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## Collapse takes car, shuts down road

A large piece of road collapsed and took a car with it on Friday night in Hadley, and the break is expected to keep the road closed for some time, officials said Saturday. The gap stretches dozens of feet and cuts the eastbound lane.

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# Trickle-down effects of royal weddings last centuries

By Rebecca Strum

Tuesday, January 25, 2011



The many brides-to-be milling through racks at department stores and boutiques have one woman to thank for the sea of white wedding dresses -- Queen Victoria.

In 1840, her white dress would inspire, with the help of photography, wedding fashion for decades, perhaps centuries, to come.

More than a century later, Diana, Princess of Wales, sent the wedding industry into a flurry, as less extravagant replicas of her 25-foot, cathedral-length train and big puffy sleeves popped up on ready-to-wear dresses around the world, said

Marylu Aragosa, owner of Ferri Formals and Bridals in Schenectady.

British royal weddings have greatly affected contemporary trends throughout history. Weddings of the Capital Region will be no exception, as Kate Middleton's style -- from the shape of her neckline to the re-emergence of Diana's big blue sapphire engagement ring -- will influence the ready-to-wear and mass production lines around the world.

Middleton's marriage to Prince William this April will likely have the greatest effect on wedding dresses. But experts believe there are a couple of long-term wedding trends in Upstate that even a little pomp and circumstance can't undo.

### The dress

"When stars get married the designers make replicas," Aragosa said. "For example Jennifer Lopez, she wore a strapless gown with lace detail and a less expensive version was created and sold for a lot less." She said famous people are the closest the American public has to royalty, but aspects of Middleton's style will inevitably trickle down to dresses of all price ranges.

Middleton has yet to publicly disclose the designer of her gown, and the exact look will likely remain a secret until the big day. But there are some details of the dress that wedding watchers and Aragosa are pretty sure of, namely sleeves.

For nearly a decade the standard wedding dress has been strapless and corseted. Whether Middleton chooses small cap sleeves, or tailored wrist-length arms, the dress will be conservative and will in turn bring sleeves back into fashion, Aragosa said.

"I think designers are running out of new ideas for strapless gowns," she said. "We'll see sleeves coming back. Brides want to look unique on their wedding and so many of their friends wore the strapless look." Other aspects of Middleton's "conservative chic" style convinced Aragosa that she'll go for the long sleeve. The dress itself will be less ornate, unlike Diana's enormous, billowing gown. Taffeta, which has made a comeback in 2011, detailed or overlaid with French Alencon

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lace is the understated fabric Aragosa predicts for Middleton's dress.

"I don't think it will be flashy," she said. These subtle and feminine fabrics cut into a conservative silhouette and coupled with a very conservative, perhaps a bateau or boat-neck, neckline, will inevitably appear on mass-produced wedding dresses as well as couture, high-end styles, she said.

Middleton will go with a British designer to honor her country, Aragosa said. But brides looking for Middleton's style could go with a designer like Romona Keveza, whose wedding lines reflect Middleton's style, she said.

Styles for the bridesmaids will also affect wedding styles, but Ferri expects them to be very subtly and conservatively dressed for the royal wedding to keep eyes on the bride. The biggest effect their style may have is if Middleton has them wear small hats or feathers. Feathers, which are already making a comeback, could skyrocket if the bridesmaids are seen wearing them, she said.

### The jewels

There is no doubt in Aragosa's mind that Middleton will wear a veil. But she also believes a tiara may be in order, which could lead to the rise of more jewel-encrusted up dos.

Drue Sanders, of Drue Sanders Custom Jewelers in Albany, said she has received only a few requests for tiaras throughout the years. A rise in wedding tiaras would definitely be a change to local trends.

More importantly, however is Middleton's ring, Sanders said. Middleton wears the late Diana's wedding ring, which is an oval 18-carat sapphire surrounded by diamonds set in gold.

"It's already starting again," Sanders said. "It is impressive to the public what stars wear and definitely what royalty wear. They have asked for a similar type of ring that Lady Di got. People will ask for the sapphire with diamonds." Sanders said it's interesting people really don't stray from what they see and like. Rather than spark a rise in other kinds of precious stones, such as rubies, clients influenced by Middleton's ring stick to blue sapphire. The only difference she has seen is people asking for a smaller cut sapphire or fewer diamonds to keep the ring affordable, she said.

Custom jewelers like Sanders aren't the only ones selling replicas of Middleton's ring. Sanders expects the mass production of much less expensive versions of the ring to start popping up in department or chain jewelry stores.

"They'll end up doing a model here and send it to China or Thailand to be mass produced and sold inexpensively," she said. "Indicatively, it will be sterling with fake gems and gold plating and sold on stations like QVC."

### The venue

Westminster Abbey, where the royal couple will wed, and the following reception will have the least effect on local weddings, Megan Albright-Barkevich, the director of special events at Total Events, LLC., in Niskayuna, said.

Upstate New York has attracted couples from the area and particularly from downstate to the picturesque Adirondacks or to Saratoga for decades, Albright-Barkevich said. Upstate has had some high-profile weddings, like Chelsea Clinton's last summer.

Brides and wedding planners in the area will likely continue to draw on inspiration from beautiful local receptions rather than look to the royal wedding for nuances like party favors, seating, flowers or lighting design, she said.

Dresses and jewelry are easy to commodify and mass produce and hairstyles easy to imitate.

But the look and atmosphere of a wedding is usually more personal to a bride and groom, Albright-Barkevich said.

If anything, famous weddings reveal possibilities brides may not have thought of before.

"For example, before the Chelsea Clinton wedding, people weren't aware they could put chandeliers and flooring and air conditioning in a tent," she said.

Sunday, March 20, 2011

"Our Town"	Hubbard Hall 2 p.m. \$15 - \$25
"You're A Good Man, Charlie Brown"	Steamer No. 10 Theatre 11 a.m. \$13 - \$15
"You're A Good Man, Charlie Brown"	Steamer No. 10 Theatre 3 p.m. \$13 - \$15
The Flipsydz	Caffe Lena 7 p.m. \$14 - \$16
Bach birthday concert	St. Paul's Episcopal Church 3 p.m. Free - \$15
Kure for Kristen benefit, with Rich Ortiz, Mike Steiner & Becky Walton, Big Medicine, Gravity, Four	The Parting Glass 3 p.m. \$10
Romantic Nature: British and French Landscapes	Sterling and Francine Clark Art Institute 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. Free
"Crowns"	Capital Repertory Theater 2:30 p.m. \$16 - \$56
Linda Lee and the Fox Creek Band	1854 Pub and Eatery at the Broadalbin Hotel 3 p.m.
Rkstar.com open mike with host Dan Goodspeed	Moon & River Cafe 7:30 p.m.

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"People started thinking outside the box." The colors of the royal wedding may have a small effect on wedding colors. Albright-Barkevich suspects they will pick very subtle tones, creams, white and metallic colors.

The wedding season in the Capital Region is from spring to mid-fall.

September is one of the busiest months for Total Events because people want to have the beautiful fall foliage for the backdrop to their wedding. This is something so unique to the area, Albright-Barkevich doesn't think a royal wedding could change that trend, she said.

Albright-Barkevich also said the couples she sees are far too modern to suddenly get married in a church or be influenced by the pageantry of a royal wedding, if they weren't planning on it before.









"We see a lot of brides that are more nontraditional than they used to be," she said. "If you're a new age couple, and more than half our couples are, they aren't going to want to replicate a royal wedding." The fact remains, regardless of how unique and personal wedding receptions remain in the Capital Region, Middleton's dress and jewels and anything else that can be easily copied will find their way into local stores in an assortment of ways.

Even Middleton will not be able to escape the influences of British Royal weddings. The experts agreed if there is one thing to be sure of, it is that her dress will be white.

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