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Something new, something old, and best of both

By Melissa Erickson

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When it comes to the special day, a wedding should be what the couple wants it to be, not what tradition requires.

Rather than doing things by the book, today's brides and grooms tend to take their own individual needs and circumstances into account, said etiquette expert Lizzie Post, host of the Awesome Etiquette podcast and co-president of the Emily Post Institute.

"Do what makes sense to you," Post said.

Couples are moving away from formal affairs to create weddings that truly represent who they are as a couple, said Kristen Maxwell Cooper, editor in chief of The Knot. Couples want to bring their personalities into the wedding and choose to tie the knot in nontraditional venues such as barns and farms, historic homes and wineries, museums and parks, according to the The Knot 2017 Real Wedding Study. Additionally, many are nodding to cultural and religious traditions and adding flavor with elements such as a Chinese tea ceremony or traditional Horah Jewish dance, The Knot survey found.

"The good news about wedding parties these days is that there are no rules," said Kylie Carlson, owner and chief executive officer of the International Academy of Wedding & Event Planning.

SEE OLD & NEW, PAGE 4



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OLD & NEW

FROM PAGE 3

Unique, but cohesive

Having honor attendants of the opposite gender is no big deal, but they still need to coordinate.

“Couples should have whomever they want on ‘their side.’ Stick with a similar color palette, even if that means just elements for a tux or the dress,” Carlson said. “Make sure the level of formality is consistent with each of the members of the wedding party. Work with your florist so that the boutonnieres and bouquets have complementary blooms.”

Mix-and-match attire is a nontraditional look couples are embracing. Focusing on a color palette will keep the wedding party look cohesive, Carlson said.

“Decide early on how much the hues should impact clothing selections. It may not make sense, for example, to have everyone dressed head-to-toe in teal, so instead, see if there are accessories that can be incorporated to complement one another,” she said.

Letting attendants choose their own outfits allows them to show off their personal style, but you’ll want to communicate the level of formality so everyone complements one another in that manner, Carlson said.

Traditional for a reason

However, some traditional elements will never go out of style.

“The first dance is a perennial favorite. It’s such a great way to start off the reception. You really can’t beat that initial excitement as the couple is introduced for the first time onto the dance floor,” Carlson said.

Registries are traditional, but an invitation should not include registry infor-

mation or what gifts are wanted, Post said.

“The focus always should be on inviting guests to celebrate the event with you -- not for an expectation of a gift,” she said.

“Honeyfunds” have been embraced by wedding guests because they want to give couples the gift of a vacation together or an activity, Post said.

“Experiential registry gifts are quite popular right now,” Carlson said. “Memberships to museums (art, science, etc.) are a great addition to any wedding registry. They typically last a full calendar year and include a number of perks, giving you plenty of excuses for a regular date night. We’re also seeing tickets to events, wine of the month clubs and gift certificates to have one’s house cleaned.”

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When it comes to flowers, anything goes

By **Melissa Erickson**
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When it comes to wedding floral trends, engaged couples are making up their own traditions with everything from more-organic bouquets to floral statement walls.

“Bouquets have come a long way, and now people are choosing to go bigger with more elaborate flowers and bouquets that are so large they almost cover the whole dress,” said Audra Danzak, owner of A Garden Floral in Las Vegas. “With their own personal style, brides can throw tradition to the wind.”

On the other hand, some brides are taking a note from the smaller bouquet Meghan Markle carried as she married England’s Prince Harry, said Diane Joyal, owner and head floral designer at Bowerbird Flowers in Chapel Hill, North Carolina.

“Bouquets have evolved from tightly bound to a more organic free-flowing style featuring greenery,” said Danielle Gonzalez, spokeswoman for Blooms by the Box, an online wholesaler of wedding flowers. “Dahlias and ranunculus are both on the rise, and with good reason. Dahlias come in wide variety of colors, from vibrant solids to a softer pastel, which makes them universally popular no matter

your color palette. Ranunculus adds whimsy and romance with their paper-thin petals.”

Greenery and arches

Something on-trend right now is bouquets with only greenery as opposed to flowers, said Samantha Rodgers, in-house florist for Vegas Weddings in downtown Las Vegas.

“Everyone is looking for oversized, boho-style bouquets with loose arrangements. When it comes to details, lace ribbon is the most popular and on every bride’s must list,” she said.

“When it comes to color palettes, pastels have returned in place of blush. I’m seeing floral designers using a range of pastel colors to create a soft, but impactful, painted effect in bouquets,” Joyal said.

Also of-the-moment is fern greenery in garlands, bouquets and boutonnieres, and to add texture to any tablescape, Gonzalez said.

“Wreaths are a perennial favorite, but now they are coming at us in an unexpected way: Think mini wreath boutonnieres for the guys,” she said.

Circles are a symbol of eternal love, and a ring or hoop of flowers brings this message to life.

“If you truly want to make a statement, this is the place of resistance. A ring or arch of flowers makes a beautiful focal point, a great conversa-

tion starter and a photo backdrop everyone will be lining up for,” said Vito Russo, vice president and artistic director at Carl Alan Floral Artistry in Philadelphia.

“An archway dripping in layers of flowers and greenery, used for the ceremony and then moved to a reception space, is a wonderful way to create a photo op for your guests while getting more bang for your buck,” Joyal said. “If you’re all about a statement wall, using tropical foliage in a living wall is something that will really impress.”

Pro tips

-- Don’t forget and order flowers at the last minute, Russo said. Florists and bridal experts recommend at least a month for basic bouquets, and up to nine months before the wedding for intricate, large-scale designs.

-- Keep in mind what flowers will be in season so that you don’t break your budget. Ever-popular peonies can be sourced in fall and winter, but you will likely pay a premium, Gonzalez said.

-- Be realistic about your budget. Do your research into floral designers and pick one whose work resonates with you, Joyal said.

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What the smart groom is wearing

By **Melissa Erickson**

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While all eyes tend to be on the bride, a groom's style needs to be on point, too.

"While the bride will be stunning, the groom should feel just as special on his wedding. A well-tailored suit or tuxedo will surely turn some heads as well," said Joseph Abboud, chief creative director at Men's Wearhouse.

Start by thinking about what the ideal wedding looks like, said Brice Pattison, fashion director at The Black Tux, a suit rental company with store and online options.

"If the vision is formal, wear black tie. If not, wear a suit," he said. "Once that is determined, then I would suggest considering set and setting -- meaning rural versus urban, day versus evening, spring versus autumn -- and opting for color, pattern and material that complements. A simple rule of thumb I use is the more sunlight there is at the event, the lighter the color of suit."

"While tuxedos and suits are the most popular attire for a groom, they don't always have to be black," Abboud agreed. "They can be navy, charcoal or light gray and are all equally as elegant, but offer an unexpected twist."

Non-tux options

A suit is a great choice for a wedding.

"Dress it up by adding a vest or take a non-traditionalist approach by pairing it with a fun bow tie, a sweater or a pair of suspenders. This is the perfect choice for those who are looking for a more modern option," Abboud said. "We are also seeing a lot of mixing and matching with different patterns and texture, with beautiful dinner jackets on the red carpet."

"If you can't decide between tux or

suit, there's a third option that's been gaining popularity in recent years," said Chris Easter, co-founder of The Man Registry. "A tuxedo-suit hybrid is perfect for grooms who want a formal look but love the feel of a suit. This hybrid features aspects from each style, boasting satin on the lapels and cloth buttons down the front of the jacket."

One big question to be answered is, rent or buy?

"Budget always plays a factor. It will be cheaper to rent, although you may get long-lasting value out of purchasing," Easter said.

A well-tailored garment is the most important fashion trend, so consider having one custom made if possible, Abboud said.

Personalize it

Men shouldn't be afraid to stand out.

"We have seen more wedding couples opt for bolder outfits for the groom than in past years, such as wearing a rose shawl collar tuxedo," Pattison said. "Additionally, more grooms are changing into a new dinner jacket from the wedding ceremony to the reception, which aligns with many brides changing their dresses for the reception."

"My favorite way to add a dash of personality to a suit or tux is to accessorize the lapel," Easter said. "Lapel decor can range from the basic boutonniere to a pin that represents the groom's personality, interest or family. Think guitar, airplane, deer antlers, sports team insignias, etc. This is instant personality that's subtle enough to not take over the look."

Just don't wait until the last minute.

"The groom should complete his suit or tuxedo fitting no later than 60 days prior to the wedding," Abboud said.

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Expert beauty tips for the big day

By **Melissa Erickson**

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Beauty trends may come and go, but looking beautiful on your wedding day will always be in style. Whether you're newly engaged or getting married this weekend, the No. 1 piece of advice is to try to eliminate stress.

"Stress plays a lot on our outer beauty, on our skin and hair. Stress-free, it'll shine through any makeup," said professional makeup artist and hairstylist Shannon Alexander of Omaha, Nebraska. "Hire a professional. They will be able to help you with the look you are trying to achieve. Quality over quantity for your big day."

Flawless hair

Textured chignons are a modern take on a classic hairstyle. "Chignons are beautiful. Very classy," Alexander said. "One thing with the chignon is, you don't need to add much to it to update it. It's always in style. Maybe add flowers or jewels, but keeping it simple is just classy."

For something a bit more extravagant, many brides are choosing a half-up, half-down look with curls. It's a style that looks timeless yet brides still feel like themselves, Alexander said. Bring it over the top by adding jewels, flowers, tiaras or a long beautiful veil, she said.

From oversize blooms to delicate blossoms, flowers real and artificial add a sweet touch to a bride's look. "They can easily be placed in the hair and secured with bobby pins. Pinning the hair up in a low loose bun with curls and adding some floral is a high request," Alexander said. For the ceremony, a veil can be placed on top of or below the curls and florals placed accordingly, Alexander said.

Stunning makeup

A radiant complexion with glowy skin is the perfect face-forward look.



"Beautiful, flawless, airbrushed makeup is a good choice for her big day," Alexander said.

She suggests a subtle soft smoky eye using browns and adding lashes to makes eyes pop.

"Add some highlight and color to the cheeks and keeping it natural, you have a bride that will just glow," Alexander said.

For a more statement look, go for a heavy eye or a bold lip, but stick to just one, Alexander said.

"A nice timeless red lip can make a great statement. If you choose the eyes to make a statement, maybe do a smoky eye, big lashes but not

fake-looking, and keep the lip natural," Alexander said.

Stylist tips

■ "Before your wedding day, taking care of your hair and skin is important," Alexander said. "Some brides feel growing their hair long and not getting haircuts for their wedding day will help their stylist. It's not absolutely necessary to have long locks for an updo. Sometimes extra-long hair can be even harder to put all in an updo." Extensions can help make hair longer and fuller and be absolutely beautiful, Alexander said.

■ Clean, dry hair is a must. Because

a stylist will be adding products to increase texture, brides should wash their hair the day before to avoid greasy hairlines, Alexander said.

■ The night before the wedding, be sure to remove all makeup. "A good base will have a beautiful end result and help makeup stay on. This starts with skin. Exfoliate, even treat yourself to a facial a week before. This will help eliminate dead skin cells, hydrate the skin and give a nice canvas for makeup," Alexander said.

■ Make sure to have your eyebrows waxed as well. "Eyeshadow will look 10 times better," she said.

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Tax tips for newly married couples

In most parts of the country, the months of June, August, September and October are the most popular for weddings. Whether recently married or anxiously counting the days until you tie the knot, there are some important tax implications that you and your spouse can't afford to overlook.

"In between the flurry of wedding planning, dress shopping and bridal showers, few engaged couples stop to think about how getting married will affect their income taxes," explained TaxAct spokesperson, Shaunna Morgan. "While it's important to understand the tax consequences, keep in mind that you can still do your own taxes. TaxAct, a leading DIY tax solution, asks simple questions about life events like marriage to guide you through the tax implications and help you get all of your deductions to maximize your refund."

Name changes

Your name(s) and Social Security number(s) are critical elements of your tax return. Both identifiers must exactly match the information the Social Security Administration (SSA) has on file. That means if you legally change your name after you get married, the SSA needs to know about it.

To get a Social Security card with your new name, you'll need to provide proof of identity, such as a marriage certificate, fill out an application and either mail it or deliver it in person to your local SSA office.

You'll want to do this long before you file your income tax return.

New address

If you're moving, remember to report your new address to the Internal Revenue Service (IRS). The fastest way to make the change is to complete Form 8822 available on the agency website at <http://www.irs.gov>.

New filing status

Once you've said, "I do," you'll have the option to claim one of two filing statuses on your tax return: married filing jointly or married filing separately. If you and your spouse each earn an income, you might consider running

the numbers to determine if you have a lower combined tax by filing one way versus the other. Some tax software packages do the calculations for you so it's easier to make an informed decision when selecting a filing status. TaxAct Deluxe, for example, gives users a Joint vs. Separate Analysis report that does all the calculations so you can see your estimated refund amounts for each filing status. For many couples, married filing jointly results in lower income tax liability.

Keep in mind that no matter when in the year you get married, you are considered married for the full year. Even if your big day is December 31, you will have a married status in the eyes of the IRS for the entirety of that tax year.

Changing your tax withholding

Any time you have a life change you should revisit your Form W-4. Getting married is definitely one of those times. If both you and your spouse work, you'll likely have a higher combined income, which may put you into a higher tax bracket. In order to ensure the right amount of tax is withheld from your paycheck, you'll want to update your Form W-4 to ensure you aren't having too much or too little tax withheld.

Affordable Care Act premium tax credit

If you or your spouse receive health insurance through a government-sponsored marketplace and receive advance payments of the premium tax credit to help offset the cost of your premiums, you'll want to review your coverage after the wedding, and notify the marketplace of your newly married status. Reporting this change will help you avoid having too much or too little premium assistance paid and ultimately, help you steer clear of owing additional money or getting a small refund when you file your taxes. If you elect to keep your coverage "as is," separate from your spouse, or wish to add your spouse to your coverage, you should notify the marketplace of your special changes in coverage. If you elect to go under your spouse's health plan, be sure to cancel your marketplace coverage.



Make it picture perfect

By **Melissa Erickson**
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In the age of selfies and Instagram, where almost every guest has the ability to take and share digital pictures, photo booths continue to be a popular addition to weddings.

“Photo booths are guest entertainment,” said photojournalist Dave Tamez, owner of Snap Me Crazy Photo Booths in Edmond, Oklahoma. “Not everyone likes to dance, but when they see a photo booth people of all ages get in line. And usually they don’t mind waiting. It breaks the ice and gets people talking and mingling.”

The traditional photo booth is still a novelty, Tamez said.

“With selfies and Facebook, people just don’t print pictures anymore,” he said.

A 2-by-6-inch strip or postcard-sized photo printout is so old it almost seems like a fresh idea.

“People really like to bring them home, put them up on the fridge or on their desk at work. Not only is it fun, it’s a great keepsake of the day,” Tamez said.

Video enhancements

Photo booths have become an integral part of weddings, but they’re not simply four-walled booths where guests can duck in for a few shots and a keepsake strip of photos to take home.

“Besides static photos, GIFs and boomerangs have become very popular. These videos can be projected onto walls, or shared via social media with the wedding’s hashtag,” said Brooklyn, New York-based wedding photographer Diana Zapata of Bluespark Photography.

Fun and shareable on social media, animated photo booth creations offer guests something a little different.

More of an investment for photo booth operators, these upscale booths

have a camera or cameras that take a burst of photos, Tamez said. The images are mashed together and can be looped forward or backward into a two- or three-second clip that can be shared on social media or by email or text.

In the same vein but opposite direction, slow-motion photo booths can dramatically capture signature wedding elements such as a champagne pop or a crowded dance floor.

Props and keepsakes

Another alternative to the nostalgic photo booth is one that doubles as a photo op.

“For example, we recently worked with two unique photo booths, one a super-cute trailer and the other a vintage Volkswagen bus. This unique twist on the photo booth has definitely helped it stay current and keep guests excited for something a little different,” said Stephanie Brown, owner of Off the Beaten Path, a full-service wedding/event planning company with in-house photography services in Napa, California.

The classic photo booth can also serve as a scrapbook station. A double of each photo is printed, then compiled into a keepsake for the bride and groom, Tamez said. An attendant can even ask guests to sign or comment on the pages to make it more personalized, he said.

Photo booths can even serve as the distribution point for a couple’s wedding favors.

“As guest pick up favors they can stop in at the photo booth and use the favors as props. Unique favors like custom sunglasses can be a unifying factor in your photo booth images or theme,” said Rachel Stephens of Totally Promotional, an online retailer and manufacturer of custom printed promotional products and wedding favors.

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Say 'I do' to these 5 classic poses you'll want in your wedding photos

By Nicci Bontrager
FamilyShare

Your wedding day is commonly referred to as the best day in your life. A whirl of people, photos, flowers, food, and music will swirl past as you celebrate marriage. What an exciting and memorable experience! Your wedding photo album will live as a reminder of those happy moments. Since you will be busy staring into your new spouse's eyes, plan ahead with your photographer to capture these 5 essential wedding poses.

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PICTURE POSES

FROM PAGE 14

quiet, or on the ring pillow, but make sure you let your photographer capture the rings on your fingers.

The Blissful Hug

Amidst the hustle and bustle of welcoming guests, dancing, cutting the cake, and smiling for hours, take some time to relax with your new spouse. Celebrate that you two are finally married and simply hold each other. (Make sure your photographer tags along during these quiet moments.) As you enjoy your wedding festivities, you'll find you are continually drawn to be in your spouse's loving arms. Enjoy those calm moments of simple closeness.

Happy Faces

Wedding photographers capture all kinds of candid photos throughout your wedding celebration. Candid photos show the movement and joy around the entire day, and these photos are not staged. In most of your photos, you'll find that neither of you look at the camera often. You'll be looking at each other or the guests more than the photographer. Occasionally the two of you will both need to look at the photographer at the same time. The "happy faces" photo shows the world your joy at becoming man and wife, so remember to smile for the camera.

Swept Away

Every wedding album needs a photo of the groom sweeping his bride off her feet. Some grooms sweep their bride down into a loving dip. Some grooms carry their brides off in their arms. The "swept away" photo can be a humorous event, a romantic gesture or a choreographed dance move. Whatever the

groom decides to do in your wedding, make sure your photographer is primed to capture those precious smiles and kisses.

Seasonal Memories

If your wedding celebration takes place during seasonal weather, ask your photographer to include some seasonal pictures. For example, an autumn wedding could include some pictures with falling leaves or harvest pumpkins. A winter wedding could show the couple dancing in lightly falling snow or the groom placing a warm shawl over his wife. The day of your wedding includes the weather of the actual day, and photographs will help you remember the details.

Whichever poses you decide to incorporate into your wedding, make sure you hire a professional photographer with whom you feel comfortable.

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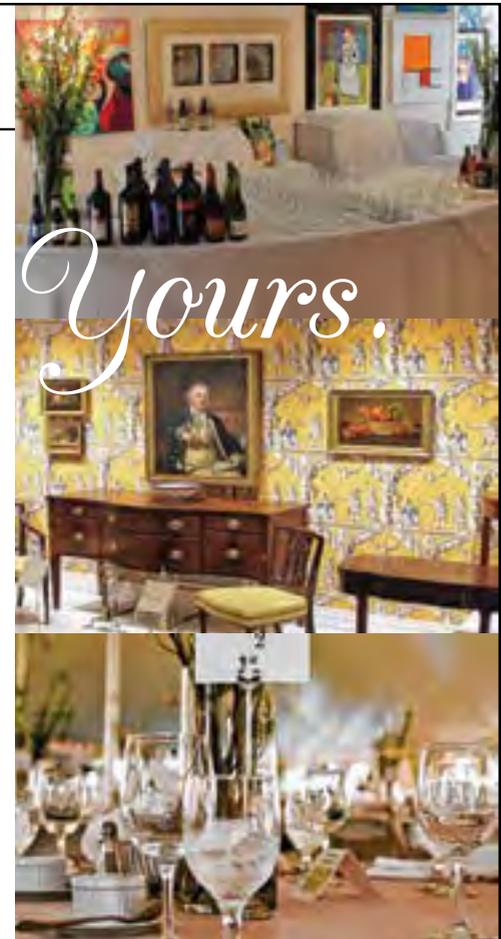
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Chic brides are choosing a range of complementary colors for their celebration

By **Melissa Erickson**

More Content Now

Brides are committing to color, and many are getting inspiration from the Pantone Color Institute, which forecasts a move toward the cooler and softer side of the spectrum.

Pantone's color of the year, Marsala, is a deep burgundy-brown. Other on-trend colors for summer weddings include Aquamarine, Scuba Blue, Strawberry Ice, Tangerine, Lavender Herb and Custard.

"Brides should pay attention to color because many different industries involved in bridal, including floral, paper, tabletop, textile, beauty and fashion, are clued into Pantone's color of the year. That means they will have some offerings that will be new and fresh and show they are up to date," said Leatrice Eiseman, executive director of the Pantone Color Institute.

Using a palette

Gone are the days when a bride walked in to meet with a wedding planner with two paint chips, said Lauren Kay, The Knot's senior style

editor. Now brides want an overall feeling of color or a color palette for their wedding, she said. Using a palette gives brides more versatility, allowing them to bring in shades and hues of a color that complement each other.

"Having a well-planned color palette can be the thread that helps bring together the florals, the invitations, the cake, the fashions, making it all feel cohesive and edited," said Abby Larson, founder and editor of Style Me Pretty and Style Me Pretty Living. "While color palettes don't need to feel matchy-matchy (think a range of hues in the same family from nude to Marsala), they help to define your wedding 'look' and they communicate to your vendors and your guests your style in a much clearer way."

Color of the year

The dark, rich and dramatic Marsala will "absolutely work for summer," especially with floaty summer fabrics like organdy, chiffon and sheer silks, Eiseman said. It pairs well with peachy pinks, rose and apricot. "It also sparkles in summer with me-

tallics like gold and bronze, and the complementary turquoises and cobalt blue are a breath of fresh air," Eiseman said.

Marsala can also be a pop of color through a bridesmaid's lipstick, a ribbon on a program, or in a signature drink, Kay said. Also, color the little details like tassels, which are big right now, seen tied to chairs and canopy ceilings, Kay said.

Obviously, color brightens typical decor such as flowers and table linens, "but let's not forget the groom and the groomsmen," Eiseman said. "Think of fun places, other than ties and cummerbunds. Socks and shoelaces in the lead color are a great accent, and so are colorful sneakers for the guys," said Eiseman.

Have fun, use caution

When it comes to playing with color, creativity captivates, but use caution, too.

"We always advise, 'Don't follow it off the cliff.' Use your color palette as a guide," Kay said.

No matter your personal style, color pairing can add variety and sophisti-

cation.

"Color pairing in weddings is much like color pairing in your home or with your wardrobe. Think in color families and neutrals. Champagne, blush pinks, marsalas all blend beautifully together. Then you can layer in neutrals like greens, black, grays, metallics or browns" said Larson.

Keys to success

The best piece of advice when it comes to building your color palette is to really allow your venue to set the pace.

"Forcing a pink and green palette into a space that is rich reds and gold will feel out of place and will take much more work to get the style you are looking to achieve," Larson said.

How do you know if you are successfully pairing colors?

"You just have to trust that 'aha' moment when you really love the colors together," Eiseman said. "If you are the bride, trust your own judgment and go with favorite colors. Remember, the bride is the star of the day and she gets to pick what pleases her."



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Hockessin couple gives advice about long-lasting marriage

By Wm. Shawn Weigel

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Ask Phil and Shirley Gardener about the key to a long-lasting, successful marriage nearly seven decades long, and it comes down to two basic elements.

"For us it's been about mutual respect, and a common religion," Phil Gardener said. "We're very active in church, and it's been one of the keys to our success."

Shirley agrees, also adding a mutual joy for travelling (although he enjoys it more than she), and meeting new people in the process, as well as a mutual faith in god, fostered through their church, Ebenezer United Methodist in Newark.

The Gardeners' story is a piece of classic, post-war Americana. They met in middle school, started dating in high school, and married when Phil was in the Navy.

As he busied himself at college, Shirley worked for the Erasmus Power Plant.

Phil's subsequent 33 years with DuPont kept the couple on the move from state to state, until finally settling in the Newark area for 40-plus years.

Now both 85 ("I'm three months older, and he never lets me forget it," quipped Shirley), the couple has settled in at the Summit Retirement Community in Hockessin, where they enjoy playing bridge, attending bible study, and visiting with friends and family.

"I'm 30 years into my retirement, and I worked for 33 years," Phil said. "So I've just about broken even."

Shirley adds that they also try to keep up with the numerous activities happening daily at the Summit.

"You're as busy as you want to be, but it'd wear you out if you try and do all the things that are offered," she said.

They also keep busy visiting with their three children, three grandchildren and three great-grandchildren when they're able.

"We've certainly been very blessed," Shirley said.



Phil and Shirley Gardener, of the Summit in Hockessin, will celebrate 67 years of marriage in May. They met in middle school and started their courtship in 11th grade. WM. SHAWN WEIGEL PHOTO

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Dancing united Odessa couple for nearly 50 years

By Amanda Parrish
aparrish@doverpost.com

In the early 1940s, a 16-year-old Blanche spent every Friday night dancing at Middletown Century Club. One night turned out to be more special than the rest.

Eighteen-year-old Franklin Bailey from Cecilton, Maryland asked her to dance.

Lifelong Odessa resident Blanche said she was interested in him, but she did not give into his advances quickly. She said she “played hard to get.”

“I liked him, but I was just testing him out,” Blanche said laughing. “I wanted to make sure he was the right one.”

Every Friday night, the two would meet up at Century Club. After the sixth week, she knew he was the man for her. One year later, Franklin asked Blanche to marry him. She could not remember exactly where he proposed, but she described it as non-traditional. He didn’t get down on one knee. She remembered him just saying,

“Let’s get married.”

About two years later, in 1943, Franklin and Blanche married at St. Paul’s United Methodist Church in Odessa. Both were nervous, she remembered, but soon enough they would begin a marriage that would last nearly 50 years.

The two were married for 48 years before Franklin died in 1991.

The Baileys spent their life running several crop and dairy farms in Maryland and the MOT area. Although running the farms was a large part of their life, Blanche said her favorite memory was the birth of their first child Frank Jr.

“I was happy when I had him. I mean really happy,” she said.

Franklin and Blanche had three sons: Frank Jr., Michael and Jimmy — known as Bo. All of their children helped out milking the cows and harvesting crops. Doing the “manual labor,” as she described it. Blanche’s family has grown substantially. Now she has eight grandchildren and 23 great-grandchildren.

Frank Jr. said he didn’t remember any specific traditions his parents had throughout the years, but he knew they were always in love.

Blanche said, “He was good to me, really good to me.”

Her best advice to give to any couple is to have strong communication to limit fighting. She doesn’t remember fighting with Franklin too often — neither does Frank Jr. — but she said he would often leave the room to avoid any argument. Blanche’s daughter-in-law Sandi Bailey said she remembers hearing stories about Franklin picking non-serious fights with Blanche and then leaving the room chuckling, which always drove Blanche crazy.

“He would leave the house if there was an argument as I would keep on hollering,” Blanche said laughing.

Franklin died in April 1991 from heart failure, two years before their 50th wedding anniversary. She said her favorite part about the marriage was how well he treated her and how well he took care of their family.



Franklin and Blanche Bailey at their son Frank Jr.'s wedding in 1967.

SUBMITTED PHOTO

Throughout the years, their lives changed, but one thing that seemed to stay constant was their dance nights.

“The two would always go to dances on Saturday nights and fire company banquets,” Sandi said. “They were still partying and having a good time throughout the years.”

Making marriage last: Milford couple celebrates 66 years

By Andre Lamar
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Spider-Man, the Grammy Awards and the hula hoop haven’t been around as long as Milford’s Liz and Herb Gabel have been married.

The pair, married for 66 years, are new residents at Milford Place retirement community. They’re both 88 years old, but Liz is the eldest.

“She’s two months older than I am, so I can call her the old lady,” Herb said jokingly.

Originally hailing from Pennsylvania, the two have made the First State their home for 50 years. Liz has slight dementia, which is why the couple decided to move to Milford Place in December, her husband said.

Yet the Gabels can’t escape their Pennsylvania roots, which is where they first met on a blind date. At the time, Liz was a freshman at Pottstown Hospital School of Nurses.

“The senior class all wanted to go to this big party, which was a charitable/formal thing. Everyone was trying to get everyone lined up and they ended up with too many guys,” she said. “Since I had no date, I was told I was going to go with this guy from Philadelphia. Well, Herb ended up being the guy from Philadelphia. But he wasn’t from there.”

Herb’s originally from Pottstown, not that it mattered. “He’s just one wonderful guy. He’s easy to get along with,” Liz said.

After a few years of dating, while Liz was still in nursing school, Herb popped the question. But they had to wait to get married or Liz would get in trouble.

“I got her pregnant, which wasn’t allowed at that time. If [her college professors] would’ve known at that time she was pregnant, she would’ve gotten thrown out of nursing school,” Herb said. “She graduated on one day and we



Liz and Herb Gabel, of Milford Place, have been married for 66 years.

ANDRE LAMAR PHOTO

got married the next. We ended up with four children and have been together for 66 years.”

Among the keys to their long marriage, Liz said, is that Herb always had a steady job and he’s kind. Meanwhile, Herb said their relationship has remained strong because he never believed in laying hands on a woman and “we never go to bed angry.”

Georgetown couple reflects on 56-year marriage

By Shannon Marvel McNaught

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Eddie and Diane Shockley met while they were both students at Georgetown High School.

"I was a basketball cheerleader, he was a star basketball player, and I'd say 'Shockley, Shockley, he's our man, if he can't do it, no one can!' That's when I fell in love with him," Diane said.

They were quickly married after a no-frill proposal, on Dec. 14, 1963, at St. Paul's Episcopal Church in Georgetown. Diane was 17 and Eddie 18.

"It was a little bit of a shotgun," Eddie laughed.

They honeymooned in Ocean City, Maryland.

"It was all pretty fast," Diane said. "But it just felt good. We always just felt like it was the right thing."

Fifty-six years later, it seems it was indeed the right thing. The couple, now 73 and 74, have three children and six grandchildren. Eddie worked at Dupont for 30 years and Eastern Shore Poultry for 23. Diane worked for Acme Markets and the Indian River School District, for 18 years each.

One of the couple's favorite hobbies is camping in their motorhome. A favorite memory is an early 90s trip to Maine, seeing Bar Harbor and Cadillac Mountain and then traveling through New Hampshire and Vermont.

"We've had lots of good years camping," Diane said. "We have lots of good friends we camped with in Cherrystone [in Virginia]. We went to Myrtle Beach a couple times."

They both had advice on how to make a marriage last.

"I think you gotta be able to enjoy the highs and get over the lows," Eddie said.

"I think a sense of humor is good to have," said Diane. "Making each other feel good is important too, to always think about the other person."



Eddie Shockley played on the basketball team and Diane was a cheerleader at Georgetown High School. SHANNON MARVEL MCNAUGHT PHOTO



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