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The Name Game

TWISTING TRADITION WHEN CHANGING YOUR NAME



CARRIE VAN DEEST WAS GETTING READY TO CHANGE HER NAME IN MARRIAGE.

But she wasn't the only one about to change her name. Her fiancé, Sam Hallgren, was preparing to change his, too.

The couple had decided to split from tradition and essentially split their names. What was once a Van Deest and a Hallgren became a Van Hallgren. And the Cudahy couple has no regrets.

In recent years, trends have shifted, so that a woman may freely choose to keep her name or hyphenate with her husband's. But some couples, like the Van Hallgrens, make a bigger break, altering both names to create a new name for a new family.

"We wanted our kids—when we have them—to have the same last names as the both of us, so we didn't want to keep our last names. We wanted to be easily identified as a family, and didn't feel our last names were conducive to hyphenating," Carrie explained.

But mixed reactions were inevitable,

as the Van Hallgrens quickly found out. Sam came in for most of the criticism. As co-host of *Filmspotting*, a movie-review podcast, some listeners sent him scathing e-mails about his choice. In a mass e-mail to his listeners, Sam held his ground and wore his new name with pride.

Which isn't to say he didn't struggle with the decision at first. "It was really hard for me. Did I really want to change my name? Honestly, a big part of me didn't want to. And I was nervous about how people would react.

"Then it occurred to me: This is exactly what Carrie was prepared to do, change the name she had lived with for nearly 30 years. That's why I decided to do it; the first rule of marriage is compromise. What better way to embody compromise than to make a compromise of our surnames?"

In the Middle

When Emmy Guglielmi married Brian Rothbauer in 2004, she knew she wanted to take on his last name. But

she had used her maiden name when she started a business 20 years before, and she wasn't looking forward to all the messiness involved in that change, especially because she was planning to expand. As owner of *Exclusiva Hair Design and Spa* in Hales Corners, she has already opened a second location in downtown Milwaukee, even as she was planning her wedding.

She came up with an old solution to a new problem. "What I ended up doing was changing my middle name from Linda to Guglielmi, and changed my last name from Guglielmi to Rothbauer," she says. "My full name now is Emmy Guglielmi Rothbauer. Changing my middle name to my maiden name was the easiest way to take on Brian's last name without compromising the name I started my business with. I can sign my name Emmy Guglielmi at one salon, and sign it Emmy Rothbauer at the other. Either way, the name is valid and legal," she says.

Old Ways

What percentage of women take their husband's name after marriage? Conflicting statistics abound, but an interesting thing to note is that, though the trend toward either hyphenating or keeping one's name became popular in the 1980s and '90s, apparently tradition has strengthened its muscle in recent years, with more brides taking their husband's name. According to an extensive Harvard study performed in 2004, 17 percent of brides kept their birth names in the year 2000, whereas 23 percent did in 1990.

One reason for the shift back toward tradition is, perhaps, the future children. How will the next generations handle brides and grooms, both with hyphenated names?

Amalgamation

Allison Kaschner and Fábio Alves have crossed this bridge. She felt strongly that she wanted to keep her own name after marriage. When they had their first child, however, they decided to combine their names for their son, Angelo Kaschner-Alves.

"We first had his name as Angelo Kaschner-Alves, but at his first doctor's appointment, the second last name kept getting dropped off on the computer, so we wanted to make sure that wouldn't keep happening throughout his life," Kaschner says.

She admits to some occasional confusion with his last name, and they often find themselves explaining that the name is all one word. But overall, she says, she's happy with their choice.

"The bottom line is that we are a family, and by combining our names, Angelo gets a little piece of each of us to take with him throughout his life." *

WHAT DOES IT TAKE TO CHANGE YOUR NAME?

To change your name in marriage, you must first file a Petition for Change of Name with the Clerk of Circuit Court in the county in which you reside. There is a filing fee, which varies depending on the county. In Milwaukee County, this fee is \$158.50. You must have proof of date and place of birth (such as a birth certificate), along with the reason for the name change, and your intent to change your name must be shown in a local publication. (Milwaukee County provides this service to you during the name change process. The fee for the service is \$85.) A specific time and date will be set to meet with a judge to ask for the name change. After the judge signs an Order for Change of Name, you must return to the Clerk of Circuit Courts to receive certified copies of the order (\$5 each), which must then be sent to the state registrar to make the change on your birth and marriage certificate. Though it may sound like a time-consuming process, it runs relatively smoothly and quickly.

In addition to changing your name with the courts, you must also change it on your Social Security card and driver's license. A copy of the Order for Name Change, along with proof of your former name, must be sent to your nearest Social Security office. This is a free service and must be finalized before going to the DMV to change your driver's license. At the DMV you will need a certified birth certificate along with proof of your name change. Surrender of your current Wisconsin driver's license is required, and this process will cost you a nominal \$4 fee.



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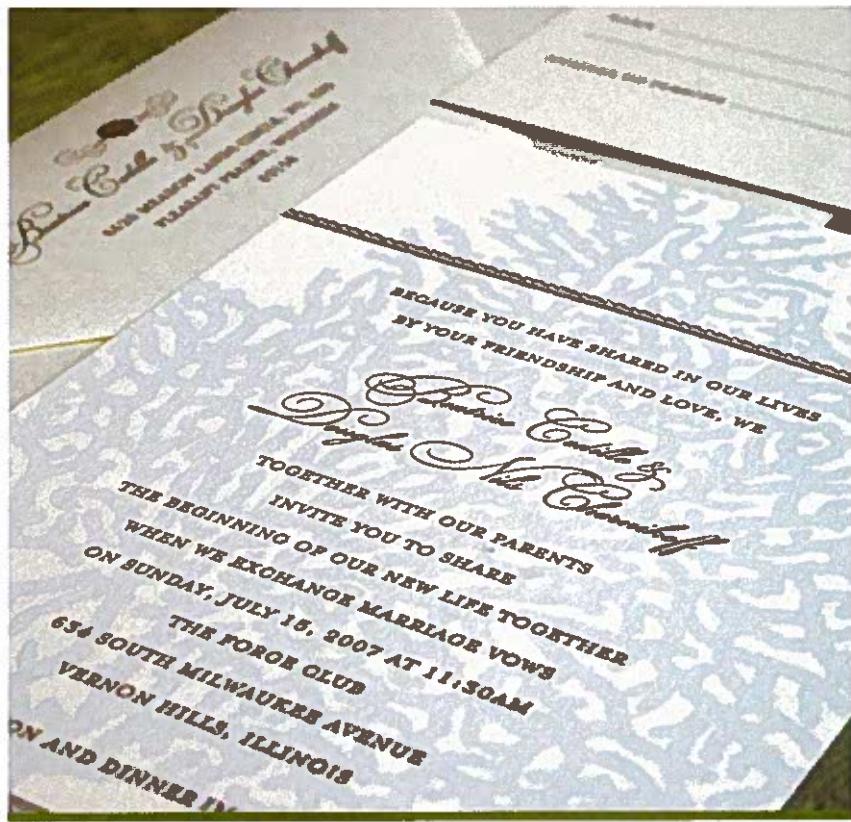
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