



The banner features a woman's portrait on the left, the text 'FREE CHECKING' and 'FREE GIFT*' in large blue letters, and the ESL logo on the right. Below the main text, it says 'Stacey, ESL Member' and '*For a free gift, a minimum deposit for new checking accounts is \$50.' The ESL logo includes the text 'ESL Federal Credit Union' and 'It's banking, only better.'

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Anniversaries: Gifts by the numbers

When it comes to presents, let the year be your guide

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Staff writer

To celebrate their first wedding anniversary, Lyndsay and Jeff Chapin knew they wanted to do something special. The Chili couple also wanted their gifts to be based on a traditional list of anniversary gifts based on the number of years a couple has been married.

So, for their paper anniversary, the Chapins decided to give each other airline tickets.

"I wanted it to be something we could share together and something that we could do together," Lyndsay, 26, says. "Since we love to travel and make memories together, this was the best idea to go with."

The couple will spend their Sept. 17 anniversary in New York City.

The tradition of giving particular gifts on certain wedding anniversaries dates back to 19th-century Europe, says Joyce Artinian, spokeswoman for the wedding planning Web site www.WedAlert.com.

As civilizations began to measure time according to the cycles of the moon and seasons, Artinian says, people began to acknowledge annual events such as birthdays and anniversaries.

As the tradition evolved, it was mostly milestone years such as 5, 10, 25 and 50 that were celebrated with gifts, she says, which tended to be extravagant — a husband giving his wife a silver garland or wreath for their 25th year, for example.

It has expanded into a list of annual suggestions akin to an extended registry. For each of the first 15 years, there is a recommended type of gift, then suggestions for anniversaries every five years after that.

"It's really gotten sort of carried away," Artinian says. "Now you have all of these different categories that have expanded to all of these different things."

The gift list can be a challenge. After paper for the first year comes cotton and then leather. Tin, iron and wool are also on the list. It gets easier with year 12 (silk or linen).

A modern version of the list begins with more functional gifts — clocks and china for the first two years — and leads to more extravagant items — gold jewelry for the 14th year and diamonds for the 30th.

Lauren Kunz, owner of Tessellations Gift Boutique in Pittsford, says customers lean more toward buying a personal gift for anniversaries.

"Things for the home, things they can enjoy together: a picnic basket with gourmet food," Kunz says, listing some ideas she's helped customers come up with.

The gift givers aren't just the brides and grooms, she adds. Family, friends, members of the bridal party all come in looking for something different.

Kunz says she's sold things such as picture frames for a collage, serving trays and tea sets for couples. She also does a lot of gifts specifically for the bride, such as a basket of pampering products, and a necklace or charm of wedding bells for a bracelet or keychain.

The Chapins credit their desire to stick with tradition to growing up in old-fashioned families and a little superstition.

For their wedding, Lyndsay wore something old, something new, something borrowed and something blue; so it was only natural that she incorporate the traditional anniversary list into her life, for "good luck."

Jeff, 28, says he wasn't aware of the gift list but didn't shy away from using it as a guide.

"It's almost like a challenge to follow each thing each year," he says. "Plus it might be a good way for me to remember I have an anniversary," he jokes.

The couple will also carry on another tradition for their first anniversary — eating the top of their wedding cake.

"I may take it on the plane with me," Lyndsay says. "It's not the same if you eat it the day before or the day after."

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Other ideas

Not into giving paper or aluminum? Try your hand at these more up-to-date suggestions:

First: Clocks.

Second: China.

Third: Crystal, glass.

Fourth: Appliances.

Fifth: Silverware.

10th: Diamond jewelry.

15th: Watches.

20th: Platinum.

25th: Sterling silver.

50th: Gold.

See complete lists of traditional and modern gifts at

www.findgift.com/Anniversary-Table/.

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