

The More The Merrier?

By Melodee Currier

There is a new phenomenon making the news. It's called "crowd birthing" – when multitudes of friends and family are allowed into the delivery room to visit and document the experience on social media. I just can't imagine a delivery room with standing room only. Many years ago when I was having natural childbirth, my husband sat in a chair next to my bed watching me in labor. I finally asked him to leave the room because it didn't make sense having him helplessly watch me in pain. Some things are best done solo and labor is one of them.

"Crowding" may be new to delivery rooms, but the concept of groups gathering together started long ago. I first noticed it at the grocery when seeing Indian families go shopping together. It seemed strange to me, but I discovered it is considered a family event in India, as well as in other countries. I see shopping as a solitary activity, however, my husband and I usually go shopping together because he enjoys shopping. It would drive me nuts to have more than one person shop with me though.

Another place "crowding" occurs is bridal shops. It is common on the television show "Say Yes To The Dress" to have numerous friends and family accompany a bride to help find her perfect wedding gown. Their comments are endless and it is usually frustrating and confusing for the bride. When I was looking for my wedding gown, I

went by myself, took a photo from a magazine with me, tried on one dress and that was it. There was no fanfare and no comments from the peanut gallery.

As if this isn't enough, for people who can't afford to pay for their wedding there is "crowd funding." The idea is to let people know they can go to a website such as www.gofundme.com and donate money to defray the couple's wedding expenses. I say if you can't afford to pay for your wedding, wait until you can – or elope.

Recently at my beauty salon I noticed a group of friends attending one woman's hair appointment with her. I can't imagine taking an entourage to a hair appointment. I am more than content to be by myself!

A big part of high school was dating and going to the prom with someone special. Today guys and gals often go on group dates. It's called "pack dating" where no one-on-one dating exists. The students go out to dinner, attend movies, concerts and dances in groups. That was unheard of when I was in high school. I know some young people, now in their twenties, who went on pack dates in high school and still haven't had a real one-on-one date. It doesn't do much for meaningful relationships, but it does wonders for birth control.

And let's not forget flash mobs – when a large group of people appear suddenly in a public place, such as a mall, and entertain before making their exit.

Finally, for people like me who don't have a lot of friends there is a service, Crowds for Rent (www.crowdsforrent.com) which, for a fee, provides a crowd for your event. It sounds like the same concept as an escort service, except with a crowd as

your date. I suppose there are events that call for this, but as for this loner, I think I'll pass!