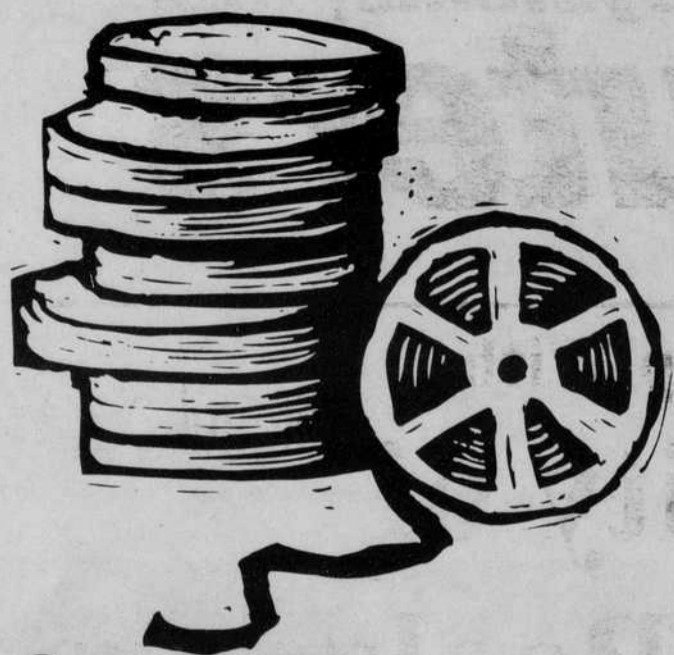


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# Cruising toward Disaster

■ Dan and Kari Isaacson's dream honeymoon was destroyed by a bad booking

By Lisa Toth  
Oregon Daily Emerald

Instead of holding hands in paradise on their honeymoon, Dan and Kari Isaacson's dream vacation was destroyed the day after they exchanged their wedding vows. The couple booked their vacation plans over the Internet — but placing too much faith in an online travel agency led to a disastrous result.

Dan Isaacson — now a 21-year-old sophomore political science and business major — met his future wife Kari Isaacson six years ago when she moved into the apartment behind his family's house in Grants Pass.

Although they knew each other as neighbors, Dan Isaacson, then 15 years old, and Kari Isaacson, then 19, strengthened their bond by working together at a steak and pasta restaurant. He was the head busser and she was a hostess, and during the summers they would coordinate weddings together.

One night, about three years ago, the couple shut down the restaurant early and had dinner together. A chocolate cake was brought out, and on top of the candle was a ring.

"She started to eat the cake; she didn't see the ring," he said. "And then she went ballistic."

With more than 200 weddings under his belt as a banquet coordinator, Dan Isaacson worked with Kari Isaacson for more than a year planning their own ceremony on a \$13,000 budget.

They picked the location; a country bed-and-breakfast house in Sisters, in Eastern Oregon. And on July 15, 2000, surrounded by family and friends, they were married.

The next day, they left for their honeymoon, which would turn out to be an experience they would never forget.

## Cruise of a lifetime

The idea for the couple's honeymoon destination was sparked from a similar trip Dan Isaacson took with his five-member graduating high school class: A seven-day cruise on



Photo illustration by Russ Weller Emerald

the Royal Caribbean Cruise Line to San Diego and Ensenada.

So when it came time to plan their honeymoon, Dan Isaacson knew that a cruise would save them from having to drive or fly far and would let them dine in four-star style every night.

The Carnival Cruise Line trip was to start in Los Angeles and continue onto the Mexican Riviera, visiting such places as Puerto Vallarta, Mazatlan and Cabo San Lucas. The couple booked their trip through a company they found in a budget-wedding book, South Beach Cruises and Cruise-Shopping.com.

After going online, they talked to a sales service agent, who booked them to leave July 16 for their honeymoon.

## Dreams destroyed

That morning, they woke up at 5 a.m., drove to Portland and flew south on a 9 a.m. flight. They arrived in Los Angeles at 1 p.m. to find that Horizon Airlines had lost Kari Isaacson's luggage: The airlines had boarded all the passengers without all the luggage.

After hours of waiting, Kari Isaacson's luggage arrived at 3:15 p.m. But panic had set in because their ship was scheduled to leave in 45 minutes. They hopped on the last charter service bus, which dropped them off at the dock.

"They had cattle lines set up," Dan

Isaacson said, recalling the scene. "There were 300 people waiting in line and four ticket agents taking people four at a time."

They waited for another two hours in line, videotaping the adventure as it went along. When they reached the front of the line, the ticketing agent asked to see their driver's licenses and birth certificates.

"He paused and got this really weird look on his face," Dan Isaacson said. "I thought they overbooked or lost our reservation."

Then the problem hit: Dan Isaacson was 20 years old and Kari Isaacson was 23. And just four days before they purchased their tickets, Carnival Cruise Line had revised its policy to say no one under the age of 25 was allowed on the ship. An earlier policy allowed married couples on board as an exception to the rule.

But the travel agent did not tell the Isaacsons about the policies, nor did it tell its employees, Dan Isaacson said.

The sales agent who booked the Isaacsons' trip sold them the vacation so quickly she forgot to ask their ages, Dan Isaacson said. As a result, the agent — in the process of receiving her \$500 commission for the sale — wrote down their ages as 35, he said.

"She guessed wrong," he said.

When he called South Beach Cruis-

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