

THE EDGERTON ENTERPRISE

BRIDAL GUIDE

2017



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Twin girls share many things ... even their wedding day

On February 29, 1940, Peter and Nellie Tolsma were blessed with twin girls. Donna Lee was born first, followed by her sister, Ora Lee, about 20 minutes later. The two baby girls were fraternal twins, and although they did not look identical, they shared many things over the years, not the least of which was their wedding day.

Donna and Fred Vander Kolk dated off and on for several years. After they graduated high school their relationship became more serious.

Ora Lee met Paul Ward after he returned from serving in the Air Force. Paul worked in communications during the war, in Japan, Okinawa, and Taiwan. When he came home, he was stationed as a teletype operator at the Chandler Air Force Base.

Ora Lee and Donna both

worked for the Northwest Bell Telephone Company in Pipestone after graduating from high school in 1958. Fred and Donna were dating and Paul and Ora Lee talked the night away while Paul was handing the base telephone operations.

Paul and Ora Lee were engaged first, but Fred and Donna's engagement soon followed. In fact, Fred proposed marriage on the twins' 20th birthday.

Paul and Ora Lee chose June 3, 1960, as their wedding day. After their wedding, their plan was to move to Wisconsin, where Paul was from. His job was waiting for him back home.

Donna said that while she thought about her own wedding, the thought of Ora Lee moving to Wisconsin made her think they should have their wedding sooner so that Ora Lee would be still be



The twins' double wedding was one of the first in the newly built First CRC in Edgerton.



Ora Lee and Paul Ward - Donna and Fred Vander Kolk

able to be there. Soon the idea of a double wedding took shape – a fine idea for Pete and Nellie who would only have to pay for one reception!

Nellie took her two daughters shopping for dresses. They found what they were looking for at Fantels in Sioux Falls. The two brides-to-be took their matching dresses home that day – no need for fittings and alterations. Nellie made the four bridesmaid's dresses. She sent the dresses to the bridesmaids so that they could try them on and make sure they fit before the big day arrived.

After the wedding, the *Edgerton Enterprise* writeup of the wedding would describe the dresses as "identical gowns of schiffli embroidered taffeta, featuring fitted basque bodices, tiny shirred sleeves, and sabrina necklines. The floor length skirts were embellished with tiered ruffles of re-embroidered tulle from center to back hem. Their fingertip illusion veils were at-

tached to a crown of seed pearls and sequins."

All too quickly, June arrived. But as the way of things are, everything did not go off without a hitch. The day before the wedding, family and guests began to arrive. Unfortunately, Paul's sister Mary, who was Ora Lee's maid of honor, forgot her dress at home in Wisconsin, 500 miles away.

Donna recalls the Wards pulling up at the house and unloading suitcases from the car. She remembers Mary asking, "Mom, where is my dress?" To which her mother replied, "Didn't you pack it?" The group went inside to tell Nellie. Poor Nellie, whose twin daughters were to be married the next day, with one moving away to Wisconsin. She had a house full of guests and relatives to cook for. And now, after sewing four beautiful dresses, one of them was not there and it no doubt seemed that the world was crashing in on her.

"I remember very clearly telling my mother, 'Mom, Mary forgot her dress.' She just started to

cry," Donna said. The twins' sister, Gloria Stevens, recalls catching her mother, who was looking for some privacy, crying in the pantry.

Paul's parents, sister, and brother got right back in the car and drove through the night to Burlington, Wisc. They couldn't ask a neighbor to get the dress and meet halfway, because the house was locked. They got the dress and drove back to Edgerton, arriving back in town that afternoon, in time for the wedding.

There were two ministers, four bridesmaids, four groomsmen, and the ushers. Peter walked his daughter Donna down the aisle and the twins' brother, Daryl, walked Ora Lee down the aisle. The bridesmaids wore the blue dresses that Nellie had made. The newspaper would describe them later as street-length dresses of blue chiffon over taffeta with satin bands. Each carried a bouquet of blue and white carnations with white streamers. The grooms and groomsmen wore white dinner jackets and white shirts with black pants and black ties.



Martha Westenberg, Ora Lee and Donna's aunt, made the matching wedding cakes. They were three-tiered angel food cakes.

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Donna and Fred Vander Kolk



Paul and Ora Lee Ward



Barb Postuma (Ora Lee's daughter) and Evon Van Hofwegen (Donna's daughter) wore the twins' wedding dresses at an Edgebrook style show.

The brides, in their floor length gowns, carried cascade bouquets of white roses with blue ribbon and a touch of blue carnations.

Donna's maid of honor was her best friend, Ardella Kooiman and her bridesmaid was her cousin, Norma (Hendriks) Krossschell. Ora Lee's maid of honor was Paul's sister, Mary, and her bridesmaid was her friend, Kathy Mollema. The groomsmen were Doug Ward and Larry Tolsma for Paul and Wayne Brouwer and Lester Zwart stood up for Fred. Flower girls were Cheryl Lynn Pratt and Becki Ward, Paul's nieces. The flower girls wore matching white taffeta dresses with blue sashes. They carried baskets of blue and white daisies.

Rev. Gareth Kok (Faith De Kam's father) performed the ceremony for the Vander Kolks and Rev. Phillip Ward, Paul's brother, performed the Ward's ceremony. The wedding was one of the first weddings at the newly built First Christian Reformed Church in Edgerton. It was the last wedding Rev. Kok performed before he moved away.

The photographer was from Glenn's Studio in Pipestone. He took one roll of film with no problems. But when he loaded his second roll of film, something went wrong. He didn't know it then, but later when the film was developed only that first roll of pictures turned out. All the rest were underexposed and only a few pictures could be salvaged.

The wedding reception was

held in the church basement. The guests ate ham buns, jello salad, and wedding cake, a customary wedding meal in those days. The brides' aunt, Martha Westenberg, made the cakes. Martha was known for her wedding cakes, and she made two identical three-tiered angel food cakes.

Donna recalls that she and Fred saved the top tier of their cake. They wrapped it up tight and put it in the freezer and enjoyed it together on their first anniversary. "After a year in the freezer, it didn't taste the best," Donna said.

After the reception, the brides both changed out of their dresses, as was the custom back then. They had similar, but not identical, dresses of blue chiffon over flowered taffeta. Wayne Brouwer drove the couples away from the church, with many others trying to follow and keep up!

They went to Pipestone to get Fred's car. Fred was working for Van Essen Construction in those days and his car was in Wayne's garage, packed for the honeymoon. When the couples arrived at the garage, they found that someone had taken Donna's bra out of the suitcase and hung it on the mirror. Nothing else was amiss, and they never did find out who the culprit was.

After an overnight stay in Sioux Falls, Paul and Ora Lee went to northern Minnesota on their honeymoon and Fred and Donna went to the Black Hills of South Dakota.

About a month after the honeymoon, Paul and Ora Lee moved to Wisconsin. But the Vander Kolks kept them informed of job openings back in Edgerton. Eventually Paul found employment doing bookwork at De Boer Chevrolet. The two couples have made their home in Edgerton ever since and will celebrate their 57th wedding anniversaries this June.

And that just goes to show, no matter how many things go wrong on the wedding day, at the end of the day, you and your spouse will still be married! And how you live out the days after the wedding is really what matters.

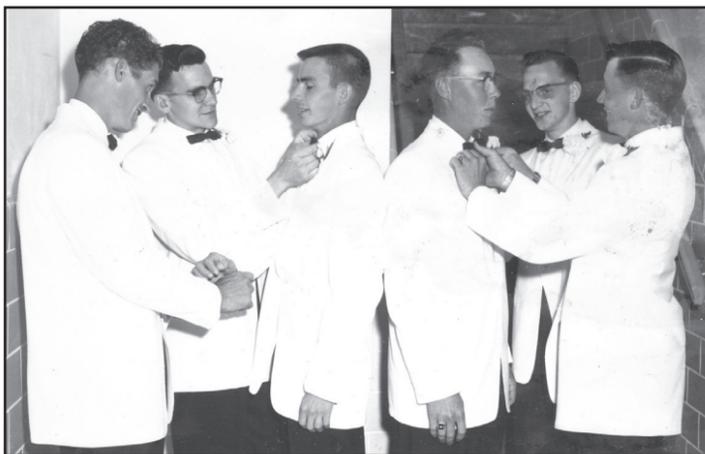
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Paul, middle left, and Fred, middle right, gussy up with their groomsmen.



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DeBoer's 62 years of wedded bliss ...and a dress that kept on giving

Henry and Iva met when Henry's father accepted a call to the Protestant Reformed Church in Edgerton, Minn., in 1949. They came from Redlands, California.

Hien was 15 years of age and Iva was 13. "We started going together when I was 15 and Hien was 17 years of age," Iva said. "Hien gave me a silver heart shape compact for my 16th birthday! I still have this and it is on display in our home."

Hien and Iva were engaged in June of 1954, and decided to get

married in August as Iva's twin sister, Ihla, was leaving for nurses training in Michigan, and her sister, Leanne, would be home on break from her nursing school in Kalamazoo, Mich.

Ihla went with Iva to buy a dress; it was bought at a bridal shop in Sioux Falls. The dress was on the cover of *Brides Magazine*. "It cost me a month's wages to purchase it," Iva said. She also purchased a veil for \$20. The expense was worth it though, because the dress was worn by

several women after Iva.

Ihla wore it three years later at her wedding when she married John Hooyer in Grand Rapids, Mich. And two daughters of Rev. Brink rented it for their weddings. Ihla's daughter, Tamera, wore this gown 27 years later on Dec. 30, 1981. She remodeled the dress and put sleeves on it.

"I still have this wedding dress," Iva said. "Stored under the bed."

Iva's three bridesmaids wore dresses made by Alice Schnyders. The bridesmaids were Ihla, Leanne Huisken, and Joan De Boer. The best man was Pierson DeBoer and the groomsmen were Hien's friends, Stan Hartog and Arvin Mesman. The ring bearer was Jim Huisken, and the flower girl was Gretchen Gunnink.

Alice Schnyders also made nine aprons for the waitresses to wear at the reception.

Iva and Hien's wedding day was a sunny day of 92 degrees. The church was very hot as there was no air conditioning. The reception was at The American Legion building in Pipestone. When bringing the jello to Pipestone in the morning it melted and made a mess on the back seat of the car. "So every time I see green jello I think of this," Iva said. At the reception they had a program with many musical numbers and skits.

The couple went on their honeymoon to Niagara Falls and then to Michigan for 10 days. Hien was employed at Fey Brothers garage and two years later started at Vander Stoeps Hardware and Furniture. He later bought into this business and worked at the hardware store for 50 years. Iva worked at Huisken Department Store, and then was a stay-at-home mom doing some baby sitting. She was also a cook at the Leader Cafe



Henry and Iva DeBoer were married in August of 1954.



Ihla Hooyer (Iva's twin sister) wore the same dress at her wedding August 27, 1957



Ihla's daughter, Tamera, altered the dress and wore it December 30, 1981



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in Edgerton for eleven years. For the past 26 years she has been working for Hope Haven, retiring last November.

In his retirement years, Hien has been doing lawn care and helping with flowers, and playing golfing and tennis. Iva enjoys making diplays at the Edgerton Museum. She also enjoys having teas, and collecting nativity sets. She is also writing for the *Enterprise* in her spare time. They both enjoy volunteering for Edge-

brook and for their church. They have traveled to Africa, to all the states except two, Jamaica, Dominican Republic, Mexico, and Canada.

Iva and Hien enjoy attending sporting events, concerts, and plays where their grandchildren participate, along with those special occasions like graduations and weddings. They have eight great, great grandchildren to enjoy as well.

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“Udderly in Love” - Jacob Bierstedt and Sarah Post are both involved in farming and love the great outdoors.



Jane Wegener and Mark Venema were engaged in July of 2016 at Glacier National Park at the top of the “Going to the Sun” road, which is 6,600 feet above sea level.

Location, Location, Location

Choosing the location of your wedding is much more of a complex decision than it ever used to be. For most of our parents and grandparents, they got married at the church they attended together, or at the bride or groom’s church, if they did not attend the same one.

Most receptions were held in the church fellowship hall, which was most often located in the basement of the church. Streamers would be hung up and white tablecloths laid out. The punch table probably had some flowers and the head table might have had some decorations on it.

Quite often in a rural area like Edgerton, the reception food would have been ham buns and salad with wedding cake for dessert.

Those days are long gone. Now wedding food is quite often more elaborate and the wedding location might not even be a church. Receptions are often held at community centers or other venues that allow for champagne or other alcoholic beverages.

Choosing a location for the wedding can be challenging. For couples who love the outdoors, an outdoor wedding may seem like just the ticket. But unpredictable weather and the windy conditions on the Buffalo Ridge can make natural nuptials a no-no.

A elegant metro wedding . . .

At one end of the wedding spectrum is the metro wedding. Blair and Davonne Wegener’s daughter, Jane, is getting married in Minneapolis on July 2. They have chosen an urban setting – a remodeled 1800’s Minneapolis precinct building called Five Event Center. It is known for its architecture and elegance.

Having their daughter get married in Minneapolis is a bit more complicated for the Wegeners, but planning is working well for Jane.

“My fiancé, Mark Venema, and I were looking for a location in Minneapolis proper as it’s where we both live, so it’s the part of the city we both know the best,” Jane said. It is also easily connected to other locations of interest, and is conveniently located near the airport.

Jane and Mark knew that most of their guests were going to have to travel regardless of where they held their wedding. So they chose to get married in Minneapolis because it is their home – Jane’s for seven years, and Mark’s for five years.

They expect to have guests from all across the country, as well as Canada, Sweden, Brazil, and possibly even Australia.

Minneapolis also has a very established wedding industry, which means more competition and more options. “There are a lot of options when it comes to venues, caterers, and vendors,” Jane said. “But it takes some looking to find what works for you and what is in the budget.”

...Or an outdoor celebration

For Sarah Post, daughter of Bill and Merri Post of rural Chandler, an outdoor wedding in a pasture sounded like what she and her fiancé, Jacob Bierstedt wanted. But Jacob knew he wanted to get married in his own church, St Paul Lutheran Church in Pipestone. So booking the church was the first part of their planning process.

“From there we went on to deciding what reception venues to consider,” Sarah said. They knew they would be looking at 400-500 guests, so their venues were limited from the beginning.

“We initially considered the armory in Pipestone due to its close proximity to hotels and the church, as well as the ability to bring in your own food vendors,” Sarah said. They booked the armory, but once they compiled their guest list, they realized they were well over the 400 person limit and would no longer fit in the armory.

So they started looking at renting a large tent.
“My dream has always been to have a wedding like the one off the movie *8 Seconds*,” Sarah said. “A wedding that is outdoors, simple, and beautiful.”

They decided on a large tent from Luverne, with a capacity of 627 people. They are also planning for a dance floor outside the tent underneath trees and lots of Christmas lights for the “backyard BBQ” feel.

Because the Posts are dairy farmers and have many family and friends in the farming industry, they needed to choose a date that was not during spring planting or fall harvest. Their wedding date is set for July 8.

Both being very involved in the dairy industry, our wedding will be full of dairy and cow related features,” Sarah said. They are “udderly in love.”

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A bridal store opened in Pipestone in 2015. Owned and operated by Barb WeberFrieze, this is the only bridal store in the four-county area.

Barbara Kay's Boutique, located on Main Street in Pipestone, specializes in wedding dresses and other special occasion dresses, including prom dresses.

Barb also operates a chemical-free salon in Pipestone. Her salon has been open for about ten years, but she has worked in the beauty business for about 38 years. Her mother passed away from cancer in the mid-90's and that prompted Barb to move



Barbara WeberFrieze shows off one of the wedding dresses.

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into chemical-free services and products.

A couple of years ago, a friend asked her if she could sell some scarves and purses out of her salon and Barb agreed. That went so well that she eventually added clothing to the mix, selling Simple Noelle brand of clothing. That eventually branched into the bridal and prom dresses that she now carries.

About two years ago, Barb bought the building located next to her salon. She connected the two buildings with a stone arch-

way, which gives her a total of about 4,500 square feet of retail space for all her inventory.

She has both plain label and designer dresses. She also has Sophia Tolli and Moncheri Enchanting dresses as samples from which brides can try. Those dresses can then be ordered to fit the bride.

"I have about 140 wedding dresses in my store," WeberFrieze said. "There is a great selection to choose from, with a budget that can meet any bride."

WeberFrieze carries the Allure brand of bridesmaid dresses. These are also sample dresses that women can try on for fit and color. She then orders in the appropriate size. Barb has several racks of prom dresses in stock. She sells one-of-a-kind and Elle Wilde dresses in sizes from 2 to 20.

So whether you are looking for a ball gown, an A-line, a mermaid, trumpet, or slim sheath, Barb has something for you. Popular styles right now include dresses with sleeves. For many years, strapless was the most popular look. But now the three-quarter sleeves that sing of European culture are growing in popularity, as are sophisticated backs with zippers trimmed with bejeweled buttons. Two piece

continued on page 7

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Kailyn Jasper, Miranda Buys, and Sydney Van Hulzen shop for prom dresses at Barbara Kay's Boutique in Pipestone.



Sierra Van Dyke, Ahna Groen, and Madison Nelson browse thru the prom dress selection.



dresses are also becoming more and more popular.

Bridesmaid dresses and bridal gowns take about four months to arrive. They often need to be altered to fit, so it's a good idea to pick out dresses six months in advance of the wedding date. Barb knows someone in Pipestone who does alterations that she can refer brides to, but they need to set up those services on their own.

She asks that brides make an appointment to come and try on dresses. She wants to be able to meet their needs and supply the customer service that they are looking for. Her store is open from 10 a.m. to 5:30 p.m. on weekdays, if you want to shop for prom dresses or just take a look at what she has at her bridal store.

Barbara Kay's Boutique also stocks many dresses in a variety of styles and colors for the mother of the bride. She also carries flower girl dresses, veils, and other wedding items.

However, Barbara Kay's Boutique is not just for females. She also has Jim's Formal Wear tuxedo service. So the guys can come on by and be measured for the perfect look to suit them.

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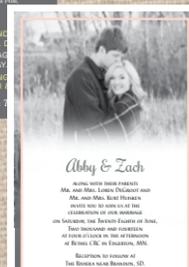


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Planning for the food - The most important part!

One of the most important parts of planning a wedding is planning for the food. Whether you are talking bridal showers, the rehearsal supper, or the menu for the big day, one of the things people will talk about and remember is the food.

My personal opinion about the wedding feast is that you should choose a trusted caterer with experience feeding a crowd. You should budget for this before you opt for designer gowns or exotic flowers. Your friends and family love you and want to celebrate your big day with you. But most (not all, but most) are looking forward to a great meal to go along with the festivities. And after all, they are buying you a gift or stuffing a card with cash – so say thank you in advance with good food.

Now, if a caterer is just not in the budget, all is not lost. Talk to family and friends or anyone who knows how to cook and proceed from there. Sometimes there is

someone in the family who can prepare the food and you can ask your church ladies to serve the food in return for a donation to their group.

Here are a few tried and true recipes that our family has used for big group meals over the years. These recipes can be adapted for bridal showers, bachelor parties, rehearsal supper, or the wedding meal.

Pulled Pork

- 1 boneless pork shoulder (about 4 to 4 1/2 pounds)
- 4 Tbsp. kosher salt
- 1 Tbsp. freshly ground black pepper
- 1 1/2 cups light brown sugar
- 1/4 cup paprika
- 2 to 3 sprigs thyme, leaves only
- 4 cloves garlic
- 1/4 cup red wine vinegar
- Scant 1 Tbsp. cayenne pepper
- 3 Tbsp. extra-virgin olive oil

Place the pork, fat side up, in a roasting pan fitted with a rack insert. Place the salt, pepper,

brown sugar, paprika, thyme leaves, garlic, vinegar, and cayenne in a food processor and pulse until well combined. Add extra-virgin olive oil until you have a nice paste. Rub all over the pork, being sure to get into the nooks so the salt can penetrate the meat and pull out the moisture - this will help form a crust on the outside when cooked. Cover the pork with plastic wrap and marinate in the refrigerator for at least 3 hours or up to overnight.

Allow the meat to sit at room temperature for 30 minutes before cooking. Preheat the oven to 325 degrees F.

Roast the pork for 3 1/2 hours, uncovered, until the outside is crispy-brown (it should look like mahogany). Let the meat rest on a cutting board for 10 minutes before shredding into bit size pieces.

You can serve this alone or on some nice fresh Edgerton Bak-



ery buns. Nobody does buns like they do.

If you are not a pork-fan, another great option is hamburgers or sliders. Who doesn't love a juicy beef burger with a buttery bun? You could serve these with cold beers instead of champagne.

Garlic mashed potatoes are always good, but if you are doing the cooking, these are a ton of work. Whenever I need potatoes for a big crowd, I opt for cheesy hashbrown potato casserole. Don't go overboard on the butter on this recipe. The hashbrowns already have oil in them and you don't want greasy potatoes.

Easy Cheesy Potatoes

Mayme Spronk

- 2 lbs. frozen hash browns (prefer shredded)
- 8 oz. sour cream
- 1 can cream of chicken soup
- 1 tsp. salt
- 1 c. shredded cheddar cheese
- tsp. pepper
- 1/2 c. finely chopped onions

Thaw potatoes and set aside. Mix together soup, cheese, onion, and sour cream. Add to potatoes. Add salt and pepper. Put in 9x13-inch pan. Bake uncovered for 40 to 60 minutes at 350°.

Every menu needs a veggie. Corn is a safe vegetable, but there's not much "wow" to corn. Glazed baby carrots are a great option: easy to prepare and even kids like them.

Glazed Carrots For A Crowd

- 3 cups sugar
- 1 cup light corn syrup
- 1/2 cup butter, cubed
- 1/4 cup thawed orange juice concentrate
- 1 tsp. salt
- 12 pounds medium carrots, sliced and cooked (or use baby carrots)

In a large saucepan, combine the first five ingredients; bring to a boil over medium heat. Boil for 5 minutes, stirring occasionally. Place carrots in two 13-in. x 9-in. baking pans. Pour sugar mixture over carrots. Bake, uncovered, at 350° for 30-40 minutes or until heated through. Yield: 45 servings.

Alongside your meat, starch, and veggie, it's good to have two salad options.

One of our family favorites is Glorified Rice. We ate this a lot growing up. It was cheap, sweet, and would keep in the fridge a few days. We have always jokingly referred to this as "Heavenly" rice.

Glorified Rice Irene Gunnink

- 3/4 cup rice
- 3 cups mini marshmallows
- 1/4 cup sugar (if using pineapple)
- 1 lg. container Cool Whip
- 1 can pineapple or
- 2 cans Mandarin oranges

Boil rice for about 15 minutes, until tender. Drain and rinse. Cool. Add mini marshmallows and pineapple or mandarin oranges with some of the juice. Add sugar, if using pineapple. Add Cool Whip and mix together.

Potato salad and coleslaw are always good options, too. I suggest buying these from a local restaurant. Sometimes a restaurant owner will sell you the bulk buckets at a good price. Doesn't hurt to ask. You can also buy those at your local grocery store if they have a deli section.

One other option is a taco salad. This one has some zing and is pretty inexpensive to make. The downside is that leftovers do not keep well. So don't make too much.

Taco Salad

- 1 lb. hamburger
- 1 pkg. taco seasoning
- 1 med. head lettuce
- 1 sm. can kidney beans
- 1 lg. onion
- 4 med. tomatoes, diced
- 1 8 oz. pkg. cheddar cheese
- 1 pkg. taco chips
- Dressing:
- 1 8 oz. bottle western dressing
- 1/3 cup sugar
- 1 Tbsp. taco seasoning
- 1 Tbsp. taco sauce

Brown hamburger, add taco seasoning, reserving 1 tablespoon for dressing; cool. Select a large salad bowl allowing enough room to toss salad. Layer salad ingredients in bowl, starting with lettuce and ending with cheese. Cover and refrigerate. When ready to serve, toss with dressing and taco chips.



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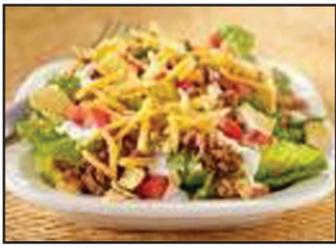
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To top it all off, you need wedding cake. My suggestion is to have a pro make you a beautiful, fake cake. You can skip the cake cutting ceremony all together, or you could ask to have one part of the cake be real. You can use that portion for the ceremony and then serve your guests sheet cake. Sheet cake tastes way better than wedding cake. Wedding cake has to be heavier in order to be stacked up in layers.

Here is my favorite chocolate cake recipe. The frosting takes a bit to make, but it is grand!

Jim's Moist Chocolate Cake

Cake ingredients:

- 2 c. flour
- 1 tsp. salt
- 1 tsp. baking powder
- 2 tsp. baking soda
- 3/4 cup cocoa
- 2 cups sugar
- 1 cup oil
- 1 cup hot coffee
- 1 cup milk
- 2 eggs
- 1 tsp. vanilla

Stir together dry ingredients.

Add oil, coffee, and milk. Mix at medium speed for 2 minutes.

Add eggs and vanilla; beat 2 more minutes. Batter will be thin. Pour into 2-9" pans, or a 9x13 pan and some muffins. Bake at 325° for 25-30 minutes. (Don't take out early, cake will fall). Cool.

Icing ingredients:

- 1 cup milk
- 5 Tbsp. flour
- 1/2 cup butter, softened
- 1/2 cup shortening
- 1 cup sugar
- 1 tsp. vanilla

Combine milk and flour in

small saucepan. Cook until thick. Cover and refrigerate. In small mixing bowl, beat butter, shortening, sugar, and vanilla until creamy. Add chilled milk/flour mixture and beat 10 minutes until light and fluffy. Frost cooled

cake(s).

Another option is to skip the cake all together and have a dessert buffet or serve various types of decedant bars.

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Different ways to express your unity

For the past 40 or so years, one of the popular ceremonies at weddings has been the lighting of the unity candle. In more recent years, other traditions have taken the place of the unity candle, including braiding a three-cord rope, or assembling a two-piece sculpture of a heart or cross.

For those who may not be familiar with the older tradition of lighting unity candles, this is a ceremony usually held after the reciting of the vows. Quite often a soloist will sing while the couple lights the unity candle.

Sometimes, the mothers of the bride and groom will light two tapered candled on each side of the unity candle at the beginning of the ceremony. The unity candle itself is usually a larger, decorated candle. Sometimes the candle will have the couple's name on it, or it will be

inscribed with a Bible verse or quote about love.

Traditionally, the bride is supposed to bring out the unity candle each year on the couple's anniversary and burn it that evening. But not all couples do this. Sometimes the candle finds itself encased in a memory shadow box or sitting on a shelf in the master bedroom.

One of the newer traditions, which works well for outdoor weddings where lighting candles does not work so well, is for the couple to braid a three-stranded rope. One type of this ceremony is called "God's Knot." It uses Ecclesiastes 4:12 as a basis: "Though one may be overpowered, two can defend themselves. A cord of three strands is not quickly broken."

In this ceremony, the groom holds a small metal ring with three attached strands. The bride then braids the strands together, symbolizing the union of God, husband, and wife. There are three colored ropes in this type of unity rope: gold, purple, and white.

According to their website, the colors of the cords are significant. The divinity of God is represented in gold. This covenant relationship is initiated by Him,

will be built under His authority, and is intended to glorify Him.

The purple strand represents the groom. As a new creation in Christ, the majesty of the groom is represented in purple. As the husband loves his wife and submits himself to the Lord, the Lord in turn will demonstrate His great love in the marriage relationship.

The white strand represents the wife. Having been cleansed by salvation in Christ, the purity of the bride is represented in white. As the wife honors her husband and submits herself to the Lord, the Lord in turn will nurture and strengthen the marriage relationship.

Another idea is to have a wooden frame with a wooden cross inside. The three strands of rope are attached at the top and two side beams of the cross. Those three strands are then braided together. Inside the same frame can be the couple's names, painted or applied with vinyl lettering, the verse about the three-cord strand of Ecclesiastes, or the couples wedding text. (see example photo)

A completely different option is something called a Unity Cross. The Unity Cross (a patented creation) signifies the wedding covenant. It is a lasting reminder of the bride and groom coming together in their faith in Christ, beginning their life-long journey as one.

The Unity Cross is a two-part sculpture of the cross, with a bold outer cross that is open, allowing for an intricate inner cross to be snapped together.

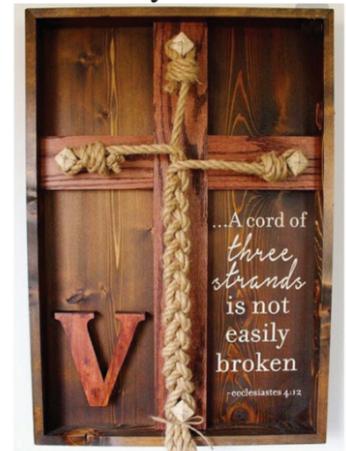
The outer cross represents the groom as the strength and cover for his family and home, and yet, without his bride, incomplete.

The inner cross is intricate. It represents the bride as beautiful and multi-faceted. She brings creativity and wisdom to the relationship.

So if you decide to incorporate a unity ceremony into your wedding day, the days of the unity candle have passed and there are several options out there.



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Bridal Registry tips

While the fondue pot and ice cream maker seem like must-haves when you're adding items to your bridal registry, it's important to ask yourself, "Will I really use these items on a regular basis?" You may want to reconsider your selections. And, although making a wedding gift wish list can be daunting, the following tips can keep the happy couple celebrating wedded bliss for years to come.

Before you and your sweetheart start scanning items for your registry, do your homework. Consider the size of your space and where you will store your new items. If you're living in an apartment or smaller condominium, you may want to rethink registering for the super-deluxe size barbecue grill. You'll be surprised how quickly your new gifts can fill up your nest space.

Next, think about your guest list. Make sure that you have a

variety of items to choose from and at different price points – high and low – so guests can purchase items they feel reflect their own taste and what they can afford. Be sure to consider your out-of-town guests as well by registering for items that are available both at nationwide locations and online to help ensure they can access your registries from anywhere. But don't forget to register locally so local friends and family don't have to travel long distances to buy the gift you can use.

Start with the rooms that you live in and use the most – the kitchen and bathroom.

Do you like to host dinner parties? Fine china should be on your list. Find something that will not only match your taste and decor, but also be a classic design for years to come.

Want to skip the china, but love to cook? Register for a complete

collection of high-end cookware. In addition to registering for such items as sterling silver flatware and crystal stemware, don't forget about everyday items like measuring cups and spoons, a kitchen scale, electronic timers, or even a microwave oven.

Love a spa feeling and want to re-create it in your bathroom at home? Then don't settle for a plain, ordinary shower experience when you can create an invigorating one. Register for a new shower head. Many new shower heads have massage

or rain-water features. Don't forget to register for some nice big bath towels, but also some regular size bath towels and hand towels. Remember, the bigger and thicker they are - the more luxurious they will feel – but they will also take longer to dry in the dryer!

Once you have the kitchen and bathroom taken care of, start thinking about the master bedroom. If you are getting married in the summer, don't forget to register for comfy quilts and a set of flannel sheets for those cold winter months. Ergonomic

pillows are also nice.

And finally, don't forget to register for some items for the garage. Tools and household items that are sure to be a help to both the husband and the wife are a good idea. A cordless drill set is always a good item to have around, but don't forget you'll also want some of the basics like a hammer and screwdrivers.

Whatever you decide to register for, don't forget to have fun as you as a couple pick out the items. Think of it as a shopping trip without having to worry about your own pocketbook!

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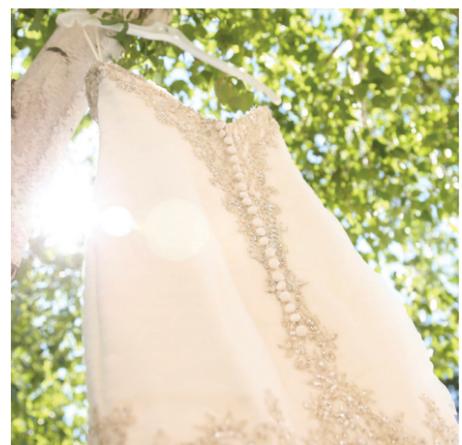
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