

Get creative in giving gifts

■ For those who have time this season, here are some options for personalizing presents

By Eugene Chen
For the Emerald

The search for the perfect gift can sometimes be both painstaking and expensive. Nobody wants to give or receive a gift that has little sentimental value or meaning. The challenge is, of course, finding something with personal meaning and a touch of creativity without draining your bank account.

Pottery shops can be a great place to find the perfect gift for that special someone. Brush Fire Pottery by you, located across from the 5th Street Market at 295 E. 5th Ave., offers an alternative to giving mundane gifts. The store allows people to personalize almost anything, including tile magnets, figurines, plates, bowls, mugs and, of course, pots.

"What do you get somebody that has everything?" asked Amy Chartrand, a Brush Fire employee. "Well, what they don't have is something made by you."

People have the choice of any item to paint and design. Store employees put the finishing touches on your creations by adding a clear gloss and firing them.

"You can personalize anything," Chartrand said. "That's the unique thing."

The best part of the experience, Chartrand added, is that it's not

only "fun and relaxing, but also really easy."

The prices for the various items range from \$3 to \$60. The mugs are the best-selling item, costing between \$15 and \$18.

Another way to express your creative side in gift giving is to take a trip to a craft store.

“What do you get somebody that has everything? Well, what they don't have is something made by you.”

Amy Chartrand
employee,
Brush Fire

Craft World, 1333 W. 7th Ave., provides the opportunity to make or decorate an assortment of items from soap to photo albums. Other available items include scented candles, papier-mâché boxes and beaded jewelry.

A representative from Craft World said people come into the store to buy the item kits because they are inexpensive. But more than that, the gifts are special because it shows that the gift giver had someone special in mind.

Some people may not have enough time to spend making gift items. Euphoria Chocolate Company, located across from the 5th Street Market at 199 E. Fifth Ave., is a possible solution. The store sells gift boxes of assorted chocolate and truffles, giving customers

the choice of which ones will most likely indulge the gift recipient's taste buds. The customer has a choice of truffles ranging from milk chocolate to mint chocolate.

"Economical," was how Lindsay Jewett of Euphoria Chocolate Company best described the gift boxes.

The gift boxes vary from one to 12 truffles in size. The price ranges from \$2.25 to \$22.25. The best-selling gift-box package is four truffles for \$7.75.

However, chocolates may not always appeal to that someone lacking a sweet tooth.

Cards can make a great gift gesture, but finding one with a message that suits one's feelings toward the recipient can be difficult. When finding a card with the perfect message fails, making one can be the solution.

Sara Simochko's Unique Designs specializes in making customized cards, jewelry and stained glass.

"Cards are a great gift idea because they're simple, elegant and they're beautiful," Simochko said.

You can find all the necessary materials you need for making a card at most any craft store. Materials include plain cards, envelopes, wax paper, art design of one's choice, tissue paper and glue. But be prepared to spend some quality minutes with your card because it can be time-consuming.

Gift giving can be one of the most personal gestures a person can make. But it doesn't have to be expensive or elaborate as long as you give a piece of yourself.

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