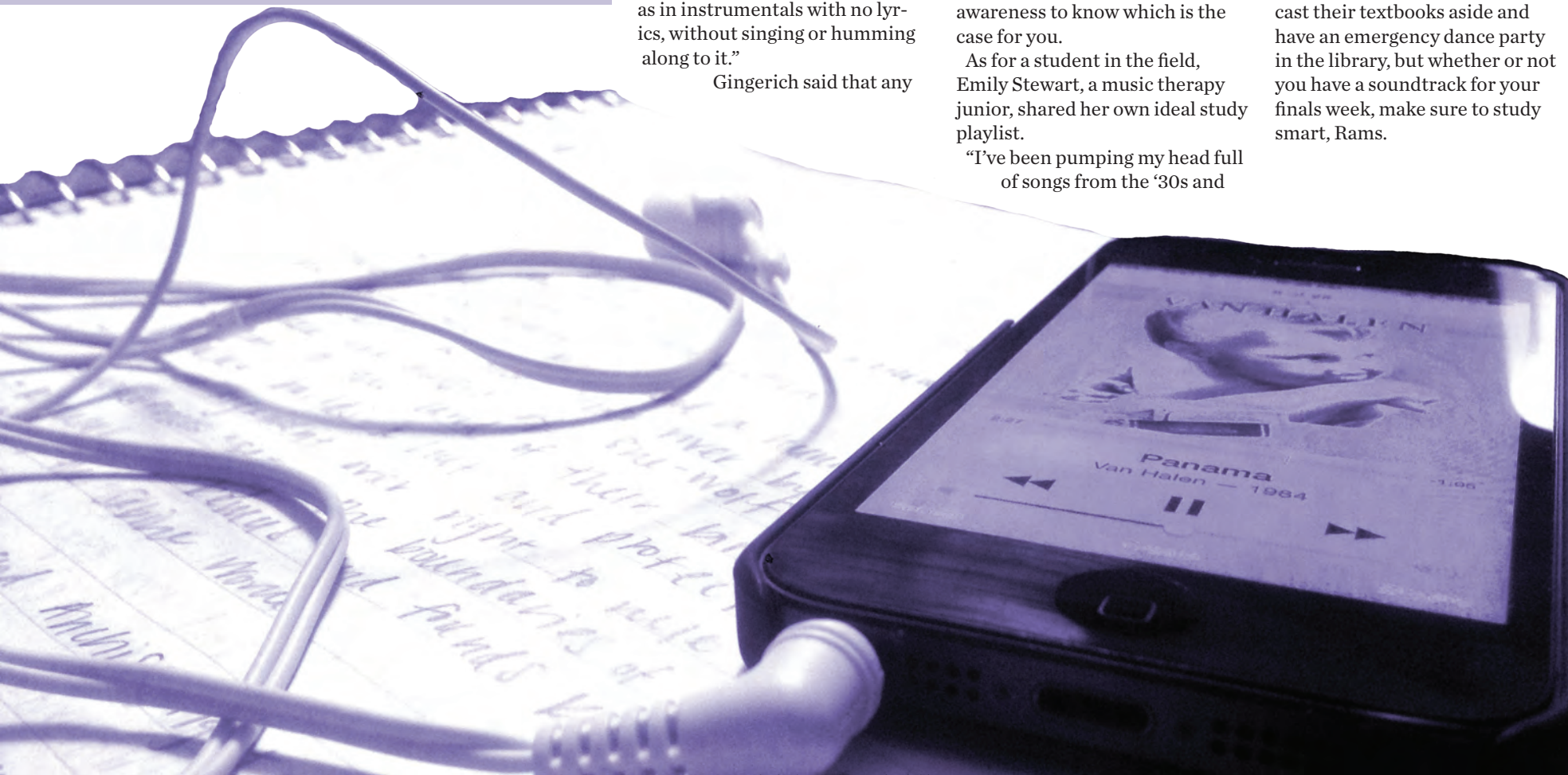
"I've been pumping my head full of songs from the '30s and

'40s this semester for my practicum with older people, so I don't really know what's good," Stewart said. "Jack Johnson is good to mellow out. 'Drifting' is an acoustic song by Andrew McKee, so there aren't distracting words."

According to Stewart, the Beatles are always a good inclusion, and "White Winter Hymnal" by the Fleet Foxes is one of her favorites, especially during the wintertime.

"Riptide" by Vance Joy, "The Ghost Inside" by Broken Bells, "Put My Troubles to Sleep" by Kelley Stoltz, "La Grande" by Laura Gibson and "I'll Be Missing You" by Puff Daddy will all be on her study playlist for finals week as well, Stewart said.

For some, music can help them retain certain information, and for others, it can force them to cast their textbooks aside and have an emergency dance party in the library, but whether or not you have a soundtrack for your finals week, make sure to study smart, Rams.





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ZODIAC GIFTS

By Alex Rager
College Avenue Magazine

Buying gifts for the important people in your life can be hard, and when it comes to a picky individual, understanding his or her personality may be helpful when you go holiday shopping this season.

SAGITTARIUS

NOV. 23 - DEC. 21

Typically, a Sagittarius has a free-spirited, easygoing, inquisitive and straightforward personality. A good book on a topic of interest and some incense are an easy pick up for the Sagittarius on your list.

CAPRICORN

DEC. 22 - JAN. 19

Capricorns are prudent, conservative, very practical and responsible. This type of personality might do well with a book on successful business practices, such as "The Starbucks Experience: 5 Principles for Turning Ordinary into Extraordinary" by Joseph Michelli, which came out in 2006.

AQUARIUS

JAN. 20 - FEB. 18

An Aquarius is an idealistic and unconventional thinker, who lives outside the box. An unconventional gift for an out-of-the-box thinker, such as a brain teaser game, might do the trick.

PISCES

FEB. 19 - MARCH 20

Pisces is a person who is considerate and sensitive to the feelings of others. An artistic sign, the Pisces on your list might enjoy a paint set or documentary on the lives of people in another culture.

ARIES

MARCH 21 - APRIL 19

Independence is a keyword for an Aries's personality. This person puts a great deal of time and effort into achieving his or her goals. Because an Aries is most likely involved in a competitive sport, the latest gear is probably on his or her wish list.

TAURUS

APRIL 20 - MAY 20

A Taurus has a tendency to be conservative, conventional and introverted. A good gift for this person might be something related to his or her hobbies.

GEMINIS

MAY 21 - JUNE 20

Geminis tend to be as sociable as they are lively, youthful people. A Gemini would do well with a gift that is universal, such as a bowl or vase, with which they can use and reuse for whatever their imagination conjures.

CANCER

JUNE 21 - JULY 22

Cancers tend to be homebodies who love their families and their homes. A scented candle to welcome them home or a nice dinner on you that he or she can share with his or her family are nice gestures.

LEO

JULY 23 - AUG. 22

The Leo in your life may like to shine in all social situations and will even try to dominate them. They are a strong personality, but giving to others. A Leo might be impressed if you donate to a favorable charitable cause on his or her behalf.

VIRGO

AUG. 23. - SEP. 22

Virgos tend to be careful planners, calm, helpful and dependable. A nice card of appreciation, along with a healthy cookbook, would suit a Virgo.

LIBRA

SEP. 23 - OCT. 22

Balance is a goal for any Libra. It is something they will innately strive for. A book on how to balance one's life, or a massage certificate may be a nice gift for the Libra in your life.

SCORPIO

OCT. 23 - NOV. 21

The Scorpio in your life will see right through you and know what is going on under the surface. These intellectuals need something challenging, like a thought-provoking book that they can analyze and discuss intelligently.

Heading home for the Holidays?



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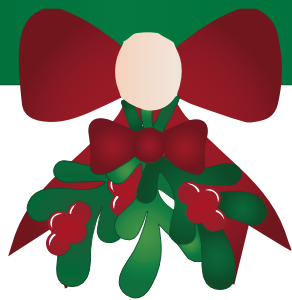
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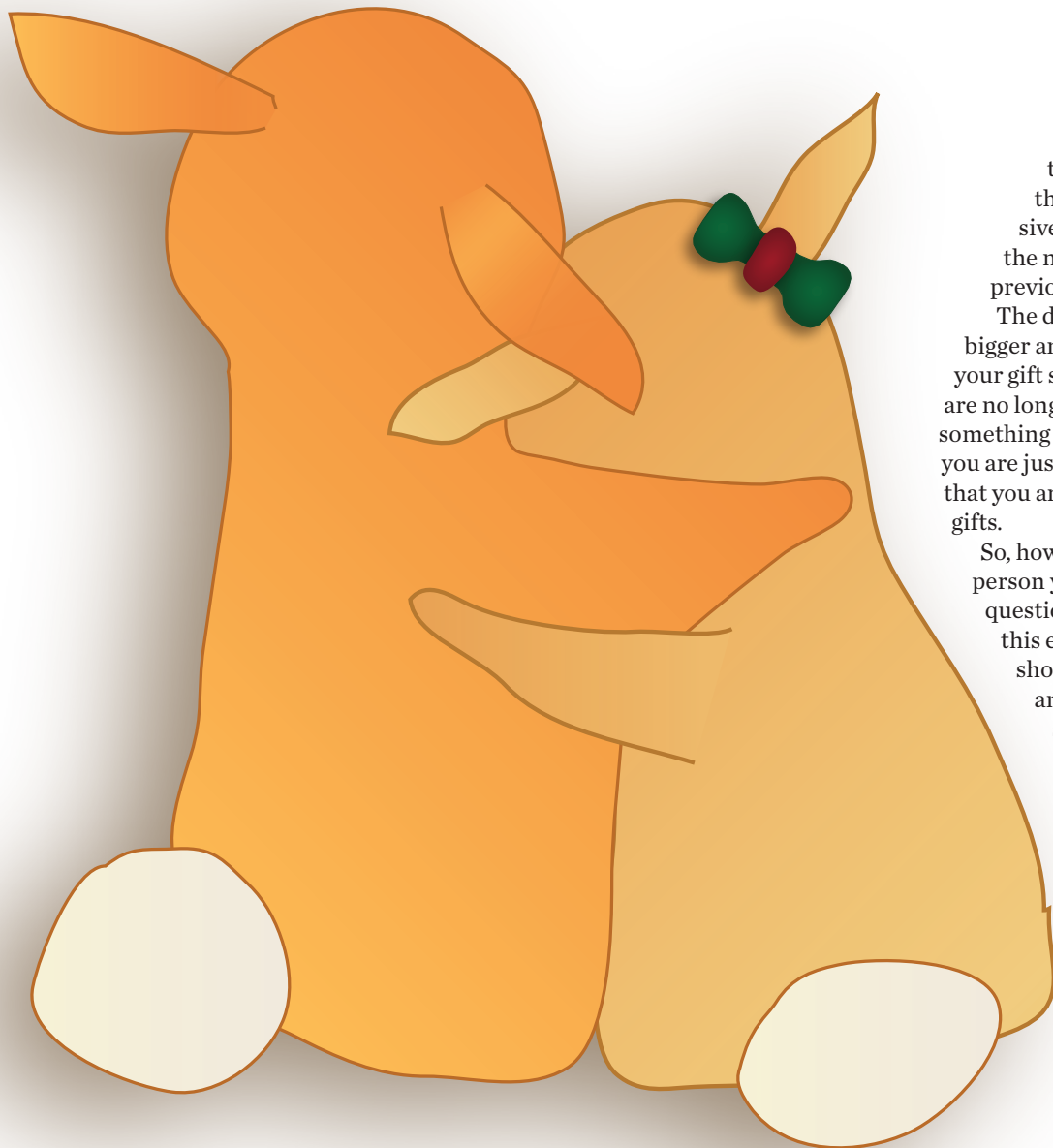


Feelin' Sentimental

Finding the perfect gift for your significant other

By Sarah Hansen

College Avenue Magazine



The holiday season is known as a time for joy. It is a time to relax and cherish moments with your loved ones. Unfortunately, sometimes all of this can be forgotten with the stress of trying to shop for your significant other. People get tied up in the idea that they need to buy their special someone the most expensive and most glamorous gift, or they feel the need to “one-up” the gift they gave the previous year.

The downside of trying to get a gift that is bigger and better is the fact that by doing so, your gift starts to lose its sentimental value. You are no longer buying someone a gift that means something significant to the two of you. Instead, you are just buying things to prove to yourself that you are capable of purchasing extravagant gifts.

So, how do you buy a sentimental gift for the person you love? This seems like such a silly question, but it has become so relevant in this era of commercial business-crazed shoppers that it is a question dying to be answered. However, the answer is quite simple. All you need to do is listen to your significant other. They may randomly mention that they love hand-knit scarves or even vintage books. If you mentally keep note of all these things throughout the year, by the holiday season, you may have a pretty good idea of what to get that certain someone.

Another good idea is to think

of things the two of you enjoy doing together. If you go on a lot of coffee dates, maybe painting personal coffee cups would be a sweet little idea for a stocking stuffer. Or, if you love watching classic films with each other, you could go to your local Walmart and buy loads of DVDs for a super low price.

Ecosystem science and sustainability freshman, Anna Banwart said her boyfriend gave her a stuffed bunny when she left for college. She said the bunny was named Cuddle Bunny because, “He [my boyfriend] wasn’t going to be able to be with me while I was away at college, and I needed someone to cuddle with while I’m here.”

Her gift of Cuddle Bunny was a gift with sentimental value. It was a gift that represented being with one another and meant a lot to both of them.

However, you do not need to go out and buy a bunny to show your love for someone. You only need to remember one thing: it is the thought that counts. Really think through your gifts for your significant other and see if they truly mean something to both of you. If you do, you will be more successful in making this holiday season one to remember.

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WRAPPING IT UP:

how to make packaging the best part of the holiday

By Erin Douglas

College Avenue Magazine

The holiday season does not have to be the same routine every year. While tradition is a major part of the holidays, opening similar presents that are wrapped in a similar fashion as last year can get boring. An easy way to get a few more laughs and creativity out of gift-giving (without trying to outdo the money you spent last year) is simply the way you wrap your gifts.

Try to think outside the box (no pun intended) when you wrap your family's and friends' gifts. For example, layer gifts in a gift bag. Place the smaller gifts first, then a layer of wrapping paper, then another gift, another layer of paper and finally the biggest gift.

Or maybe, if you are only getting someone a small gift but you want to make it a big deal, do a Russian nesting doll style packaging job. Start with the small gift box and keep putting it into larger and larger boxes. The recipient will have to unbox each one until they finally reach the small gift. This is also a great way to prevent guessing.

There are many other ways to prank your recipients. Kush Desai, a junior social work student, said, "I've always wanted to put a gift into Jell-O like they did on 'The Office.'"

If you are an ambitious gift-wraper, try to wrap a boring box

to look like something different, such as origami. An easy example would be to make a house — use the color of the wrapping paper to help distinguish between the house, roof and chimney.

However, sometimes the best gifts do not need a lot of fancy packaging. For a cell phone or iPod, hide it in the Christmas tree. Then, call the phone or set an alarm for when you want the recipient to find it. They will be confused, but pleased when they make the discovery. A modification of this could be scavenger hunts for the presents with a set of clues.

It is best to keep in mind your recipient's sense of humor. Freshman electrical engineering student Keith Evenson said he enjoyed the irony in certain gifts from his family.

"In my family, we would package nice gifts like a new phone in an old dust-buster box and wrap the box in duct tape," Evenson said. "It was a perfect fit for our family's sense of humor."

There are thousands of variations in wrapping paper and gift bags. Do not stick with the same old holiday wrapping paper. Make an attempt to find something unique or start a new tradition with your recipient. Remember, the holidays are a time for laughter and memories. Have some fun and put some effort into making the recipients of your gifts feel special this season.

What's trending this gift giving season?

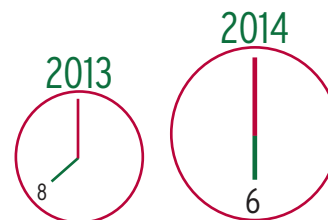
\$57.4 billion
\$50.9 billion



Black Friday sales



Average spent per person over Black Friday weekend
** data from the National Retail Federation*



Average time major retailers opened on Thanksgiving
** data from www.reviewjournal.com*

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** data from IBM*

Online Thanksgiving Sales

↑ 14.3% up compared to 2013
** data from IBM*

Online Black Friday Sales

↑ 9.5% up compared to 2013
** data from IBM*



Photos by Megan Rakoczy



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Rudolph's Landing: serving up year-round Christmas cheer



By Alexa Phillips
College Avenue Magazine

Behind the lit trees that line Old Town Square and the fresh snow which covers the sidewalks, Rudolph's Landing takes up storefront on Linden Street, separated from the crowds drawn to Old Town, even on unusually cold evenings. This small, charming Christmas store is the perfect place to be when its surroundings could not be more like the holiday season itself.

Rudolph's Landing has humble beginnings, drawing from the passions of Ed and Christina Cashimer, avid collectors of Christmas memorabilia for the last 20 years. Pre-retirement, they travelled around the country, and in every place, they found a Christmas store, adding to their collection along the way. They were able to turn their hobby into a business, using their own collection as the primary inspiration for what brands and types of merchandise the store would

carry. The couple are experts in all things Christmas, and familiar with high-end, upscale, eclectic Christmas merchandise making up the majority of the store's product.

The merchandise is unique in that it is made from artisans, handmade and hand-painted. They carry Fontanini, an Italian brand that specializes in hand-painted Nativity sets. The figurines come in a variety of sizes, from 3 inches to 70 inches, shaped and created in the U.S. and then sent to the Tuscan region of Italy to be hand-painted. Rudolph's Landing also carries Department 56, a brand that specializes in pieces to build Christmas villages. Many of them are the themed around certain stories, such as the movies "A Christmas Story" or "A Christmas Carol." Customers can even put together their own personalized villages. The store also offers a variety of ornaments from vendors such as Ne'Qwa, Kubla Crafts, Kurt Adler and Christopher Radko.

"We love Christmas," the couple said when asked how they keep the Christmas spirit alive year-round.

The store, which opened September 2012, is located at 217 Linden St. behind Old Town Square. They are currently the only year-round Christmas store in Fort Collins. However, they also carry other merchandise for holidays like Mother's Day and Valentine's Day and for major life milestones, including trinkets for newlyweds and newborns. What is unique about the setup of the store is that much of the ornaments are displayed on Christmas trees, so customers are encouraged to "shop off the trees" as indicated by signs interspersed around the store.

According to Ed, naming the store was "quite a process." They wanted to have something around the theme of Christmas, and both he and his wife were big fans of Rudolph, so they settled on "Rudolph's Landing," named after everyone's favorite red-nosed

reindeer. Within the ornament selection, they have quite a few as an ode to the classic claymation cartoon, which happens to be turning 50 years old this year. Their merchandise is marketed towards families, intending to share the selection of Christmas ornaments together.

As for location, the couple said wanted a traditional downtown business with good foot traffic. After looking at various locations around Northern Colorado, such as Erie and Eaton, they decided on Fort Collins because Old Town attracts shoppers throughout the year.

"Personally, I think Fort Collins is better than Denver because it gets a steady amount of foot traffic year-round," Ed said.

Usually, one would think that a Christmas store only draws traffic around the holiday season, but for Rudolph's Landing, that is not the case. The store sees customers year-round, even in the summer, when Fort Collins caters to tourists taking advantage of the

outdoor activities. The store runs off-season promotional events such as "Christmas in July" and monthly sales to draw customers. Other than the holiday season between Thanksgiving and Christmas, they also draw a crowd for Valentine's Day, Mother's Day and Halloween.

"Ornaments are actually bought all year," Ed said.

The store has a warm and intriguing atmosphere. The Cashimers are so passionate about the holiday and the merchandise, and it shows through in the knowledge and enthusiasm they have when describing the merchandise to their customers, whether they are looking around or shopping. The couple take an interest in their customers, interacting with their patrons and telling the stories behind particular pieces. It puts a smile on your face to walk around the store, viewing their selection of Christmas merchandise. It is the type of store that puts you in a good mood, no matter the time of year.

Santa Spoiler: CSU students share how Santa's secret was revealed

By Erin Douglas

College Avenue Magazine

This article was not intended under any circumstances to be read by or read to a child (unless his or her Christmas spirit has already been spoiled).

A deep and integrated lie deceives approximately 20 percent of our country every Christmas. It has not only broken hearts, but also stifled imaginations. As if this was not severe enough, approximately 80 percent of the population participates in keeping this lie alive by passing it on to new generations and going to great lengths every year to keep the 20 percent in the dark.

***Spoiler alert:** It's Santa.

Hundreds of thousands of homes across the United States will put out cookies and milk, thousands of parents will sign packages with "Santa" instead of Mom or Dad and some parents will even dress up as St. Nick himself to protect the lie from curious peaking eyes.

Now, in college, here is a look back to childhood on how CSU students found out about Santa.

Let's face the facts: according to a 2012 AP poll, the average age to stop believing is at about 9 years old. Yet, almost 10 or 15 years later, many students still remember Santa as not only an important part of their celebrations, but almost as a magic they still want to believe in.

When asked, freshman fashion

merchandising student Rachel Navratil said, "I still believe."

Although, after a bit of coaxing, the real story came out.

"One of my friends told me in the third grade, but I didn't believe him," Navratil said. "I just wanted to continue to believe. So, I probably believed until about the eighth grade."

Santa Claus is so integrated into our culture and into our holiday season that some children (or college students) still do not want to give up on St. Nick, even in the face of peer pressure.

"My friend told me in the fifth grade," Brittney D'Aloia, a sophomore health and exercise major, said. "I didn't want to believe it, but it confirmed what I was already thinking."

However, some students were more skeptical as children.

Freshman social work student Eboni Stevenson participated in the Santa traditions.

"My mom would always put out one or two presents from Santa, and we would set out milk and cookies the night before," Stevenson said.

Yet, one Christmas, Stevenson came to an epiphany. "One day, when I was about 11 years old, I thought logically and realized Santa was really improbable," Stevenson said. "So then I didn't believe anymore."

While parents went to great lengths to keep the secret in their family, many children simply outsmarted their parents with

curiosity.

"My parents used to dress up like Santa just in case one of us saw them," Caitlyn Cook, a freshman health and exercise major, said. "I would always stay up and try to peek. But, one night, I woke up and they weren't dressed up, so I saw my parents and realized they were Santa."

The discovery can be postponed, however, as parents go to greater and greater lengths every year to keep their children's growing curiosity in the dark. With flour Santa footprints by the fireplace (simply dip a boot into flour and make an imprint on a rug) and the many "Santa Trackers" online, there is no end to ideas on Pinterest to help parents take Santa a step further.

"Our parents would take the time to write my brother and I letters back from Santa and place the letter by the glass of milk during the night that would say stuff like, 'Thanks so much for being a good girl and boy,'" Heather Salyer, a freshman theatre major, said.

No matter how we found out, discovering that the jolly old man does not exist was disappointing. It marked the end of our naivety, the end of the magic and one of the many ends to childhood bliss.

Freshman sociology major Luz Casteneda said, "One Christmas, I wrote a letter to Santa without telling my parents, and then I didn't get what I wanted. It was a sad day."



Photo by Anne-Marie Kottenstette

“ just wanted to continue to believe.”

– Rachel Navratil, CSU freshman

Photo by Megan Rakoczy



Where
to track Santa:
www.noradsanta.org

How many
homes Santa visits:
91.8 million

How Fast
Santa's sleigh moves
650 miles per second

How Long
Santa has to visit
823 homes per second

* data from www.daclarke.org/Humour/santa



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HOLIDAY COUNTDOWN

By Abby Kurtz
College Avenue Magazine

When the Old Town lights go up and Christmas music starts playing in every store in town — you know that the holiday season is finally upon us. So, if you celebrate Christmas, here are some ideas to keep you busy until then and help you get into the holiday spirit. And even if you don't celebrate Christmas, these ideas will at least keep you entertained through break!

DEC. 10

Decorate your dorm! Waking up to tinsel, garland and ornaments is a sure way to inspire the cozy holiday feeling throughout December.

DEC. 11

“Christmas tree, Oh Christmas tree.” Don't forget about this age-old tradition! Head over to the nearest Christmas tree lot and pick out the perfect tree, or just wander around if your tree-space is limited.

DEC. 12

Tune into some holiday music! There is no better way to brighten your long drive home than with some classic holiday music. Let “Rudolph,” “Frosty” and “Santa Baby” guide you down the interstate, just watch out for the ice!

DEC. 13

Volunteer! It is better to give than to receive, and the holiday season is the perfect opportunity to give to those less fortunate.

DEC. 14

Go holiday shopping! Unless you're one of those few over-achievers, you still need to buy presents for the whole family, your friends and roommate(s). Whether you buy for all or a select few, make your way to the mall and shop til you drop!

DEC. 15

Play in the snow! Channel your inner-kid with snowball fights and snow angels. Honestly, who doesn't want to build a snowman?

DEC. 16

Sit on Santa's lap! You're never too old to tell Santa your wish list. Visit Santa's Workshop downtown for a visit with Old St. Nick.

DEC. 17

Take a horse-drawn carriage ride through Old Town! Even better than a walk through the twinkling lights is a magical ride through them as the December snow falls.

DEC. 18

Go ice skating! Bundle up with some friends and head over to Edora Pool Ice Center and skate the night away.

DEC. 19

Watch all the holiday movie classics! From “A Charlie Brown Christmas” to “Home Alone,” holiday movie favorites will keep you feeling festive on those cold winter nights.

DEC. 20

Make a gingerbread house and bake cookies! Buy one of those gingerbread kits at the grocery store and decorate away. The best part about the holidays is gobbling up all the goodies!

DEC. 21

Go to an ugly Christmas sweater party! Being surrounded by all those goofy sweaters is a great way to take part in the holiday festivities.

DEC. 22

Send out holiday cards! Write letters to all those family members who want to know “where are you going to college?” and “what's your plan for next year?” It will save you a few redundant conversations.

DEC. 23

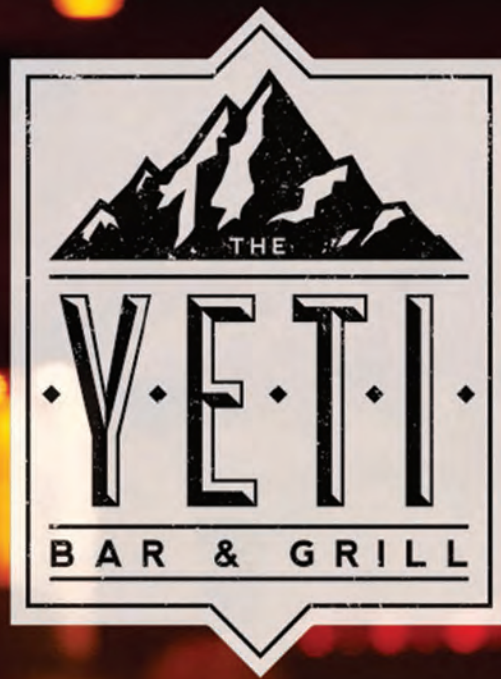
Spend time with your family! Whether it's in person or via Skype, the holidays are meant to be spent with family, even the crazy ones.

DEC. 24

Drink hot cocoa! Make this winter treat especially festive with some snowflake marshmallows and a peppermint stick.

CHRISTMAS DAY

Hang your stocking by the chimney with care! After an entire month of anticipation, make sure to enjoy Christmas Day and all the festivities that come along with it.



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These holiday presents are so bad, they are (almost) good

By **Hunter Goddard**
College Avenue Magazine

The generation gap is seldom so in-your-face as it is around the holidays, when out-of-touch relatives shower us with gifts that amount to little more than a laugh. 'Tis the season, and the students of CSU shared with us their most... memorable... holiday presents.

Aubrey Shanahan, a history junior, is an arts and entertainment reporter for the Collegian. When she was 12 years old, she wanted a PlayStation 2 more than anything. She was sure that one box in particular was the game console, and she unwrapped it last against her mother's warnings.

"It turned out to be a foot bath," Shanahan said. "Not even a foot massager, but a foot bath. I had just started hiking that year."

Hope Genty is also a junior majoring in history, and her grandmother lives in Washington, sending presents every year to Genty and her sisters for them to open under the tree Christmas morning. When Genty was 10 years old, that year's gift proved to be quite the surprise.

"That morning, everything was normal, and my family and I decided to open my grandma's gift," Genty said. "We never liked her gifts because they were never anything like us. That Christmas morning, me and my sister had a stuffed cat and my other sister had a stuffed dog."

According to Genty, she and her sisters immediately dropped their presents on the ground with faces of horror, to the hysterical laughter of their parents. Genty's mother later learned that Grandma had wanted to share her newfound love for stuffed cats and dogs.

Nicole Conklin, a journalism freshman, was 11 years old when the eccentric grandparents on her father's side of the family gave relatively (and deceptively) conventional gifts that Christmas day at their house

in Denver, much to Conklin and her siblings' surprise.

"My brother received a new Xbox game and my sister received a cool printed sweater and some 'Harry Potter' books," Conklin said. "Well, I open my present, and that was when I found a T-shirt with cats doing yoga 'pawstitions' on it and a 1940s 'Wonder Woman' comic book purse."

According to Conklin, she smiled and thanked her grandparents, not knowing how else to react but also genuinely appreciating their gesture, with her father cracking up in the background.

"The purse was a comic book cover of the original 'Wonder Woman,' which was an extreme close-up of her face, that was sewn into the front," Conklin said. "The pattern of the fabric was this weird-looking paisley rainbow pattern. I knew that purse would never leave my closet."

Conklin said, however, that she still wears that yoga cat T-shirt because it is a favorite of hers.

Christy Schuster, who is a freshman art major, said she was 16 when her grandparents offered to give her their 1998 Camry for Christmas while they looked for a new car. During her grandparents' road trip from California to Montana, they called Schuster about the wonderful red Camry they were bringing.

"My grandma's Mandarin accent is really heavy, and she confuses some English words," Schuster said. "I remember checking the driveway constantly, until this grayish thing rolled up and my grandparents stepped out. She still insisted it was red."

According to Schuster, her family still jokes to this day about the confusion, and any gift they receive now from her grandmother is the red fill-in-the-blank.

At 16, Alexis Marks, a sophomore psychology major, also faced her own Christmas Eve incident with a grandmother. When her relatives all opened their presents at the same time, Marks said she soon realized that her grandmother had wrapped her an empty box with tissue paper inside and nothing else.

"I remember just saying, 'Thank you, Grandma,'" Marks said. "The best part is, my little cousin wanted to see what I got. I told her, 'No, it's a secret,' because I didn't want my grandma to feel bad. Then, last year, my cousin brought it up, saying she is still upset I wouldn't show her."

Sometimes, it truly is the thought that counts, and the spirit of the holidays does not exist in the things our families give us, but, rather, in the laughter and the memories we share with them — for better or for worse.



Sustainable gift-giving

By Sarah Ross
College Avenue Magazine

In order to stray from your average run of the mill gift guides, College Avenue has put together a list of Christmas presents with the environmentally friendly flair that embodies Fort Collins to help you go sustainable this Christmas!

“I think it’s important to act sustainably over the holiday season because, for me, it’s a small way to pay tribute to the areas in the world that aren’t fortunate

enough to enjoy the holidays due to all of the unsustainable actions surrounding their communities,” said Acacia Sublette, Summit Hall’s Eco-Leader.

Buying sustainable and eco-friendly products goes a long way. They may be a bit pricier, but they say a lot. Not only are they thoughtful gifts, but your money goes towards a good cause, which just perpetuates good actions and efforts in the future.

So do your part this holiday season by helping out the world while also making your friends

feel loved and appreciated!!

If you want more gift ideas, check out treehugger.com/gift-guides for several lists that are themed to fit your friends’ interests. If those don’t cut it, talk to an Eco-Leader on campus; they hold office hours on the top floor of the Pavilion every weekday in the afternoons. There are also ideas on Tumblr, Pinterest, Google, you name it — so get out there and save the planet with the power of your purchases!

Teacup Orchid

Plants are the best gifts. They brighten up office and desk space, don’t need as much care as an animal and they supply fresh oxygen. Better yet, teacup orchids are really cheap at Walmart right now at about \$8. If your friend isn’t into exotic angiosperms, consider cacti or other small plants, like bamboo. If you’re going for a more relaxing gift, get a bonsai tree, which will calm even the busiest person while they trim those tiny little branches. Are they a plant killer? Try a self-watering pot at IKEA that only costs \$10.

Ecoxpower System

For all your biker friends out there, this gadget charges your phone from the power of your pedaling, so all that leg work pays off in more ways than just having amazing thighs. It’s a bit pricey — around \$100 — but with Christmas rolling around, can you put a price tag on love? Not to mention you’ll be encouraging alternative transport, so everyone wins in the long run!

Fair Trade, Palm Oil Free Chocolate

Did you know that Rams Express sells this chocolate? Fair trade products are better for the global economy as a whole because they ensure that employees are paid fairly and that customers get quality products. So feed your friends’ sweet tooth, and feel good knowing you are helping make the world a better place.

Bean Cycle Gift Card

Alright, we know gift cards are pretty tacky. However, by buying a gift card from Bean Cycle, you are giving the gift of sustainability in more ways than one. Bean Cycle serves coffee made from organic, shade-grown, fair trade coffee beans. That’s enough to make any environmentally-conscious person drool. Also, buying a gift card from Bean Cycle, or any other local shop, helps the local economy. Lastly, Bean Cycle hosts lots of cool events for free, like poetry slam night. So in a way, you’re getting the recipient coffee and a fun evening out all in one.

Upcycled Clothing

Do you have a knack for needles? Plato’s Closet is just off College Avenue, and with a few bucks and some elbow grease, you can make one-of-a-kind treasures for your friends, while simultaneously recycling older clothing. This keeps clothes from ending up in landfills and gives your friends something to wear when you hang out, or just an excuse to think of you.

Numi Artisan’s Tea Blending Kit

Some days, especially now that it’s chilly outside, there are very few things better than curling up with a good book and a hot cup of tea. Numi Artisan’s Tea is a kit where your favorite friends can make their own custom tea blends. It comes with organic teas and spices, tea bags, herbs, fruits and a reusable box. The recipient also gets his/her very own tea pot. Can’t get much cooler than that.

Creative Yet Simple DIY Holiday Gifts

By Octavia Perry

College Avenue Magazine

If your pockets are a little lighter this holiday season, DIY jars are a cute, cheap gift to give your family members.

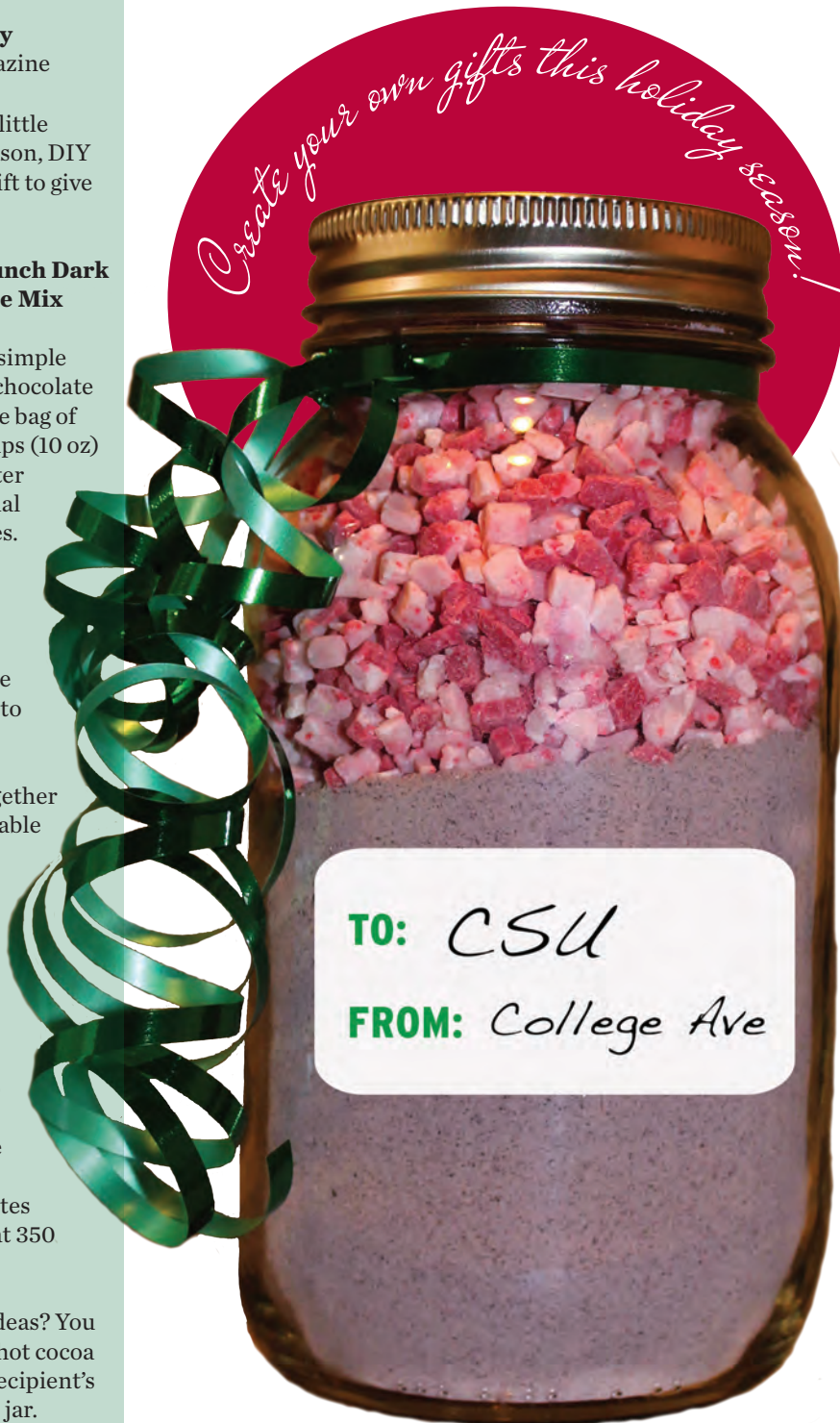
The Peppermint Crunch Dark Chocolate Cookie Mix

All you need for this simple recipe is a box of dark chocolate cake mix (15.25 oz), one bag of peppermint baking chips (10 oz) and a jar. Ribbons, glitter and stickers are optional for decorating purposes. Pour the cake mix into the jar, pat down the top and pour the peppermint baking chips on top. Then, attach the following instructions to the jar:

1. In a bowl, beat together a half cup of vegetable oil and two eggs.
2. Pour in the cake mix and peppermint chips. Stir well.
3. Chill the dough for 20 minutes before baking.
4. Round dough into balls and place on a non-stick cookie sheet.
5. Bake for 8-9 minutes (more if needed) at 350 degrees.

Want more DIY jar ideas? You can also just put plain hot cocoa mix, bath salts or the recipient's favorite candy into the jar.

Create your own gifts this holiday season!



By Valerie Vester

College Avenue Magazine

If you are still thinking about what to get your friends and family this year for the holidays, look no further. With these fun do-it-yourself gifts, there is bound to be something for everyone. Not that crafty? That's okay! These projects are creative, yet super easy.

DIY Pre-Made Recipes

One way to get creative with your gifting this year is pre-made recipes. Think of something your friends and family would like to eat or drink, gather the ingredients and put them together in some sort of container (mason jars work great). Ashley Van Bruwaene, a senior business administration major, said a favorite of hers is chai in a jar. "It is basically when you have all the ingredients and toppings inside the jar, and then all you have to do is add water or milk," Van Bruwaene said. Tie a ribbon around the jar, and you are done. Another great one is a sugar cookie kit. This is great for someone who likes to bake, or someone with kids. Clean out old light bulbs or Christmas lights (the big kind) and fill them with cookie-decorating toppings such as sprinkles, chocolate chips and graham cracker crumbs. Then, wrap some sugar cookie dough in holiday cellophane, add some cookie cutters and you have a holiday sugar cookie kit.

Reinbeer

Chloe Wilson, a junior psychology major, said she made "Reinbeer as secret Santa gifts one year." Just buy some root beer or beer and turn the bottles into festive reindeer. Wilson used pipe cleaners as the antlers, googly eyes, small craft pompoms for the nose and then added Santa hats to the top of the bottle. You just glue everything on, and then you are done.

Canvas Art

If you want to express your creative side a bit more, this one is for you. Canvas artwork can be super easy to make, yet still gives you lots of room to play around with your creativity. A simple way to make one of these is to get a canvas and cut out the letters of the quote you would like. Stick them to the canvas and then paint the entire canvas however you want. Bring out your inner Van Gogh and create a masterpiece, or keep it simple and paint it a single color. Have fun! When you are done, pull the letters off and you will have handmade canvas artwork.

Ornaments

Christmas ornaments are gifts that can be cherished for years to come. Shockingly, they can be extremely easy to make. You can buy clear bulbs at any craft store and then just fill them up. Color the bulbs by pouring paint inside and swirling it around evenly. This way, it will not chip as it would on the outside of the bulb. You can then paint details on the outside of the bulb like a Santa belt or snowman face. If you would rather keep the bulb clear, fill it with something for an artistic effect. For example, cut out strips of song lyrics and fill the entire bulb with the strips of paper.

Themed Gift Baskets

Themed gift baskets are great because you can customize them specifically to the recipient. Wilson said she loves "punny gifts like making a gift basket of the things a person likes with a note with a joke or something on it." One theme could be pampering yourself with "fluffy socks, lotions, scents, chocolate and wine, or a Friday night bag with hangover cure stuff in it," Wilson said.



Home for the HOLIDAYS

OPINION

“

Rams, go home, shut off your phone and spend quality time with your loved ones.

”



By Alex Rager
College Avenue Magazine

The value of the season evolves with age, and while many of the traditional aspects of the holidays are still in place, the value of being with your family and celebrating the holidays together has universally changed.

As we age, this joyous season becomes less about presents and more about being together. The mentality of a child transitions from anticipating Christmas morning and gift-opening to looking forward to spending time with loved ones.

Most kids remember watching holiday specials, playing outside all day, hearing those classic tunes around every turn and having one thing on his or her mind... PRESENTS! At that age, you do not think that you are seeing an aunt for the first time in years, or that grandpa's business is doing well — you just want to watch cartoons and eat good food.

With time, and especially when one reaches university age, the presents are still nice, the lit trees around town are still inspiring, but the aunt you have not seen in years and your grandpa's business become a point of interest. You begin to pay attention to the loved ones you may take for granted throughout the year.

“I value my family much more than I used to, especially my sister,” Meagan O'Brien, a sophomore animal science major, said.

With the hustle and bustle of modern life, many families are, in some way, separated. Not every family can be off in 10 different directions and still come together at the end of the day.

“This Thanksgiving was the first time in six months that my immediate family had been together in the same state,” O'Brien said.

The holiday season provides the perfect excuse for families to reconnect, even if it is for the first time in a long time.

One day, we will be out of college and focused on our lives, and the value one places on this season will change again. We will talk to our aunt and grandpa, sharing stories from when we were young, and watch in loving awe the toddlers just beginning their holiday journey.

The holiday season has always been about coming together as a family, reminiscing with relatives and celebrating being together.

So this year, Rams, go home, shut off your phone and spend quality time with your loved ones because even if not salient to you, it is to them.

I wish each and every one of you safe travels this season, well wishes and happy holidays to you and yours.

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