

Bride's Dance

By Elsa Keller Michitsch, Agoura Hills, California

When we came to this country in 1952 a lot of other families came to this area from Europe, Russian German's, Hungarian German's etc. (Los Angeles, California)

For years these people stuck together. We had a German/Hungarian Catholic Church (still do), German Clubs etc. We went to quite a few wedding. There always was a bride's dance sometimes after the dancing started. The bride and groom would start dancing together, the guests would tap on the shoulder of the bride or the groom for their turn, men as well as women would dance with the bride and a donation was given by either pinning the money to the bride's dress, but mostly a volunteer would have a vessel of some sort to collect the money for the bride. While the bride was dancing so was the groom, but money was donated just once. I never saw the guests receiving a special treat of schnapps and/or wedding cake.

By Derinda Kuehn Stickel

The bride dance is a tradition here in eastern Montana among people of German-Russian descent and others, too. I don't think it is money grubbing at all because it is usually only a few dollars involved.

A tradition from my North Dakota and South Dakota relatives is for an older member of the bride's or groom's family to smash a plate on the floor during the dinner or reception and declare loudly enough for everyone to hear, "Hochzeit!" which, as you probably know, means "Wedding." I don't know the origins of the tradition, but I wish that I would have had it done at my wedding 30 years ago.

Best wishes to your son and his new bride. It is commendable that they are mindful of tradition.

By Madeline Fischer

When I was growing up a bride's dance was held during the "Community dance". At that time the bride's and groom's families always put on a dance for the community a week or so after the wedding. It was an open dance... everyone and anyone from miles around were welcome.

Usually close to lunch time (Lunch was always served part way through the evening with everyone bringing sandwiches or cake.) the bride dance was held..... Someone started it by taking donation from some one and putting it into a hat. As each man tossed in a donation he earned a round of the dance floor with the bride. A few times the women (usually the man's wife would take a round with the groom) The money was presented to the couple just before the dance ended. It served as the community gift and welcome to the couple..... (I didn't grow up in a German community. I think it may be a Canadian tradition.... especially western Canada..... as a social gathering event)

We have been at a couple of wedding dances held for the invited guests at a wedding reception. My opinion of that being done there is it looks like a money grab as all of the invited guests would have brought a gift. Sounds kind of cheap.... expecting guests to pay for the wedding dance. As a suggestion for your son as for a tradition adaptation... use the idea as a way to say thanks for coming by offering (free) the "round of the floor" dance as the wedding cake is served.... Kids just love that opportunity to take part too. (Guests get their cake from the bridal party and then line up to dance. Those who chose not to take the dance are given a hug or handshake instead when their turn comes.

Hope this helps.