

No Cash for Graduation Gifts? No Problem.

'Tis the season for weekends filled with graduation parties. But just because you're invited to a party doesn't mean you *must* bring a gift. Oftentimes a well-written note in a card is perfectly suitable. If you plan on giving a gift, consider these low-cost options:

- Send the grad off in style. If college is in the graduate's future, call the school's public relations or recruitment office to see if they'll give you promotional goodies such as mouse pads, key rings, pens and pencils. Don't forget to include required items such as a student handbook and campus map. SWEATSHIRT
- Food always works. Pack a case of Ramen noodles (a college staple) and include unique recipes to try.
- Buy a book. The new graduate will thank you for assisting him/her with the trials of term-paper writing with such gifts as *The Associated Press Stylebook* or *Lester's Complete Guide to Writing Research Papers*, or a good dictionary or thesaurus.
- Build a scrapbook. Fill a section with items that commemorates the grad's high school experience like a school newspaper, old report cards or the graduation ceremony program. Leave pages blank for college memories.
- Prepare a Homesick Emergency Kit. Place in it reminders of home such as photos, a hand-written note, local food etc. Include a disclaimer that package should only be opened under extreme feelings of homesickness.
- Help furnish their dorm/apartment. Towels, place settings and candles make for great inexpensive gifts.
- Pay for a night out on the town. Buy two movie passes or coupons for the local coffee shop. These are luxuries that a college freshman may not be able to afford.