

Calligraphy: Let it enhance your wedding style

There will be plenty of weddings this year, over 2.5 million by some reports. They will be traditional church weddings, afternoon garden affairs and new wave happenings.

No matter the style, in keeping with formal etiquette, most of the invitation envelopes will be hand-addressed and hand-stamped; most thank-you notes will be handwritten.

And, in keeping with today's modern approach to equality of the sexes, the bride and groom often will share in this responsibility.

But what do you do if you both have awful handwriting, hate to write notes, and think maybe etiquette expert Amy Vanderbilt was much too rigid when she suggested the handwriting be in a "rounded, clear, English style affected by social secretaries."

"Consider calligraphy," says Ken Brown, a self-taught calligraphy expert and spokesperson for SPEEDBALL® Elegant Writer™ markers and kits. "It is a distinctive way to enhance a wedding celebration."

Calligraphy, derived from the Greek word *kalligraphia*, means beautiful writing. It is an ancient art form created from the first Roman alphabets, and further developed and refined in the Middle Ages.

Monks and scribes used calligraphy to produce Bibles and manuscripts. Today, it lends a special style to handwritten messages of all kinds.

Although the elegant, flowing lines of this distinctive writing form may seem complicated to master, the basic techniques used to produce a calligraphic alphabet are easy to learn, assures Brown. And you do not need good handwriting or artistic talent to become a good calligrapher, according to Brown.

"Calligraphy is an acquired skill that requires no experience, prior training or artistic talent," he says.

"With quality materials, easy-to-follow instructions and practice, the bride-to-be and groom-to-be can give their wedding invitations and thank-you notes a very special signature in just a matter of weeks," says Brown.

Brown has developed 14 basic calligraphy pen strokes that create all the letters in the alphabet. His simple rules relating to hand and pen positions help the beginner quickly and easily create the graceful letters.

"When forming calligraphic letters, the writer pulls the nib pen instead of pushing it as with a writing pen," he says. "Therefore, the pen and hand positions are very important."

"The angle of the pen point, the hand position and the pen position are what enable the writer to form the correct letter strokes almost immediately," he adds.

How does the beginner become a seasoned calligrapher in time to address wedding invitations and write thank-you notes? Brown suggests that you allow six

to eight weeks to learn the basic calligraphy strokes.

"With practice, the repetitive formation of these common elements makes every character easy to do," he says.

"It is best to practice regularly, but for short periods of time," suggests Brown. "That way, you will be fresh and relaxed—two key factors in producing a consistent, flowing style."

There is a wide variety of high quality materials and kits available, at all price ranges, to help the beginner learn calligraphy, says Brown.

For the novice, he recommends the SPEEDBALL Elegant Writer calligraphy kit from Hunt Manufacturing Co.

The kit includes four chisel-tipped black felt pens in different nibs, or points, a selection of practice papers and an instruction booklet that outlines Brown's easy-to-follow, step-by-step method.

The markers are available in a variety of popular colors including blue, red, green, violet, burgundy, black and brown. "The colored pens can complement the color scheme of the wedding," adds Brown.

In addition, a wide selection of nib widths allows thick, thin and decorative strokes. Specialty papers, the SPEEDBALL Textbook and any of the Ken Brown instruction books also aid the beginning and advanced calligrapher.

For a slightly higher price the OSMIROID® lettering pen set, including an instruction booklet and paper, is available. This pen is imported from England and features gold plated nibs for smooth writing.

The entire line of SPEEDBALL and OSMIROID calligraphy pens, inks and kits is available at art, craft and office supply stores, and selected mass merchandisers throughout the country, says Brown.

Brown's enthusiasm for calligraphy and wedding celebrations, is obvious. "Just add 'learn calligraphy' to the planning calendar and the wedding invitations and correspondence will have a very personal flair," he says.

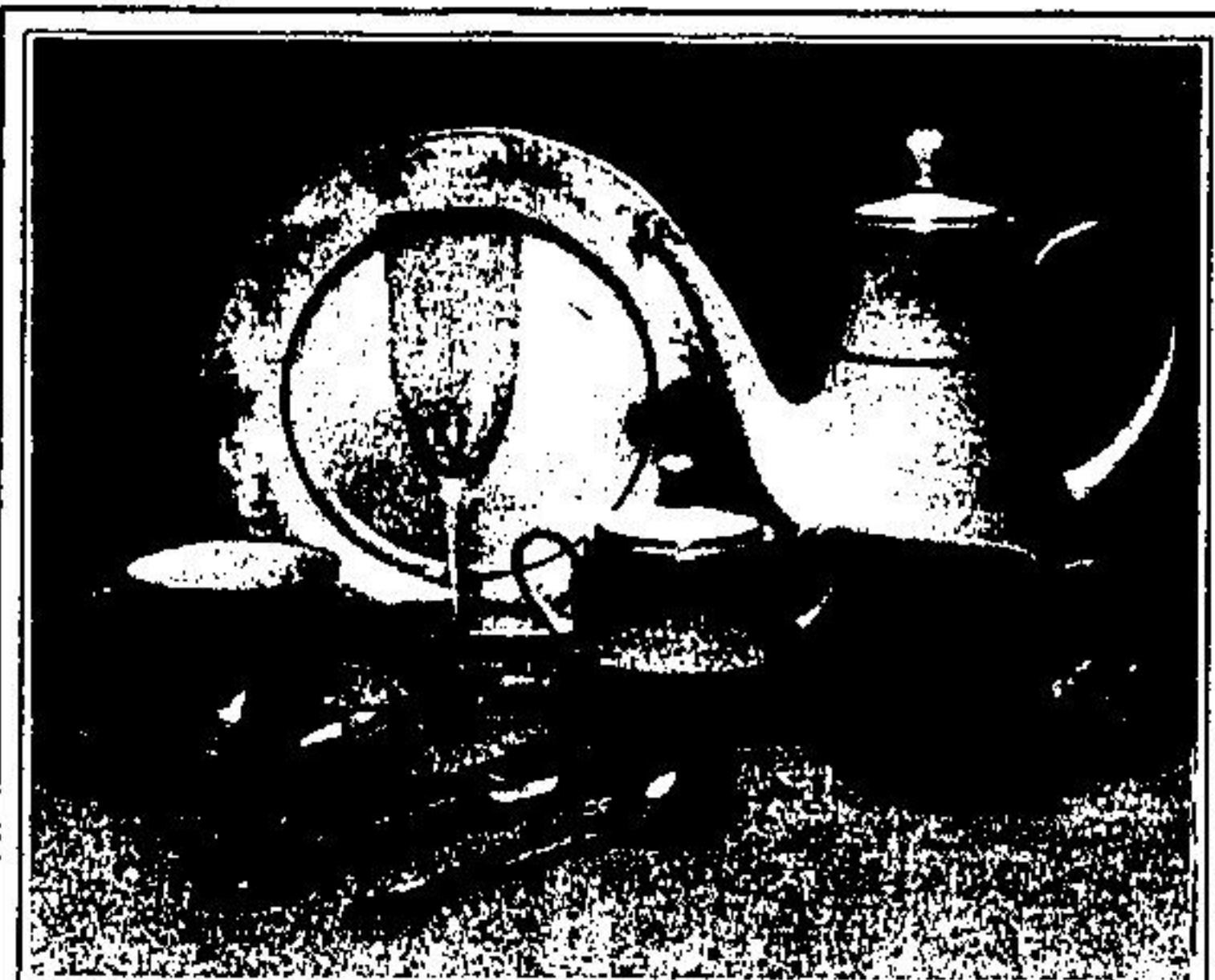
Romantic folklore

Superstition and folklore have long been associated with love and romance. In ancient times, charms, magic potions and other supernatural or magical forces frequently were employed as a way of trying to control one's destiny—especially in matters of the heart.

Love Potions: A Book of Charms and Omens (Salem House Publishers), written by Josephine Addison and illustrated by Diana Winkfield, relays to the reader a variety of ancient love potions, incantations and beliefs in a way that is at once whimsical and informative.



CALLIGRAPHY is a distinctive way to enhance wedding invitations and thank-you notes. SPEEDBALL® Elegant Writer™ calligraphy markers, available in a wide variety of popular colors and a selection of nib widths, are ideal for the novice calligrapher.



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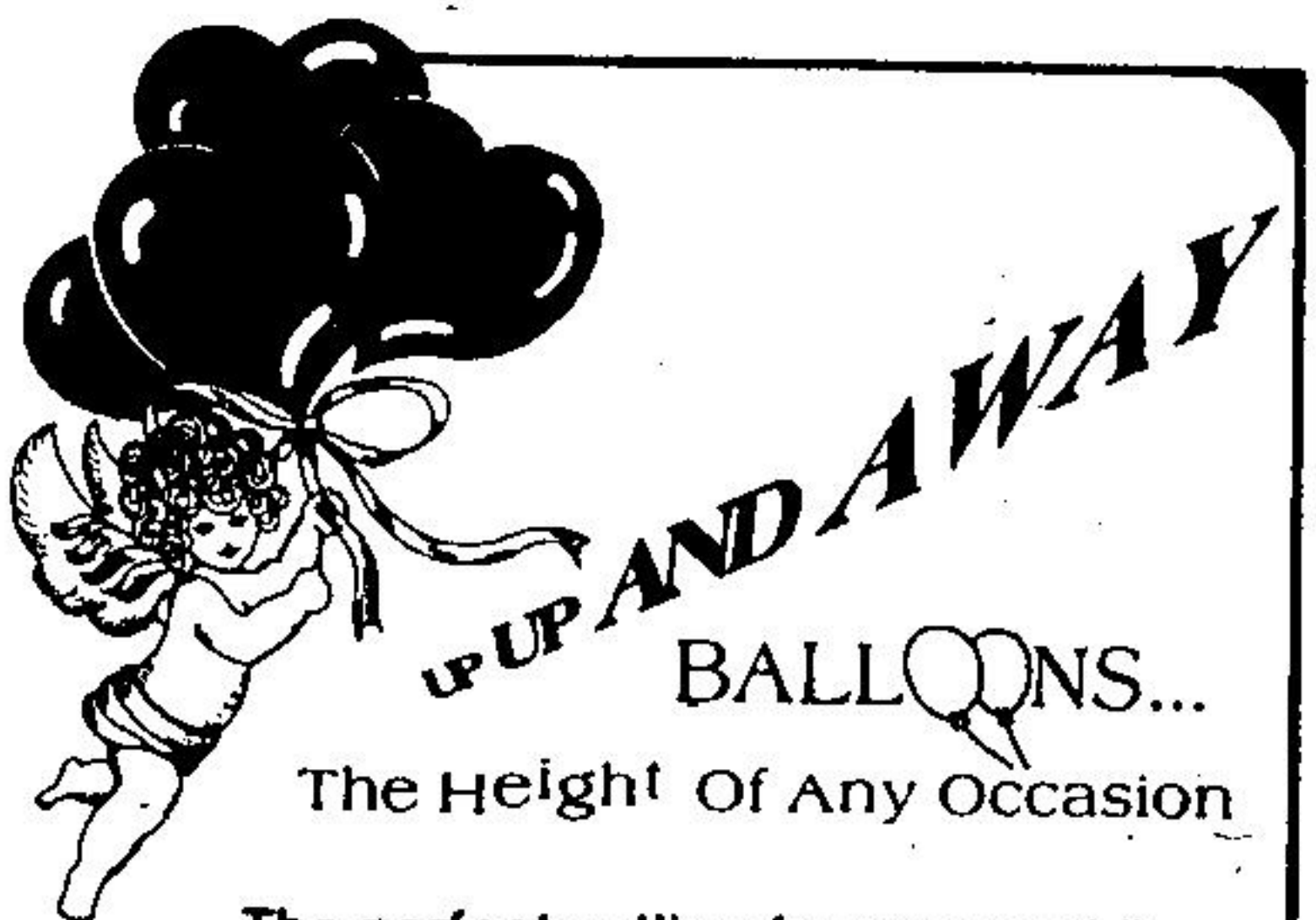
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ADVANTAGES OF BRIDAL CONSULTANTS

If you had the money, time and expertise, you would have no trouble at all planning your wedding.

But, if you are like most brides today, you are on a budget, are working (which really puts a crimp in your free time), and you're not too sure about all the technical details that go into organizing a wedding.

That's where the professional bridal consultant comes into play, according to Gerard J. Monaghan, President of the Association of Bridal Consultants.

"Working with the bride and bridegroom, the consultant provides the experience, has the time and—perhaps most importantly—helps keep the bride within her budget," Monaghan said.

Consultants can save money through their contacts in the wedding business, Monaghan said, and are not an added expense, even though they were once used only by the rich and famous.