



Wedding Bells 2021

Two local features:

- Sickendick/Jahnsen Wedding – page 2B
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GASCONADE
COUNTY
Republican
WEDNESDAY, Feb. 10, 2021

Falling in love with you...

Jared and Madalyn Sickendick, April 18, 2020

by Roxie Murphy, Gasconade County Republican Feature Writer

Lovestory of Madalyn (Jahnsen) & Jared Sickendick

Wise Men Say Only Fools Rush In
Wyatt Jahnsen hounded his friend Jared Sickendick to date his older sister Madalyn for three months straight. The couple was slow to the starting line, but once the connection was there, they were inseparable.

“For our first date, we just drove around and got to know each other,” Madalyn said. “I knew he was “the one” first because when I first met him, I told one of my friends I was gonna marry him one day.”

They were both 20-years-old.

Their “first date driving around” was every night for a week straight, and their drives lasted three hours each evening.

“Every evening when we both got off work, we would meet up and drive — anywhere from Owensville to Gerald,”



MADALYN'S MOTHER wore this bracelet on her wedding day — something borrowed.

she said. “We would just hit every country road there was.” They talked about everything.

“Our family, we both come from a big family, our religion, what we wanted to do in life — anything we could think of,” Madalyn said.

Since they both still lived with their parents, they took turns spending evenings at each other’s houses and went on double dates with Maddy’s twin sister Lillian Loughridge and her husband.

It wasn’t long before they started talking about getting married and where they would live.

“She always pushed me to do better while being together,” Jared said.

Soon after they started dating, he quit his job at PEM and started working for Mid West Waters.

“During that time I was able to move out of my parents and get my own place,” he said. “We knew we wanted more

See **Sickendick**, Page 3B

Wedding photos by Brittany Sederburg

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DIANE THOMAS





Sickendick/Jahnsen Wedding
Page 2B



Lenauer/Baehr Wedding
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Sickendick

• from page 2B

for our future, so I quit my job at Mid West Waters and started at KJU to better our future.”

They hadn’t been dating a year yet, but he had his eye on the prize. Instead of asking Maddy what ring she wanted, he took her shopping.

“She tried on a lot of rings, but when she tried on her ring, I knew I had to get it because she couldn’t stop smiling, and she didn’t want to take it off,” Jared recalls.

“It was perfect for me,” she said. “It wasn’t too big and wasn’t too small and had just enough bling. They had just got it in and I was the first person to try it on. I just knew it was meant for me.”

“I actually bought it that day. After I purchased the ring (from Kay’s), it took about two weeks before I proposed,” he added.

But I Can’t Help Falling In Love With You

“We had always talked about getting married and then the day came when he asked me to marry him,” Madalyn said.

It was two weeks after he had purchased the ring, which was burning a hole in his pocket. Jared decided he would take Madalyn fishing at Port Hudson Lake. It was a beautiful October in 2019.

“He acted like he was putting a worm on my line, instead he put the ring on it,” she said. “Then got on one knee and asked me to marry him.”

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A special thanks to these couples for sharing their stories.

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Of course, she said “yes!”

“I was so excited and started planning right away,” Madalyn said.

They wanted a fall wedding and chose September, but then decided they couldn’t wait that long.

“So we chose April 18,” Madalyn said.

It wasn’t until later that she realized her twin sister had married on May 18, 2019, and they would be married 11 months apart!

“I had everything booked and all lined out,” she said.

The guest list included 250 of their friends and family.

While Madalyn planned the wedding, the couple also had an eye on their future living arrangement. They wanted to start a family right after the wedding, but Jared was still living in an apartment. Fortunately, his recent job change gave him the ability to purchase a home.

“I thought, why not put our money towards something we could own,” Madalyn said when they started talking about housing. “I knew we couldn’t raise a family in an apartment and we wanted kids right away. So one day I looked at Zillow and said ‘let’s buy this house.’ And we did.”

By November, Jared had a contract down on a house in Owensville.



MADALYN'S FATHER, Kurt Jahnsen hugs his daughter before the ceremony where he asked her one question. “Are you sure?”

As Jared started the home buying process, Madalyn was putting the finishing touches on their wedding, choosing classic black and white and blue colors to go with a rustic theme.

“My aunt had always told me black was a thinning color, so I knew I wanted my bridesmaids in black and the boys were also in black and white and I had them wear blue floral bow ties to give it an elegant look.

See **Sickendick**, Page 5B



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AN EMPTY church was not what Madalyn and Jared wanted for their big day. COVID-19 changed those plans.



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BRIDESMAIDS FOR the Sickendick wedding were Lillian Loughridge, Erica Marquart, April Jahnsen and Paige Reed. Groomsmen were Colton Moore, Jeremy Sickendick, Rhett Turner and Wyatt Jahnsen.

Sickendick • from page 4B

She purchased her dress from Mimi's Bridal Shop in Sullivan.

"I wanted a fitted, mermaid style dress," Madalyn said. "I knew I wanted it plain or with very simple details."

The dress she purchased was a strapless mermaid style with ruching.

"It had a fun bottom with layers," she said. "I had no detail on the dress except for the belt I added to it."

Darling, So It Goes, Some Things Are Meant To Be...

They closed on the house in January 2020, and Jared moved in. Even though they knew they wanted to get married, and were planning their wedding and their future with a home purchase, Madalyn and Jared were determined not to live together first.

Madalyn had the final touches on their wedding completed.

"I had everything booked and all lined out and then COVID started taking off," Madalyn said. "I was terrified because I wasn't going to be able to have my dream wedding or have a wedding at all. Then, after talking about it, we agreed COVID is

See **Sickendick**, Page 7B

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AFTER THE ceremony the couple made a special trip to Gasconade Manor Nursing Home to visit Madalyn's grandmother Pauletta Jahnsen, who was unable to attend the ceremony due to COVID-19 restrictions.



Sickendick • from page 6B

not going to stop us from getting married. So we continued on. We knew it wasn't gonna be how we wanted it, but we would make it work. And we did."

In March, the Center for Disease Control and local health department recommendations prohibited gatherings over 12 people. A two-week closure of restaurants and curfews set in place had couples downsizing or rescheduling weddings everywhere.

Madalyn and Jared canceled their large reception, to be rescheduled at a later date, and asked all but 20 guests — their parents and the wedding party — not to attend the church service at the Immaculate Conception Church of Owensville.

The morning of April 18 dawned with sunshine, but rain was expected in the afternoon and a high in the 50s.

Jared and his best man Colton Moore got ready at the couples' new house, while Madalyn and her maid of honor/sister Lillian got ready at the church.

"My make-up and hair were done by Jasmine Marquez and nails by Kim at Elegant Nails," she said.

Once her make-up, hair, and dress were ready, there was only one thing left. Something borrowed.

"When my mom got married, she wore a pearl bracelet and so when my two sisters got married they wore the bracelet, and then I wore it on my wedding day," Madalyn said.

At 2 p.m., Madalyn and her father Kurt Jahnsen were waiting at the back of the church. This wasn't the dream wedding she had hoped for.

"I wanted a big wedding, having the double doors open and all eyes on me," Madalyn said.

Just as the music began to play, her father Kurt asked her the same question he asked his other two daughters on their wedding days, "Are you sure you want to do this? We can leave right now."

But she said "yes." She and Jared saw each other earlier in the day and her decision was made a long time ago.

"We decided to see each other before walking down the aisle," Madalyn said. "Of course, when I saw him, I cried like a baby. I was so happy that I was going to be able to

See **Sickendick**, Page 8B

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MADALYN AND JARED were able to hold a reception last fall, about five months after the wedding.

Sickendick • from page 7B

marry this man.”

Canon in D started playing in the vestibule, the doors were open to a mostly empty church, her groom waiting at the front.

“He looked very handsome, well-groomed and nicely dressed. He had a smile on his face as I was walking down,” Madalyn said.

Jared watched his bride walking up the aisle on her father’s arm.

“The doors were already opened and I remember when the song started to play, she started walking down, I knew she was the one. I’m not a crier, but I was extremely nervous, but also happy. I couldn’t take my eyes off of her,” Jared said.

Their only witnesses were her parents, Kurt and Theresa Jahnsen of Bland, and his parents, Jake and Dawn Sickendick of Hermann, her maid of honor and his best man.

Their officiant, Priest Wayne Boyer, waited with the groom.

Following the vows, the couple made their exit out of the church where some of their family and friends waited in the open air to congratulate them.

“Definitely not the vision I wanted,” Madalyn said, but adds, “It made my wedding a lot less stressful for me and my wedding day simple and meaningful.”

See **Sickendick**, Page 9B

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MADALYN AND JARED share their first dance as a married couple by Only Fools Rush In by Elvis Presley.

Sickendick • from page 7B

Flowers were brought in from Old World Creations in Owensville, and the day was memorialized by their photographer Brittany Sederburg.

A small gathering with a cake from Dieters Market in New Haven followed the ceremony. While most of their family and friends were prevented from attending, there was one who Madalyn missed especially.

“My grandma wasn’t able to come because of COVID, so we drove to the nursing home where she was at and went outside by her window,” Madalyn remembers. “We got a picture with her and she was able to see me on my wedding day.”

A small gathering with a cake from Dieters Market in New Haven followed the ceremony.

Take My Hand, Take My Whole Life Too

The reception was rescheduled for September at Immaculate Conception Parish Hall, and the couple eventually danced their first dance as man and wife to “Only Fools Rush In” by Elvis Presley.

They had hoped to go on their Florida honeymoon after the reception, but life had a different plan.

“I got pregnant and I was sick all the time,” Madalyn said.

The couple announced their pregnancy in August and by September, Madalyn didn’t think she would survive the drive to Florida.

“So we went to Branson instead,” she said. “We stayed at a condo in Westgate. We booked it for a whole week, but didn’t stay the whole week.”

They have moved into their new home in Owensville. Madalyn took a position as a teacher’s aid and Jared works for the Laborers Union. They are expecting baby Sickendick in March.

“Even though COVID happened, I don’t think I would have changed anything. It wasn’t how I planned, but it turned out perfect,” she said.

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Perfect Love Story...

Colton and Lauren Lenauer, Oct. 7, 2020

by Roxie Murphy, Gasconade County Republican Feature Writer

Every love story has its own rhythm. For Lauren (Baehr) and Colton Lenauer, it reads like the stanzas in Ed Sheeran's Perfect.

We were just kids when we fell in love...

Lauren and Colton met at Sunday School when they were kids. There was a connection that couldn't be ignored, even in middle school.

They dated on and off in their teenage years, and even had their first date at Owensville Memorial Park.

"I told him I was going to marry him one day," Lauren said. "I was 15 and he was 16."

They dated on and off until after college, but it wasn't until their mid twenties that these two went from not knowing what love was to Colton following her lead.

Oh, I never knew you were the someone waiting for me...I will not give you up this time

Colton and Lauren began dating again after college. After all the ons and offs since they were in sixth grade and now she was 26 and Colton was 27, he knew he wasn't letting her go this time. He had a plan.

On Jan. 18, 2020, he surprised her with a spontaneous trip to Tennessee to stay in a treehouse on a ranch.

"The property had a walking trail (around it)," Lauren said. "As we were walking, he stopped me and told me that we should take a picture with the horses in the background."

Colton set his phone on a timer and



THE BRIDE'S father, Steve Baehr constructed these large tables for the reception.

and celebrating with family and friends," Colton said.

Outdoors was what they wanted, but the only place that held everything they wanted wouldn't do as it was. Colton's family owned land outside of Bland that had a barn that needed some repairs, but Lauren saw something else.

"A beautiful red barn that sits in an open field, surrounded by leaves changing colors," Lauren said.

That their families chose to pitch in on the renovations, right down to nurturing plants and grass was what Colton that was the most special part of their wedding planning.

"Lauren's and I's family was involved in creating the venue and making our wedding

See **Lenauer**, Page 11B

propped up against a fence post.

"When he walked back from propping up his phone, he proposed," Lauren said.

Colton wasn't taking any chances.

With rings in hand from Diamonds Direct in St. Louis, he asked, and Lauren agreed to be his bride.

She shares my dreams, I hope that one day I'll share her home...

They began planning a fall wedding almost exactly nine months out, and set the date for Oct. 17. They wanted all the beauty of the outdoors surrounding them.

"More specifically, we wanted to feel like a relaxed fall evening, hanging out, eating



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Wedding photos by Aaron Wieseman Photography



A BIG RED BARN was the backdrop to the outdoor wedding ceremony for Colton and Lauren.

Lenauer • from page 10B

day perfect,” Colton said.

For Lauren, the sweetness of preparing for her wedding was enhanced by her father’s contribution. The wooden tables that the wedding party sat at were handcrafted by Steve Baehr.

Obviously the barn wasn’t a small project.

Hempelmann Construction renovated the inside of the barn. Their families rented machinery from Pioneer Trust to spread sawdust and mulch and trimmed trees.

They were confident it would be everything they dreamed of.

I see my future in your eyes...

With the venue on its way and family helping to lay mulch, powerwash, plant decorative grasses, lay sawdust, clean light fixtures and maintain the landscape through the summer and fall months until the wedding. They cut tree stumps for a walkway/aisle and arrangements, made signs for the wedding and arranged to have a portable bathroom and sink.

Lauren planned the rest and filled in the details.

See **Lenauer**, Page 13B

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BRIDESMAIDS FOR the Lenauer wedding were Hannah Baehr, Katie Jost, Stephanie Jost, Hilary Mittrucker. Groomsmen were Donny Thorsen, Christian Loges, Carter Montgomery, and Jason Kottwitz.



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Lenauer • from page 11B

Old World Creations in Owensville ordered her flowers and prepared to transform the barn.

They hired Aaron Wiseman Photography to capture the day.

“They joined our crew so smoothly,” Lauren said. “On the day of our wedding, they were professional and tuned into every aspect that was important to us and they captured just that. They managed to capture the most breathtaking photos. We couldn’t have been more pleased.”

Crystal Rademacher from First Street Eats Catered the event.

“The food was amazing,” Lauren said. “Crystal is so patient and easy to work with and her food is wonderful.”

They arranged for Wright Party Rental to bring chairs, tables, and linens; Party Pros for the tent rental; and Peggy Curtman to bring cake and cupcakes.

And Lauren was able to make her most important purchase at Wedding Creations in Washington, Mo.

“I wanted a simple, yet elegant dress that I could wear all night and that’s what I found,” Lauren said.

Her gown was complemented by the unique bouquet from Old World Creations, and her bridesmaids colors mimicked the surrounding leaves in rusty rose, emerald green, burgundy and navy blue.

“Our vision was a small, simple country wedding,” Lauren said. “I never realized how much hard work went into planning a wedding. Plans and ideas changed daily and you learned to just go with the flow.”

See **Lenauer**, Page 15B

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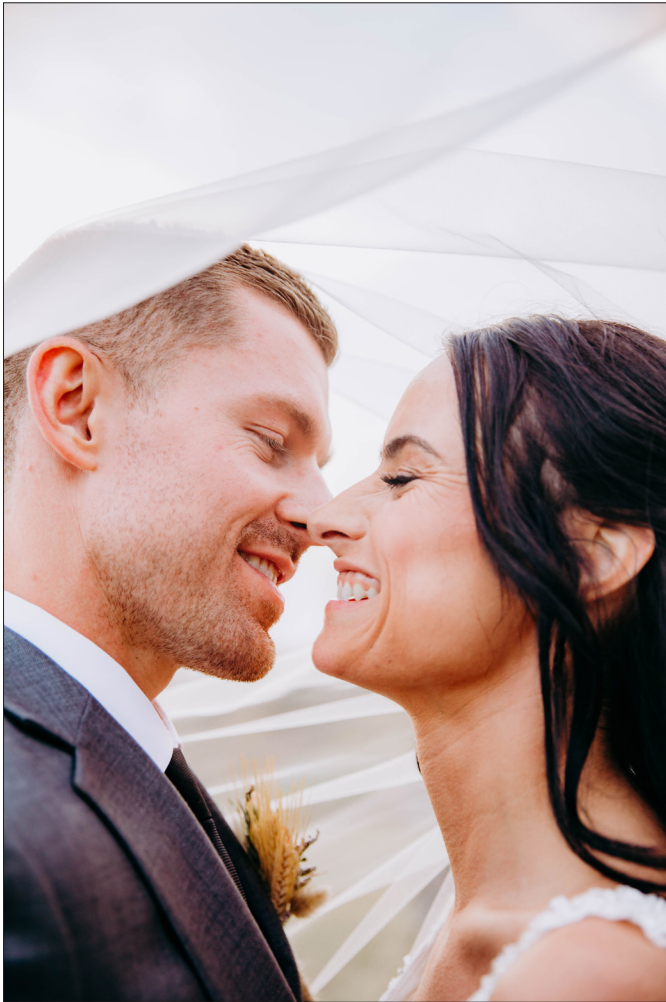
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Lenauer • from page 14B

When I saw you in that dress, looking so beautiful...

The morning of Oct. 17, 2020, dawned dry and sunny. Lauren and Colton snuck away to Simply Sweet coffee shop in town to have breakfast together and share their personal vows privately.

"Thank you to Simply Sweet for providing free coffee to the bride and groom the morning of the wedding," the couple added.

The ladies went to Lauren's parent's house to get ready and Colton and the groomsmen went to his parent's house.

At the barn, Old World Creations brought in Lauren's centerpieces and transformed the space inside and out.

"Old World Creations made my vision come to life!" Lauren said. "When the arrangements were delivered, I knew I made the right decision."

At 4:30 p.m. 120 of the 165 invited guests were waiting in white chairs outside a red barn with a black mulch aisle.

Hay bales were placed strategically at the top of the aisle and the bride and bridesmaids waited in a sprinter van behind them. The groomsmen waited in the shed for the bridesmaids to appear from behind the bales. Their officiant, Adam Grayson, waited at the makeshift altar.

"We had an acoustic wedding ceremony performed by Gateway Guitar," Lauren said. "Our songs were I can't help but falling in love with you, Perfect by Ed Sheeran, Canon in D by Pachelbel, Check Yes or No by George Strait and Livin' on Love by Allen Jackson.

When the music began, the ladies stepped out and the groomsmen met them at the hay bales to walk them down the aisle.

Finally, Canon in D began to play, and Lauren made her appearance. The fitted lace top of her white dress had small straps and came to a V in the front before flowing gently to the ground. The bouquet she held was mixed with traditional fall flowers, Baby's Breath and dried wheat grass, along with bright oranges, burgundy and navy blue accents and trimmed with soft feathers.

Colton got his first look at his bride. "She looked beautiful and that it was finally here," He said about his first thought, seeing her walking towards him. "We had been planning for nine months and it was actually happening."

Lauren was ready. "My first thought was 'I'm so thankful to get to marry my best friend, I can't believe this is happening,'" she said.

The day went by in a rush. The reception, planned to be held outside the barn, began that afternoon and went well into the evening. Their videographer Daniel Lenaur

captured the whole thing.

Baby, I'm dancing in the dark, with you between my arms...

Just before dusk at 6:30 p.m., it was time to get the evening festivities started.

"Our reception was outside and looked like something out of a fairytale," Lauren said. "We had lights strung from the tents, trees, and the barn to enhance the ambiance and to keep the area well-lit since it was dark. The DJ was in an old wooden wagon. We had stump pathways with lanterns on them that led into and out of the barn, a straw bale sofa, and a saw dust dance floor."

Inside the barn, they set up buffet style catering, a photo booth, cupcakes and a party favor table. Appetizers and a bar were also available. If guests were inclined, they could even look at pictures of the families working on the barn.

The couple shared their first dance to Perfect by Ed Sheeran.

But darling, just kiss me slow, your heart is all I own; And in your eyes, you're holding mine...

When the night was over, Lauren and Colton left the barn for their evening room, a rented apartment above First Street Eats.

While COVID changed very little of their wedding plans, especially with the event being held outside, it did change their

honeymoon destination.

"Because of the impact of COVID on small businesses, we wanted to support small and local businesses," Lauren said. "Our honeymoon plans changed. We were supposed to fly to Hawaii for two weeks and because of COVID our plans were canceled. Instead, we stayed in a beautiful cabin in Arkansas overlooking the Arkansas River."

Darling, just hold my hand; Be my girl, I'll be your man

The couple now reside in Chesterfield where Lauren works as a nurse and Colton works as a mortgage loan originator.

Looking back on their wedding and ceremony, they couldn't be happier.

"We made our wedding day and ceremony exactly how we wanted to do it — personalized to us," the couple said.

For a wedding day celebration that always has the possibility of things being missed or going awry, no one bothered the bride and groom about it!

"If things went wrong, we didn't know it!" Lauren said. "Which means our families and friends did an amazing job at ensuring our day went smoothly. We couldn't have done it without them."

If they did go back, Lauren says she might change one thing...

"Maybe not to have a sawdust dance floor," she says.



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Savings strategies for weddings

The question was popped; the engagement ring presented. What's the next step on the road to the wedding? Saving should definitely be on couples' minds.

A wedding is likely the most costly party couples will ever throw. According to The Knot's 2019 Real Weddings Study, the average cost of a wedding in 2019 was \$33,900. There are many different costs associated with weddings. Some are predictable, while others are unexpected.

Investopedia says the vast majority of couples budget too little for their weddings and also end up spending more than they had planned. Various strategies can make it easier to save for a wedding and avoid a post-wedding financial hangover.

Get informed

It's impossible to budget for a wedding and ultimately save without knowledge of what services and items cost in the region where you live. A wedding in New York City will be expensive, while a wedding in Mississippi will cost a lot less, indicates SuperMoney's guide to wedding costs.

Conduct some research and find out what photographers, florists, transportation pro-

viders, reception halls, and wedding wardrobe vendors charge for common services. This will paint a vivid picture of what a wedding may cost in your area.

Flesh out the budget

Once you have gathered estimates, you can then figure out a financial goal. This also is when you can determine where to rein in spending and where you might want to splurge. If having a video memory of the wedding is not a top priority, you can skip videography services. If you have a special flower that you like, you may want to budget more for that bloom even if it isn't in season.

Set up a dedicated savings account

One of the easiest ways to save for big-ticket items like a wedding, home purchase or other financial goals is to use



Avoid overspending

An analysis of your spending habits will likely reveal areas where you can scale back so you can devote more funds to wedding savings. Do you need a takeout coffee in the morning or can you brew a pot at home? Might you be able to scale back on streaming services? Do you feel comfortable buying less expensive store brand groceries over name brands? Small cost savings can quickly add up.

Add up gifts

Factor in deduction of expenses that other people will commit to covering for wedding expenses, but only if you have concrete confirmation. A parent may host the rehearsal dinner. One's relative may offer to pass down an antique wedding gown to wear. But rather than simply removing these gifts from your savings calculations, keep them as a safety net to put toward unforeseen expenses.

Saving for a wedding can be challenging. But various strategies can help couples plan their dream weddings without breaking the bank.

an automatic savings account that may be available through your bank or employer. An automatic savings plan will pull a set amount from a personal checking account into a savings account through auto-draft. The bride and groom can link individual checking accounts to one savings account to contribute jointly.

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Precautions that can keep wedding guests safe during the pandemic

Happy couples planning to tie the knot in 2020 confronted a challenge they likely never saw coming. While many couples fear inclement weather on their wedding days, 2020's prospective brides and grooms had to contend with something far more fearful than rain clouds.

The outbreak of the novel coronavirus that began in the winter of 2019-20 and was ultimately declared a pandemic by the World Health Organization put many couples' wedding plans in peril. In an effort to stop the spread of the virus and protect those most vulnerable to it, governments across the globe placed restrictions on social gatherings, including weddings. Those restrictions prompted some couples to postpone their nuptials until 2021, while others tied the knot at considerably smaller ceremonies than they initially planned for.

Couples planning to tie the knot in the months ahead can still do so, but the WHO recommends they take certain precautions as they organize their ceremonies and receptions.

- Confirm local regulations. Restrictions related to COVID-19 differ greatly by region. Areas that were not hit hard by the virus may not have as many restrictions in place as those that were devastated by the outbreak. In addition, cities or regions whose responses to the virus have been successful may have relaxed restrictions more than areas that are still struggling. The WHO notes the importance of checking local

guidelines prior to planning an event, and that's especially important for couples who hope to get married in towns or cities where they do not currently reside.

- Keep guests up to date about precautions. Include detailed information about the safety measures that will be implemented during the wedding on your wedding website. Insert a card detailing this information into your invitation envelopes as well so all guests know what to expect when they accept the invitation. In addition, remind guests of the safety precautions throughout the ceremony.

- Provide sanitary supplies. Make sure hand sanitizer, soap, water, and masks are readily available for all guests. Social distance markers also can be placed on the ground throughout the venue to make it easy for guests to stay six feet apart from one another.

- Choose an outdoor venue. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention notes that the COVID-19 virus spreads very easily through person-to-person contact and that the risk of spreading the virus is greater when spending time indoors. Couples can mitigate some of that risk by tying the knot outdoors and then hosting an outdoor reception where tables are kept at least six feet apart.

Weddings will be different until the world puts COVID-19 in its rearview mirror. In the meantime, it's up to happy couples to keep their guests safe come the big day.



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Dos and don'ts of caring for rings

Jewelry is a key component of weddings. The financial resource CreditDonkey notes that, in the United States, the average amount spent on an engagement ring is \$5,500, while Canadians spend an average of \$3,500. Jewelry costs can add up, especially when adding in the cost of wedding bands, which can cost as much as \$1,000.

The cost of jewelry only

underscores the importance of learning how to care for it and preserve its value.

The best way to maintain jewelry depends on the makeup of the rings. The online jewelry guide Jewelry Notes says gold rings without gemstones can be cleaned effectively with only soap and water. Simply prepare a solution of lukewarm water and mild dish soap in a small bowl. Soak the rings for 20 to 30 minutes. Use a soft brush or cloth to clean the jewelry of dirt. Rinse the residue under clean water.

Rings with diamonds can be treated similarly with a mild soap-and-water solution. The Diamond Information Center also says to soak the diamond ring in equal parts cold water and ammonia for half an hour and let it air dry. Brand name jewelry cleaner also is another good option. This method only should be used with diamonds; ammonia can't be used with other gemstones.

Maintaining jewelry also should include twice yearly visits to a jeweler who can check the prongs and make sure the setting is not loose; otherwise, the diamond can become dislodged, according to Martha Stewart Weddings.

Avoid touching diamonds and other gemstones as much as possible when putting rings on and taking them off. Precious stones often are magnets for dust, dirt and body oil, according to Taylor Lanore, diamond consultant and engagement ring designer for Lauren B. Fine Jewelry and Diamonds. Grab the ring by the band.

Use discretion when wearing rings while engaging in hands-on activities. Activities like cleaning dishes, moving furniture, gardening, or diving through waves at the beach warrant caution; otherwise, you risk damaging or making jewelry unnecessarily dirty. Store the ring in a safe location until you can safely wear it again.

One of the most important steps to safeguard wedding and engagement rings is to insure the jewelry. The description of the ring, its cut, carat weight, metal, and other information offered through a certified independent jewelry appraisal will be needed to insure the ring. Take a close-up photo of the jewelry as well. Other items like laser inscription or a home security system can qualify jewelry owners for discounts on insurance. Consumers also can add a jewelry rider to a homeowner's or renter's insurance policy.

These are some ways to care for wedding jewelry. Always consult with a jeweler before attempting to clean items made of various materials.



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Questions to ask before booking a photographer

Various components combine to make weddings beautiful and memorable. Couples rely on photographers to capture the smiles and moments that helped make their events unique and to ensure the big day is remembered for years to come.

The trusted wedding resource The Knot notes that an internal study found that, among 27,000 couples who got married in 2019, an average of \$2,400 was spent on a wedding photographer to document their big day.

Couples who want to find the best photographer for their wedding day can ask several questions before making their final decision.

What style do you specialize in?

Photographers may be able to shoot various styles of photos, but may specialize in a specific type. For example, some photographers specialize in photojournalism, while others may excel at portraiture. Going with a photographer who has the most expertise shooting the style you prefer will help produce the desired results.

Who will be shooting my wedding?

Certain photography studios have several photographers working under one roof. Just because you meet with one does not necessarily mean that photographer will be on site, unless it is specified in the contract.

Have you ever worked at my venue before?

Photographers may be familiar with several local wedding venues and houses of worship. A photographer who has experience working in the locations where couples will tie the knot and subsequently celebrate might produce the best results, but lack of experience with particular venues need not exclude other professionals.

Can we see a full gallery of a recent wedding?

According to Brides magazine, unlike an album or a highlight gallery, a full gallery provides a better sense of a photographer's style and attention to detail.

Will photos be color balanced and retouched?

Skilled photographers are capable of capturing winning photos. But photos can be enhanced further in the studio with retouching software to bring out specific effects. Some photographers will polish all proofs, while others only will work on the images ultimately ordered. Confirm retouching details before signing the contract.

What's included in the photo packages?

A detailed price list helps you compare one photographer to another and decide which elements are covered. Additional prints, having a photographer's assistant, ordering albums for the parents, or ordering a large framed print can alter costs significantly. Explore all prices to ensure you're getting the best value. In addition, consider how many hours of event coverage are included in the price.

What is the payment timeline?

Photographers may accept deposits for their services but expect a different timeline of payment. Some may require payment in full before the wedding, while others may offer a payment plan that includes a final payment when picking up proofs or albums.

Wedding photography is one of the essential elements of a wedding and helps tell the story of couples' special day. Asking key questions can help couples find a photographer who will produce the desired results.



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Winter scene photo from Vail Colorado by John Martin.

How to host a socially distant wedding

It's likely that few people heard of "social distancing" prior to 2020. That changed as the novel coronavirus COVID-19 spread rapidly across the globe and the world found itself in the midst of a deadly pandemic.

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention defines social distancing as keeping a safe distance of at least six feet between yourself and other people who are not from your household. Public health officials continue to champion social distancing while acknowledging the fatigue that many people have experienced as the pandemic stretched on for months. Though much of the world hit the proverbial pause button, life went on during the pandemic. Perhaps nowhere was that more evident than at the altar, where many couples still tied the knot, albeit in scaled back ceremonies that adhered to social distancing guidelines in their communities.

Engaged couples who have yet to tie the knot no doubt recognize that planning a socially distant wedding will not be the same as organizing more traditional ceremonies and receptions. While planning a socially distant wedding presents some unique challenges, couples can take certain steps to ensure their big day is memorable and safe.

- Spread the socially distant word. Let guests know what they're in for should they decide to take part in the festivities. Many people have strictly followed social distancing guidelines, while others have been reluctant to do so. Couples intent on keeping themselves and their guests safe from COVID-19 should emphasize that their weddings will be socially distant affairs so there's no confusion come the big day.

- Stream the wedding online. Stream the wedding online for those guests who won't be in attendance. By the end of 2020, millions of people had already "attended" weddings



via platforms like Zoom, so loved ones may be experienced virtual guests by the time couples walk down the aisle in 2021. Couples who may need some help planning virtual affairs can visit the virtual wedding coordinators at Wedfully.com, who recently partnered with Zoom to help couples bring their ceremonies online.

- Pare down the in-person guest list. Couples who planned large weddings prior

to the pandemic can still invite all of their loved ones to witness the festivities online, but pare down the in-person guest list to reduce the risk of spreading COVID-19. Limit in-person guests to immediate family and those people who are part of your social distancing bubble.

- Plan a party for down the road. Couples can still celebrate their nuptials with family and friends down the road. Plan a post-

pandemic reception and let guests know you will fill them in on the details once social distancing restrictions have been lifted.

Socially distant weddings may require couples to take some unusual steps as they try to tie the knot while keeping themselves and their loved ones safe.

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How to avoid wedding reception seating mistakes

Weddings are great opportunities for people to gather and celebrate the melding of two families into one. Weddings are a melting pot, and while the ultimate goal is for all guests invited to mingle and have a good time, preexisting relationships may cause some wedding-day interactions to be strained. However, with careful planning and some best behavior on the parts of all involved, getting hitched can go off without a hitch.

It's possible for guests who may have tumultuous pasts to keep the peace, but this also can be ensured through careful seating arrangements. This is just one factor couples need to consider when deciding where guests will sit and dine at receptions. It's important to avoid some common mistakes.

Mistake #1: Not having a seating plan. Let guests sit where they want and chaos may ensue. People may think they're entitled to certain seats, may hop into seats vacated by someone getting up to use the restroom or any number of other scenarios. Seating arrangements also ensure everyone is accounted for across the room.

Mistake #2: Seating families separately. Unless there are rifts between certain family members, it's best to seat parents and children at the same tables.

Mistake #3: Trying to force new friendships. Avoid trying to figure out who will get along by creating a potpourri table. A cousin in a band will not necessarily want to sit next to your coworker who plays guitar simply because they have a shared love of music. A wedding is not the time to try to create new friendships. If it's meant to be, they'll connect in a more organic way.

Mistake #4: The dreaded kids' table. Young children can probably get away with sitting at a dedicated kids' table, although it may mean their parents have to interrupt their experiences by checking on their kids throughout the night. A bigger faux pas is to sit teenagers or twentysomethings at the kids table even if they seem like youngsters to you. Set a strict cut-off age for a children's table.

Mistake #5: Being too strict in seating. It's one thing to direct couples or singletons to specific tables, quite another to assign specific seats. Do not dictate exactly where at the table a guest should sit. Some people arrive early, others late, and it is up to them to work out how to arrange themselves at the table.

Mistake #6: Failing to get family feedback. Always check with your parents and future in-laws as resources about how to seat certain guests. They'll likely know who will make the best table-mates, especially if couples are not familiar with everyone on the guest list.

Mistake #7: Not being aware of disabilities or needs. Be conscious of guests' needs. An elderly relative may not be comfortable in front of the DJ table. A person in a wheelchair may need easy access to and from the reception room. It's important to be mindful of these special needs.

A seating plan for wedding receptions is an important consideration so that every guest can feel comfortable.

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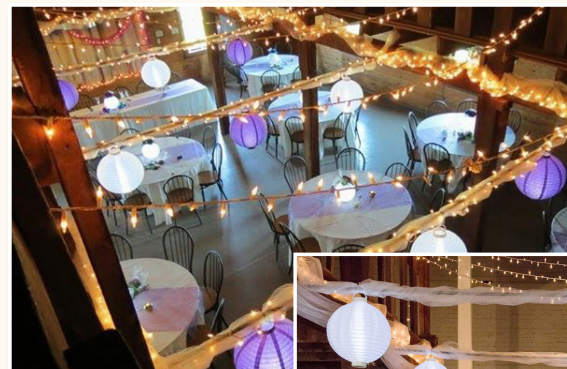
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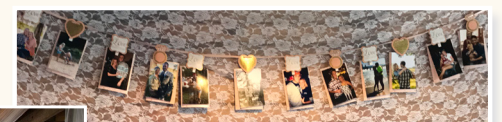


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Useful ways to incorporate social media in your wedding plans

Since its inception decades ago, social media has changed the world. As the popularity of social media exploded in the early part of the 21st century, various platforms emerged and ultimately affected movements pertaining to everything from politics to social justice to charitable efforts.

Social media also has emerged as a great tool for couples on the cusp of getting married. The following are some useful ways that couples can employ social media into their wedding planning.

- Create your own hashtag. A couple-specific hashtag can be a great and simple way to share information on Twitter, which remains one of the most popular social media platforms across the globe. Your own hashtag can alert friends and family who are on Twitter whenever you post new information and photos.

- Share a photo album online. Photographers serve as something akin to unofficial documentarians on couples' wedding days. Many photographers are there from the moment the bride begins to get ready until the last person leaves the dance floor at the end of the night. Many couples love leafing through their wedding albums for the rest of their lives together, but guests also may enjoy reliving the night. The photo sharing social media platform Instagram is a great way for couples and their guests to relive the special moment a couple ties the knot and all the ensuing fun at the reception. Create

a wedding-specific Instagram page and post all the photos you want to share.

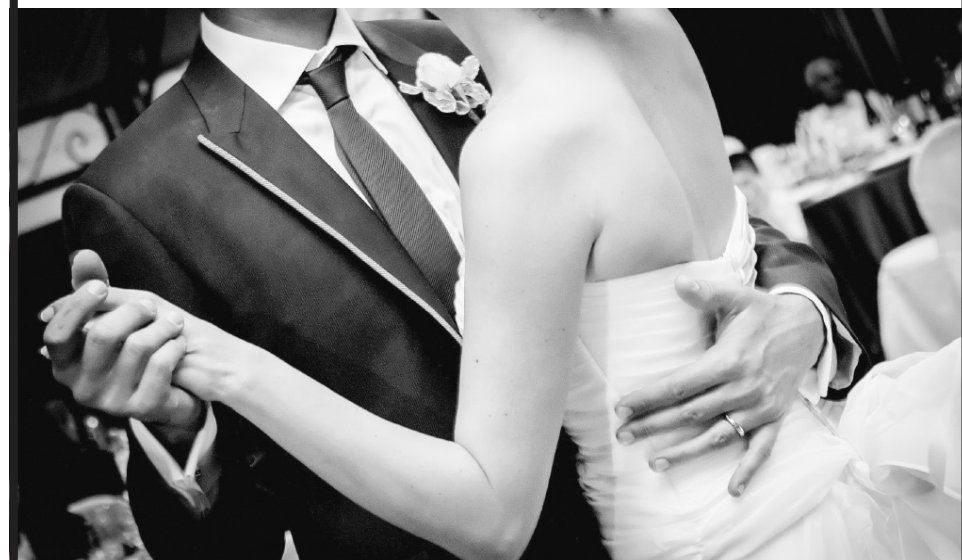
- Include guests who could not attend the festivities. No matter how hard couples may try to pick a date that's convenient for all of their guests, some invitees will inevitably decline the invitation. That's especially true while the world continues to confront the COVID-19 pandemic. Elderly guests or loved ones with underlying medical conditions that make them more vulnerable to getting seriously ill from COVID-19 may be forced to reluctantly decline their invitations. But couples can utilize social media platforms like Facebook Live to include loved ones who couldn't make it in real time.

- Encourage others to pitch in with the planning. Planning a wedding should be fun, and what better way to add to the fun factor than encouraging loved ones to share their ideas via a social media platform like Pinterest? Couples can create a Pinterest board and ask interested friends and family members to share ideas on everything from attire to decor to floral arrangements. This can be an especially effective way to involve bridesmaids and groomsmen if social distancing guidelines and travel restrictions related to the pandemic are still in place when planning your wedding.

Social media has changed the world, and it also has changed how couples plan their weddings.



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Honeymoon registry

Many couples who are planning to get married have lived together during the engagement period or even longer. A Pew Research Center study found that about two-thirds of married adults who lived with their spouses before they were married say they saw cohabitation as a step toward marriage. According to Brandon Gaille Small Business & Marketing Advice, 65 percent of couples who get married live together at some point before their weddings. Individuals who live together must outfit their homes with furniture and other essentials, including kitchen supplies. That means that couples may already own traditional wedding registry gifts like kitchen and bath items and accessories. Brides- and grooms-to-be can think creatively when registering for gifts if they already have many of the items found on traditional registries. Target has partnered with HoneyFund, a free honeymoon registry and cash wedding gift registry, to allow couples to register for honeymoon travel and other experiences. Honeymoon registries can be great ways for couples who already own household items to simplify the process of gift-giving for their wedding guests.

Negotiating prices with wedding vendors

A couple's wedding day is likely to be the most expensive party they ever host. The average cost of a wedding is \$33,931, according to The Knot's 2019 Real Wedding Study.

However that final cost can vary widely depending on where the wedding is held. In fact, in 2019, New Jersey was the most expensive state for getting hitched, at an average cost of \$53,400, followed closely by Rhode Island at \$49,800. The average cost of a Canadian wedding, according to the lifestyle resource Slice, is around \$31,000.

Engaging in a dialogue with prospective vendors can help couples curtail the cost of their weddings. That's especially so during the pandemic, as so many businesses have faced financial uncertainty due to the global pandemic. Vendors who already have been operating under less-than-ideal circumstances may be more flexible with their pricing schedules. Then again, struggling business may have to increase prices to cover losses. Negotiation may be necessary as couples look to get married without breaking the bank.

Be open and honest

Negotiating with vendors should not be mistaken for aggressive haggling as one might do at a garage sale or auction. Rather, it's more about having a discussion about what can be modified to work with the budget. A vendor may not be able to dramatically drop his price, but may be accommodating in another respect. For example, florists may be able to throw in an extra floral arrangement or a DJ may agree to stick around for an extra hour at no additional cost.

Be gracious

Letting a vendor know you're a fan of their work or have received glowing recommendations from past customers may make them more inclined to work with you if the budget doesn't quite align with the pricing.

Find work-arounds

Even if the price seems out of reach, there are ways to negotiate with vendors to get things close and where all parties are in agreement. For example, a florist may be able to make suggestions on another type of bloom that looks similar to the desired flower but at a fraction of the cost.



Vendors may be willing to discount some costs if the couple handles some of the work themselves, such as picking up and delivering materials to the reception or ceremony sites or handling alterations.

Couples should speak freely with wedding vendors and discuss what they can spend after some careful research in regard to what standard services and products cost.

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Wedding Invitations

CUSTOM, UNIQUE INVITATIONS

- SAVE THE DATE CARDS
- INVITATIONS
- THANK YOU CARDS
- FAVORS

201 EAST PETERS AVE.
OWENSVILLE, MO
573-437-8002

Remember when you were 10 years old and at a wedding?

Bet you wish they had a bounce house!

PIONEER HOME CENTER & RENTAL

Hwy. 28 West,
Owensville
573-437-4104



Booking for 2021 & 2022

Your Legacy Starts Here

Venue Rental Includes

- 1-Day Use of Venue for Ceremony and Reception
- Red Oak Valley Coordinator to help with planning
- Private use of the preparation areas on-site
- Multiple indoor and outdoor Ceremony locations available to choose from
- Use of Red Oak Valley wedding décor
- Tables, chairs, and linens for the Reception
- Overnight accommodations in the Farmhouse (sleeps 16)
- Delicious on-site Catering is available
- 9000 sq. ft Barn is fully heated and cooled for your maximum comfort!
- Wedding Weekends are available!



RED OAK
VALLEY

RedOakValley.com

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