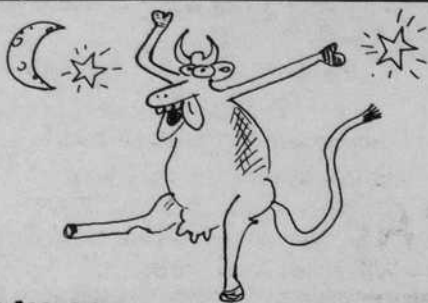




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Pop the question with style

■ Proposing marriage can be nerve-racking, but it should reflect your love

By Arlene Juan
For the Emerald

Saying "I do" is easy, but getting up the nerve to ask the question "Will you marry me?" can be quite an ordeal. To help find the perfect way to propose, here are some useful hints on the "dos" and "don'ts" of asking the question.

"First, you must know if both parties are ready," said Persephone Shon, a senior journalism major. "Do not set yourself up for rejection. Know the situation, and know it well."

"A lot of people concentrate so much on what they should do and forget the things they should not do," said Ilona Widjojo, a senior architecture major.

She strongly advised not to propose by e-mail. Widjojo stressed that proposing over the telephone,

while at a sporting event, while at a bar or under the influence of alcohol are definite no-nos.

Glen Park, a recent graduate, said, "Be sure not to concentrate on what could go wrong. Take into account what could go right."

A great proposal idea could be "putting the ring inside a single rose and having her play the game 'he loves me he loves not,'" Park added. "By the time she reaches the inner core of the rose, the ring will have said it all."

Most female students emphasized originality. The ring is secondary.

"Be brilliant and original," said Shannon Casey, a junior marketing major.

"Dazzle her with surprises like decorating the room with scattered rose petals. Romanticize her with dinner and wine. Finally, give her a scrapbook with memorabilia. As she turns to the last page, there will be a ring."

Sarah K. Samman, a senior from

Saudi Arabia offered another suggestion, "you can create cards with riddles and private jokes that she must figure out," said Samman, a double major in biology and psychology. "It's like making her hunt for a hidden treasure. Put her in suspense. Girls love surprises."

Of course there are some who would appreciate a full-blown, star-studded engagement. These types imagine anything seen in movies and celebrity affairs — such as "having a 'Will you marry me?' sign trailing a jet, or hopping onto a balloon and proposing to her in the midst of the open air," said Tara Hadley, a sophomore pre-journalism major.

As for Katie Yoder, who got married last fall, the act of proposing must have one key element.

"Whether you choose the event to be extravagant or simple, you must maintain the tradition of getting down on one knee," Yoder said. "Let the moment illuminate unity, love and devotion."

Low-cost gifts still say 'I love you'

■ Spending quality time with a sweetheart can mean more than a box of chocolates

By Russ Fegles
For the Emerald

Items such as bouquets of roses, big boxes of chocolate and jewelry dominate Valentine's Day gift giving.

But for college students, expenses such as tuition, credit cards and rent can make holiday presents hard on the wallet. With a little creativity and thought, students can overcome these challenges to give their loved ones something from the heart without breaking the bank.

Instead of giving a material gift, students can spend some quality time with their sweethearts. "Take them somewhere and give them an experience," said Suzanne Clark, an English professor. "There are many free events on campus, such as plays at Villard Hall."

Indeed, the University area is brimming with romantic potential. A stroll by the Millrace or a bike ride in Alton Baker Park are two examples of places a student could take his or her valentine without spending a penny.

Technology can also help students channel their creativity. "A lot of people burn love-mix CDs on their CD burner for their boyfriend or girlfriend," said junior Neil Vandehey, a journalism major.

Other potential valentine uses for computers include

making cards on PageMaker or similar layout programs and sending animated greeting cards to a loved one's e-mail address from www.123greetings.com. Hand-crafted gifts are another inexpensive way to say "I love you."

David Christensen, an English major, said the EMU Craft Center provides ways to be creative on a tight budget.

"You can go there and make a pot or a bowl for your valentine, and it doesn't cost much," said Christensen, a sophomore.

The Craft Center's \$5 special classes are among the many options for crafty and thrifty students like Christensen.

With a little creativity, edible gifts can also be an inexpensive but appreciated gift. "You could cook something for your loved one, like cookies or a cake. It doesn't even have to be anything sweet," Clark said. "That might be a problem for students, though, because many of them don't have access to an oven."

Valentine's gifts don't necessarily have to be "crafted" to be treasured. Students can use their creativity to write a poem or a song, both of which cost nothing. Clark suggests that students "write a long love letter, by hand, and send it through the postal service instead of e-mail."

Perhaps the best low-cost Valentine's Day gift of all is the suggestion from sophomore Michael Washington, a psychology major: "Just tell them you love them."

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