

HONEYMOON COUPLE RETURNS TO CITY

BY [NEIL STEINBERG](#) Sun-Times Columnist

Gladys Anderson has a sharp eye.

"There were 24 people on the stairs," she said, after I sat down with her and her husband, Roy, at the Palmer House Hilton this week.

She was describing the royal welcome -- more than 100 hotel employees lined up to greet them -- the couple received when checking in.

The Palmer House Hilton, in one of those charming quirks that all great hotels must have, invites anybody who honeymooned there more than 50 years ago -- and has an original receipt to prove it -- to stay at the hotel at the original rate, which in the Andersons' case was \$7.15 a night in August 1943.

We sat in the lobby chatting, the Andersons sipping champagne (demurely sipping, I should add, lest their friends back in Schenectady, N.Y., suspect the couple, who met at Lutheran youth group, came to the city and went on a spree).

Mr. Anderson, 91, who served in the U.S. Navy before a career at General Electric, alluded to a stamp on their receipt reminding guests to return the keys, which were made of brass, a scarce commodity.

"It shows the intensity of the country at war," he said.

Mrs. Anderson, 88, still had the receipt due to a bride's book assembled for her by her friend, Bernis Allen of Rockford.

I asked the couple if they planned to go out during their stay.

"Maybe I shouldn't say this," said Mrs. Anderson, lightly touching her husband's arm. "We don't usually go out at night anymore."

Sixty-six years of marriage is no small accomplishment. Is there a secret?

"We listen to each other and we treat each other with dignity and respect," said Mr. Anderson. "I think it's important we assign various tasks to the one who can do it best -- she's best at managing money and does that . . . and everything else."

"He is good at repairing things that are broken," Mrs. Anderson elaborated. "He does a lot more with the computer than I do. I have a lot more things to do than to sit in front of a computer."

For instance? Gardening.

Mr. Anderson -- who spent his career in satellite technology and remembers when computers held one bit of information on each small iron ring -- is concerned that people have become overly fond of their communications devices.

"When we went camping, we'd forget about work, forget about everything for a week," he said. "Now,

nobody seems to ever relax or to get away from their responsibilities."

"If it isn't the computer, it's the cell phone," added Mrs. Anderson. "Everybody has to stay in touch."

"Really, I don't think it makes people happier," said Mr. Anderson. "I think it makes them more nervous. They have no time to be free."

Speaking of happiness, I asked Mrs. Anderson how the Palmer House Hilton today compares with her memories of the hotel from 1943, and she confessed that she wasn't paying attention to the hotel then.

"We were on our honeymoon," she explained.

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