

'Tis better to purchase than to receive?

By Dionne Searcey
Staff Reporter

The University of Nebraska-Lincoln's spring graduates may have a hard time holding on to extra cash if they take advantage of loan plans designed for them at local businesses.

Recent graduates tend to "pop in" to local car dealerships and check out the merchandise, said Bruce Gregerson, sales manager at Dean Bros. Lincoln, Mercury.

And if new grads can show their diploma and proof of employment, they can look into special finance plans, Gregerson said.

Ford offers finance programs that could give the qualifying graduate a \$400 rebate or 120 days of deferred payment on a new car.

Patrick Combs, general sales manager at Rhoden Nissan/Volvo, said Nissan offers a similar 90-day deferred payment program or special prices on new cars.

He said college graduates like to start careers with new cars.

Gregerson agreed and said most grads won't settle for their undependable used cars that barely lasted through college.

"Graduates are starting out on a new job and need reliable transportation," he said. "They have a load of

things to worry about. They have to relocate. They don't need headaches."

New grads like sporty, two-doored cars, Gregerson said, and tend to pay about \$10,000 for a new one.

But if graduates can't stretch their money far enough to make a major purchase, they can invest in jewelry.

Watches are popular items that grads reward themselves with, said Todd White, assistant manager at Brodkey's.

And the new grad can buy a \$200 gold chain or diamond ring as a reminder of past college achievements, White said.

"Graduation is once in a lifetime. Graduates want something that will be around 40 years from now," he said. "A diamond lasts a lifetime. . . It's the most durable and most precious stone. It's a symbol of a graduate's new-found status."

White said grads also treat themselves to popular stones such as sapphires, topaz and rubies because of their durability.

Along the more practical lines, some recent graduates check into buying a stereo system, Jim Krysl, manager of Stereo West, said.

Graduates tend to buy entire stereo systems, he said, ranging in price from \$2,000 to \$3,000.

Tradition lasts in hard times

By Wendy Navratil
Staff Reporter

Despite the recession, tradition continues to prevail over cost in dictating the selection of gifts for graduates, according to Lincoln businesses.

"I don't think the economy has affected (gift-buying) at all," said R.J. Lucas, assistant manager of Gateway Sartor Hamann. Most retailers as well as the CRC Computer Center in the Nebraska Union agreed that this May's graduates would fare as well as past graduates in terms of the gifts they received.

Pen sets, small ornamental clocks, gold chains for both men and women and strings of pearls were among the items Lucas said were being purchased by parents and friends of May graduates.

"Watches are probably our best seller — they're very traditional; and a lot of times colored stone jewelry is a big seller. A lot of (graduates) don't go with 'class rings,'" Lucas said.

A newer tradition in graduate gift-buying may be forming in the

purchase of computers for graduates.

Becky Kalinski, manager of the CRC shop, said sales of both IBM and Macintosh computers increase at this time of year.

"Our biggest time is the end of April, first of May. We get a lot of phone calls from parents who say they'll be coming in with their students," she said.

CRC can sell computers only to faculty members, degree-seeking students and staff members of the university, Kalinski said. For this reason, parents wishing to purchase a computer for their son or daughter must bring the student and his or her valid university identification card with them when they go to the shop.

"People are looking to spend from about \$1,000 to \$2,000. That's what they (IBM and Macintosh) are trying to get the prices down to. Because all the prices are dropping, we've seen increased sales," Kalinski said.

If tradition holds, however, many parents and students will opt to do their graduate gift-buying at the

bookstores rather than spending hundreds or thousands of dollars on a gift.

Karen Manning, a University Bookstore sales clerk, said that it was still too early to tell what students would buy their friends for graduation.

"Students are still worrying about their homework and finals," Manning said. "But usually, little tiny figurines, cards and stuffed animals do well. Russell Stover candies also usually go well."

Jan Roth, floor supervisor of the gift department at Nebraska Bookstore, said any type of memorabilia, as well as gag-type gifts and mugs, were popular gifts for graduates.

Melody Aude, supervisor of the Big Red department at Nebraska Bookstore, said parents and students were buying everything from glassware sets and class rings to boxer shorts and T-shirts.

"It surprises me . . . parents have been coming in and saying their child hasn't ever gotten a sweatshirt or T-shirt, so they have to get them now, before they graduate."

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