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# Gowns that were something special

By **JILL JENKINS**  
Special to the Record-Eagle

**F**inding the perfect outfit for a special occasion can be frustrating. That frustration is multiplied when that perfect outfit is also meant for that most special day — your wedding.

Choosing a wedding gown is rarely done with a short stop at one bridal shop; instead, women spend hours trying — and re-trying — gown after gown.

Here's a look at how some women were able to find their perfect dress.

### SOMETHING OLD

There's something special about a bride wearing her mother's or grandmother's

wedding gown — and not just for the family. The seamstress who alters the dress also recognizes, and enjoys, that aspect.

"What other time would you have that connection?" asked Jeanette Veeder, a Traverse City seamstress for over 20 years. "The mothers get so involved and so emotional. It's just so special."

But Veeder admits that altering an old gown has many difficulties, namely size, style and dress condition.

"It's either too small, which is mostly the case, or the condition of the dress (is questionable)," Veeder said. "Sometimes they have stains on them and they're difficult to remove."

While stains can sometimes be stubborn, what can really take some creativity is altering

a too-small gown. Luckily, Veeder has been able to find a way to make it work. For one gown she was able to use part of the train to add to the sides of the altered gown.

"It's more difficult because you have to invent ways to modify the dress for the person who's going to wear it," she said.

### SOMETHING NEW

A new wedding gown is hardly unique. But a free, custom-made wedding gown given away by a radio station is.

Almost three years ago WJZZ 95.5 FM held a contest awarding the winners an all-expenses paid wedding. And Katrinka and Kevin Kochanek won.

As part of the contest, the Kochaneks had to follow the guidelines set out by the radio station. For instance the ceremony didn't take place in a church, or a courthouse, or even at a bayside resort.

Instead, the ceremony occurred on a float at the Cherry Royale Parade during the 2000 National Cherry Festival.

Another guideline was the designer of the dress, already chosen by the station — Rachele Hansen of Elk Rapids. Katrinka did have some say in the design of the gown, however.

"We kind of compromised on the style," she said, "and I really liked the dress she made."

With only two months to prepare, Katrinka worried about how everything would come together. Everything except the dress.

"I wasn't worried about that at all," she said.

Even with a hectic pace and many decisions made for her, Katrinka doesn't regret anything about her wedding.

"It was a lot of fun," she said. "I don't think I'd want my wedding any other way now."

### SOMETHING BORROWED

For the most part, brides don't borrow their wedding gowns. A handkerchief or a piece of jewelry, sure. But not a wedding gown.

Nancy Render, a teacher at Traverse City Cooperative Preschool, knows a woman who actually did borrow her wedding gown. She borrowed it from someone surprising — her husband. Okay, the gown didn't belong to the woman's husband, but the material for the gown did. The woman's husband was a paratrooper during World War II, and she had the parachute made into a wedding gown.

Render had the chance to see the gown during the 1970s when she taught at a coopera-



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