



# Shopping malls stock unusual gifts

'Tis the season of goodwill and cheer ... and worn-out wallets and tired ideas.

What is worse than the last-minute Christmas rush is not having the vaguest idea what gifts to buy for family, friends, or for that special someone in your life. Add to that a lean student budget, and options appear acutely limited.

But fret no more. If you're not particular about the conventional present and are not averse to giving something unusual or funky, here are some alternative gift suggestions that'll not only lighten up someone's Christmas and your pocket as well, but probably get you extra credit for innovation. All stores are at Valley River Center.

### NORTHLANDS GIFTS

The store's pretty, intricate, hand-crafted and hand-painted ceramic and porcelain figurines make excellent collectibles or elegant mantel-pieces for the home.

From elaborate doll and cute cherub sets, to special animal, plate and cottage/townhouse collections (some in limited editions), there's something to please every whim and fantasy.

Especially for this season, of course, are the lovely nativity pieces that'll definitely add some festive sparkle to the home.

Prices range from as low as \$6 for a simple piece to \$70 for the limited editions.

### THINGS REMEMBERED

For that personalized touch, this store offers custom engraved gifts.

A broad selection of gifts and commemorative items are available and the staff will personalize from one to 1000 pieces to meet your needs and etch everything to your specifications, even custom logos and designs.

Clocks, key-chain, pens,



Photo by Sean Poston

Unusual gifts can be found at Valley River Center, including the Illusion Kaleidoscope, which sells for \$30.

memo pads, coasters, nameplates, frames — you name it, they'll do it.

And it's nice to know that all that service comes to as little as \$6 for an engraved key-chain. Average prices range from \$15-\$40 depending on complexity of design.

### NATURAL WONDERS

This is the place to go for the weird and wonderful. This is a specialty gift store thriving with products that are either derived from or related to nature.

Two hot items now from the store: the Illusion Kaleidoscope, and the Laser Disc. The kaleidoscope is filled with light oil, crystals and sparkle stones that float by the prisms within the kaleidoscope, creating a myriad of colors and shapes.

The disc, popularly known as the "Laser Dazer," is a metal disc with a holographic design. When spun like a top, it throws off different light designs and shapes. Pick it up for just \$5.

### HK LIMITED

Though it appears to be primarily a retro houseware store, it stocks some rather novel items as well.

For those frustrating moments when you just want to vent steam but can't afford to get your hands on anything but a pillow, try Stress-X, a

squishy, tough, rubbery material shaped into a thick head. Just squash the life out of it whenever you're in the mood. Also, there's a punching bag version called "Wham-It," where you can attach a picture of someone or something you wish to sock it to. Both cost \$10.50 each.

For those with a star-fetish, give the life-size Hollywood card-board stand ups. The celebrities in line include Marilyn Monroe and James Dean (\$25).

### DOLAN'S BRIAR SHOP

Hats and cigars of all variety are the staples of this store. But the more popular items now are: crushed rock critters and statuettes at \$17.50; Indian pottery from \$20; and pewter fantasy items the likes of dragons and wizards from \$10.

—Ming Rodrigues



## Grand Opening

Eugene based national mail order catalog company in its sixth year of specializing in the culture of Japan is now opening its first outlet store featuring catalog items, one-of-a-kind samples and unique holiday gifts from across the world.

Located in the Fifthpearl shops. T-S 11-5-30, Sun. 11-5.

**Shibumi: The Japan Store**

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