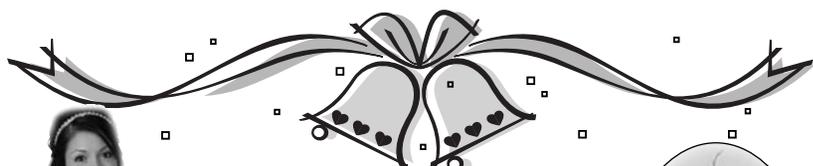




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## Beautiful bouquets

One of the last things you need to do for your big day is visit the florist.

Robin Roberts with Flowers For You said bridal couples need to pretty much have everything together before they decide on flowers.

"They don't want to waste the florist's time and we don't want to waste their time either," said Ms. Roberts. "Back in the old days, you used to have to plan your flowers anywhere from six to eight months up to a year in advance.

"But unless you're getting married in the high wedding season — April, May, June and even into July — you really don't have to plan quite that far ahead.

If, however, you want to go ahead and get a particular florist, you can reserve the date and give him or her the details later. "Most of the time, you will have to put down a deposit," said Ms. Roberts.

And it doesn't matter what time of the year you are getting married, you can have the flowers you want year round. Used to be, bridal couples could use only what was in season. But now flowers can be shipped in easily and quickly, said Ms. Roberts.

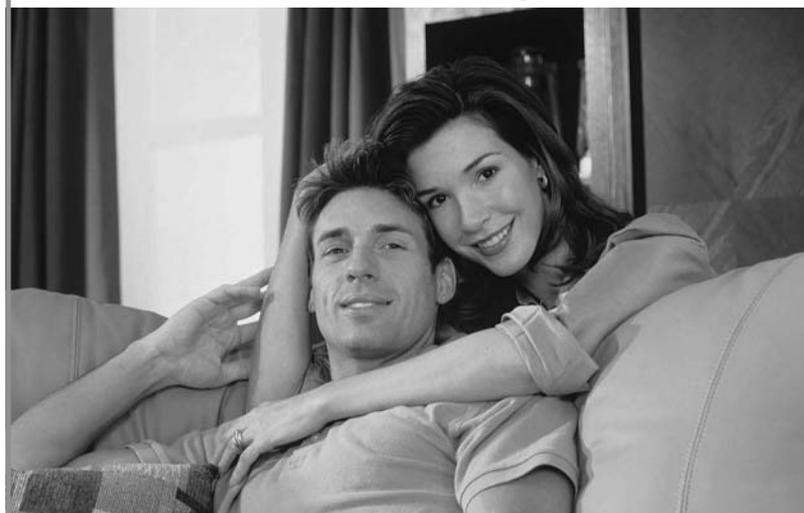


Story by  
**BECKY BARCLAY**  
Photos by  
**MITCH LOEBER**

Wrapping ribbon around a bunch of flowers with long stems makes a pretty wedding bouquet

See **FLOWERS**, Page 3

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# Flowers

Continued from Page 2

"If you want to get married in November and want a summer flower such as hydrangeas or peonies, we can get it in November," she said.

If you want a flower out of season, it won't cost you any more, said Ms. Roberts. "But if you are getting married around Valentine's Day, you will pay more for all of your flowers because of the high demand for flowers on that day," she said.

And you don't have to use just one color or type of flower at your wedding.

Ms. Roberts said florists can get flowers in several colors. With modern technology, the flowers can even be painted the color the couple wants.

However, she said that a lot of the browns are popular for weddings today. She said brides like various shades of brown and even black with greens and blues in their dresses and the florist can get these colors of flowers, too.

"We actually had a fall wedding with teal and brown not too long ago," said Ms. Roberts. "We used yellow, brown and orange flowers and it was really pretty."

Brides can use any color of flower



Robin Roberts prepares flowers for a wedding reception.

any time of the year.

"Just remember, if it's an evening wedding, pick your flowers accordingly. An evening wedding is more elegant. You would use a more elegant style of flower such as roses, hydrangeas and lilies and darker and richer colors."

Who will you need flowers for? Are you remembering each bridesmaid, groomsmen, usher, mother, grandmother, register attendant and director in your count? But it all depends on the couple; some have a small budget and others have a larger budget. If you have a larger budget, you might want flowers for the greeters, cake cutters and others.

You might want to use flowers in the church and at the reception.

Ms. Roberts said brides are using glass tops on the cake table and flowers can be put between the glass and the cake.

One popular thing florists are doing with the bride's bouquet is accenting it with butterflies, beads, jewels, crystals and monograms.

"No matter how many flowers you need or where you will use them, the florist is the finishing touch to any wedding," she said.

For centuries the month of June has been the most popular choice for weddings, but the original reason for having it then just might surprise you. During the 1400s and 1500s, May was the month in which the "annual bath" occurred.

Back in those times, people were only able to bathe thoroughly once each year. Since the over-all population was smelling relatively fresh in June, it was a good time to hold a special event like a wedding.

Furthermore, the month of June is also named after the goddess Juno.

She was the Roman counterpart to Hera, the goddess of the hearth and home and the patron of wives.

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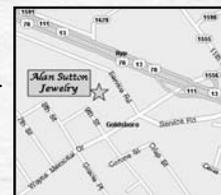
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## How to know who's picking up the tab

**T**oday there are no hard rules for who pays for what. Because a wedding is expensive, the couple, the bride's family and the groom's family all share expenses.

The key is to meet early in the planning process to set a realistic budget and determine who will be responsible for which expenses. This will prevent misunderstandings or hard feelings later on.

Here is a guide to help:

### \$\$ The bride \$\$

- \$ Wedding ring for the groom.
- \$ A wedding gift for the groom.
- \$ Presents for the bridal attendants.
- \$ Personal stationery.
- \$ Accommodations for her out-of-town attendants.

### \$\$ The groom \$\$

- \$ The bride's ring.
- \$ A wedding gift for the bride.
- \$ The marriage license.
- \$ Gifts for the best man and ushers.
- \$ Flowers: The bride's bouquet and going-away corsage, corsages for the mothers, boutonnières for the men in the wedding party.
- \$ Accommodations for out-of-town ushers or best man.
- \$ Gloves, ties or ascots for the men in the wedding party.
- \$ Fee for clergy.
- \$ The honeymoon.
- \$ Optional: bachelor dinner.

### \$\$ The bride's family \$\$

- \$ The entire cost of the reception: Food, wedding cake, beverages, gratuities for the bartenders and waiters, decorations, music and flowers.
- \$ A wedding gift for the couple.
- \$ Bride's wedding attire/trousseau.
- \$ The fee for engagement and wedding photos.
- \$ Ceremony: Rental of church, fees for organist, soloist, sexton, aisle runner and canopy if used and other decorations.
- \$ Bridesmaids' bouquets.
- \$ Transportation for the bridal party to the wedding ceremony and from the ceremony to the reception.
- \$ Bridesmaids' luncheon.
- \$ Optional: Rehearsal dinner.

### \$\$ The groom's family \$\$

- \$ Clothes for the wedding.
- \$ Any traveling expenses and hotel bills they incur.
- \$ Wedding gift for the couple.
- \$ Optional: Rehearsal dinner or other expenses they can help with.

### \$\$ The guests \$\$

- \$ Traveling expenses.
- \$ Wedding gift for the couple.

### \$\$ The attendants \$\$

- \$ Wedding attire.
- \$ Traveling expenses.
- \$ Wedding gift for the couple.

— Compiled by *Becky Barclay*,  
*Life&Family Editor*

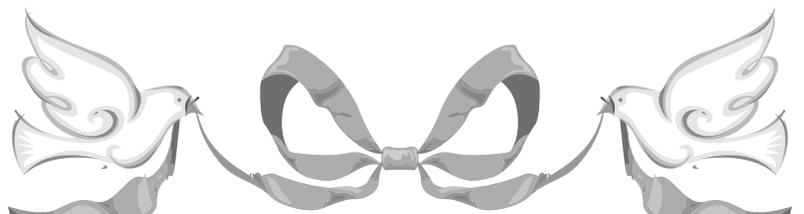
The bride is never supposed to practice walking down the aisle during her rehearsal or it will bring bad luck. The most popular alternative is to ask a close friend not in the wedding party to be your "stand-in-bride."



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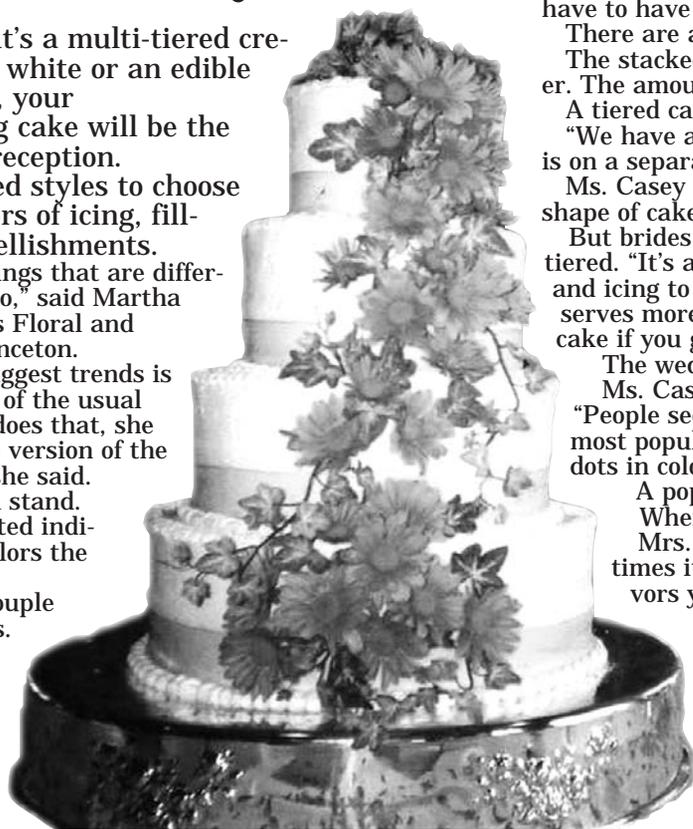
"There are a lot of things that are different than a long time ago," said Martha Casey, owner of Casey's Floral and Catering Service in Princeton.

She said one of the biggest trends is using cupcakes instead of the usual cake. "When the bride does that, she always has a miniature version of the cake for the top part," she said.

The cupcakes sit on a stand. Each cupcake is decorated individually in whatever colors the couple pick.

With cupcakes, the couple can control the servings. If they're having 200 guests, they order 200 cupcakes.

Story by  
**BECKY BARCLAY**



The round cake, either stacked or tiered, is still the most popular cake for weddings.

"And with cupcakes, there is less waste," Ms. Casey said. Today's cakes come in a variety of flavors, too. There's vanilla, almond, chocolate swirl, lemon, strawberry and more.

Ms. Casey has done red velvet and carrot cakes for weddings, but doesn't recommend either of these because they don't hold up well. "A lot of brides will have different flavors," she said. "You don't have to have just one flavor, especially with the cupcakes."

There are also different styles of wedding cakes. The stacked cake is when layers are stacked on top on one another. The amount of layers depends on the couple. A tiered cake also has layers, but they are separated by columns. "We have an I Do stand," said Ms. Casey, "where each cake itself is on a separate stand. And it can be configured all different ways."

Ms. Casey noted that the round cake is still the most popular shape of cake. But brides lately have been opting for square cakes, stacked or tiered. "It's a more expensive cake because it takes more materials and icing to make it," said Ms. Casey. "The square cake also serves more people so you don't have to have as big a wedding cake if you go with a square one."

The wedding cake can be decorated in a multitude of designs. Ms. Casey said the most popular right now is a dot pattern. "People seem to like just the very simplistic dots," she said. "The most popular is white dots on white icing. But we can do the dots in colors."

A popular accent for today's wedding cake is fresh flowers. When should you start looking for a cake?

Mrs. Casey said it's never too early. "Even though sometimes it will change, as long as you get your idea of what flavors you want and what colors and style, that's OK."

When you go to the baker for a cake, you'll need to know how many people will attend and colors if you want a certain color theme.

"You need to know where you are going to be," said Ms. Casey. "Will the reception be outside or inside?"

You'll also need to know the time of day you'll have the reception.

See **CAKES**, Page 6

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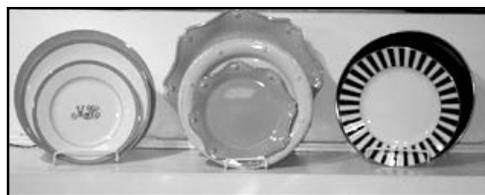
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## Cakes

Continued from Page 5

"For a nighttime wedding, people might eat more at the reception, including more cake," said Ms. Casey.

If you are going with a round cake, be prepared to pay about \$2.50 per person, said Ms. Casey. A square cake will run about \$3 per person.

And cakes using fondant icing will cost a bit more.

Some questions to ask potential bakers are:

◆ Can I see photos of previous wedding cakes you have designed? This is essential. If the baker won't show you photographs, look elsewhere.

◆ Can I have a taste test? Many small bakers won't have samples on hand for you to taste. If your baker doesn't have any for you to taste at the time of your visit, ask if the baker will be hosting any "cake tastings" in the near future.

◆ Do you charge extra for anything such as special fillings or icings, delivery, set-up, etc.? Extra charges for these items are pretty standard, but you need to know up front for the sake of your budget.

◆ Will you decorate the cake with fresh or silk flowers or will you work with my florist?

◆ Unless the baker's floral decorating skills are excellent, ask your baker if your florist can handle silk or fresh flower decorations.

◆ How far in advance will the cake be prepared? If the cake is being prepared well in advance and frozen, ask the baker how long it will take the cake to thaw.



## Wedding essentials

### Don't forget the marriage license

By **BECKY BARCLAY**  
Life&Family Editor

**H**e has popped the question and she has accepted. A date has been set for the big day.

Now what?

Before any couple can tie the knot, they need one very important piece of paper — the marriage license.

In Wayne County, bridal couples should go to the register of deeds office in the courthouse to obtain the license. It will cost \$50 and payment must be made by cash or check only.

Register of Deeds Lois J. Mooring said that both the bride and the groom have to go at the same time to apply for the marriage license.

Everyone applying for a license will need their Social Security card or something with the Social Security number and their name printed on it and a state-issued picture identification.

Those over 21 can use their driver's license as identification, said Ms. Mooring.

She said those 18 to 21 will need to take an identification card such as a driver's license or military identification card and a certified copy of their birth certificate.

Those under 18 will need to have more identification and should go to the register of deeds office for a list of acceptable documents.

Anyone who has been divorced less than 30 days will have to take a copy of his or her divorce papers when applying for the marriage license. If a person has been divorced a month or longer, he will just need to know the month and year of the divorce, according to Ms. Mooring.

The marriage license is good not only in Wayne County, but anywhere in North Carolina. It's good for up to 60 days from the date it was issued.

Ms. Mooring said it will take the couple about 30 minutes to fill out paperwork and get the license. "And there's no waiting period; they can go straight to the magistrate's office and use the license as soon as they get it," she said.

Couples may apply for a marriage license Monday through Friday between 8 a.m. and 4 p.m.

For questions, the phone number is 731-1449.

License requirements may also be found on the Internet. Go to [www.waynegov.com](http://www.waynegov.com) and click on "departments." Go to the register of deeds office and click on "marriage license."

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# Wedding planner:

The groom-to-be has popped the question.  
You said yes. Now what?

Here's a countdown calendar to planning your wedding:

## 12 months

- ◆ Announce your engagement.
- ◆ Choose a wedding theme, style.
- ◆ Work out a basic budget; research reception venues.
- ◆ Determine number of guests.
- ◆ Look through magazines for attire ideas.
- ◆ Meet potential wedding consultants; obtain bids.
- ◆ Research wedding pros (photographers, videographers, reception bands or DJs, ceremony musicians). Set up appointments and review portfolios, tapes and recordings.

## 11 months

- ◆ Select a wedding consultant and meet to discuss details.
- ◆ Determine theme/decorations for your reception.
- ◆ Meet with several caterers; arrange for tastings.
- ◆ Select and book a caterer.
- ◆ Reserve musicians/DJ for reception.
- ◆ Determine ceremony musicians and make musical selections.
- ◆ Book wedding videographer and photographer; make a list of photos, such as ceremony and reception shots.
- ◆ Research and interview florists.
- ◆ Select and reserve your ceremony venue and schedule a rehearsal time.
- ◆ Choose reception venue; negotiate contract; leave a deposit.
- ◆ Secure parking and/or transportation for your guests at the reception location.
- ◆ Visit local bridal stores to browse their selection of gowns.
- ◆ Choose your wedding-party members and ask them to participate in your celebration.
- ◆ Meet with your officiant to discuss the ceremony.
- ◆ Determine your honeymoon budget.
- ◆ Mail save-the-date notices for a destination wedding.

## 10 months

- ◆ Select and order your wedding gown.
- ◆ If your ceremony or reception will be held in a park or recreational area, obtain necessary permits.
- ◆ Discuss attendants' duties with your maid of honor and bridesmaids.

## 9 months

- ◆ Register for gifts.
- ◆ Coordinate with vendors to incorporate your theme/style

into all aspects of your wedding.

- ◆ Decide on the food and liquor to be served at your reception.
- ◆ Prepare a playlist of wedding-reception musical selections.
- ◆ Select and order your headpiece, veil, gloves and shoes.
- ◆ Confirm orders of and delivery dates for your wedding attire.
- ◆ Research airline, hotel and rental-car reservations for guests.

## 8 months

- ◆ Go to first gown fitting; invite your maid of honor to attend.
- ◆ Choose and order bridesmaid dresses and accessories.
- ◆ Research a variety of wedding ring styles.
- ◆ Select florist; discuss the wedding theme and style.

## 7 months

- ◆ Review and finalize your wedding details with consultant.
- ◆ Notify bridesmaids about dress fittings.
- ◆ Discuss attire with groomsmen and make referrals to local formalwear store.
- ◆ Select attire for flower girl and/or ring bearer.
- ◆ Determine the design, wording, font and paper stock for your wedding invitations, stationery, table cards and thank-you notes; finalize order.
- ◆ Arrange a printer or hire a calligrapher to do your table cards.
- ◆ Determine order of ceremony events and choose appropriate wording for your programs.
- ◆ Negotiate rates and book a block of hotel rooms for guests.
- ◆ Select and order your wedding rings.
- ◆ Purchase bridal accessories: jewelry, lingerie, etc.
- ◆ Choose and order something fun for guests to throw after your ceremony (rose petals, confetti or birdseed).

## 6 months

- ◆ Review and approve proofs of invitations and stationery.
- ◆ Discuss the type of honeymoon you want, start reading up on potential destinations and consult a travel agent for ideas and suggestions.

## 5 months

- ◆ Order table cards; place print order for programs.
- ◆ Finalize choice of honeymoon destination.
- ◆ Taste a variety of wedding cakes and select a baker; place



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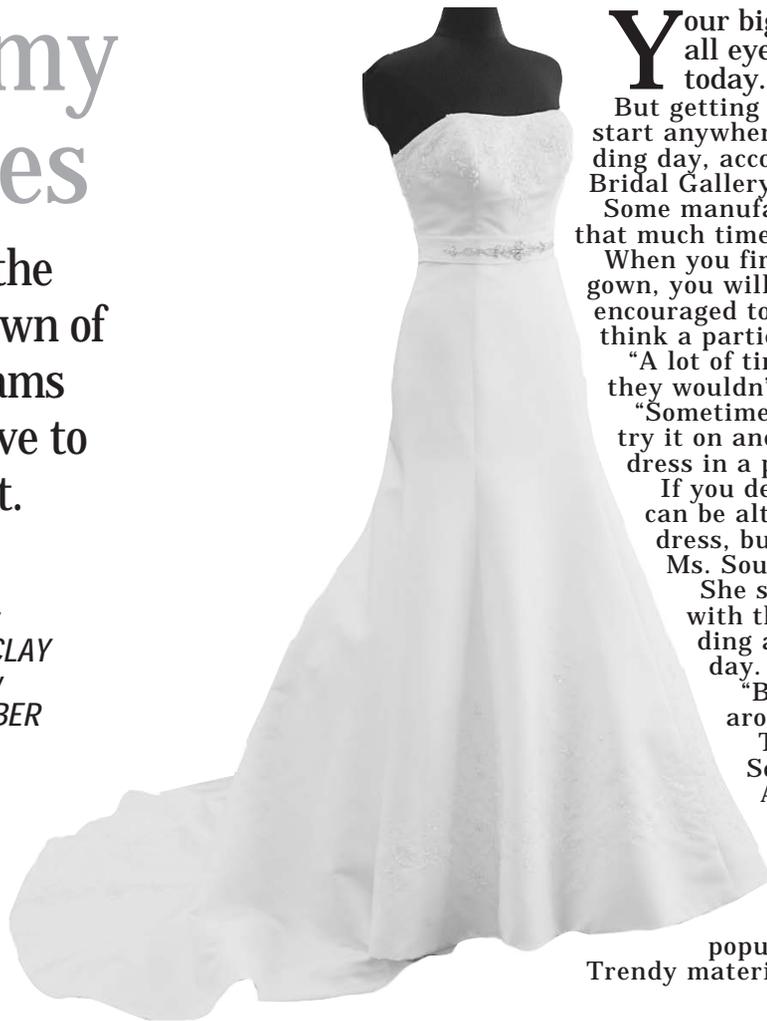


# Dreamy dresses

Picking the wedding gown of your dreams doesn't have to be difficult.

Story by  
**BECKY BARCLAY**  
Photo by  
**MITCH LOEBER**

Bridal gowns with a trumpet or mermaid skirt are popular this year. This one has a chapel-length train with a belt at the waist with beading and crystals.



**Y**our big day has come. As you walk down the aisle, all eyes are on you. You are the belle of the ball today.

But getting there is an involved process that you should start anywhere from nine months to a year before the wedding day, according to Dana Southerland, owner of the Bridal Gallery.

Some manufacturers offer rush orders if they don't have that much time.

When you first go into a bridal shop to look for a wedding gown, you will be shown what's available. You will be encouraged to try on different styles — even if you don't think a particular one will look great on you.

"A lot of times, they will walk out with what they thought they wouldn't like," Ms. Southerland said.

"Sometimes they come in with a picture of a dress and try it on and hate it. Or they may come in and not like a dress in a picture and love it when they try it on."

If you decide on a gown, but the fit is not quite right, it can be altered. "And if they love everything about the dress, but want to change something, we can do that," Ms. Southerland said.

She said it's also better to come to try on gowns with the way you will wear your hair during the wedding and with the makeup you will be wearing that day.

"But if they just can't, we can always work around that," Ms. Southerland said.

Traditional gowns are still in vogue, said Ms. Southerland. These are strapless gowns with an A-line skirt.

But new this year are the different necklines like cap sleeves and halters. These appeal to brides wanting to get away from the strapless gown, Ms. Southerland said.

"And trumpet and mermaid skirts are very popular," Ms. Southerland said.

Trendy materials include silk taffeta and chiffon.

See **DRESSES**, Page 9



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# Dresses

Continued from Page 8

And brides seem to want a little color in their white gowns, said Ms. Southerland. "Chocolates and browns are real big this year," she said. "We're actually doing a lot of the chocolate tuxedos and bridesmaids' dresses with a touch of chocolate in the wedding gown."

"Gem tones and jewel tones are other popular colors such as jade and berry. These are the new and hip thing for right now."

On the wedding gown, there is usually just a hint of color on the bodice, across the waist or down the back.

Brides are also wanting long trains, Ms. Southerland said. "The longer, the better seems to be the thing right now."

Ms. Southerland also sees a lot of the simple wedding dresses for destination and beach weddings.

"These dresses are straighter, simpler with shorter trains," she said. "They are lighter weight material, not as heavy and hard to move around in. That way if they are on the beach or on a cruise ship, they can get around a little bit better."

But the bottom line is that the bride should go with what she wants. "Etiquette is not as important as it used to be," said Ms. Southerland.

A wedding gown doesn't have to cost an arm and a leg, said Ms. Southerland. The Bridal Gallery carries gowns from \$99 up to \$1,500 with the average being between \$600 and \$800.

Once you've purchased your gown, you may store it at the Bridal Gallery until the wedding.

Or you may go ahead and take it home with you. Just remember to keep it away from smoke and extreme temperatures, said Ms. Southerland.

"After the wedding, have it preserved," she said.

"Preservation companies clean and preserve the gown and put it in an airtight box."

# Best man's toast to couple should be spectacular one

**A**t one point during the reception, all eyes will be on the best man as he toasts the new couple and wishes them a happy future.

But writing that may not always come easy.

Start off by writing down thoughts freely about the bride and groom and your relationship to them.

- ◆ How do you know them?
- ◆ Why did they choose you as best man?
- ◆ How would you describe each of them? What are the first five adjectives that come to mind?
- ◆ What was the groom like before he met the bride? How has he changed knowing her?
- ◆ How did they meet? How did the groom tell you about her?
- ◆ If you are married, you may wish to think about marriage advice you've received or have learned.
- ◆ Are there any particularly amusing anecdotes that illustrate who the bride and/or groom are?

After thinking about these questions a while, you are ready to give your speech.

First, introduce yourself.

To get people's attention, you might do a joke or maybe a quote about marriage.

Thank those hosting the reception.

Then you may tell a funny — not humiliating — story about the bride or groom or both. Tell the story of how they met, talk about how you've seen the couple change throughout their relationship or give your thoughts on love and marriage.

Wrap up your speech with a wish, toast or blessing for the couple.

You may write your toast down on a notecard or two if you are afraid you'll forget.

And, above all, be brief.



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# Bridesmaids, flower girls, moms

They will stand out and look their best in today's trendy styles

**A**lthough the bride will be the centerpiece of the wedding, the bridesmaids, the flower girl and the couple's mothers all want to look their best.

The cocktail length seems to be the preferred style of bridesmaids' dress right now, according to Dana Southerland, owner of the Bridal Gallery.

"That way they can wear the dress again after the wedding," she said. "And the simpler, the better. There's a little less beading."

"The jewel tone and gem tone colors are popular, like teal, berry, jade."

Bridesmaids still prefer the strapless dress, said Ms. Southerland. But there are also tank and halter top dresses as well.

A bridesmaid's dress will average \$150.

You should start shopping for your bridesmaids' dresses



The high-low hemline is popular for today's bridesmaids' dresses, like the one on the left. Above is a white tea-length flower girl dress with a satin overlay and floral embroidery and beading. On the right is a silk taffeta dress with detachable spaghetti straps and a bolero jacket for the couple's mothers.

Story by **BECKY BARCLAY**  
Photos by **MITCH LOEBER**

about four to six months before your wedding day, Ms. Southerland suggests.

Styles vary for flower girl dresses, according to her age, said Ms. Southerland.

"We do a lot of the tea-length dresses for the younger girls because it's easier for them to walk down the aisle," she said. "We do a lot of the real simple, girly-looking dresses for girls under 5."

"When they get a little bit older, it's more like a junior bridesmaid look so they don't feel like they're playing dress up."

Ms. Southerland said some brides want the flower girl to match them or maybe in ivory with a touch of color.

Sometimes the flower girl's dress matches that of the bridesmaids.

"But it's really whatever the bride wants," she said.

Most flower girl dresses will run anywhere from \$80 to \$130, Ms. Southerland said.

See **BRIDAL PARTY ATTIRE**, Page 11



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## Bridal party attire

Continued from Page 10

The average is \$100.

Flower girls need to be fitted for their dresses about four to six months before the wedding.

And don't forget the mothers.

"The moms' dresses are usually the thing the bride puts off until last," said Ms. Southerland. "But it's one of the most important things."

You should start shopping around for one about six months before the wedding.

There are a lot of different colors and styles of dresses for the mothers, said Ms. Southerland.

"There are also separates where you can mix and match the top and the skirt. That seems to be really popular. They can pick their own skirt and own top and maybe a jacket to go with it."

Ms. Southerland said the same colors that are popular in bridesmaids' dresses are also popular for mothers' dresses.

"But we do sell a lot of black and navy for moms," she said.

The couple's mothers need to coordinate their dresses with one another. According to etiquette, the mother of the bride gets to choose first.

But both mothers need to make sure their colors don't clash with one another. And they also need to make sure their dresses don't outshine the bride's gown.

# Magical music ... will make your ceremony special

**T**he wedding music you choose for your ceremony will set the tone for your entire wedding.

Remember to ask your site what types of wedding music it allows — many churches do not allow secular music to be played and have very strict rules about what may be used in this type of religious setting.

Consult with the musical director of your facility to be sure you create a program which is suitable and also suits your own style.

During your prelude, you will want to use wedding music that is not obtrusive.

This will be played while your guests are arriving and while they are taking their seats.

Start this music as early as possible so that wedding music is playing when the first guests arrive.

While important family members, such as the mother-of-the-bride, are being ushered to their seats, you will need to choose a pre-processional piece of music.

When the wedding party appears at the top of the aisle, the wedding music should switch from the pre-processional to the processional.

This piece should have a tempo which allows your bridesmaids and grooms-men to walk down the aisle at a measured pace and heightens the suspense for the wedding guests as they wait to see the bride.

When choosing wedding music, keep in mind how the piece is to be played.

A piece that is perfect in full orchestral form may not have the same presence if performed by an organist.

As soon as the bride appears at the top of the aisle, the wedding music should switch to the piece you have chosen for the bride's entrance.

This is the moment that you, and all your guests have been waiting for.

Your wedding music should be dramatic and sweeping.

After you are pronounced husband and wife, your recessional will begin.

This is the moment in which you and your new spouse walk down the aisle.

You should choose wedding music that is joyous and conveys your feelings of excitement and happiness.

Sunday, January 25, 2009 • Brides 2009 • a planner for the Bride-to-be — 11



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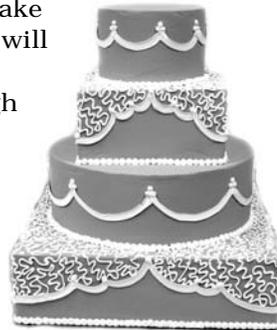


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# Working budget

Ensure your wedding is affordable, yet elegant

You've decided to tie the knot. Now's the time to start planning your big day.

Here's how to start:

- ◆ Talk to your spouse-to-be about what kind of wedding you both want. Discuss what kinds of flowers, colors, venues, clothing, invitations, music and food you prefer.
- ◆ Make a list of what you'll need: a wedding consultant if you're using one, a ceremony location, a reception venue, food, beverages, cake, flowers, photography, entertainment, attire, invitations, etc.
- ◆ Prioritize this list. What means the most to you? Is the cake more important than the music? Where can you pinch pennies without sacrificing your vision?
- ◆ Meet with both sets of parents to find out how much money, if any, they are willing to contribute. Be gracious, grateful and understanding, no matter what their responses.
- ◆ Calculate how much money you currently have available, how much you think you'll need and how much you will have to save. Keep in mind that the average wedding in the United States costs about \$15,000.
- ◆ Make a plan to save what you need, using a savings account or certificate of deposit.
- ◆ Divide your budget according to your priorities. For example, if your top priority is the dress and your second priority is the venue, you might plan to spend 20 percent of your budget on the dress and 15 percent on the venue.
- ◆ Visit at least four vendors or suppliers in each category (florists, photographers, caterers, consultants, etc.) and compare prices.
- ◆ Use a checklist to make sure you ask all of the vendors the same questions. Note their answers in your budget notebook and review your notes before making a decision.

- ◆ Keep a record of the estimated and actual costs of each item in your notebook.
- ◆ Keep all contracts, agreements, receipts and vouchers in the notebook.
- ◆ Review your budget after each purchase to make sure you're on track. If you're \$50 over budget on the cake, maybe you can save \$50 by cutting the cost of favors or eliminating those electronic turtledoves.

There are many ways to save money if you are on a tight budget. You can save money many ways. Start by looking through the budget and crossing off anything that you don't need.

Here are some money-saving tips:

- ◆ Trim your wedding guest list. Each time you add a name to your invitation list, you're increasing your budget significantly. It's not just the catering costs, but also the extra centerpieces, favors, rentals, etc.
- ◆ Invitations. Find a good printer. The invitation is the first thing guests see that's connected to your wedding, so they should look nice, but you don't have to go overboard. People will remember the event, not the invitation.
- ◆ Rather than having a reply card, ask guests to reply online or by phone.
- ◆ Save money on church decorations. For religious weddings, consider having it near a major holiday.
- ◆ The church will already be decorated, saving you lots of money on flowers.
- ◆ On other days, look for simplicity. A candlelight ceremony can be romantic, gorgeous and inexpensive.
- ◆ Reception venue. Saturday night is the most sought-after time. If you can do a Friday night, Saturday morning or afternoon or Sunday reception, you'll not only save money, but you may have more choice of dates.
- ◆ Transportation. Consider finding a friend with a nice car and using it.
- ◆ Flowers. If there's time, have a friend get them at the local greenmarket on wedding morning and set them up at the ceremony and reception sites yourself, with the help of family and friends.
- ◆ Do it yourself. Throw a pitch-in party where guests help you assemble favors and make invitations, centerpieces and other homemade items.

Story by  
BECKY BARCLAY

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## Survive your wedding a handy emergency kit just in case

Even though you've planned for everything to go perfectly, you never know what might happen on your big day. That's why it's a good idea to assemble a bridal survival kit beforehand so you'll be prepared.

Here's what you need:

- ◆ antacid
- ◆ aspirin
- ◆ bobby pins
- ◆ clear nail polish
- ◆ emery board
- ◆ extra earring backs
- ◆ extra pair of stockings
- ◆ eye drops
- ◆ hairspray
- ◆ hair mousse
- ◆ needle and thread
- ◆ safety pins
- ◆ small scissors
- ◆ straight pins
- ◆ tissues
- ◆ white chalk (to cover any dirt or stains you may get on your dress)
- ◆ breath mints
- ◆ a blow dryer
- ◆ extra perfume
- ◆ masking tape
- ◆ a stapler
- ◆ wash cloth or hand towel
- ◆ tampons or pads
- ◆ deodorant
- ◆ hand lotion



## Some paperwork will require a name change

For the brides planning to take her husband's last name after the wedding, there are certain documents that must be changed.

Many can be done now.

Some will need to be done after your wedding ceremony.

Some agencies will require a copy of the marriage license before processing the change.

Here are a few items that need to be updated:

- ◆ Social Security card
- ◆ driver's license
- ◆ car registration
- ◆ voter registration
- ◆ employer records
- ◆ school records
- ◆ passport
- ◆ bank account
- ◆ stocks
- ◆ bonds
- ◆ will
- ◆ pension plan
- ◆ property titles or leases
- ◆ charge accounts
- ◆ subscriptions
- ◆ club memberships
- ◆ post office
- ◆ insurance policy
- ◆ tax records
- ◆ bills



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# Diamonds are a girl's best friend

## The latest in engagement rings and wedding bands

**A** word of advice to bridal couples: Don't walk into a jewelry shop and choose the first ring you see. Alan Sutton, owner of Alan Sutton Jewelry, said you need to know a ring's color, clarity, carat and cut before buying it. Each one of these facets plays an important role in the price of the stone.

He said a diamond's color is graded on a scale. "D, E and F grades are colorless," said Sutton. "G, H, I and J are near colorless. And you get into a faint yellow and more yellow on down the scale. "In today's world, everybody likes to be in that near colorless range. You are looking at a big difference in price to go to a colorless diamond — the D, E and F range."

Sutton said he sells more diamonds in the G to J range than any other range because of price. "You're still getting a nice, white brilliant stone," he said.

"On the clarity side, diamonds are carbon deposits and are full of inclusions when they grow and coming up from the earth's surface, they crystallize.

"Some diamonds, after they are cut, have more internal inclusions or blemishes. The more of those you have, the lower on the scale the diamond is."

He said there are eye-visible stones, slightly included stones, very slightly included stones and very, very slightly included stones. From there you

have eternally flawless and flawless.

He said flawless diamonds cost a lot more. The most popular clarity range is the slightly-included range, said Sutton. "That's because you cannot see the inclusions in a true slightly-included grade stone with the naked eye. Yet it will be hundreds, sometimes thousands of dollars cheaper than a very slightly-included stone."

The only difference in grades is that a diamond with inclusions may break. Sutton said it's like a faultline.

"An inclusion that's internal, if it takes the right hit, it can break," he said. "But that's in very, very extreme cases and in very highly included stones."

Sutton said the more inclusions in a stone and the lower the color grade, the lower the price.

Carat weight is simple, said Sutton. "Diamonds are graded on a point system. It's like a dollar bill. There are 100 pennies in a dollar."

"A one-carat diamond has 100 points." He said a lot of ways people save money on the carat of the diamond is by taking a slightly less carat size. For example, Sutton might show them a 95-point stone instead of a 100-point stone.

Price is based on points. "You can get the same look in a 95-point stone that you will in a 100-point stone, but you're not paying for those extra five points. It's a way of saving a dollar and getting the same thing."

Story by  
**BECKY BARCLAY**  
Photos by  
**MITCH LOEBER**



This 14-carat yellow gold marquise ring has a 1-carat diamond in the center with six marquise side stones with a total weight of  $\frac{3}{4}$  carat.



A popular white gold diamond engagement ring is shown.

See RINGS, Page 15

### Planner:

#### Continued from Page 7

cake order and arrange for delivery.

- ◆ Secure reservations for rehearsal dinner and select menu.

#### 4 months

- ◆ Determine method of addressing invitations and hire a calligrapher, if applicable.
- ◆ Print labels, and hand-address — or have a calligrapher address — invitations.
- ◆ Write or choose your

wedding vows.

- ◆ Have groom visit formal-wear shops and try on tuxedos.

- ◆ Purchase or rent groom's wedding accessories, including tuxedo, cuff links, shoes, socks and any other necessities.

- ◆ Make honeymoon reservations and place all deposits.

#### 3 months

- ◆ Review and approve wedding announcement and

See PLANNER, Page 16

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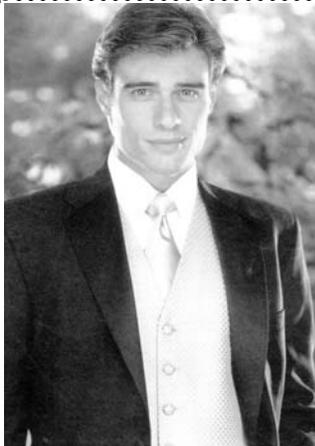
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## Rings

Continued from Page 14

The next thing you should be aware of when purchasing a ring is cut, which can become very complicated, Sutton said.

The first thing cut refers to is the shape of the stone. There are several shapes — round, marquis (football shape), square (Princess cut), emerald, pear, radiant.

"The most popular stone on the market is the Princess cut," said Sutton.

"The round brilliant cut has never gone away, even when another stone is the most popular. Through the late 80s and 90s, the marquis cut was the most popular cut of stone. But for the past four or five years, it's been the Princess cut by a longshot."

Sutton said cut also refers to how well the proportions are in a diamond.

He said the trend today is to have an ideal-cut stone, which means that 58 percent of the stone is the flat surface or table. Cut refers to how much of the total diameter of the stone the table takes up.

"Cut can play a bigger role in the price of a diamond than a lot of other things," Sutton said.

Sutton said since buying a diamond is a very big decision for any couple, they need to know all these things about it.

## Showers: Have fun with holiday, hobby or pantry party

A fun part of the wedding process is a bridal shower. Today there are many kinds of showers that can be given.

Here are a few suggestions:

◆ **Calendar.** Assign each guest a month and have her take something that can be used during that month.

◆ **Reminiscing.** Have guests take photos with a note or letter about the photo or that occasion so you can later assemble them into an album.

◆ **Cookbook shower.** Each guest should take a cookbook that she thinks will be useful in married life. Or each guest may take a favorite recipe to be assembled into a home-made cookbook later.

◆ **Pounding.** Each guest takes a pound of something, such as sugar, flour, nails, potting soil, nuts, coffee, and an accessory to use with it.

◆ **Entertaining.** Gifts would be things the bride could use as a hostess, such as punch bowl, wine rack, ice bucket, coasters, candles, chafing dish, candy dish.

◆ **Christmas.** Ask each guest to attach a Christmas ornament to the top of his gift. Gifts could include tree lights, ceramic figures, candles, wreaths or anything for Christmas.

◆ **Hobby.** If the bride or groom has a hobby, have guests take items especially for that hobby, like golfing, boating, camping, home renovation, gardening, music, art.

◆ **Pantry.** Guests take items the couple can use at home, such as groceries, spices, bulk items, spice rack, gift certificate.

◆ **Around-the-clock.** Assign each guest a time and have her take a gift that would be used at that time.

◆ **Garden.** Guests should take items that would be used in a garden — tools, patio furniture, flowers.

◆ **Basket.** Guests take a themed basket, like an Italian basket with pasta bowls, cheese shaker, pasta, wooden spoons, cans of tomatoes or a decorations basket with small decorations for a holiday — Christmas, Halloween, Easter, Valentine's Day.

◆ **Storage.** Have guests take items to help the couple with storage space, such as plastic food containers, stacking units for closets, rolling file racks.

◆ **Alphabet.** Assign each guest a letter and have her take a gift that starts with that letter.

◆ **Personal library.** Guests take a book, journal or magazine to help the couple build their library.

◆ **Tool.** Guests are asked to take a tool or gadget such as a hammer, rake, shovel, flashlight.

◆ **Something to do.** Each guest takes a gift certificates for an activity for the couple to do their first year of marriage — theater tickets, membership to a museum, gift certificates to restaurants.



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## Music sets tone for reception

**M**usic sets the tone of a reception. Without it, conversation dries up, mingling halts and dancing is impossible.

When planning the tunes for your party, consider three primary issues: Style, range and delivery.

◆ **Style:** Even the most agreeable person has strong opinions about music, and the average engaged couple is no exception. Is your favorite genre big band, country, classical, bluegrass or classic rock? Does nothing move you like reggae?

Choose music that reflects your personal tastes and party preferences, but don't forget your guests. Everyone will have more fun if the style is at least a little eclectic.

◆ **Range:** If you're like most couples, you imagine a certain kind of soundtrack for the receiving line and a different one altogether for when the dance floor gets hopping.

Whatever style you choose, be sure there's range within it — from slow and easy to really jumping. Alternately, choose different genres for different parts of the celebration — light jazz for the cocktail hour, swing for after dinner.

◆ **Delivery:** Basically, you have two choices: Band or DJ. For stylishness, excitement and great sound, it's hard to beat a live band.

On the other hand, DJs make a pretty good case for themselves in terms of versatility, consistency and cost.

Your budget or setting may make this decision for you. If the decision is yours, try to weigh all the musical elements of the reception when making your choice — including special dances, guest requests and the need for an emcee.

When shopping for bands or DJs, be sure to see them in action at another event. Look for style points, quality of sound, ease with equipment and interaction with the crowd.

Plan to finalize arrangements at least six to nine months in advance and even further ahead if your favorite choice is in high demand.

— Information from Amazon.com wedding

## Planner:

### Continued from Page 14

printed program proofs.

◆ Book venue or secure reservations for post-wedding brunch.

◆ Discuss bachelorette party plans with your attendants.

◆ Plan your bridesmaids' luncheon or dinner.

◆ Make appointment with stylist and/or hairdresser to discuss your wedding hairstyle.

◆ Take another look at your registry and update or add items.

◆ Create hotel information

cards and maps to include with your invitations.

### 2 months

◆ Secure a wedding-day dressing room for your bridesmaids.

◆ Weigh, purchase postage for and mail invitations.

◆ Go to final gown fitting; arrange for pickup or delivery.

◆ Have groom's formalwear fitted.

◆ If you plan to have a prenuptial agreement, meet with your attorney to discuss it.

See **PLANNER**, Page 18

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# Why you should create a bridal registry

## Friends and family will know exactly what you want, need

By **BECKY BARCLAY**  
Life&Family Editor

**W**hile planning your wedding day, don't forget that loved ones and friends will undoubtedly want to shower you with gifts to celebrate the event.

The easiest way to let everyone know what you need or want is to use a bridal registry. Most department stores and other places have bridal registries these days.

If you don't register, be prepared to get things your family and friends think you need, like a fourth set of Pyrex.

It's easy to register for gifts at Target and takes only a few minutes.

You go in to the computer in front of the customer service desk and touch the screen to begin, said Wendy Palmer, customer service desk cashier.

You hit "Club Wed", she said, and the program loads in a few minutes.

"Then you create your registry," said Ms. Palmer.

You take the scanner that's at the computer and go throughout the store scanning in items you would like to receive. There's no limit to the number of items you can register for.

"The registry automatically keeps track of what people buy for you," Ms. Palmer said. She said the couple may go in and check and update their bridal registry as often as they would like.

There are many places where couples can register for gifts, including these:

- ◆ All major department stores.
- ◆ Building supply stores such as Lowe's and Home Depot.
- ◆ Hardware stores.
- ◆ Sporting goods stores.
- ◆ Gardening stores or local nurseries.
- ◆ Mortgage lenders — registering for contributions to a down payment on a house is becoming popular.
- ◆ Travel agents — whether for the honeymoon or another trip.
- ◆ Home furnishing and accessory stores.
- ◆ Online registries.

Here are 10 questions to ask before you register:

- ◆ Do you need an appointment?
- ◆ What is the store's return policy?
- ◆ How does the store keep track of your registry and gifts? A computer database is the preferred method as it is the most quickly updated.
- ◆ How often does the store update the registry and gift?

◆ How long does it take to get your gift registry up and running?

◆ Does the store have a toll-free phone number?

◆ Does the store accept phone purchases?

◆ Does the store have a Web site?

◆ Does the store ship gifts? Any additional charge for this service?

◆ How long does your registry list stay in the records? A year after the wedding date is the ideal, since guests have up to one year to purchase a gift for you.

Most department stores will have a consultant available to help and guide you with gift selections in various price ranges.

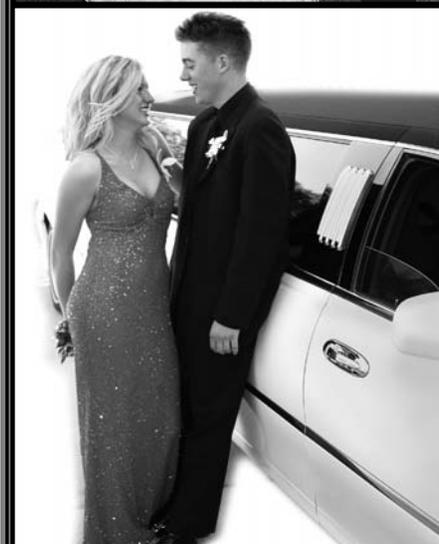
Registering at two or three stores is considered ideal and will give your guests a choice on where to shop for your wedding gift.

Trust a reputable store and a consultant who is pleasant and willing to explain everything in-depth.

This is a free service from the store and it will benefit from your business — so make sure you and your family are comfortable with the atmosphere and employees.

If the store's policies are acceptable, plan a meeting with the consultant that will take about one to two hours.

See **REGISTRY**, Page 18



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## Who sits where at your ceremony?

Make sure your ushers know the proper seating arrangement

Here are some guidelines to help you with the seating at your wedding ceremony.

Since your ushers will escort guests to their seats, it's not necessary to have assigned seating.

However, you will want to section off a reserved seating area in front for your immediate families.

Traditionally in church weddings, the bride's parents sit in the front row on the left side, along with her grandparents and siblings.

If the bride's parents are divorced and prefer to sit separately, the mother and her

husband might sit in the front row while the father and his wife sit in the second row.

Other special relatives may sit in the second and third rows.

The groom's family is seated in the same manner, but on the right side of the room. (At Jewish ceremonies, all the seating is reversed.)

An usher should offer a female guest his right arm to escort her to her seat. Male wedding guests may simply be led to their seats.

When a number of wedding guests arrive at once, seat the eldest ones first.

## Registry

Continued from Page 17

Here are some examples of what to register for:

- ◆ House accessories and gadgets
- ◆ Kitchen stuff
- ◆ China
- ◆ Crystal
- ◆ Silver

- ◆ Sporting goods
- ◆ Linens
- ◆ Wines
- ◆ Home improvement supplies
- ◆ Garden supplies
- ◆ Mortgage down payments
- ◆ Honeymoons
- ◆ Vacation travel
- ◆ House cleaning services

## Planner:

Continued from Page 16

- ◆ Purchase gifts for all wedding-party members.
- ◆ Arrange transportation for bride and groom from the ceremony site to the reception.
- ◆ Purchase ceremony accessories (unity candle, wineglasses, etc.)

6 weeks

- ◆ Purchase a new camera, if needed.
- ◆ Send rehearsal dinner invitations.
- ◆ Write thank-you notes as you

receive gifts.

- ◆ Confirm music selections ("playlist") with musicians/DJ.
- ◆ Select menu for post-wedding brunch.
- ◆ Write newspaper announcement and gather photos.
- ◆ Purchase a gift for your spouse-to-be.
- ◆ Shop for wedding favors.
- ◆ Purchase honeymoon clothing, luggage and accessories.
- ◆ Go in for a practice hair-styling and make day-of-wedding hair appointment.

See PLANNER, Page 19

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# Who does what?

Not sure who's usually responsible for specific aspects of your wedding? Use this checklist to see what's customary

For your wedding to be an event to remember, it takes the efforts of many people.

There are the bridesmaids, groomsmen, ringbearer and more.

Here is a list of the duties:

## Maid/matron of honor

- ◆ Hosts the bridal shower.
- ◆ Helps bride to select her wedding apparel and accessories.
- ◆ Helps bride coordinate wedding vendors and plans.
- ◆ Supervises and organizes the other bridesmaids for their wedding apparel
- ◆ Coordinates purchase of bridesmaids' gift to bride.
- ◆ Coordinates purchase of bridesmaids' gift to couple.
- ◆ Assists in wedding day plans and preparation.
- ◆ Assists bride in dressing for the ceremony and last minute touch-ups.
- ◆ Witnesses wedding license.
- ◆ Holds the bridal bouquet during the ceremony.
- ◆ Adjusts the bride's veil and train before the processional and the recessional.

## Bridesmaids

- ◆ Assists maid or matron of honor with her duties.
- ◆ Assists with bridal shower.
- ◆ Assists the bride throughout the wedding planning process.

See **RESPONSIBILITY**, Page 20

## Planner:

### Continued from Page 18

#### 4 weeks

- ◆ Confirm floral order and arrange for delivery times.
- ◆ Meet with ushers and assign duties for the ceremony and reception.
- ◆ Discuss the details of your ceremony with your officiant.
- ◆ Determine the placement or distribution of programs at the ceremony venue.
- ◆ Arrange for preparation, storage and break areas for musicians/DJ at the

reception venue.

- ◆ Determine seating arrangements for guests.
- ◆ If you color your hair, make appointment for a touch-up the week before your wedding.
- ◆ Go in for a dry run with a professional makeup artist and make a day-of-wedding appointment.
- ◆ Schedule an appointment for a manicure and/or pedicure the day before your wedding.
- ◆ Finalize details with

See **PLANNER**, Page 21

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# Responsibility

Continued from Page 19

## Best man

- ◆ Coordinates and oversees all ushers' activities and duties.
- ◆ Coordinates all logistics (rental and fittings) for ushers' wedding apparel.
- ◆ Picks up and returns all rented wedding apparel for the ushers and the groom.
- ◆ Organizes bachelor dinner or party.
- ◆ Organizes purchase of groom's gift from ushers.
- ◆ Organizes purchase of couple's gift from ushers.
- ◆ Helps with honeymoon travel plans.
- ◆ Helps groom to dress on his wedding day.
- ◆ Drives groom to ceremony.
- ◆ Witnesses marriage license signing.
- ◆ Takes marriage license to ceremony.
- ◆ On wedding day, pays any and all service providers as per groom's instructions.
- ◆ If there is no organized transportation, drives bride and groom to reception.
- ◆ Conducts toasts to couple during reception.
- ◆ Assists groom with changing his clothes after ceremony.

## Ushers

- ◆ Seat guests at the ceremony.
- ◆ Roll and unroll aisle carpet.
- ◆ Assist best man with bachelor dinner or party.
- ◆ At ceremony, provide guests with wedding programs and maps to reception.
- ◆ Head usher seats mother of the groom and bride at the reception.
- ◆ Transport bridesmaids to reception.

## Flower girl

- ◆ Carries basket with rose pedals, rice or confetti to be

thrown before bride's path during processional.

## Ringbearer

- ◆ Carries pillow with rings attached.

## Bride's parents

- ◆ Hold engagement party for bride and groom.
- ◆ Prepare guest list for bride.
- ◆ Serve as host and hostess of reception.
- ◆ Mother helps bride choose her wedding gown.
- ◆ Mother helps bride keep track of gifts received.
- ◆ Mother is last person to be seated at ceremony.
- ◆ Mother stores top layer of wedding cake for bridal couple while they are on honeymoon.
- ◆ Mother arranges for wedding gown to be dry cleaned and preserved.
- ◆ Father coordinates his wedding apparel with other men of the wedding party.
- ◆ Father rides to ceremony with bride in limousine.
- ◆ Father gives bride away at ceremony.

## Groom's parents

- ◆ Prepare guest list for groom.
- ◆ Organize rehearsal dinner. This is one of the most important responsibilities for the groom's parents.
- ◆ Mother coordinates wedding dress with bride's mother.
- ◆ Father gives toast to bride at rehearsal dinner.
- ◆ Father coordinates wedding apparel with other men in wedding party.

Superstition has it that if there is a full moon one or two days before the wedding, then your married life will be filled with luck and good fortune.

# Don't forget ... After your big day there are still a few loose ends

Some details that should not be forgotten about after the wedding include:

- ◆ Return the cake dividers to the cake shop or bakery and collect the deposit, if appropriate.
- ◆ Return any rented equipment and collect deposit.
- ◆ Return rented formal wear and accessories.
- ◆ Preserve your wedding gown and selected accessories.
- ◆ Finish sending thank-you notes.
- ◆ Notify your parents and family of your return. Thank

them for their assistance and cooperation.

- ◆ Select wedding photographs. Order from photographer.
- ◆ Get video from videographer.
- ◆ If not done before the wedding, change your name on your driver's license, charge cards, insurance policies, Social Security card, tax records, etc.
- ◆ Hold a small dinner party sharing your wedding and honeymoon pictures and video.
- ◆ Groom: On your first day after the wedding, buy your bride some flowers.



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**Continued from Page 19**

photographer and videographer, determining arrival times at each nuptial venue.

- ◆ Arrange for preparation/storage area for photographer and videographer at each nuptial venue.
- ◆ Sign your prenuptial agreement, if applicable.
- ◆ Finalize honeymoon plans/itinerary and confirm all travel and hotel reservations.
- ◆ Arrange for transportation to and from the airport.
- ◆ Make all necessary arrangements for care of pets, plants and mail while you're away on honeymoon.
- ◆ Post announcement and photo on your website.
- ◆ Arrange for table card setup at reception venue.
- ◆ Schedule pickup/return of groom's formalwear.

**3 weeks**

- ◆ Finalize list of reception guests.
- ◆ Give the final headcount to the caterer and review details.
- ◆ Arrange for delivery and placement of wedding flowers, candles and other decorations on the day of the ceremony.
- ◆ Call anyone who has not responded to his or her invitation.

**1 week**

- ◆ Confirm your honeymoon travel arrangements.
- ◆ Start packing bags for your honeymoon.
- ◆ Get traveler's checks and/or a small amount of foreign cash.
- ◆ Pick up your wedding dress.

**Wedding day**

- ◆ Eat a good breakfast.
  - ◆ Attend hairstyle appointment.
  - ◆ Give yourself plenty of time to get ready.
  - ◆ Relax and enjoy yourself.
- Adapted from *Bridal Guide's "How to Plan the Perfect Wedding ... Without Going Broke"* by Diane Forden.

Throwing the garter began in France when pieces of the bridal attire were considered lucky. The bride would throw the garter to the guests at the wedding and whoever caught it could expect good luck. In the United States, the groom traditionally removes the garter from the bride and throws it to the unmarried men. The man who catches it is thought to be the next to marry. At some weddings the man who catches the garter will place it on the leg of the lady who caught the bouquet or they may start the next dance. It is also common for the recipients of the bouquet and garter to have a photograph taken with the bride and groom. The garter is placed on the brides right leg, just above the knee.



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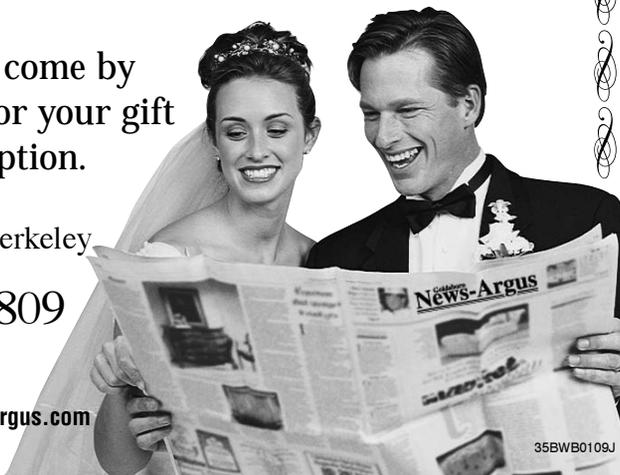
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# Honeymoon

## It's never too early to start planning

By **BECKY BARCLAY**  
Life&Family Editor

**Y**ou've set the date and booked the church for your wedding. Now you're thinking about the caterer, photographer, gown, music and reception.

But don't forget about the fun part — the honeymoon.

It's never too early to start planning your honeymoon, said Eileen Conekin, travel agent with All About Travel.

"Begin planning honeymoon as far in advance as possible," she said.

"Promotions come and go.

"If you're not getting married until June, you should go ahead and come in and plan and pay your deposit in January so you can get the promotion that's out there right now."

Ms. Conekin said that with the economy the way it is

now, a lot of places are offering a fifth or seventh night stay free.

But the closer that it gets to June, it's going to get more expensive.

"At the same time, if a better promotion comes along after you've paid for your trip, you can get some money back," Ms. Conekin said. "I had a couple that booked and paid in full, then a better promotion came along and they are getting \$240 back.

"So you're protected both ways by planning ahead."

On the other hand, with the slow economy and not as many people traveling as usual, the airlines are cutting back their services, Ms. Conekin said. "Even the resorts will start to cut back and close wings and do renovation work if they know their occupancy is down. Just because it's a slower economy doesn't mean there's going to be any better availability."

Another advantage to planning ahead is that you can tell everyone at your

bridal showers and they may get a gift certificate towards your honeymoon.

Ms. Conekin said the popular honeymoon spots continue to be warm locations like Mexico, the Bahamas and the Caribbean. They're also in close proximity to North Carolina and newly-weds like that.

"Hawaii is a good spot," said Ms. Conekin. "But it takes longer to get there so you need at least 10 days to two weeks to spend there to get your money's worth. So time is a consideration here."

See **HONEYMOON**,  
Page 23



News-Argus/GREG SOUSA

Pat Cipriani displays some of the honeymoon travel guides at All About Travel.



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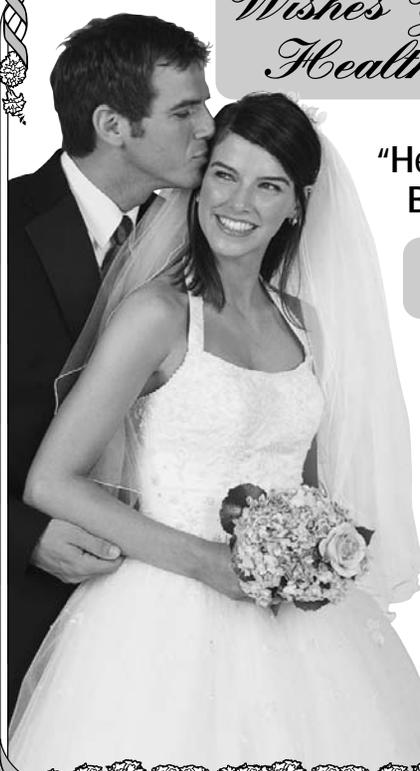


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# Honeymoon

Continued from Page 22

She said Disney World has become a popular honeymoon destination in recent years because it's a good value.

"Right now it has a promotion of paying for four days and getting three for free," said Ms. Conekin.

"This year, you also get in free for your birthday. So, instead of getting in the park for free, which is incorporated in the honeymoon package, you will get a \$75 gift card to spend that day at the park. That's spending money while you're there.

"For travel through March, you also get a \$200 gift card to spend in addition to the three free nights."

Ms. Conekin said that adventure trips not as popular because couples are looking for somewhere to relax and just be together because of how much was involved in the wedding planning.

"Now they want an all-inclusive package where they only decisions they have to make is what to eat and where to swim that day," she said. You pay one price up front and get the whole package. You don't have to worry about spending more money either."

The best time to go to these warm honeymoon spots is in the spring before the summer crunch when families take their vacations, said Ms. Conekin.

"The winter time is peak season in

these places because everyone in the north is going south," she said.

"May is an excellent month for a honeymoon to the warmer places. April is good if you avoid the two weeks around Easter."

Ms. Conekin said that in January, the pricing is great because everybody has just traveled for Christmas and New Year's. There's a lull in January with good pricing then in February and March, the price goes up.

In the summer, prices go up.

"The fall is a good time to go because prices are reasonable," said Ms. Conekin.

"But then you run into problems with the weather because it's the tropical season."

If you are not sure where you'd like to go on your honeymoon, the travel agent can tailor your honeymoon according to what you like to do and your budget.

Once you've made the decision, you make a deposit on your honeymoon trip. Ms. Conekin said that most honeymoon packages require that you pay it off about 60 days before leaving.

"The longer in advance you can plan, the more time you have to pay off your honeymoon," she said. "You can even make payments. But if you come in in January and you're getting married in early April, it's pretty much pay in full because you're almost at your 60 days."

# Bridal beauty important

By **BECKY BARCLAY**  
Life&Family Editor

**D**on't wait until the last minute to start thinking about your skin and hair for your big day, advises Amy Williams, owner of Salon 150.

"A lot of brides will start on their beauty regimen a couple of months in advance," she said. "Most will come and do a trial run for their bridal portrait — especially getting their hair done to find out how they like a certain style. And they'll do their makeup to see how they like that."

Ms. Williams said that's about the time brides should start their skin care regime, too. A lot of them will have skin peels, microderms and facials to get their skin in its best shape for the wedding day.

At home, just washing your face every day will create radiant skin, she said. "There are different creams and lotions you can use after cleansing your skin. And you should keep it hydrated and stay out of the sun."

Ms. Williams said it's best not to make a major change in hair style or color right before the wedding. "Just maintain your color and condition your hair," she said.

Then the day of the wedding, the bride will either go to her salon to have her hair and makeup done or the cosmetologist will go to the church to do these things.

And let's not forget the groom. He wants to look his best for the wedding, too. "A groom will often get a facial or they will come and get waxed," said Ms. Williams. "He'll get his hair cut or beard trimmed. And sometimes a groom will even get color on his hair." She suggests that a groom keep his regular schedule of getting his hair cut.

"Skin care is important for a groom, too," said Ms. Williams. "It just depends on how far he wants to go with it." At home, it's important for the groom to cleanse his skin well regularly.

Planning a wedding can get stressful and that can affect your hair and skin. It's important to take extra steps to keep both in good condition for the wedding day.

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