

Everything you always wanted to know about * ...but were afraid to ask

My mother had one of those big, ugly sewing machines in a wooden cabinet with spindly legs. I swore that when I got married there wouldn't be an ugly sewing machine in the house.

My wife put her sewing machine in our bedroom. When I wake up in the morning it's one of the first things I see. It's uglier than my mother's.

Being a reasonable man, I told my wife that she could keep the sewing machine.

"JUST PUT the thing in the closet and roll it out when you needed it," I suggested.

She agreed to the plan, but the closet wouldn't go along. The sewing machine remained where it was. Marriage, my wife and I learned, is a series of adjustments.

No one ever told us, for instance, that we would have to agree on what kind of toothpaste to use. Or which newspaper we should order.

OR HOW the bills should be handled.

Or what station we should tune the radio to.



... OR A BIG DRIP

Such trifles—which seem like, well, trifles—become the building

The first morning in our new apartment after our honeymoon, my beautiful bride asked what I wanted for breakfast?

"Do we have any of those pizza mixes?" I asked.

SHE THREW a pillow at me and our marriage began in earnest.

"But I'm not really fond of eggs, toast is kind of like dry bread and bacon is too expensive," I said. "Besides, it's almost time for lunch."

We had bacon and eggs.

AFTER THE honeymoon we also began writing all those thank-you notes for the wedding gifts. ("Thank-you for the plaster of Paris salad bowls. We use them every day.")

We returned the second, third, fourth and fifth toasters we received and exchanged them for things we needed, like silverware and dishes.

Of course our first (and only toaster) broke two weeks later.

THE WEDDING pictures, when they came back and were paid for, also had to be taken around to all the relatives. All the relatives.

Then there were things like deciding where to keep the wet towels, what kind of salad dressing to buy, how much should be spent on phone calls and what time to set the alarm clock for.

And, once you're married, you have to decide where to insure your car (or cars), whether or not to get life insurance (and if so, how much?) and where to do banking.

ON TOP OF that, there's the name-changing game. Social security cards, drivers licenses and charge cards must be changed.

Add to that address changes if you move to a new place.

Marriage also calls for other little adjustments.

"I want to sleep on that side of the bed," my wife said one evening.

I LOOKED up from my pillow, not sure if I was awake.

"Why?"

"It's too hot on this side."

"But it's not any different on this side," I said.



MARRIAGE CAN BE A BIG KISS ...

"YES IT is, let's trade places," she said.

We traded places and things went along fine—for the rest of the night. Now we trade places about twice a week.

As a kid I used to watch Ozzie and Harriet. Good ole Ozzie always wore that sweater, a white shirt and tie. At least once a week he went out and bought some icecream.

OZZIE WAS always clean shaven, and yet Harriet never complained about the stubble he left around the sides of the sink.

In turn, Harriet didn't use Ozzie's razor to shave her legs. If she did, Ozzie never figured it out, or else he was too much of a gentleman to say anything.

Harriet always cooked good meals that Ozzie liked. He never dribbled gravy on her new table cloth or fell asleep watching television.

BEING AN impressionable youngster, I figured that Ozzie and Harriet had the perfect marriage. They always got along, they always looked fresh and their biggest problem was figuring out what to get Ricky for his birthday.

But from that first bacon and eggs breakfast I had the uneasy feeling that our marriage wasn't going according to Ozzie and Harriet standards. It became even clearer two weeks later.

I was asleep when my wife suddenly said "I'm cold" and pulled away my half of the blanket.

FOR HALF a minute I lay there shivering, trying to figure out what had happened. Then I got myself together enough to try and get back my half of the blanket. I tugged, but the blanket wouldn't budge from her grasp.

On my second tug she released it, smiled and said "I love you."

Well, it wasn't exactly Ozzie and Harriet, but I didn't really mind.

*nuptials