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Newer registries shower couples with practicalities

BY AMANDA SCHINDLER
 Staff Reporter

Meant to stave off the hassle of returning duplicated or unwanted gifts, gift registries have always been convenient. Now the gifts available through registries are becoming practical, too.

Today, registries promising a wide range of practical gift choices are challenging traditional gift registries found in large department stores.

For instance, through Target's Club Wedd gift registry, couples can register for anything from grills to movies, said Candace Slocum, head cashier for Target, 333 N. 48th St.

"(Club Wedd) gives our guests an opportunity to register for more practical items," she said. "Some people can't afford china, and wedding guests usually have such a wide range of spending limits."

Even the larger department stores concede that gift registration has gotten more realistic over the past few years.

"Couples are being more practical," said Denise Koci, a J.C. Penney Gift Registry Consultant in Gateway Mall. "They're registering for what they'll be using right now."

Small appliances like toasters and coffee makers have taken over as the most popular items, Slocum said. China, flatware and stemware were the most popular 30 years ago, she said.

About 450 couples register at J.C. Penney each year, she said.

Prospective brides at Sunday's 16th annual Wedding Fair at the Cornhusker Hotel agreed practical gifts are becoming more popular.

"Things are more casual nowadays," said Ann Hanson, of Table Rock. "It's a sign of the times, of a more casual lifestyle."

Her daughter, Beth Hanson of Bancroft, said it reflected changes in family structure, where both husband and wife work full time.

"Most couples will both be working now," she said, "whereas, back then, the woman was usually a housewife."

Laura Slaughter of Grand Island said '90s brides are more likely to shrug off customs.

"Couples now are not afraid to break tradition," she said.

Her daughter Heidi

Coleman, who will be married in May 1999, said her most important gifts would be pots, pans and towels - "things we need."

"We won't use the stemware and china and crystal," she said. "They're like a little bonus."

Some couples learn this the hard way, said one Dillard's employee.

"A lot of people register for china and come back 10 years later and say they haven't used it once," the employee said.

At an average cost of \$40 per place setting, that's an expensive mistake, she said. She recommended couples "don't register for anything too frilly."

Linda Peck-Allan, whose niece, Hillary Peck, will be married in November, said there was no longer a need for nice china because "we don't do formal entertaining like we used to."

When Peck-Allen remarried a few years ago, she said she registered for fun, usable gifts.

"I got Super-Soakers," she said. "Frou-frou out; practicality in."



DAWN DIETRICH/DN
 MODEL TIM LEE straightens his tie before showing his tuxedo to prospective grooms Sunday during the Wedding Fair at the Cornhusker Hotel, 333 S. 13th St. Lee modeled the tuxedo for Holway Formal Wear, 1228 P St.

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