



Extra Extra, Read All About It

The announcement of a wedding can tickle anyone's romance bone. Considering how much my friends and I love to read about couples in the newspaper, I'm surprised there isn't more ink on this subject. Many publications only publish the wedding announcements once a week, so brides will want to research and make theirs count!

Wedding announcement policies vary from newspaper to newspaper. Check with the newspaper to see if brides fill out a form or can write their own allowing for a far more interesting read. Many social editors would be grateful if brides wrote their own announcements. Some tips:

- **Check fees.** Contact the local newspaper, both hometown and current town, for the publication fee. Some brides send one to a town, in which close family members live and/or where they went to college.
- **Photos.** Inquire if newspapers have size, color and file requirements for photos. It's good practice to write the couple's names and wedding date on the back of the photo and include a stamped and self-addressed envelope if brides want the photo returned. It is okay to be creative. I saw a sweet photo recently with two toddlers in a sandbox. After further reading, I learned the couple had been life-long friends.
- **Research.** Read published wedding announcements in your target newspaper for ideas and norms.
- **The introduction.** The first paragraph includes the bride and groom's names, the date, time and location of the wedding as well as who officiated the ceremony. Check the officiant's title and the spelling of their name. A list of the bridal couples' parents and their hometown usually follows.
- **Juicy details.** Start with who escorted who. The notion of being given away is offensive for some brides, so they shouldn't feel they must use the expression. Describe the dress and bouquet keeping in mind a picture will be included. Take note of the budget when announcing the wedding party. For tighter budgets, list those who stood up with the bride

and groom. Larger budgets allow for everyone, including the maid of honor, matron of honor, bridesmaids, best man, groomsmen, honorary attendants, ring bearer, flower girl, program attendants, guest register attendant and readers. Triple check the spelling of names and hometowns. Reception, rehearsal dinner and bridal shower details may follow. Mention who hosted the events as a token of thanks.

- **Back to basics.** If brides have the budget, they can provide basic information about their education and occupation as well as the groom's. An example: "The bride is a 2005 graduate of University of Mary Washington and is employed in the program of Teach for America."
- **Happy endings.** Last, but not least, couples can share where they went on their honeymoon and what town they will reside in upon return.

Sharing the silly and fun details will be enjoyable for future grandchildren to read one day and very exciting for readers to discover another love story in the making!

*Meredith Thomas has many years of experience planning special events.
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