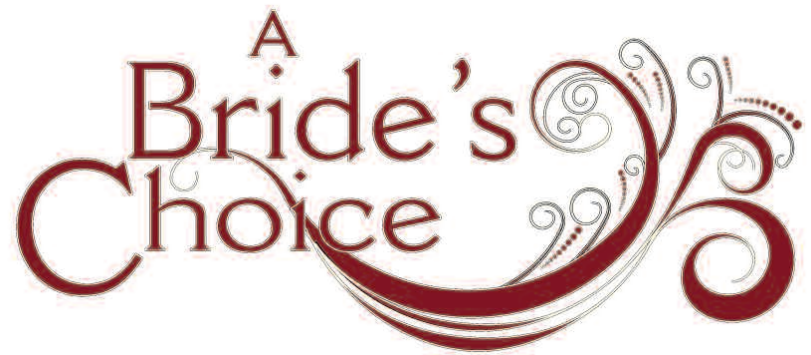


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**WEDDING**  
PLANNER  
2016 Edition







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*Cover photo: Emily and Aaron Bradley pose for a wedding photo at Bay Cliff Health Camp in Big Bay.*

*Photo courtesy of Wren Photography*

Graphic Design/Layout: Selena Hautamaki Ad layout: David Bond Coordinator: James Larsen

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## Wedding ring basics

**E**ngagement ring purchases are usually a solo endeavor, with the groom having an idea of the ring style and color his bride-to-be prefers. But couples usually shop for their wedding ring sets together, and such excursions can be special and meaningful. Like many decisions couples make when planning their weddings, choosing rings comes down to personal preference. There are no steadfast rules when it comes to purchasing wedding rings, but some guidelines can make shopping far easier.

As couples prepare to shop for rings, it can help for each

person to list the attributes he or she would like in a ring. This should include the type of metal, color, width, and even cost. Couples may find they have different preferences, and this is perfectly fine, as wedding rings do not have to match.

A wedding band should complement the engagement ring but not be a perfect match. An ornate engagement ring might look better with a simple band, and vice-versa. Similarly cut gemstones also can complement an engagement ring. If the bride chooses to wear both her engagement ring and wedding band together on the



*Courtesy photo*

same finger, she should choose a band that will accommodate the curves of uniquely shaped engagement rings.

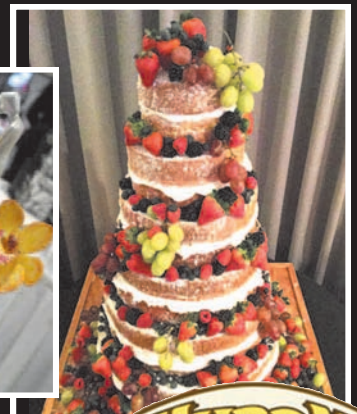
Couples can make some early choices even before they visit jewelry stores. Narrow down your options so the experience will not be overwhelming. When the time comes to shop, give yourselves at least two months to browse and then choose the rings you like best.

Lifestyle and daily routine should be considered at all times. These rings will be worn daily, and no one wants to fret about a ring being too delicate to stand up to everyday wear and tear. Also, think long-term. Trendy rings can be fun, but will they still seem like such a good idea when you are celebrating your twentieth wedding anniversary?

When getting rings sized,

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***Wedding rings do not have to match. It can help for each person to list the attributes they would like in a ring.***



both the bride and groom should go when their fingers aren't swollen from exercise or early in the morning after they may have retained fluid. Shopping should take place when hands aren't too hot or cold. This will allow the best size so the bands fit comfortably and will have enough wiggle room should fingers swell or shrink a little bit.

People can protect their in-

vestments by keeping the ring on as much as possible and only removing it when engaging in demanding physical activity or when working with chemicals. Store the ring in a safe spot when you are not wearing it so you are less likely to lose it.

Wedding rings can be purchased from any number of retailers. Just be sure the rings are of good quality and sellers stand by the craftsmanship.



*Courtesy photos*



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## Inspiration boards bring wedding plans together

**M**aking the wedding of your dreams a reality may require some creativity. It can be challenging to organize all of the creative ideas swimming around in your head, but inspiration boards may be able to help.

Inspiration boards, sometimes referred to as idea boards, are commonly used by interior designers, artists, writers, and even wedding planners. Such boards can serve a great purpose when starting a new project, especially if all of your creative ideas seem to lack cohesion. Sometimes seeing things together, rather than in bits and pieces on their own, can fuel even more creativity.

Inspiration boards can include magazine clippings, photographs, fabric swatches, quotes or literary passages, and color

swatches. As the idea board grows, you may find a common denominator among your inspirational elements. This can help determine a theme for your wedding or jump-start other planning.

While poster boards may be more traditional idea boards, creative ideas also can be compiled in binders or scrapbooks, which work especially well at keeping all items organized and concise. Plus, they're portable, which means you can take a scrapbook to a meeting with a wedding vendor and show him or her your concepts for the wedding.

Later, when photographers, florists and other vendors have been booked, you can attach receipts or agreements to the inspiration board for future reference.



*Photography by 2:40 Media Productions, Justin Berkel*

This keeps all of your important wedding information in one place rather than requiring you to search through different folders or files for important documents. In addition, if friends or family members ask for advice on vendors and planning their own weddings in the future, you can readily access your inspiration board.



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## How to build a inspiration board

To start building your own board or book, take clippings of photos or articles that resonate with you. As you visit bridal shops and other stores, take fabric swatches and pictures of particular looks. Attend bridal shows and take home promotional materials. Remember, inspiration may not always come from bridal-related resources. Anything you come across in your daily life — such as window-shopping at a furniture store or passing an art exhibit — may inspire some creativity.

Inspiration boards are used by top design professionals and can be a handy resource for couples planning their weddings.



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# Wedding checklist



## 12-18 months

- ☐ Envision the type of wedding you want
- ☐ Pick a wedding date (and several backup dates)
- ☐ Determine a budget and number of guests to invite
- ☐ Book ceremony and reception sites
- ☐ Select and book an officiant
- ☐ Hire a wedding consultant if desired
- ☐ Start browsing for a dress
- ☐ Begin researching vendors

## 9-11 months

- ☐ Submit your newspaper engagement announcement refer to pg. 12 "Submitting announcement"
- ☐ Order gown, accessories and bridesmaid dresses
- ☐ Create a guest list
- ☐ Notify out-of-town guests so travel plans can be made
- ☐ Choose and ask attendants
- ☐ Reserve a photographer and videographer
- ☐ Select a caterer and work on menu
- ☐ Book your reception band or DJ
- ☐ Investigate floral, invitation and honeymoon options

## 6-8 months

- ☐ Book a florist
- ☐ Hire a baker for your wedding cake
- ☐ Select ceremony music
- ☐ Register for bridal gifts
- ☐ Reserve any party rental equipment
- ☐ Order invitations and announcements
- ☐ Make wedding day transportation arrangements
- ☐ Finalize honeymoon plans

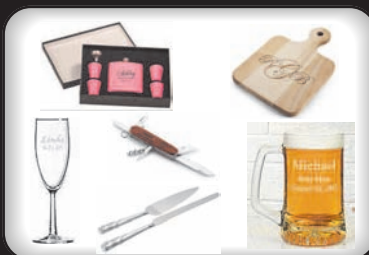
## 3-5 months

- ☐ Address wedding invitations
- ☐ Finalize details with florist and caterer
- ☐ Confirm delivery dates for dresses and schedule fittings
- ☐ Shop for and purchase wedding rings
- ☐ Reserve groom's tux and groomsmen's outfits
- ☐ Book a room for your wedding night
- ☐ Make plans to get your marriage license
- ☐ Select or design a marriage contract required by your religion
- ☐ Book a rehearsal dinner site and determine guest list
- ☐ Acquire passports and/or visas if honeymooning abroad

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## 2 months

- ☐ Choose ceremony readings and finalize vows
- ☐ Have final dress fittings
- ☐ Purchase attendants's gifts
- ☐ Order ceremony programs
- ☐ Confirm all arrangements with vendors
- ☐ Stamp and mail all invitations
- ☐ Schedule ceremony rehearsal and review details with officiant

## 1 month

- ☐ Purchase your wedding license
- ☐ Pick up wedding gown and rings
- ☐ Make name change to proper documents
- ☐ Have our wedding portrait taken
- ☐ Coordinate wedding day details
- ☐ Mail invitations for rehearsal dinner
- ☐ Start planning reception seating
- ☐ Give requests to band/DJ and photographer
- ☐ Schedule hair and makeup appointments
- ☐ Confirm attire and accessories are ready
- ☐ Confirm reshearsal time and date with wedding party
- ☐ Finalize reception seating
- ☐ Prepare place cards

- ☐ Prepare toasts for rehearsal and reception
- ☐ Address announcements to be mailed on your wedding day
- ☐ Confirm room reservations for wedding night and honeymoon

## 1 week

- ☐ Book manicure and pedicure
- ☐ Have final conversations with vendors
- ☐ Submit final guest count to caterer

## The day before

- ☐ Entrust marked payment and tip envelopes to the best man
- ☐ Confirm beauty appointments
- ☐ Rehearse the ceremony
- ☐ Get a good night's rest

## Wedding Day

- ☐ Eat a well rounded breakfast
- ☐ Have hair and makeup done
- ☐ Relax and enjoy your wedding day

## Home from the honeymoon

- ☐ Send out your thank you notes
- ☐ Submit your newspaper wedding photo and story

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by Marcia DeFant

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## Wedding veil sizes

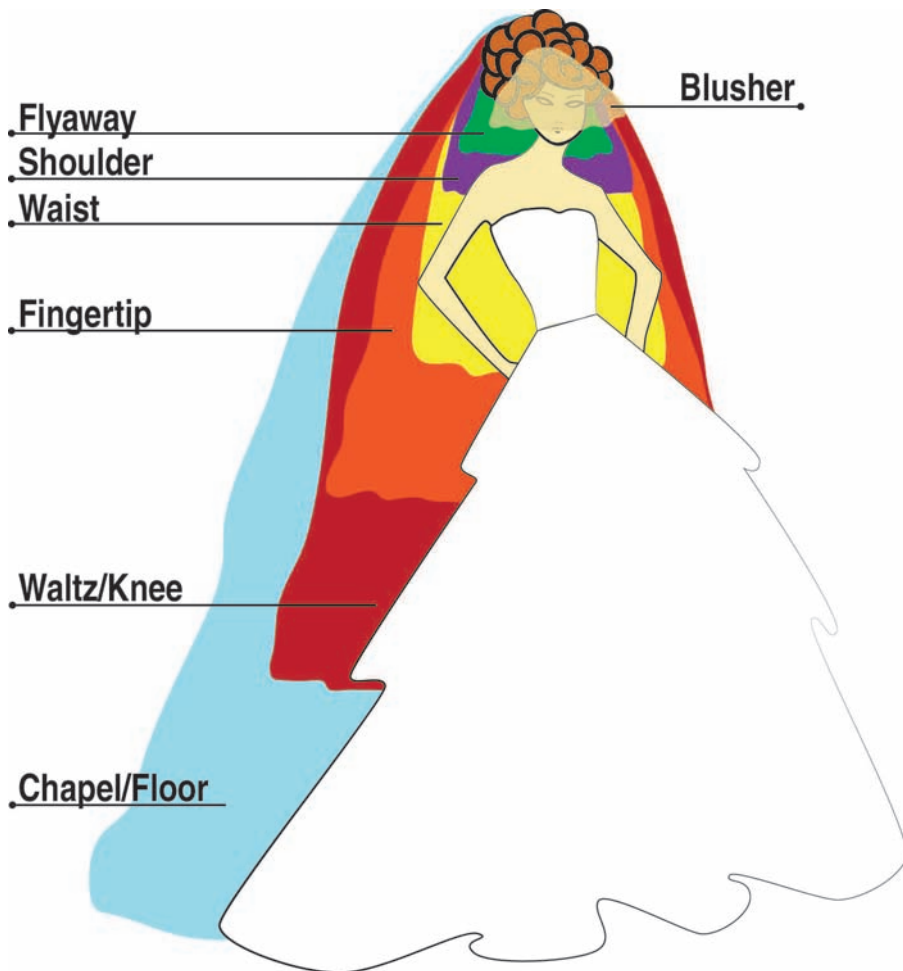


Illustration by Selena Hautamaki

**T**he perfect dress is on the wish list of many a bride-to-be, but no bridal ensemble is truly complete until the bride chooses her veil.

Veils come in various lengths and can complement the style of a wedding gown. They also tend to add glamour to brides' looks. Here are the types of veils from shortest to longest.

- **Blusher:** Blushers cover the face, though some extend only to mid-cheek on the bride.

- **Flyaway:** Flyaways cover just the back of the head. Shorter veils may work better on petite women.

- **Shoulder:** Shoulder veils are about 20 inches in length and will hit at the bride's shoulders or just below.

- **Waist:** Waist-length veils cascade down to the middle of the bride's waist.

- **Fingertip:** These veils extend down 38 to 42 inches, brushing against the bride's fingertips.

- **Waltz/Knee:** For a dramatic look, many brides may opt for waltz-length veils, which fall to the back of the knees.

- **Chapel/Floor:** Veils that extend to the floor may be referred to as "chapel" or "floor-length" veils. Such veils cascade slightly behind the bride.

Veils can complete brides' wedding day looks. Shorter veils may be comfortable to wear throughout the day and evening, but brides may want to consider detachable veils if they are selecting lengthier options.



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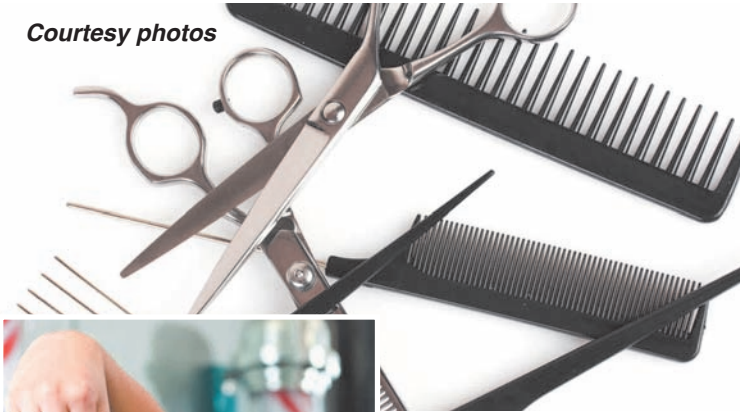
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## Grooms, look your wedding day best

**W**eddings are a chance for couples tying the knot to be the center of attention. All eyes will be glued to the bride and groom on this special day, which makes it even more important for couples to look their collective best.

Brides might garner most of the attention on a couple's wedding day, but dashing grooms also will get their share of attention. As a result,

grooms must be just as diligent as their blushing brides with regard to grooming and appearance on their wedding days. To look picture-perfect, grooms may want to include these grooming tips in their wedding day preparation.

### Hair

Schedule a haircut with a professional stylist roughly a week before the wedding to get your hair shaped and

trimmed. Although trendy hair-styles may show off creativity, keep in mind that photos last forever, and it's often better to stick with a classic cut. A barber or stylist may suggest styles that best suit your face shape and hair texture. Above all, the haircut should be neat. Resist the urge to wash your hair every day before the wedding. Allow some natural oils to build up and make your hair shine in a healthy way.

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*Grooms may want to book a manicure before the big day.*

### Shaving

Shaving is another thing grooms must consider. If you have a beard, make sure it is clean, combed and trimmed. Men who shave the day of their weddings may find their skin is sensitive and irritated, which can lead to redness. Unless your facial hair grows especially fast, shave the evening before. This is a good time to splurge on a professional shave with a straight razor at a barber shop. A hot shave from a professional will produce a close shave with the least

amount of irritation when done correctly.

### Hands

Grooms also may want to book a manicure. Keep in mind that salons will do men's nonpolish manicures and pedicures, and they can be well worth the investment. Photos of entwined hands or close-ups of the ring exchange will have guests zeroing in on your fingers. Have hands look their best with clean, shaped fingernails and trimmed cuticles.

*Get plenty of sleep prior to the wedding. This method helps reduce puffy eyes and dark circles.*

### Skin

Get plenty of sleep the night prior to the wedding. Being well rested will help reduce puffy eyes, dark circles and sallowness. It will also put you in a more positive mood, which can help you enjoy the day even more.

The day of the wedding, shower using water and a mild soap. Avoid any skin irritation by patting your face and body dry, rather than rubbing it with the towel. Moisturize your skin to avoid dry patches. Stores sell many moisturizers geared toward men's needs, often in unscented or more masculine fragrances.

Reducing shine is key for wedding day photos. Rely on face and hair products that will not add unnecessary sheen to your skin or hair to avoid making you look greasy. Matte hair waxes and sprays will tame tresses. Also, ask your fiancé to pick you up a package of blotting tissues if you are prone to oily skin. These absorbent, typically rice-paper sheets will remove oil from your face and keep sheen to a minimum.

### Smile

Make sure your teeth have been thoroughly brushed and that you have used a minty mouthwash so you're primed for that first kiss. Many grooms also opt for whitening treatments prior to the wedding so they have a dazzling smile. On their wedding days, grooms will likely be photographed more than any other time in their lives. That means putting extra effort into personal grooming to look their best.

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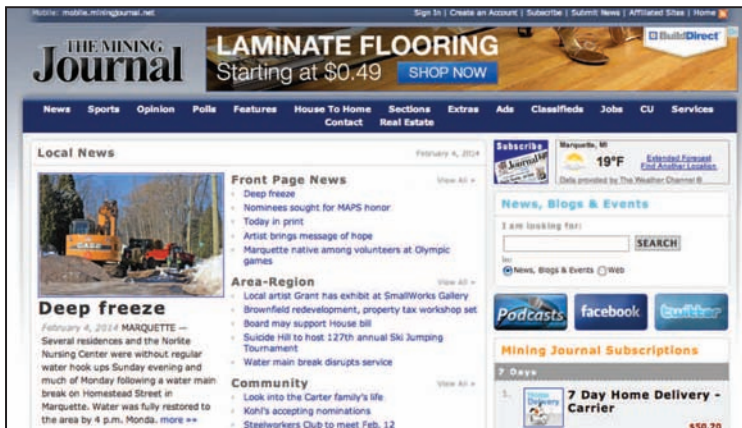


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# Submitting your wedding day announcement

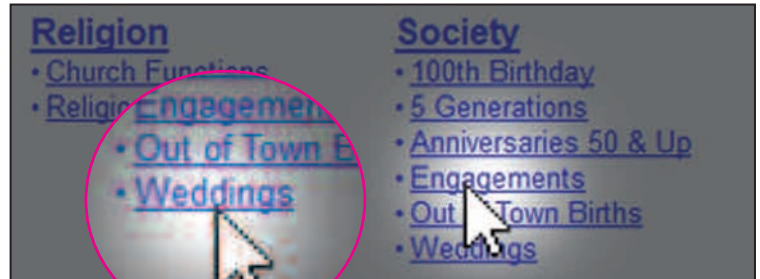


1. For submitting your engagement or wedding announcements, head to <http://www.miningjournal.net/>

2. In the upper right corner, click on **Submit News**.



3. The opening screen is The Mining Journal's **Virtual Newsroom**.



4. Toward the lower center of the opening screen, under the column **Society**, click on **Engagements** or **Weddings** to begin submitting your announcement.

5. Pictured below is the screen to submit an engagement announcement. Enter your information in the text box as well as your **full name**, **email address**, **mailing address**, and a **daytime phone number** in the correct boxes below. There are instructions listed for your written submission as well as photo submission guidelines. You may add a photo and the editor reserves the right to decide whether a photograph is suitable for reproduction or to crop if necessary.

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(DO NOT use all caps)  
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#### Example

Deadline for submitting announcement forms is noon Tuesday for our Sunday paper (items to be published as space allows). Wedding announcements will be accepted no later than eight months after the wedding date. Anniversary announcements will be published for 50 years, and each five years thereafter. For

6. Below, after submitting your information, click on the button **Send My Submission** at the bottom of the page.

Let's Note: Multiple photos are optional (do not submit them after selecting correct photo) Photo Location: (maximum 6 MB total size)

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## How to arrange the best outdoor wedding photos

Photography is a great way for couples to capture all the special moments that occur on their wedding days. Long after the final piece of wedding cake has been consumed, wedding albums remain to remind couples of all those moments that made their big day so special.

Photography preferences differ from couple to couple, but when weather permits, many

brides and grooms prefer to take photos outdoors. Mother Nature can provide some awe-inspiring backdrops, and such beauty comes at no extra cost.

Couples using professional photographers should share their image preferences with their photographers, especially if outdoor photography is desired. Photographers may have to do a little more work to achieve great outdoor photo-



Photo by Metro Creative

graphs, even visiting a site in advance of the big day to scout areas that can produce great photos. Scouting and preparation can involve seeing the landscape, examining the way the light shines on photo subjects and getting an accurate light reading on a meter to adjust flash accordingly. Photographers also will need to ensure there are no obstructions that will appear in the

background of the photos.

It's also important for photographers to select locations that have shade. This way they can adjust the amount of light needed, rather than having to contend with the photo washing out from too much sunlight.

There's much a photographer can do in production to fine-tune photos, but the couple can help things along. Bring along some powder or makeup to

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*Above, photography by 2:40 Media Productions, Justin Berkel, at left courtesy photos*



touch up between photos.

Warm weather can cause shininess or beads of sweat on the skin. A light dusting of powder can tame shine, while any remaining moisture can be blotted away with a towel.

Although brides and grooms may think clouds on their wedding days are a harbinger of bad luck, overcast conditions can actually contribute to better photos. A healthy

blanket of cloud cover can produce richer colors and pleasing shadows, making photos even more appealing. If the clouds are just passing, photographers may wait until a cloud passes over the sun to provide just the right amount of light filter.

Couples may want to change into comfortable footwear as they traverse the landscape to get into perfect

portraiture locations. This will help keep their fancier shoes clean, and photos can be cropped to hide feet.

Bring along some refreshments when posing for photos, as it can be tiring. Couples can take frequent breaks as the photographer adjusts his or her camera for the next shot. Staying hydrated will keep skin looking supple and ensure that every-

one feels refreshed when it's time to return to the party.

Not every family member will be able to join the happy couple for outdoor photos. Elderly relatives or those who have mobility issues may find it difficult to stand in the sun or make their way across certain landscapes. Arrange for indoor photoshoots with guests who can't handle the outdoors.

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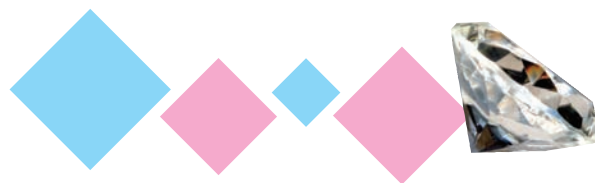
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## Big day prep at the The Ultimate Bridal Event

By **KELSIE THOMPSON**  
Journal Staff Writer

**C**ourtney Lloyd's wedding day isn't until June 18, but she had a "blushing bride" moment at The Ultimate Bridal Event hosted by A Bride's Choice on January 9 at the Masonic Building.

Lloyd's name was drawn out of a pool of more than 100 attendees to win a \$1,000 decorating package to help make her big day as beautiful as possible. The prize was just another added bonus of attending the event, which Lloyd said she traveled to from L'Anse for some planning inspiration.

"I'm just here scoping out dresses and other vendors ... there's a lot of great decor here," Lloyd said. "(Planning) is stressful, but it's fun."

The expo featured several vendors from throughout the Upper Peninsula that covered all the basics of wedding planning, including decorations, food, photography, music and entertainment, venues and clothing.

Elaine Debelak, representing Debelak Family Farms, was among the vendors filling out the Masonic Center's ballroom during the expo.

She said her family has been contemplating renovating a barn on their 600-acre property in the Eben/Traunik area to rent out for weddings and events.

"We're using today to gauge interest," Debelak said. "We haven't started the renovations yet, but everything is in place to begin in the spring. It could be wedding ready in June."

Debelak said they realized the

potential of the property after A Bride's Choice rented out the farmhouse on the property, which sleeps 9-11 people comfortably.

Another barn venue in the area, Belsolda Farm in Skandia, is completely booked for the 2016 calendar year, showing the need for such a space.

"Barn weddings are a very big thing right now, especially in the U.P.," said Jasmine Walford, A Bride's Choice bridal store manager.

Debelak said interested individuals can follow up with by phone at (906) 446-3429 or email at [edebelak@tds.net](mailto:edebelak@tds.net).

Marquette-based Double Trouble DJs had a booth set up in the ballroom, and also did the music and lighting for the bridal fashion show in the center's Red Room.

Models flaunted gowns designed by Stella York, bridesmaid dresses by Sorella Vita, Alfred Angelo and Gather & Gown and tuxedos by Jim's Formal Wear as the crowd cheered on.

All looks from the trunk show were available in A Bride's Choice Marquette store following the expo, said Walford.

"A Bride's Choice has been in the business for over 20 years," Walford said. "We love to give (brides) that special experience. We love to put them in dresses and make them feel special and important, and we wanted to showcase that at the expo. We want to show you we're all about you."

*Kelsie Thompson can be reached at 906-228-2500, ext. 206. Her email address is [kthompson@miningjournal.net](mailto:kthompson@miningjournal.net).*

**Photography by 2:40 Media  
Productions, Justin Berkel**







## The rings Symbols of commitment

Couples adhere to many traditions on their wedding days, including the exchange of wedding rings. Wedding rings symbolize the union of two people and their pledge to remain faithful to each other.

No one is exactly sure just when the tradition of exchanging wedding rings originated, but some say it can be traced back to ancient Egypt, when the oldest recorded exchange of wedding rings was made. Reeds growing along the Nile were twisted and braided into rings and given during betrothal ceremonies. The round ring symbolized eternity, and the hole within the center meant a gateway to things unknown.



Photography by 2:40 Media  
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## Helpful hints when planning floral arrangements



**W**hen planning their weddings, couples may find themselves becoming experts on subjects they previously never gave much thought. Thanks to the cost of weddings, today's couples must make each decision carefully, and that may result in hours of research and discussion.

One of the big decisions couples must make when planning their weddings concerns their floral arrangements. The right floral arrangements won't break the bank but will add substantial aesthetic appeal to ceremonies and receptions. It can be difficult for couples to achieve that balance of cost and look on their own, so the following are a few helpful hints for couples when choosing their wedding day floral arrangements.

- Work with a florist you trust and like. All florists are not the same, so finding one you can trust and will enjoy working with can make all the difference.

Many couples have little or no experience with floral arrangements prior to planning their weddings, so it can calm couples' nerves to work with someone they trust in such situations. Florists with significant wedding experience will no doubt make a host of recommendations based on couples' budgets and preferences, so couples might be more inclined to listen to that advice if they are working with someone they trust. Ask relatives, friends or coworkers if they can recommend any florists whose wedding work they are familiar with.

- Choose in-season or native flowers. Couples working with tight budgets may want to choose in-season flowers

or those native to the area where they will be tying the knot. In-season and native flowers won't need to be ordered or shipped in from afar, which can be costly. In-season and native flowers tend to be more abundant as well, and the greater their availability the less couples are likely to pay for them.

- Repurpose floral arrangements. Another way to save on floral arrangements is to repurpose flowers throughout the day. Once bridesmaids no longer need their bouquets, use them to decorate gift tables or cocktail areas. Floral arrangements on display during the ceremony can be removed once you have both said "I do" and moved into the reception area where they can be enjoyed through the night. Go over any repurposing you plan to do with your reception hall manager prior to your wedding day so he knows where and when to move the arrangements.

- Go big. Some flowers simply bloom larger than others, and choosing such flowers may help you save money since you won't need to buy as many flowers as you would if you were to go with smaller blooms.

Once you find a florist to work with, discuss your options with regard to doing more with less. Many florists embrace the challenge to be creative within a budget, so you might just be surprised and impressed by what they come up with.

Floral arrangements can set the mood for a wedding ceremony and reception, and even couples with little or no experience choosing arrangements can end up with stunning displays.



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*Why did you choose September for your wedding date?*

## Be prepared when choosing popular months

**T**he season couples choose to get married can affect many aspects of their ceremonies and celebrations. Vendors are in high demand during popular wedding seasons like spring and summer. But those same vendors may be more flexible and less expensive during those times of year when fewer couples tie the knot.



“We had a couple of reasons. One, it was our two year anniversary of being together. Two because it generally is a nicer time of year; not hot, not cold. Third, it is a beautiful time for pictures.”

Patrick and Jessica Moore  
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## Tips when choosing your wedding date

### Value dates

Tying the knot in the early part of the year can be a more budget-friendly option for cost-conscious couples. Prices for reception sites and vendors may be lower in January and March than during other times of the year. However, February may not be so budget-friendly thanks to Valentine's Day. December also may not garner significant discounts thanks to the holiday season, when vendors may be in high demand for holiday parties.

### Local events

Even though certain months may not be in high demand for weddings, that doesn't always mean they are the perfect time for couples to tie the knot.

Popular local events, such as festivals, large-scale meetings and conventions, can intrude on wedding plans. Consult with a local chamber of commerce and local schools to see if any local events that might drive up the cost of your wedding are going on. Reunions or conventions can stretch nearby restaurants, hotels and reception sites pretty thin, leaving you with fewer options.

### Vary the time

If you have your heart set on getting married during more popular months to tie the knot, then you may be able to save a bit here and there by being more flexible with the time and day you choose to make your vows. Couples often choose a Friday or Saturday wedding because they believe it will make it most convenient for guests to attend. However, if you provide ample notice to guests, they may be able to take off a Thursday or even a Monday from work, making a Thursday or Sunday wedding a more doable option.

If Saturday is still your ideal day to walk down the aisle, think about having an early wedding ceremony followed by a brunch or lunch reception. You also can customize your wedding to be a cocktail party only, saving you some money.

### Have backup options

Recognize that if you want to get married on a Saturday at the height of wedding season, you may not get first choice on your venues and vendors. Have a list of service providers at the ready just in case your first choices are already booked.

By understanding how dates and times can affect weddings, couples can make more informed decisions when planning their nuptials.



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## Clever takes on the 'something old, new, borrowed, blue' tradition

**W**edding day tokens of good luck come in many forms, but "the something old, something new, something borrowed, something blue (a sixpence in your shoe)" adage remains one of the most popular luck-enhancing wedding traditions. According to the bridal resource The Knot, this tradition stems from an Olde English rhyme. Something old represents continuity; something new is for optimism for the future; something borrowed stands for borrowed happiness; and something blue is for purity, love and fidelity. The sixpence in your shoe is a wish for good fortune and prosperity, but this is not a tradition widely celebrated outside of the United Kingdom or British territories.

These traditions can add some creative flair and personality to wedding ceremonies. There's no end to the inventive combinations of items brides can carry to increase their good fortunes.

Photography by Ben Rosett, Unsplash.com

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## Something old

**S**omething old is one of the easier mementos to obtain. There is a good chance that someone in the family is willing to pass an item down to the bride that she can include in her wedding wardrobe. It also can be something the bride may have in her own memory box. Beads taken from a grandmother's dress or a swatch of fabric from a beloved toy doll are creative ideas that can be sewn into inconspicuous places on gowns.

*Tradition continued pg. 24*

*Photography by 2:40 Media Productions, Justin Berkel*

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*Tradition from pg. 23*

## Something new

**B**rides already purchase many new items for their wedding day looks, so “something new” should not be too hard to find. Couples may want to work together to find something new they can both carry so they have a matching set upon tying the knot. Interlocking charm bracelets or keychains may work. What about the groom carrying a small padlock and the bride the key? Quirky couples can each wear one sock from a pair. Get clever and have fun.



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## Something borrowed

**M**uch like something old, something borrowed is yet another way to pay homage to a friend or family member. It's also one way to add a sentimental twist to everyday items. Borrow a grandfather's handkerchief to wrap around the stems of the wedding bouquet. Exchange vows with the original rings used by a distant relative at their own wedding. Flatter a close friend by wearing the same veil she did.



Photo by Metro Creative



Courtesy photo

## Something blue

**T**here are many ways to incorporate "something blue" into your wedding ceremony. Brides can paint their toenails blue or wear blue shoes under their gowns. Sew a patch from a pair of denim jeans into the bodice of the dress. Paint the bottom of your shoes bright blue so they stand out when kneeling at the altar. Blue sapphire or topaz jewelry can add an exotic look to the wedding wardrobe.

With a little ingenuity, brides can easily incorporate "something old, something new, something borrowed, something blue" into their wedding ceremonies.



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## Stay on schedule when mailing wedding invites

Invitations are a vital component of wedding planning. In addition to informing guests about the details of the ceremony and reception, wedding invitations convey the tone and style of the day.

While there are no rules governing wedding invitations, there are some ways for couples to ensure they stay on schedule when mailing invitations.

- Order invitations early. Couples can start to consider their invitation options once the wedding date and venue have been chosen. The wedding stationery industry has changed a lot over the years. Couples can now order invitations from local retailers, use online printers, or design and print their own invitations from home. Invitations should be worded carefully and proofed several times before

printing, so expect the process to take a couple of weeks from start to finish. Plan for this time so you will have the invitations ready for mailing roughly three months before your wedding day. Always remember to order extra invitations so you have spares in case you make a mistake or make last-minute additions to your guest list.

- Get organized before mailing. Start preparing invitations about a month before you plan to ship them, as this gives you ample time to write envelopes so you do not have to write them all on the same day. Keep the guest list handy and double-check the spelling of names and the addresses. Traditional etiquette suggests addresses should be handwritten, but computer-produced calligraphy on envelopes is now just as ac-



Photo by Metro Creative

ceptable. Avoid printed labels. Be sure to have the complete invitation weighed at the post office so you will know exactly how much postage is required. Purchase stamps for both the invitation and the response cards.

- Coordinate mailing time and RSVP deadlines. Mail invitations roughly eight weeks before the wedding. This gives guests time to make room in their schedules and arrange for travel, if necessary. Set the response date for three weeks before the wedding date so

guests will have the time to make a decision and mail back the response. Many caterers require a final head count one week before the wedding, so make sure your RSVP date is at least two weeks before the big day so you can account for late responders.

- Don't let responses linger. Check off who is coming and who cannot make it as you receive each response. This way you'll know just how many responses are still outstanding and you can follow up if necessary.



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## Cake cutting a symbol of partnership

**T**he presentation of the wedding cake marks the culmination of the day's festivities and a final symbol of a happy couple's new partnership. Many people eagerly await the cake as much as they may anticipate catching a glimpse of the bride in her beautiful gown. While the cake in all its finery can be a beautiful sight to behold, a cake can only last so long before its fate as a delicious dessert is sealed.

The cake-cutting ritual at weddings has withstood the test of time, and many couples still prefer to present the cake with fanfare and excitement.



Photo by Metro Creative

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## Cake cutting etiquette

As is the case with many wedding traditions, there is some established etiquette with regard to cutting and serving wedding cake. If you plan on putting your cake on display, be sure it is made with a frosting and filling that can endure room temperature.

Certain creams may sour if not refrigerated, and you do not want anyone becoming ill. If you have your heart set on perishable fillings, keep the cake refrigerated and then have the big reveal right before it is cut.

The cake cutting usually comes near the end of the wedding reception. Schedule the cutting so that older guests or young children can leave without feeling as if they would be offending anyone. The emcee of the evening typically announces the cake cutting, and the band may play a quirky tune or revisit the wedding song while the first slice is

being cut.

A bride should hold the cake knife with her right hand, while the groom places his right hand over hers before they proceed to slice down together. If the cake has a foam or cardboard support, be careful not to cut through it. Use a cake server to grab the first piece.

Traditionally the newly betrothed will feed each other a bite of the cake to symbolize their first meal as a couple.

Couples can feed each other a small amount, taking care not to spill any. Many couples no longer embrace the once-popular tradition of smashing cake in each other's faces, but whether or not couples follow this tradition is up to them.

Some couples like to serve their parents a piece of cake. Traditionally the bride should serve the groom's parents and the groom the bride's parents. If there is a groom's cake,



Photo by Metro Creative

guests may prefer a slice of both cakes. Guests may also want to take home a slice of the groom's cake. Tradition states that a piece of the groom's cake should be presented to an unmarried woman attending the wedding. The woman is not expected to eat the cake, but rather to put it under her pillow.

Superstition held that this tradition would help an unmarried woman find a husband. Make arrangements for proper packaging of the groom's cake, so guests can take home a slice if

they so desire.

The waitstaff typically handles the slicing of the cake. The uppermost tier is reserved for the couple to save, and the remainder of the cake will be served.

Recognize that not all guests like cake, but it's better to err on the side of caution and have a cake that will feed all of the guests. You also may want to offer a dessert bar for guests who prefer another type of sweet treat. However, this is a luxury, not a necessity.



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