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# Contributors



**Maggie Cramer** currently resides and writes in Asheville, North Carolina, a hub of all things green and sustainable—including weddings. While she's not yet married, something she constantly reminds her boyfriend much to his discomfort, when the day does arrive, she knows she'll say 'I do' with sustainable style.



**Donna Bowden**, owner of Injoy Events, has committed her time and talents to helping countless brides achieve their wedding vision. Developing and maintaining good working relationships with the area's most respected vendors gives her and her clients a variety of options. Donna and her staff are focused on each client's individual needs, and her commitment is unsurpassed. For more information please visit [www.injoyevents.com](http://www.injoyevents.com)



**Harriet Riley** and her groom, along with three children, are living happily ever after in Houston, Texas. Harriet is a freelance writer who has worked as an adjunct professor at the University of West Florida, teaching writing classes in the Communication Arts Department. Ms. Riley served as director of United Ministries in Pensacola for seven years. She was very active in civic and church groups in Pensacola. She has also worked as a hospital marketing director in Louisiana and as a reporter in Tennessee. She has her Master of Arts degree in communications from the University of Texas and her Bachelor of Arts degree in English and journalism from the University of Mississippi.

**Dechay Watts** is a strategic copywriter for Watts Writing Studio. She creates content for websites and other promotional materials to reflect the unique marketing message of each client. Her experience includes assignments for some of the world's leading brand marketers including General Motors Europe, Lancôme, Miramax Films, Wicked Fashions and Saatchi & Saatchi.



Dechay earned her MBA from UWF in 2005 and her BS in Public Relations from University of Florida in 1996. She is involved with Big Brothers/Big Sisters, Pensacola Bay Area Advertising Association, and NWF Learn to Read.

**Maegan Outzen** is a full-time Journalism student at the University of West Florida, where she will soon graduate in May. She is an editorial intern for Ballinger Publishing and is the arts and entertainment editor for UWF's newspaper, The Voyager. She loves to hang out at home, watch movies and lie by the pool on a sunny day.



**Melissa Miller** is a senior at the University of West Florida and will be graduating in May with a degree in Communication Arts. She is also a mom to three wild and crazy boys, ages 9, 4, and 2. When she isn't studying, writing or chasing after kids, she loves to unwind by watching "The Office", spending time on the beach, knitting, or doing arts and crafts with her boys.



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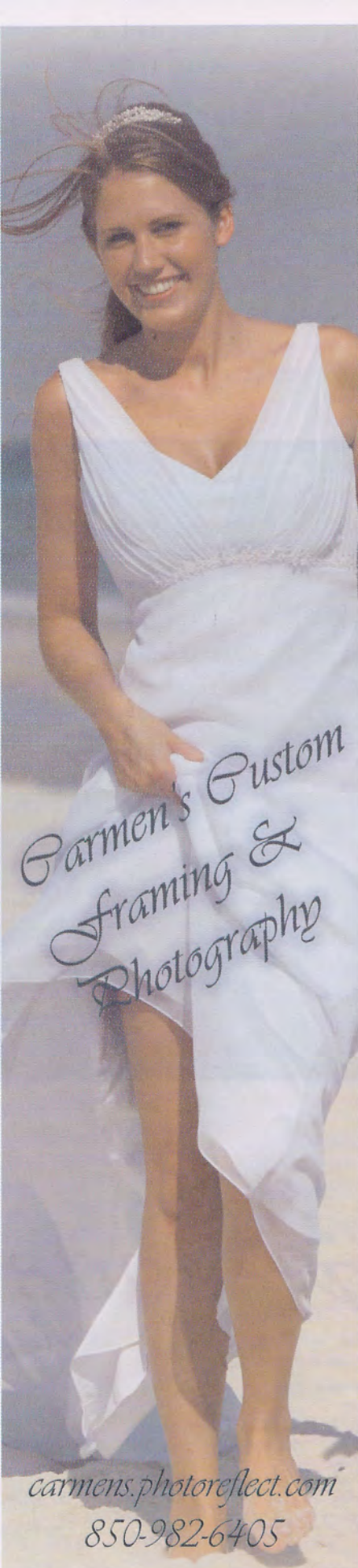
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# Happily Ever After...Again



*The author and her husband on their wedding day*

## Weddings: The Second Time Around

By Harriet Riley

It all starts simply enough. You fall in love. You decide to get married. Again. You made some mistakes the first time, but this time it's going to work. You're old enough to know what you want. And the ceremony is going to be uncomplicated this time. Sounds easy, right?

Wait a second. Do you have children? Does he have children? Does he have a best friend? Do you have a sister? Do you have parents who aren't in a nursing home yet? This is where it gets tricky. But here a few simple tips, learned from experience, for the second time around wedding in Pensacola.

**First of all, relax and create a vision.** Focus on you and your intended's dreams and desires for this ceremony. Your parents probably had a lot to do with the planning for your first wedding. This is *your* turn. Do you want it simple or elaborate? Do you want to wear white? Or not? Do you want to get married on the beach?

Or in a church? These choices are for the two of you to make. No one else. So start with writing down your vision for this ceremony.

I had always dreamed of exchanging vows on a sailboat, and my sweet boyfriend also liked the idea. We did a little research and found a perfect sailboat with the perfect name—*Namaste*, a Hindu greeting, which recognizes the God within each of us. After several email exchanges with the boat owners, we met at the sailboat at the beach and made our plans. We would get married on Easter Sunday at five in the afternoon on Pensacola Sound—on *Namaste*.

**The next tip is to keep this wedding simple.** You have every right to invite only the people you both want to have at the ceremony. Because you invited the obligatory distant cousins last time, right? Remember you get to choose the clothes, flowers, music, and attendants you want to have.

In my case, it was easy. The sailboat

limited the number of people to eight. That meant we could only have six guests, and that suited me just fine. I have two children, and he has three. That left a space for the officiant. Our minister was a dear friend who respected our wishes to keep the wedding simple and was willing to perform the ceremony on a sailboat.

The clothing would have to be casual, and the flowers could be optional. We ordered a few of our favorite foods to share on board and our favorite beer to drink. Key-lime pie would be our wedding "cake." The music would be a mixed CD of our favorite songs.

**Be creative.** The wedding magazines, websites and bridal stores aren't much help for a second wedding. They are promoting and selling the virginal first wedding ceremony. The wedding you've always dreamed of. Well, you might call the second wedding the second chance wedding. This is your time to express

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who you are. And Pensacola is the perfect place.

One of my friends had her second wedding in Seville Square outside Old Christ Church with only her son and the judge present, and the groom, of course. They decided to be spontaneous and called their friend, the judge, who met them at Seville Square on a beautiful May afternoon. It was just what they wanted.

Another friend had her ceremony on Langdon Beach (pre-Ivan) at the National Seashore at the Fort Pickens area. She was a teacher and her first grade class sang the Nat King Cole song "L-O-V-E." Her kindergarten son and all the children pranced around during the ceremony. They had erected a tall bamboo pole with long, white tulle streamers flowing in the wind to mark the beach spot for the wedding. The Blue Angels even happened to fly over after the ceremony. Only in Pensacola...

Because we were getting married on a sailboat, I decided to order baseball hats and beer/drink cozies for everyone with our names and the date.

By this time, the wedding party had grown. My sister was coming to help with the children, and my husband's sister and her spouse were coming from Australia to join in the party. This required some juggling. The rule of eight on the sailboat meant that we could not be under sail with more than eight on board. So we decided to leave from Sabine pier with half the group and then have the remaining members of the wedding party meet the boat on a dinghy. The sailboat would be anchored near the beach at the boat ramp just west of the Gulf Shores Islands National Seashore. The other half of the group would sail back to the Sabine dock with us. It was a bit complicated, but it gave everyone sailboat time, and they would all be allowed on board for the ceremony, as long as we were anchored.

**My last and most important point is: be prepared for surprises.** When you agreed to marry again, you were taking a risk. You already knew the dangers and pitfalls of marriage. The first time, you were going into marriage blindly with no idea what you were getting into. This time, you both have a few battle scars and have experienced unexpected twists and turns in your life. Expect the same for your second-time-around-wedding.

Since our wedding party had grown in



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*A casual beach wedding on a chilly day*

size, we decided to rent a beach house for the weekend. It was Easter and the children all had a long weekend holiday. We visited several large rental houses at the beach and decided on one we liked. It was perfect, with five bedrooms and several decks facing the Gulf. Our wedding was turning into a house party. We had our five children (two of them young adults) and our two sisters and spouses from around the world. We settled in for a weekend of togetherness with the wedding on Sunday.

But the unexpected happened when we woke up on Easter morning. It was cold, and it was sleeting. Ice was on our porch. About noon, we visited our friends at *Namaste*. The owners agreed: there was no wind, and it was too cold and wet to marry on the sailboat. So, we had to regroup. Our beach house had a large deck, and hopefully, the rain would slow down by late afternoon. Our sisters went to Tom Thumb and bought Easter lilies to decorate the deck. We decided to move the wedding up to 3 pm because the rain had stopped momentarily and it wasn't as cold. Our minister and his wife drove out to the beach. At the appointed time, I walked out on the deck to join my soon-to-be husband and our family. My groom and I were barefoot, but I wore my jean jacket over my white sundress. The three youngest children read Bible verses in the ceremony and the children held the rings (without dropping them through the deck onto the sand). Etta James singing "At Last" played in the background. My sister snapped the photos. It was a picture perfect wedding...just not what we expected.

So as you plan your second (or third) wedding, remember to have fun, and do it your way. Hopefully, this is your last chance to have the wedding *you* have always dreamed of, before you live happily ever after—again. **PM**

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