

AGGIELIFE

THE BATTALION

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Married, with classes

Married students experience the best and worst of matrimony and academia

By Denise Schoppe
THE BATTALION

On one hand there is the dress, the cake, the guests and "til death do us part" — on the other there are professors, the papers, studying and "we are the Aggies, the Aggies are we."

Some students choose to get married while still enrolled in college, however unconventional others may consider the situation.

Jennifer Putsche, a senior chemistry major, met her husband, Richard Anderson, a senior industrial engineering major, through a mutual friend two weeks into their freshman year.

"The friend was in my Physics 218 class, and was Richard's next door neighbor in Moore Hall. We all started studying and doing Physics 218 homework together on a regular basis until we all became such good friends that we couldn't manage to get any studying done," Putsche said.

The two got engaged on Feb. 1 of this year and were married on May 18.

"It seems like quite a short time frame, but we had known for quite a while that we wanted to be together," Putsche said. "All in all, it was about four years and nine months we had known each other between meeting and getting married."

For Putsche, marriage is a big responsibility that she and her husband work hard to handle on their own.

"Once you're married, every little thing becomes your responsibility," she said. "We no longer rely on parents for the small things like groceries and things like that. On that same track, we're totally responsible for paying our bills, rent and keeping track of everything ourselves."

To handle it all, the couple gives up a lot of the things they had before getting married, such as spending time together.

"Between classes and making ends meet, there is little free time," Putsche said. "The little time we have together may not be ideal time. For an example, after I've been at school from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m., and then work from 5 p.m. to 11:30 p.m., I see my spouse for maybe an hour in the day."

All of this time divided between work and school can leave a person physically and mentally exhausted.

"Even though we don't see much of each other some days, the little time we have together is very valuable, and caring about each other becomes much more important than the convenience of picking times according to mood and energy," Putsche said.

When fellow students and professors learn she chose to

marry before graduating, Putsche said those people are usually surprised. Otherwise, she describes herself and her husband as "just your usual undergraduates," but said there are some definite advantages to getting married.

One advantage, she said, is living with the one you love without the social stigma of premarital cohabitation.

"I personally know a few students who pretty much just use their dorm as a storage area (and) home base while on campus, and spend all their time and nights at their significant other's place of residence; people and parents would always question whether they would get to spend time with one of us alone," Putsche said. "But when you get married, it becomes expected and socially acceptable to spend all your time with your spouse."

Brad Maples, a senior civil engineering major, and his wife Kimberly Maples, a senior elementary education major, had been dating since high school when they got married in June of 2001.

Brad said their situation is tough, but they make it work.

"We are both working to put ourselves through school, so we don't have a lot of time, sometimes," he said. "Our family lives about two and a half hours away, so we're pretty much on our own."

Putsche and Maples said although they themselves are married, they are not unlike other students.

"None of my friends are married, but we all still hang out as we did before," Maples said.

The married life isn't for. Some students can't even imagine being wed while still in college.

"It's not for me, but if they find the right person, I think it's great,"

Lindsey Vaculin, a senior agricultural journalism major, said. "If it were me, I'd choose to wait until after I graduate. I can't imagine the responsibility of taking care of someone else as well as myself."

Maples said there is one more advantage to married life. "It's kind of nice, also, that you have someone all the time for support," he said.

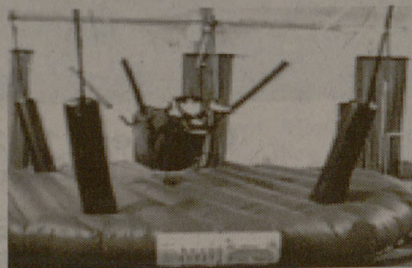


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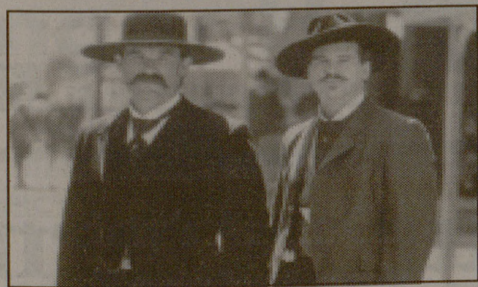
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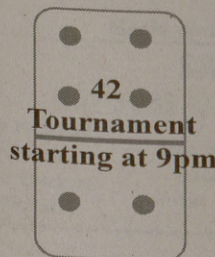
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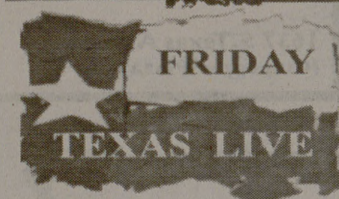
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