

WOMEN NOW

Useful gifts best for engagements

By THE ASSOCIATED PRESS
Newlyweds are apt to have numerous gatherings to show off their new home. They invite one clutch of guests after another to put that new china and silver to use and to share their happiness with others.

Engagement and wedding gifts to aid them do their hosting with flair are a long today's most welcome presents. Fortunately, the stores are full of witty and useful items in all price ranges, dedicated to the pleasure of entertaining.

Here are some gift suggestions, including a few from a newlywed hostess who recently did her share of nose pressing against shop windows.

High on her list of possibilities is a see-through ice bucket with a dark plexiglass dome. And she feels an inexpensive but thoughtful gift for the dishwasher-less couple is a supply of clear plastic disposable glasses in highball and old fashioned sizes.

These can be found in smart smoky shades.

The newest decanters are amusing and arty. Some are cylindrical, some are stemmed and have long, narrow necks, some have spouts. If you'd like, add contents with top status for filling the decanters—such as imported Polish vodka to gurgie icy cold from a tall, skinny, lidded pitcher. Or introduce young sophisticates to that low-proof aperitif, ruby-red Campari, so popular in Rome and Paris, which makes an art object out of the new teardrop decanter with silver handle and flush-set spout.

Gag gifts are good for a laugh and then get tossed out. So stick with useful gadgets like a cartridge-propelled plunger that pops out wine corks. Consider a small brass or chrome wine rack for the budding gourmets; an encyclopedia of wines to help their choices, or a lavishly illustrated party cookbook.

Laws discriminate against women; marriage becomes unequal union

By SUE DAVIS

Battalion Women's Editor

The days when a man went out, clubbed a woman over the head and dragged her home with him as if she were a sack of potatoes are long gone. Or are they?

The methods of obtaining a mate have been greatly refined, to be sure, but the wife's status has yet to rise above that of a sack of potatoes. In most states, a woman has no more rights than a piece of furniture.

More than 1,000 state laws discriminate against women's rights to property, inheritance, guardianship, management of earnings and control of a family's wealth — with the married woman their principal victim. Obviously, marriage is an unequal union.

Laws which apply to marriage have been constantly modified in the past 100 years. The result is two types of laws which govern wives' rights. These are the "common law," which contains the basic feudal concepts, and the supposedly more enlightened "community property" approach.

Forty-two states use the common law concept which states that during marriage, the income and property acquired by each spouse remains separately owned. The number of working wives is definitely rising, but most still depend on their husbands' incomes.

The community property idea sounds good in theory. Everything, including property and earnings, acquired during the marriage is jointly owned by

both the husband and wife. This only conceals a catch, however. In

seven of the eight community property states, the husband alone has the right to control and manage the joint estate. Even though the wife contributes to the family income, she has no say as to how the income can be used.

Texas is the only state that is completely fair. The law reads: "each spouse shall have sole management, control and disposition of that community property which he or she would have owned if a single person."

It further states that if property owned by one spouse is combined with that of the other spouse, it is subject to joint man-

agement, unless otherwise ar-

ranged by the partners. All the laws are not against the wife, however. She has no duty to contribute to the family income. If a marriage ends in divorce, the law becomes a strong protector of the wife's right to receive support from her former husband, unless the wife is the "guilty" party.

The law makes stern demands on the husband. Even if the former wife is independently wealthy, he must still pay her what the court demands. A divorced woman must be paid support that will reflect the life style she had been accustomed to while she was married.

A couple cannot remove the ob-

ligation a husband has to support his wife by a private agreement. These agreements are made void by what the law calls "public policy." Exactly what this means is that the courts have the final say in such matters.

Stacked in favor of the husband are the "crimes of passion," murder or manslaughter provoked by adultery. The law of the frontier is not dead; it is alive and well in Texas. Defense to such a crime is based on the "unwritten law." On this basis, a husband who kills his wife's lover has a complete defense. A wife who kills her husband's mistress has none.

Besides these discriminations, wives have another barrier to equal rights. Wives who wish to set up their own businesses must often go to court to prove their fitness. This law seems to state that a woman is both physically and mentally inferior to men once they marry.

In 1944, the Florida Supreme Court summarized the situation: "... a woman's responsibilities and faculties remain intact from age of maturity until she finds her mate; whereupon incompetency seizes her and she needs protection in an extreme degree. Upon the advent of widowhood she is reinvested with all her capabilities which had been dor-

mant during her marriage, only to lose them again upon remarriage."

Women are discriminated against in their jobs, too. The protective labor laws were originally designed to prevent exploitation of women by their employers. They are now being used as a cover to put working women at a disadvantage to men.

If the law provides for additional facilities for women, such as restrooms, an employer is discouraged by the expense. Some states restrict the weights women can lift. These are usually unrealistic because of the heavy work women do at home. The number of hours a woman can work in a day and a week are often set by law, therefore depriving women of earning more money through overtime.

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