

Registries widen options to make gift giving easier

By PAULA LAVIGNE
Senior News Editor

Newlyweds who live in fear of four breadmakers, two Salad Shooters and a china pattern of Barney and Friends have a better option than potluck gift giving.

Gift registries can make it easier for couples to tell their friends what they want, how many, what color and whether or not they make that much bread.

Most registries are computerized. And online registries at Younkers, Dillard's and Target can be accessed nationwide, so your friends in Iowa can figure out what will look good in your Lincoln home.

Connie Snyder, wedding registry consultant at Dillard's in Gateway Mall, said registering was a wedding tradition.

"Guests coming to the wedding want to get something for the couple," she said, "and it's not so much, 'This is what you have to buy me,' but suggestions and ideas."

Snyder said Dillard's can register 60 to 75 couples per month.

Deb O'Hanlon, assistant manager at Younkers' Gateway store, said the store makes about \$5,000 of business off each couple that registers.

Registries can mean big money for stores, but the service is free to couples.

Gift registries at Younkers and Dillard's stores work much the same way. Associates suggest that the couples come with a list of items they need and then spend time browsing to add items they want. The couple can either go it on their own or enlist a consultant to help select items and enter them into the database.

O'Hanlon added that the job should not belong only to the bride. The groom should have input.

"Maybe the bride picks out a cup and the guy doesn't like the way it feels with his fingers," she said.

Registering at Target's Club Wedd is a little different. Renee Arends, cashier supervisor at the Target store on 48th and R streets, said Target's database is also online and linked to stores nationwide.

It differs because instead of writing items down and having an associate enter them into the computer, couples take scanners through the store and scan the items they want. An associate then enters the scanner information into the computer, and the couple has a list 15 minutes later.

"I've seen some people with eight pages and I've seen some people with two pages," Arends said.

When the guests buy something off the list, their purchase is entered into the computer — like the systems at Younkers and Dillard's. This shows other guests how many items have been bought and prevents duplications.

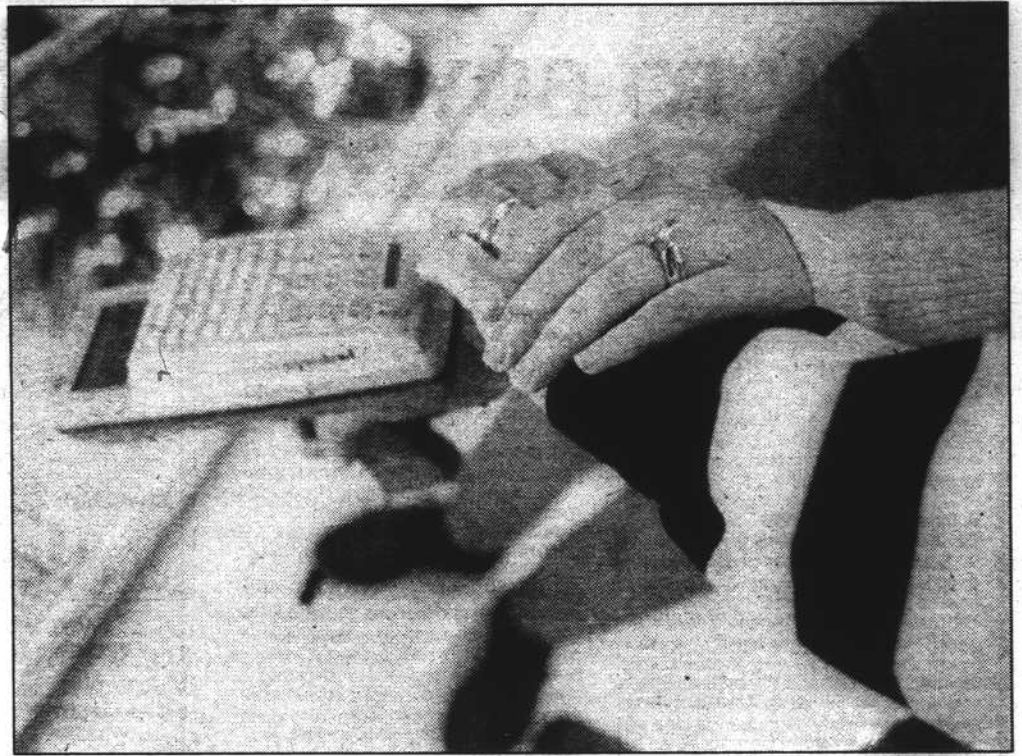


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"It saves them time from having to exchange things," Arends said. "Some people get three blenders."

And blenders don't even top the list of most popular items. Both O'Hanlon and Snyder said many couples already have the necessities and are looking for the "fun" or decorative items — such as breadmakers, ice-cream makers, cappuccino/espresso machines and pasta makers.

And even if something should go awry and the Mr. and Mrs. end up with an extra pasta maker or two, gift registries also make it easier to return or exchange gifts.

Target's policy allows the couple to return the gift without the receipt; the store will give them cash back as long as the gift was bought from the registry list.

Dillard's allows a full refund with the receipt or a lifelong merchandise voucher if returned without the receipt.

Younkers offers a gift receipt — a receipt without the price printed on it — so guests can include it with the gift without feeling self-conscious, and the couple can return it without a hassle.

And if couples think the wedding registry — and their marriage — works, the stores offer baby and anniversary registries as well.

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