

Northern Vermont & New Hampshire

Weddings



The 2014 Bridal Guide from The Caledonian-Record & The Orleans County Record

Simply BRIDAL



THE BAKERS

Heidi, 22, and Neil, 30, of Concord, Vt.

Important dates: Engaged Aug. 2011, married Aug. 10, 2013

Budget: Almost \$12,000 for 173 people

The wedding was at Bandstand Park in Lyndonville and the reception was at Lyndonville Fairgrounds

Activating "plan B" - Neil had planned to propose to Heidi while they were out of town on a long weekend. But Hurricane Irene interrupted those plans. Unable to follow through on Plan A, Neil came up with Plan B.

Read about how Neil popped the question and other engagement stories on page 4.



THE CAMPBELLS

Raven, 23, and Chris, 27, of Marshfield, Vt.

Important dates: Engaged Oct. 2011, married Sept. 14, 2013

Budget: A little over \$10,000 for 150 people

The wedding and reception were at the Canadian Club in Barre

Still standing - Chris and Raven were both relieved when she made it to the front of the aisle without falling because she had tripped the night before during rehearsal. The moment when she finally joined him is Chris' favorite memory of the day. "When we got to hold each other's hand, that was the big one," he said. Read advice from our couples about planning and enjoying your big day on page 14.



THE COXES

Kadi, 21, and Justin, 26, of Whitefield, N.H.

Important dates: Engaged February 2013, married July 13, 2013

Budget: \$4,000 for 110 people

The wedding and reception were in a field in Lancaster, N.H.

Exchanging rings - Justin and Kadi both grew up in Christian homes and had committed to waiting to, in their words, "become one."

"I wore my purity ring that my dad gave me when I was 16 down the aisle," Kadi said. "I took my purity ring off and gave it to my dad, and then Justin put my wedding ring on."

Read more about their commitment to God and to each other on page 24.



THE GROOTENBOERS

Tabitha, 35, and Charles, 29, of Groveton, N.H.

Important dates: Engaged May 2012, married July 6, 2013

Budget: Under \$5,000 for 175 people

The wedding was at State Tabernacle Church in Jefferson, N.H., and the reception was at the Lancaster Fairgrounds

The gift of staying within budget - "We had many gifts that kept the cost of the wedding under \$5,000 to us," Tabitha told us. Family members and friends provided the food, the linens, the cakes and much more.

Learn how the Grootenboers and other couples stuck to their budgets on page 17.

THE O'DONNELLS

Abby, 22, and Derrick, 23, of North Haverhill, N.H.

Important dates: Engaged June 2012, married Oct. 12, 2013

Budget: "Money wasn't a problem" for 250 people

The wedding and reception were outdoors at River Meadow Campground

His family walking toward him - Abby and Derrick's son Landyn had just turned two when they got married and they wanted to give him an important part in the wedding. "He walked me down the aisle with my dad and gave me away," Abby said. "Derrick told me after the wedding that it was difficult for him to watch Landyn coming down the aisle with me because he saw his family coming toward him."

See a picture of Abby and Landyn as well as a scrapbook of other wedding memories on page 19.



THE SCARINZAS

Jenn, 43, and John, 54, of Randolph, N.H.

Important dates: Engaged March 2012, married Sept. 28, 2013

Budget: \$30,000 for 200 people

The wedding and reception were in a field near their home

A "simple" field wedding - John and Jenn wanted to get married in their favorite field. John said, "It was a very simple concept ... but you'll find there's nothing simple about a field wedding."

Read about their considerations for a "simple" field wedding on page 20.

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Cover contest entrants PFC John Armstrong and Alexis Armstrong were married at the American Legion in Groveton on July 27, 2013.

ON THE COVER

The winners of our Bridal Guide Cover Photo Contest are Heidi and Neil Baker of Concord, Vt. For submitting their photo online and receiving the most votes, they won a 3-night stay at historic **Jackson's Lodge** in Canaan, Vt., a prize worth \$600. Their winning photo was taken by Kelly Cooke of **KM Cooke Photography**.

Read more about our cover-winning couple on page 10.

WEDDINGS

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Find a complete index on page 31.



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GROOTENBOERS

Charles told Tabitha that he was going to work, but in fact he was going to buy her ring in another town.

Unfortunately, that same day his daughter broke her leg. "She went to the doctor's and I was mad at him that he wasn't going to the checkup," said Tabitha. "I had to drive all the way to Manchester to purchase the ring that day, but I couldn't tell her that, so she got mad at me!"

But Charles got one thing really right: he asked Tabitha's *three sons for permission* to marry their mom. "It was out of respect," he said. "They've been through a lot ... I just wanted to make sure that everything was okay. I didn't want to jump in on them."


BAKERS

Neil had planned to take Heidi away for a long weekend and pop the question, but Hurricane Irene blew that

plan out the window. So instead he asked her to go for a hike to a little building at the top of Owl's Head in Groton.

"It's like a stone gazebo," Heidi added. "It's so cute!"

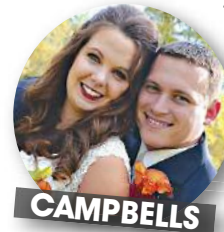
Neil didn't want to wait for the proposal because Heidi was getting anxious. "*I kind of knew*," Heidi said. "I like to plan things out, so I didn't know exactly but ..."

"She was still really surprised, but she knew it was coming at some point," Neil said.

Sometimes the man does it, sometimes it's the woman. Sometimes it's an elaborate plan and sometimes it's a simple moment. Here are the stories of how our couples popped the question.

Chris put together a scavenger hunt so Raven could chase the clues around four acres. "I hid different clues all over the place," he said. "The last clue sent her to me and I proposed."

Chris had a partner in crime for the proposal: his dog. "I had a golden retriever who was my only companion before Raven for a long time. So I was actually sitting on the couch with her and the *ring was hanging around her neck*."


CAMPBELLS

"I had no idea that I was going to be asked to get married, so I was shocked!" Raven

said. "I was so frozen, I couldn't even say it. He was like, aren't you going to say anything?"

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The Scarinzas met through their mutual love of maple sugaring and built a sugar house together in 2009.

One evening in 2011, they were cleaning up after a day in the sugar house when Jenn saw two pieces of discarded tubing on the floor that reminded her of rings. "I had the urge to pick one up," she said.

"I should just ask him to marry me."

But, in her words, she "chickened out."

Flash forward to one year later. "I decided I wasn't going to let the opportunity slip by again, so I planned it," Jenn said. "I had written out what I wanted to say and I cried

through the whole thing."

John was shocked by the proposal. "I thought we were getting ready to sweep the floor!"

The sugar tubing rings are important symbols for the Scarinzas – who still have them in a place of honor – but John knew he needed to get a real ring for Jenn.

He told her, "If you insist on doing things the non-traditional way, at least let me do this. Everybody's going to want to see the ring."

A month later he proposed to her in front of friends and family at her father's 70th birthday party.

The Scarinzas with their sugarhouse rings (far left) and their official wedding rings (center).



SCARINZAS



Abby and Derrick had a special place they went to be alone, talk and watch planes take off and land – the Lebanon Airport. Derrick chose to take Abby there for the special conversation.

"I had no idea, because that was just a normal thing for us to do," said Abby.

"It was nothing fancy," said Derrick. "It was just out of the blue when we were sitting there talking. She was looking the other way so I just pulled it out and surprised her with it."

"I had actually just taken a bite of my soup and *I was shocked*," Abby said. "I said yes right away. I think I actually said, 'Of course!'"



O'DONNELLS

Kadi and Justin had talked about getting married near the beginning of their relationship, but Kadi had three rules that Justin had to abide by for the actual proposal.

"One, it has to come from your heart," she said. "Two, you have to ask my dad. And three, you have to make it a little bit romantic, but it has to be a surprise. I want to have *no suspicions!*"

Justin asked her dad and got the ring, but he wasn't sure how to accomplish

the surprise. Finally, one day when they were with Kadi's parents admiring the new car she had just purchased, he found his moment.

He stuck his head in the car and said, "Oh my gosh, Kadi, look at this feature!" When she came to look, he was down on both knees in the snow with the ring.

"I had no idea it was going to be that day," said Kadi. "Which is exactly what I wanted."



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Simply **POETIC**

Bethlehem, N.H., artist Katherine Ferrier has spent the last couple of decades honing her craft as a writer, improvisational dancer and visual artist. This year, these various artistic threads have come together in an exciting new venture that caught the eye of the bridal magazine *The Knot*. Her work is being featured in their spring issue, on newsstands now.

Here Katherine tells us in her own words about creating improvisational poetry at weddings, her inspiration, and the typewriter that makes it all possible.

One word

I write poems on request, spontaneously on the spot, using only one word as a diving board. In other words, you give me a word and I write you a poem.

I started doing this as a performative thing at farmers' markets. I'm in performance with my typewriter.

People would come up and say, "What is this?" I'd have these wonderful exchanges of receiving a word, and also paying attention to

everything about the moment. Everything about the person: what they're wearing, who they are, their energy, their excitement, what's in their eyes.

I'd read all this information from them and they give me this one word.

Then I'd write a poem and give it to them.

Inevitably there's this moment where they have this look of, "I've been recognized!" Or, sometimes, "Holy **** this is a real thing! This isn't 'roses are red.' You actually wrote me a poem!"

I started to think about what a beautiful thing this would be to do at weddings – to celebrate and honor these little moments in time.

High on love

I have a table at the reception with a little sign that very sparsely explains what I'm doing. "Give me a word and I'll write you a poem."

People are drawn in by the sound of the typewriter. It's not an object that a lot of people see in their everyday lives. They give me a word and I write a poem and give it to them. I also take a picture of that moment when they first read it.

And then they go off.

It's just this sweet little ripple that goes around the wedding as people hear about what's going on. And it's a wedding, so everyone is high on love!

I talk with the bride and groom well in advance of the wedding to get to know them. They talk about the wedding, and themselves, and how they met. I'm gathering information so I can write a poem for them. It's a longer poem, a special poem for the couple. I mount it onto a wooden block and when I arrive at the wedding I present them with that.

After the wedding, they can get a book of photographs of all the poems written at their wedding and a picture of the person reading it, which is really sweet.

The poems

Some people ask if I ever run out of things to say. But once I tune in to a person, it's almost like how do I edit them? There's so much information! This one word and this one-minute exchange opens up a world of material.

If something comes to me right away, it

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Katherine Ferrier with her beloved Royal manual typewriter.



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She was like, "I can't believe it! I can't believe you knew that! How did you know?" That's the reaction I get a lot. "How did you do that? It's like you just looked into me."

might take me 4 or 5 minutes to write a poem.

Occasionally I'll get stuck on a line and I'll set a poem aside in progress. I could just rip off something like "Roses are red," but part of this is what it's doing for me as a writer. I care about the poem. I'm not putting it out into the world until I can sign off on it.

The typewriter

I have a 1950 Royal manual typewriter. It's beautiful!

What isn't special about it? First of all, it's immediate. In this age of phones and email and 3-D

printing, there's something about putting my fingers on the keys, hitting the keys and it smacking the paper.

There's also the sound of it. It's not the same if I were to sit down with my laptop and ask someone for a word. That's too delicate. There's not enough life. Force. Impact.

Dancing inside

My training as a dancer is in improvisation. In my dance company we do a lot of spoken word, improvised performance. For years I've been honing this practice of showing up to a moment and

responding, crafting a response to whatever I find there.

When I'm writing a poem, it's almost like I'm dancing inside.

I was in New York for 15 years, struggling as an artist and working for catering companies at eleven million weddings. I know a wedding inside and out! I know the back end and how it works and the flow and the timing of it.

This is a collapsing of many different endeavors. Listening, fielding information, seeking, perceiving, and responding to it, all simultaneously.

Thread

It's the thread of meaning, the thread that connects us. It's the through-line, something that holds things together. It's a word I've been using for a while to describe my search for meaning as expressed in different forms.

You can find Katherine online at www.thread-write.com and check her out in the current issue of The Knot magazine.

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SCARINZAS

A self-described “tomboy,” Jenn assumed she wanted cap sleeves, but they didn’t look good on her. Finally one of the women she was shopping with said to her, “Sometimes dear, *we like dresses that don’t like us!*”

She fell in love with her gown the moment she saw it. “It’s just so true to our theme and our lifestyle,” she

said.

John agrees. “It was beautiful, absolutely beautiful. She was a girlie-girl!”

When talking about finding their wedding dress, most of this year’s brides had a common theme: the dress they bought wasn’t the dress they thought they were looking for.



BAKERS

Heidi went with her sister and some of the girls from her wedding party. “I think I tried on five dresses,” she said. “I got the third one I tried on. Oh gosh, *I loved it!*”

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Kadi went with a group of women from her family and she told everyone to pick out something they thought she would like and she would try them each on.

She was determined to stay under \$600 because she wanted to pay off the dress with her tips from work. She discovered that the “Informals” dresses were a couple hundred dollars less because they didn’t have a train. “But because I’m so short, they just hemmed the front,” she said. “So I got a *free train* at half the price of having one!”

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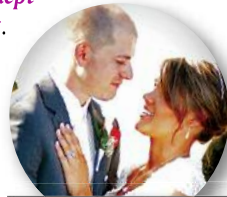


“I only tried two dresses on,” Raven said. “It was the first one I picked out ... I wanted to go for *something lacy* and I found it right when I got there so it was easy.”



CAMPBELLS

“I had the style dress I wanted picked out but not a specific one,” said Abby. “I went one day and said I wanted to try them on and wasn’t going to buy anything. I think it was the sixth dress I tried on and *I kept going back to it.* The last time I tried it on I just started crying and knew that was the one he’d want to see me in.”



O'DONNELLS

“When you get something in your head that you want for a dress and then when you actually go and try them on, it’s two completely different things,” Tabitha said. “I had in my head that I was going to have a completely lace dress with a keyhole back. That’s all that I wanted and *I got something completely opposite.*”

She ended up getting the second dress she tried on. “It was completely not what I thought I was going to like, and I loved it!”



GROOTENBOERS

Cover contest entrants Chris and Jennifer Caron were married Aug. 24, 2013 in Stark, N.H.



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Simply **WINNING**

Sitting down with Heidi and Neil Baker, it's impossible to miss the adoration in Neil's eyes as he looks at his wife. And while he hides it well amongst his buddies, the conversation slowly reveals that he's actually a total romantic.

At 22, Heidi is eight years Neil's junior. And yet age seems to be a total non-issue for the two of them.

Besides, when it's right, it's right.

"It's just one of those things," said Neil. "It just clicks."

After spending a lot of time talking on the phone and hanging out, he said that "in an instant it happens."

"It just clicked," Heidi agreed. "I didn't date a lot before, so he's pretty much my first long-term relationship, but we're best friends."

Neil feels that being best friends is a key factor in their relationship, and he's grateful to have found Heidi after a lot of years of dating people who weren't The One. "It's hard out there, but somehow I stumbled on her."

Heidi and Neil started dating in the summer of 2010 and got



engaged a year later. They wanted to wait until Heidi graduated from Lyndon State College before getting married, so their engagement lasted for two years. But a long engagement didn't mean a long planning period. Heidi did most of the planning for their wedding and she didn't start until graduation day, so that left only about two months to get everything together.

"I never want to do it again!" exclaimed Heidi. "Looking back at it, it probably wasn't too bad. But at the time it was!"

Most of their wedding party was from out of town, so coordinating all of the people was particularly stressful. "Making sure they were all going to be here was a big challenge," Heidi said.

All of the planning was worth it when the day finally came. "I would definitely do it over again," said Neil. "I had a lot of fun. It was perfect."

"Oh my gosh, we danced all night!" exclaimed Heidi. "It was fun. It went by so fast."

From his sweet proposal (see page 4), to sneaking out of town to buy exactly the ring that Heidi had admired one time in a jewelry store, Neil's romantic streak shows in the important moments – and none more so than his vows.



Neil reads his vows.



BAKERS

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"We had agreed to keep them short," Heidi said. "So mine were really thoughtful, but short. A few sentences. His were two full handwritten pages!"

"I knew it was a special day, so I had a lot to say," Neil explained. "I tried to put it as short as I could, but it ended up being a little long."

"He's really sensitive," Heidi said.

"Even the guys from where I work, they're not sensitive whatsoever, and they were crying a little," Neil laughed. "So it was good!"

It provided what Heidi remembers as one of her favorite moments of the day. "It was so real," she said. "He was just doing them so graciously and slowly, and it was just really beautiful."

The Bakers had already lived together for a couple of years before getting married, which was important to them. "It was helpful knowing how we get along living together," Heidi said.

They're talking about having kids in a couple years, but for now they're settling into married life and Heidi is settling into her career at the Area Agency On Aging.

All in all, life is good for the Bakers. In fact, getting married didn't change a lot for them, except that they now have rings on their fingers. "It's pretty much the same," Heidi said. "It's more relaxed now. We get to enjoy our time rather than planning a wedding!"

This was a first wedding for both and, as Neil said laughingly, "Hopefully the last!"

Judging from the look in his eyes when he looks at Heidi, they're on target to meet that goal.

Thanks to their contest-winning cover photo, taken by Kelly Cooke of KMCooke Photography, the Bakers have won a three-day vacation to historic Jackson's Lodge in Canaan, Vt.

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Simply COWBOY

This year cowboy boots made a major showing in our bridal cover contest. Here are a few examples.



Kadi Cox wanted to have cowboy boots because they played into her theme of a country wedding. "Everybody sat on hale bales, that's how country it was!" she said. Her photographer even caught this pic of a bridesmaid using her boot to help while lacing up her dress.



ABOVE: Cover contest entrant Nicole Nummelin and her bridesmaids at a family home on Oct. 26, 2013.

BELOW: Kristyna and Derek Sullivan's wedding party at the Inn at Mountain View Farm on Sept. 28, 2013



ABOVE: Cover contest entrant Marie Murray and her bridesmaids at the Murray Farm in Groton on July 13, 2013.

LEFT: Raven Campbell and her bridesmaids all wore cowboy boots for the ceremony ... and even the little girls got in on the act!



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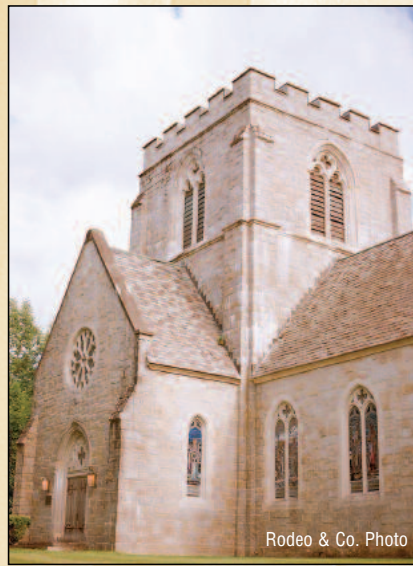
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Simply WISE

When it comes to sharing wisdom with couples who are just starting to plan their weddings, our couples were pretty uniform in their advice: start early and accept help.



BAKERS

“Accept help from people when they offer it,” said Heidi. “I probably didn’t do that enough. There were a lot of people that wanted to help. ... And start a lot earlier than I did!” “Try not to get overwhelmed,” said Neil. “*Everything will fall into place.* And if it doesn’t, one little thing is wrong, it’s not the end of the world.”

Don’t take the moment for granted. Because if you do it right, you only have to do it once.

— Justin Cox



COXES

Kadi knew she didn’t want a long engagement because, “I didn’t want to be one of those brides who has all this time to change their minds and spend all this money and then change it. I wanted to look for stuff, I want to get it, I want it done and let’s be married.”

Justin’s advice is for the guys: “*Listen to the older people in your life,* the married guys who are really happy,” he said. “Really concentrate on the day and know how special this day really is for your wife. If that’s what makes you happy, this is your day. This is OUR day, but this is your day and you are a princess today.”

In order to cut down on the time guests had to wait for picture-taking, they also set a half-hour timer and then rejoined their party. Then they snuck out later to take some more photos.

“Don’t take the moment for granted. Because if you do it right, you only have to do it once,” he added.

“Plan early, try not to procrastinate,” said Chris. “Prioritize your goals and get things done by a certain time.”

In terms of the relationship, Raven added, “Be sure you’re actually ready. *Don’t rush into things.* Make sure you want to be with that person.”



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Cover contest entrant Bethany Maher was married June 8, 2013 at Jay Peak.



GROOTENBOERS

The Grootenboers were so in sync with their advice that they almost said it in unison: "Elope, or have somebody else do everything!" "Trying to do *everything ourselves and on a budget* was exhausting," Tabitha added.



Cover contest entrant Alissa Rita was married Sept. 7, 2013, in Cambridge, Vt.

“D

efinitely incorporate your own personal quirks and things about you,” said Abby. “Keep it really personal.”

“You just don’t want to get too busy with it and not be able to enjoy it,” added Derrick.

“Once it’s gone, *the day after it’s like what happened?*”

They also learned some useful things from their wedding planner (see page 26). “She said it’s actually less stressful to have a seating chart and to post it,” Abby said. “She made sure that we had our photographer and wrote down all the pictures we wanted and got the photographer and caterer early than we would have on our own.”



O'DONNELLS

the pictures we wanted and got the photographer and caterer early than we would have on our own.”

The Scarinzas hired a wedding planner. “We did it late in the game,” Jenn said. “I always thought that was for fancy rich people.”

“It’s worth it,” agreed John. “The bride always thinks she’s going to have time to do all these things.”

“I would say, ‘We’re just going to move the chairs around or move the flowers.’ And John would say, *‘Who’s going to do that* and who’s going to keep track of that?’”

John had another priority: to not make guests wait around. “I find weddings long and tedious,” he said. Between the interminable cocktail hour while pictures are taken to the usual food that seems to be served at most weddings, he was determined to make this party more enjoyable for their guests.

“We worked very hard to have very good food, very good music, and had a schedule,” he said. “Minimize the time that guests were expected to mill around ... make it fun for the people that were there.”



SCARINZAS

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Simply BUDGETING

Tabitha and Charles were able to keep their budget under \$5,000 thanks to gifts from many of their family and friends. Because they had their reception at the Lancaster Fairgrounds they had to supply their own tables, chairs, table settings, chair covers and more.

"My mother paid for all the champagne and the plates," Tabitha said. They used clear plastic place settings that looked like glass and found plastic flatware that looked like real silverware. Tabitha's mom also purchased the wedding gown. "The only thing I had to pay for was the veil and my shoes."

Charles' mother made all of the food for their 175 guests. "She prepared cold salads ahead of time, and she marinated steak and chicken for grilling. Charles' brother-in-law did the grilling during the reception.

Chuck made a huge score one day when he happened to be at a summer camp that was getting rid of a whole bunch of tables and chairs. "They said *as long as you don't bring them back* you can have them!"



The Grootenboers received a bride's cake and this groom's cake as gifts toward their wedding.



GROOTENBOERS

"In the back of my mind I was thinking 15 or \$16,000," John said. They ended up spending closer to \$30,000. "We had the *luxury of being older* and being able to spend a little more than being younger and maybe needing to buy a house or something like that," John said.



SCARINZAS

The Coxes had a very specific reason to keep their wedding budget low: they want to put every extra penny into the ongoing renovations of their house.

"What's more important?" Kadi asked. "One day that you're going to remember, or budgeting it a little bit better so you still have an amazing day, but then when you guys come home every night you have a house and a roof over your head? That was so important to us."

They did so well that they finished the wedding with all their *bills paid and no debt*.

Some of the decisions they made included a potluck-style reception and renting a field venue rather than a high-priced pavilion.



COXES



CAMPBELLS

Raven and Chris said their flowers were one of the most expensive items in their budget and if they had it to do again *they'd choose fake flowers*.

"You can have them around for a longer time if you do that," said Chris. "If you buy real flowers, you have them for a week or less. Some of our centerpieces were made from fake flowers and we have some of the centerpieces in our house right now."

Budget is a major question for almost every wedding couple. No matter whether it was large or small, our couples were pleased with the results of their expenditures.



O'DONNELLS

The O'Donnells were in the enviable position of not needing a budget. "My parents just told me that *money wasn't a problem*," said Abby. "They wanted to make it exactly what we wanted."

"We were trying to stay within 5 or 6, but it was almost 12," said Heidi.

"It's so hard to *plan for it to be right on*, it's usually going to be over," added Neil.

Some of their budget tricks included not doing wedding favors and using plastic dinnerware rather than real dinner plates.



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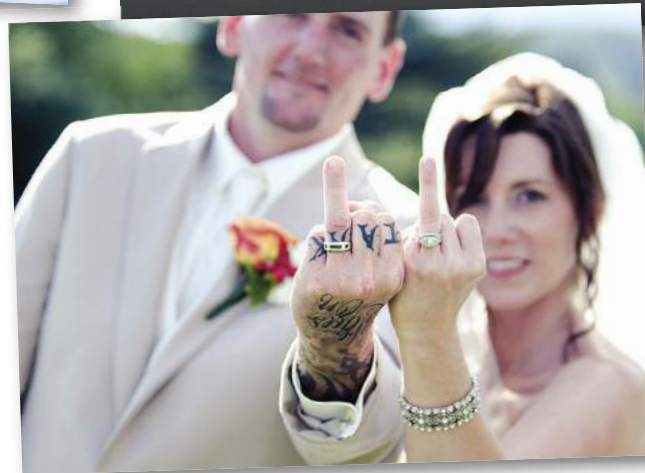
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RIGHT: Heidi and Neil Baker's wedding cake presentation was an idea from Pinterest. **BELOW:** Tabitha's sons and Charles' daughters are adjusting well to their new blended family. "They have their moments like any siblings," said Tabitha. "But they mostly get along well."



ABOVE: Tabitha found a lot of online sites helpful, including Pinterest, TheKnot.com and OrientalTrading.com. She found flying paper lanterns on JustArtifacts.com that the party lit after dark. **LEFT:** Tabitha and Charles Grootenboer showcase their non-traditional sensibilities in this fun picture.

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RIGHT: Kadi Cox's uncle passed away four years ago and she wanted to be able to honor him at the wedding. She placed his picture in a remembrance heart and tied it around her bouquet. **BELOW:** Kadi asked the photographer to take a picture of Justin the first moment that he saw her. "I told the photographer, I don't want a picture of me coming around the corner ... I want the first picture you take to be of his face seeing me."



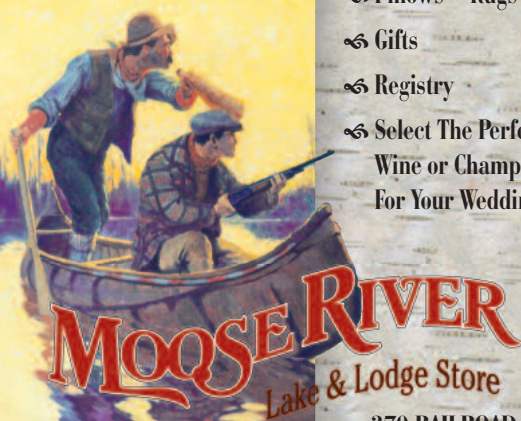
ABOVE: Abby O'Donnell with her son Landyn. **LEFT:** The O'Donnells showed their playful side by incorporating Derrick's love of race cars into the wedding. Derrick made wrench bottle openers, and the photographer took a photo of their rings on a wrench. But the coup de grace was the photo that Abby did with her bridesmaids ... without letting Derrick know! "I was going to give it to him for Christmas," she said.

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The great outdoors has been an integral part of Jenn and John Scarinza's relationship from the beginning. They met through their mutual love of maple sugaring and got to know each other as they bumped into each other at various forest management classes.

It was only natural to assume that their wedding would be outdoors. "We don't need anything big and fancy, we don't need plush or cushy or whatever," Jenn said. "We're simple people. We just want to get married in a field."

Besides, she added, she's a tomboy and "People expected that I would get married in Carhartts and boots!"

She'd been driving by a field near their home for a long time thinking, "Someday I want to marry John in that field."

So they spoke to the owner of the field and got permission to have their wedding there. With the location set and no grand plans, setting up their "simple field wedding" should be easy, right? WRONG!

"It was a very simple concept ... But you'll find there's *nothing* simple about a field wedding," John said ruefully.

"It's all fine and dandy until you invite over 200 people," Jenn said. "And then you have to think warmth and comfort and food and music and chairs and tables, and every last thing. Including the salt and pepper shakers. They all have to be brought in!"

And power. Or, as John said, "Lots and lots of power."

"On that side of the road there was no power," John explained. "In the end I hooked up a big generator. The next prop-



SCARINZAS

LEFT: Jenn and John had stumps at the end of every other row of seats where they placed vases of colorful flowers.
BELOW: The happy couple



erty over I had access to a big power line. The band takes power. If you're going to have a catered event with heated plates and all that, all of a sudden you're using a lot more power. And you can't do it with a generator you have at home." There are a lot of logistics to be worked through.

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And that doesn't even cover making the field itself usable. John spent many afternoons mowing the field and (sarcasm cough) *discovering* where all the big rocks in the field are.

The Scarinzas had chosen to have their wedding in the fall so that Jenn, who is a teacher at White Mountains Regional High School, could spend the summer putting it together. "But I didn't know it was going to be all summer for me to work on it also!" said John.

"At one point at the beginning of August, in my frustration I wrote the chapters to the book that I'm going to write, which is titled 'Our Simple Field Wedding – Everything Else You Need To Know'," said John. Chapter titles include: There will be crying, plan on it, deal with it; There's rocks in my field...how come?; and Hiring a band is just no fun!

John became so exasperated at one point that he was ready to throw in the towel. "Suggesting we should have done just two witnesses and a pizza didn't go over too well," he joked.

"He would say, 'Isn't this something you and your mother are supposed to do?' And I'd say, 'Yes, if I were 20. But it's not she and I getting married!' " Jenn said. "I really wanted it to be OUR wedding, not MY wedding day. It was our commitment to each other. It was our party for our friends and family."

In the end, Jenn and John were both very happy with how the whole day turned out. The weather cooperated beautifully and Jenn's dad was able to drive her up to the ceremony in his newly-restored Model A car.

As John remembered it, "Jenn was beaming as she stepped from the car and all 200 guests applauded. ... Jenn looked stunningly beautiful in her dress and veil, but what was most beautiful was her radiant smile and to see how happy she was as she walked down the aisle in the field on a picture perfect day. I couldn't have been prouder to be able to say 'I do' and that she had picked me to be her husband."



ABOVE: Jenn prepares for her ceremony.
RIGHT: Jenn's father restored his old Model A so he could drive her into the field in style.



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Simply PROMISED

Another way that couples are able to insert their personality into their wedding is in their vows. Here's what some of our couples chose to do.

Kadi and Justin chose to write their own vows and not share them with each other in advance. When they read them aloud, they discovered that both of them had referred to the same Bible verse: 1st Corinthians 13. The pastor also included it in his remarks. "It was funny how all three of us put that verse in," said Kadi. "And none of us knew the other was doing it."

Justin was nervous about writing his vows so Kadi gave him some good advice. "Honey, just make it from your heart and *just talk to me*," she told him. "I just wanted the vows to be about us. Very personal."



COXES



Jenn and John make their vows under the arbor John built for their "simple" field wedding.



SCARINZAS

The O'Donnells had considered using standard vows but "knew that it wasn't really our personality," said Abby. "We have *a lot of quirks* about each other that we only know and we wanted to incorporate that into our ceremony."

In their vows they included mentions of how much they love McDonalds, Abby's tendency to hog the bed and Derrick's tendency to steal the covers, and how Derrick loves Abby even when she's grumpy in the morning.



O'DONNELLS

An arbor was important to the Scarinza's big day. John built it for Jenn and incorporated it into his vows.

"As represented by this arbor, I promise to always provide you with a roof over your head and a root cellar to store the vegetables in," he said.

They also referenced their love of sugar making. "I told him I would love him through seasons of light amber and dark amber and *no syrup at all*," said Jenn.

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Charles and Tabitha opted for traditional vows but also wanted to make sure that their kids were part of the process.

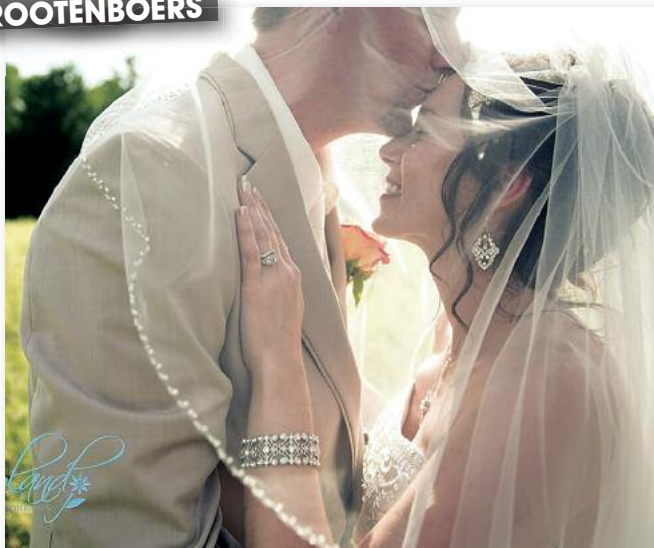
Each of the five children was given a candle that represented a word to light from a single unity candle.

"The pastor had them come up and light their candles and he talked about what their word represents in marriage."

The five words were *love, kindness, virtue, happiness and patience.*



GROOTENBOERS



While Caroline Milne was waiting to walk down the aisle on the Big Dipper trail at Burke Mountain, her dad snapped this relaxed candid.

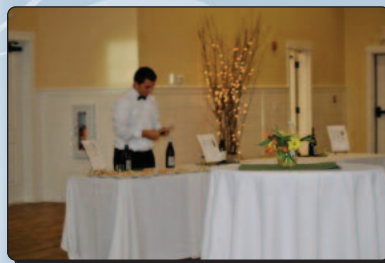
"We had all of the guests and the groomsmen congregate at the wedding site while my dad, my father-in-law, my bridesmaids and I "hid" on the toll road, above the actual wedding site," Caroline told us.

"We ended up having to wait quite awhile on the toll road, and in *the true spirit of a fun, easy-going, rustic wedding*, I had a carefree attitude toward my dress. Squatting like that is a comfortable position for me, and so when I got tired of standing and walking around I assumed this relaxed sitting position and continued to wait. My father turned around and saw me like that and started laughing, and told me not to move while he took the picture. I think it is my **favorite picture** from the entire wedding because it really reflects the re-



laxed atmosphere of our wedding, and because I remember that time hanging out with the dads and the sisters before the big event."

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Simply WAITING



Kadi has a special moment with her flower girls before the ceremony.



The Coxes grew up in Christian homes that emphasized “saving themselves” for marriage, and they both took that commitment seriously.

“I was brought up where you make a promise to your parents and to God to save yourself for marriage, and [Justin] was brought up the same way,” Kadi said. “So the whole time through dating, there was no hanky panky.

The simple stuff, but no sex until married,” she laughed.

Given that choice, they made another decision that many might find hard to understand: they lived together before they got married.

“It was challenging,” Kadi said. “A lot of people looked down on us and immediately judged us: You’re living together, so of course you’re having sex.”

But Justin had been living with his parents while he renovated the home that he and Kadi now share, and Kadi was living alone in an apartment in downtown Littleton, N.H.

“I didn’t like her living alone,” Justin explained. “I just liked to

know that she was safe.”

So Justin moved in and slept on the couch, “for quite a while.”

Throughout their time together-but-not-together they acknowledge there were times when the urge was strong. “You have a lot of temptations and you want to give into it,” Kadi said. “But God kept us strong in our faith.”

“He did,” Justin agreed. “He definitely did.”

Kadi sent her engagement ring out to be fused with her wedding ring, so she wore the purity ring, which her dad gave her when she was 16, as he walked her down the aisle.

“Our pastor said, ‘You guys have promised each other that you would wait for tonight to be the night that you would become one.’ And so I took my purity ring off and gave it to my dad and then Justin put my wedding ring on,” Kadi said. It was at that point that many of the guests realized that despite living together, they had truly kept their promise.



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Justin remembers that moment very fondly. "Just seeing the look in her parents' eyes. Just knowing we did it. *We did it.* This is a celebration!" he reminisced. Then with a big laugh he said, "We did it, and now let's go home ..."

The couple agrees that although it wasn't a traditional way to go about things, it worked well for them. "I'm glad we didn't have that living together part and the marriage part to try to figure out at the same time," Kadi said. "I'm glad that we had those separate."

Of course, when a couple makes a public promise of chastity until the wedding night, everyone knows what's going to happen later that night.

"The awkward thing was that everybody knew what we were doing later!" laughed Kadi. "It was like a group circle before we left. All of my girlfriends were gathered around me and they were like, this is what you've got to do. And I was like, don't stress me out!"

Justin continues to think about that moment when Kadi exchanged her purity ring for her wedding ring. "I have to just say it was



The pastor leads Kadi and Justin in a quiet moment of prayer during their wedding ceremony.

an honor. Does that make sense? It was an honor for her dad to give her to me. It was an honor to say, 'I do'."

And after a moment of reflecting on the courage it takes for a man to give away his daughter to her new husband, Justin said with feeling, "I just hope I live up to that standard."

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Simply SERVICE



Lori Shearer works on John and Jenn Scarinza's special maple wedding cake.

Our couples had only positive things to say about the vendors they worked with. Here is a sampling of the local people and businesses that got particularly high marks.

Kelly Cooke, photographer - Both the Bakers and the O'Donnell's gave her special praise as their photographer. She took the winning cover photo.

David England, photographer - "He is fabulous," said Tabitha Grootenboer. "I had seen pictures that Dave had done online and I thought his pictures are always so beautiful."

All About Flowers, florist - "They're a local business in town so I went to them and Jesse had some really good ideas," said Heidi Baker. "She did everything I wanted plus more!"

Lori Shearer, wedding cake - The Scarinzas wove a maple theme through their entire wedding, including the cake. "Our cake was designed as a special maple wedding cake and she did an amazing job on that," said Jenn Scarinza.

Lancaster Floral, florist - When Tabitha Grootenboer went to pick up the flowers for the wedding, she realized that they weren't exactly what she wanted. "The woman was so nice, she redid them on the spot!"

Libby's Bistro, catering - The Scarinzas were thrilled with the way that Libby incorporated their home-raised broiler chickens and their freezer full of venison. "One of the things that was important to her was what's our background, what type of food do we like to eat, what do our friends like to eat?"

Liz Shelton, wedding planner - The O'Donnells found the planning process to be really stressful until they hired Liz from The Party Store in Woodsville, N.H. "It went really smoothly from there," said Abby. "She led us in the right direction."

Steve and Maureen Mosher, catering - The Bakers had their food at another wedding and knew they wanted the Moshers to do their wedding. "It was really good," said Heidi. "Their prices were good too."

PHOTOGRAPHER CREDITS

We'd like to acknowledge all of the amazing photographers whose work we're pleased to showcase in this Bridal Guide.

Our Featured Couples

The Bakers – Kelly Cooke
The Campbells – Cheyenne Godfrey
The Coxes – Roy Mercon
The Grootenboers – Dave England
The O'Donnells – Kelly Cooke
The Scarinzas – Normand Labonville, Richard Macko

Other Cover Contest Couples

PFC John and Alexis Armstrong – Dana Weir
Jennifer and Chris Caron – David England
Kerry and Jesse Holden – Jackie Nagle
Kayla and Matt Link - Heather Young
Bethany Maher – Caleb Craven
Caroline Milne – Jamie Milne
Marie Murray – Curtis J. Hartson
Nicole Nummelin - Alex Fischer and Camille Harris
Alissa Rita – Shem Roose Photography
Derek and Kristyna Sullivan – Rodeo & Co.

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Simply MARRIED

Kayla and Matt Link shared their wedding stories and photos with us for the 2013 Bridal Guide, so last month we picked up the phone to check back in with them and see how things have been going. Turns out, they've had a busy year and lots of news to share!

"I'm a big fan of the Ellen DeGeneres Show," Kayla said. "Over the summer she was doing this 'Watch and Win' game."

The big prize was a trip to Australia. So Kayla answered the questions and wrote a little bio about herself and Matt and why they deserved to win.

"I told about how my husband and I met in college and we had recently been married and we were both working at low income schools and we decided to push our honeymoon back because we got married at the end of summer and it's too hard to get time off from school. We said we'd do it the next summer, which was last summer. We were looking at places to go, and it was just so expensive and we really wanted to start a family. We were torn – do we take a trip or do we start a family?"

Family is really important to both of the Links. "We knew it was something we really wanted to start after we got married, but we did want to spend a little bit of time just us experiencing things. But as teachers we don't make that much, so you have to weigh what's most important."

Of course, if you've read this far, you will have realized that we'd only tell you this story if Kayla and Matt ... WON the trip to Australia!

"They let you choose between Sydney and Melbourne," Kayla

said. "We chose Sydney."

They could go any time between August 2013 and June 2014, so they'll be heading off during their February break from school. "We're spending six nights in Sydney. It works out so we can leave right after school and get back right before school."

Now that they don't have to choose between a trip and starting a family, they get both!

"We're actually pregnant right now," Kayla said. "We're very excited. We're due in June, so it works out perfectly because it's the last week of school."

They had just booked the trip when they found out they were pregnant. "They said everything should be fine. I won't be so far along that it's not safe to travel."

As for married life, all is well with the Links. "We moved to Barre, which made it a lot easier," Kayla said, explaining that their commute to work isn't as long now. "We've just kind of taken everything and digested it. The funny thing is that it just feels the same. Not a whole lot has changed with how we are around holidays, or with our families, or how our everyday lives are. It's just a continuation."

Kayla and Matt Link at their 2012 wedding.



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Every couple finds special ways to infuse their day with their own personalities. Here are some of the ways our couples put their unique stamp on their day.

Simply **UNIQUE**

When Tabitha and Charles began planning their wedding, they each made a list of their “perfect wedding” and their “wedding on a budget.”

“It makes me laugh when I look at it,” Tabitha said. “On his side, the wedding on a budget is *catered by McDonald’s* and we show up on a motorcycle and there are disposable cameras on the tables.”

They didn’t end up with French Fries and Big Macs, but they did manage to incorporate the motorcycle. “At the reception, he had the bike parked at a separate part of the fairgrounds,” Tabitha explained. “Toward the end of the reception he started his motorcycle and drove out on the dance floor!”



GROOTENBOERS



BAKERS

The Bakers wanted to make sure that all the little ones had a good time at their wedding, so they *rented a bouncy house!*

“They were pretty occupied with that,” Heidi said.

They also chose to forgo providing alcohol and make the party BYOB. “We didn’t want to encourage drinking a lot,” Heidi said. But that didn’t dampen the party at all – especially not once they got the karaoke going!

The Campbells decided that because money is tight for many people these days, they would *pay for the dresses and tuxes* for everyone in their bridal party. “It was our wedding and they didn’t ask to be in our wedding, so I thought we would do it for them,” Raven said.

But they didn’t get off scot-free! Raven got her pay-back during the reception. “We made the bridesmaids and the groomsmen dance ‘Sexy And I Know It,’” she laughed. “It was fun.”



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SCARINZAS

The Scarinzas wanted to find a way to include their entire family in their ceremony. Combine that with John's sentiment that "If I'm getting married, *everybody in the Valley is going to know about it*," and there was one obvious answer: fire a cannon!

The cannon was provided by a friend who had been partially responsible for introducing Jenn and John, and the cannon crew was made up of the couple's two brothers and seven nephews. "We wanted to symbolize a blending of families," John said. "And we got to fire a cannon as part of our ceremony!"



ABOVE: The Scarinzas' brothers and nephews fired a cannon during their ceremony. **BELOW:** The O'Donnell's guest book.



COXES

For their outdoor wedding, Justin and Kadi wanted it to be "classy, but not too classy." Justin knew that he didn't want to be stuck in a

tuxedo – which turned out to be a good decision since it was 95 degrees with high humidity on their wedding day!

Kadi spent some time on Pinterest searching for other options and finally came up with a winning look: *dark jeans with white shirts and vests*. As soon as he saw it, Justin said, "That's it! That's what I'm going to wear!"

They were both thrilled with the result: It was inexpensive, classy, and fit their country wedding theme.



O'DONNELLS

"Our guest book was an old pallet that we set on the table for people to sign," Abby said. "We just put a thin layer of gloss paint on it and had people *sign with white paint pens*."

The idea came up because Derrick has a lot of old pallets at his race car shop, and the result is a beautiful keepsake.

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Cover contest entrants Kerry and Jesse Holden were married Sept. 28, 2013 at Willoughby Lake in Vermont.

Simply A SHOW

Whether you're just getting started with planning or you're finishing up the details, make sure to mark your calendar for the second annual "Fabulous February Bridal Show" in St. Johnsbury on Feb. 22 from 11 a.m. to 2 p.m.

Started last year by Carolyn Cross of Exquisite Bridal and Formal Wear, the bridal expo was a huge success and Cross is looking forward to an even bigger event this year.

"I think the Northeast Kingdom for bridal is a wonderful place with a lot of wonderful wedding professionals," she said. "I don't see why we can't promote the area and promote these wonderful wedding professionals."

Cross noted that people from the Northeast Kingdom have traveled to Burlington to find their dress and other vendors, but now it's time for people from Burlington and other nearby cities to come to the

Northeast Kingdom instead. Last year's St. Johnsbury bridal show brought in 53 brides, while Cross said that she attended another show in Burlington that only got a handful more.

This year's event will be held at Catamount Arts on Eastern Avenue in St. Johnsbury and profits will be donated to Catamount. "I'm going to be moving the show around to different venues so the venues that I go to can highlight themselves," Cross said.

The event will include live music, as well as a "man cave" for the gents to relax in. The highlight of the show will be a live runway fashion show highlighting 2014 dresses, tuxedos and flower girls dresses.

Local vendors will be

in attendance representing all the bridal necessities including venues, flowers, cakes, caterers, photographers, rentals, makeup/hair and bridal wear.

Every vendor has donated a door prize, so there will be over 30 prizes ranging in value from \$75 to \$400.

Tickets can be purchased through the Catamount Arts Center.



SCARINZAS

"We have amazing professional wedding vendors right in this area. You don't have to go to Boston or Manchester to get your wedding dress or to find really good people to work with," Jenn said. "We were delighted to find people to work with in this area that fulfilled all our needs."

"Everybody was local and everybody was a professional," added John. "The band came from southern Vermont, but otherwise everybody was local and first class."

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