

BU BAYLOR LARIAT

News for the students by the students



Wedding bell bops ... pg. 3

Archaeologist couple ... pg. 4

Third wheeling & thriving ... pg. 7

EDITORIAL

Ring by spring distorts reality, undervalues singleness

One day, you're a freshman giving teary-eyed goodbyes to your parents, shrinking your clothes in the communal laundry room and planning your day around when to get a Memo flying saucer — and the next, you're a senior with 12 wedding invitations on your fridge and four bridesmaid dresses in your closet.

Obviously, ring by spring isn't the universal practice at Baylor, but man, does it feel like it.

The wild number of engagement posts and couples graduation photos can make even the brightest 21- and 22-year-old women feel like Charlotte Lucas in "Pride and Prejudice."

"I'm 27 years old. I've no money and no prospects. I'm already a burden to my parents, and I'm frightened."

It started as a meme, but over time, the laughs started to become a *little* painful.

Perhaps the hardest part of it all is how much pressure the culture of Protestantism tends to place on marriage. In the course of breaking away from Catholicism, it abandoned clerical celibacy, the consecrated life and the conception of marriage as a sacrament. The result of such reforms was the profound elevation

of marriage as an institution, so much so that singleness is oftentimes seen as a curse.

In reality, though, this idea is not biblically sound. In 1 Corinthians 7:7-8, Paul says, "Indeed, I wish everyone to be as I am, but each has a particular gift from God, one of one kind and one of another. Now to the unmarried and to widows, I say: It is a good thing for them to remain as they are, as I do." Here is a clear instance of one of Christ's apostles praising singleness as a vocation that is pleasing to God, so why are we quick to characterize singles as the red-headed stepchildren of the church?

Dr. Stacy Keogh George, a professor at Whitworth University, echoes this criticism in her 2016 article titled "Beyond the 'Ring by Spring' Culture."

"Instead of encouraging men and women of faith to live out their individual vocations which may or may not include marriage, ring by spring culture pressures students to fulfill this sacrament as a cultural requisite for Christian college success."

Of course, marriage is a beautiful covenant, and there is nothing wrong with getting married young

if someone finds their person and is prepared for the responsibility.

The point at which ring by spring becomes harmful is the point at which it teaches students that marriage is necessary for them to live a Christian life — and, further, that marriage is promised. College offers an opportunity for immense personal formation, and we shouldn't overshadow that opportunity with unrealistic, and frankly unbiblical, pressures to settle down.

The reality is that not every person on campus right now is going to get married, and the vast majority of those who do get married are not going to find their life partner in the halls of the Baylor Sciences Building or Moody Memorial Library. According to a Pew Research Survey, 32% of adults meet their partner through family or friends, 18% through work, 17% through school, 12% online, 8% at a bar or restaurant and 5% at a place of worship — not to mention the fact that the average marriage age in the United States is 28 for women and 30 for men.

The highly publicized culture of ring by spring has a tendency to make students who are single feel like they're the only ones their age who haven't



Gwen Henry | Cartoonist

found their life partner, but that couldn't be further from the truth.

For those of you who desire marriage, know that undergrad isn't the only place or the only time you can meet someone. Maybe you're destined for a wholesome office romance like Jim and Pam, and who knows, maybe you'll live out your wildest Hallmark dreams.

For those of you who don't desire marriage, know that singleness is just as valuable a vocation. For the great majority of church history, Christians

revered monks and nuns who lived a monastic life. Perhaps it's time to revive this conception of singleness.

So, if your life starts sounding just a bit too much like the "always the bridesmaid, never the bride" plot of "27 Dresses," rest assured that you aren't alone. Make college your selfish years. Build strong friendships. Enjoy the chance to do whatever you want, whenever you want. Invest in your relationship with God.

And above all else, know that you're not behind.

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Play this, not that: Break up with boring wedding music

EMMA WEIDMANN
Arts and Life Editor

If you've been to a wedding at any point in the last decade, you've probably also developed an allergy to Bruno Mars and Ed Sheeran.

Though those top-40 pop hits are sure to get your aunt and uncle on the dance floor, nobody wants to see them try (and fail) to do dances that haven't been popular since you were in middle school. Here's what to play instead, slow songs included.

1. Instead of "Uptown Funk (feat. Bruno Mars)" by Mark Ronson, play "Blinding Lights" by The Weeknd.

We're all tired of "Uptown Funk." Instead of boring your guests to death, play "Blinding Lights" for some catchy, '80s-inspired energy.

2. Instead of "Thinking Out Loud" by Ed Sheeran, play "Lover" by Taylor Swift.

Weddings call for an acoustic slow dance, and "Lover" by Taylor Swift fits the bill. It's sweet, it's sappy, and it was released only five years ago, making it recognizable without being overdone or cheesy.

3. Instead of "Sugar" by Maroon 5, play "Adore You" by Harry Styles.

I'm putting everyone out of their misery by keeping them from ever hearing Adam Levine's punched-in-the-gut wheeze of a singing voice at a wedding again. Instead, play "Adore You" by Harry Styles — a romantic pop masterpiece that keeps the vibes up without forcing your guests to try and name another member of Maroon 5.

4. Instead of "Shut Up and Dance" by WALK THE MOON, play "Dance The Night" by Dua Lipa.

If the "Barbie" craze of last summer teaches us anything, it's that you can never go wrong with that soundtrack. "Dance The Night" is a perfect updated replacement for "Shut Up and Dance" — both about getting out on the floor, both high energy. "Shut Up and Dance" screams middle school, so if you're marrying soon, reconsider putting this on your playlist.

5. Instead of "Marry You" by Bruno Mars, play "Best Years" by 5 Seconds of Summer.

"Marry You" is just a little bit on the nose, and who really wants to play a song about getting married because you're inebriated, anyway? "Best Years" by 5 Seconds of Summer is a little-known bop, and it deserves more recognition.


6. Instead of "Perfect" by Ed Sheeran, play "Video Games" by Lana Del Rey.

Lana Del Rey makes an amazing love song. "Video Games" makes use of romantic string instrumentals and sweet lyrics to earn its spot on any wedding playlist.

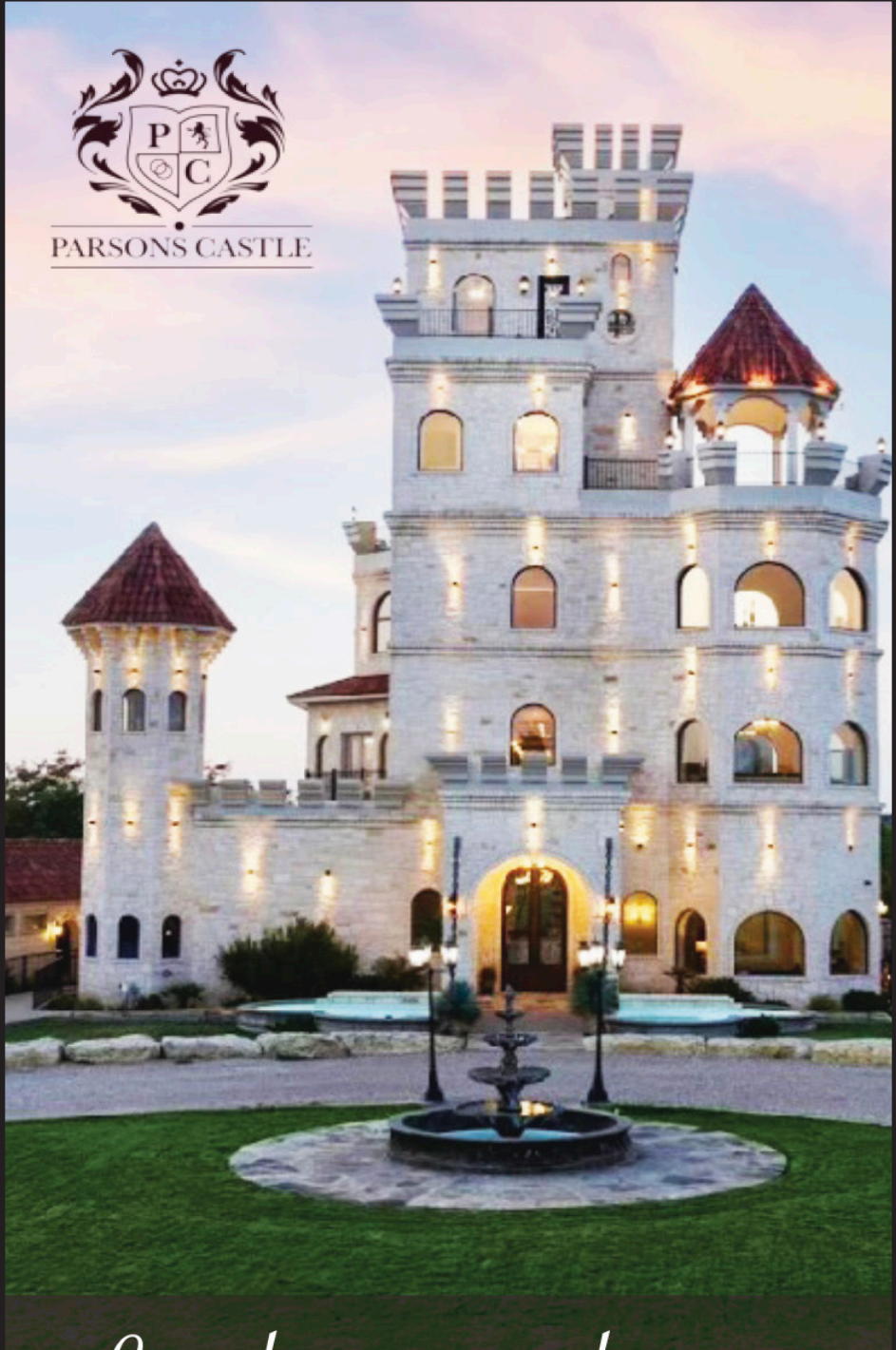
7. Instead of "All of Me" by John Legend, play "About You" by The 1975.

Boy, is this song corny. "All of Me" came out in 2013, and it hasn't been put to rest since — until now. Opt for another more modern ballad instead. I saw a couple dance to "About You" during The 1975's set at Austin City Limits, and the whole scene was so romantic I nearly fell to my knees.

Scan here to see
the full playlist!

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Professor couple collaborates on archaeology research – and they dig it

JOSH SIATKOWSKI
Staff Writer

People say to never do business with family, but for Drs. Colleen and Davide Zori, it's hard to tell where business ends and family begins.

Colleen and Davide Zori are professors in the Baylor Interdisciplinary Core, with offices right next to each other in Morrison Hall. The two work even closer to each other in the summers, when they travel to central Italy to work on the San Giuliano Archaeological Research Project.

The Zoris — who are history professors and archaeologists — began the San Giuliano Archeological Research Project in 2016. They have co-published numerous journal articles about the development of the site over the course of 2,000 years. In the last eight years, the project has evolved from a simple husband-and-wife research pair into an entire village made up of Baylor students as well as the children and parents of the Zoris and other colleagues.

This coupling of work and family is unlike any other. One moment, the Zoris may be unearthing a tomb of an Etruscan noble, and the next, they may be looking up, wondering where their children have wandered.

Colleen Zori said the last eight summers have led to “a blending of family and work that I've never been able to manage before.”

However, this blending is hard to achieve, and it takes a special situation to make it work. Davide Zori said when they found the opportunity to continue their research while remaining active parents, he wasn't sure how it would play out.

“Admittedly, I was a little worried,” Davide Zori said. “When you mix any sides of your life together, you always worry that they won't quite work together.”

And it wasn't just two sides of the Zoris' lives that were being mixed together; it was nearly all of them. The roles of researcher, teacher, parent and in-law would all overlap for the Zoris for three months of every year.

“Being able to do this project through Baylor has actually made me reconcile those two parts of my life,” Colleen Zori said.

Despite these worries, both Colleen and Davide Zori said the lifestyle came

quite naturally.

“I don't feel that I'm putting on the professor hat or putting on the husband hat or putting on the dad hat,” Davide Zori said. “It's all become kind of organic.”

Colleen and Davide Zori both agreed what keeps the program running smoothly is their common passion — obsession, even, according to Davide Zori — for the human past.

Thankfully, the Zoris have had ample time to develop this passion. The road to becoming an archaeologist is a long and narrow one. Academic archaeology jobs anywhere, but especially in America, are scarce and competitive. Colleen Zori said “it requires stamina” to be successful in the field.

Even before the San Giuliano Archaeological Research Project began, the Zoris were used to summer digs, as they're a typical part of the archaeologist's calendar, which Davide Zori called “the rhythm to the life of the archaeologist.”

Because of this rhythm, Davide Zori said marrying another archaeologist became not just a luxury but also somewhat of a necessity.

“I think an archaeologist being with a non-archaeologist would probably be hard,” Davide Zori said.

Colleen Zori said days can become long, lonely and tiring.

“The lifestyle of going away every summer to go do fieldwork in another place is so exciting, and it's so fun,” Colleen Zori said. “But I've missed weddings and graduations. There was a sacrifice that went along with it.”

Despite these sacrifices, Colleen Zori stuck through it, reminding herself that she's had her heart set on archaeology since the age of 12.

Davide Zori was not free from these challenges either. He said he wasn't exactly encouraged to go into archaeology.

“My advisers at the University of Florida all thought I was nuts, even the ones in the field,” Davide Zori said.

Ignoring the suggestions of his advisers, Davide Zori began a joint archaeology and history graduate program at UCLA in 2002. Colleen Zori started there the same year, and the two began dating shortly after.

The Zoris' aligned passions have been



Photo courtesy of Dr. Colleen Zori

THIS ROCKS Drs. Colleen and Davide Zori have offices in the same building, teach in the Baylor Interdisciplinary Core and work on the same summer research project — and they're married.

crucial to building the life they have today. First, they have been able to make each other better academically.

“Having another smart person you could just bounce ideas off of was invaluable,” Colleen Zori said.

More than this, their studies have created a balance in their relationship that has made the blending of lifestyles in San Giuliano possible.

Although the two are united in their passion for the past, their respective research experiences aren't always the same. As a Viking historian, Davide Zori spent summers in Iceland, while Colleen Zori spent summers in Chile researching the Inca people.

“We had these things that we were intensely

sharing,” Colleen Zori said. “But at the same time, we also had some things that we had to ourselves.”

When the Zoris took this leap of faith in San Giuliano, collaborating on what had historically been a personal part of each of their lives, there were questions.

But with their shared obsession, aligned rhythms and what Colleen Zori calls “an unwavering commitment to each other,” the San Giuliano Archaeological Research Project has become not just a successful dig site but also a cherished summer tradition and liberating experience.

“I feel it can be the most authentic version of myself in [San Giuliano],” Colleen Zori said.

Column: Look to the stars for stylish wedding inspiration

BELLA WHITMORE
Intern

Even if they are impractical and unachievable for many people — especially college students — who doesn't love a celebrity wedding? Let's take a look at a few that stand out and offer fun and innovative inspiration for your wedding needs this year.

TAYLOR HILL AND DANIEL FRYER

In June 2023, former Victoria's Secret angel Taylor Hill tied the knot with Daniel Fryer at Devil's Thumb Ranch in the rustic landscape of Colorado. Wearing a beautiful off-the-shoulder dress by Etro, Hill perfectly combined luxury and comfort with her ornate jewelry and bare feet.

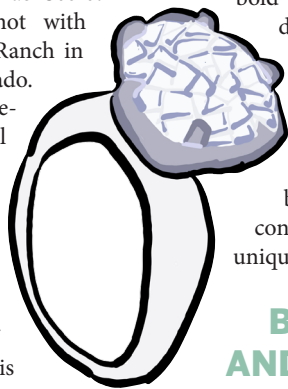
The ceremony and reception were studded with everything western, from cowboy hats and boots to custom belt buckles. If "cowboy couture" is your style, this wedding makes the perfect muse.

NICOLA PELTZ AND BROOKLYN BECKHAM

Nicola Peltz and Brooklyn Beckham got hitched at her family's estate in Palm Beach, Fla. Peltz rocked a Valentino wedding dress coupled with a long train and platform heels.

The rest of the Beckham bunch participated in the ceremony as well, with Brooklyn's younger sister as the flower girl and his two brothers as the best men.

The couple took to the dance floor for their first dance, swaying to a soulful song by South African artist Lloyiso. This wedding serves as a perfect example of timeless with a twist.



HAILEY BALDWIN AND JUSTIN BIEBER

Also known as "the wedding that rocked social media," Hailey Baldwin and Justin Bieber got married at the scenic Hotel Montage resort in the marshland of South Carolina. Baldwin wore an off-the-shoulder lace gown with her hair in an updo, not to mention an 18-carat Tiffany & Co. wedding ring.

She also sported a veil that included the phrase "till death do us part" in bold lettering toward the bottom, designed by the late Virgil Abloh of Off-White.

The wedding was very much a coastal, classic Americana vibe, which is perfect for the couple. I have personally been to this hotel before and can confirm it's very beautiful and a unique choice.

BARBARA PALVIN AND DYLAN SPROUSE

Everyone's favorite child star married the beautiful Victoria's Secret model at Palvin's family reserve and church in the countryside of her hometown in Hungary. Palvin donned a classic corset-style Vivienne Westwood dress with a simple yet graceful hairstyle.

The wedding was very austere and included a lot of natural elements as well as religious imagery that related to Palvin's family and their faith.

Sprouse was always known for loudly conveying his love and adoration for Palvin publicly, but the choice of location and style for the wedding might just take the cake.

Illustration by Cassidy Tsikitas | Photo Editor

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Students navigate LGBTQ+ relationships at Baylor

SARAH GALLAHER

Staff Writer

When it comes to finding a significant other, things may look different for LGBTQ+ students at private Christian universities. Members of Gamma Alpha Upsilon, an unaffiliated LGBTQ+ advocacy group at Baylor, said being in an openly queer relationship is especially complicated at Baylor.

As a transgender person, Elgin, Okla., junior and external chair Bee Matthey found a safe space on campus within Gamma Alpha Upsilon. The organization sought a charter for 10 consecutive years before deciding in 2021 to remain unaffiliated. A year later, Baylor welcomed Prism — its first LGBTQ+ student organization.

“Despite not being allowed to be a student organization, there are definitely benefits to it,” Matthey said. “There’s a big sense of independence that we have because we are able to seek justice in a way that an official organization might not be able to.”

Matthey said the relationship between LGBTQ+ students and Baylor is a complicated one. According to Baylor’s statement on human sexuality, “The University affirms the biblical understanding of sexuality as a gift from God. Christian churches across the ages and around the world have affirmed purity in singleness and fidelity in marriage between a man and a woman as the biblical norm.”

Though the university does not condone LGBTQ+ relationships in its understanding of Christianity, its guidelines state that students are no longer expelled or punished for same-sex attraction, nor do counselors condone the use of conversion or reparative therapy. In 2015, Baylor removed its ban on “homosexual acts” in favor of the phrase “biblical understanding of sexuality.” But in 2023, there was controversy surrounding the university’s Title IX religious exemptions.

“There is a history of oppression



Gracie Speer | Cartoonist

on Baylor’s campus that is not being repaired,” Matthey said. “There is a bridge that was torn down for decades, and we are a Baptist campus that still can’t say we fully accept queer students.”

Waco freshman and Gamma Alpha Upsilon member Joanna Able said her outward appearance and identity as a bisexual woman offer her privilege, protecting her from backlash on campus.

“I can ‘pass’ as straight,” Able said via email. “When I am seen with a man, no one bats an eye. Yet, I have faced hostility for simply

walking with friends who outwards appear ‘queer.’”

Though Able said she has felt welcomed and loved in many spaces at Baylor, she said she has felt rejected by others. Able said she feels like the hostility present on campus prevents her from dating a woman without the fear of facing backlash from various people and groups.

“I hate to encourage people to hide parts of themselves, yet your safety needs to come first,” Able said.

The fear of judgment or criticism can prevent LGBTQ+ students from fully exploring their sexuality

and identity, sometimes opting to keep their romantic relationships private.

To Matthey, those who hold hands and participate in other public displays of affection have a lot of confidence in doing so. While Matthey has the opportunity to hold hands with their partner in public, they said that is not the case for many queer couples.

“As a trans person, I look like a woman, and nobody would ever assume that I am trans,” Matthey said. “My partner is a cisgender gay man, so we pass as a hetero relationship.

I think that is a really big privilege for us.”

Although Matthey has generally felt accepted by faculty within their department, they said they have still experienced discrimination and microaggressions based on their gender identity while at Baylor. Gamma Alpha Upsilon offers a space for them to explore their identity as a transgender person and to have an openly queer relationship.

“Any place where queer people feel safe, it is so empowering to be around people like you,” Matthey said.



Kassidy Tsikitas | Photo Editor

Third-wheeling and thriving: Singles find joy from within

ISABELLE RUFF
Intern

The time is upon us when family and friends begin to become married couples rather than just fellow classmates. Being the single friend doesn't have to be discouraging, though. Some Baylor students say finding yourself is more important than finding a partner.

Edmond, Okla., freshman Hattie Burchfield is the maid of honor in the upcoming wedding of her twin sister. Although they are twins, their lives look vastly different, as Burchfield has never been in a serious relationship, while her sister has been in one for three years. She said this is something only other people seem to notice.

"I feel like other people treat me like the single one more than I think of myself as the single one, because I've never been in a serious relationship, so this just is my life," Burchfield said. "They think that I'm sad that I'm not getting married or in a relationship."

While Burchfield doesn't feel like she's behind schedule on finding a partner, she acknowledges that marriage and making a home is something she desires for her future.

"[My sister is] making a home, and that's something that I also really desire for my life that she is already getting to step into," Burchfield said. "She's getting all of these things like crockpots and homemade oven mitts that I want for myself, but I'm going to have to buy them myself next year when I move into my little college house."

Houston sophomore Hannah Jane

Thompson, who is the maid of honor in the upcoming wedding of her older sister, said feeling sad and supporting a happy couple can happen at the same time.

"It's genuinely been so fun doing all the classic wedding things," Thompson said. "There is a little lingering feeling in me that's like, 'Hey, you need to enjoy this, because there's no guarantee that you'll get married.' But I never let it get me too down, because at the end of the day, this isn't about me. It's about my sister and her fiance."

Thompson, like Burchfield, recognizes that when marriage is something you look forward to, it can be harder to participate in a wedding as a single person. She advises allowing yourself to feel all the excitement and hurt equally.

"If getting married is something you really crave and something you're really longing for, it's natural to react with some level of sorrow if someone close to you gets engaged," Thompson said. "Obviously, you'd rather react with just joy and support for the couple, but you wouldn't be human if you only reacted positively."

Burchfield said that along with allowing yourself to joke about being a third wheel, it is important to find who you are outside of a relationship.

"To find contentment in being the single friend is hard, and it takes a while, but I think it is absolutely vital to take the steps to say, 'What does contentment look like for me?'" Burchfield said. "Nobody wants to marry somebody who has no personality or interests, so you may as well spend this time cultivating who you are as a person."

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'I wouldn't have wanted it any other way'

Married professors share their unique cross-country path to love

ERIKA KUEHL

Staff Writer

Dr. Renée Umstattd Meyer, associate dean for research in Robbins College of Health and Human Sciences, and Dr. Andy Meyer, associate professor in sport foundations, were not ring-by-springers, but they now find their offices across the hall.

When they met at the University of Illinois, Renée was completing her postdoctoral position, and Andy was finishing his Ph.D. They ran in similar crowds and went to a yoga class as friends once before she moved to Alabama.

"And then Facebook appeared, and I was not savvy," Renée said. "And so I was lucky enough one of my friends that we had — I guess the closest friend that we had mutually in common from Illinois — I had seen her and then saw him post on her page. And I was like, 'Oh, Andy. I wonder how he's doing.' So I invited him to be my friend, and then we kind of connected a little bit that spring, and then I started training for a triathlon with my sister."

After, they began connecting on social media over their mutual ventures in triathlons. Andy slid into Facebook messenger and started asking if she needed any advice on training.

"One of my friends from Illinois was getting married, and so one of our mutual friends invited me to be her plus one to her wedding, and I said yes," Renée said. "And so I reached out to Andy. I was like, 'Hey, I'm going to be in town for a wedding. Are you going to be around?' And he was like, 'Well, maybe we can go on a bike ride.'"

When her flight got delayed, Renée decided to drive the distance between Alabama and Illinois to



Photo courtesy of Dr. Renée Umstattd Meyer

LOVE IS IN THE AIR Dr. Renée Umstattd Meyer and Dr. Andy Meyer share their unique love story.

fulfill her dinner plans with Andy.

"I didn't remember what his voice sounded like at this point or how infectious his laugh was," Renée said. "And so I said, 'Hey, I'll be there, but I'm driving.' And when I arrived, we had a really frank conversation pretty early on. 'Are we friends, or do we want to see where this could go?'"

Their first dating venture was taste-testing all the cupcakes at the wedding reception, which quickly turned into sushi-tasting in town. Five days after Renée left, Andy drove down to Alabama.

After some time as a long-distance couple, Renée was offered a temporary job position in Hawaii.

"She invited me to go on a research

trip to Hawaii, and I think I said, 'OK, I'm going to marry this girl,'" Andy said. "So then, when she took the job at Baylor, I had just graduated with my Ph.D. from Illinois, so I moved to Texas with her and we got married."

Renée said she knew God had called them to start their lives together when they moved to Waco. They had a small backyard ceremony

in 2010 and married again a year later with all their family and friends.

"Everybody was out there dancing, and we have friends that are no longer with us that I'll always hear a song and just remember them," Andy said. "Everybody was sweaty and dancing, and nobody walked away from that wedding saying there was a minute that [they] didn't enjoy."

Both well into their careers at Baylor, Renée said working in the same department as Andy means their worlds are always intertwined.

"It's also, I think, lovely in the fact that I have watched Andy teach, and I see him come alive in the classroom," Renée said. "It's because he cares so much about it, and I have been able to watch and walk alongside and really be part of what I feel is a huge calling for him."

Now with two daughters, they are excited for the unexpected of every day and their future adventures.

"Our whole life has been exciting together, and I feel like our future is just — we don't know what the path is," Andy said. "And so that's exciting, to see what comes now. Whatever happens tomorrow, we just don't know. So I guess the exciting thing is that I have my best friend, my spouse and my wife sitting right next to me going through all of this."

Renée said her path in love didn't look like the stories around her, but God's timing allowed her to find her perfect person.

"I was a Baylor undergrad," Renée said. "Ring by spring is real. It trickles. I had lots of friends who were passing the candle, that were doing all the things, and that wasn't what God had in store for me. In fact, it took years to circle around, to find the person that God had planned for me. I wouldn't have wanted it any other way."

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Behind closed doors

Sociology professor debunks marriage, divorce myths

KALENA REYNOLDS
Staff Writer

During the ring-by-spring rush, lecturer of sociology Dr. Jodien Johnson teaches the trends and statistics of marriage in her class titled Marriage and The Family. The class presents topics from “a sociopsychological viewpoint with stress on personal awareness, growth and satisfaction in interpersonal relations.”

Johnson teaches about how and who people date, how people in a marriage or family communicate, sexual adjustment, parenting, cohesion, adaptability and divorce. She also debunks myths about current marriage trends and how they have evolved over the years.

“I think people are surprised when we talk about how divorce is actually decreasing — the percent of people getting divorced,” Johnson said. “Most people have been told

that the divorce rate is 50%, that half of all marriages end in divorce. Certainly at the peak of [it], that was probably true, but since the '90s, we've seen the divorce rate steadily coming down.”

Johnson said divorce peaked in the 1970s and 1980s, and in the 1990s, divorce laws allowed for “no-fault” divorces, meaning neither person in the marriage was responsible for it ending. However, with the decrease in divorce rates since then comes a

reduction in marriage rates and a shift in overall priorities.

“Women were entering the workforce, so they could divorce and support themselves,” Johnson said. “So we saw that huge spike, and that's when it became a really big social concern. And since then, it has been decreasing. We also see the marriage rates are decreasing. So maybe also the people that really want to be married, stay married.”

Johnson said the misleading divorce statistics are based on studies done in the '80s on a mix of marriages. It included couples in their second, third and fourth marriages, which have a much higher rate of divorce, making it an inaccurate representation of marriage statistics.

While Johnson said divorce statistics are much lower than what most people think, she also mentioned that predictors of successful marriages have shifted.

“For example, if you have an education, you're much less likely to get a divorce,” Johnson said. “A bachelor's degree or higher is much less likely to get a divorce than someone without a bachelor's degree, and so education seems to be a big influencer. If you practice a religion — not if you claim a religion, but if you actually practice the religion — you're less likely to get a divorce.”

Every year, Johnson surveys her classes at the beginning of the semester in order to get their viewpoints on the subjects they will discuss. Seven Springs, N.C., graduate student Chloe Davis has been Johnson's teaching assistant for the last year and has seen firsthand the thought processes of Baylor students on topics like cohabitation, divorce, gender roles and marriage.

Davis said one of the most surprising results of the surveys was that Baylor students were

against living with their partner before marriage.

“It's very surprising to me every semester that Baylor students are very against living with their spouse or partner before marriage, whereas most other universities, if we took a poll, I'm sure most would approve of cohabitation or even would be cohabiting,” Davis said. “But with this whole ring-by-spring culture, I think it really sets a tone for Baylor's campus on not living together until later.”

Davis said students are often taught concepts like a “marriage market” — how marriage is more centered around economic trades in society.

“A lot of it is teaching them about the marriage market and how love does not have much to do with marriage, unfortunately, anymore,” Davis said. “It's more of an economic trade. You find your best match by who can provide for you and who you feel you can provide for. So I think it gives an interesting spin on how people traditionally think of marriage and family life.”

Even though indicators of successful marriages have shifted, Johnson said the biggest transition related to marriage is people's priorities in marriage. Why people are getting married now compared to 50 years ago is centered around the question of love and happiness rather than security.

“Marriage of the past would be unbearable for people today — these marriages that were mostly sort of arranged by our families, that didn't necessarily include love, that were about stability and fulfilling roles and public good,” Johnson said. “Today, we would not be able to sustain those, because our culture today is not about sustaining family for the public good. It's about individual happiness.”



Camie Jobe | Photographer

UNDER THE SURFACE In her class titled Marriage and The Family, Dr. Jodien Johnson helps students view topics such as dating, communication and divorce through a sociopsychological lens.



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Think twice before signing the lease: Side effects of college cohabitation

ASHLYN BECK
Staff Writer

The idea that cohabitation before marriage leads to divorce is a myth according to a Baylor lecturer's research, but they still say to think before moving in with your significant other.

Dr. Tamara Lawrence, senior lecturer in the department of psychology and neuroscience, said she focuses primarily on romantic relationships in her research. According to Lawrence, cohabitation is not proven to be always beneficial or negative.

"When couples live with their future spouse — in other words, they cohabitate after they become engaged — it has no impact on marital stability really at all," Lawrence said.

The real indicator of relationship success or dissolution, Lawrence said, is the reason for cohabitating. If a couple is planning on getting married and cohabitation is the "financially feasible next step," then it can be highly beneficial for a couple.

"If the plan is already to get married, so they're thinking of marriage or they're engaged, then it does seem to be a good idea," Lawrence said.

Centennial, Colo., sophomore Miranda Ford is planning on moving in with her boyfriend this summer. Ford said she and her boyfriend have been together for four years and have been long distance for most of that time. Ford said they met when her boyfriend was on active duty in the military and was deployed to Iraq for about eight months of their relationship.

"Both him and I would be going to Baylor, but even if he doesn't [get in], it's just a way to close the distance and for us to take that next step, and we feel like we're ready for it," Ford said.

Ford said she and her boyfriend are planning on getting married in the next couple of years, and moving in together is a step to take before they are financially stable enough for marriage.

"We've always talked about it, and we know that we want to get married," Ford said. "I think it's honestly just something we're ready for."

Another factor that goes into relationship success is age. Lawrence said taking the step to



Gracie Speer | Cartoonist

COHABITATION PROS AND CONS Living with your partner in college can have financial benefits, although there are some other factors students should consider before deciding.

cohabitate or get married too young might not be a good idea.

"I think the biggest thing that those relationships would have working against them is age," Lawrence said. "Are you mature? How far down the path of your life are you before you make a decision to join paths with someone else?"

Being in relationships and having experience, Lawrence said, is a way to grow and learn how to

have a healthy relationship, so getting married in college tends to cause more problems than it solves.

"I tell my students in my relationships class, life takes you on a lot of twists and turns," Lawrence said. "It's highly likely that the younger you are, the more your lives could diverge."

Aly Pasche graduated from Baylor last May and got married right before graduation. Her husband is still in school at Baylor, and

she works remotely from their home right off campus.

"The most important thing [for us] is being committed to each other and getting married, and then everything else just follows after, like the challenges of potentially living in a different city or me working full time in person somewhere else," Pasche said.

When it comes to marriage in college, Lawrence said a shared faith, which can be common at Baylor, tends to preserve marriage and guard against some of the negatives of early marriage.

"[A lot of] Baylor students share their faith tradition, and that's important to them and maintains importance throughout their life," Lawrence said. "That can certainly be a buffer against a lot of the negative things that can affect marriages too."

Some couples engage in cohabitation thinking it will strengthen their relationship, but Lawrence said it is not the best reason for a couple to decide to live together.

"People sometimes think that living together will bring [them] closer together and will make [their] relationship better, and that seems to be a flawed assumption," Lawrence said.

Getting married in college might pose an issue to anyone hoping to pursue a career because of the attention and responsibility required for maintaining a marriage, Lawrence said.

"I think sometimes when women get married, they have a tendency to sign over their life to nurturing their spouse and any potential future children," Lawrence said. "But if a woman wants a career and wants to make a contribution beyond her family, sometimes getting married too early sort of stifles her own personal and professional development."

Though Lawrence said this happens, it isn't always the case. Lawrence said the important thing is living with or marrying a partner who encourages personal growth and ambition.

"I don't ever want to see a woman feel like they're getting up on their own personal growth and development to get married and have a family," Lawrence said. "I think that both things can happen."

‘Wrapped with support’: How to identify, handle unhealthy relationships

RORY DULOCK
Staff Writer

While relationships are often a central part of college life, they are not always healthy. With the input of a psychology professor and the guidance of the Title IX Office, students can better identify and deal with potentially unhealthy relationships.

Dr. Alisha Wray, clinical associate professor in the psychology and neuroscience department, said she finds it helpful to reference the work of Dr. John Gottman from the University of Washington to understand the signs of healthy and unhealthy relationships.

“There’s a very clear set of both helpful relationship behaviors and unhelpful relationship behaviors or damaging relationship behaviors,” Wray said. “Surprisingly, things even like anger or sadness, more difficult emotions, can actually be helpful in relationships as long as they’re expressed and communicated in their purest form. One of the tenets behind [his] work is that conflict in relationships is unavoidable. People are going to have differences of opinions, but it’s more how you express that conflict.”

Wray said there are a variety of possibilities for how an unhealthy relationship can take form, including verbal, emotional and physical aggression.

“Unfortunately, when the relationship has turned to the use of verbal or physical aggression, that can continue without intervention or support,” Wray said. “And there are a variety of different resources — individual therapy, couple’s therapy, depending on the circumstance — that could be useful. Sometimes, unfortunately, the safest way to resolve kind of an unsafe situation might be to

find a way that ends that relationship.”

Dr. Valerie Willis, education and prevention specialist for the Equity, Civil Rights, & Title IX Office, said recognizing the signs of an unhealthy relationship is important for one’s safety and well-being.

“I think the first step in addressing or handling an unhealthy relationship is acknowledging and recognizing that there is an issue, a situation, a problem,” Willis said. “Once the individual has acknowledged or recognized that there is a situation, they can seek support and education and help.”

Baylor has numerous resources to help individuals who are navigating an unhealthy relationship. Willis said the Title IX Office provides training on boundary-setting, consent, bystander intervention, empowerment and self-defense.

“In addition to these trainings, we do the customized training,” Willis said. “They have free counseling through the Counseling Center, free health services for students who may be in need of more direct

and one-on-one support. But if an unhealthy relationship involves conduct prohibited by our SIM policy — or sexual and interpersonal misconduct policy — we encourage people to connect with our office so that we can provide resources and support and resolution options.”

Willis said programs across campus are customized to the student and their situation.

“Students really have a lot of support and hopefully don’t feel like they’re alone when they’re here at Baylor,” Willis said. “They’re wrapped around with support. ... I think between our office, the Counseling Center and the CARE Team, and even the Student Success Center, there are several resources students can tap into if they need help.”

“
Students ...
hopefully don’t
feel like they’re
alone when
they’re here
at Baylor.”

VALERIE WILLIS |
EDUCATION AND
PREVENTION SPECIALIST



Baylor Lariat Radio hosts a lively sports podcast **every Wednesday**, discussing high and low points of Baylor athletics, their takes on **Big 12, NCAA and professional sports**, along with a quick look at **intramural matchups** at Baylor.

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Something borrowed and something bland: These 10 wedding trends are out

KALENA REYNOLDS
Staff Writer

Wedding bells are ringing, and trends for the big day have shifted.

Whether you're ringing those bells by springtime or simply planning for the future, it's always good to keep up with what's in and what's out. Here are the top 10 trends that are out in 2024 and what people should avoid when it comes to planning a wedding. While some might be obvious (see No. 2), others will take you by surprise and have you rethinking the way weddings have been planned in the past.

SINGLE-GENDER WEDDING PARTIES

While having a "groomswoman" or "bridesman" might have been taboo 10 years ago, more and more recent weddings have featured unisex gender parties representing both the bride and the groom. When it's your big day, you shouldn't be limited in who you can include to stand beside you in holy matrimony with your future spouse. When inviting your best friends and family members to stand beside you, you should not be limited to those of a specific gender.

SAD, BEIGE WEDDINGS

There are many appropriate places for beige, such as folders, walls and the occasional nail set. However, wedding trends have been swiftly moving away from it, and aren't we all glad to see it? It's bland, and quite frankly, it's a safe color with no personality or flare. Conversely, greens are all the rage within the wedding space and can still give that neutral effect when done correctly.

RUSHING THE HONEYMOON

As lovely as it would be to follow up your vows with a trip to a remote island in Brazil that your spouse's vampire parents bought as



Kassidy Tsikitas | Photo Editor

TOSS THESE TRENDS Some traditions are timeless, and others, like a barn wedding, should go.

a wedding gift, we aren't all Edward and Bella Cullen, and taking a honeymoon immediately after the wedding is hardly feasible for most couples in this economy. Instead, more couples have delayed their honeymoon to a few months after their ceremony to be more financially responsible.

BARN WEDDINGS

Barn weddings were the central display of pins on everyone's Pinterest boards from 2019, but it's time to face the music: They are a thing of the past. Sure, they can have an excellent rustic appeal, but they are also overdone and usually come with an aura of dust and a lack of

accessibility. On the other hand, forest weddings are in, so if you're thinking of marrying your college sweetheart in a barn anytime soon, consider the possibility of a tree-filled venue instead.

CHURCH WEDDINGS

On the note of venues, church weddings are getting revamped and are becoming less popular. While most of us can attest to seeing stained glass windows and pews while flipping through our parents' wedding photo albums, trends have shifted. Instead, people are looking for more modern venues that still represent the sense of holiness a church would.

SMASHING CAKE IN YOUR SPOUSE'S FACE

Need I say more?

WEDDING REGISTRIES

Blenders and silver-plated bowls are out. More and more couples are asking their guests to provide money to cover wedding and honeymoon expenses. According to Gitnux, an independent market research platform, 80% of couples want cash instead of gifts for their wedding.

MATCHING DRESSES

We're beginning to see a drop in brides requesting that all their bridesmaids wear the same dress. Honestly, if the bridesmaids are buying them, then they should be able to spend their money on something that is special to them. Many brides are opting for individualized gowns so that each member of the wedding party has the opportunity to pick out something that accentuates their features.

SCANDALOUS BACHELOR(ETTE) PARTIES

The so-called "last moments of freedom" parties are pretty much dead. Instead, couples opt for joint parties in preparation for their big day. Not only does this allow couples to bond over their soon-to-be unity, but it also removes the idea that marriage equates to the end of freedom.

INVITING EVERYONE

Don't get me wrong, weddings are arguably one of the most important life events, but is it essential to invite your mom's third cousin, whom you met at a funeral once when you were 12 years old? While large weddings seem excellent, intentional guest lists make for a more intimate day and cost-efficient ceremony.

OPINION

Forever hold your peace: You don't have to love nontraditional weddings

KAITLIN SIDES

LTVN Reporter/Anchor

As times are changing, so are wedding trends and traditions.

Twenty years ago, every wedding was the same. Now, with an ever-developing generation, this timeless event is also changing.

This past winter break, I attended a wedding that had no dance floor and a coffee cart for after-wedding drinks. This was a new adaptation, and I loved it. Not only was celebrating two of my great friends' marriage special, but they also did it in a way that was personal to them.

There is immense pressure on brides to keep their weddings a certain way, especially from older generations. Many people may have opinions on how my friends went about their wedding, but I believe it was a great adaptation. It still had a typical ceremony, first dance and send-off, but that is not what is important. What is important is that the couple customized the wedding and were able to do it in a way that was special to them.

Brides are also becoming more open to allowing their bridesmaids to choose their dresses. I fully support this idea, because it ensures the bridesmaids will be comfortable and

will feel most confident. Often, when brides do this, the dresses are still within a color scheme, and they look great.

Other traditions are being added every day and may become the new normal at future weddings. For example, many people are opting for morning weddings, which is not typical.

Traditionalists are not for the changes in weddings, which is no surprise. Many people I know plan to have a typical wedding, and I will most likely follow their lead, but it's ultimately the couple's decision.

If the couple decides they want a morning wedding with no reception, that's their choice. If the couple decides on a colorful wedding with no theme, that's OK too. Everyone is entitled to their own opinion.

It's their special day; it's not about you. Would you want someone to tell you how to run your wedding? No. It's the couple's decision at the end of the day.

Many people are open to change in weddings. Some people even believe weddings are unnecessary.

By the time we are all consistently attending the weddings of our friends — which may be sooner than later, considering many Baylor students tend to follow the ring by spring trend going to be unique to

the couple.

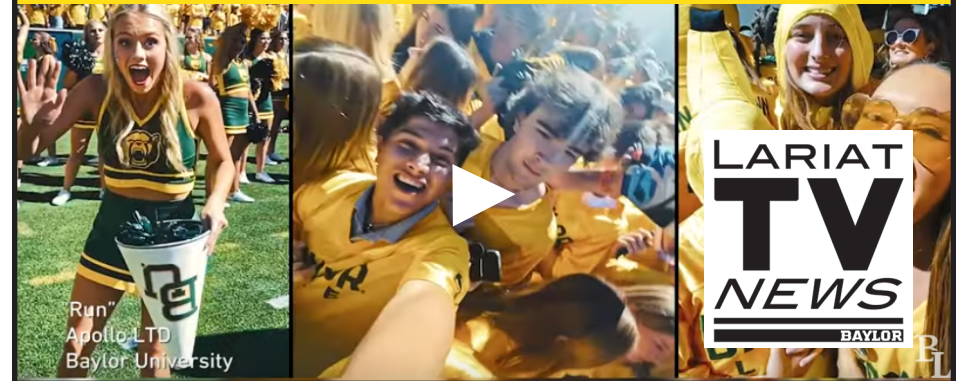


“It's their special day; it's not about you. Would you want someone to tell you how to run your wedding? No. It's the couple's decision at the end of the day.”



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April is Sexual Assault Awareness Month

The Equity, Civil Rights, and Title IX team invites you to join in educational and awareness events throughout the month.

Mark your calendars for these events:

April 3: SAAM Kickoff Event

8 a.m. – 4 p.m., SUB Stage *[across from Common Grounds]*

April 10: Bringing in the Bystander

[in partnership with the Advocacy Center]

6 – 8 p.m., BDSC 210

April 17: Light the Night *[Campus Lit Teal for SAAM]*

April 24: Denim Day

8 a.m. – 4 p.m., SUB Stage *[across from Common Grounds]*

Follow **@BU_Equity** on Instagram to learn more.

