

Ladies Have You Heard?

By Doris Thomas

Lancaster Extension Home Economist CHRISTMAS GIFTS YOU CAN CREATE

Let your imagination and not your wallet be your guide to giving the right gift to everyone on your gift list this year. Christmas gifts you make yourself reflect more than just your buying power. A handmade gift shows you spent "time and talent" for someone special.

For the men on your list, a handmade tie is an unusual and welcome gift. Choose the fabric according to the recipient's per-

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sonality. A colorful Christmas vest, given in advance, is a festive gift for a special man, as well as a terry cloth robe, or even a silk smoking jacket - if you're especially talented and have the time.

Children love stuffed toys. Make them cute and cuddly for small children and a bit "kooky" for teenagers. They can be made from terry cloth, washable velvet, corduroy, gingham, washable acrylic pile or imitation fur fabrics. Stuff with washable filling and attach trimmings firmly so young children can't pull them off.

Popular gifts for the home include pillows, hooked rugs, tablecloths, placemats and matching napkins. Transform an ordinary terry cloth guest towel by stitching two rows of braid or multi-color tassel fringe along each edge. Create placemat and napkin sets the same way. Sew a ball fringe border around a readymade placemat, with matching trim for the napkin corners, or buy suitable fabric and make them "from scratch." A word of caution: use washable, permanent press fabrics and trims. Don't wrap up laundry problems with your handmade gift.

Little girls would be delighted with handmade doll clothes to fit their favorite doll. Little boys might appreciate a vest made out of a suede-like fabric. Add fringe to create a Western look.

Women and girls appreciate scarves - done in varying lengths, shapes and fabrics suitable for different uses. A matching scarf and tie for a "togetherness" couple will be welcome and unique.

Last minute gifts can be unplanned but really inspired. For a little girl, how about a "dress-up hox" filled with discarded hats, vests, dresses, purses, beads, scarves and other "finery." If there is a future carpenter on

your list, wood scraps in an assortment of sizes and shapes can fill a need. Include an adult size hammer and plenty of nails and a box for storage.

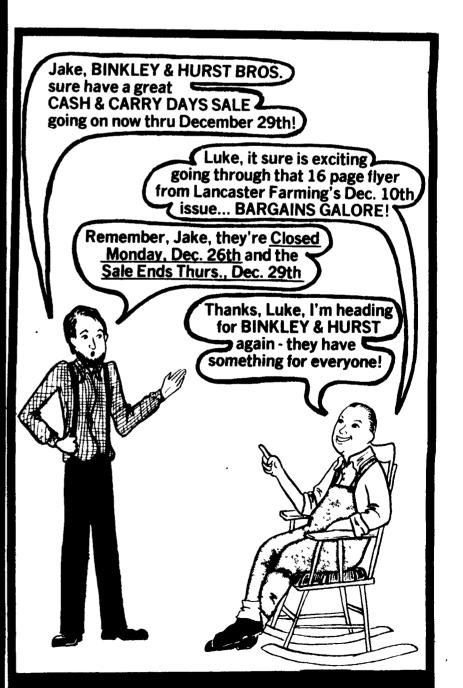
Materials for a budding artist can include paste, scissors, paper and paints.

An interesting gift for someone with a sweet tooth is a candy centerpiece or tree. Decorate a styrofoam cone with wrapped candy pinned on with decorative or ordinary straight pins. A few ribbons can make it more festive. A basket or bowl fitted with a styrofoam ball becomes a "sweet gift" with lollipops poked into the styrofoam and other wrapped candies attached by a variety of pins or toothpicks. Or use noncandy treats such as sugarless gum or small boxes of raisins to add variety.

Food can also become a welcome gift for that special person. Include rare cheeses, special chocolates, gourmet supplies or homemade goodies. Special diet foods can be a present for someone on a special diet.

Give gifts of time to people who need it. Give babysitting time to a young mother in the form of redeemable coupons, each worth one hour. This is better than a vague promise and gives you something to wrap for under the tree. The promise of short trips, such as grocery store shopping for an older neighbor or an at-home parent can be given too in the form of coupons or tokens.

Use your imagination and creativity this year as you prepare your gift list for family and friends.



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