

# WEDDING DISASTERS CAN'T EXPLODE JOY OF THE BIG DAY

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A new year is a time for new beginnings, which is part of the reason I got married a year ago on New Year's Eve.

It's also a time to stop repeating old mistakes, which is why I have to pass on this piece of marital advice: Don't have your wedding at a place that is going to blow up.

Trust me on this. Or if you don't, talk to Taylor and Isaiah Burciaga and Schuyler and Jason Knackstedt, two other local newlywed couples who had to deal with wedding disasters.

Remember the explosion in November, 2007, at the Valentine Theatre? That happened five weeks before my fiancée and I were to be married there, and only two weeks prior to the Burciagas' nuptials. The Knackstedts had to deal with a three-alarm fire in September that destroyed the clubhouse at Bedford Hills Golf Club in Temperance less than two months before their wedding reception.

There are all kinds of ways to respond to news like this. I chose stunned silence. Taylor cried. Schuyler laughed.

"I was like, of course it did," Schuyler said. "I didn't really believe it."

None of us could. Looking back, the amazing thing isn't that we all managed to get married anyway, but that the disasters actually enriched our experiences.

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[Schuyler Knackstedt talks about her wedding disaster](#)

Consider Taylor's dire situation. Some guests already had plane tickets, but there was nowhere in town where she could move the wedding on such short notice. So she pushed the ceremony back to May — after the Valentine reopened — and decided to enjoy herself.

"I was like: What's the worst that could happen? Oh wait, that already happened."

Her new invitation made light of the situation by including a checklist for a bride like her: Send invitations. Order flowers. Have wedding hall blow up. Re-send invitations.

Instead of fretting about little details, she learned to relax and more fully appreciate what the big day is supposed to be about in the first place: the sanctification and celebration of two people's lives together.

Planning a wedding is a stressful task even under normal circumstances. Many people spend more than a year preparing for one, so the prospect of doing it again in a matter of weeks can be more than just intimidating; it can be downright scary.

Yet things magically fell into place for Schuyler. Another venue in town had a cancellation for that date. There was time to fix the invitations just before they went to print. And she learned something about her new life partner, who didn't sit back in the face of adversity. Instead, Jason was busy working the phones and making wedding plans when her work schedule was too overloaded for her to do it.

"It was like one of those weird little situations where everything was actually better in the long run," she said.

Unexpected twists like the ones we experienced mess with your head for a moment, but they shake your priorities back into place too. You realize that the trappings associated with a wedding or reception aren't really important



as long as you've got a ring on your finger when it's over.

So when I ended up getting married at a place that was in the middle of major renovations — the Secor Building downtown was practically the only place we could find that wasn't booked on New Year's Eve — it didn't matter. Sure, our expectations for the night were different, but because we gave up on planning the "perfect" wedding, we were actually free to enjoy it.

As it turned out, a flurry of work made the building look beautiful and the night was all that we could have hoped for, even surpassing our original plans. It reminded me that life's greatest moments tend to be unscripted, and that it never pays to get hung up on the little things. You never know when they might get blown to smithereens.

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