

Wedding Bells 2018



Featuring two local weddings:

- Woody & Devon Schlottach
- John & Melanie Behrens

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FEBRUARY 14, 2018

Childhood Friend, Positive Heart Leads to Love

Woody & Devon Schlottach, Aug. 12, 2017

by Jenny Stockton, Gasconade County Republican Feature Writer

Living your whole life, only to make it complete by marrying your one and only, even though she was in front of the groom for years sums up the love of these two.

Meeting Each Other

A long history exists between the Schatz-Schlottach families, from playing sports with the bride's brother, as a child, to their fathers sharing seats in the Missouri House of Representatives describes how long the happy couple has known each other. The couple's relationship was sparked to life at a Jason Aldean/Florida-Georgia Line concert in 2014 on the hottest day of August. "Our mutual friends spontaneously met at the concert, so we hung out together that night.

He put his number in my phone at the end of the night. A few months later I showed up at the winery and the rest is history," commented Devon (Schatz) Schlottach.

Devon, You're the One

"Devon is everything I am not; she is my other half. She is beautiful inside and out. She has inspired me so much in my faith and has challenged me to grow in so many ways," commented Woody. They share the same values and, together, they make perfect sense. There was never really a time when she wasn't the one according to Woody. "Devon's brother passed in 2010, and we attended his funeral visitation. When we walked out of the church my dad said, 'How about that Devon? There's a girl for ya.'

Photos by "Ashley Fisher Photography:"



WOODY AND DEVON were married at her church, Temple Baptist Church in Sullivan. The reception was held at White Mule Winery in Rosebud.



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She was ‘the one’ for a long time, it just took us a little while to get there— four years [almost to the day] to be exact,” said Woody. Their wedding took place August 12, 2017.

Woody, You’re the One

“I remember when Woody and I started dating; I think I fell in love with his family first. I remember evenings with his parents and how much love they showed me. I was certain they were the kind of people I had hoped and prayed for all my life to be my in-laws,” said Devon. She had a particularly bad day, and she remembers Woody said to her, ‘There’s no such thing as a bad day, only bad hours.’ “After a history of heartache and loss in the death of my brother, I realized when Woody said this to me that he would be the man I would marry. He has this ability to lift me up and make me smile,” said Devon. Not only does Woody do this for her, she explains that Woody does this for everyone he meets and gets to know. “He believes his calling in life is to make people happy and to lift them up, and he is sure good at it,” commented Devon. “He has always shown me grace, looks for the best in me and others, and inspires me to be a better person. God has revealed to me over and over again the gift He has given me in Woody, and I can’t imagine any greater blessing than to be his wife.”

The Proposal

The two dated for just over two years before Woody proposed to Devon. He decided to propose to Devon on Christmas morning in December of 2016, right after Devon had finished a 12-hour night

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A special thanks to these newly weds for sharing their stories.

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shift. Once they were engaged in December, they knew they didn't want to wait a year to get married, so the engagement was approximately nine months, and according to them was the perfect amount of time to plan. "I never shed a tear through the planning process. Everything went so smoothly. I did cry, however, as our wedding neared, and I realized that the planning process was ending. Our engagement was such a fun time, and we had so much fun planning our wedding that we just didn't want it to end. I would do it all over again, the exact same way," said Devon.

Wedding Ceremony

The bride and groom's wedding ceremony took place at Temple Baptist Church in Sullivan, Mo. on Aug. 12, 2017, 3 p.m. Reverend G. Scott Perry officiated the wedding ceremony. He has been Devon's pastor all her life.

"We are both, now, members of Temple Baptist. Temple Baptist is like home, and Scott is like family," said Devon. In addition to Reverend Perry, others involved in the ceremony included, their parents, photographer Ashley Fisher Photography, of St. Louis, and J.D. Huitt, videographer.

"Instead [of a unity candle or unity sand], we invited our parents on the stage for a time of prayer in uniting our two families. We had special music at this time by our friend, Bradley Perry. It was beautiful," said Devon.

The Reception

The happy couple chose to get married at Temple Baptist Church, the church where Devon grew up, and has played a pivotal role in the growth and depth of their relationship according to Devon. "We are so grateful for our church!" For the reception location, they chose Woody's parents' winery, White Mule Winery, located in Rosebud.

In addition to the outbuildings and the winery itself, they accommodated close to 600 guests by renting a tent from Grand Rental Station and had areas of outdoor seating all over of the winery. Furthermore, their nephews are the lights in their lives, so they wanted to accommodate as many children as they could.

"We both share the same favorite feature of our wedding reception, which was our Kids' Tent. We are obsessed with our nephews, and with a guest list of over 600, we anticipated tons of kids. We wanted to give them a special place of their own to enjoy. With the help of Nancy Gann, our decorator and coordinator for I DO Weddings and Events, we had 20x40 tent outfitted with lights and all kinds of toys and crafts. We had stickers, games, hula hoops, customized coloring books, and more. We think it was a huge hit for both the children and their parents," said Devon and Woody!

The First Dance

They had a live band performs the song "I Do" by Paul Brandt for their first dance. "Woody had this song picked out from his



WITH A guest list of 600 the couple had a total of nine cakes (photo above) displayed from Teresa Lynn Cakes of Sullivan. Everything about the Schlottach wedding was big including the 11 groomsmen and bridesmaids (photo opposite page).

childhood, and we loved it," commented Devon. A live band, Beaucoup Bottom Band from Illinois, performed this song and served as the music for the wedding day and evening.

Gorgeous August Weather

"One thing we were certain of is that the weather on our wedding day would be hot and miserable. We couldn't have been more wrong. It was about 72 degrees the day of our wedding, accompanied by beautiful sunshine and a light breeze. It was the most beautiful August day," said Devon. "We were so thankful our guests were comfortable and able to enjoy the day. We still had wine slushes, just in case," said Devon.

Table Decorations and Ambiance

"Another special feature of our reception was a surprise gift for Woody from his best man and brother, Gus. Gus created customized wine labels with our photo and a special message, and each table had their own bottle of wine; plus, these bottles were used throughout for decoration. My goal for styling both the wedding and reception was to be classy, yet rustic, and altogether timeless, and I think it was totally accomplished, throughout," said Devon.

Dewy grapes, rustic candle votives, rustic charm, and beautiful candlelights set up the ambiance for a beautiful evening. The Schlottach's table centers, including the bride's bouquet, were created from several types of flowers and greenery. "We used a variety of flowers. Judy from Old World Creations in Owensville was the mastermind. Garden roses, hydrangeas, tons of greenery, and millions of grapes were incorporated in the arrangements," said Devon.

Each table was set up so intricately and beautifully to welcome guests as they arrived. Admiration and smiles of love describe the guests as they waited and watched for the guests of honor to arrive.

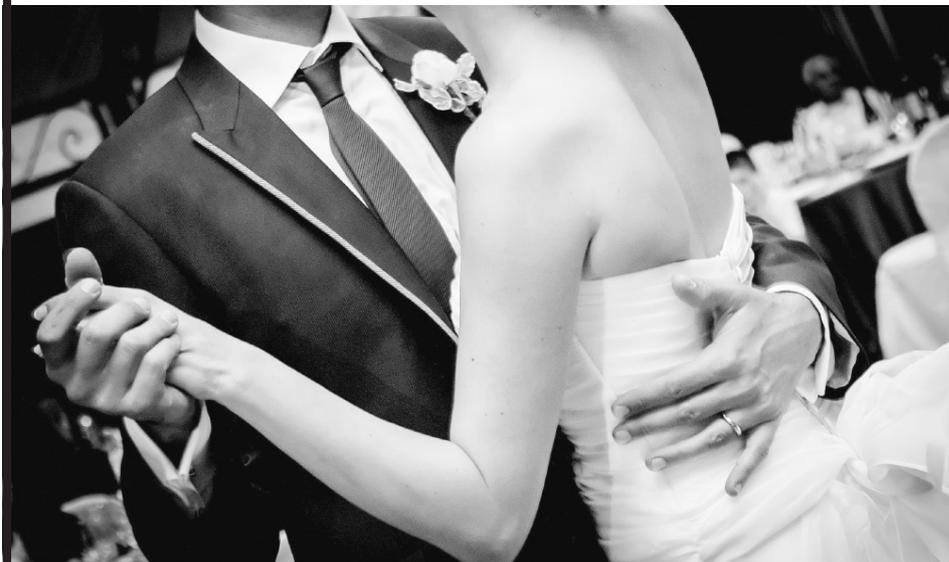
Beautiful Bride; Beautiful Wedding Gown

"My gown was an ivory Casablanca gown. It was fitted throughout the bodice with a little flair at the bottom. It featured a halter neckline with soft beading throughout,

an open back, and a small train. My veil was a cathedral length veil that featured soft beading on the trim. It helped add the drama

See **Schlottach**, Page 8B

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THE GROOMS brother and best man surprised the couple with personalized wine labels (photo left) for the reception. With a high temperature of 72 for their August wedding photographer Ashley Fisher had no problem taking outdoor photos at the reception at White Mule Winery.

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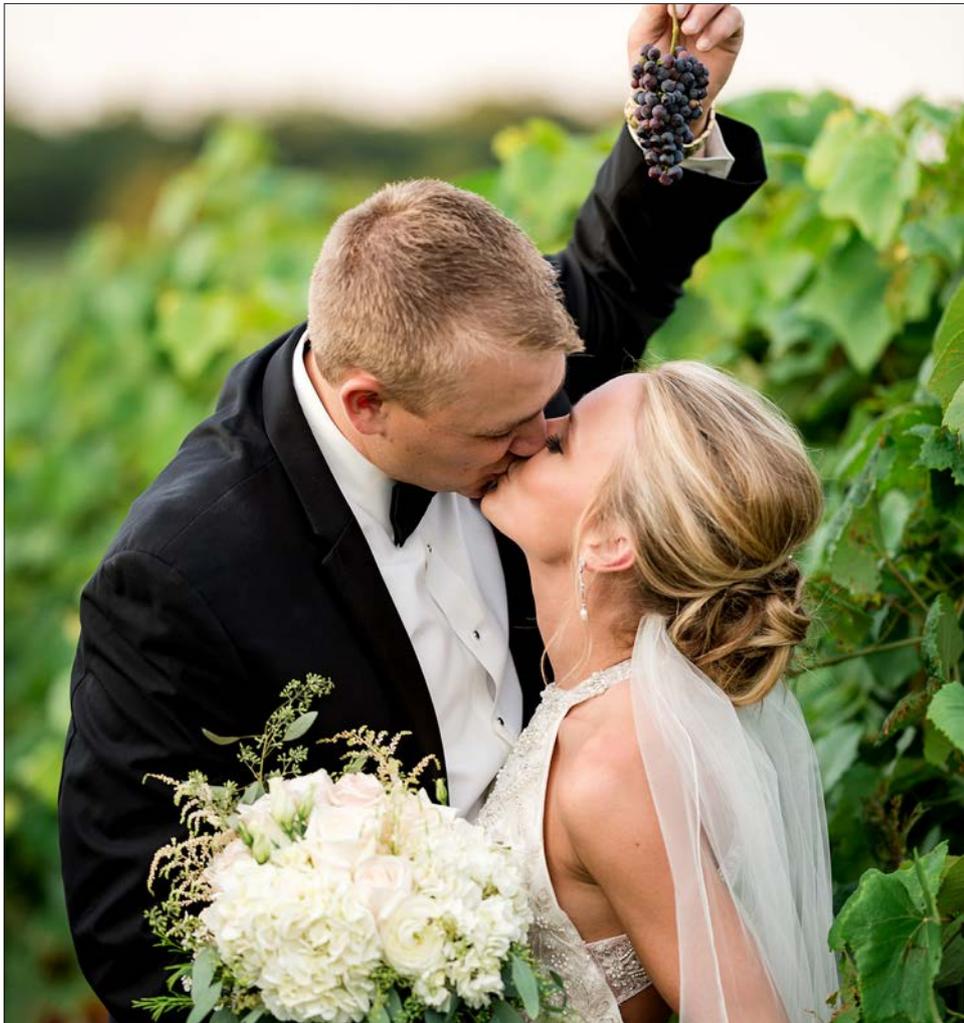
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I wanted for the ceremony. My gown was more comfortable than I could have ever dreamed! I have to also give special mention to my amazing hair stylist Sarah Linhardt with Magnified Salon. She traveled from Jefferson City to do my hair and the wedding party's hair! She's amazing," commented Devon.

Bridesmaids' Dresses and Handsome Groom and Groomsmen

The bridesmaids really brought the pop of color with their berry dresses. The groom and groomsmen wore black tuxedos, black bow ties, and suspenders, and black, and we accented blush, ivory and gold throughout the wedding. Wedding Creations located in Washington, Missouri outfitted the bride and groom and all of the wedding party members.

The Wedding Party

Woody had 11 groomsmen and 1 honorary groomsman. His Best Man was his brother, Gus Schlottach. Groomsmen included: David Schatz, brother of the bride; Daniel Schatz, honorary groomsman - beloved brother of the bride; Nick "Cheddar" Cuchetti, friend of the groom; Nick "Catfish" Altemeyer, friend of the groom; Mike Spurgeon, friend of the groom; Shane Nicks, friend of the groom; Jordan Robertson, friend of the groom; Kevin Roethemeyer, friend of the groom; Mark Wehmeyer, friend of the groom; Zach Hoffman, friend of the groom; and Ethan Klausner, friend of the groom. Devon had 12 bridesmaids. Her Maids of Honor were her sisters, Dana Schatz and Dailee Schatz. Her Matron of Honor was her sister-in-law, Stephanie Schatz; Bria Bartolotta, cousin of the bride; Mackenzie Schatz, cousin of the bride; Grace Schlottach,

See **Schlottach**, Page 24B



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Fake it 'till you make it

John & Melanie Behrens, July 29, 2017

by Roxanne Murphy, Gasconade County Republican Feature Writer

If fate and faking it happen to be the same thing for you, you might be John and Melanie (Nelgner) Behrens.

Fated

John and Melanie shared a connection prior to their birth through their fathers, who found out they were each expecting their first children within six months of each other.

"My dad, John, found out her dad, Bill, was having a baby and said you can have John's hand-me-downs," John said.

"The running joke is we shared onesies," Melanie laughed. "We theoretically knew each other all of our lives."

Melanie's family is from St. Charles and John's parents live in Gerald. Eventually, John's dad changed jobs, but their parents kept in touch. It wasn't until John and

Melanie were close to their teens that they met again in person.

I remember re-meeting him," Melanie said. "It was one of the trail rides we went to, I was maybe 12 or 13. About five minutes from their house, my dad was like, oh yeah, you shared onesies. I guess after that, we became adequate friends."

John scoffed at her choice of words describing their friendship.

"Adequate friends? That is the adjective you are going to use?"

Melanie explained.

"I actually thought he hated me for the first five years of our friendship; I think I stopped thinking that he hated me during my freshman year of college," she said.

They saw each other very little. Once a year or so she would get a text from John saying he or his family were having a get together and inviting her to come to their home in Gerald. It always worked out that she could make it.

Faked it?

"I always liked Melanie, from the beginning, but I was an awkward little kid," John laughed.

Melanie adds that she did have a crush on him from 13 years-old on.

"My freshman year of college, I was like, I have to give up because John hates me," Melanie said.

"So my aloofness worked," John put it.

See **Behrens**, Page 10B



RICK OBELE'S last wedding (photo far right) at St. John's Bem United Church of Christ was for John and Melanie Behrens on July 29, 2017. John (photo right) points out his confirmation photo to his groomsmen. John explained that he was in Oberle's first confirmation class at Bem, and was Oberle's last wedding at Bem.

Photos by Eivan Photography, Chicago, Ill.

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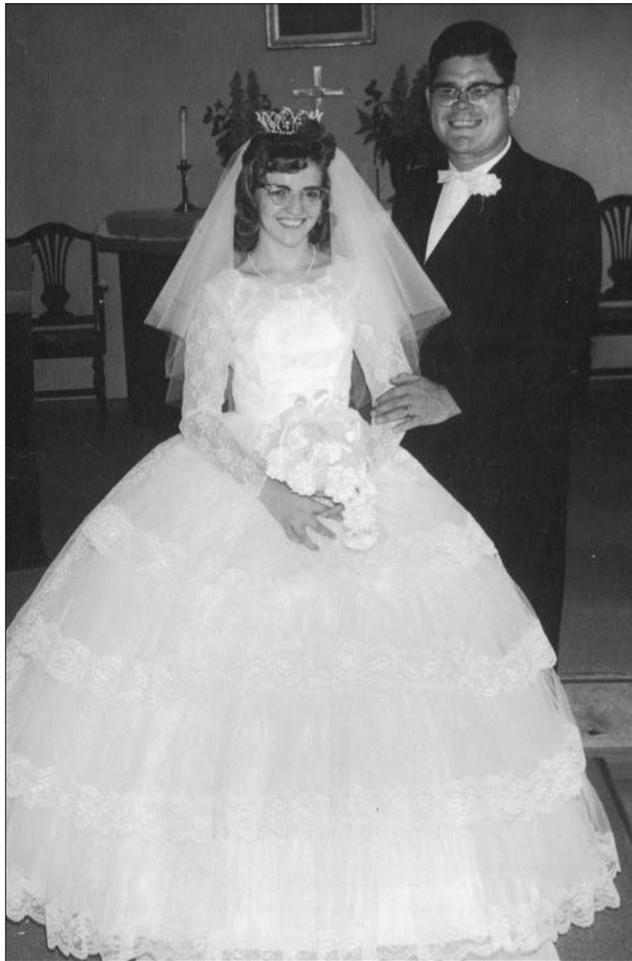
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JOHN'S FAMILY has a history of being married at St. John's United Church of Christ Bem. On April 20, 1941 his great grandparents (photo left) Junior O. and Ester Tayloe were married at Bem. Gene and Nancy Ringeisen, his grandparents, tied the knot on Sept. 5, 1964 and his parents John and Tracy Behrens were wed at Bem on Aug. 20, 1994. Roxanne Meyer-Murphy was the flower girl at the John and Tracy's wedding.

Behrens • from page 9B

As they got older, John decided it was time to take a chance at one of his family's get-togethers. Melanie was in her sophomore year in college, and took time out that weekend to head to Gerald, and planned on staying the night after the party. Things took a twist as she was preparing to leave the next morning.

"I was saying my awkward good-byes to John and gave him a hug; when I hugged him, he kissed me—like on the cheek-neck area," she blushed. "At that point, I didn't

know how to handle the situation, so I laughed and said I have to go and just left."

John didn't know how to take that. After building up all that fake confidence, he was pretty sure he had just been shot down.

"I was all proud of myself, amped up, and I gave her a hug, and I kissed her. And she LAUGHED at me," he said. "And I was like, this is it, now we know for sure; five years in building and I am never going to date this girl. She has no interest in me. Then she left and we never talked about it until we were engaged."

As it turned out, John's actions had the exact effect he was hoping for.

"For me, it was—I had been waiting for you to do that a long time and then, hah, it happened!" Melanie said to John during the interview.

For the next year-and-a-half the two were in limbo.

"It was like, hey, I am having this gathering. Do you want to come as sort-of my plus one?" Melanie explained of John's invites. "Which, for me was nerve racking, because are we dating? I can't tell. Should I ask him? Probably not."

It progressed until Melanie decided it was pretty clear in October 2015 that they were dating, but he didn't actually ask until

January of 2016.

"We went to my company Christmas party, and I had to introduce her to people," John said. "So I casually introduced her as my girlfriend Melanie."

When the two returned to John's house later that night, he asked her how she felt about him introducing her as his girlfriend, and Melanie didn't mind.

"I was like cool," John said.

Made it!

For the next year, the couple juggled

See **Behrens**, Page 13B

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THE BRIDAL party included: Sara Laskowsky, maid of honor; Julie Nelgner, Haley Hearst and Erica Nolan as bridesmaids; Len Whiteside, best man; Gene Behrens, Justen Schmidt and Robert Schmidt as groomsmen. The ushers were Will Nelgner and Nathan Gregg. The candle lighters were Will and Myla Lauth.

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Behrens • from page 10B

going to college in different towns and meeting in the middle. Time flew, and before they knew it, January was there again. John decided he didn't want to see another January without being able to call Melanie his wife. He bought a ring and started planning a way to propose. "She knew I had a ring. I am going to tell my version, then you can tell your version. It was perfect," John said, with a sly glance towards Melanie.

John had been living in Columbia while attending school and Melanie was still in St. Charles. Since it wasn't unusual for them to meet somewhere in the middle or go on an outing, he invited her Jan. 8 to visit the Arch in St. Louis with him.

"I was like, hey, let's go see the Arch this weekend," he said. They arrived before 10. "It was January of 2017; the Arch was

closed."

He had planned on it going far differently. "My whole thing was we were going to go; and I know we couldn't go to the top, which would have been ideal, but we were going to see the museum, then go back out to the base of the Arch."



LIKE HIS father John wore a black felt Stetson hat at his wedding.

John wanted it to be at the base of the Arch where he proposed, because Melanie had once told him a story that she liked to lay at the base of the Arch and look up.

"We went in to the basement of the Arch where you go in, and the Arch was closed for construction," He said. "So we walked through the gift shop instead; because they had

closed the museum, but the gift shop was open."

They walked through the gift shop and watched the movie. Then John asked Melanie to go outside.

"My grand plan was to propose at the base of one of those columns. Then we got out there and I lost it. I started laughing before I even took the ring out of my pocket," he said.

He got down on one knee and prepared to ask Melanie to marry him.

"Before I even could say 'Melanie, would you marry me, she took the ring and put it on her finger,'" he said.

"There was a pause, you didn't move," Melanie insisted.

"You didn't even give me an answer," he argued.

"I did," she said.

"Not enthusiastically," he said. "Then I decided, this went badly, we are going to do it again. So I took the ring off her finger, put it back in the box. I closed the box, put it back in my pocket, stood up, got on one knee again, opened the box. And made her let me put the ring on her finger."

In spite of the mix up, John and Melanie happily share their engagement story, saying it went right along with everything else in

See **Behrens**, Page 14B

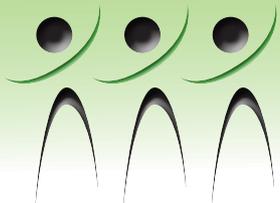


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their relationship.

“It was part of the course,” John stated. “Our entire relationship leading up to this moment had been—”

“Awkward and unorganized,” Melanie finished. “It would have been more weird if it had gone perfectly.”

They were both 22 years-old, and more than ready to start life together.

A Rough Start

It was still early, so they left the Arch around 10 a.m. and decided to go for brunch at the Lemp Mansion. While they were there, Melanie asked John if it would be ok to put a photo of the ring on Facebook.

“I said ok,” John remembers. “I am going to talk to everyone in my family when we leave here.”

But they hadn’t thought of all the people who were friends with other people...or how fast news spreads.

“I put it on Facebook like 10 minutes before we left,” she said. “I saw John’s Aunt Sandy had liked it.”

“I got a call from my mother, and she was pissed that Aunt Sandy knew before she did,” John put in.”



“I didn’t understand the whole vortex of communication at that point,” she added.

The next two or three hours of their engaged life was spent doing damage control—trying to get to people before they were called by someone else or seen it on Facebook.

“Which was most of the wedding,” Melanie added. “Damage control.”

Four Generations at Bem Church

Things never really quieted down for the couple, it just continued. They started planning, and the first question was where do you want to get married?

“For me, it was the church (St. John’s United Church of Christ Bem),” John said. “It was where my parents, grandparents and great-grandparents married. It was my

church.”

It wasn’t just about the living family members either.

“You walk through the cemetery at Bem, and I am probably related to 40 percent of the folks there,” he said. “It’s not that we went much, but it has always been my church and where I wanted to get married.”

Melanie said she was much less sentimental than John.

“I had thought my grandparents church in Washington, but I was still on the fence about doing that; I hadn’t had a church in mind,” she said. “I love my church, but it is in a warehouse.”

John said the sentiment was definitely a multi-generational thing.

“I was blessed in that her family just kind of took over this thing, and I didn’t have to do much,” John said.

Aside for the church, John said he got one other thing to go his way in the wedding.

“I remember my parents, the pictures of my mom and dad, getting married out at Bem, and the groomsmen had the felt Stetsons; so I wanted that too,” he said.

They also didn’t have a pastor in mind for the ceremony, just the venue. Pastor Rick

See **Behrens**, Page 15B

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Oberle was preparing to make his move from Bem to another church.

“We were his last marriage at Bem, and I was in his first confirmation class at Bem,” John said.

Setting the Date

Sure they didn’t want a long engagement, they started searching available venues to have the reception. They knew they didn’t want to go too far away, and with Melanie’s family traveling in from out-of-town, they also knew they would need a place to house everyone. They decided to ask the White Mule about a wedding package.

“They had one day left, July 29,” Melanie said.

They took it, and started planning. It was then they realized why that date was still available. It was the weekend of the fair, so some vendors were scarce.

“The White Mule, they were just so awesome to work with,” John said. “We weren’t quite sure who the DJ was going to be because of the fair, but they said they would take care of it.”

After the church and reception locations were taken care of, John tried to help Melanie with some of the wedding plans.

“Melanie would either take it from me or her dad would take it from me,” he said. “Her dad was more concerned than Melanie was about it being absolutely perfect. We would try to do something to cut corners, like fake flowers or a potluck for the reception. We were trying to be frugal at first, and they shot that down.”

Gran

While Melanie may not have been too picky about the church, she knew where she wanted her dress to come from.

“My Gran had actually made my mom’s wedding dress, but I didn’t want my mom’s dress, I wanted my own,” Melanie said. “And I wanted my Gran to make it and it would be special that way.”

They started by going to JoAnn’s and picked out a stretchy white fabric. They found lace she loved, but didn’t get it that day, which was a mistake. Melanie’s mom, Heidi, went back for the fabric later, and it was gone.

“Apparently discontinued, so she made multiple phone calls for it and it was done. It was the perfect lace,” Melanie said.

Gran had made Melanie’s mom’s dress without a pattern, but Melanie wanted something simple and found it in two different patterns.

“We picked out two patterns, one for the top and one for the bottom,” she said. “My Gran’s sister is an actual seamstress, so she helped Gran make sure the patterns fit together properly, and Gran put the dress all together.”

Gran Anne lives in Warrensburg, so every month or so, Melanie went to visit and try on the dress.

“She had originally made a slip; the dress would have three layers so it would have flowed,” Melanie said. “It would have been made of satin material, which does not breathe at all.”

Gran used the slip measurements to make the rest of the dress, and towards the end of the project, they decided to leave the slip out, because a wedding in July would have been terrible in a satin dress.

After it was all done, the dress was beautiful, but felt like it was missing something.

“The belt that went around the waist; we got it off of Amazon,” she said. “I wanted something sparkly to break up the white.”

After Gran had the dress put together, Melanie’s mom took it to sew on the beads.

“They cascaded from the waist down, and all the way around,” she said.

Afterwards, Melanie’s grandpa told her Gran Anne never again, no more sewing

dresses.

“She is a perfectionist, so I trusted her with it, but it really stressed her out in hindsight,” Melanie said.

A Prairie Style Wedding at a Dirt Road Church

The week before the wedding was scorching hot, with temperatures soaring easily over 100 degrees in the evenings, let alone the shade. The couple worried about the outside reception and the heated temperatures. But July 29 dawned and topped at a balmy 72 degrees, much to everyone’s relief.

At a white church on a back country road, John dressed with his groomsmen in black tuxes from Old World Creations in Owensville and black felt Stetson hats. The church was decorated with yellow sunflowers and blue ribbons, while the bridesmaids carried white roses and yellow sunflower bouquets. As he prepared at the front of the church to wait on his future wife, someone had a last minute idea.

“Pastor Rick came back and said, ‘hey, your grandma had an idea. How would you feel about walking your mom down the aisle?’” John remembers.

“That was not planned,” Melanie agreed.

See **Behrens**, Page 16B



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“Because we almost walked up while you were coming back.”

John’s mom Tracy welcomed her chance to walk with her son down the same isle she had walked 23 years prior.

“Her first words were don’t fall,” John laughed.

Mere minutes later, at 3 p.m. Melanie met him at the front of the church to say ‘I do.’

“We didn’t write our own vows,” Melanie said. “We figured it would be best if we didn’t with how awkward we both are in general.”

Things Aren’t Always As Planned

Following the ceremonies, John and Melanie and their wedding party greeted and thanked guests for coming. Then they boarded a school bus, rented from Da Family MC in Beaufort, and drove down Highway 19 South to allow guests time to leave. They had hoped to do some driving prior to the reception, but wound up having to turn around pretty quick for pictures at the church, then straight to the White Mule.

At the White Mule, the outside pavilion was also decorated with flowers provided by Wolf’s Flower Shop in South St. Louis, owned by Melanie’s aunt and uncle. She and her friends and family had taken an evening to put the centerpieces and candy boxes together.

A cake table set up in the front left corner boasted a designer cake by part-time local wedding planner and decorator Donna Bates, of This & That Wedding Rentals.

Old World Creations took care of the lighting and ceiling decor. Guests mingled and enjoyed the open bar, while waiting on the special couple to arrive.

“It looked pretty,” Melanie said. “It was exactly what I wanted.”

Catering services were provided by the White Mule, who also came through on their promise to find a DJ, Tammy and Ron Jones.

Following the dinner, the couple shared their first dance as husband and wife to “Shameless” by Garth Brooks.

That night, they stayed at the White Mule Bed and Breakfast with family.

“We managed to pack us, her parents, and grandparents each into their own rooms, plus the wedding party, and some other random people,” John said.

Thanks to a cousin’s RV parked outside, John said they also managed to house a few random people, along with family. Some even pitched tents.

The evening was wonderful, and attendance hadn’t been too affected by the last day of the fair.

Looking Back At the Big Day

“It was literally one emergency at a time the entire time we planned it,” he said. “And we managed to handle it very well. We were both amazed how it turned out; there was never an over-all picture—it was one detail at a time.”

John said he had the time of his life. It was

Melanie who had taken the brunt of the questioning throughout the day when things had gone wrong though.

“The wedding was beautiful, but for me as a person, the stress of it—I could have just eloped,” Melanie said.

“I didn’t realize she didn’t enjoy it,” he said. “Our wedding came together, but it’s not worth the stress, you could do it more simply.”

John thinks Melanie would have enjoyed herself more if they would have gotten to spend more time together.

Melanie said if she was given the op-



MELANIE’S DRESS was hand made by her grandmother and the beads were added by her mother.

tion to change it, she wouldn’t, but if she had to do it again, she would elope.

“We really didn’t get any time alone together the whole day, and I think that is part of the reason Mel didn’t enjoy herself,” he said. “It was for everyone else. We didn’t get time to ourselves until we were wheels up for Colorado.”

A Mountain Honeymoon in the Summertime

After the wedding, Melanie and John took off for a week to Rocky Mountain National Park with a pop up camper that her parents had gifted to them.

“We figured, hey, you only get one honeymoon, let’s do something we don’t get to do very often,” John said.

Melanie added, “We figured it was July, what a perfect time to go to the mountains instead of a beach somewhere.”

But the park had a couple of surprises for them too. The campground didn’t have showers, just running toilets and facets.

“So the worst of it was we didn’t shower, we sponge bathed,” Melanie said.

“We learned a lot about each other,” John laughed. “We hiked, we seen the Stanley Hotel, we rented a side-by-side for a day and racked up a \$100 bar tab with six drinks.”

They said mostly the whole honeymoon, they didn’t plan anything.

“We got up each morning and said what do you want to do today; we have just been making this up as we go along,” John said.

Melanie said it wasn’t until the last day of their honeymoon, and they had money left over, that they decided to get a hotel.

“We were in some town in Kansas,” John said. “I wasn’t going to pay \$100 a night for a Best Western, so we went to a Travel Lodge. To get to our room, we had to walk through a hallway of grubby mattresses. She took one look at the bathroom and said she would

See **Behrens**, Page 17B

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Rustic bouquets add natural flair to wedding celebrations

Couples opting to get back to basics, streamline their nuptials and create more intimate and less superficial affairs often gravitate toward rustic celebrations to showcase their ideals. Rustic weddings also may appeal to environmentalists and men and women who want their weddings to be as eco-friendly as possible.

Rustic weddings may include those ceremonies and receptions that take place outdoors or in abodes, such as barns, wineries, castles, or converted silos or town factories. In fact, Bridal Guide says that barn weddings have never been more popular — among both urban and rural couples alike.

Coordinating a rustic wedding may mean letting go of perceived notions of how everything from food to favors to flowers should be. In fact, one way to describe rustic weddings — and especially the floral arrangements that adorn them — is “purposely imperfect.”

Rustic wedding bouquets may seem like they were plucked right out of the garden or grabbed through a stroll in a meadow. They're rarely symmetrical or feature the

customary flowers of more formal wedding celebrations.

When designing rustic bouquets, florists may keep the stems of wildflowers or other blooms untethered for a relaxed feel. Long stemmed arrangements are quite popular, and trends point toward bouquets that are loosely tied with raffia, twine, vines and other natural materials rather than more refined ribbon.

Another way rustic bouquets set themselves apart is with the introduction of other elements into the arrangements. Not merely blooms and greenery, rustic pieces may feature twigs, vines, berries, scabiosa pods, ivy, and feathery ferns. The heights of elements in the bouquet are varied, and the bouquets will not have an overly uniform shape. Rustic bouquets are far from pretentious, and brides shouldn't feel that these bouquets are delicate or will fall apart when handled.

When planning a rustic wedding, couples can work with their florists to create bouquets and arrangements that fit with their visions.

Behrens • from page 16B

wait to shower. I tried to shower, but there was no shower head.”

They couldn't find an attendant to get their money back, so they left and wound up staying at the Best Western anyway.

“I guess that's way it could charge so much,” John laughed.

Married Up & Settled Down

Since they married seven months ago, Melanie has graduated and is now a Hermann High School sophomore English teacher, theatre productions teacher as well as a track coach.

John is finishing his degree in supply chain analytics from UMCEL and runs a local electronics recycle business, Rock Island Recycling.

They agreed if there is a correlation between all the events in their relationship, they can always count on one thing to get through.

“Fake it 'till you make it,” John said. “Even now, post-married, it is still just one day at a time. We are pretty good at handling that.”

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Choosing wedding color palettes

Some brides may feel beholden to the color white on their wedding days, at least in regard to their gowns. Those who do often embrace the opportunity to showcase their personal styles and set the mood for their nuptials by embracing various colors throughout their ceremonies and receptions.

Color can be a critical component when establishing the ambiance for a wedding. Color can evoke certain moods and set the tone for the day. Some colors work better together than others, so while choosing a color scheme may seem like an easy undertaking, some couples may find it requires more careful consideration than they first imagined.

According to the bridal guide *A Practical Wedding*, wedding colors can give couples a starting-off point for all of the other details of their weddings. This ensures the wedding ultimately has a cohesive look. Colors need not necessarily match, but borrowing on similar hues can make it easier to plan

See **Color Palettes**, Page 19B



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Frosting-free cakes the latest trend

A new trend is taking hold both in North America and on the other side of the Atlantic Ocean. Cakes are being pared down so that frosting and fondant coverings are now nearly absent from the confections.

They're called "naked cakes," and these simplified desserts showcase the texture of the cakes and their fillings. According to culinary experts, the idea for the naked cake came from Christina Tosi, owner of Momofuku Milk Bar. It's an award-winning bakery with locations across the United States and Canada. Now many other pastry chefs and bakers are hopping on the naked cake bandwagon, with the trend being highlighted by the likes of Martha Stewart and the respected wedding resource The Knot.



Just because these cakes may be short on exterior buttercream doesn't mean they fall flat on flavor or visual appeal. Cakes can be embellished with fresh blooms, gum paste-molded flowers, edible pearls and gems, fresh berries, and much more. The Knot notes many naked cakes are garnished with flavors that are included in the cake, such as chocolate chips, crumbs, cookie dough, or candy sprinkles.

Couples who are stripping down their weddings to include more basics and natural effects may be drawn to these naked cakes. They're also an option for those who find frosting, buttercream and fondant too sweet for the palate. Naked cakes enable the interior flavors to really shine.

Color Palettes • from page 18B

wedding party wardrobes, flowers, table linens, and much more.

Colors can come from anywhere, but many couples try to coordinate their color schemes with the season in which the wedding takes place. In fact, couples who are finding it difficult to decide on a palette can look to seasonal colors for inspiration. For example, pastels and blooming flowers can set the scene for spring weddings, while jewel tones and rich reds and greens may be fitting for winter ceremonies.

Some couples opt for more loosely defined color palettes, such as neutral and natural colors. Country and garden weddings can borrow ideas from the landscape, with natural linens paired with wildflowers. Using whites, grays and beiges enables couples to add a pop of color without overwhelming the setting.

Brides magazine suggests that couples avoid choosing too many colors. A maximum of three with one metallic can ensure that things look cohesive without being over-the-top. Also, brides and grooms needn't feel pressured by the "hot" colors of the moment. As with clothing and hairstyles, trends change. It is better to select colors that will stand the test of time and look good for years to come.

Couples may have to incorporate colors already at their wedding venues into their style. Fortunately many reception sites are outfitted in neutral tones to enable customization.

The wedding resource The Knot also says having a basic knowledge of the color wheel can help. Typically, colors that pair well together are those that are opposites on the color wheel. Also, colors that share proximity on the color wheel will have similar tones and play well together. Examples of opposite colors include purples and yellows, reds and greens, and oranges and blues.

Couples should not be afraid to take some chances with their color palettes, especially if they want to make a bold and modern statement.



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Wedding costs: What to expect

Newly engaged couples may experience an array of emotions when they sit down to plan their weddings. Some couples cannot wait to jump into planning and want to catalog every aspect of the process, while others may proceed with caution because they don't know what to expect — particularly in regard to cost.

Many couples find it difficult to create their wedding budgets because they have no previous experience to draw on. The wedding planning advisor CostofWedding.com indicates the average wedding cost in the United States is \$26,720, with most people spending between \$20,000 and \$34,000. Seventh Heaven Event Catering states that, in Canada, the average wedding costs around \$30,000. Such costs can vary greatly depending on couples' preferences, including where they hope to tie the knot.

By breaking down wedding expenses, couples can get a clearer picture of how much they may need to pay for their weddings and where they may need to cut costs.

• **Reception site:** According to The Knot, a premiere wedding planning resource, couples can expect their receptions to eat up the largest chunk of their wedding budgets. Wedding reception venues may cost between \$10,000 and \$15,000. The average price for catering per person is roughly \$70. Bar service may be around \$2,000 for a three- to four-hour party. Some reception sites combine the room cost with the food and beverage costs, while others have à la carte fees.

• **Cake:** Wedding cakes tend to be multitiered intricate designs, so they will cost more than birthday cakes. According to Statistics Brain, wedding dessert will come in around \$390.

• **Music:** The Knot says wedding bands cost around \$3,500, which is more than twice as much as hiring a deejay (\$1,200). Soloists or ceremony musicians may cost around \$650.

• **Wedding planner:** Many couples employ wedding planners to make planning their weddings easier. Wedding planners cost an average of \$1,300, says Thumbtack, a company that matches professionals with people who require their services.

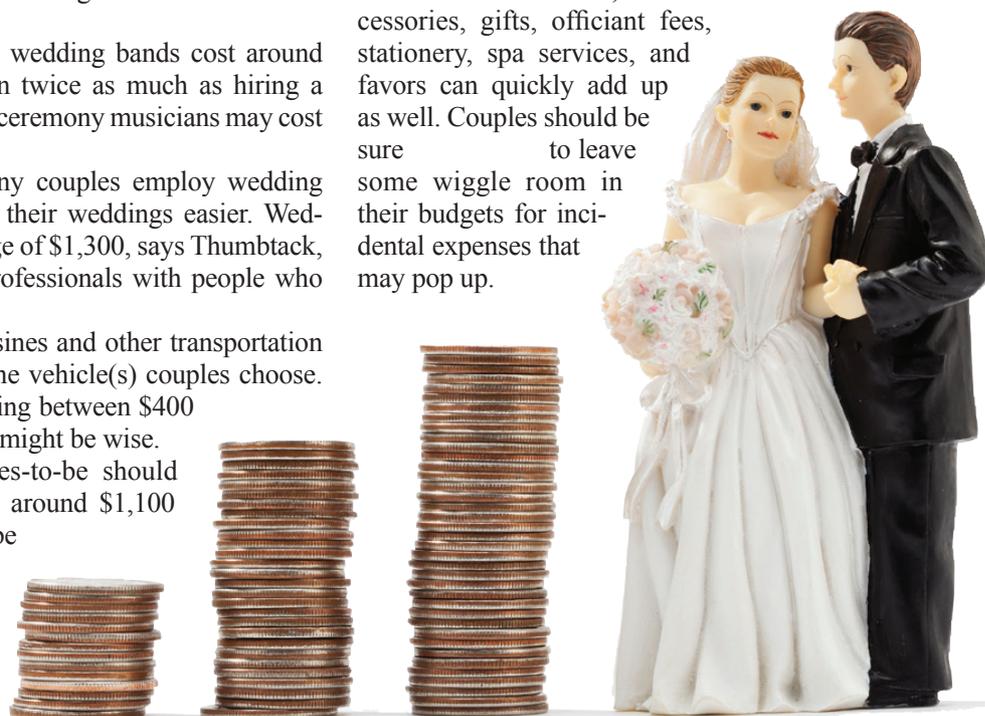
• **Transportation:** Limousines and other transportation prices vary depending on the vehicle(s) couples choose. The Knot notes that budgeting between \$400 and \$500 for transportation might be wise.

• **Wedding gown:** Brides-to-be should expect their gowns to cost around \$1,100 and the veil or headpiece to be roughly \$120, according to the Association of Bridal Consultants.

• **Photography and Video:** Preserving wedding day memories costs

around \$2,800 for video and photography services, based on data from Statistics Brain.

The smaller details, such as accessories, gifts, officiant fees, stationery, spa services, and favors can quickly add up as well. Couples should be sure to leave some wiggle room in their budgets for incidental expenses that may pop up.



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How couples can benefit from hiring local wedding vendors

Local vendors are often a go-to choice when couples are planning their wedding ceremonies and receptions. As the “shop local” movement grows in popularity, weddings present a prime opportunity to embrace this movement.

Couples may have different ideas regarding where to tie the knot, but local vendors can be hired regardless of geography. Brides magazine says the biggest factor influencing wedding location is the size of the guest list and the number of people who wouldn't be able to attend if the wedding was in a particular locale. Hometowns might be the traditional choice regarding wedding location, but the XO Group says one in four couples now host destination weddings.

Once couples choose a town or city to host their weddings, they can begin exploring the benefits of working with locally-based vendors.

Familiarity

Local vendors will be familiar with the area and possibly even the location where the wedding will be held. That can help couples avoid having to give directions, discuss venue protocols, and handle other tasks that must be worked out with non-local vendors. For

example, local photographers familiar with a particular venue will know all of the best places to get shots, and some vendors may have preexisting relationships with venue representatives that could ensure wedding day operations go smoothly.

Proximity

Local vendors can meet with brides and grooms more readily throughout the planning process, making things less stressful on the happy couple. This also makes it easier to drop off deposits, attend meetings, make fitting appointments, or attend styling sessions.

Savings

Couples who travel for their weddings and employ local vendors will not have to pack as much. Using local vendors eliminates the need to bring along bulky dresses, decorative items, flowers, and much more. Plus, couples needn't pay to transport and house vendors brought along from back home.

Environment

Individuals who take great strides to conserve resources by reducing their energy consumption and protecting the environment often find that shopping local is beneficial. Local vendors are more likely to source their materials from other local businesses,



LOCAL VENDORS have intimate knowledge of the areas they serve, and that can make for a more personalized, eco-friendly wedding.

reducing their carbon footprints along the way. For example, local caterers may rely on local farmers for their foods, affording couples the chance to host eco-friendly or even farm-to-table weddings.

Customization

Working with local vendors often trans-

lates into getting more personalized service and attention than mass retailers or merchants can provide.

Going local when choosing wedding vendors is an increasingly popular choice among couples about to tie the knot.

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12 wedding tricks add ease to planning and fun

Brides and grooms understandably feel a little stress when planning their weddings. Adding to the pressure is the fact that, according to a WeddingWire.com report, the average couple in their 30s spends \$32,000 on their wedding. That is a lot of money riding on one day.

But planning a wedding can be even more fun than it is stressful, especially for those couples who employ a few tricks of the wedding planning trade.

1. Fake the cake. Save some money by asking the bakery cake artist to decorate a foam-tiered “mock” cake for pictures and display, and serve guests from an inexpensive sheet cake in the kitchen.

2. Use labels. Once the guest list is finalized, create a database of guests’ addresses. Print out two sets of labels: One for addressing the invitations and the other to address the thank-you cards.

3. RSVP tricks: Number the back of RSVP cards and correspond the numbers to the guest list. If one or more responses is illegible, refer to the number to figure it out.

4. Embrace inexpensive decor. Dollar stores and craft stores are

great places to find inexpensive decorative items. Empty wine bottles can be painted or glazed to serve as vases. Candle lanterns can be picked up at low cost at many retailers.

5. Create an email address. To have all of the wedding-related details in one place, create a separate email address exclusively for wedding correspondence.

6. Use veil weights. These weights can be sewn into veils to prevent fly-aways during outdoor ceremonies or photoshoots.

7. Keep bugs at bay. Spray chair and reception table legs with insect repellent. Dryer sheets also can be tucked into inconspicuous spots to keep bugs away.

8. Save money on favors. Unless the favor is something to eat or something especially practical, you may consider skipping the favors altogether, as many guests tend to forget to take them home anyway.

9. Use page markers for seating. Use multicolored, self-sticking page markers to create easy seating arrangements. Each color can represent a category: His, Hers, Friends, Work.

10. Make a photo clothesline. A clever and inexpensive idea is



to pin photos of the couple to a string, cataloguing how they met and their time together leading up to the wedding.

11. Use loose flower centerpieces. Loose flowers in a vase are easier to sort and transport home for guests who want a memento.

Make pre-cut butcher’s paper or cellophane available to make bouquets.

12. Stock up on string lights. Lights can be wrapped around trees outdoors, strung indoors around windows or draped along buffet tables to create a romantic

ambiance.

Weddings can be expensive and stressful; therefore, couples can use all the tips they can to corral their expenses and tame their nerves.

Did you know?

Since Ancient Roman times, June has been a popular month for couples to tie the knot. The month’s namesake, the goddess Juno, was said to be the protector of women in every aspect, but most notably in regard to marriage and childbearing. Therefore, it made sense to get married and take the first step toward creating a family in June. For practical reasons, June also has been a prime month for marriage because the month is

neither especially hot nor especially cold in many areas of the world. While dressed in formalwear — whether having an outdoor wedding or an indoor one — no one wants to be overheated or uncomfortably cold.

While June is still a popular month to get married, the wedding resource The Knot indicates that autumn, in particular the months of September and October, has overtaken summer as the most popular wedding season.

Warmer-than-average temperatures in autumn over the last few years as well as a dazzling display of natural color help make the fall a popular time for nuptials. Interestingly enough, perhaps due to a slightly cooler climate, a 2015 survey from Wedding Bells found August to be the most popular month to get married in Canada, and that 67 percent of weddings in Canada that year occurred between June and September.

Affordable bachelor and bachelorette party ideas

Weddings can be expensive. Various sources estimate the average cost of weddings is anywhere from \$26,000 to \$31,000. Couples and their parents may bear the brunt of wedding expenses, but those who have accepted a role in the wedding party also can expect their share of expenses.

Taking into account gifts, wardrobes, makeup, bridal showers, and travel, including getting to and from the bachelor/bachelorette party, bridal party members are on the hook for a lot of money when their friends or family members tie the knot. Many men and women like to travel for their bachelor/bachelorette parties, and cost-conscious bridal party members may be concerned about how expensive such parties can be. Pulling out all the stops can be exciting, but there's no guarantee these types of parties will be more enjoyable than simpler soirées.

Taking steps to control costs can help cost-conscious couples and their friends. The following are some affordable ideas that can be fun for all involved.

• Bar or winery crawl: Partygoers typically want to enjoy a night out on the town,

and traveling from one establishment to another can be a fun way to do just that. Everyone invited can set themselves apart with a signature item (hat, T-shirt, or colored clothing), and make the rounds.

• Attend a group event: Group events include sporting events, concerts, theater shows, or a night at a comedy club. Investigate discounted tickets for large groups.

• Belt out the tunes: Open mic nights at restaurants, bars and other establishments around town may make for a fun way for friends to share a few laughs together. Participants need not be professional singers to join in on the festivities.

• Camp out: Get in touch with nature by enjoying a camping trip, complete with a campfire and a few brews. Spending time in the wilderness can restore focus and let stress melt away.

• Poker or game night: Groups can gather around the poker table to test their skills in poker and other card games. With some free-flowing beverages and snacks galore, games can get pretty animated.

• Dinner party: Hire a chef to visit your house and prepare a meal for guests. Serve



a signature cocktail and let the conversation flow.

Bachelor and bachelorette parties can be affordable without sacrificing fun.

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Winter scene photo from Vail Colorado by John Martin.



Schlottach • from page 8B

sister of the groom; Ashley Monasmith, future sister-in-law of the groom; Alana Weiland, friend of the bride; Katie Wells, friend of the bride; Emily Witt, friend of the bride; Emily Reinhold, friend of the bride; and Courtney Groves, friend of the bride. There three ring bearers as part of the wedding party. They are the nephews of the bride. Caden Daniel Schatz, Nolan David Schatz, and Tyson Steven Schatz are lights of the couple's lives and both wanted them all to play a part in their wedding.

Tasty Food and Delicious Desserts

Being led by the groom's mother, Karen Schlottach, and co-owner of the White Mule Winery, the winery staff prepared delicious dinners served to approximately 600 guests. Dinner included roast beef, pork loin, green beans, corn, cheesy potatoes, salad and rolls. Dessert was traditional wedding cake. "One of the things I desperately wanted was a 'display' of cakes. Teresa with Teresa Lynn Cakes, from Sullivan, and with the help of Nancy, our coordinator, made that vision come to life. I believe there were nine total cakes in a variety of flavors on the display. My personal favorite is white wedding cake. I really wanted the cakes to make a statement of their own. I would say we accomplished that," said Devon.

The Honeymoon

Believe it or not, the couple didn't plan their honeymoon. They were completely surprised by it. "This was a really fun planning experience. We decided we didn't care where we went, and we wanted to be surprised, so we booked through a travel agent, Kelly Mormon with Totally Travels. We asked to go somewhere warm and all-inclusive, but we didn't care which country. We were told when to arrive at the airport and were given clues along the way for the big reveal. We were totally impressed with her choice! We went to Riviera Maya in Mexico and stayed at a resort called Unico.

What made this especially fun is our travel agent took facts about us, such as Woody being a farmer, and myself being a student, desperate for a place to relax, that she was able to really customize this trip for us. Unico is a small, brand new resort that prides itself on being immersed in the culture with tons of spa options and food from local farmers.

We also went swimming with sea turtles, which was super fun. We would definitely try the 'surprise' trip again. It was a blast and took the stress out of planning," commented Devon

Love and Support From Family

Their families and love for them are prevalent as each of them describe their relationships with their parents. The bride's parents are Dave and Chara Schatz and the groom's parents are Charlie and Karen Schlottach. Without the help of their parents, the day wouldn't have come together as smoothly as it did. They helped throughout the entire planning process.

"Thank you for all your love, help, and support to make our wedding so perfect," commented Woody and Devon Schlottach.



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