

Happy Holidays from the broke student

NICK KHATTAR
STAFF CONTRIBUTOR

So you spent your last few dollars at The Dome buying drinks for a T.A.

Now all you have is the clap and an A+ on that assignment, but no cash left for Christmas presents.

But don't worry. There are plenty of ways to pack the bottom of that fir tree.

First, root through your basement, garage or attic in search of the junk your family might have forgotten they already have.

Now this move has become pretty popular and they might be expecting it. So I'd strongly recommend you redecorate what you find.

A little coat of paint and some sprinkles on a coffee mug can go a long way. Sewing a few cotton balls to a tuque is not only stylish but also handy in case of a bloody nose.

In the unfortunate event that your parents recently had a yard sale, you're pretty well up shit creek, re-gift-wise.

But if rooting through the garbage is good enough for home decorating, why shouldn't it be good enough for festive gifts?

A week before Christmas, get your mitts on and go for a stroll.

An old bent golf club can be put in a decorative case and pawned

off as a prop from *Happy Gilmore*. A rusty box of nails with a healthy dose of glue becomes 'modern' art. Even a green garbage bag with some dirt can become 'organic potting soil' for your green-thumbed aunt.

Now for your brothers, sisters and significant other, you may have to be a bit more crafty.

Garbage won't do unless you go to NSCAD first.

You can find some decent gifts by skulking around the esteemed art college, waiting for assignments to get thrown out. Heck, why not just go nab someone's work right off the wall or out of the studio? It just might wind up seeing the light of day.

If you're not on a criminal type, you're not screwed.

Here's what you do: get some blank CDs and spend a few hours downloading every stinking bit of media you think your brother or sister will like.

The more the better to divert their attention from the fact you seriously scammed them out of a present while they spent \$100 on those new jeans for you.

For the boyfriend or girlfriend, you're going to have to get seriously crafty. Here it's all about quantity, not quality.

First, go find an old mixed tape.

Get out all your CDs and carefully make a list of songs you think he or she will like.

Record these songs to the tape.

Decorate the hell out of the tape case. This will be your saving grace.

Next, go steal one of your parents' bottles of wine (this will be essential in saving your ass) and make a fake label depicting both of you on a beach holding hands or something like that. Tape it to the bottle.

Lastly, la crème de asshole, bring your digital camera to a nearby spa/salon and snap a shot of one of their gift cards.

These are usually cheap little plastic cards without a bar code or scan strip. Take that picture home and open it up in Photoshop (Paint will work). Enlarge to the desired size. Go get some sticker paper and print it out. Find an old card, preferably with a blank white back, resembling a real card and stick the picture to it.

Abra-ka-forgery, you've got a gift card!

Wrap it all up, toss it under the tree and no one is any the wiser.

You can easily substitute money with a healthy mix of knavery, pilfering and Christmas spirit. Just make sure they drink the wine before you give them the sparkle-covered mix-tape.