

Regift:

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stuff they can't afford," said Kim McGrigg, spokeswoman for Money Management International.

In today's cash-strapped and environmentally conscious world, regifting is becoming more accepted, McGrigg said.

A push toward practicality and eco-friendly living make Wendee Swanson a fan of the practice.

As a hairstylist, Swanson, owner of Nicos Bella Salon & Spa in Camas, frequently gets bottles of wine as gifts from clients. It's a thoughtful gesture, but she doesn't drink.

"I get 30 or 40 bottles a year, so I regift them," said Swanson, 33. She doesn't advertise when she regifts items, but she isn't ashamed to admit she does it either. Swanson usually uses the hand-me-down wine to regifting a gift chosen specifically for a particular recipient.

Good intentions are key to regifting, Swanson added.

"It's good for the environment, but you have to find the right person to give it to," she said, encouraging people to regift items they know friends and family will use, not simply as a way to foist off unwanted goods or scrounge up an 11th-hour present.

Sometimes nice gifts just don't suit their original recipient's needs and style, and those items can make great regifting candidates.

That's something Clark Crawford discovered after

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lege friend of mine regifted a gift to us as a wedding present. The gift was from her wedding, and the only way we knew that she regifted it to us was because she forgot to take the wedding card out of the box (from her wedding) before she wrapped the gift and gave it to us. It took everything I had to not ask her to thank Mr. and Mrs. _____ for the gift when I sent her my thank-you note.

—Susanne McGinnis, 47, Ridgefield

No. 1 rule: Look in the box before you wrap it! Our sister-in-law gave my husband an empty box two years ago. We were

all pretty surprised, but she didn't seem concerned. Regifting is OK — just be sure there's really a gift in the box.

—Carol Rose, 64, Swanton, Ore.

Regifting brings back one of the best memories of my youth. It has nothing to do with hurt feelings or insensitivity, but everything to do with our mother's very special recycled gift to three young daughters.

I'm sure money was tight in the late '60s and it was difficult to buy new toys for four children. Although we were old enough to be wise to the tradition of Santa, we were unaware of mom's kinship to Santa's elves. Somehow, during all of the baking, decorating and preparing for

Christmas, she found time to secretly fashion gift and shipping labels so that no one would suspect her intentions.

Oh, the joy we three girls felt as we raced down the stairs to see what under the tree the family faces of my young step-siblings had new green Barbie dolls and hot, red boxer's Connie and Vicki's Wendy among the mountain snow globes. Outside each doll box several outfits and soft flannel night gowns made from fabric remnants from mom's sewing drawer.

That Christmas morning our "regifted" presents didn't seem almost as good as gifts as the love we saw in our mother's eyes.

—Suzanne Swanson, 47, La Grange

someone else," she said.

If McNeill receives a present she really can use, she'll donate it to charity rather than wrap it up and give it to someone else.

McNeill is right to be wary of regifting, said money manager Jay Wosner, founder of the business and social ethics training firm Protocol Enterprises and author of "Just Ask

REGIFTING VIEWS

Money Management International, a nonprofit that provides consulting firm, surveyed 1,748 people nationwide to gauge the public's attitude on regifting. Here's what the 2007 survey found.

■ 78 percent of what they have regifted is not a regifted gift. 68 percent of those who do regifted regifted 1 to 4 items in 2006.

■ Of the 10 percent of people who do regifting, 60 percent regifted more than once. 25 percent regifted during the previous year to family, friends, and 14 percent regifted to the general public.

■ 42 percent of people who regifted say they would like to see something to make it all or go.

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■ Only two percent of people who regifted say they don't care if they receive a regift. Twenty-eight percent said they'd never get a regift, and 5 percent don't know if they'd be happy to get a regift. 9 percent said they'd be annoyed, 6 percent said they'd be disappointed and 2 percent would be angry.

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"A gift is supposed to be a well-thought-out item you bought for someone special," said Dallas, Texas-based "Woman 40." "There's nothing great that can come from regifting."

MADE ANN ALBERTSON over 40 years of experience in the field of gift giving. She is the author of "The Gift of Giving" and "The Gift of Receiving."



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REGIFTING DOS AND DON'TS

Some experts suggest being upfront when regifting, but many people feel more comfortable passing off unwanted items as new. If you decide to attempt clandestine regifting, here are some tips that could help you and the recipient of your recycled present avoid potential embarrassment and hurt feelings.

■ **Do** regift unused items that aren't personalized, customized, one-of-a-kind or homemade. Candles, bottles of wine and household gadgets are good bets.

■ **Do** keep in mind that regifts have a shelf life. If you have to dust something off, then it's too

old to be regifted. Only regift new items in good condition.

■ **Do** consider presentation. Buy fresh wrapping paper and a new card, and make sure the item doesn't contain old gift tags or other telltale signs of regifting.

■ **Don't** regift something just to clean house or scrounge up a last-minute present. Make sure it's something you think the recipient will enjoy.

■ **Don't** regift a gift card that's been partially used. Presenting a friend with a gift card that has a balance of \$89.95 will expose you as a regifter. Also, consider checking with the store

to make sure your name wasn't entered into the computer system when the original giver purchased the card.

■ **Don't** regift a present to the person who originally gave it to you, or to anyone who travels in same circles as he or she does.

■ **Don't** forget that a regift is still a gift. If you find yourself on the receiving end of a hand-me-down present, keep in mind that the majority of people who regift do so with good intentions.

Source: Kim McGrigg, Money Management International at regiftable.com