

# POPPING THE QUESTION

■ From planning the wedding to buying the ring, already busy students face engaging challenges

By Lisa Toth  
Oregon Daily Emerald

High school sweethearts aren't just a myth. The spark that lights up between the eyes of junior Jenny Brogdon and her future husband, senior Amos Callender, has the mark of true love.

"I know he's the one for me because each day I look into his eyes and know I am the luckiest person on earth," Brogdon said. "Amos is so wonderful and supportive that I couldn't ask for anything more. He is truly special."

But for this engaged college couple and many others, they discover not only the joys, but the challenges of sharing their lives.

Brogdon, 20, a track and field athlete and member of the Geography Honor Society, said she enjoys sharing the good news with friends, but making all the wedding arrangements while still in school is a burden.

They set a June 28, 2003, date, but Brogdon said she and Callender can't do much planning until this summer, except for reserving the reception site and choosing a caterer.

"But once next year comes around, it will be crazy trying to get all the little things organized while still being involved in school and track," she said.

They had always talked about getting married one day, Brogdon said, but she didn't know Callender would pop the question during Christmas break.

"Amos has never been skiing before, so for a Christmas present I took him to the slopes close to our hometown (La Grande)," she said. "Afterwards, we went back to his house and watched movies with his family. Later that evening, we were talking about our future, and when we stood up to hug, he got on his knee and asked me to marry him."

But Brogdon said she couldn't remember how she met 22-year-old Callender, since they had both lived in La Grande all their lives.

"But, I think my freshman year of high school, I got to know him as a friend through sports," she said.

Brogdon said neither she nor Callender had ever had a romantic relationship before they met each other.

"It is kind of a fairy tale, because we are each other's first love," she said.

They will have been dating for four years in March, growing close to each other during that time, and Brogdon said they just seem to be the perfect fit.

"Our personalities mesh well with each other; he's a quiet, soft-spoken type, and I'm talkative and outgoing," she said.

Balancing a relationship with track, school, work and other responsibilities, however, is far from easy.

"I have maxed out my commitment wheel, since I carry a 17-credit load, spend about 18 hours a week at practice, go to track meets many weekends and have a wonderful job," Brogdon said. ".....But there's always the evening to spend with Amos, and since the architecture program keeps him busy in studio most of the time, I go visit him after dinner and squeeze in what little time there is in between activities to see him and my other friends."

Brogdon said by the time they finish school, supporting each other financially shouldn't be a problem, and they will enter the job market making money to help pay off loans.

Brogdon said all of her friends and family support the couple's decision to become engaged.

For 19-year-old sophomore Josh Rapp, the big night came in August after he and his girlfriend, sophomore Naomi Weiss, 20, had just finished a road trip together to see one of their favorite bands play at the Gorge Amphitheater in Washington.

"Since we both live in Medford, we stayed the night at the Hilton here in town," Rapp said. "That night we went for a walk,



Courtesy photo

Amos Callender (left) proposed to his girlfriend, Jenny Brogdon, during a Christmas ski trip.

got some coffee and laid a blanket on the grass on campus. We talked for a while. The whole time I was fiddling with the ring in my pocket, and finally I got the guts to ask her to stand up. Trembling like crazy, I got down on one knee and said the words. We were both so excited.

"I don't think she was very surprised, but excited nonetheless," he said.

Rapp said he and Weiss have set a July 7 date.

Rapp, who is in the Army ROTC and intramural basketball, said there are many perks to their engagement.

"It's great to get an early start on our life together," he said. "Plus, sharing the cost of living for the last two years of college is a bonus."

The couple has had some help in planning the wedding.

"Naomi's mom has done the majority of the planning, so that takes a lot off of us," he said. "We make the final decisions, but she tells us our options."

Weiss met Rapp because they both went to the same junior high and high school.

But Rapp said they didn't really meet until they came to the University and got to know each other through a mutual friend.

"We are probably the most compatible couple I have ever seen, and not because I'm biased," Rapp said. "Our personalities fit together so great, and we just always love to be with each other — always."

Rapp said once they are married, they should be able to sufficiently support each other, and he has plans to become an army officer after graduation. Rapp said they help each other through the good moments as well as the rougher ones.

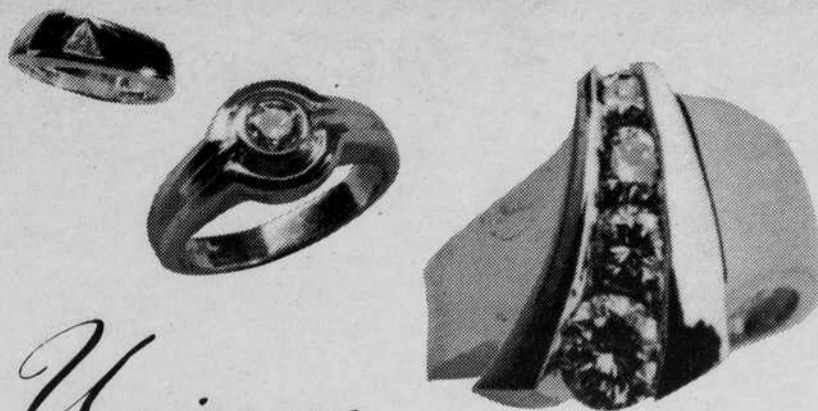
"The times that stick out in my mind are the times when we have been sick," he said. "Whenever one of us is sick, we really show each other how much we care ... by doing anything to help. We both go all out to make each other feel better."

Richard Skeie, owner of Skeie's Jewelers, said that every day college-age couples come into his store to look at engagement rings. Skeie's Jewelers has been in operation since 1922 and offers fine-cut diamonds. Skeie, who has more than 20 years of experience in the business, said a growing trend in the last five or six years has been the popular carat diamond. He said one of the benefits of visiting a professional jewelry store is that sometimes "people will come in with an idea that doesn't work, and we can help them avoid those mistakes."

Skeie said no matter what a couple may be looking for, his business tries to accommodate their needs. He said couples are willing to spend anywhere from \$800 to about \$5,000 on rings.

"It depends on how important it is to them. Sometimes they just want plain gold bands," he said. "It is important to me that they get what they want."

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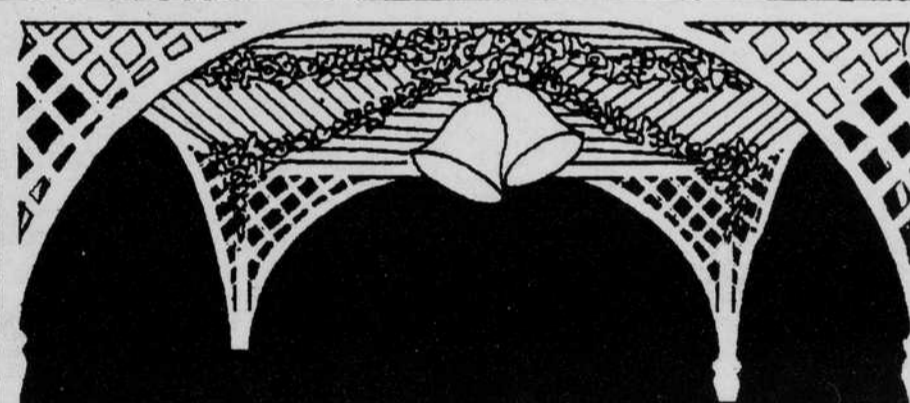
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