



*Wonderful  
Weddings*

May 28, 2020

# CONTENTS



Jodi Jacobson/E+/Getty Images

**B3** Wedding delayed? Here are 3 stylish wedding looks you can buy today.

**B4** It's not your fault

**B6** Wedding vendors give back

**B7** Listings

**B8** My year of weddings

Rest easy.

**NFP** | The Meltzer Group

NFP | The Meltzer Group has got you covered.

In an uncertain world,  
NFP | The Meltzer Group provides  
something that is difficult to come by:  
peace of mind.

Whether it is individual life insurance,  
estate planning, property and casualty  
insurance, an employee benefits  
package or retirement plan  
services for your business,  
NFP | The Meltzer Group  
has got you covered.

Contact us today.

301-581-7300  
nfp.com

# Need the dress now?

Here are three stylish wedding looks you can buy today.

By Rachel Kohn

**WITH LARGE** gatherings still off-limits, some couples are opting for immediate family-only religious wedding or civil ceremonies and planning to party with friends and family at a later date.

A bride herself only a year and a half ago, fashion designer Shaina Kohn, 29, empathizes with those adapting their plans during the coronavirus pandemic. A silver lining, at least when it comes to the dress: “Brides can take this as a fun opportunity to step out of their comfort zones and wear a look they might not have originally worn at their wedding but equally expresses their personality,” she said.

A transplant from the New York City fashion scene, Kohn lives in Washington, D.C., and attends Keshet Israel Congregation with her husband (and this writer’s brother), lawyer Jacob Kohn. She is CEO and design lead of her own luxury eveningwear brand Mendalawi. Her first collection was due to hit the stores in this fall, but that was postponed when production in the fashion industry, like others, ground to a halt.

“People who already ordered their [wedding] dresses will eventually get them,” Kohn said, “but it’s a matter of deciding on if they are going to wait for that dress to come in [to have their wedding],” and if are they planning on wearing that same dress at their future full-blown wedding ceremony or reception.

A friend of hers opted to keep her March wedding date, for instance, with immediate family present and others attending via Zoom. The reception, however, was rescheduled to a year later. “She decided to save her original dress for their future formal reception and opted to wear a simple



Courtesy of J. Crew

Courtesy of Banana Republic

Courtesy of Nordstrom

## I LIKE IT EYELET

All from J. Crew: Laser-Cut Eyelet Dress in 365 Crepe, \$148.00; Two Gem Drop Earrings, \$39.50; Slingback Sandals in Leather, \$178.00. Available at [jcrew.com](http://jcrew.com) while supplies last.

## SUBTLE SEXY

All from Banana Republic: Linen-Cotton Puff-Sleeve Dress in White, \$129.00; Large Flower Stud Earrings in gold, \$48.00; Bare High-Heel Sandal in Gold, \$128.00. All available at [www.BananaRepublic.com](http://www.BananaRepublic.com) while supplies last.

## ROMANTIC RUFFLES

French Connection Whisper Ruffle Minidress, \$148. Nordstrom Pavé Cubic Zirconia Stud Earrings, \$98. Nordstrom Cubic Zirconia Tennis Bracelet, \$99; Sam Edelman Yaro Ankle Strap Sandal in White, \$99.95. All available at [Nordstrom.com](http://Nordstrom.com) while supplies last.

white gown for the religious ceremony,” said Kohn.

Budget is a consideration but the venue is too, with so many people opting for outdoor weddings. “I think when it comes to outdoor weddings in general, the concerns will always be not getting the dress dirty – do you need to put something down to protect the dress? – and what type of heels can you wear. You can’t wear a really pointy stiletto in grass, because you’re going to sink,” said Kohn.

Kohn put together these looks incorporating budget-friendly ready-to-wear dresses and accessories. Each look captures a different style and is currently available to order online for your special day – because it will be special, even if it isn’t what you originally planned, she said. [WJW](http://WJW)



# *It's not your fault*

## SO HERE ARE WAYS YOU CAN MAKE THE BEST OF YOUR WEDDING PLANS

By Andrea F. Siegel  
*Special to WJW*

**W**edding postponement wine glasses. Decorative protective masks. These are signs of our COVID-19 pandemic-tainted times. What to do about the already planned wedding? Postpone? Cancel? Intimate ceremonies – immediate family only – with the larger celebration postponed are increasingly popular.

How can couples make plans given the uncertainties of ever-changing social distancing and restrictive orders – and not knowing if the illness will return? How should couples who have yet to start planning go about making wedding plans now for 2021 or beyond? Wedding planners familiar with what's going on in the industry can be helpful, and numerous wedding websites have COVID-19 guides.

Here's a bit of advice:

### **“Take a deep breath,”**

says event planner Tracy Bloom Schwartz, president of Creative Parties Ltd. in Bethesda. “It's not your fault.” Then consider what your next steps are. Much of that

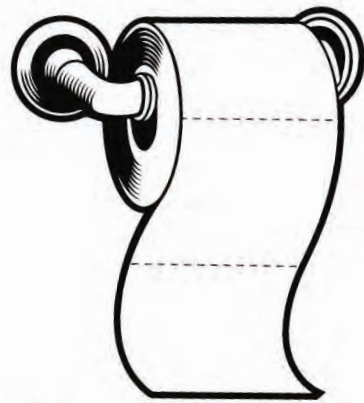
will depend on whether your wedding date is close – summer – or in early fall, or later with invitations yet to be ordered, or you're just starting to plan.

A lot of people are in this unusual situation, Bloom Schwartz says.

### **Your Jewish ceremony may change a bit.**

Couples counseling may be entirely over digital platforms for now. Due to COVID-19, Rabbi Cantor Annie Bornstein, whose company is Jewish Heart and Soul, says she holds sessions over Skype, including for local couples. Her calendar now includes officiating within weeks an intimate wedding ceremony from her home in Gaithersburg over Zoom, the web platform used for conferences (and big for COVID-19 spring seders), with the couple and their family elsewhere. A few of her weddings have been rescheduled for fall, she says.

The six-foot spacing for social distancing means fewer people at a chuppah for now, and that could continue, depending on comfort levels, government rules, health guidelines and so on, she says. She'll be further than usual from the couple, too, and says she “can't imagine” performing a wedding with a mask covering half her face, though knows she may need to if requested. How the kiddush cup is handled may get another look and tweaked to ensure that the bride and groom feel



THIS STINKS BUT WE'RE

Rolling  
with it

Change of Plans

DUE TO UNFORTUNATE EVENTS  
WE HAVE MADE THE DIFFICULT DECISION  
TO POSTPONE OUR WEDDING.

PLEASE SAVE THE NEW DATE

www.theknot.com

LOVE,

Courtesy of [SaveTheDateLLCEvents.com](http://SaveTheDateLLCEvents.com)

### Postpone or cancel?

Will you regret skipping the celebration entirely?

Then consider having a ceremony with immediate family and closest friend or two – stay within your jurisdiction's limit for gatherings – and reschedule the larger celebration. Or postpone the ceremony and its reception. Your venues and vendors – you have contracts and gave them deposits – generally will work with you to reschedule, Bloom Schwartz says. Currently, she says, no one's certain what future events will look like as a result of COVID-19.

Much will depend on what evolving local government reopening orders allow – some activities are starting to resume with cautions – what vendors and venues can accommodate & the like, says **Cara Weiss**, founder & senior planner/director of **Save The Date, LLC** Events in Potomac.

Among the questions, Weiss says: Instead of trays of hors d'oeuvres being passed among guests will there be a small appetizer plate for each guest? Fewer seats per table to create a bit of distance among guests? Will the number of people permitted in a room be reduced? Will the dance floor be impacted? Masks for guests? For waitstaff?

If you decide to cancel the event – whether that's either only the celebration or a ceremony with a reception in favor of a private ceremony – you may lose part or all of each deposit. Read your contracts carefully, wedding planners say. The inability to hold an event on a contracted date due to a situation that is under neither side's control is disappointing to couples and businesses, and wedding planners advise trying to work out a resolution. Do consider that the disappointment over COVID-19 soured wedding plans may be offset by a later celebration.

### Livestream the intimate ceremony. Preserve the video.

Technology allows you to share a small ceremony with a large crowd. Mute guests during the ceremony. You may want to include such things as a toast, remarks by the few people there, a dance. An external mic, tripod and a friend managing

the livestream are helpful, or consider hiring a professional. Check livestreaming platforms for price, fees for optional services, participant limits and more. Platforms include Facebook, FaceTime (for Apple products only), Joy and Zoom. Preserving it (YouTube is one of several options) allows you to view it and share it, including during a later reception.

### Include guests in other ways in your small ceremony.

You can hold a drive-by mini-celebration perhaps with music – guests can honk congrats and wave from their cars, says Choy. You may want to give them a party box with a split of champagne and festive goodies – or send a similar box to virtual attendees of your livestreamed ceremony. And yes, that sort of event can be fun.

Amy and Robert (they didn't want their last names published) changed plans and decided to keep the date with a ceremony downsized to only immediate family and are rescheduling their party. Catering

by Seasons of College Park catered the family dinner at their Alexandria home, and at the scheduled time, local well-wishing friends drove by. Each car received a box with a bottle of champagne, a note asking them to toast the couple, take a selfie and post it to a virtual photo booth put together by Electric Events of Rockville.

"It was an oasis in a desert," says Glynis Keith, senior sales and event manager at Catering by Seasons, coming during the pandemic.

### Whether starting to plan, or rescheduling, be flexible and don't dawdle.

Bookings are well into 2021. Couples rescheduling are vying with the newly engaged for the same dates. Many dates are taken, says Weiss. Saturday nights go fast; consider other days, including weekdays (prices are often lower) and holiday weekends when people will have an extra day off. Many venues, though closed, have added walk-through videos, Weiss notes. Consider that although the number of people who decline invitations is typically about 15 percent, health and travel concerns may at least double that, Bloom Schwartz says.

Choy says that as you look to reschedule, choose a few vendors you'd really like to keep – for example, that could be the venue, caterer and DJ – and see what they've got open on and around your preferred new dates. Check with the people closest to you as well.

### Stay in touch with guests.

They may have travel and lodging arrangements to redo. "Wedding postponed" and "change the date" announcements come in card, magnet and email formats. Call and text as well. Keep your wedding website current. "Your guests understand that is a very unusual circumstance. They will understand if you can have only five or 10 people (at your ceremony)," Choy says.

Keep this in mind: In the long run, this is about the start of a **W**edding.

*Andrea F. Siegel is a Washington-area writer.*

Newlyweds Amy and Robert enjoy their drive-by reception

*Photo provided*

at ease with that.

"If they are comfortable with it – when I bless the couple I generally put my arms around them or wrap them in a tallit and bless them, and I won't be able to do that on Zoom," she says. Depending on a couple's comfort level and social distancing practices, the Reform rabbi says she hopes to be able to do it at other upcoming weddings.

Vicky Choy, owner and event planner of Event Accomplished based in Arlington, notes in an email that among additional considerations, observant couples "will need to revisit the bedeken [where the groom veils the bride] and the tish [where the groom, or both bride and groom teach Torah] also. The question is ultimately can you perform all these rituals in a safe manner while observing social distancing and possibly minimizing contact. It's tricky."

# Wedding vendors give back

By Ellen Braunstein  
Special to WJW

As the coronavirus forces wedding cancellations and postponements, two Washington-area wedding vendors have pivoted their businesses to help fight COVID-19. Something Vintage Rentals has organized a mask-making drive and Occasions Catering has launched “Occasions Giving Kitchen,” a fundraising initiative that brings wholesome meals to under-served communities.

Based in the District, Something Vintage Rentals specializes in reclaimed, handmade and heirloom pieces for weddings and other events. Owner Dawn Crothers mobilized a network of 150 volunteers to make the face covers that protect front-line health workers from respiratory infection. The rental shop is also paying additional seamstresses and laid off workers to help fulfill mask orders.

Volunteers have turned out 4,000 masks so far. Crothers’ company is providing many of the volunteers with the pattern, material and elastic at drop-off points throughout the metro area.

The protective face shields that Crothers calls Victory Masks have gone to Children’s National Hospital, MedStar Washington Hospital Center, Sibley Memorial Hospital, Community of Hope and nursing homes.

“Word spread through social media,” Crothers said of Something Vintage’s signature multi-colored masks. “We discovered that so many hospitals needed them and it just kind of blossomed and exploded from there. People just want to help our frontline healthcare workers.”

Harvey Green, Medstar vice president and chief philanthropy officer, said, “We are so grateful to Dawn and her team for dedicating themselves to making these homemade masks.”



Occasions Caterers co-founder and CEO Mark Michaels and Director of Marketing Denise Vu

*Photo courtesy of Occasions Caterers*

Cole Norton, a potter for Something Vintage and a nursing home worker, has sewn 200 masks so far. “I think it’s important to keep everyone healthy. I’ve taken care of COVID-19 patients at a nursing home so I know how serious it is.”

Under normal circumstances Occasions Caterers in Washington is a full-service catering company that specializes in elegant cuisine for weddings and other events. They offer couples fully customized menus, a

wedding consultant team and talented chefs.

When the pandemic hit, Occasions formed Occasions Giving Kitchen to provide philanthropic relief feeding efforts for homebound seniors and disadvantaged youth and families. The special events vendor is working with DC Greens, a food justice program, Wards 7 and 8, churches and N Street Village.

They are also safely delivering food to frontline workers who need to eat on the job. To date, Occasions Giving Kitchen has provided more than 37,700 meals to communities in need.

Director of Marketing Denise Vu, said, “Hunger has been something that has been close to our co-founders Mark and Eric Michael. “We’ve always been working with many organizations that combat hunger in the city. Once the pandemic hit, it was really natural to work with these partners through the Giving Kitchen, which is the philanthropic relief feeding efforts.”

The Giving Kitchen has access to an extensive kitchen, a delivery fleet and food and supply chains. “It really just made sense,” Vu said. “When we formalized it, we started asking clients for donations to help with this really important effort for the city.”

Donations run the gamut from \$10 to hundreds or more. Clients who had to cancel the events are applying the money for the relief fund to help with the food drive efforts. Occasions is also donating proceeds from its home meal kits and Mobile Market, a convenient, safe, drive-through market that is open twice a week.

“We’re making sure there is access to food throughout the city during this shutdown,” Vu said. “It’s at the core of what we do, bring happiness to people in the form of food and catering. Really this is no different, it’s just a different circumstance.” **WJW**

*Ellen Braunstein is a writer in Chicago.*



**CONNECTING NOT DISTANCING**  
**on Jewish Community Radio**  
*with Estelle Deutsch Abraham*

---

**MUSIC | FEATURES | INTERVIEWS**  
**SUNDAY 10 am and 12 noon**  
**WUST AM1120**

Throughout the **WEEK** Throughout the **WORLD**  
**www.WUST1120.com**

*Rabbi Cantor Annie Bornstein*



- Personalized Wedding Ceremonies
- Traditional, Interfaith, Same Sex
- Creative and Personal Life Cycle Events

Virtual Conversations and Weddings via Face Time available

**WWW.JEWISHHEARTANDSOUL.COM | WWW.WEDDINGWIRE.COM**



Dawn Crothers of Something Vintage Rentals

Photo courtesy of Dawn Crothers

# Weddings LISTINGS

## BANQUET FACILITIES/ HOTELS/VENUES/ RESTAURANTS

### AMP BY STRATHMORE

11810 Grand Park Ave., Fourth Floor  
North Bethesda, MD 20852  
301-581-5255  
ampbystrathmore.com/private-events  
Rentals Coordinator  
rentals@strathmore.org

Unique and contemporary, AMP is an ideal urban rental venue for mitzvahs and other parties, weddings, and corporate meetings in Montgomery County.

### DOUBLETREE BY HILTON HOTEL WASHINGTON DC - SILVER SPRING

8727 Colesville Rd.  
Silver Spring, MD 20910  
301-563-3829  
SilverSpring.DoubleTree.com  
DCASS\_DS@Hilton.com

The DoubleTree Hotel provides over 20,000 sq. ft. of newly renovated banquet space, perfect for social gatherings, mitzvahs and weddings.

## INSURANCE

### NFP | THE MELTZER GROUP

6500 Rock Spring Dr., Ste. 500  
Bethesda, MD 20817  
301-581-7300  
nfp.com  
Regional Managing Director  
ethan.foxman@nfp.com

NFP is a leading insurance broker and consultant that cares deeply about its employees' and clients' well-being. We're honest, hardworking, dedicated professionals who love what we do and strive to lead by example.

## OFFICIANTS/RABBI

### RABBI CANTOR ANNIE BORNSTEIN

804-335-4041  
Jewishheartandsoul.com  
Abornst691@aol.com

Rabbi Cantor Annie L. Bornstein happily serves those in the Virginia, Maryland, and Washington, D.C., areas for Bar & Bat Mitzvah training and ceremonies, marriage, including interfaith & same sex couples, baby namings and more.



For an  
Extraordinary  
Wedding Celebration



#### Hotel features:

- New upgraded high speed internet
- Best downtown location
- Two restaurants on property
- Valet parking
- Indoor heated pool

#### Banquet features:

- Newly remodelled event space
- Separate event kitchen
- Kosher caterers welcome
- Event rooms directly connected to guest rooms and parking
- Experienced Catering sales and service managers
- Flexible space options

Contact us today for your free tour!

301-563-3829

DCASS\_DS@Hilton.com

8727 Colesville Road, Silver Spring MD 20910  
SilverSpring.DoubleTree.com

# My year of weddings

The postponements contained sentiments like, ‘We truly appreciate all the love and support we have received through this crazy adventure and cannot wait to celebrate our special day with you.’

By Anna Lippe  
*Special to WJW*

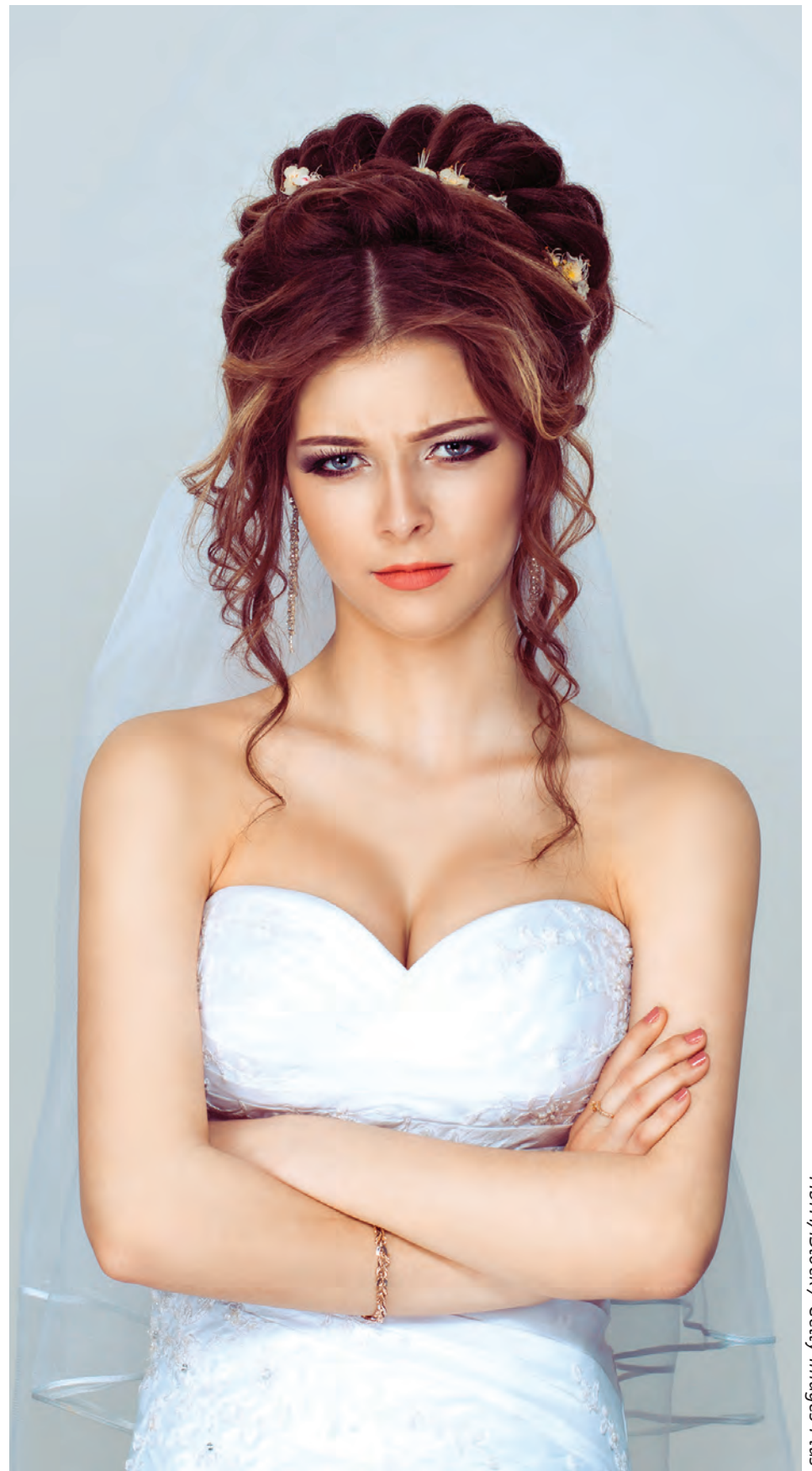
**W**hen 2020 began, I was looking forward to attending five weddings with my boyfriend, Noam. We had plans to travel from D.C. all over the East Coast, from Walt Disney World to Philadelphia. In fact, we were supposed to have three weddings on consecutive weekends this spring.

We had hotels, flights, outfits picked out. We attended bachelor parties (where Noam went skeet shooting) and bachelorette parties (where I went on a New Orleans steamboat) for our friends to be wed in 2020. We had our Disney World rides picked out, and I even begrudgingly agreed to visit Star Wars: Galaxy’s Edge in Disney’s Hollywood Studios.

Noam and I moved in together in the beginning of March. We decided to move when we did partially to be settled in before all of our April and May wedding travels. I envisioned having friends over when we weren’t traveling to enjoy our Shaw rooftop with a great view of the city. Masks and gloves were not part of the vision. Essentially, I went from living alone in a quaint studio in Kalorama to being quarantined in a one-bedroom with Noam.

## The pandemic had other things in store

One after the other, we received thoughtful emails outlining postponed wedding dates and rescheduled plans that contained sentiments like: “We truly appreciate all the love and support we have received through this crazy adventure and cannot wait to celebrate our special day with you.”



Hbr/H/Stock / Getty Images Plus

I appreciate the thought our friends have put into rethinking their weddings, and I’ll be excited to celebrate with them when it is safe.

Like everyone, our calendars have completely opened up. While we were at a (socially distant) cabin in Virginia for Noam’s birthday, I realized that if not for the pandemic, I would have been dancing the horah at my friend Sam Flax’s wedding at that very moment.

Doing a puzzle in an owl-themed log cabin was a very different night.

## The brides’ perspectives

I talked to three brides — Flax, Allie Gold and Sarah Halpern — about changing their wedding plans amid the pandemic. (I’m sure there are bridezillas out there, but these three are not.)



Flax and her fiancé, Jimmy Barber, planned on getting married in Baltimore in April. After postponing to July, they postponed again to April 2021.

“We made the decision to move it to July which, based on the information at the time, seemed plausible, and then it became apparent that the flattening of the curve and the whole trend would take longer than we thought,” says Flax, who invited 210 people to her wedding. “It became apparent that July wasn’t going to work.”

Another wedding we planned to attend was of Halpern and fiancé Seth Levin, who postponed fairly early on because they and most of their guests would have needed to travel to Charleston, S.C. “We actually started discussing the possibility of moving/canceling back in February, so we were mentally prepared when it became real, says Halpern.

Flax, Gold, and Halpern all pushed their wedding celebrations to 2021, but each had a different approach to how they spent their original wedding day.

### What they did on their original wedding date

The pandemic didn’t stop Gold and fiancé Alex Smith from getting officially married on their original wedding date. They got married outside in the Canton neighborhood of Baltimore.

“Before our ceremony, our friends surprised us with an amazing outdoor mimosa and macaron bar to ourselves,” says Gold. “That was followed by a walk to our friend’s house for a short ring exchange ceremony where we were surprised, again, to see our closest friends in Baltimore watching from hundreds of feet – and, of course, more than six feet away from one another – down one street.” More friends and family joined the celebration via Zoom.

Halpern and Levin will still get married on their original June wedding date in Hawaii, where they live. Halpern’s mom shipped Halpern’s wedding dress, some family tallitot and the kippot customized for their Charleston wedding. They are planning to have the officiant, a photographer friend, and two witnesses to sign the ketubah. “Maybe a few people more depending on what the situation is like in Hawaii by then, but definitely something low key,” says Halpern.

On the day of their original wedding date, Flax and Barber received food and champagne from friends to enjoy. The couple watched Flax’s favorite movie, “When



Vera Fedorova/iStock / Getty Images Plus

Harry Met Sally.” Their ketubah was already sent to them with their original wedding date engraved.

We Zoomed with yet another couple on their original wedding date, which was also postponed. They were in their D.C. apartment, not too far from ours, in sweatpants, the bride wearing her veil. That image – our friend as a little box on Zoom in her wedding veil – pretty much summed things up for me.

### The right attitude

I’ve been so impressed with how my friends have maintained the bigger picture. I asked Flax’s advice to other brides, and she said to put things in perspective. “I know that there are other brides who have gotten really upset, but there’s nothing we can do about this situation,” she says. “It’s not ideal, but the reality is people are literally dying. Obviously the wedding day is about you, but there are so many bigger things going on in the world right now that you have to appreciate what you have.”

Gold felt similarly. “When we knew our wedding plans

had to change, I really wasn’t that worried or upset,” she says. “Three thoughts dictated my emotions at the time: There’s nothing we can do about it other than let time, and our insurance company, handle the emotional and financial damages, respectively; our friends and family will support us and want to celebrate no matter what time of year; and there are worse things happening in the world than our postponed wedding weekend.”

A sense of perspective has also helped Halpern see the bigger picture. “People are dying and losing their jobs because of this virus, so having to move our wedding celebration really isn’t a big deal in the scheme of things,” she says.

And as Flax said, “If you can get through this, I would hope that it is an indication that you will have a successful marriage.”

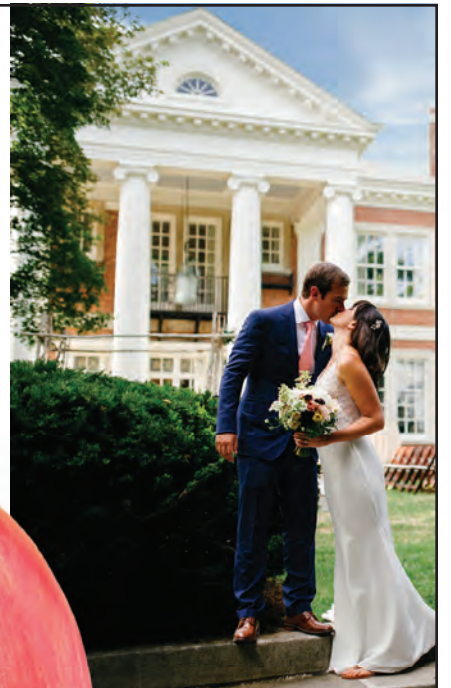
And 2021 will have a lot of weddings. [WJW](#)

Anna Lippe is a Washington writer.

## WEDDINGS AT STRATHMORE

# Be Inspired.

*Let Strathmore set the stage for your dream wedding. With two incredibly unique spaces, we can help you create a celebration as special as your love for each other. Virtual tours available.*



# STRATHMORE

Strathmore Private Events: 301.581.5255 | [rentals@strathmore.org](mailto:rentals@strathmore.org)  
10701 Rockville Pike, North Bethesda, MD 20852 | [STRATHMORE.ORG/WEDDINGS](http://STRATHMORE.ORG/WEDDINGS)