

Craft Center helps students create holiday gifts

From ornaments to Ukrainian eggs, EMU Craft Center creations work as alternatives to store-bought presents

By Moriah Balingit
Freelance Reporter

As Christmas Muzak rings in the holiday shopping season in malls across America, students are left to ponder that annual predicament: how to get a loved one a gift they'll appreciate while maintaining the vow of poverty that college students take — mostly involuntarily.

Options in the past have ranged from "As Seen On TV" appliances to the ornament that came with the hamburger ordered during a rare finals week study break.

The EMU Craft Center offers students an alternative to these default options: hand-made gifts. The Craft Center is hosting a number of classes that may give students potential gift-giving ideas. From wooden birdhouses to paper lanterns, the gifts are limited only by a participant's creativity.

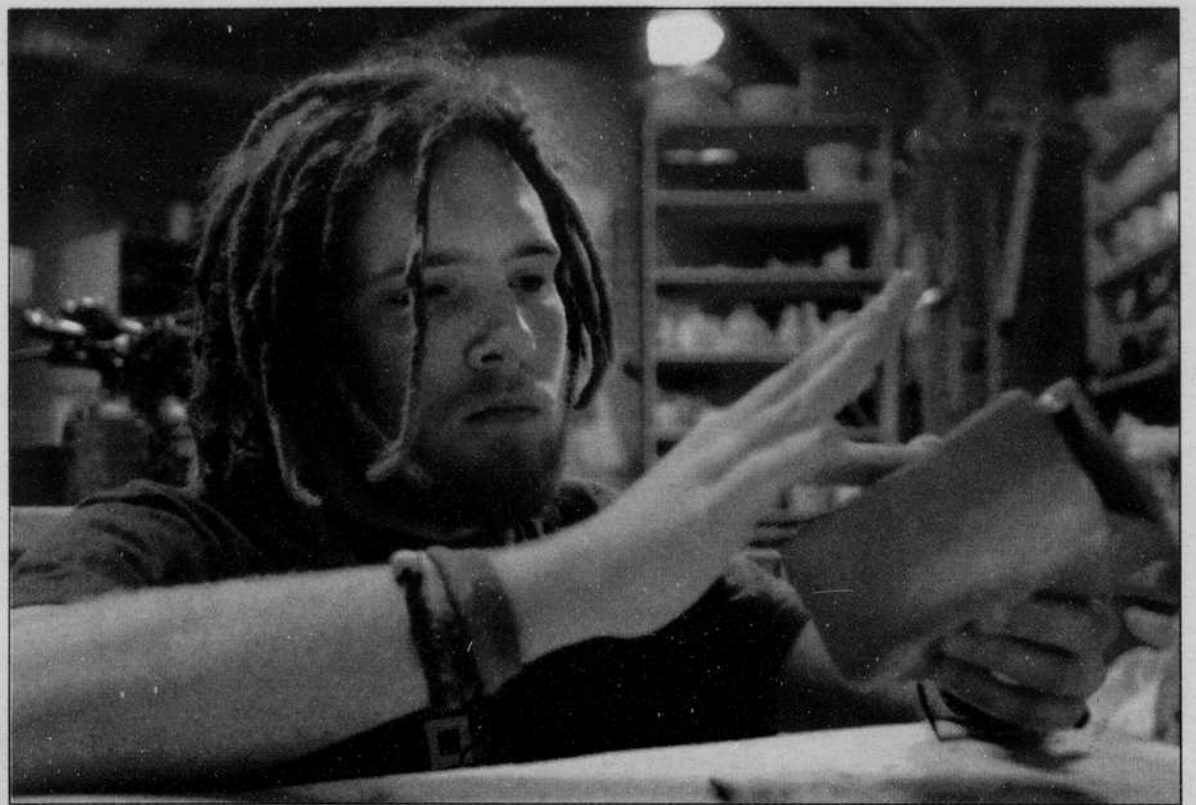
In the Polaroid Transfer Card

class, students bring in their favorite slides and transfer and manipulate the images using art paper to create personalized greeting cards. The Center also offers a Ukrainian egg painting class where students can make decorative egg ornaments. Laura Gerards, the "Craft Center Queen," who teaches the class, noted that store-bought Ukrainian eggs can cost anywhere from 30 to several hundred dollars. The class is \$24 with a term pass and \$29 without a term pass, materials included.

Special holiday classes cost between \$22 and \$36, and many of the classes provide extra materials.

The Craft Center is also open to artisans armed with term passes to make personalized gifts. Freshman Steven Sessions etched his friend's name and a goldfish in a flower vase he purchased for \$.99 to make a personalized fish bowl. Fish bowls typically cost several times as much, he said.

In addition to economic benefits, hand-made gifts offer "unique qualities that mass-produced gifts lack," Craft Center "craftator" Jeb



Tim Kupsick Freelance Photographer

Giving his gifts a personal touch, freshman Ben Cooper works on a vase for a friend at the EMU Craft Center.

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Mistletoe legends range from kissing to Christmas

The myths and stories surrounding mistletoe, or 'the kissing ball,' span several hundreds of years

By Lisa Catto
Freelance Reporter

It's unobtrusive, often hidden. Its effects sneak up on unsuspecting partygoers. Hanging above door-

ways and strung from rafters, mistletoe — that small leafy plant with tiny white berries — is one of the most recognized symbols of modern holiday celebrations.

But the use of parasitic mistletoe is not a new phenomenon; it was considered sacred to many ancient cultures.

Celtic people believed that mistletoe had healing powers. In the Celtic language, mistletoe means "all-

heal." It was thought to cure diseases, make poisons harmless and protect someone from witchcraft and ghosts, according to <http://www.christmas.com>.

Druids claimed to have visions directing them to locations where mistletoe could be found. If someone had a vision, they would dress in white robes and begin a search for the plant. If it was found, they would climb the tree and separate

the mistletoe from the branches with a golden knife.

Druids would only cut mistletoe at a particular stage of the moon at the beginning of the year. If an extended length of time elapsed without a vision, or if mistletoe fell to the ground, it was thought to be an omen that misfortune would happen, according to <http://www.botanical.com>.

In the 18th century, Sir John Colbatch published a pamphlet called

"The Treatment of Epilepsy by Mistletoe." This publication detailed the healing powers of mistletoe for epilepsy. Colbatch recommended that mistletoe leaves, as much as would cover a sixpence, be consumed in black cherry water every morning.

The 18th century English also gave the world the kissing ball — a

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