

Advice to bride's family on...
Money matters in wedding planning

It is traditional in the United States for the parents of the bride to cover the entire cost of a couple's wedding. But according to *Bride's* magazine, this situation is changing.

In the first issue, there was a column titled "The bride's budget," which dealt with the general budget for these items with the couple and how the bills were divided among them.

This columnist's need for money-chasing hands is for further talking about costs between families.

An alternative idea would be for one family to pay for the ceremony flowers, the church rental, limousines, the other to pick up the reception tab. Each family then has complete control over their part of the celebration.

There are many possible arrangements, and the options should be discussed openly and early in the engagement, so an agreeable plan can be worked out.

It's also important to remember, says *Bride's*, that it's still the prerogative of the bride's family to decline an offer of help if they wish. If this happens, the bride's family can celebrate the marriage in another way, such as having the rehearsal dinner or throwing an engagement party.

Incidentally, the idea of sharing wedding expenses is not really a new one. In many countries, the practice has been followed for centuries. For instance, in Spain, fathers of the bride and groom traditionally issue the invitations and have the wedding together.

A wife in a gift received says it must be returned to the line of purchase.

Marriages are made in heaven.

—Tennyson

—Gastie

Experts offer down-to-earth advice

Your wedding is a few weeks away and, naturally, you're dreaming of a perfect, worry-free day. But it's true of weddings as of anything else: The best-laid plans often go awry.

If you're the victim of a no-show organist, or a record heat wave, will you know how to cope? *Bride's* magazine has these tips for handling common wedding-day crises:

• **The photographer is nowhere to be found.** Or, the wedding cake does come, but it says, "Bon Voyage, Aunt Claire."

The florist has dropped off six centerpieces, you ordered 12.

Farce! All these mishaps by getting everything in writing. A reliable contact should specify details as dress colors, frosting, favors, liquor amounts.

Provide all delivery people with a map and instructions for reaching your home or the reception place. Confirm all services ahead and, again, the day before the wedding.

On the day itself, ask a friend to get to the church early to make sure flowers are being delivered and the photographer is

setting up. As a last resort, turn to back-ups.

A talented cousin might be your pinch photographer. Send ushers to the deli, bakery and liquor store for missing items. (Don't wait too long!)

• **You spill red wine on your dress.** Everything imaginable can go wrong with clothes — zippers stick, wrinkles appear, veils tear, buttons fall off.

Ask your salon owner beforehand of what fabric your dress is made, and for tips on how to repair it in an emergency. Then, pack a "just-in-case" kit with needle and thread, spot remover, safety pins, tape, a travel steamer. In a pinch, move flowers to hide the spot or tear.

• **The best man forgets the ring.** Or, it gets stuck on his finger. Or, it falls off the ring bearer's cushion and rolls out of sight. Generally, the best man should keep the ring in his pocket, not on his finger.

Secure the ring on the ring bearer's pillow with a ribbon — or use a fake just for the effect. If your ring really is temporarily out of commission, borrow a ring from an attendant or a parent, and

Origins of beloved customs lie in ancient marriage rites

It happens in every wedding: The bride and groom exchange rings. They share cake. The bride throws her bouquet.

But do you know how these customs began? A new book by Barbara J. Fober, Editor in Chief of *Bride's* magazine, reveals their sometimes surprising origins.

The bride throws her bouquet as an unmarried friend can "catch" some luck in marriage, gives the modern explanation. But the custom actually started as a form of self-defense.

In times past, belief in the mystical value of a bride's adornments prompted friends and strangers alike to try to grab a piece of her wealth.

Conventionally, some clever bride found that by flinging her flowers away from herself, the crowd would have something to fight over — and she would escape.

The wedding party originally served the serious purpose of protecting the bride and groom from the chaos of evil-like those of the bride and groom, so the identity of the happy couple was kept secret on the way to the church and until they were safely married.

The first piece of wedding cake is cut and eaten by the bride and groom as a carry-over from the time when the sharing of food or some other was the marriage.

Customs, for example, were considered wed after drinking mead together for 30 days. (The word *brideal* comes from

bride-ale.)

The aisle runner protected the bride from evil spirits who, it was thought, lived below the ground. These demons were also feared to lurk around doorways, hence the bride is carried over the threshold of her new home.

Rice symbolizes the age-old hope that the couple would be as fruitful as the earth. In France, guests shower the bride and groom with wheat, an expression, with reason, of good wishes.

People drink glasses when they toast the bride and groom in order to produce a bell-like sound, (Bells, it was believed, were repellent to the devil.)

The tradition of dowry, the betrothal ceremony consisting of a kiss and the exchange of rings, with the kiss being the actual legal bond.

The tradition of dowry, was actually an early form of life insurance, since it was meant to ensure that the bride could survive without her husband if the need arose.

We wear the wedding ring on the third finger of the left hand because the pharaohs of Egypt believed a vein, the "vena amoris," ran from that finger directly to the heart.

The honeymoon began when, in ancient marriages by capture, the groom kept his bride at home to prevent marauding relatives from finding her.

The word *maid* comes from the early tradition, common of couples drinking an aphrodisiac honey drink for 30 days, or one week of the moon.

carry on.

• **A bridesmaid is about to keel over.** It could be stage fright, a skipped breakfast or just too much excitement. Be sure to include every attendant in your wedding rehearsal and practice walking down the aisle, what to do at the altar.

Encourage R & R time for everyone the week before, including plenty of sleep and exercise. Plan your rehearsal dinner as an early evening — or hold it two nights ahead. Ask your maid of honor to carry smelling salts, aspirin, adhesive bandages, tissues.

• **It's pouring rain.** Or, it's sunny, too sunny, and the heat threatens to wilt flowers and your hair! It's essential to have a backup location for anything planned outdoors.

You should also be prepared to Dress at the church or nearby. Delay the ceremony. Put up signs for a detour route to church in case of flooded roads. Use beach umbrellas to ferry everyone from cars to church in a downpour. Borrow small air conditioners and fans to keep the wedding party party cool and makeup intact until the ceremony.

The ever-increasing number of working brides has led to new roles, new rules

Today's brides — a little older and more educated — are better decision makers, says *Bride's* magazine. They're also better at looking around doorways, hence the bride is carried over the threshold of her new home.

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Here, therefore, are wedding etiquette tips for the office:

• **Learn to separate work and wedding.** Occasionally it's necessary to confirm an appointment or run a wedding errand during work hours. Usually, though, it's best if you save these for time that's less important to you — lunch hour or coffee break. And, using a pay telephone is better than tying up company phone lines.

• **Keep wedding talk to a minimum.** Co-workers are genuinely excited when they first see your engagement ring. However, supervisors may be concerned that office work is not being done if wedding details monopolize all conversations.

• **Maintain your professional poise.** Clips of wedding dresses or samples of dress fabrics tacked to a bulletin board do pip up your excitement, but will confuse a client who sits down to discuss an investment plan. Stash wedding notes in a folder, separate briefcase or desk drawer for easy reference.

• **Be realistic about invitations.** Don't

feel you have to invite your entire department — wedding invitations are personal. But, if you want to invite everyone, post a blanket invitation to the ceremony (or, reception too) and make it clear how someone planning to come should respond.

• **Don't ask your staff to become wedding assistants.** Think about hiring an office worker to help address invitations or monitor responses, at home, on weekends or in the evening.

• **Avoid identity crises.** A customer may be confused to receive a letter from Kathy Schneider one week after dealing with Kathy Jones the week before. Send colleagues a printed announcement of your marriage, stating whether you will keep your name or assume your husband's name.

• **Stay even-keeled at work.** As deadlines approach, nerves get frayed. Find acceptable ways to relieve stress and keep up your energy so frustrations do not erupt inappropriately at work.

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