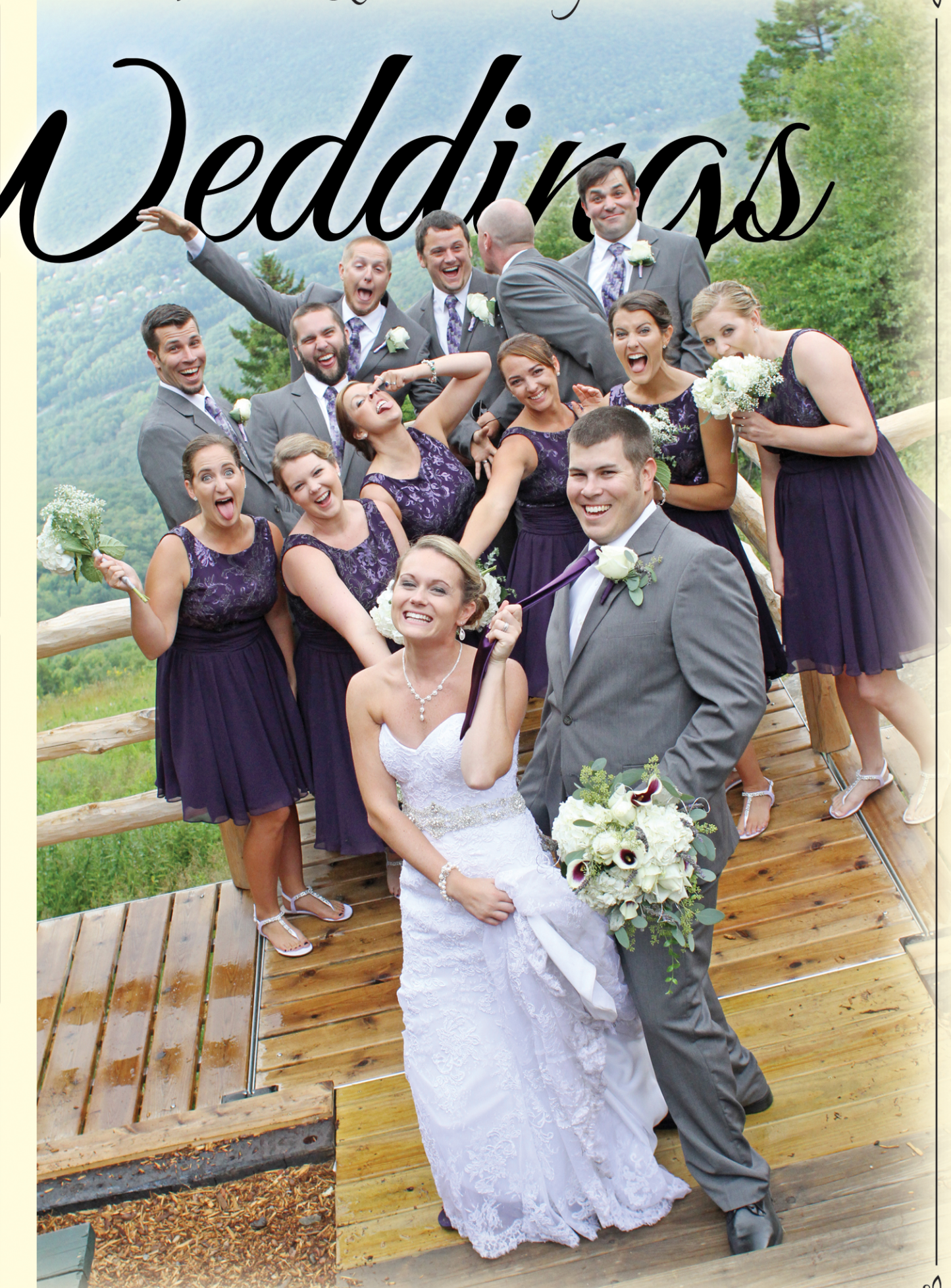


Northern Vermont & New Hampshire



Cyan Magenta Yellow Black



Our 2017 cover couple are **Britney and Nick Bigelow**. Their photographer is **Jordan Royer of Double Diamond Photography**. Britney and Nick are one of the six couples you will meet throughout this publication as they talk about their wedding day and the planning it took to get there.



Weddings

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Meet Our Couples



Britney & Nick

THE BIGELOS

Britney (Lane), 25, and Nick, 29, of Waterford, Vermont

Started dating: 2012
Engagement: 2014
Wedding date: Aug. 6, 2016
Budget: They didn't set a

specific budget for 145 people

Venue: Loon Mountain Resort in Lincoln, New Hampshire

Bridal party: 6 bridesmaids and 6 groomsmen



Kelsi & Shane

BEFORE- MacDOUGALL

Kelsi (Before), 24, and Shane, 26, of Burke, Vermont

Started dating: 2007

Engagement date: January 2014

Wedding date: Sept. 25, 2016

Budget: \$13,500 for 80 people

Venue: Burke Mountain in Burke, Vermont

Bridal party: 2 bridesmaids and a maid of honor; 3 groomsmen and a best man

THE LIBERTYS

Amanda (Shields), 34, and Shawn, 41, of East Haven, Vermont

Started dating: April 2015

Engagement date: December 2015

Wedding date: May 28, 2016

Budget: \$2,000 for 50 people

Venue: East Burke Property Rentals

Bridal party: None



Amanda & Shawn

THE SCOTTS

Ayla (Nett), 29, and Ian, 33, of Montpelier (Hardwick at the time of the wedding)

Started dating: January 2014

Engagement date: Dec. 25, 2015

Wedding date: Oct. 15, 2016

Budget: \$12,000 for 98 people

Venue: Alerin Barn in St. Johnsbury

Bridal party: 1 maid of honor, 1 man of honor, 2 best men



Ayla & Ian

THE FOSTERS

Michele (Girouard), 50, and Rob, 54, of Monroe, New Hampshire

Started dating: June 2009

Engagement date: Feb. 14, 2015

Wedding date: July 9, 2016

Budget: \$3,000 for 150 people

Venue: Michele's parents' home

Bridal party: Maid of honor and best man



Michele & Rob

THE EDGARS

Mercedes (Duprey), 24, and Jason, 25, of St. Johnsbury, Vermont

Started dating: In high school

Engagement date: Aug. 30, 2015

Wedding date: May 28, 2016

Budget: \$15,000 for 120 people

Venue: Private property in Derby, Vermont

Bridal party: 3 bridesmaids and a dog of honor; 4 groomsmen



Mercedes & Jason

Quotes from the couples throughout this publication have been edited for length and clarity.

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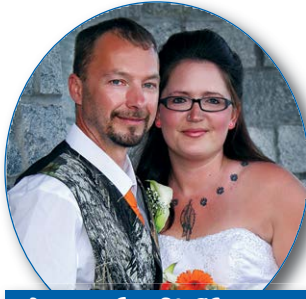
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How They Met

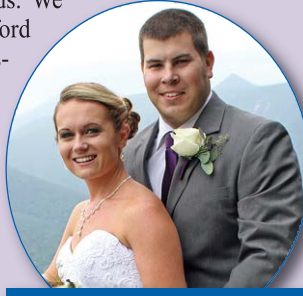


Amanda & Shawn

Amanda - We worked together at Lyndonville Hardware. He was a yard worker and I was a cashier. It really was love at first sight. I saw him and I was like, 'He's the one!' We were friends at first, and just kind of feeling each other out. After a year, we started seeing each other.

Nick - We met through mutual friends. We had a group of friends who went to Waterford School during the summer and played basketball. We were fooling around and Britney showed up one day. It took a little bit of coaxing from my friends to get a little bit of encouragement to talk to her.

Britney - He liked me but he's awkward. He knows that, I told him that! But he's a pretty funny guy and we hung out a few more times. Our first dates were with a group of friends and I guess he won me over!



Britney & Nick

Michele and Rob are both long-time employees at Burndy's in Littleton. When they first met over 20 years ago, they were both in other marriages. Over time, they both got divorced and they struck up a friendship. But having been out of the dating game for so long, they both had to figure out how to re-enter it.

Rob - I pulled a fast one. She owns a motorcycle. I asked her to give me all the information she could on riding a bike because I don't. She got all that information for me. I gave her my phone number. She got a hold of her sister-in-law and said, 'What should I do?' Her sister-in-law said, 'Call him! Text him! Do something!' So she did.

Michele - I was hesitant about starting a relationship with anybody because I had just gotten out of a long-term marriage. I didn't quite know the protocol for the new dating. We took our time and got to know each other and realized that we had a lot of the same interests. We just took it one day at a time and it just kind of grew. But once it grew, it grew quickly.



Michele & Rob

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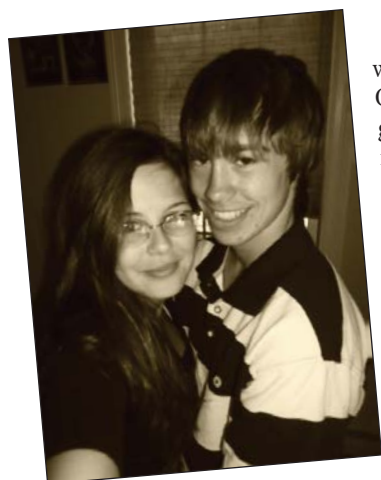


High School Sweethearts

Kelsi - We met at Lyndon Institute. I was only 15. I played field hockey, he played football. I went to his games. We began dating at school. He asked me before one of our classes and we have been together ever since.



Kelsi & Shane



Mercedes - I was a cheerleader and Jason was a football player. We were sophomores. One day after a football game we got together and went over to this mutual friend's house. I spent the night there (there wasn't anything going on). We stayed out at a camp at Harvey's Lake and looked at the stars and started dating from there.



Mercedes & Jason



Amanda & Shawn

Meet Amanda and Shawn Liberty

Shawn is a hunter and loves all things "country," so the Libertys made that a priority at their wedding. "We didn't go for the traditional tux," Amanda said. "We kind of gave it the country theme." Jason wore a white shirt with a camo tux vest. "And you had the sh**kickers," Amanda reminded him. "The tux wasn't that weird camo look, it was a beautiful mossy oak camouflage vest. In his nice black Carhartt jeans. He looked very nice in it and it was perfect for a wedding ... That's what we wanted."

Rather than a big wedding dinner, they had a low-key barbecue. "I'm a hunter," Shawn said. "I'm a country boy so I like that stuff. That's what I wanted."

Because Amanda's father wasn't a part of the wedding, their two mothers escorted her to her groom. "They've all helped us out so much. I felt like the best way to show our appreciation was to have both of them walk me down the aisle. They were absolutely tickled pink," said Amanda. "We were very happy. It was a beautiful, beautiful day."

"It was a small wedding but it was a gorgeous wedding," Shawn agreed.



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Getting Engaged



Amanda & Shawn

Amanda - It was a surprise. He tricked me into it! He said, 'I heard there was a whole bunch of ice on the rocks by Willoughby, I want to check it out.' I was like, 'Yeah, I think I see some ice.' There was none, of course. We got to Devil's Rock. We had carved our names into the trees another time up there. He was like, 'See if you can find our names.' I turned around and he was holding a box. And inside the box was a bag. And inside the bag was a tiny little box. It was very romantic.



Britney & Nick



Nick - We went to Burlington one weekend to do some Christmas shopping the beginning of December 2014 and we went to Church Street to see all the lights. My plan was to get her down by the big Christmas tree and propose, but the day we went it was really windy and cold. Britney said, 'Yeah, the lights look pretty. I'm cold let's go!' I was like, 'No, we've got to go down and see the big tree.' We got to the point where we could see the tree and she was like, 'Yep I can see the tree, let's go!' I had to drag her all the way down the street.

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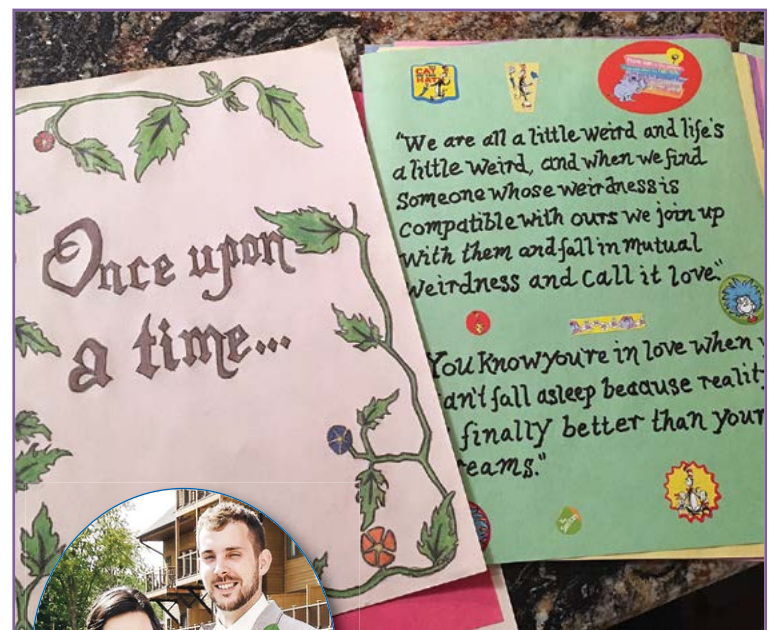
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Kelsi & Shane

Kelsi - We hiked in January up to the top of Mt. Pisgah and he made a lunch with all of my favorite foods and my favorite drink. I love Theodore Geisel, who writes Dr. Seuss. He wrote and illustrated an entire Dr. Seuss-themed storybook for me. He asked me to read it aloud. I started crying on the first page, so he read it to me. And on the last page it said, 'Will you marry me?' And then he pulled out a stuffed Lorax, my favorite Dr. Seuss character. He had the ring on the Lorax hand.

Knowing They're The One



Ayla & Ian

Ayla -

I've never had somebody compliment me so well. I've never had somebody kind of help my glitter shine brighter. We're made for each other.

Ian -

Because of our jobs, we spent every single day together, just the two of us, for four and a half weeks when we first started dating. Then I knew I could spend a lot of time with this person.

Kelsi -

I hate to admit it, but I'm a little hard to get along with sometimes. I'm anxious and I'm so dedicated to school, I would go three weeks during exam time without seeing him. He helped me through all of the school stuff and whenever I was anxious or upset, he would always be there and able to help me. I think that for me he was the one. He was just so helpful with my personality.



Kelsi & Shane



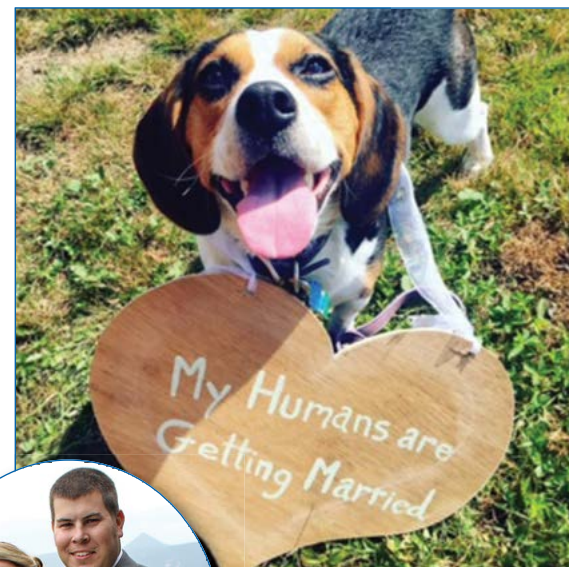
Mercedes & Jason

Jason -

We balance each other out very well. She's able to put up with me. It only took me about seven years to really figure it out!

Mercedes -

He can put up with me. I don't have a temper, but I get upset and frustrated pretty easily. Never once has he yelled at me. He can just calmly look at me and deal with what's going on. And that's it, it's fine, it's done. It's not a big deal. It's the perfect fit.



Britney & Nick

Nick -

I loved being around her and doing stuff with her.

Britney -

It wasn't like one day I was like, 'Okay I'm going to marry this guy.' Over time he was just so easy to be with, easy to talk to. Everything is just perfect - easy. It doesn't take much effort.



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The Dress



Mercedes & Jason

Mercedes - I went with my mom and my sister, and then we were sending pictures to my maid of honor because she couldn't come with us.

After a couple of dresses we tried on the one that I really wanted to try on. I thought it was going to be that one! But then my sister was like, 'No, you have to try on the one that's on the mannequin.' I put it on and I just knew. It was perfect.



Kelsi & Shane

Kelsi - I told my mom and my sister strictly what I wanted

before we went. I told them I wanted straps and things like that, and I really liked the strapless dress I ended up getting. They tried to talk me out of it because of what I told them going into it. That is not the dress I got excited about. I'm really happy with the dress I chose, I loved it very much.



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Meet Michele and Rob Foster

Michele's dad had been involved in the planning of the wedding even though he knew he might not be there.

Sadly, he passed away a few weeks before the event.

Instead, her son, a captain in the Marine corps, walked her down the aisle.

"We'd already planned on him escorting me down because Dad knew he wasn't able to walk down the aisle," she said. Her son also accompanied her for the mother/son dance.

Of course Michele missed her father at the ceremony. But he had been in declining health for about a year and had foreseen his possible absence.

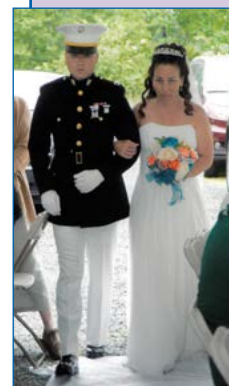
"It wasn't like it was sudden, but we were hoping he would at least make it to be through the wedding. But it wasn't meant to be," Michele said.

"He was adamant about not changing the date," Rob recalled. "You're not going to do that for me!"

Michele put out pictures on the gift table of her father and several others. "So anybody who was missing that day, we had pictures on the table for everybody to see," she said.



Michele & Rob



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Love Birds

A popular feature of weddings and other events around the world is finally making its way to the Northeast Kingdom and North Country: dove releases.

"In England it's very popular," said William Chatlos, owner of Vermont White Dove Release in Kirby, Vermont. "It's the beauty and it's the motion that the birds provide that really adds that specific touch of unusuality to a ceremony ... The cool calmness of just looking at them, they're just peaceful beings."

Once they choose a mate they are faithful. "Therein lies the symbolism of white doves," said Julie Chatlos, co-owner of the business. "They pair up and mate for life and they're very loyal with each other. For a long time they've been seen as a symbol of purity, loyalty, and true love."

How does it work?

William Chatlos does most of the breeding, training and events. Having spent so much time with him, the birds are attached to him.

"They know me well," he said. "They've got some unique personalities. There's a couple of them that I'll have out exercising and they'll buzz me. Or, if I'm not in sight, they'll look for me and do flybys."

Chatlos has a flock of about 60 birds, of which about 40 are "professional" birds for events. He will take them as far as about 35 miles from their home.

"For five or eight miles, they'll use visual for location and they'll bear their way through landmarks," Chatlos said. "Outside of that, they use



PHOTO BY SEAN MARKEY

Dove release at Kelsi and Shane's wedding

other natural resources. They can see different shades of light. They can even see ultraviolet. So their eyesight is very keen, as well as their hearing ... Like any kind of natural navigation, they use a lot of the sun to navigate with."

The birds are actually homing pigeons, al-

though they look much like white doves. "If it was doves, mainly it would be just like tossing a fish out of water. They're not going to survive. They don't have any natural skills," Chatlos said. "But these are homing pigeons and

See **Doves**, Page 10



PHOTO COURTESY OF VERMONT WHITE DOVE RELEASE

Doves wait in box prior to release.

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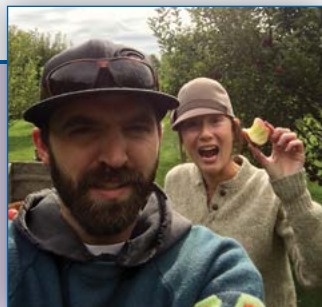
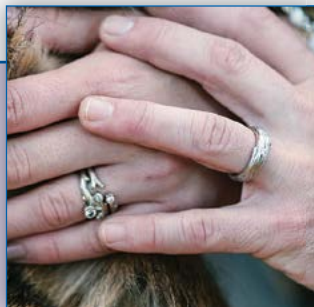


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Meet Ayla and Ian Scott

Ian's mother had saved her mother's engagement and wedding band for him to use when he got married.

"When my mom gave me the ring that she had been holding onto, she thought it was kind of gaudy and I should do something with it," Ian said. "I took it to a jeweler and designed an engagement ring and then saved the rest of the diamonds off of it. The rest of the diamonds went into Ayla's wedding band, my wedding band, a set of earrings, and a little pendant. They're all spread out."

He said he gets lots of compliments on the design, which resembles branches and wood knots. "The jeweler did an amazing job."

It was far from the only really personal touch at their wedding.

The couple harvested apples from Ian's uncle's property so Ian could make 100 personal-size apple crisps for dessert. He also made his grandmother's potato doughnuts recipe, and Ayla's mom brought pepperoni rolls from West Virginia to represent Ayla's roots.

Because traveling is a big theme for the couple, Ayla bought a bunch of picture frames and decorated them to display photos "of all of our travels and family and life up to that day."

Ayla also knew she wanted to do something unusual for her flowers.

"They're really expensive and most of the time they get thrown out after the wedding anyway," she said. "I just thought why don't I dry flowers? It was a huge experiment – I had no idea how it was going to turn out! It could have been awful. But it wasn't."

She started collecting and drying flowers in August. Friends donated flowers and feathers throughout the early fall.

"I had a vision that I wanted it to be very fall-esque," Ayla said. "It turned out awesome."



Ayla & Ian



PHOTO BY TOMOKI NOMURA

William Chatlos holds one of his birds.

Doves

Continued from Page 9

that's what they're bred for and that's what they live for."

They are white like doves because the color is bred out of them. "Almost like an albino, but not exactly," said Chatlos. "It takes some skill and it also takes you as a breeder to breed the right birds."

He spends so much time with them that he knows every bird as an individual. "Even though they're all white, to me there's something different about each one and I can pick that out."

Logistics of using live animals at a wedding

The most important thing to know is that Chatlos won't fly his birds in the winter, heavy rain, winds over 10 mph, or when there is lots of fog.

"We watch the weather patterns for winds and so forth," he said. "It's for the success of the birds. We want to make safe travel for them. We like to get them home."

His ideal is a day with winds under 8 mph with the wind at their back.

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Choosing The Wedding Date



Britney & Nick

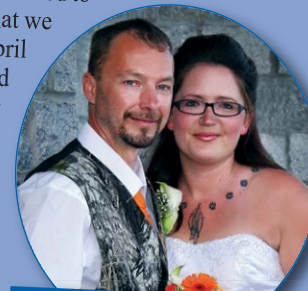
We wanted summer. With getting engaged in December 2014, it was too early to do a 2015 wedding, plus we had five weddings that summer of friends and family. So we knew 2016 was the year. We picked Loon as our venue and they gave us a list of dates in June and August. They told us June was buggy there, so we went with the end of August.



Kelsi & Shane

It was our 9-year anniversary. There was leap year, so we could have it on a Friday in 2015 or on a Sunday in 2016. We chose the Sunday. Kelsi graduated from college in 2015, so it actually worked out pretty nice.

We originally wanted to do it on the date that we started dating, April 28. But it didn't land on a good day for everybody, so we decided to move it ahead a month. We wanted to have a nice spring wedding.



Amanda & Shawn

When we sat down and were deciding, there was no question: we knew we wanted to have it at the Alerin Barn. I always wanted a fall wedding in October. And when we called in January, they only had Oct. 15 open! It was serendipitous. So we took it.



Ayla & Ian

It was close to when we went out, first started talking. I wanted a large wedding. I wanted it outside, so that had to be in the summer. June and August are kind of busy for us because of other events, so we settled on July 9.



Michele & Rob

I love the springtime, that's my favorite season. I wanted it to be spring but not have ice on the weekend. It was Memorial Day weekend and sometime we get snow and sometimes we don't. We were pretty lucky in getting a good day when it was actually supposed to be thunderstorms all day, and it ended up being beautiful.



Mercedes & Jason

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Mercedes & Jason

How did you pay for your wedding?

I paid for most of it myself. I had some savings, some money we had set aside for the wedding. We don't have any loans.

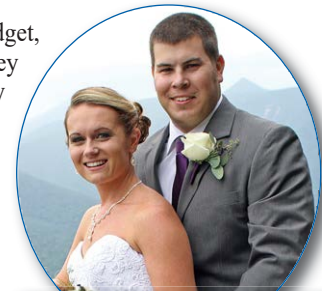
Our parents chipped in for a couple things. My mom got my wedding dress for me, which we hadn't intended. Jason's dad paid for the rehearsal dinner.



Where did you choose to spend your money?

When we decided to do this, we didn't really set a budget, but we decided the important things we would put our money towards – the venue and photographer – and put our money there. Our decision was to go with a little bit pricier venue, which included the food. And we put up the extra money to get the second photographer and videographer. We would definitely go with the second photographer for anyone who cares about the photos. We're very happy with the results.

Anything we could do on our own, we did. We made our own invitations, our own centerpieces. We bought the stuff we needed to and we did it.



Britney & Nick

How did you save money for your wedding?

Our parents gave a gift of \$5,000 for the wedding, and we paid the rest. We started saving very late, so we were pretty crunched for quite a while - and still are now. We started in the late spring, so we had to come up with quite a lot of money in a little time. We wished we had started saving much sooner than we did.



Kelsi & Shane

Where did you choose to spend your money?

We always said we wanted to stay between \$12,000 to \$15,000. We knew that the extravagancy was definitely our food, beverage and venue. We knew if we were go-



Ayla & Ian

ing to spend money on stuff, these were the things we wanted to spend money on.

Did you stay within your budget?

We just kind of went by the seat of our pants. We didn't really have anything. We have very stubborn mothers and there was no getting around having them help! My mother made the candles and party favors and my mother-in-law helped buy some of the food. She paid for half our cake and half our flowers.



Amanda & Shawn

Did you stay within your budget?

When we were planning, we spaced putting a tent into the budget, so that was where we went over budget. But it was less than \$4,000 for everything.



Michele & Rob

Cyan
Magenta
Yellow
Black

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It's All In The Details

There are some important decisions that couples have to make but don't get a lot of attention. We asked the couples about three of those issues.

Did you invite children to your wedding?

Michele & Rob

There were kids and grandkids at Michele and Rob's wedding, which was a real family affair.

Amanda & Shawn

There were about five kids. There was plenty of yard for them to run around and they had plenty of activities. They had a good time. I don't like having too many people drinking with kids present.

Ayla & Ian

There were probably 10 or 15 kids there. At the Alerin Barn there's a fire pit and they do s'mores stations, so there were lots of fun little things for kids to do. And we had a Polaroid station, so the kids loved that.

Britney & Nick

We asked for adults only. We made it known early on so people could plan for it. I think after the initial reaction, it was like, 'Oh cool a weekend away with my husband!' We had a huge dance party and I think a lot of people let loose because they weren't worrying about where their kids were.

Kelsi & Shane

We had a photo booth and the little kids took a lot of pictures. Other than that, we didn't do anything special for them.



Little girls were the life of the party on the dance floor at Mercedes and Jason's wedding.

Mercedes & Jason

There weren't a ton, but the little girls loved the dance floor. They loved to be out there dancing and they'd go grab other guests and bring them to the dance floor!

Did you choose an open bar or a cash bar?

Michele & Rob

A family member gave them a beer keg as their wedding gift, so they didn't have to worry about the bar.

Ayla & Ian

We had an open bar and decided right off the bat to do beer and wine only. We spent about \$3,000.

Amanda & Shawn

We didn't have a bar at all. Our budget was small, so we just had people come up for a big BBQ. It was just like any other normal day where you want family to get together to have a BBQ in the summer, and it just happens that it was for our reception.

Britney & Nick

We did an open bar for the cocktail happy hour and a cash bar for dinner. We were a little bit nervous at first because this could end up being \$4,000 to \$10,000. So we put a cap on it, and they didn't reach the cap during happy hour. We felt like it was a nice gesture for our guests who had spent a lot of money to join us for the weekend.

Kelsi & Shane

The reception started at 1 p.m. on Sunday, so I don't think it was a big thing, or there was a big need for people to drink a lot.

How many invitations did you send?

Amanda & Shawn

We sent out no more than 60 invitations. A couple people didn't come because of bad timing.

Britney & Nick

We sent 185 invitations; around 145 showed up. A couple people said yes and didn't show up.

Kelsi & Shane

It was mostly family. We had four or five people not respond, and about 10 people didn't show up who said yes. I didn't really realize who wasn't there until after the wedding, but I was surprised when I realized it.

Mercedes & Jason

I made 65 or 70 invitations to families and groups. We didn't have very many people who declined. Nowadays you can't get people to send you an RSVP back, even if you put a stamp on it for them. I had family members who hadn't said they were coming, or they said they weren't coming and then they showed up.

Ayla & Ian

We sent out invitations for 160 people; 100 said yes; 60 said no. Two who responded yes didn't show up.

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Getting The Shot

There are many places you might have found Sean Markey over the years: writing about fossil meat and killer kangaroos for National Geographic News; doing an in-depth interview with former Secretary of State Colin Powell; or chronicling the art of making an orchestra out of other people's garbage.

Another place you might find Sean Markey today: behind the camera at your best friend's wedding.

While Markey still works as a freelance journalist and photographer, he has also made some adjustments to spend less time traveling and more time as a stay-at-home-dad in Peacham, Vermont. Which is part of what caused him to turn his lens onto weddings over the past few years.

You can see his journalistic eye all over his bridal photos and it makes for an unusual and beautiful mix.

"I don't have a commercial sensibility," Markey said. "I think I have more of a documentary eye."

What caught our attention was a photo the MacDougalls sent us from their wedding of the dance floor seen from the point of view of the DJ behind his mixing station. It is fair to say that this is an unusual wedding shot - and all the more captivating for its singularity.

"I've always had an eye for moments, and feeling the emotional import of something that is happening," Markey said. "I think as a photographer, the best thing you can do is ... be a big emotional sensor. Hopefully with some good technical and visual skills behind, but just to really - as corny as it might sound - really open yourself up as a human being and really respond as a sensitive person to what you're seeing."

He admits to getting "a little verklempt if I'm really rooting for my couple."

Getting comfortable

In order to make sure everyone is comfortable on the day of the wedding, Markey makes an effort to be with the couple on the rehearsal day to scout



locations and break the ice.

"I take some pictures, spend a couple hours being in the room with people, getting close to them with a camera from time to time," he said. "That way, we're all warming up. And the next day during the wedding, they kind of get it that they don't have to worry about me. I'm going to inject myself, but I'm not going to take over."

He finds these "practice" sessions can also help the couple loosen up so they don't look too stiff in their formal portraits on the big day. "It really helps the couples to practice posing. You wouldn't think you'd have to practice posing!" Markey said. "But if you ask people, 'I want to take your picture,' they'll probably just stand straight and look kind of like a dead cadaver - face to the camera, straight on. There's really an art to turning, practicing some gestures. And photographers have lots of tricks up their sleeve to help couples do that spur of the moment - look at your bride, whisper something in her ear."

Markey said there are some general rules for

what people want in their wedding photos: "Guys want to look strong and macho, and women want to look beautiful."

Having already met with him and seen him at work for a few hours can help people to have fun on the day of the wedding. "I think people relax when they feel confident and they know that you know what you're doing and you're comfortable," Markey said.

The not-so-obvious shots

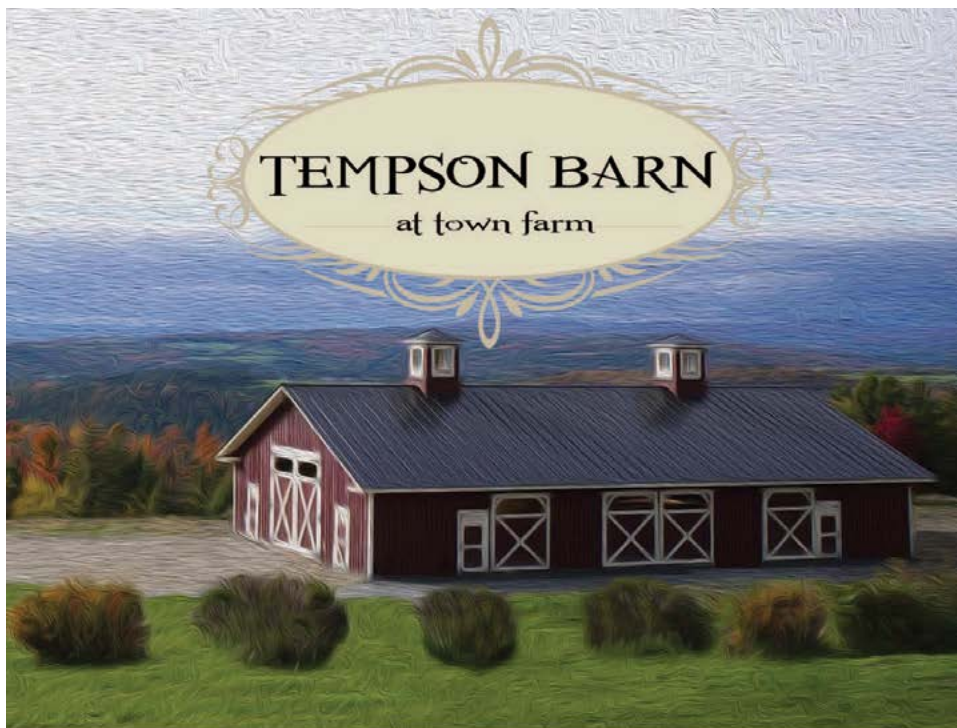
On the wedding day, Markey has certain photos that he has to get, but he also lets his eyes roam for other shots that aren't so obvious.

For instance, this year he began taking note of the mothers of the grooms. Because they were often less involved with the planning of the wedding, they also weren't part of the army making last minute adjustments.

"If someone isn't actively running around and throwing up tulle around a gazebo or putting the flowers out, they're still really important," Markey reflected. "As a photographer you sometimes fol-

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low the action or the big personalities. I just wished I had paid a little more attention to some of the visually quieter people.”

Professional judgment

Looking through Markey’s portfolio, you’ll see as many black and white photos as those in color. While many photographers will shoot everything in color on the day then translate some of them into black and white in post-production, Markey prefers to make his decision on the spot.

Earlier this year he shot a wedding where the bride was getting ready in a dark lodge. The couple wanted a lot of color photos, but when he saw the room he knew he’d have to use a lot of flash and that would com-

plicate an already difficult color situation.

“The furniture is mismatched and the drapes are burgundy and the carpeting is sky blue and the upholstery from the 1980s is forest green,” he said. “It’s going to look really elegant in black and white, and it’s going to be pretty rustic in color and maybe isn’t going to be the most flattering choice.”

That eye for detail is part of what Markey says couples are paying for when they hire a wedding photographer.

“People are hiring your professional judgment and sensibility,” he said. “You can only hope that what speaks to you speaks to the people you’re working for. But you have to trust that’s why

they hired you and that you’ll surprise them and do justice to the moment. That’s a great sense of responsibility.”

How to choose the right photographer for your wedding

Markey has a couple of simple suggestions to help you choose the right person to shoot photos at your wedding.

“Ask to see a bunch of photos from a single wedding,” he said. “It’s easy for photographers to cherry pick and take three good pictures from one wedding and two good pictures from another wedding. But I think you’ll get the best representation by looking at pictures from one wedding. Look at a couple hundred photos and I think that will give you the flavor.”

Second, make sure that you’re looking at the work of the right people.

“Some photographers maybe have second photographers, so make sure that you’re looking at the work of the photographer that you want to come to your wedding.”

With a wide variety of experience, Markey finds something very special in wedding photography.

“People are so happy,” he said. “It’s really great to work with people who are having fun and it’s a really big moment in their lives.”



You can find him online at www.seanmarkey.net.



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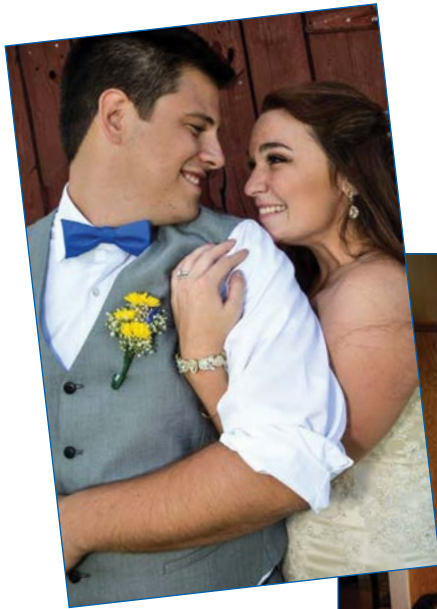
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Budget Worksheet

Cyan
Magenta
Yellow
Black

	Budgeted	Vendor Estimate	Actual		Budgeted	Vendor Estimate	Actual
Apparel				Photography/ Videography			
Bridal Gown	_____	_____	_____	Formals	_____	_____	_____
Veil/Headpiece	_____	_____	_____	Candids	_____	_____	_____
Alterations	_____	_____	_____	Extra Prints	_____	_____	_____
Bride's Shoes	_____	_____	_____	Photo Albums	_____	_____	_____
Bride's Hosiery	_____	_____	_____	Videography	_____	_____	_____
Bride's Garter	_____	_____	_____	Other	_____	_____	_____
Jewelry	_____	_____	_____	Total Photography:	_____	_____	_____
Groom's Suit	_____	_____	_____	Music			
Groom's Shoes	_____	_____	_____	Ceremony Music	_____	_____	_____
Engagement Rings	_____	_____	_____	Cocktail-Hour Music	_____	_____	_____
Wedding Rings	_____	_____	_____	Reception Music	_____	_____	_____
Other	_____	_____	_____	Sound System Rental	_____	_____	_____
Total Apparel:	_____	_____	_____	Dance Floor Rental	_____	_____	_____
Flowers/Decorations				Other	_____	_____	_____
Bridal Bouquet	_____	_____	_____	Total Music:	_____	_____	_____
Bridesmaid Bouquets	_____	_____	_____	Favors & Gifts			
Boutonnieres	_____	_____	_____	Hotel Gift Bags	_____	_____	_____
Corsages	_____	_____	_____	Attendant Gifts	_____	_____	_____
Ceremony Flowers	_____	_____	_____	Bride/Groom Gifts	_____	_____	_____
Flower Girl Buds	_____	_____	_____	Gifts For Parents	_____	_____	_____
Ring Pillow	_____	_____	_____	Gifts For Readers, Etc.	_____	_____	_____
Pew Decorations	_____	_____	_____	Other	_____	_____	_____
Table Decorations	_____	_____	_____	Total Gifts:	_____	_____	_____
Reception Decorations	_____	_____	_____	Stationery			
Lighting	_____	_____	_____	Save The Date Cards	_____	_____	_____
Candles	_____	_____	_____	Invitations/RSVPs	_____	_____	_____
Balloons	_____	_____	_____	Programs	_____	_____	_____
Other	_____	_____	_____	Seating Place Cards	_____	_____	_____
Total Flowers:	_____	_____	_____	Menu Cards	_____	_____	_____
Reception				Thank You Notes	_____	_____	_____
Venue Rental	_____	_____	_____	Postage	_____	_____	_____
Table/Chair Rental	_____	_____	_____	Guest Book	_____	_____	_____
Food	_____	_____	_____	Reception Napkins	_____	_____	_____
Drinks	_____	_____	_____	Calligraphy	_____	_____	_____
Linens	_____	_____	_____	Other	_____	_____	_____
Cake	_____	_____	_____	Total Stationery:	_____	_____	_____
Favors	_____	_____	_____	Other Expenses			
Staff And Gratuities	_____	_____	_____	Wedding Coordinator	_____	_____	_____
Other	_____	_____	_____	Rehearsal Dinner	_____	_____	_____
Total Reception:	_____	_____	_____	Engagement Party	_____	_____	_____
Ceremony				Showers	_____	_____	_____
Site Fee	_____	_____	_____	Salon Appointments	_____	_____	_____
Officiant Fee	_____	_____	_____	Stag/Hen Parties	_____	_____	_____
Other	_____	_____	_____	Brunch	_____	_____	_____
Total Ceremony:	_____	_____	_____	Hotel Rooms	_____	_____	_____
Transportation				Other	_____	_____	_____
Limousine Rental	_____	_____	_____	Total Other Expenses:	_____	_____	_____
Out-Of-Towners	_____	_____	_____	Grand Total:			
Parking	_____	_____	_____		_____	_____	_____
Other	_____	_____	_____		_____	_____	_____
Total Transportation:	_____	_____	_____		_____	_____	_____



Brian and Allison Jones were married on Aug. 6, 2016 at Jacksons Lodge, Wallace Pond, Vermont.

PHOTOS BY DANA CROSSLEY

Having fun with her wedding photo, bride Allison (Weber) Jones shields the eyes of her flower girl Bristol Weber, as Jones' bridesmaids and maid of honor celebrate with a few drinks. Starting at the top with her arm straight out and going clockwise are Maid of honor Josie Kenney, bridesmaids Kelly Jones, Alexandra Claus, Hilary Flynn, Heather Hibbard and Becca Leigh.



Tying the knot



Scott Stewart, Ayla and Ian's officiant helped Ian get spiffed up for the ceremony.



Ayla & Ian

PHOTOS BY MEG BROWN, MEGABUG PHOTOGRAPHY

Sean and Elizabeth Breen were married on July 3 at the St. Johnsbury Athenaeum in St. Johnsbury, Vermont. They chose to have great fun with their wedding party photos. The men all wore superhero socks, while the ladies did their best Charlie's Angels impression.



Cyan Magenta Yellow Black

Aerith the Labradoodle

Mercedes - My dog had to be a part of the wedding - there wasn't a question about that.

Usually your dog doesn't walk you down the aisle. Or get introduced at the reception. She walked down with one of my bridesmaids, but she walked back with a groomsman.



Mercedes & Jason



One Mother, Three Weddings

For Cynthia Stanton, 2016 was the year of the wedding.

"It started when I jokingly said to my boys, 'You know, if you guys don't hurry up and get moving, I'm not going to be able to see any grandkids graduate from high school because I'll be too dang old!'" Cynthia remembered. "And then boom! They all decided 2016 would be the year to get married."

All three of her sons - Michael, 34; Nicholas, 32; and Kevin, 30 - were married in one year.

While the three boys are very close, according to their mother, they have very distinct personalities and that showed in their weddings.

Michael got married first, choosing a small, intimate wedding on a farm in Candia, New Hampshire. He and Megan Trusselle were married outdoors on Feb. 14.

"It was 9 degrees," Cynthia said. "We took a sleigh ride and there was a big bonfire, but we were outside and cold!"

Kevin got married next, choosing to wed Rachel Maliniak at the Alerin Barn in St. Johnsbury on Aug. 27.

Nicholas was married to Nicole Macri just a few weeks later in Park City, Utah on Sept. 17.

"I think we hit a home run on all of them. They all were very different weddings, very different places. But all really beautiful and very wonderful to see," Cynthia said. "They all seem very happy with the end result."

Mother of the groom(s)

Between attending showers, helping to purchase rings and dresses, and planning the events themselves, Cynthia's calendar for 2016 is almost comical.

"I would say to my husband, 'This is this week and these are the things that need to get done because we can't leave it all to the last minute because it will just not work out if we do,'" she said. "Planning like that, you just had to be efficient about getting everything done. Between northern showers and southern showers and in amongst these, we had a nephew get married so there were showers for that family."

She is grateful that during her Year of the Wedding she was dealing with three sons rather than three daughters.

"The involvement of mothers of the groom is very different than mothers of the bride," she said. "Each one of them had me involved with different things, so that was fun."

While some mothers have a hard time separating themselves from the planning of their child's wedding, Cynthia didn't have that luxury. Because she was involved in so many weddings at once, she didn't have time to be involved in every decision.

"One thing I learned is they [the couple getting married] are the runners of the show. They're the ones it's for. So I might have some ideas, but I say, 'Okay, what do you want to do with this?'"



ALL PHOTOS COURTESY OF CYNTHIA STANTON

The three Stanton sons and their brides pose with the Stanton parents at Kevin's wedding. From left: Michael and Megan with their son Miles, Peter and Cynthia Stanton, Rachel and Kevin, and Nicole and Nicholas.

Cynthia said. "Each one you had to know who they were as personalities, and then be involved as either you were asked or recommended that you do something. It's learning that role."

Doing so many weddings at once also helped her to see how each couple's character informed their wedding. "You had to really look at each couple's personality and what their interests were," she said. "Their personalities definitely shone through in what they were planning."

Financial figuring

As tradition suggests, the Stantons paid for the rehearsal dinner for each son's wedding. They also covered the alcohol at the wedding. "I read online somewhere that's what we were supposed to do," Cynthia said.

But before they got to paying the bills, the parental couple sat down and looked at their finances. They decided a total amount of money they had to spend on weddings, then divided that in three - one chunk for each son.

"We wanted to keep it as fair as possible because that's important," Cynthia explained. If a couple used all of their money for their wedding, that was fine. If they had anything left over, the son and his wife received the rest in cash.

Rehearsal dinners

Each of the rehearsal dinners required different levels of input and planning from Cynthia and Peter.

For the eldest son - the

outdoor wedding in February - the rehearsal dinner was held at one of the Common Man restaurants in New Hampshire.

"I had to just book it and then do very limited stuff for that event," Cynthia said. "I wasn't able to do anything there because it was at a restaurant."

The middle son's wedding was in Utah, but prior to heading out west, they had a bridal shower in Brantview Dorm at St. Johnsbury Academy, where Cynthia works.

"We had everybody wear their hats and pearls," Cynthia said.

At first, she said, people were skeptical of the idea. "But once people really jumped into it a bit,



Michael and Megan get married in southern New Hampshire outside on Feb. 14.

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Kevin dances with Cynthia at his wedding in the Alerin Barn.

it was very fun. We had a really nice time,” Cynthia said.

Once in Park City, Cynthia and Peter hosted the rehearsal dinner. “I just had to ask them as a family, what do you have for suggestions? I could look online, but I don’t know what’s a good restaurant, what’s not a good restaurant,” she said. “So I took their recommendations and then called and booked that.”

The youngest son’s rehearsal party was at Cynthia and Peter’s home, and they managed to get something out of the deal: an excuse to do renovations on their home.

“When you host something at your house, you’re a little more attentive to some of the things that you hadn’t seen before,” Cynthia explained. “So I painted things and we added a sunroom on our house.”

They also had pizzas made on-site by Farm To Fire Pizza (see page 24 for more.)

Favorite memories

Cynthia carries a favorite memory from each of her sons’ weddings.

For Michael: “Listening to my son say the most heartfelt vows, and he said it from his heart. It still makes me cry. It was very lovely. He’s a very, very thoughtful man.”

For Nicholas: “Watching him scurry around trying to get things ready for the wedding and how proud he was that everyone was there who could be there.”

Because Cynthia’s mother and father, both in their late 80s, were unable to make the trip out to Utah, Michael hooked a live video feed so the grandparents could watch the proceedings, which was a special touch.

For Kevin: “I think watching those two walk toward each other and how much emotion they were both feeling ... That was incredibly sweet.”

Advice for other parents



Nicole’s bridal shower was a high tea held at Brantview Dorm in St. Johnsbury.



Nicholas (left) and Michael (holding his son Miles) offer toasts to their youngest brother Kevin at his wedding.

This guide is always filled with advice for the bride and groom, but Cynthia Stanton is well positioned to offer freshly-acquired advice to other mothers.

“Really have the conversations with kids about what they would like to have - what kinds of things they hope to have be part of their event,” she offered. “But also be very clear about what is able to be done from the family. And also communicating that with the other family, to make

sure that everybody is on the same page, to make sure that you’re not going to put anybody in a bad spot.”

Unsurprisingly, she said, it all comes down to one word: Communication.

“And just making sure that the couples were getting what they needed and wanted and that we weren’t impeding that in any way. And that we were doing the kinds of things that they wanted to have,” she concluded.



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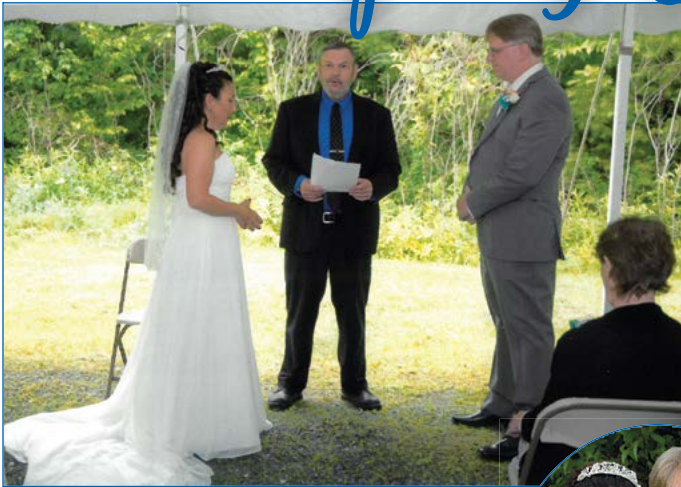


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Keeping Yourself Organized



Michele & Rob

How did you keep yourselves organized?
Michele – My mother is very good with lists, so she helped with that. We had lists as to what needed to be done and who should be doing what. As things got done, we crossed them off the list or added more as someone thought of something. We had one list that everyone worked off of on a yellow pad.



Amanda & Shawn

How did you keep yourselves organized?
Amanda - I focused on the most important things – the dress, the tux and the rings. Then the other stuff just kind of flowed. We both work in a hardware store, so it was easy to get the mason jars, or the BBQ baskets you can use for your food. We had so much help between our moms for getting everything for the wedding. We didn't want to spend a lot of money on the wedding.

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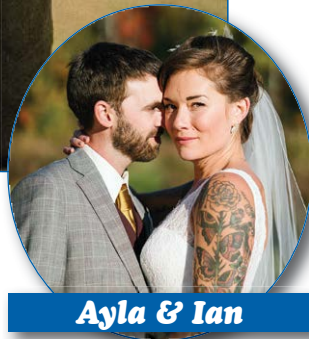
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Ayla & Ian

What challenges did you have in staying organized?

Ayla - When we were planning our wedding, we also moved across country and we were living in between houses from May until August.

Ian - We were planning a wedding while we were pretty much homeless while we were bouncing around getting our feet on the ground in Vermont.

How did you keep yourselves organized during planning?

Ayla - We had a box that we put anything and everything into. And a notebook. That was about it!

What apps/websites did you use for wedding planning?

The Knot - It was very user-friendly. It made coordinating our guests a lot easier; 90 percent of our guest list were coming from the west coast and most of them had never been to New England before. We spent lots of time to make it very detailed about directions, where to stay, what to see. Having that tool for them - for that aspect alone it was amazing.

See **More Organizing**, Page 22

Meet Kelsi and Shane MacDougall

Kelsi and Shane started dating when they were both in high school at Lyndon Institute. When they decided to get married nine years later, they wanted to signify the length of their commitment.

"After our ceremony, we released nine doves to signify our ninth anniversary," Kelsi told us (to learn more about dove releases, see page 9.)

Kelsi did most of the wedding planning because she said she was very specific about what she wanted. "[Shane] just let me go off and do my own thing," she said. "I showed him and told him what we were doing, and he was okay with it all."

They stayed within their budget with one exception: the decorations.

"They didn't all go as planned," Kelsi said. "The decorations I think I spent too much time thinking about and buying. I don't think I needed as much stuff as I bought. I was happy with everything else."

Because they were married at the beginning of the school year, Kelsi didn't want to immediately take time off from her job as a teacher for the honeymoon. Instead, they took a "mini-moon" to Boston to see the Celtics play. They're planning their big honeymoon for next summer, although they haven't yet decided where they want to go.

"We're totally debating," she said. "We don't know if we want to go to a beach or an outdoor thing. It depends on how much money we can save."



Kelsi & Shane



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More Organizing

Continued from Page 21

What challenges did you have in staying organized?

I had wanted one year for planning, but school got in the way, so I started Christmas break. I had about 9 months. I don't know if it would have been enough if I hadn't had the summer off school to plan as well.

How did you keep yourselves organized?

Kelsi - I'm pretty organized because I'm a teacher. It's my personality. I had lists on my phone and my computer and had everything written down by dates.

Did you have a wedding website?

We did. It wasn't helpful, only because I thought my sister was going to give out the links, and she thought we were giving it out, so it never went out. It would have been helpful if we'd sent the link out on one of the invitations.

I used the Knot, which gave me a really helpful checklist - a timeline of what I needed to do by when.



Kelsi & Shane



Britney & Nick

How did you keep yourselves organized?

Britney - I have a folder and I have binders!

What websites or apps helped you during planning?

The Knot - The checklist on there is really helpful. It breaks down what you have to do six months before your wedding and three months before your wedding.

Pinterest - You can just type in anything with your colors and get ideas for different types of flowers or other ideas of what other people have done and then just stem off that.



Mercedes & Jason

How did you keep yourself organized during planning?

Mercedes - I kept things in a folder together in my email. I categorized things that way. I'm not a super organized person but I like to keep things in the right place and when it counts I can do that.

Jason - Mercedes did a lot of the planning, but some of it got kicked to me at the end. A lot of the finalization, but Mercedes did 90% of all the work.

What websites or apps helped you during planning?

WeddingSpot.com - I could organize my guest list and when they accepted/rejected the invitation.



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Gift Registries



Kelsi & Shane

I did the Knot registry, but we never sent the link out to anyone! So I didn't get any gifts from it, unfortunately.

We got a lot of homemade gifts – personal items like pictures and things for me and Shane - and cash and checks. I was really happy.



Ayla & Ian

I used thankfulregistry.com and I would highly recommend it to anybody. It's amazing! It's a registry that you can pull off of any website, any store – etsy, or even a friend's website. It's a \$30 fee and the registry is valid for one full year. I did a lot of research and this one was the most user friendly. It was very easy for anyone, whether or not you're computer savvy to use the website. It was also very, very easy for me to add gifts to it.

Most people gave us gifts off the registry. Since we knew that so many people were traveling for the wedding, on our website we were like, bring us your favorite vinyl record, because we got a record player off the registry.



Michele & Rob

Michele - We told people that no gift was necessary. We didn't register anywhere and kind of left it up to the guests. If they wanted to bring something, that was up to them. But we preferred no gifts.

Rob - We did get quite a few, because people were so kind.



Britney & Nick

We didn't have a ton on our registries at Kohl's and Amazon. We'd already had our house for about a year before the wedding. I got most of the gifts that were on the registry for the wedding shower and then most of the gifts for the wedding were money toward the honeymoon.

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Pizza: A Novel Wedding Delicacy

Over the last couple of years we've been hearing about a new trend: an on-site pizza party for weddings and rehearsal dinners.

Last year, Jeff and Paula Geil of Monroe, New Hampshire, entered the field by rolling out their own wood-fired oven to public and private events around the area.

It all started because they are pizza lovers themselves.

"We personally were looking to have a wood-fired oven at home and decided it was prohibitive to put it in the house and wanted to make sure we could take it if we moved," Jeff Geil said. "It sort of grew into, hey we can make a business out of this if it's on wheels."

And thus Farm To Fire was born.

"It's a fully-enclosed trailer. I designed it so the side of the trailer opens up," Geil said. "People get a view of the full kitchen and wood-fired oven, so they get a full view of the live action."

They've brought their pizza trailer to venues around the area including the Alerin Barn, Bishop Farm and the Pioneer

Barn, as well as private homes. "We pull up to somebody's home and set up there," Geil said. "We just need a standard 15 or 20 amp outlet so we don't have to run a generator, we can just plug in."

And with that one outlet, they're up and running!

"We're very quiet and pretty much self-contained. We have water on board and our heat source is wood, so it's very inviting and very entertaining for guests."

The couple hosting the party selects five pizzas from the menu of 20 offerings. The Geils keep the buffet table filled with those five pizzas for as long as people are eating, along with salads and appetizers.

"We're producing pizzas as they're being consumed," Geil said. "We're cooking on the floor at between 500 and 600 degrees, so the pizzas cook very quickly. We cook three to four pizzas at a time, so it goes fairly quickly. But if everybody comes up at once, they can clean the table up!"

All of the pizzas are sliced before going on the buffet table, and guests can return as many times as they want to sam-



PHOTO BY MEGABUG PHOTOGRAPHY, COURTESY OF FARM TO FIRE PIZZA
Kregg and Regan MacPherson enjoy Farm To Fire Pizza with their son Jaxon.

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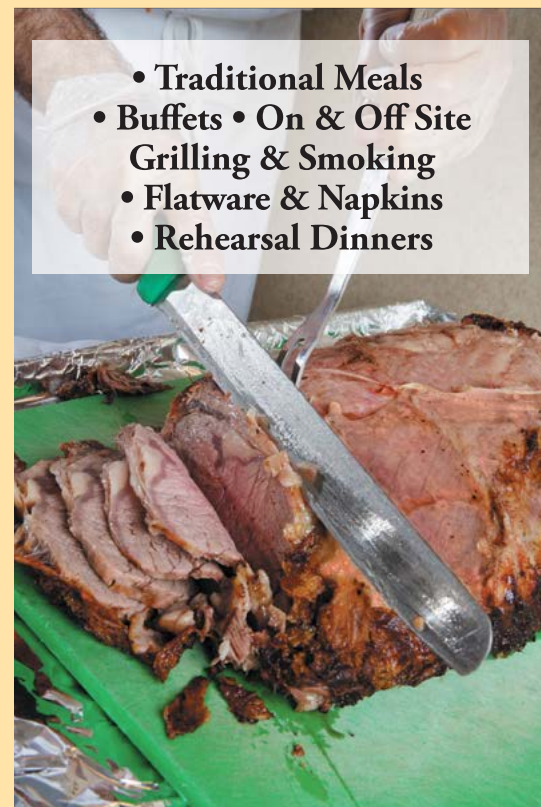
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ple the different types of pizzas - or get more of a favorite.

They are also able to take care of people with dietary restrictions, like gluten or dairy sensitivities, as well as vegetarian and vegan guests.

They're also happy to take requests to add something or leave something off a particular pie, as long as they have the ingredients on-hand for the day.

Speaking of ingredients

The Geils grow a lot of their own vegetables for use on the pizzas, and source as much else locally as they can.

"We try to source from local farm markets and our own garden. We grow our own garlic and tomatoes and basil," Geil said.

"Meats are a little more difficult to say they're all locally-sourced," he said. "But if clients request that, if they want specific meats, we'll certainly source them accordingly."

They also use local cheeses from area farms as often as possible.

Why it's nice to have a wood-fired oven at a celebration

"It's sort of warming," Geil said. "The oven itself draws you in, the wood-fired aspect. People ask a lot of questions and it's fun to share our passion."

He and his family, who work the pizza oven together, enjoy weddings in particular. "There's a lot of happy moments there, and to be part of that, and to see smiling faces because they're enjoying the food and the physical presence of a wood-fired oven," Geil said. "It's fun to learn about the new couple and their families."

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Old/New/Borrowed/Blue



Michele & Rob

Old – A pin of my father's - it was a small cross and I put it on my bouquet

New – My dress

Borrowed – A princess crown that I borrowed from my future mother-in-law

Blue – My garter



Ayla & Ian

Old – Earrings made from Ian's grandmother's rings

New – My dress

Borrowed – A pin that has been passed down by a whole train of women who have used it as their something borrowed for generations

Blue – Really beautiful embroidered labels that had our married initials sewn into it, and I had that sewn into my dress



Old – An angel pin that my mother gave to my sister to wear when she got married

New – The necklace I wore – I didn't want it to be just a diamond or pearls. So it was a brand new sterling silver necklace with a moonstone in it and two white sapphires.

Borrowed - Earrings from my friend Caitlin

Blue – A little blue charm from my mother-in-law



Mercedes & Jason



Kelsi & Shane

Old and borrowed

- A cake cutting set from my grandmother that my mom and grandmother used at their weddings

New – my dress

Blue – My undergarments



Britney & Nick

Meet Britney and Nick Bigelow
Britney and Nick decided up front that they had three priorities: their venue, their food, and their photographer. They would spend their money there and do everything else on their own.

Some couples who make the DIY decision end up panicked because things take longer than they expected. But because they had 16 months to plan, the couple told us that they never felt rushed.

But they were working hard.

"For a while we called our basement the wedding sweatshop," Nick joked. "We'd go down there on Sunday afternoons and our m o m s would come over and we'd get done what we got done."

And they made other choices that were special to them as a couple. For instance, rather than buying party favors for all the guests, they made a donation to the National Parkinson's Foundation, something that is important to both of them. "Our families were pretty touched by that," Britney said.

And rather than having their groomsmen pay a lot of money for a short-term tux rental, they were talking about possibly buying suits. Then one day, while shopping in at the outlets in Tilton, New Hampshire, they wandered into the Van Heusen store, which was having an 80 percent off sale.

"We were in the store and we found the suits!" Nick said. That began an afternoon of texting back and forth with their groomsmen about sizes and measurements. "Our groomsmen paid us back for them, but we got their suits for under \$100."

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Their Favorite Moments



Michele & Rob

Michele – My favorite moment that day was when my son and I were walking down the aisle. I had a split second when I felt like everything was perfect. It felt like my dad was actually pushing my son and I down the aisle toward my soon-to-be husband. That's when I knew that everything had come together perfectly and we were where we were supposed to be.

Rob – Stepping out of the camper with my brother by my side and walking over and standing there, and just waiting for Mrs. Foster to come wandering down the aisle. And she did!



Britney & Nick

Britney – Seeing Nick. We had debated doing a first look but we didn't. I was walking down the stairs with my dad and we were talking and both crying. Then you look and Nick is bawling too.

Nick – I remember everybody telling me that the first time you saw your soon-to-be wife coming down the aisle, you'd feel like you just got punched in the chest and you wouldn't be able to breathe. She finally came around the corner and they were right – I couldn't breathe. I was trying to wipe my face. I was a mess.



Kelsi & Shane

Kelsi - We were doing a generations dance and my grandparents were the last people on the dance floor. They've been married 60 years and my grandfather was crying. He's sick with cancer now, so it was just a beautiful moment for my grandmother and grandfather to be up there dancing and be so emotional. He didn't know if he could make it to my wedding, so that was a good moment.



Ayla & Ian

Ayla – Walking down the aisle, I finally got to see him. Every single part of that moment - it was like tunnel vision. I didn't see anyone else, I just saw Ian. He wrote the song that I walked down the aisle to. I just saw him and I couldn't look at anything but his eyes and hear this music and feel my mom beside me. It was the best moment of my life.

Ian – Seeing her come down the aisle was an amazing moment, and thank God it took some time because I was trying to hide tears and keep my composure. But the best moment was exchanging our vows. Just locking eyes with my favorite person in the world and being able to share with each other; very much in front of everybody else around us, but only seeing her.



Mercedes & Jason



Jason – Having everyone there. We're all busy, so we don't really get to see family and the friends. Having everyone there was actually really nice.

Mercedes – When we shared our cake for the first time, we kind of laid it on a bit. I almost bit off his thumb! He was really pushing it in, and his thumb was in my mouth so I just bit it. It was just a perfect moment and we got great pictures to capture it perfectly.

Shawn – Marrying my wife. She was beautiful. Very stunning.



Amanda & Shawn

Amanda – Walking up to him and just seeing his face and knowing I'm going to marry my best friend for the rest of my life.

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Most Fun vs. Most Stressful



Britney & Nick

What was the most fun part of planning your wedding?

Nick – All the time we spent together putting stuff together and accomplishing stuff.

Britney – He was obsessed with the checklist!

Nick – That was my favorite thing, checking stuff off.

What was the most stressful part of planning your wedding?

Nick – Getting everything to Loon Mountain Resort. Not using vendors, we didn't have any way to deliver the cakes or the flowers. Everything we'd created for the last year and a half, we had to figure out how to pack it and get it to Loon, and where to store it over night. Once we got everything where it was supposed to be, I felt a lot less stress.

What was the most stressful part of planning your wedding?

Shawn – All of it was stressful!

Amanda – There's not one thing that wasn't stressful!



Amanda & Shawn

What was the most fun part of planning your wedding?

Ayla – I think one of the most fun parts for me was sending out the invitations and getting the RSVPs back. It was also one of the most daunting tasks – rounding up everyone's addresses, etc. But once you did, it was this realization that, oh my god, we're going to have all of our favorite, most loved people at once place at the same time. I think for me it was the first time that I had realized that. Then getting the RSVPs back was like YAY!

Ian – Also harvesting all the food and getting to hang out with our friends for that week putting it all together last minute.

What was the most stressful part of planning your wedding?

Ayla – This was the first time I've ever done this. A lot of my friends aren't married yet, so I've never been involved in the planning process. We were going into it without a road map. I don't know are things supposed to cost this much? I don't know if I'm doing this right. I don't know if I'm doing it on the right timeline.

Ian – Some of our lists were the same lists over and over again because we couldn't focus while also finding a house and starting new jobs.



Ayla & Ian

What was the most fun part of planning your wedding?

Reconnecting with friends and family. One of my bridesmaids I hadn't seen in three years, so I got to see her. That was great!



Kelsi & Shane

What was the most fun part of planning your wedding?

Mercedes - It was fun to have the control over my wedding. I enjoyed putting people with certain things and choosing the colors. The decorating and making my invitations was fun for me.

What was the most stressful part of planning your wedding?

Jason – The deadline!

Mercedes – Trying to get everything done in time. I did a lot of things myself because I was trying to save money. There were just some projects that couldn't get done, but I was working all the way until the day of the wedding.



Mercedes & Jason

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Advice As You Begin Planning



Mercedes & Jason

Mercedes – Don't get so caught up in the details. People are there to see you and the one you love joined together and celebrate your day. The fact that your napkins don't match your bridesmaids earrings doesn't matter. Get everyone fed and happy and enjoy yourself!

Jason – Definitely lean on each other. At the end of everything, Mercedes was freaking out and finally said

to me, 'Call the photographer, talk to them and finalize everything.' Everyone will definitely be there to help.



Ayla & Ian

Ian and Ayla – Breathe!

Ayla – Don't get down on

yourself if you feel like every single part of it isn't fun and the most awesome thing that you're doing. That's okay. You're planning a very large event. I'm planning an event for 100 people. It's stressful. And it's okay to feel that way.

You're going to have the most important people around you in one space. Nothing else is as important. You're getting MARRIED to your best friend, the person you love most in the world. That's what matters.



Kelsi & Shane

Kelsi - Let other people help you. I think the reason why I was so stressed was because I did the whole thing by myself. I was specific and I knew what I wanted and I thought other people wouldn't, so I didn't accept or ask for any help.



Britney & Nick

Britney – I would tell them to not rush it. I think that was why we were so relaxed throughout our whole planning. It wasn't rushed and we were able to do a lot of things ourselves and then put our money where we thought it was most important. And doing the planning together was a lot of fun!

Nick – Make sure you take the time to relax and not be stressed on your wedding day. It goes by so fast – the day is what it is. Just let it happen.



Amanda & Shawn

Amanda - Take your time with it. Communicate with each other. It's good to have both people's input. It's not just one person's wedding, it's both of yours. Both people's input are just as important. And you don't have to spend a lot of money to have a beautiful wedding.



Michele & Rob

Rob – Just relax. Just enjoy each other and enjoy whatever it is you want to do. Not a lot of stress and pressure is needed. A lot of young kids today, they just want to jump into things. I'd maybe want to see them procrastinate a little. Be smart about your decision.

Michele – Enjoy the planning, enjoy the time.

Remember that if everything doesn't turn out just perfect, the only one who's going to know that is you. Remember, this is just the first day of your life – yes you want it perfect, but you have more days. This is just one day.



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Mercedes & Jason

Meet Mercedes and Jason Edgar

When Mercedes decided to hand-make personalized invitations for her guests, she didn't realize the project was going to take two months.

Their wedding theme was vintage/rustic, so she bought scrapbook paper with interesting patterns. Then she got a bunch of doilies from a friend, along with vintage doilies her mother had collected in the 1970s. "I love how pretty doilies are. They're vintage and really neat," she said.

Inspired by projects she had seen on Pinterest, she tried to turn the doilies into a chandelier (Google DIY doily wedding chandelier if you don't believe her).

When that didn't work to her satisfaction, she decided to use them for the invitations. "I custom cut them so that they would fold over the front of my invitations and into the inside," she said. "And I got some rice paper that was see through that you could print on it. I used that and I printed the text and it laid over my actual invitations."

Every invitation was individually designed. "They were really pretty," Mercedes said. "That's why it took me two months!"

"It was a lot of work," agreed Jason.



Post-Wedding Blues

Some couples report that after a year or more of planning for a single day, when the music and lights are turned off, they have a sense of post-wedding blues. Others are elated that the big day went well.

Ayla – Post-wedding blues was huge for both of us.

An extended wedding - With friends and family coming from all over the globe to celebrate, the Scott wedding event lasted for about 10 days. Ayla said, "People started arriving the Monday before the wedding. We had a very casual rehearsal dinner on Thursday. On Friday we did a big meet and greet at the Comfort Inn for everyone. Saturday was the wedding. Sunday we had people come back to stay in Montpelier. We went out to eat and to the bars for the next three days, as everyone left one by one. It was really nice because it wasn't a mass exodus of everyone you love being suddenly gone." The last guest left the Wednesday after the wedding.



Ayla & Ian



Kelsi & Shane

Kelsi - I think that I was very happy that it was over. It was four weeks into the school year and I was trying to finish up the wedding. It felt like after the wedding I returned back to my job. It was successful and I was happy to move on.

Nick – I was very sad the next weekend when I had no crafts to do.

Britney – Sense the sarcasm!

Nick – The next day wasn't a let down, but after 16 months of planning and all of a sudden it's done in a few days. I guess it was a little bit of a shock. It went fast.

Their biggest regret - Not taking leftovers from their wedding buffet. Nick said, "One of the waitresses came up and said, 'If you want a to-go box let me know what you want and we'll put it together.' We didn't think anything of it. But Sunday night we were like, What are we going to have for dinner?"



Britney & Nick

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Ayla & Ian



Photographers

Many thanks to the professional photographers whose work grace the pages of this publication.

- Amanda and Shawn Liberty - **Tina Mitchell**
- Ayla and Ian Scott - **Elaine Sheldon**
- Britney and Nick Bigelow - **Jordan Royer**
- Kelsi and Shane MacDougall - **Sean Markey**
- Mercedes and Jason Edgar - **Geoffrey McLoughlin**
- Michele and Rob Foster - **GM Fotography**



Britney & Nick

Recommended Vendors

Our couples used many local vendors to make their wedding day dreams come true. Here are some of the ones they spoke highly of:

FOOD

- Topic of the Town - Littleton, New Hampshire
- White Market - Lyndonville, Vermont
- Sodexo - Lyndon State College

CAKE

- Price Chopper - St. Johnsbury, Vermont

RENTALS

- Abbott Rental - Littleton, New Hampshire

PHOTOGRAPHERS

- GM Fotography - Littleton, New Hampshire
- Double Diamond Photography - Lyndonville, Vermont
- Sean Markey - Peacham, Vermont

FLOWERS

- Price Chopper - St. Johnsbury, Vermont
- Artistic Gardens - St. Johnsbury, Vermont
- White Market - Lyndonville, Vermont

HAIR

- Shear Insight Design - Littleton, New Hampshire
- Oxbow Hair Design - Bradford, Vermont

VENUES

- Alerin Barn - St. Johnsbury, Vermont
- Loon Mountain - Lincoln, New Hampshire
- Burke Mountain - Burke, Vermont

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