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## Ideas for gift giving this year:

Zoom or FaceTime with an elderly or sick relative.

Do a favor for your mom or dad (or even a sibling!)

Spend time with a family member doing something they enjoy-you may learn something new about them!

Create an electronic thank you or holiday card for a teacher and let them know how much you appreciate their efforts.

Make someone breakfast in bed.

Do all of the household chores for a day.

Make a holiday card for your mailperson, trash, or recycle team and thank them for their efforts on your behalf.

## Helpful Links

For info about SAT I, II, and AP Tests go to:  
[www.collegeboard.com](http://www.collegeboard.com)

For info about ACT test go to:  
[www.act.org](http://www.act.org)

For info about test optional schools go to:  
[www.fairtest.org/university/optional](http://www.fairtest.org/university/optional)

For info about financial aid go to:  
[www.FAFSA.ed.gov](http://www.FAFSA.ed.gov)  
[www.fastweb.com](http://www.fastweb.com)

Dear Students, Family, and Colleagues:

As 2021 comes to an end, we look back on the progress so many of our students have made. Whereas many students (and their families) struggled with the virtual model of learning, the return to the classroom has brought a sense of relief and renewal. Our students have committed themselves to trying new strategies, viewing their academic experiences through a different lens, and soliciting help when they need it.

We are looking forward to the progression of this “new normal” and being a part of your student’s journey.

We wish everyone a new year filled with strength, resilience, empathy, healing, health, and respect.

*Happy Holidays!*

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## The Bike on the Back of Your Car

Planning a trip is both exciting and a huge undertaking: we have to plan what to bring, how to transport these personal items, the course of our journey, etc. What are the necessary items we need and, when our suitcases are overflowing, what belongings can we afford to leave behind?

My husband and I just returned from visiting our older son who is away at college. Being the adventurous types, we opted to **drive** the 10.5-hour journey. The fact that we needed to bring our son’s bike with us further sealed our decision to traverse this semi-cross-country venture by car. Extra precautions were taken to ensure the bike was securely fastened to the bike rack and to make sure the rack was properly attached to the sedan. Straps were pulled, bungee cords were wrapped around the bike frame and properly connected to strategic points on the bike. The stoppers and braces on the bike rack were checked....we were ready to go!

The winds were stronger than we had anticipated and as we barreled down the Pennsylvania Turnpike, the right side of the bike disappeared from the view of the rearview mirror, quickly followed by my husband’s ominous cry of, “Oh no!” We pulled over to the side of the road and as the traffic whizzed by, shaking the car, Mark inspected the damage. I thought for sure the bike had been destroyed, but luckily, it never hit the road or the car. He adjusted the rack to a more upright position to compensate for the lift the wind was creating underneath the bike as we drove. Needless to say, it was an unsettling

[www.finaid.org](http://www.finaid.org)

For college search info go to:

[www.collegenavigator.gov](http://www.collegenavigator.gov)

[www.collegeprowler.com](http://www.collegeprowler.com)

To take a virtual tour of college campuses go to:

[www.youniversitytv.com](http://www.youniversitytv.com)

[www.youvisit.com](http://www.youvisit.com)

To learn about Colleges That Change Lives go to:

[www.ctcl.org](http://www.ctcl.org)

**Keeping on Track: Seniors:** Finish up your college admissions essays and your Common App. Continue to work hard in class and enjoy your extra-curricular activities.

**Juniors:** How are you holding up? Take this year one step at a time. Work on those extra-curricular activities. Find a passion and run with it: attend club meetings virtually; arrange clothing and food drives; volunteer to help the newly immigrated Afghan refugees. Be creative and innovative. Think outside of the box. Get your work done on time and to the best of your ability. If you plan to take the SAT or the ACT, be sure to practice your skills. Take advantage of practice tests. Schedule campus visits and be mindful of COVID protocols on each campus.

## TEST UPDATES

ACT: Here is the link for the latest ACT information: [www.act.org](http://www.act.org)

SAT: Here is the link for the latest SAT information: [www.collegeboard.com](http://www.collegeboard.com)

***Pay it Forward: Do you know someone who is struggling with the shift to virtual classroom learning?? Send them this newsletter or forward us their contact information. We want to help!***

## Contact Us

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journey as we anticipated the bike might come off the back of the car at any point during our 725-plus-mile journey, but we made it with the bike intact!

In reflecting on this experience, I realized this story was the perfect analogy for our journey through life. Sometimes we have to ride with the “bike” on the back of our “car”...it’s unavoidable. What matters is how you attach this large object to your car-is it secured? Are you using strong belts and bungee cords to ensure the bike doesn’t move during your ride? Have you accounted for all variables (like wind shear or the lift) you will encounter from the winds that day? For example, during those weeks when you have two tests, one paper, a project, and a sports game all in the span of one week, that is a hefty load; you can’t do anything to lessen it. But you can work ahead to break down the work, so you have plenty of time to study, meet with your teachers to review material, work with your friends to work in a study group, chunk the paper into smaller, manageable pieces, etc.

In other circumstances, maybe you can choose to carry your “bike” differently. If we had had an SUV, we probably would have transported the bike inside of the car to avoid the risk of it falling off the back of the car. Similarly, in life, there may be more than one way to complete tasks or to solve the problem you are facing. Perhaps speaking with your teachers will allow for an extended due date or a modification of an assignment. Or maybe you break up the assignment into smaller pieces among friends and regroup to put it all together once each of you has completed your respective task.

And then, there is always the option to leave the “bike” behind. On a given week, you were planning to meet up with friends from camp and travel together to see the rest of your camp bunk in New York. However, you are feeling worn out from the week’s workload and you know the following week will be a little less hectic, so you decide to postpone your trip, rest up, and see your friends the following week. In this case, the “bike” is set aside until you are in a better frame of mind to address it.

The bike does not always have to go on the back of the car. Throughout the course of our daily lives, we all make choices about how we fulfil our obligations. We decide what we need: what is **required** versus what are the luxury items. What can we pare down so we can reduce the load we will bear? Once we have decided on the course we will travel, we have to ensure we carry our belongings carefully, seeing to it that all items are properly stored and attached. By thinking through these aspects of your journey, you will ensure yourself of a successful experience.

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## Joke of the Month:

Two guys walk into a bar; the third one ducks.

