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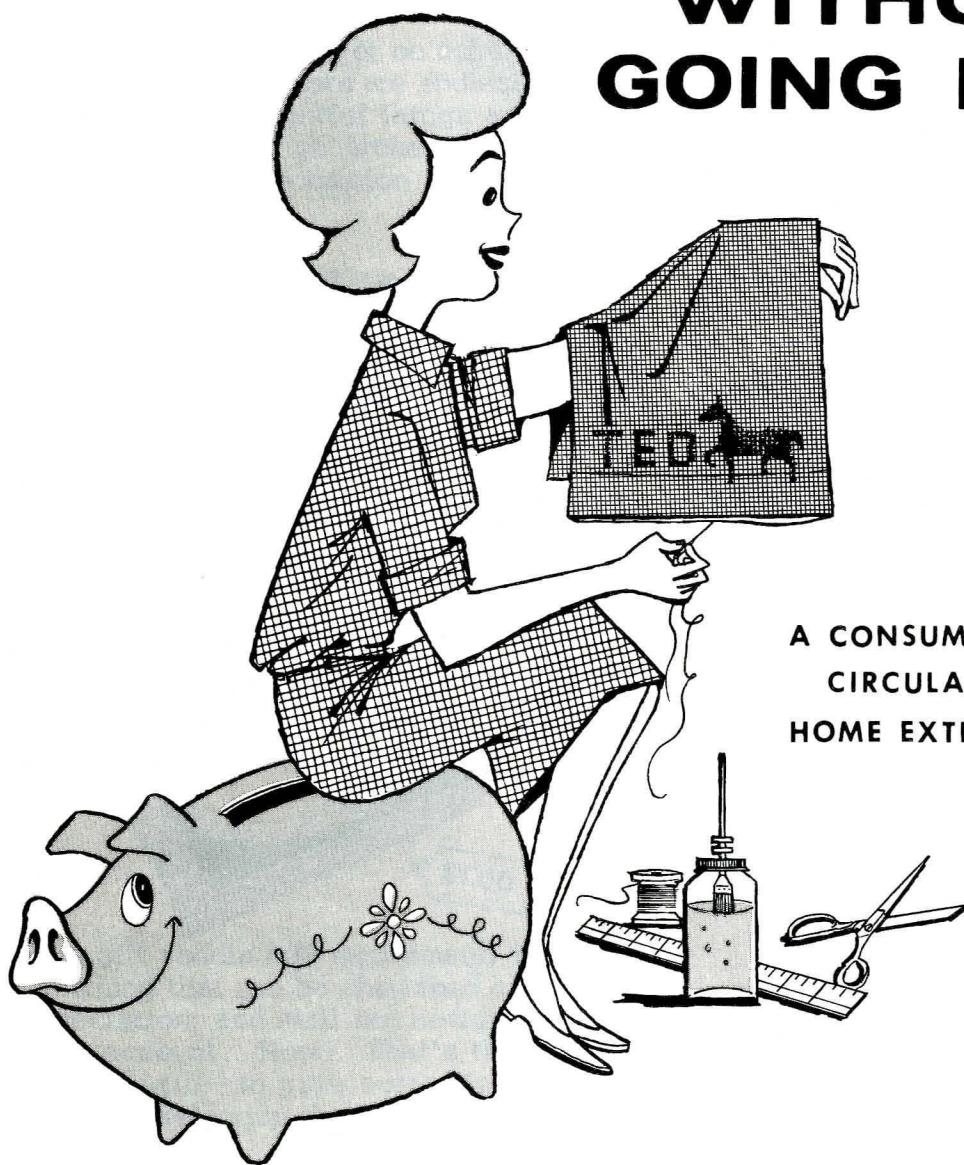
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GIFTS with a *Flair*_____

WITHOUT GOING BROKE



A CONSUMER INFORMATION
CIRCULAR FOR USE BY
HOME EXTENSION LEADERS

UNIVERSITY OF NEBRASKA COLLEGE OF AGRICULTURE AND HOME ECONOMICS
EXTENSION SERVICE
AND U. S. DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE COOPERATING
E. F. FROLIK, DEAN J. L. ADAMS, DIRECTOR

GIFTS WITH A FLAIR-WITHOUT GOING BROKE

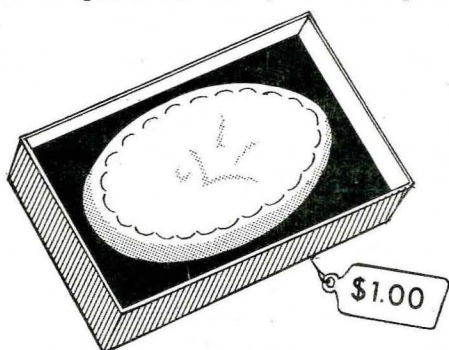
By Mrs. Clara N. Leopold
State Extension Specialist
Home Management

Once, when all Christmases were "old fashioned," everyone but the most affluent had to make his own gifts. And what a bustle of excitement and secrecy there was all through the house!

Today it seems that a very large proportion of gifts -- Christmas and otherwise, are purchased.

Gift giving should never be a frantic, expensive experience. There are endless beautiful, purposeful, delightful things available. It isn't necessary to go broke while remembering some happy occasion for a friend or relative.

What's the secret? It's a bit of showmanship, originality, individuality. The late Billy Rose, the master showman, once put it this way: "If I had only a dollar with which to buy my wife a Christmas present, I wouldn't try to get something that looked like \$1.98. Instead I'd buy a bar of luxury soap -- and have the Missus feel like a Queen while bathing." Every one of us can use a showmanship trick to quicken the pulse of people on our list.



This gift should add excitement; it should be something that can be cherished and is full of appreciation; and still not noticeably dent our bank account. How? That's the purpose of this bulletin--to give some tips on buy-manship and selection that may help you to be a better showman.

So let's get started with the first step toward selecting a gift for that special someone--not only for Christmas, but for any occasion during the year.

Know Person Receiving Gift

To really know the person receiving the gift is vital. His interests and personality are just as important a part of the gift as is the originality and thoughtfulness of the giver. What kind of person is he or she? Age, temperament, residence and interests are good cues to an appropriate gift.

The athlete and active outdoors person probably would not enjoy a novel as much as he would a book or magazine related to his particular interest -- fishing, hunting or golfing. Others might be more intrigued with publications on coin collecting, weaving, quilts, dolls, poetry and the like. Books and games are nice for children, but be sure the book or game is suited to his reading and learning ability.

Be Original

Sometimes the urge to give is overpowering. We feel that we must do something about the season or occasion, however small; must send some tangible object along with our greetings. Yet, even though tempted, we cannot throw our budgets over the Christmas tree or over the wedding bells in the church tower. What can we do?

Why not take some of the dollars out of birthdays, weddings, showers, Christmas, Easter and the other holidays. Enlarging your list of gifts or cards beyond workable limits only makes you bemoan the burden when the bills come in.



"A gift from the heart is worth two from the pocketbook!" Remember that it can be trifling, such as one large sugar cookie with a child's name written on it and wrapped with a jingle bell in the bow; a checked gingham

pillowcase with the youngster's name cross-stitched on the squares as a border; for the little Miss, a cutie gingham apron with the pocket in the form of a baby buggy into which you tuck a tiny dolly; your favorite salad dressing recipe in a re-useable container.

A "born cook" loves recipes -- so why not a recipe file with some of your own best creations recorded on cards to fit the box? Or a sampling of your special salad dressing, put up in baby food jars dressed up with colorful seals. To add your own touch, there are gummed labels you could have with your own identification that say: "From the Kitchen of _____."

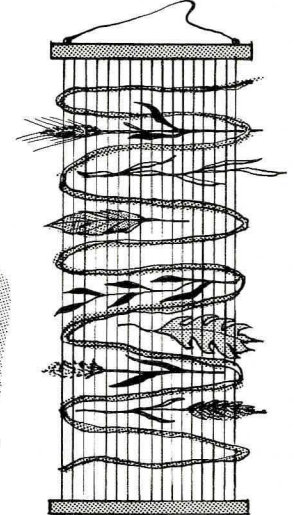
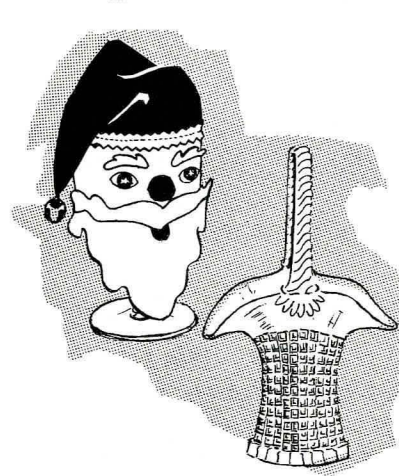
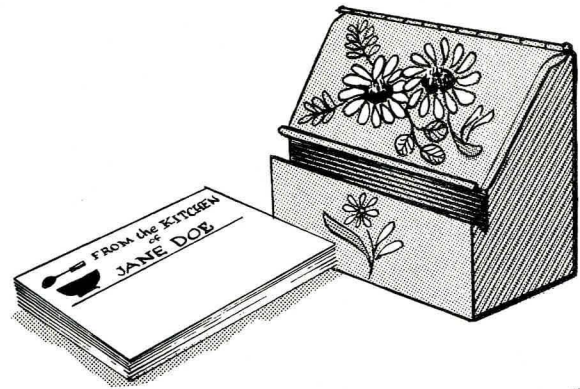
There is no limit to gifts you can make or grow, as well as those to be purchased. Something that comes from your garden, woods, orchard or canning kettle can be prepared during the summer, using fancy jars, or some glasses you can decorate to suit the occasion. An individual snifter or a goblet, dressed up as Santa Claus; or a glass Easter or May Day basket -- often found in re-sale stores -- might contain cookies, candy or one of your particular preserves. The container itself carries a message of love long after the contents are gone.

Even a simple wall hanging woven on a homemade frame, with weeds, grasses and other dried materials from your yard or the fields is beautiful and inexpensive.

Token presents may be the answer to a slim budget. Here, as elsewhere, the general principles of buymanship and selection apply.

Something that you have made yourself has value that is unrelated to its cost. Do you have a special talent and skill that lends itself to gift giving? What could be more delightful than something into which you've put part of yourself? If you have cooked it, painted it, or sewed it, it goes with a bit of your heart in it. No one else in the whole world could give a gift like yours. That is what makes it so special.

Soap is something everyone can use, it isn't expensive, and it is easy to dress up for any occasion -- birthday, showers, graduations, bon voyages, and for hostess gifts -- and it can be a conversation piece when combined with imagination.



Gift soap can be "custom made" by cutting an appropriate design from a greeting card and affixing this to the soap bar with epoxy glue. Then immerse the bar in melted paraffin, design down, covering as much as possible of the sides. This protects the design from water the first few times the bar is used, but still permits it to lather up.

To win the traveler's heart, prepare individual "doses" by pouring enough package soap or detergent for single batches of basin laundry into pharmacist's envelopes. Seal them and tie several packets together with ribbon. They take up little room in the luggage, and can be tucked into corners of a suitcase or in the toes of shoes. A traveler may prefer a bar of her favorite toilet soap to use in preference to soap supplied by hotels and motels in this country. Many foreign hotels do not provide soap at all for their guests. Considerate extras to include are a plastic box or bag for carrying the damp soap, and a supply of wash cloths -- either "regular" or compressed discs which expand to full size when wet.

Children love little animals formed by folding a wash cloth around the bar of soap.

Any friend who has a fireplace would rejoice to receive a small fruit basket or colorful nylon bag filled with pine cones or paper logs that have been treated to give gypsy colored flames as they burn in the fire. The cost is nil compared with the beauty created by the dancing colors.

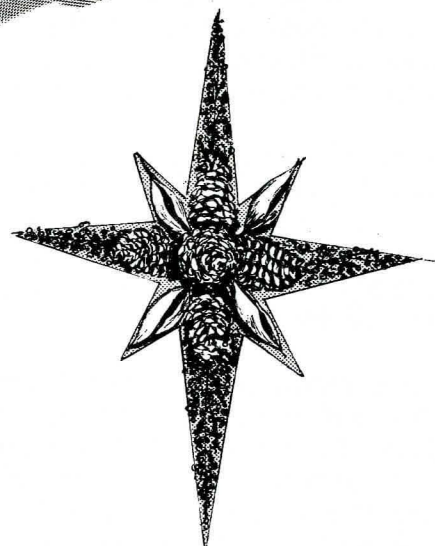
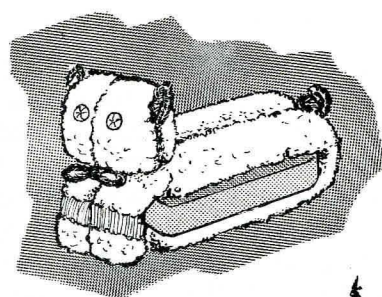
Another clever use of pine cones and pods is a Christmas decoration on a plywood base in the shape of a star or tree. Affix the pieces with glue, allow to dry thoroughly and then spray with transparent shellac. For year 'round use apply to a vertical strip, covered first with burlap.

Quality Before Quantity

Quality, rather than quantity, is a very basic principle of selection, whether the article is being purchased or you are making it. More pleasure is derived from the best of a lower-priced product than the cheapest of a "higher ticket;" or less of an expensive item rather than a large volume of inferior goods. Buying- and making-sense are appropriate whether the item is an everyday necessity or a special gift.

One good quality sheet is a more practical and gracious gift than a pair of sheets of inferior quality. The man of the house would appreciate a good hammer rather than a kit of inexpensive tools that are poorly made, of material that will not perform satisfactorily. A well-made shirt or blouse will please the recipient more and longer than a cheap sweater. A tiny bottle of good perfume is to be preferred over a showy bottle of cologne or toilet water that may be the same price.

Or choose a gift that goes in an envelope with a Christmas card, or any other kind of greeting card. A fat little card is always fun to receive. It takes on the aspect of something that is more than a card rather than less than a gift. It seems, as we open it, to be bursting with the affection that comes with it. The kinds of things that go well with a card are such things as a kerchief, a sachet (purchased or handmade), a veil, a packet of



seeds for the garden, a bookmark, a handknit dishcloth. And for children: a baby bib, a batch of bright balloons, a new hair ribbon, or saucy little bow tie. And have you noticed the "playthings" greeting cards for children -- a card that turns out to be a paper doll, a game, a puzzle or a cunning mobile?

Joy In The Unexpected

There is always added pleasure to the giver when the gift is something that has an element of surprise to the receiver. Gifts of money, for example, are very nice, but somehow they often smack of "last-minute thoughtfulness." The gift should be unique in some way so that it will reverberate in the recipient's mind because of the obvious pains you took in choosing it. And this is often as much fun to the giver as the receiver.

Perhaps your friend wants something special that you hesitate to pick out for him or her. Then money is a good answer, but at least you can wrap it and dress it up in some fashion that indicates you intended it to be used for that purpose.

For a lamp, try giving a light bulb along with the money with a little ditty that says he can pick his own lamp but you are giving the most essential part -- light itself. Or try folding the money in an unique fashion. Oftentimes banks have special birthday and Christmas cards for carrying coins.



If the occasion is the twenty-first birthday or wedding anniversary, a crisp, new dollar bill for each year placed in an appropriate card would be more ingenious than a check for the same amount. Or perhaps roll each bill into a "candle" and place atop a make-believe cake.



For a little guy, how about mixing foil covered coins with gold-wrapped chocolate coins in a jug? Or coins mixed with marbles in a marble bag? Or paper money attached like a cockade on the hat of a styrofoam snowman?

The diet-conscious miss would adore her head lettuce fashioned from crisp, new dollar bills on a silver-dollar base. Each layer of bills hides the string used to tie the preceding layer around a core of tightly wadded paper; outside layer Scotch-taped in place.

Is she a teenager yearning for a lipstick? Wrap a greenback around a 10¢ candy lipstick and add a note, rhymed or prose, about shopping for real.

Another idea is to provide the receiver with something that heretofore he has had to share with someone else -- tools designed for women instead of men; ball and jacks for each youngster, with each ball a different color for easy identification; manicure outfit for the budding teen-girl; an individual car key bearing the crest of the make of the car he drives; for children, terry towels that have a story book picture on them -- Mary Poppins, Smokey the Bear, circus clowns, Batman.

Right along with the unexpected thrill, let's make our receiving friend feel good. For, after all, what is the giving of gifts meant to do but give enjoyment to both the giver and receiver? You can't sprinkle the perfume of happiness on someone else without spilling something of the exhilaration of it on yourself.



A youngster who is all engrossed in football or basket ball would be thrilled with a sweater or sweat shirt bearing his favorite university or school insignia; a special perfume gives a real lift for milady; or a subscription to a special magazine that befits

the gentleman's profession can give him a sense of importance. A record of favorite music can bring endless enjoyment to the whole family. It can be the music of a particular holiday, something that brings back memories of a pleasant trip to Hawaii, the original cast recording of a Broadway musical the recipient has seen recently; or just favorite classical or popular tunes.

And do help the children find inexpensive gifts. Small children juggle piggy banks and stack pennies. Older boys and girls proudly count nickles, dimes and quarters every day from allowances and odd-job payments. The happy fever of gift giving excites youngsters as well as adults. It's a big job for youngsters to decide what to give.

But there is a way you can help even without being too specific about it. One clever mother made a long list of piggy-bank price articles that she and the rest of the family might like to have. Shopping from the list became a treasure hunt full of fun. The list included such things as a jar of dried basil for a kitchen herb collection, a needle threader; map of a city; wooden mixing spoons; clear plastic box with compartments for earrings, or nails and tacks; key ring; set of pure food colors; small portable pencil sharpener; small magnets for holding recipes or notes on refrigerator door; paper weight -- you can think of many more yourself!

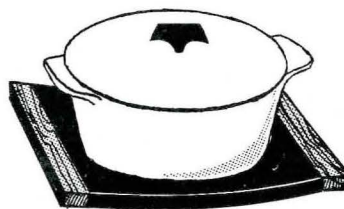
One result this plan can promise: the thank-yous will give the small fry a wonderfully warm feeling that their gifts are a genuine success.

Luxury

Luxury can be practical or frivolous. It's good to be practical, of course, but it still can be something special. Part of the fun of receiving a gift may be in the glee of owning something not ordinarily in your budget. But that isn't to say that a luxury cannot be also a necessity. Why not a luxurious necessity? Receiving something that you would not ordinarily buy for yourself is sure to be a delight. One can go a long time without a lighted magnifying glass -- but for one whose eyesight is failing, the extra light is an added joy. Billy Rose's costly soap is a luxurious necessity -- and would be doubly so if some bath

freshener of the same fragrance is included. Maybe a small piece of imported English ware -- for example, a Royal Doulton egg coddler, would add zest to the daily egg of a single person?

Instead of a dust catching figurine, how about one of the newer type ceramic casseroles that would add beauty to any homemaker's table? They're easy to clean, and are useful in many ways other than as a casserole.



Pile a variety of pickles and relishes into a basket or pretty box to send to a gourmet on your list. You might include baby dills, dill strips, hot mixed peppers, pickle mid-gets, pickled cauliflower and dilled beans. What about some of your own home canned products? They can be a real treat to the person who has no opportunity to do good home canning.

A variety of pancake mixes -- blueberry, buttermilk, buckwheat -- to hot cake fans. One package plus a jar of honey or one of the newer syrups; or add one of the new round cake turners.



Treat a friend living in another part of the country to a few of the food specialties of your own region. Nebraska being the Beef State, offers a choice steak. There's also the Centennial Husker Chop. Pack in dry ice and send them to the east or west coast. If you have a special way of preparing the meat, include your recipe. There are numerous products that are Nebraska-made that would make unique gifts -- food, household apparel and recreation items, plus books and magazines about Nebraska. Here's your

opportunity to sing the praises of Nebraska-land, so be sure that you include a card or note that tells about the product. (See list on back page.)

And to represent the Cornhuskers, have you tried corncob jelly? It's a beautiful color with a delicate taste-teasing flavor. Easy to make, too.

Durability For Lasting Pleasure

It's no fun to receive something that won't last -- and later find that it can't be repaired. Flimsy plastic toys do not give much pleasure for very long to the boisterous youngster. Toys for children should be more than durable -- they should be safe. Take care to select those not likely to cause fire, shock, explosion, or poisoning.



For milady soft whirring motors and soft toned plastics, gleaming chrome and bright ceramics, signal lights that say "when" and temperatures that stay constant--they're all a part of the dazzling and sometimes bewildering world of today's small electric appliances.

Choose a good piece of merchandise, being selective as to established brand, reliable dealer, substantial and well-balanced construction, guarantee, UL Seal, and the availability of local repair. These are all good indications of durability of appliances. But do remember to enclose with the gift the instruction tags for care and use. Some things require future repair and replacement. Such things as appliances, clocks, and electric blankets should be purchased from reputable dealers -- the kind who stand behind their products.

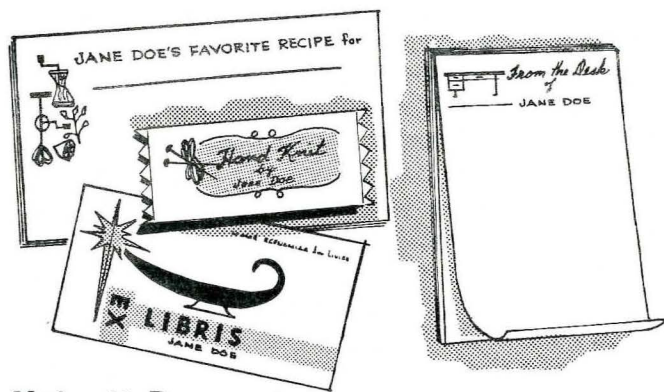
Add-to gifts are often welcome additions to treasured possessions. A spoon to match the lady's silver pattern, or serving piece to

match her china. Because open stock patterns also allow for replacement in case of loss or accident, they are better buys than standard sets.

For clothing and household textiles note the construction. Sleazy material ravels quickly with the first washing if the seams are not properly reinforced.

There's no wear-out to a good picture, well framed, large or small, traditional or modern.

Compare a clever, well-made apron that stands washing and ironing versus a showy fancy handkerchief with lace that pulls loose the first time it's washed.



Make It Personal

Everyone thinks he is pretty important, so why not tickle the ego by a personalized gift. Consider a packet of initialled or fully personalized stationery with name and address; pads of return address stickers; recipe cards that can remind where the recipe came from; memorandum sheets that proudly proclaim "From the desk of _____" or "A message from _____;" bookplates with the name and address of owner; monogrammed pajamas, shirt or blouse.

Grandmothers are doting on the current fad of a "family tree" using stamp pictures of the children and grandchildren. Dad would like to have a set of these little pictures for his wallet.

If you like to do aluminum etching or copper tooling, why not a desk plate for the professional people on your list? There are companies who make clever plates to attach to the family car that say "This car made especially for _____" or a chain tag to be sewn in a man's overcoat at the back of the collar that has the owner's name engraved on it.

Handkerchiefs, keytainers, desk pen set, notebook cover, pins, clips, ties, and necklaces are but a few of the items that can be purchased with an initial to personalize them.

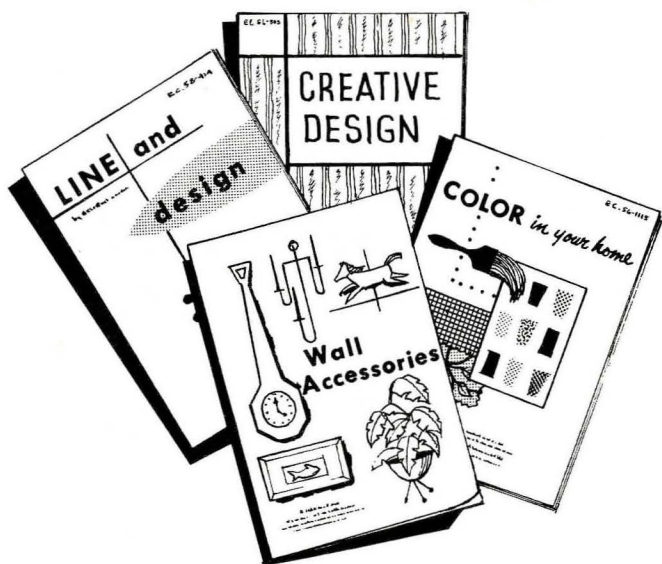
To delight a child's heart there are pencils with the name imprinted, a sweatshirt with his name on it, a homemade stepstool, with his name on it, to help him reach the sink or washbasin; and many other items.

For the woman whose needlework is prized, there are labels to be sewn on that say "Designed by _____," "Handwoven by _____," "Hand knit by _____," "Handmade especially for you by _____." She would have double pleasure in giving the article and also remembering from whom the personal label came.

And one thing people can't buy is your photograph. A small one in a standup frame is appropriate for the recipient to enjoy day after day on his desk or dressing table.

Good Taste and Pleasing To The Eye

Whether it's a gift or not, always use good taste. It should also be pleasing to the eye. Be sure you will not burden someone with an item that is so highly stylized that it will be out of date in no time. Simple, clean lines and attractive colors are always in good taste. Here is an opportunity to use your knowledge from your Extension Club lessons -- Creative Design, Wall Accessories, Color in the Home, Line & Design.

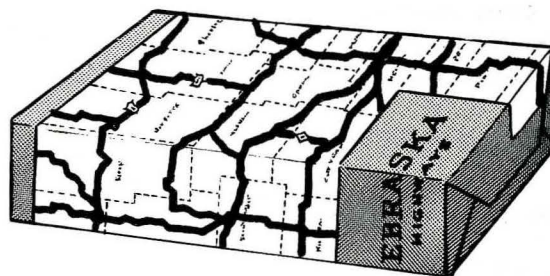


To go along with good taste and pleasing to the eye, don't overlook ease of care. Be sure that you give a gift -- not a chore. Easy to wash, not too fragile materials are best. If the gift makes extra work, it won't be used; or if it is used, part of the joy of having it is dimmed by the tedious maintenance job.

Wrap It With A Flair

You may not be able to judge a book by its cover, but an unusual cover entices you to peek inside. That gift package cover need not always be bedecked with fluffy bows and gay gift wrap paper. Did you ever think of wrapping a cook book or a box of cookies in a gay kitchen towel and tying it with yarn?

A bottle set down in an oatmeal carton solves a wrapping problem. When the carton is dressed up into a head of Santa Claus or bunny rabbit it's as saucy a parcel as ever said a "From me to you!" Use an old fashioned folding paper bell on one corner of the box -- putting glue on the back and laying the bell half open. This would be as appropriate for a wedding gift as it is for Christmas. A package with little metal bells worked into the bow makes it heard everytime it's moved.



When the gift is for a traveller about to take off on a journey, try using a highway map or a world map for the wrapper. Even newspaper tied with common string can be a real teaser. Make a tag of newspaper that says you are cutting expenses and hope they will enjoy reading news of the day after the festivities are over!

You can make your own enclosure and gift tags by carefully cutting old greeting cards. Then use a plain color paper for the wrap that harmonizes with the tag to be used. Glazed shelf paper comes in beautiful colors.

It is also fun to make your own gift wrap paper with a linoleum block on brown craft or shelf paper, or screen printing on some plain white tissue. Your own individual paper will not be like any of the other packages! Be sure you sign your name on the paper so that everyone knows that you designed and made it.



When the gift is small, boxes within boxes create fun for the crowd as they are opened and unwrapped, step by step. A silver thimble, for example, makes a mighty small box but the final wrap could be large enough to cover a sofa cushion!

Consider the lowly brown bag. Wrap the gift with it. Decoration could be a clown face, a pup, a flower -- your only limit will be your own imagination. Use bits of felt, cloth, beads, paint, cotton, sequins, tinsel, ribbon bows, colored pictures, and what have you!

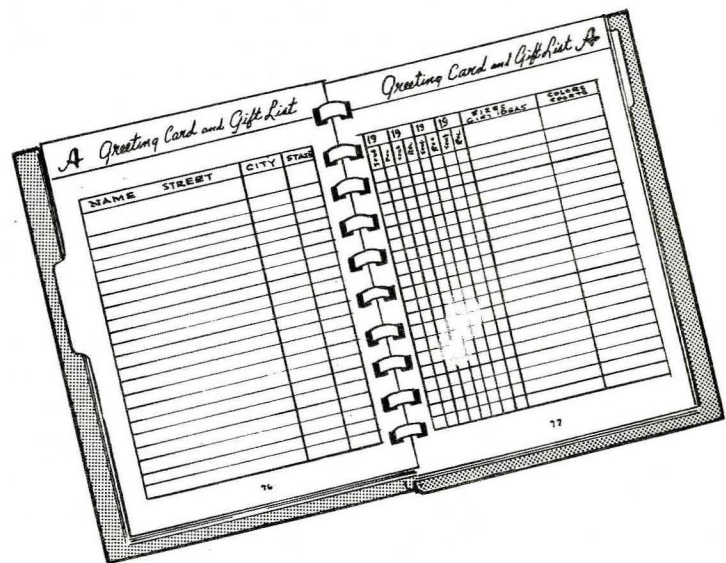
Think A Year Ahead Of Time

Gift giving, like many other things, is what we make it. Why not make it easy and fun?

It does require planning but it needn't be elaborate. Just be sure to get everyone in on the act and that you don't wait until the last minute to get started.

Get smart! Begin as soon as one occasion is over to plan for the occasion next year. Find a convenient box or drawer for storing gift wrappings -- ribbons, papers, boxes. Have another box in which to collect little items and decorations from time to time during the year. Whenever you see a suitable gift for a particular person or party occasion stash it away. It might be a good idea to label it and you might keep a list so you won't duplicate when you go shopping.

Have you tried keeping a "Remembering Book?" A simple notebook used year after year can become priceless. It can list your friends and tell what you've given them in the past -- plus notes concerning them. Include needs and desires as you find out about them. Sizes of family and friends as well as names of their pets might be included.



Whatever you do, enjoy the giving of the gift. The price tag is insignificant--so never tarnish your spirit of generosity by going broke. Your ingenuity and imagination are much more fun for both you and your recipient!

Gifts Of Nebraska-Made Products ^{1/}

FOODS

Apples
 Beet sugar
 Cheese
 Cider
 Coffee
 Convenience foods:
 Macaroni & cheese
 Pizza mix
 Pancake flour
 Biscuit mix
 Stone ground cereals & flours

 Honey
 Horseradish
 Jams & preserves
 Meats:
 Centennial steaks ^{2/}
 Beef sausage
 Frankfurters
 Husker Chops ^{3/}

 Pickles
 Popcorn
 Salad dressings
 Sizzle seeds (popped wheat)
 Turkeys:
 Smoked
 Rolled
 Steaks

HOUSEHOLD ITEMS

Brooms & brushes
 Bathwater softener
 Cutlery
 Hand tools
 Ironing board covers & pads
 Pottery

APPAREL & RECREATION

Boots
 Duck & goose decoys
 Gloves
 Hunting knives
 Leather belts
 Uniforms
 Slides & murals of Nebraska ^{4/}
 Books about Nebraska ^{5/}
 Nebraskaland Magazine ^{4/}
 Nebraskaland Calendar ^{4/}

- ^{1/} List compiled from Directory of Nebraska Manufactures 1966-67. For further information inquire of Division of Nebraska Resource, State Capitol, Lincoln, Nebraska 68509.
- ^{2/} Detailed specifications available from Centennial Commission, Lincoln Hotel, Lincoln.
- ^{3/} For further information and colorful recipe leaflet to enclose write Nebraska Centennial Pork Promotion Committee, Box 49, Glenvil, Nebraska 68941.
- ^{4/} From State Game Commission, State Capitol, Lincoln 68509
- ^{5/} From University of Nebraska Press, 215 Nebraska Hall, University of Nebraska, Lincoln 68508.