

career a little more solidly.”

And as people delay marriage, “the average age goes up. People are living longer, too, so as a result, there’s not such a rush to marry in their early 20s. People are doing everything longer,” he said.

As a result of those long-term trends, he added, “Even when the economy does recover, I suspect you’ll see an uptick in the number of marriages, but not quite as much an uptick as you might think.”

At Tesi’s, Judy Beckley, of Galloway Township, who was trying on a dress for her granddaughter’s wedding, said she was married at 19, while Grace Gorman, of Cape May, said she was considered an “old bride” when she married at 27.

“Now, my son is 33 and the bride is 31,” Gorman said as she examined her outfit in front of the boutique’s mirrors.

Gorman’s friend Suzanne Knoll, of Philadelphia, said her daughter got married at 32 to a 36-year-old.

“It’s too expensive,” Knoll said. “You can’t afford to do it all.”

At Wedding Belles, co-owner Terri Raphial said many people have decided to spend less on their weddings than before — “But they’re still getting married,” she said. “I think the bridal stores that did sell very expensive dresses, they’re the ones that got hurt, not us.”

Co-owner Tina Conklin said many weddings now are “a little more affordable, a little more intimate. ... Normally, a dress takes five to seven months (to get ready), and now people buy off the rack. And while before they were spending \$1,800 to \$2,000, now it’s mostly \$1,200 to \$1,500.”

Conklin said she’s noticed the trend of couples waiting a few years as well.

“A lot of people the last two to three years want to have the big wedding,” she said. “So they’ve saved up.”

For her part, Christina Buch exemplified the trend of waiting and saving up for the big wedding — even, in her case, after her marriage began.

“He and I were already married at a small ceremony, and we wanted a bigger ceremony for friends and family,” said Christina, whose last name is now Leps. “It’s been over a year of planning, and we’ve known each other seven years and lived with each other for more than two years.”

Leps said she was “definitely a budget-conscious bride. I’m never afraid to negotiate with vendors.”

So she made the last of her preparations for her big wedding Friday night — and even that was a case in point.

“A wedding on Friday,” she explained, “costs less than one on Saturday.”

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