

# C.S. Lewis & Co. Publicists

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Dear Editor/Producer,

If a pair of co-authors guaranteed that you could save a minimum of \$500 on your wedding expenses by reading their book, you'd take a look, wouldn't you?

That's the promise of **DENISE AND ALAN FIELDS**, America's leading consumer watchdogs for the bridal industry. Their newest offerings to readers include the completely updated and revised 7<sup>th</sup> edition of their best-selling guide, *Bridal Bargains: Secrets to Throwing a Fantastic Wedding on a Realistic Budget* (Windsor Peak Press, 2005), and a brand-new companion wedding planner called *Bridal Passport: The Dollars & Sense Guide to Planning Your Wedding* (Windsor Peak Press, 2005).

The Fields are America's best-known experts on the tricks and traps of wedding planning, bridal industry scams, and money-saving services.

Longtime favorites of Oprah, the Fields are media pros who would be delighted to discuss any topic related to wedding planning, including:

- 4 steps to setting up a wedding budget
- How to avoid bridal scams
- 7 things your bridal shop, florist, stationer, reception site, caterer, baker, photographer, or wedding entertainer won't tell you
- How to save big bucks on your honeymoon
- How to survive wedding day crises
- Bridal and wedding trends for 2005
- Hilarious and horrifying real-life wedding stories from a decade of reader feedback

The Fields are walking encyclopedias of the wedding industry, who have stayed on top of consumer trends and tastes in the bridal marketplace for more than a decade. Please let me know if I can arrange a time for you to speak with them directly.

Warm Regards,  
Cathy Lewis

# Love Is Priceless; Weddings Cost

Two books by wedding-industry watchdogs offer tips, secrets, and budgeting strategies for the soon-to-be-wed.

After you say yes, but before you say I do, you're going to be making a lot of decisions. With the average wedding costing \$20,000, engaged couples need smart advice on how to cut costs. And they want insider information that will help them see the big picture, keep track of details, and make sound decisions.

Two new books by bridal industry experts DENISE AND ALAN FIELDS offer everything you need to plan a perfect, affordable wedding.

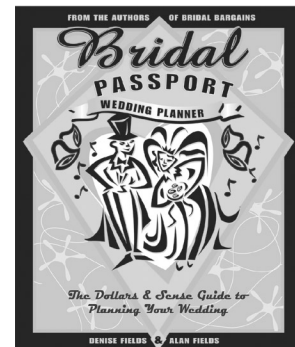
In the fully updated edition of their best-selling guide, *Bridal Bargains: Secrets to Throwing a Fantastic Wedding on a Realistic Budget* (Windsor Peak Press, 7<sup>th</sup> Edition, 2005), the authors share money-saving secrets, pitfalls to avoid, top questions to ask, hundreds of creative wedding ideas and resources, and no-holds-barred reviews of bridal merchants and services.

*Bridal Passport: The Dollars & Sense Guide to Planning Your Wedding* (Windsor Peak Press, 2005) is the all-new companion planner to *Bridal Bargains*. The Fields have made the whole process easier with detailed worksheets for comparing vendors side-by-side so you get the best deals, in-depth budget advice, and countdown checklists and to-do lists.

Together, these invaluable guides provide:

- Hundreds of cost-cutting secrets and tips for wedding attire, invitations, reception sites, entertainment, catering, honeymoons, and more
- Consumer alerts on the latest scams and overpriced services
- Hundreds of little-known sources and online sites for discounted bridal goods and services
- Step-by-step scheduling and financial planning strategies, worksheets, and checklists for every aspect of a wedding—from the engagement through the honeymoon

The Fields have done it again, this time adding a do-it-yourself workbook that lets any couple plan their dream wedding—worry-free—down to the last detail, and save hundreds of dollars along the way.



## 4 Steps to Setting a Wedding Budget:

1. Understand the basic costs.
2. Learn the 7 keys to saving money on your wedding.
3. Set your own bridal priorities.
4. Create a wedding budget that fits the wedding *you* want.

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# About the Authors

DENISE AND ALAN FIELDS are co-authors of the newly revised, best-selling classic *Bridal Bargains: Secrets to Throwing a Fantastic Wedding on a Realistic Budget* (Windsor Peak Press, 7<sup>th</sup> Edition, 2005), and a new companion wedding planner called *Bridal Passport: The Dollars & Sense Guide to Planning Your Wedding* (Windsor Peak Press, 2005).

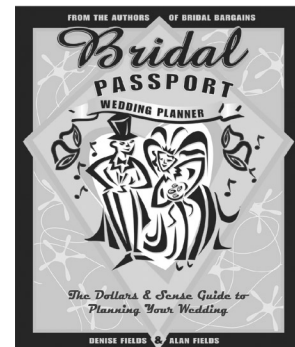
The Fields are known as the “Ralph Naders of the wedding industry” for exposing inflated pricing scams targeting the soon-to-be-married, and for bringing no-nonsense tips and strategies to engaged couples to help them save money on bridal and wedding-related services nationwide.

To say their book was unpopular among members of the “wedding industry” would be an understatement. The Fields have been banned from attending bridal shows, and an editor from a major bridal magazine lambasted the consumer watchdogs in a letter to the *Wall Street Journal*. Fortunately, the consumer advocates caught the attention of Oprah Winfrey, who told her viewers to buy the book, making *Bridal Bargains* a best-seller.

The Fields have penned several other successful books for consumers on shopping smart and saving money, among them *Baby Bargains*, *Toddler Bargains*, *Your New House*, *Bridal Gown Guide*, and *Cyberbride*. With award-winning pediatrician Ari Brown, MD, FAAP, they also wrote an FAQ-style guide for new parents, called *Baby 411: Clear Answers & Smart Advice for Your Baby's First Year*.

The Fields are media veterans who have been widely quoted and featured in most major newspapers and magazines, and have appeared on such national television shows as *Oprah*, *The Today Show*, *Dateline*, and *20/20*.

In addition to their many titles, the Fields have successfully made the transition to new media, with consumer-focused, interactive websites featuring articles, e-newsletters, chat rooms, community bulletin boards, and consumer alerts. They maintain an online presence at [www.bridal bargainsbook.com](http://www.bridal bargainsbook.com), [www.bridalpassport.com](http://www.bridalpassport.com), [www.bridalgown.com](http://www.bridalgown.com), and [www.baby411.com](http://www.baby411.com).



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# Interview Topics

## How to Be a Well-Dressed (and Frugal) Bride *Tips, tricks, and traps of bridal apparel.*

Here's absolutely everything you ever needed to know about buying a bridal gown. The Fields discuss:

- Best-buy online and mail-order wedding gown sites
- 17 steps to buying the right dress
- 25 money-saving tips
- 15 bridal shop pitfalls
- Reviews and ratings of 44 top bridal manufacturers

## How to Stretch Your Wedding Flower Budget *Learn how easy it is to cut costs on bridal floral bills.*

With the average floral bill for weddings topping \$900, the Fields offer creative ways to get more bang for your buck. They present:

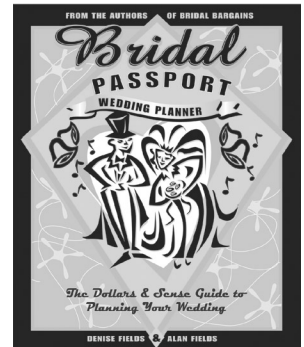
- Best online wedding florists and floral wholesalers
- 9 step-by-step flower-shopping strategies
- 11 questions to ask your florist
- 22 money-saving tips
- 6 bridal flower pitfalls to avoid

## Catering to the Cost-Conscious Couple *How to save a fortune on catering, the biggest wedding expense.*

If you watch your wedding wallet in this single area and no other, say the Fields, you'll save a bundle. They discuss:

- 10 steps to shopping for a wedding caterer
- 18 questions to ask a prospective caterer
- 20 top money-saving ideas
- Do-it-yourself catering tips
- 5 biggest myths about catering
- 6 catering minefields and how to avoid them

—MORE—



### Best-buy Bridal Flowers

*Gerbera daisies*

*Statice*

*Alstroemeria lilies*

*Carnations*

*Chrysanthemums*

*Gladiolus*

*Freesia*

*Heather*

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## **An Invitation to Save Money**

*Bridal-bargain experts can save you 50% or more on invitations.*

According to the Fields, there's no reason to spend big bucks on wedding invitations. They discuss:

- Best invitation sites on the internet
- 9 steps to shopping for wedding invitations
- 5 questions to ask your stationer
- 12 ingenious tips for saving money on invitations
- 8 wedding stationery pitfalls to avoid
- Picks and pans of top invitation brands

## **Avoiding the Budget-Busting Wedding Reception**

*Will your wedding reception make or break your budget?*

Finding the right reception site for your wedding may be the most challenging task you face. The Fields help by showing you:

- 6 places to find unusual, creative wedding reception sites
- A 9-step strategy for reception-site shopping
- 11 questions to ask of a wedding reception site
- 14 inventive ways to cut costs on your reception
- 7 reception pitfalls and how to avoid them
- Pros and cons of the 5 most common reception sites
- Surprising hidden costs of throwing a wedding at home

## **A Snapshot Look at Wedding Photographers**

*Find out how to get your money's worth in a pro photographer.*

The Fields say it's not hard to hire a great professional wedding photographer once you understand what's involved and ask the right questions. Learn:

- 9 steps to finding the right wedding shutterbug
- 14 top questions to ask a photographer
- 11 ways to save money on wedding pics
- 9 wedding photography pitfalls to know and avoid
- 7 things your photographer won't tell you

## **5 Myths about Wedding Gowns**

1. Expensive gowns are hand-crafted.
2. Italian satin is a luxury fabric from Europe.
3. Brides should look like an overstuffed cream puff or Cinderella.
4. Mail-order/online discounters won't fix the problem if something goes wrong with your dress.
5. White is your only color option.

## **5 Entertainment Pitfalls to Avoid**

1. The band you saw and hired isn't the one that shows up.
2. The bandleader or deejay won't stop talking and play.
3. The band doesn't resemble its demo tape.
4. The musician recommended by your wedding site is lousy.
5. The disco fog machine, strobe, and other special effects are hazardous.

# More Interview Topics

## Make Beautiful Music Together

*Experts share secrets for best-value wedding entertainment.*

Whether choosing liturgical music for your ceremony or a live band for the reception, soon-to-be-married couples can benefit from the Fields' wedding entertainment dos and don'ts. Discover:

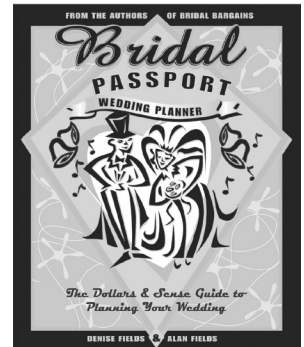
- Interesting, unusual sources for musicians or deejays
- 9 top ways to save money on wedding entertainers
- Deejays versus live bands: pros and cons
- Top trends in wedding music
- Worst-case scenarios you can know about and avoid

## Affordable Wedding Ceremony Sites

*Discover often-overlooked, very affordable places to say "I do."*

The Fields say that the first way to save money on your wedding is to make a smart decision about where it will be held. Learn:

- Best sources to use to find great, offbeat ceremony sites
- 6 questions to ask of a ceremony site
- 6 questions to ask your officiant
- Top 5 secrets to saving money on your ceremony site



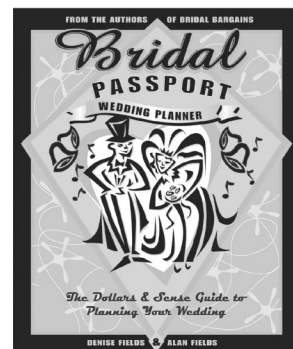
### 5 Questions to Ask a Baker:

1. Do you have photos of your own cake designs?
2. Can we have a taste test?
3. Are there any extra charges?
4. Who will decorate the cake with fresh or silk flowers?
5. How far in advance will the cake be prepared?

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# Suggested Interview Questions

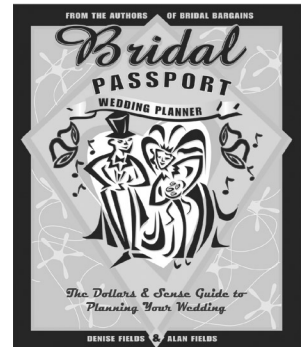
1. How much money does the average wedding cost?
2. What are the biggest expenses associated with a typical wedding? What insider tips can you offer for cutting costs in each of these areas?
3. What are the best ways to save money on bridal gowns, groom tuxes, and bridesmaids dresses?
4. What are some of the worst scams engaged couples fall prey to?
5. Name some creative ideas you have for saving money on a wedding reception site.
6. How can you cut down on the cost of invitations, which typically run about \$400?
7. What are the top things you need to know and to ask before hiring a videographer and a photographer?
8. The biggest expense at most weddings is the reception that follows the service. Are there any ways to trim costs here?
9. How do you order flowers at wholesale over the internet?
10. Talk about your websites, [BridalPassport.com](http://BridalPassport.com) and [BridalBargainsBook.com](http://BridalBargainsBook.com). What will browsers find there?
11. How have weddings changed over the years since you've been wedding watchdogs?
12. Early on, the two of you made some enemies in the wedding industry for your honest reviews and critiques of bridal merchants. Are you still banned from bridal shows and industry trade shows?
13. What's new in this updated version of *Bridal Bargains*?
14. Why did you decide to write a companion wedding planner to *Bridal Bargains*? Will this book put live wedding planners out of business?



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# Top 8 Wedding Rip-offs

1. **Is that a lawyer cutting your cake?** Some hotels and country clubs have ridiculous charges such as “cake cutting fees”—a 50¢ to \$2 per guest charge to simply slice a wedding cake.
2. **Milli Vanilli demo tape.** Here’s a modern scam—wedding bands that use other studio musicians to record the tracks to their demo videos. The result: What you hear isn’t always what you get.
3. **Disintegrating bridesmaids dresses.** Some dresses for bridesmaids are so cheap, they unravel during the reception. Why? While they cost \$100 to \$200, most bridesmaids dresses are made of cheap polyester with glued-on detailing and unfinished seams.
4. **Sky-high Hi-C.** Why are wedding receptions so expensive? \$35 per gallon fruit punch could be one reason—that’s how much hotels mark up this simple item. And no, you don’t get to keep the silver bowl after the party.
5. **The Mercedes syndrome.** Some florists change the price of wedding flowers and arrangements depending on the type of car a bride drives up in. When a bride drives up in a fancy car, up goes the price of wedding flowers. Take the bus!
6. **Lucky for whom?** Sometimes it’s the little items that can add up. At some bridal shops, you’ll find accessories with sky-high price tags—such as faux pearls at real pearl prices and lucky pennies for \$5!
7. **Now you see it, now you don’t.** Here’s a new scam—the wedding gown preservation rip-off. You pay a company \$250 to “clean and preserve” your expensive wedding dress and they give you an empty box. That’s what happened to talk show host Leeza Gibbons and hundreds of other brides who dealt with unscrupulous gown cleaners.
8. **Bait and switch, photo-style.** Beware of photography studios that promise expert photography and then deliver only amateur prints. Instead of the professional photographer showing up at your wedding, you get a stringer who couldn’t tell an F-stop from a camera lens.



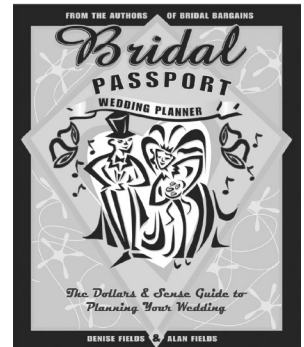
## Name-change Scam

After you’re married, expect an official-looking mail from companies offering to change your name with the Social Security Administration and other federal agencies. All you have to do is send them a \$15 fee. Don’t fall for this one. You can download the form from the SSA website and mail it in. It’s absolutely free!

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# Top 10 Bridal Bargains

1. **Mail-order bride.** The average cost of a wedding dress is \$800, and many top \$1,000 or even \$2,000! Online discounters can save you 20 to 40 percent for the same first-quality designer gowns.
2. **The un-bridesmaid dress.** Instead of forcing your bridesmaids to buy those horrible disposable bridesmaids gowns for \$150 to \$200, try a department store or catalog. Many now sell stylish gowns for under \$100.
3. **Say no to flowers.** Balloons are an affordable alternative to floral centerpieces; flowering plants and greenery can be rented at low rates from a local nursery. Or have a wedding near Christmas, when churches come predecorated!
4. **Nix the engraving.** Most brides don't have \$700 or more for engraved invitations. Invitations that are thermographed are 50 to 70 percent cheaper, and look just as elegant.
5. **Let's do lunch.** Save 30 percent or more on your reception by serving lunch or brunch instead of dinner. Save even more money by having an afternoon reception with cake and light hors d'oeuvres.
6. **Park it right here.** Many cities and towns rent out parks and other civic-owned sites for wedding receptions at incredibly affordable rates. A city park clubhouse might rent for only \$125 while a comparable private site would be \$750.
7. **A deal to die for.** Check out funeral homes for the best deals on limos. Many have limos that sit idle on weekends, available to rent out at cut-rate deals.
8. **Seasonal best buys.** Flowers are like pork bellies—a commodity that fluctuates in price based on the weather, time of year, etc. For example, roses are outrageous in February; tulips can be pricey in the off-season (summer). To stay on a budget, stick to in-season blooms.
9. **Ceremony-only pics.** Save up to \$500 by hiring a videographer or photographer to film the ceremony only. Then have guests use their own camcorders (or put disposable cameras at the tables) to capture the reception.
10. **Ban the bands.** Instead of a live band, hire a disc jockey. Bands can cost \$1,000 to \$2,000, while a deejay is as little as \$400 for four hours, plays a wide variety of music, and doesn't take breaks.



Looking for a deal on flower girl dresses? Forget bridal shops! Visit department stores and check out the sales after Christmas and especially after Easter, when dress-up clothes for little girls are marked down by 50 percent or more.

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# Cocktail Dresses for Bridesmaids— and Other Bridal Trends

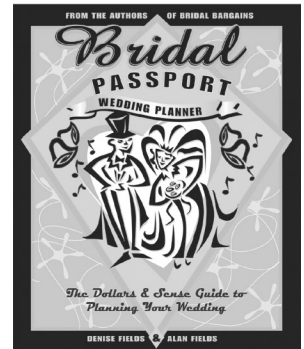
## Is the bridesmaids dress dead?

“Yes,” says **DENISE FIELDS**, co-author, with husband **ALAN FIELDS**, of the best-selling *Bridal Bargains* (Windsor Peak Press, 7<sup>th</sup> Edition, 2005) and its new companion wedding planner, *Bridal Passport: The Dollars & Sense Guide to Planning Your Wedding* (Windsor Peak Press, 2005).

Gone are the days of the hideous taffeta gown with huge puffed sleeves, even bigger back bows, and colors like lime Kool-Aid. In its place, says Fields, are bridesmaids dresses that can actually be worn again. “Brides are opting for simple cocktail dresses bought from department stores or catalogs like Chadwick’s.” A bonus to this trend: These “new” bridesmaids dresses are half the price of traditional gowns.

## More bridal trends in 2005:

- **Digital Disaster.** Many photographers now take wedding pictures with a digital camera. But beware the disappearing ink: Some digital pics start to fade after just two to three years if not printed on special paper. Couples would be wise to ask their photographer about archival paper and ink.
- **Web Tricks.** The large “wedding websites” are all the rage, but be careful where you surf. Many sites tout their ability to hook up brides with reputable wedding merchants. Unfortunately, the same sites “forget” to label paid-for plugs as advertising.
- **Do-It-Yourself Invitations.** Got a computer and a printer? Go out and buy the Wedding Invitation Kit (available at office supply stores), which guides you through the process of setting up an invitation. You don’t have to be a professional graphic designer to make fabulous, professional-looking invitations—and shave about 80 percent off the cost.
- **Ethnic Music and Bands.** From mariachis and salsa bands, to Polka trios and African drummers, couples are celebrating their own family heritage but also reflecting a new cultural diversity in the music they’re demanding for their reception. Best of all, it’s unforgettable and fun!



## 2005 Wedding Cake Trends:

- Chocolate wedding cakes
- Shaped cakes: octagons, ovals, trapezoids, squares
- Mini-cakes: An individual wedding cake for each guest, instead of a slice.
- Different flavors in different tiers

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