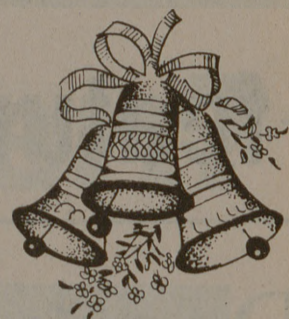




Weddings

Battalion special section focuses on how to make them memorable



Here comes the bride, there go the dollars

United Press International
NEW YORK — It will come as no surprise to anyone who ever has been a bride that more than 14 percent of all toasters sold in the United States are intended for newlyweds.

Without weddings and wedding presents, 40 percent of the nation's warming trays and food warmers would go unsold, according to *Modern Bride* magazine, which makes it a business to know such things. The makers of waffle irons would see sales skid 43 percent. The bottom would fall out of the electric frying pan business.

The bridal market looks particularly juicy to retailers these days. More people than ever are getting married — and money is no object to them.

"Despite the economy, young couples planning their weddings are spending like there's no tomorrow," said Bill Heaton, president of Bridal Expos.

Experts say couples planning marriages in the 1980s are thinking like Joanne Kelly, 23,

who expects to spend about \$10,000 on her October wedding on Long Island.

Kelly and her fiance, John Sullivan, are inviting 250 people to a sit-down dinner following a formal wedding at her parish church. Kelly said they will pay the costs themselves — a trend wedding consultants are noticing across the country.

Last year nearly 2.5 million couples entered the \$16.2-billion-a-year bridal market — six months of hyper-purchasing immediately before and after the wedding.

The number of marriages each year has been climbing steadily. After a slide in the mid-1970s, the number of weddings jumped 12 percent in a five-year period. The trend seems likely to continue, given the fact that the baby boom generation is at the marrying age, and more than 90 percent of all Americans say they regard the married state as the preferred way of life.

The increasing number of weddings means more gifts will

be given. The wedding shower has become an increasingly pricey affair, with the bride-to-be receiving food processors and microwave ovens instead of the old lacey underwear.

But the popularity of one pricey item — china and silver — has fallen. The tableware industry prefers the thinking of Cheryl Vollmer, 19, whose parents have volunteered to provide china and silverware as a wedding present.

If such expensive tableware does not arrive as a wedding gift, chances are it probably will not be bought at all. Such magazines as *Modern Bride* are full of ads for china and crystal, and many manufacturers also advertise in periodicals that cater to the bridal magazine reader of tomorrow.

More than 14 percent of all tableware is intended for the 2 percent of American households classified as the bridal market, researchers say. That includes a third of all sterling or silverplate flatware sold, 15 per-

cent of all china and 64 percent of such stainless steel ware as teapots, bowls and pitchers.

There also is the wedding itself, generating business for dressmakers, tuxedo renters, catering firms, florists and orchestras.

Many experts say the trend is back to lavish, old-fashioned ceremonies.

It can cost a king's ransom, of course.

The wedding dress, an item that may be worn once in a lifetime, costs more than any other piece of clothing the bride ever buys.

Terry Dufka, director of wedding gift services at Carson Pirie Scott in Chicago, says the average dress sold by her department store chain costs \$450-\$600. The price tag can, of course, go much higher.

A saleswoman at Neiman-Marcus in Dallas said the store's wedding gowns begin at around \$350, "and we can take you up to \$7,000-\$10,000."



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