

Financial aid available for the family of the bride

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

For the first time, there's a definite trend toward the sharing of wedding expenses. The groom's family, as well as the bride and groom themselves, are taking on a chunk of the

financial responsibility.

One reason for this may be changing attitudes toward the nature of marriage. In this era of liberation, a bride's parents are no longer considered to be "marrying off" their daughter. Rather, the wedding is seen as the joining of two people, and two families, with everyone contributing to the festivities.

A second reason is

Ideas for the bride



PACK A BRUNCH and surprise the bride with a picnic shower or a simple patio get-together with friends. Plastic Servin' Savers, new from Rubbermaid, hold picnic fare and make a nice take-home gift for the bride. Center press lids seal tightly to help keep foods fresh and avoid spills. For an appetizer serve shrimp vinaigrette, a refreshing change from the traditional cocktail sauce. Round out the meal with cold sliced beef, rolls, salads and relishes. Elegant pastries add a festive note for dessert.

frankly economic: The cost of a formal wedding these days runs on average around \$4,350, according to a 1981 *Bride's* reader profile study. It can go as high as \$10-\$15,000 in some urban areas.

Rather than cut back on their idea of the perfect celebration, many couples and their families are instead finding new ways to meet the expenses. Especially where the bride and groom are on their own and earning money themselves (increasingly common as the average age for marriage goes up), it only makes sense for them to pitch in.

* Figure from a 1981 BRIDE'S Reader Profile Study

The actual dividing up of the costs can be done in

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several ways. An easy, tactful method is to settle on specific expenses in advance, rather than to just split the cost of the whole wedding down the middle.

For instance, the groom's family might agree to cover the flowers, the music and the liquor. They would then discuss the general budget for these items with the couple and have the bills sent directly to them. This eliminates the need for money changing hands or for further talking about costs between families.

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

There are many possible arrangements and the options should be discussed openly and early in the engagement so an agreeable plan can be worked out. It's also important to remember, that it's still the prerogative

of the bride's family to decline an offer of help if they wish. If this happens, the groom's family can celebrate the marriage in another way, such as hosting the rehearsal dinner or throwing an engagement party.

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

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