

# With this Ring ...

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I'm not sure if all girls are like this or just me, but I've been reading wedding magazines since I was in high school. I had my dress picked out, the colors, the details, all of it. I even own two event design books by celebrity event designer, Preston Bailey, and have read Emily Post's wedding etiquette book multiple times, just for fun.



MONICA K.  
SMITH

So when the opportunity presented itself to work on "With this Ring ..." I jumped at the

chance. In this special section, I hope to help brides, myself included, in putting together the biggest day of our lives. As I write this, I have 30 days left till my big day. Crazy. In planning our weddings, I hope we all remember to keep what is important at the forefront of our minds. The food may not taste the best, the band may sound horrible and our distant uncle might get overly intoxicated and make a fool out of himself, but in the end all that matters is both of you say "I do."

Happy planning!

MONICA K. SMITH is the New Era Community Editor and recent bride-to-be. Reach her at 270-887-3243 or msmith@kentuckynewera.com.



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set on fire."*

Jeremy Taylor

Cleric in the Church of England, sometimes known as the "Shakespeare of Divines"



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# Choosing the person to spend the day with: Your photographer

BY MONICA K. SMITH  
NEW ERA COMMUNITY EDITOR

"At the end of a wedding all you have are your memories and photos."

That's the driving force behind the work of photographer

Craig Hodge. He took a moment from his day to share with us what he believes brides should look for when booking a photographer:

■ **What should brides look for?**  
Look at their portfolio. It's not about

their volume but the quality of their photographs. Do you relate to the imagery? Do you look at a photo and are drawn to it?

■ **What about their experience?**

You have some people who have been photographing weddings for 15 years and some who have been doing it for two years who are just as good. For some people, the one with 15 years is good for them, but not every photographer is right for every bride. You should be able to connect with their work.

■ **What are some challenges?**

Lighting. The equipment I use allows me to work in really dark situations. Also now knowing what to expect, but that can be easily overcome with a timeline worksheet.

■ **What is a timeline worksheet?**

It makes you plan out the day so you

know how much time is allocated for travel for the photographer, where to be, when to be there. It makes the day easier for everyone so there is no pressure. You have plenty of time to get everything done.

■ **What is the turn-around time to get your photos?**

For me it's typically two to three weeks. There is a bad stigma for wedding photographers. There are stories of people who have been married for three years and are still waiting for their photos. My uncle waited nine months. I like to build on the excitement after the wedding.

■ **What's a piece of advice you give to brides when selecting a photographer?**

You should be comfortable with the photographer. A good way to do that is

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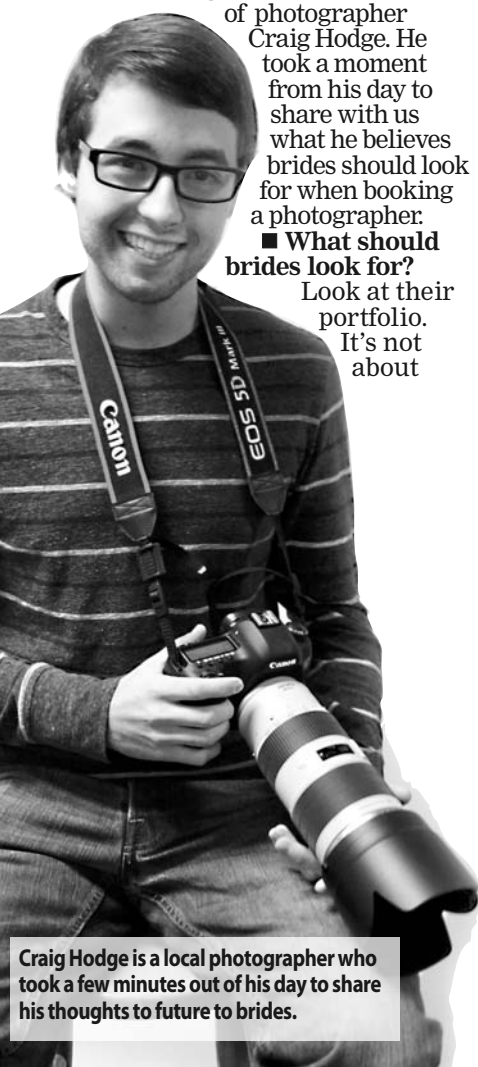
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through an engagement shoot. That way, the bride and groom get used to the photographer and the photographer gets used to them. They should feel comfortable with each other because, by the time the wedding is over, the photographer will have spent more time with the bride and groom than they have with each other on their wedding day.

MONICA K. SMITH is the New Era Community Editor and recent bride-to-be. Reach her at 270-887-3243 or msmith@kentuckynewera.com.



Craig Hodge is a local photographer who took a few minutes out of his day to share his thoughts to future to brides.



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## RECEIPT

# Taking a loan out to pay for a wedding

BY MONICA K. SMITH  
NEW ERA COMMUNITY EDITOR

You've heard of taking a loan out to pay for a house or a car, but what about for a party? That's what brides may be tempted to do, especially since, in 2012, Brides magazine said the average American couple spends around \$27,000 on their wedding day. And the cost adds up quickly with food, decorations, invitations, wedding gowns, tuxes, entertainment, photography, wedding favors; it's not long before your budget is stretched.

The discussion boards of wedding websites are full of brides asking the same question: How do I save money? The answer may be more apparent than you think, although it may require some sacrifices.

The best plan of action is to be prepared prior to anyone popping the question. If you plan on getting married at some point, start saving now.

For those looking to purchase rings, bigger isn't always better. There is a temptation out there to get the largest diamond available, but it's not necessary. Your beloved is saying "yes" to you, not your ring.

Once someone has asked and someone else has accepted, it's time to determine who is paying for what. This might be an uncomfortable conversation to have with both families, but it's important. The days of the bride's family paying for the entire wedding have become days where both families work together to make the day memorable. Don't go in with any set expectations and know that for some people providing financial support means they get a say in the details of the wedding.

Once you've set your budget, decide what things you must have, what things you want to have and what things you'd like to have. Practical decisions start with date, location, attire and food. Next comes the "want to have" including types of flowers, decorations and entertainment. Then comes the "like to have," including all the extras like fireworks or elaborate invitations. And this list may vary from bride to bride. To save money, cut the areas that aren't as important to you.

When determining the date of the wedding, remember weekdays and afternoons are cheaper than a Saturday evening.

Near the top of your list should be determining your guest list. The overall cost of a wedding can vary dramatically based on the number of people attending. If you're looking for an effective, but sometimes difficult, way to trim costs, consider having a smaller wedding.

Finding a wedding dress in your budget can sometimes be a challenge. One tip is when trying on dresses, tell the store your budget and then stick to it. Tell them to only bring you items that fall within your budget. It is harder to say "no" if you fall in love with a dress you've tried on. Protect your heart and steer clear of dresses outside of your budget.

In the end, the wedding is what you make it. Instead of worrying about filling your day with wedding items, focus on filling it with loved ones and good memories.

Groom	\$One year
Family and friends	\$One lifetime
Everything else	\$A lot of money

TOTAL :	\$Priceless
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PAID

## Traditional roles in financing a wedding

- Bride – pays for the groom's ring, lodging for her out-of-town attendants, a wedding gift for the groom and gifts to the bridesmaids.

- Groom – pays for the engagement and wedding rings for the bride, fees for the marriage license or other legal documents, lodging for out-of-town attendants, clergy fee, cost of honeymoon, and wedding gift for bride and groomsmen.

- Bridesmaids – pays for the bridal shower and bachelorette party. Also pays for their own gowns and accessories.

- Groomsmen – pay for the bachelor party, their own attire.

- Parents of the groom – pay for the rehearsal dinner, wedding brunch and a gift to the couple.

- Parents of the bride – generally they pay for everything else including venue, food, entertainment, flowers, in addition to bridal gown and a gift to the couple.



## Tips from real brides

WE WENT ONLINE AND ASKED FACEBOOK FANS OF THE NEW ERA TO SHARE WITH US THEIR TIPS FOR SAVING A FEW DOLLARS WHEN PLANNING THEIR BIG DAY.

### Shannon Finley

My fiance & I are getting married in October. My maid of honor & I are making all of our bouquets & arrangements ourselves, rather than hiring a florist.

### Christina Maria Jones

I'm not getting married until 2014 but when I find things on clearance or really cheap I get it then, plus I'm pretty much doing everything from flowers, decorations, my own cake and catering, my invitations and favors. It saves a lot from hiring other people to do it for you.

### Angela Reeder

I actually bought some things and borrowed some things. I bought table cloths, runners, glass votives — that was cheaper than renting those things from a planner. Then I sold them on ebay or at a yard sale and got back about half of what was spent. For example, I bought table cloths online for about \$9-\$10 each. We used them for the wedding and for a couple other things afterward (it would have cost about \$20 each to rent) then sold them online for \$5 each. I don't recommend doing your own catering or cake just because the last few days before the wedding are super hectic unless you have lots of people to help you cook.

### Janet Read Godsey

My husband and I served communion to our guests right after we were pronounced man and wife (after the kiss of course). We had minimal flower arrangements in the sanctuary, because we wanted the focus to be on the communion elements. That saved money and kept the focus where we wanted it to be.

# My \$2,000 wedding: Remembering what is important

BY MONICA K. SMITH  
NEW ERA COMMUNITY EDITOR

When looking through a wedding planning guide, most couples have at least a handful of months to plan out their big day. My fiancé and I had seven weeks.

He is in the Army and going to Korea for a year and we wanted to get married before he left. Having a quick wedding meant we put the whole party together with the money in our pockets: about \$2,000.

Although \$2,000 sounds like a good amount of money, in the wedding-planning world, that amount will pay for a dress and a cake. Or a cake and a photographer. Or the venue. But not all of them. Having planned out my wedding a million times in my own head (down to the price of my wedding favors) it should have been easy to put this together — however, in all my original plans I had a healthy budget. This was going to be tricky and we were going to have to think outside the box.

I was lucky in coming across the Christian County Chamber of Commerce newsletter which announced the opening of 801 Main — formerly known as the Hogshead. It is now an event space with plenty of charm. The warm wood floors, round lights and vintage feel meant I would be able to host a reception there with little decorating needed. The space has its own character, I wouldn't need to add much — but if I wanted, I would be able to as long as we "put everything back the way you found it."



MONICA K. SMITH | KENTUCKY NEW ERA

The character of 801 Main means less work with decorations. The space holds enough for my 100 guests and is flexible in its layout.

We were able to book both downstairs halls for a fraction of the price most venues charge in addition to having it the entire day and being allowed to come in the day prior to decorate. In one hall would be the wedding ceremony followed by cocktail hour. From there guests would enter through two large wooden and glass doors into the main reception space.

While 801 Main worked with us on drinks, we chose to cater through another nontraditional business. A buffet. We went with Hong Kong Garden who worked well within our budget to ensure our 100 guests would be well fed through four main course options, two types

of rice and two side items.

We printed our invitations through an online company who delivered them in a week. They were simple but fit our personalities and the mood of the wedding. Our simple but elegant cake was created by local baker Marilyn St. John of Sweet Designs by Marilyn. The band on Fort Campbell cannot play at any civilian event, however many of their players do work together on the weekends to play at weddings and parties. We had the option to get a six-piece jazz combo band with the rest of our money.

That still left us with photography, video, flower, hair, makeup, party favors and the big one — the dress. For the majority of those things, we looked to family and friends. Friends doubled as photographers taking photos from their many perspectives throughout the event, in addition to some friends pulling a double shift doing hair and make up. We decided not to have video or party favors to save money and it appeared no one really cared that they didn't have another knick-knack to add to their garage-sale pile. As for the flowers and dress, my mother was insistent on having flowers — something I don't really care for or against and my family pulled together to get the dress of my dreams that was way out of my price range on my own (thank you!).

In the end, the wedding cost my fiancé and I \$2,400. Not within my budget but pretty close and I think we did a pretty good job. In the end what was important to us was having each other, our family and friends, and good food and entertainment. Everything after that was extra.

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# Here we are now; entertain us

BY MONICA K. SMITH  
NEW ERA COMMUNITY EDITOR

There is a great debate between having a live band and using a disc jockey during a wedding reception. For Brandon Burke, with First Dance DJ Service, he believes brides should choose what they like and what stays in their budget.

## ■ What is better, a band or a DJ?

A DJ is cheaper for sure and even a band needs a DJ for when they are between sets. That's something to ask a band. A lot of them prefer a sound engineer so they can focus on the music. I can do both.

## ■ What are some other benefits to having a DJ?

The number of songs can be an issue. A band can only know so many songs as far as requests go whereas I can get on my phone, buy it, download it and that's that. It's nice to have a digital system.

## ■ What should brides focus on when choosing a DJ?

Price, of course, but also if the DJ fits your personality. Different DJs put on different types of shows. Some focus more on their lights, others on music quality and some are on the microphone more, whether that is too much or too little.

## ■ How can a bride tell if a DJ is good for them?

If you can, go see them in action if they are doing an event some-

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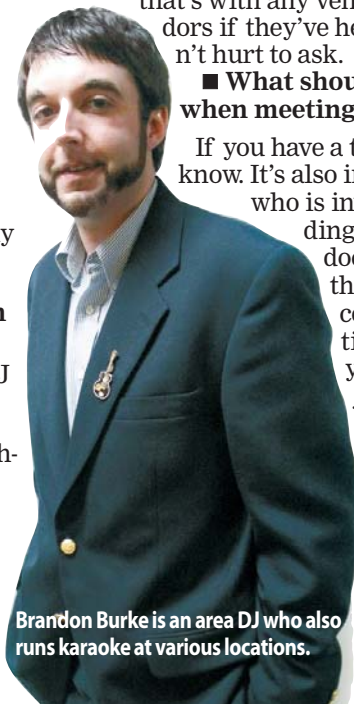
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where. You can also ask other people for referrals. The wedding industry is well connected and if you can't get a good referral that might be an indicator. But that's with any vendor. Ask other vendors if they've heard of them. It doesn't hurt to ask.

## ■ What should brides have when meeting with a DJ?

If you have a theme, let the DJ know. It's also important to know who is involved in the wedding party. I give people documents that explain the song order for the ceremony and reception. It might not fit your line up, but it's just to show you the potential order of events, at least everything that might need a song.

MONICA K. SMITH is the New Era Community Editor and recent bride-to-be. Reach her at 270-887-3243 or msmith@kentuckynewera.com.



Brandon Burke is an area DJ who also runs karaoke at various locations.

## Perplexed bride ponders how to let bridesmaid go

**DEAR ABBY:** I used to be close friends with "Colette." We were so close that I asked her to be a bridesmaid in my April wedding.

During the last few years of our friendship, she became selfish and domineering.

How do I let her know I want to withdraw my request for her to be a bridesmaid? I don't want to hurt her feelings, but my wedding will be a small, private affair, and her presence would be painful and disruptive to me and another bridesmaid who had a similar experience with her.

Colette may not be burning with desire to come anyway, given our falling out, and hasn't yet incurred any of the expenses or spent any of the time and effort associated with being a bridesmaid. I don't want to act unkindly, even though I don't plan on rekindling the friendship.

— Needs Perspective in Kansas

**DEAR NEEDS:** Tell Colette your plans have changed and you have decided to "scale back" the wedding; therefore, your wedding party will be smaller, and you won't need her after all. It's euphemistic enough that it could be taken to mean that finances have dictated your decision, which would be face-saving.

If she feels as you suspect she does, she may be relieved to be let off the hook. And if not, well — you don't plan on continuing your friendship with her in any case. Do not make the conversation anything but polite and brief.

**DEAR ABBY** is written by Abigail Van Buren, also known as Jeanne Phillips, and was founded by her mother, Pauline Phillips. Write Dear Abby at [www.DearAbby.com](http://www.DearAbby.com) or P.O. Box 69440, Los Angeles, CA 90069.

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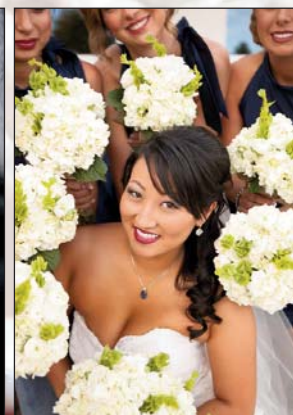
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# Local love story

BY MONICA K. SMITH  
NEW ERA COMMUNITY EDITOR

Their love story began in the seventh grade when Tanya-Tua and Bryan Moore were a middle school couple at North Drive Middle School. However, they were torn apart when they each attended rivaling high schools in Hopkinsville.

It was then their story took a hiatus.

Then 13 years later, the story picked back up.

"We were at a family friend's gathering and I ran in to say something to someone and he was there talking to my neighbor and he yelled my name," said Tanya-Tua, 32.

That was in October in 2011. In May 2012, Bryan, 33, asked permission from Tanya-Tua's three children to marry their mother. They said yes and so did Tanya-Tua.

The couple then entered a whirlwind of planning for their September 2012 wedding. Both Tanya-Tua and Bryan are avid University of Kentucky fans and chose UK blue and white as their colors. However their passion for the team was not limited to the colors.

"I had UK jewelry, a UK garter, you name it, it was Kentucky," Tanya-Tua said.

The wedding took place at Oakland Manor in front of a white gazebo surrounded by lush greenery. The long UK blue dresses worn by the bridesmaids complemented the blue ties of the groomsmen. Instead of traditional bouquets, the bridesmaids each had blue and white corsages ornamenting their wrists. The bride also wore a similar corsage in addition to carrying a bouquet. All floral pieces were created by the bride's godmother.

"She really wanted to do the flowers and they came out perfect," Tanya-Tua said. "They are still on display in a cabinet."

After the ceremony, guests dined on a menu catered by Four Seasons. The cuisine included pork tenderloin, garlic herb chicken, green beans and mashed potatoes. Their cake was an assortment of cupcakes.

"We took two menus and asked our moms to pick out three meats, three sides and if they picked anything alike that's what we would pick," Tanya-Tua said.

Music was provided by a disc jockey and while the bride danced, the groom took in the moment.

"I was overwhelmed," Bryan said. "She was beautiful."



"I was overwhelmed.  
She was beautiful."



REACH MONICA K. SMITH at 270-887-3243 or [msmith@kentuckynewera.com](mailto:msmith@kentuckynewera.com).



# Technology changes face of wedding fashion, trends, planning

KOKOMO, Ind. (AP) — In an era of technology, a bridezilla's outburst can go viral on YouTube just as quickly as a crafty wedding table creation can be re-pinned hundreds of times on Pinterest. As the wedding trends of 2012 are turned into photos and dissolve into a framed memory placed on the mantel, one trend is here to stay: technology.

Flower shops, hair stylists and the wedding planning world are taking cues from brides with a smartphone in their hand and a picture on Pinterest pinned in their mind.

"If it's on Pinterest, brides want it," Linda Taylor, owner of Bowden Flowers, said about her prediction for wedding trends in 2013. "As a florist, I'm not seeing one up-and-coming trend, the trend is to not follow a trend but create your own ideas and personalize things you see on Pinterest and online. We've done stuff with peacock flowers, baby's breath bouquets and bouquets with a rustic feel that have burlap intertwined in them, everyone is into their own unique thing, that's the direction."

Although brides are letting their creativity lead the way, Taylor did mention a color that is popping up everywhere — not

just Pinterest.

"Lime green, it's really big right now," Taylor told the Kokomo Tribune. "Lime green roses, lilies and hydrangeas all are popular paired with a dark purple or red. We have a Kermit mum that's really popular; the lime green is a big color seen in bouquets."

For future bride Meredith Platt, decisions about flowers and colors have been made through the Internet. Platt added Google has been a go-to guide for planning a destination wedding in Florida.

"If it wasn't for the Internet I wouldn't be able to plan my wedding; I've ordered a personalized cake topper and champagne flutes at etsy.com and met my DJ and wedding officiant through the Internet. I sent pictures of the flowers I want to a florist I found online. I can do all of it online." Platt, who will marry fiance Leighton

*"... the trend is to not follow a trend but create your own ideas and personalize things you see on Pinterest and online."*

**Linda Taylor**  
Owner of Bowden Flowers

Freeman on June 6, said her style of planning might not be for everyone.

"It depends on what kind of personality you are too. Not everyone would want to do it this way," she said. "A wedding planner could help with organization, but I like seeing an idea or coming up with one and running with it. Just being independent with the planning is fun."

Platt and her future husband also designed a wedding app just for their special summer event through Appy Couple. Platt said it's just one of the many apps that assist brides who are doubling as their own wedding planners.

"You create your own wedding app and other people can access it through their phones or on your site, it links photos and it has a wedding date countdown. It's new so there are a few glitches, but it's been helpful," Platt said.

"The Knot planning app is what I use to look through hairstyles and it has a checklist for how many months out you are, that's pretty good. We created a Facebook group where I can post suggestions for hotels and directions to keep everyone updated. Technology is a big help."

Lindsay Pyle, Posh Salon and Day Spa owner, knows with wedding planning comes planning your appearance. And she said the best advice is to practice.

"I'd have the bride go in for a practice updos; not for the hairstylist, but for the bride. You definitely want to like your hair for your wedding day and this gives you a chance to get it done, take some pictures and see what you like and what you don't like," Pyle said. "Keep in mind the type of hairstyle you want and the time of day your wedding is; if you want your hair down and you're getting married at 5 p.m. I'd suggest a hair appointment closer to that time instead of that morning."

Pyle, who travels internationally to study updos, said for brides to expect a modern twist on the classic bun and keep in mind not every style works for every face shape — no matter how good it looks on Pinterest.

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# Wedding over? Trash the Dress!

PANAMA CITY, Fla. (AP) — A year after her wedding, bride Cassidy Bancroft and photographer Robert J. Hill took a road trip to complete her wedding album — and to destroy her gown.

Somewhere near Graceville, they shot images inside an abandoned house, but that didn't get the dress nearly as dirty as they expected. Next, Bancroft climbed on trees above the Econfina Creek, getting bark and lichen stains on the white fabric.

Finally, they employed an underwater camera and shot her swimming in a blue hole spring like a newly married mermaid.

"We had such a great time," Bancroft said. "We went to an old dilapidated house, and (Robert) helped me get to certain spots that were surrounded by old, broken wood and probably hidden spiders — it was great! . When we got to the point where he said 'let's do some underwater ones,' I had to mentally prepare myself because the water was cold. It was so much fun, though. He had me hold onto a tree root so that I could stay in one place long enough to take a picture — and he got a perfect shot with that."

Hill, a Panama City-based photographer

and filmmaker, is a big proponent of "trash-the-dress" shoots. The trend has been around for years, he said, but only recently has penetrated into the South.

"It's never been big in this area," he said, because not only is the idea of family heritage so ingrained in Southerners, but also, "people are more conservative down here."

However, women are finding more often these days that their daughters or granddaughters have no interest in wearing an old, out-of-style gown — even if they are touched by the sentiment. And those same daughters or granddaughters see no reason to store their own dresses for posterity.

"So many brides hold onto their \$2,000 wedding dress because they think, one day, they may pass it on to their own daughter," Hill said. "But our culture is transitioning to never passing their wedding dress down."

Bancroft's sister, Nycole, first told her about seeing similar photo shoots online, so she did some searching and "just thought it was such a different thing to do with a dress ... better than storing it in a closet and it never seeing the light of day,

ever again."

Trashing the dress usually is done sometime after the wedding day — often on an anniversary. Hill and his bride, Emily, were married last April and have been holding onto her dress to trash it in the springtime.

The method of trashing the dress can be as individual as the bride. Some have done it by climbing trees, wallowing in mud, ripping them apart or burning them. In this area, many brides opt for running into the Gulf surf.

According to Wikipedia, the idea of destroying a wedding dress has been used in Hollywood since at least the late 1990s, when Meg Cummings of the short-lived soap opera "Sunset Beach" ran into the ocean in her wedding dress after her wedding was interrupted.

The modern phenomenon has nothing to do with disrespecting the union, although many women who kept their wedding dresses have chosen to destroy them after a bad divorce. Huffington Post blogger Joelle Caputa released a book in 2011 called "Trash the Dress: Stories of Celebrating Divorce in your 20s," and trashed her wedding gown for a Style Network



PHOTO PROVIDED

The New Era Community Editor happened to have another dress in her closet and didn't mind getting it a little dirty for photos.

pens to the dress is part of the story. "Why not go out with bang in your dress, instead of it hanging and taking up space in your house?"



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# All in the details: Easy decorating ideas to make your wedding stand out

BY MONICA K. SMITH  
NEW ERA COMMUNITY EDITOR

Local photographer, Craig Hodge said “details are important. If you think about it, all weddings are essentially the same. It’s the details that make them unique.”

On every bride website, blog and column brides want to know: What are good ideas to decorate? No one wants their ceremony or reception to be bland, but what do you do? Here are a few suggestions that not only look great, but are cost effective.

## ■ White Christmas lights

White Christmas lights are generally available all year round, and if not, its easy to borrow from friends and family. The lights can be draped over the ceremony area to add light to a dim room, hung during the reception to add to the ambiance or even wrapped around trees or other structures to create focal points. Other light options are lanterns and patio lights.

## ■ Ribbons

I once saw a venue where the trees had ribbons hanging from them. It added a romantic and whimsical feel to the wedding as guests sat beneath them. More traditional uses are to decorate seats in lieu of using seat covers. Another idea, courtesy of Pinterest is to have ribbons hanging from an arch behind the couple as a backdrop during the ceremony.

## ■ Fire

Just yesterday my coworker, Copy Editor Logan Todd told me to take the amount of fire I was having in the wedding and multiply it by three. While I’m not sure that’s always the best idea, a fire, or water element can add depth to your wedding. Candles are the obvious choice used in decorating the aisle, the backdrop for a wedding and on the tables during a reception. Consider grouping candles together in odd areas to create a beautiful environment. The best part, they are inexpensive.

## ■ Picture frames

This has become popular recently and used to frame engagement photos, draw the eye to cake stands, double as chalkboards and even used as props for photos. They are easy to purchase and even easier to borrow from friends and family – just as long as you promise to return them after the wedding.

## ■ Food

It’s going to be there anyway, why not dress it up a little? Instead of piling all your chicken strips together, use smaller more creative platters at more stations throughout the reception. Open your cocktail hour with a dessert bar with jars of candy or baked goods. Presentation is everything with food, so play it up. You’re paying for the food anyway, might as well make it look good.

## ■ But what about that eyesore in the corner?

Inevitably, you’ll have a part of the room you wish you could remove with a sledgehammer. Before you start destroying your venue, try covering with fabric. You can create a curtain around the eyesore with a little PVC pipe and cheap fabric.

REACH MONICA K. SMITH at 270-887-3243  
or [msmith@kentuckynewera.com](mailto:msmith@kentuckynewera.com).



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