Saratoga Library English Conversation Club
Unique San Francisco Wedding
October 1, 2026

This week we will take a break from health topics to read an article about an "only-in-San Franciso" wedding that happened a few weeks ago. First, review the vocabulary.

Vocabulary Preview: Read these words and match them to their meanings.

1) **to brainstorm** (BRAYN-storm)	A. a small, three-wheeled vehicle powered by a person pedaling, used as a taxi to carry passengers
2) **conservatory** (kuhn-SUR-vuh-tor-ee)	B. to spend time thinking up many different ideas for a specific project or problem
3) event coordinator (ih-VENT koh-OR-duh-nay-ter)	C. completely matching the style, personality, or image of a specific company, celebrity, or person
4) **mimosa** (mih-MOH-suh)	D. group of people, vehicles, or floats moving forward in an orderly, formal line during a parade or ceremony
5) **on brand** (ON BRAND)	E. a greenhouse used for growing plants
6) **pedal** (PED-uhl)	F. a continuous count of a score or number of items over time
7) **pedicab** (PED-ee-kab)	G. a popular drink made from champagne and orange juice
8) **placemat** (PLAYS - mat)	H. the arrangement of plates, glasses, napkins, and silverware on a table for a meal
9) **procession** (proh-SESH-uhn)	I. a foot lever used to control or power a vehicle or machine, such as on a bicycle or piano
10) **table setting** (TAY-buhl set-ing)	J. a person whose job is to plan, organize, and manage all the details of special gatherings like parties or weddings
11) **tally** (TAL-ee)	K. a serious promise to do something or behave in a certain way
12) **vow** (vow)	L. a small, protective mat placed on a table in front of a person to support their plate and silverware
13) **fleet** (fleet)	M. a large group of vehicles such as bicycles, cars, airplanes, boats etc., that move or operate together

Answers: 1-B; 2-E, 3-J; 4-G; 5- C; 6- I; 7-A; 8 - L; 9 –D; 10 – H; 11 - F; 12 - K; 13-M

Dialog 1: Planning a Big Event

Lee: We need **to brainstorm** a unique plan for the music academy's gala this year.
Maya: As the official **event coordinator**, I think hosting it in our grand greenhouse **conservatory** is perfect.
Sam: Good idea, but let's make sure the decorations stay **on brand** for our elegant image.
Lee: I agree. We also need to keep a running **tally** of our decoration costs to stay under budget.
Maya: I'll make a solemn **vow** right now to keep this project completely affordable.
Sam: Perfect! If you achieve that goal, I'll toast you with a refreshing **mimosa**!

Dialogue 2: Setting Up the Procession and Event
Maya: Help me check each **table setting** to ensure the forks and knives are perfectly straight.
Lee: Make sure every guest has a clean **placemat** aligned with the edge of the table.
Sam: Look outside—the grand wedding **procession** is already starting to move down the main street!
Lee: The bride is riding in a gorgeous, vintage **pedicab** decorated with white ribbons.
Maya: The driver looks tired; he has to **pedal** incredibly hard to pull that heavy carriage up the hill.
Sam: He's doing great, and the guests are all cheering as they follow them to the **conservatory**!

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They wanted an only-in-S.F. wedding. So 140 guests showed up on bikes

Peter Hartlaub, September 17, 2026 at 5:00 AM PDT

Debs Schrimmer and Matt Redmond arrive at the Conservatory of Flowers for the start of their rolling wedding reception through Golden Gate Park to Beach Chalet on Sep. 13, 2026. (Jess Lynn Goss/For the S.F. Chronicle)

Debs Schrimmer and Matt Redmond celebrated their dream wedding in Golden Gate Park on Sunday September 13, 2026 with cake, music and 140 people on bicycles. That **tally** included Debs's 95-year-old grandmother.

"Some weddings, a lot of energy is spent thinking about **placemats** and **table settings**," Debs said. "A big part of our wedding was thinking about how to get bicycles for our guests. Which is very **on brand** for us." San Francisco has long been the land of creative weddings, from poetic proposals, to **vows** exchanged in the upper deck at a Giants baseball game and a BART platform photoshoot.

But Debs and Matt, whose relationship grew over Bay Area bike rides and park visits, may have set a new degree of wedding difficulty, calling on members of the local bicycling and Burning Man community to make their bike parade wedding a reality.

Grandma Meryl's safe passage was one of the easier tasks to **brainstorm**: The couple booked three rickshaws with experienced drivers "This has been the most love-filled, heartfelt, amazing week of my life," said Vicki Schrimmer, Debs' mother. "We've gained a second family."

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Debs, 36, and Matt, 34, have been on this path since their first meeting in 2015, a tacos-and-beer date spent chatting about online mapping software. They fell deeper in love over Burning Man trips, group bicycle rides and using **pedal**-power and public transit to explore the Bay Area.

Ninety-five-year-old grandmother-of-the-bride Meryl Schrimmer, left, and mother-of-the-bride Vicki Schrimmer, center, ride in a **pedicab** through Golden Gate Park for Debs Schrimmer and Matt Redmond's rolling wedding reception. (Jess Lynn Goss/For the S.F. Chronicle)

Now Debs and Matt finish each other's sentences like an old married couple, listening intently when it's not their turn. They each asked the other to marry them.

Matt chose the **Conservatory** of Flowers in Golden Gate Park to propose to Debs. Soon after, the couple decided to have a bike **procession** through the Park, starting at the **Conservatory**. The route would then go past the art on JFK Promenade, past the Polo Grounds, to brunch at Beach Chalet.

Each decision added five more challenges. But as Debs and Matt called around to bike shops, artistic friends and colleagues, they kept finding supportive people in the community who seemed as excited as they were.

With most guests coming from out of town, three local bike shops provided rentals, while others rode a **fleet** of electric Lyft Bikes. The San Francisco Bicycle Coalition provided sturdy bike racks for Beach Chalet, which is more accustomed to car parking issues than too many bikes. Students from the SF State Bike Club helped park the bikes.

Friends helped with other the details. Some of them put a giant speaker on a bike trailer for rolling disco music. Others found children's safety seats and bubble guns for the group of preschool-age kids

on the guest list. The couple exchanged **vows** days earlier at City Hall with a smaller group. They told their guests not to race bikes and to dress comfortably.

A three-year-old guest holds a balloon animal at Beach Chalet after biking through Golden Gate Park. (Jess Lynn Goss/For the S.F. Chronicle)

The Wedding Procession

The bride and groom arrived first - Matt in a sparkly blue sport coat and Debs in a white jumpsuit with splashes of blue and orange, the wedding colors. Debs also wore a sheer cape.

Friends, covered in feathers and face sparkles, rolled in on borrowed bikes. Elementary school children wore feathered boas. Grandma Meryl looked flashy and charming in a dark blue suit and orange and white silk scarf.

Others wore tutus, bright leggings, Hawaiian shirts and paisley ties, all in orange and blue hues that stood out even on the colorful promenade. "What's this for?" passersby asked. "Bike wedding!" riders called out.

Smiles broadened, and a few strangers joined the parade. From there it was a lot like a regular wedding, on wheels. **An event coordinator** rolled along giving orders and confirming details on her phone. Wedding photographer, Joshua Strong, who usually covers bike races, darted back and forth through the pack.

"I almost want to steal the idea," said Strong, who is planning his own wedding. "I'm usually capturing these hard endurance moments, and all I saw in my camera were smiles and expressions of love."
The couple's closest friends stood ready with water and makeup for the newlyweds. They also had tire kits and kept an eye out for shaking guests who hadn't ridden a bike in years.

A Guests gather at Beach Chalet for food and drinks after the rolling wedding party in San Francisco. (Jess Lynn Goss/For the S.F. Chronicle)

But all went smoothly – even the weather, which was a perfect 72 degrees for the entire ride. It was over too fast, with cyclists passing through a balloon arch to the meadow behind Beach Chalet, where a bubble artist covered the area in vibrant prisms.

Grandma Meryl, whose **pedicab** was one of the first to arrive, was all smiles. As someone tried to hand her a **mimosa**, she gave a positive review: "It beats walking!" Debs and Matt laughed a lot at the scene. Surrounded by loved ones at Beach Chalet, now looking very

odd on their own two feet, the couple glowed. "I mean we met here, and we fell in love here," Debs said.

"It feels like a real treat to get to show that off to our friends and family coming from out of town," Matt added. "Just bringing them through Golden Gate Park and letting them experience the thing that we're lucky enough to experience every week." He smiled at Debs as she finished the thought. "It really felt like a love letter to San Francisco today."

Discussion Questions

1. Do you think this is a one-of-a-kind wedding and could only happen in San Francisco?
2. What is the most unique wedding you have ever been to?
3. What was the best wedding you have ever been to? Was it the most expensive?
4. Have you heard of couples or families going into debt for a wedding?
5. In your home country, who usually pays for a wedding – the groom or the bride's family? Or do the groom and bride pay for it themselves?
6. In your opinion, what is the most important thing to spend for a wedding?
7. Are arranged marriages common in your home country?
8. In your experience, do the bride and groom feel a lot of pressure from family members on how to plan the wedding?
9. Have you ever been to Golden Gate Park in San Francisco? If so, did you go to the Beach Chalet or the Conservatory of Flowers?
10. Would you want to go on a bike wedding?
11. Have you ever had a mimosa?
12. Have you ever heard of Burning Man?

References

https://www.sfchronicle.com/totalsf/article/golden-gate-park-wedding-bike-22422521.php?utm