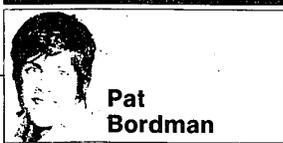


# Check out craft classes before you pay for them



**Pat Bordman**

## Here's a toy just for fun

A toy is for a child's amusement, imagination and entertainment.

When a child turns to a toy because he finds it pleasurable, any other skills it teaches will follow with no effort and with no pressure.

We don't need to couch every toy selection with rationalizations for its use. We don't need to legitimize toy play. We don't need excuses like good eye-hand coordination. Nor do we need pre-conditions like small muscle development, or high-blown purposes like indoor exercise. We need no motive, no justification, no reason at all.

Call this toy the "Nuts to You" toy, and enjoy it for no reason at all. (Of course, it will do all of the things that we don't need to worry about it's doing.)

There are at least two versions. For the first, cut a milk carton in half and save the lower half. Tie a nut, or other heavy object such as a Tinkertoy piece or a small rock, in the middle of a length of string that is about 14 inches long. Secure the string to the lower portion of the milk carton by punching a hole on two opposite sides and tying the string through the holes.

The longer the string, the harder it is to catch the nut in the milk carton. The shorter the string, the easier it is. Gauge the length of string by the ability level of your child.

The second version uses a five-ounce paper drinking cup, string and something a bit lighter, such as a washer, as the object to be caught. The construction is the same.

The object is to catch the nut in the container, by holding the container and swinging the nut up and into it. With a bit of practice your child will be saying "nuts to you," politely, of course.



It's fun to bounce the nut into the paper carton. (Photo by Pat Bordman)



the lively needle

**Mary Kay Davis**

The hairdresser was scrubbing my hair and talking about his mother's needlepoint course. Stds ran into my ears as I heard about how expensive it was — lots of gadgets were required — and how she loved it but couldn't afford it.

It's time to talk turkey about craft classes and how to choose a good one. When you sign up for any class, you pledge two very important elements — your money and your time. How can you be sure that you're making the best of both of them?

Do a little simple arithmetic. How many students will be in your class and how long will it take? Divide the bodies into the hours and see how much of the teacher's time will be spent on you.

THE FOLLOWING figures come from my classes at the Henry Ford Museum and depend greatly on what I'm pitching and my particular teaching style, so don't hold other teachers to this format. But if you discover that you're very much on the low side, I'd take a good, hard look at the class.

For a four-hour workshop, I must have approximately 10 minutes per student or it all falls apart. This presupposes teacher organization and experience, plus lots of written directions for you, the student, to take home.

In a workshop of eight or 16 hours, I need 20 or 40 minutes per student. Time has expanded, but so has the size and complexity of what is being taught.

My full, beginning course needs almost an hour per student. Beginners need all the help they can get and time must be available to give it to them.

WHAT SHOULD you look for and expect in a craft class?

- Good light. See where it's being taught if you can. The best teacher works with hands tied when the class can't see what they're doing.
- Limited class size. When a teacher is paid by the number of warm bodies present, there's an understandable temptation to stuff classes beyond the point where they're teachable.
- Teacher organization. This is never more apparent than at the first class meeting. You must get materials and he/she must get basic skills across.
- Individual attention. When a student becomes confused, the teacher must notice it first before he can solve the problem.
- Directions for completing your project and making it into a finished product. Telling you to take it to a finisher or a framer is a cop out.
- How much extra stuff will you be required to buy? Can you get it on the open market or only through the teacher?
- Consumerism. Be sure that you learn what materials are good, which are bad, and how you can spot the difference once the teacher has gone home.

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