

**Inside:**  
**'Ninja Gaiden'**  
 more difficult  
 than ever before.

# LIFE

D

TheIntelligencer

77 days and counting ...

## Committing personality to paper

When choosing your wedding invitations, give thought to what the stationery says about you as a couple and the overall sentiment behind your special day.

Eighth of 15 parts

Hi.  
 My name is Sarah.  
 I'm a paperholic.  
 It's an addiction that stretches back years. Scrumptious prints, handwoven fibers, textured cardstock and rich colors dazzle my eyes like a magpie spying a tin can.  
 If there were a support group for



Sarah Larson  
**Down the Aisle**

people who can't stop buying pretty paper, though, I wouldn't join it. Because this is one addiction I have no intention of fighting.

Fortunately, I have plenty of people with whom to share my passion. My scrapbooking, card-making buddies all feel the same way.

So does Kimberly Kardos-Bensing. The graphic designer turned stay-at-home mom has put her artistic chops to work in a home-based company she calls Heirloom.

In the most adorable studio — a wisteria-festooned wooden one-car garage behind her historic home on Route 202 in New Britain — Kardos-Bensing retreats to her computer, designing one-of-a-kind paper prod-

ucts for celebrations of all kinds.

By paper products, I don't mean plates and cups, of course.

I mean save-the-date announcements for a seaside wedding, sealed inside bottles with shells and sand and mailed in cardboard tubes. I mean invitations and RSVP cards for the commitment ceremony of two theater lovers featuring art from the Broadway hit "Les Miserables." I mean a wedding rehearsal invitation that mimicked an FAA flight plan, for a pilot and his betrothed.

Kardos-Bensing's work, which she markets almost exclusively through her Web site, [www.heirloom-occasions.com](http://www.heirloom-occasions.com), is very personal.

She works with brides and grooms — and families, for birthday celebrations, and companies, for corporate events — to create a set of paper goods that reflects their personality.

"I talk to them and try to find out who they are," Kardos-Bensing says.

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Kimberly Kardos-Bensing created this wedding invitation for clients who met by the beach.

Staff photo by Rich Kennedy

## Paper

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"We're looking for one, overall concept that will pull together all aspects of the wedding."

Many couples come to her already with a design concept in mind. Others are not so sure.

She spends more time with those, talking about their hobbies, likes, dislikes and the story of how they met. Over time, a theme emerges — maybe an airplane gracing a vellum overlay, with a

swooping trail through fluffy white clouds. Or an Eiffel Tower image imprinted on invitations and stationery for a couple who love Paris.

The custom work does not come cheaply.

Kardos-Bensing says she has done invitation packages for weddings that ranged from \$800 for one set to \$2,300 for another, which also included escort cards, place cards and thank-you notes.

"The ones who just call and ask, 'How much for 150 invitations?' I know I won't get that job, because they're choosing based only on price," she says. "My clients tend to be high-end brides, because of the work involved. But I'll also work with their budgets."

She has offered to cut the price for couples who wanted to assume some of the assembly work themselves to save on overall cost.

Regardless of price, Kardos-Bensing says, the finished prod-

ucts should reflect the couple and the wedding's overall design scheme.

Those are good guiding principles to keep in mind, whether you are choosing an invitation from a stationer, soliciting a custom

design like Kardos-Bensing's or crafting them yourself. As it is the first tangible evidence of the upcoming wedding, an invitation sets the tone for the entire event.

I gave a lot of thought to what I wanted our invitation to convey. Even scoffers will admit, when shown examples, that different paper, designs and fonts create different moods. You should have seen my boss' face when he overheard that I had found the perfect fonts for the invitations! But he will notice the difference, even if he doesn't realize he's noticing it.

A modern typewriter font with clean lines conveys a fresh, funky informality for the body of the invitation, and a cursive, traditional script highlights our names. The paper is luscious — my favorite textured cardstock in a monochromatic palette of greens with chiffon yellow and several shades of pink as accents.

Those accents are various-sized daisies. They are meant to convey the freshness of spring and the outdoors — where we will be married, if Mother Nature cooperates.

They have a deeper meaning, too, though.

When my parents were first married, they left Illinois for a couple years in California. They didn't have much money; my mother was supporting them as a nurse while my dad finished college. My resourceful father used to stop to pick for my mom an armful of daisies growing wild along the road he traveled into San Francisco each day.

Even though my parents divorced 20 years later, the daisy still speaks to me of sweetness and love, two qualities Drew and I hope our marriage has in abundance.

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