

AGGIELIFE

THE BATTALION

Page 3 • Friday, January 23, 2004

Nice day for a *White Wedding*

Students weigh pros and cons of college marriages, responsibilities of living together

By Kim Katopodis
THE BATTALION

Sarah Pate pours over page after page on the Internet. She's been to theknot.com, looking for bridesmaids' dresses; potterybarn.com for decorating ideas for the newly remodeled house she and her fiancée will live in when they are married and various jewelry sites looking for the right wedding band.

Pate, a senior psychology major, plans to get married in June, just after she graduates.

Many people question whether college students are capable of making lifelong decisions, such as marriage, at such a young age. Some believe it is not well thought out while others believe it is a personal decision that should be based upon the maturity of the individual couple.

Suzy Green, a junior journalism major, believes Pate and other soon-to-be-married students are making a mistake by getting married so young.

Green said she believes that college students are not mature enough to make a lifelong commitment to marriage.

"The problem is that at this age, everyone is changing and developing ... and it's a big risk because a person will probably be different by the time they are 25 or 30."

While she said she is not anti-marriage, Green says that getting engaged "isn't about planning a wedding, it's about starting a life."

Pate agrees. But, she says she has no illusions about adjustments that will have to be made in coming months and years.

"Everybody's timing is different, so when you find the right person, you should marry them," Pate said. "I want to marry him even if we have different living styles."

Lauren Cox, a senior double-majoring in nutrition and biomedical sciences, got married two weeks ago. She said she knew there would be challenges going into her marriage.

"My husband works and takes 16 hours so I knew we would have to make time for each other," Cox said. "We study together and I cook every night and we eat together, so I would say we spend more time together than most couples."

Pate and her fiancée are currently participating in pre-marriage counseling with the minister who is going to marry them in the hopes that they can avoid the pitfalls many newlyweds face.

"We took the Taylor Johnson Temperament Analysis Test

where each trait has a positive and negative and it shows where you fall along the spectrum," she said. "An example of traits on the test would be nervous versus easygoing, and you'd see which end of the scale you lean toward."

Green said that at A&M, specifically, there are several factors that she feels pressure people to get engaged at a young age.

"The type of people who go here, many from small towns, where they are more family oriented, plays a role in peoples' mindsets about marriage ... The military influence is big also," Green said. "Once people in the military are sent off to bases, training or deployed somewhere, there is not as big of a chance to find someone, so they figure this is a good time."

Green also cites religion as a catalyst for early marriages. She said many people are waiting for marriage to have sex, and to get to that, they tend to rush things.

Pate agrees — to an extent.

"I think one reason people are critical of marriage between people my age is that so many people are living together now that they don't feel it is necessary to get married right away, so they just put it off," Pate said. "That's why we are doing counseling. We are trying to eliminate surprises so we have less to adjust to later."

Counseling has helped her name some traits about herself and her fiancée that they may not have necessarily been able to identify on their own, Pate said.

"I've learned so much about why he (my fiancée) is the way he is," Pate said. "Now that we know each other's specific weaknesses, we can work on it."

Money is often a stress that young couples face. Cox says she and her husband are lucky because her parents still pay her tuition and because "he (my husband) has always had to support himself, so he already knew how to budget things well."

Cox relies on advice her grandmother, who has dated her grandfather since high school and recently celebrated her 50th wedding anniversary, gave her.

"She said the good thing about marrying young is that you don't have the baggage like old relationships and stuff," Cox said. "You go into it fresh and you get to experience things together."

"I think one reason people are critical of marriage between people my age is that so many people are living together now that they don't find it necessary to get married right away."

— Sarah Pate
senior psychology major



IVAN FLORES • THE BATTALION

DORM DIRECTOR:

▶ Person in the dorm who always has a good downloaded movie handy.

THE NEWEST WAY TO GET HIT MOVIES: DOWNLOAD THEM. STUDENTS GET 25% OFF*
ALL MOVIES AT COLLEGE.MOVIELINK.COM. NO SPYWARE AND VIRUS-FREE.



Movielink™
movies on demand

*Terms and conditions apply. See website for details.