

# *Bridal Guide*



*A supplement to the Armstrong Journal, Bancroft Register, Emmetsburg Reporter-Democrat, Estherville News, Gracettinger Times, Ringsted Dispatch, Ruthven Zipcode, Snea City Herald-Press and West Bend Journal*  
*February 2024*

# Sonya & Tyler tie the knot with family & friends



Sonya and Tyler Swanson were hanging out in their rooftop pool over the holidays in 2021 where they watched another couple from their resort get married. It was at Playa Mujeres in Mexico when Tyler proposed and the couple started planning their own wedding. The wedding took place Aug. 19, 2023.

Sonya's parents are Rita & Randy Newkirk. Tyler grew up in Estherville, the son of Penny Swanson & Shannon Lehmkuhl. The wedding was officiated by Matt Anderson. Sonya had

Paige Reynolds as her maid of honor with bridesmaids Sydney Swanson, Emily Miller, Madison Burghart, Rebecca White, Alandra Kidd, and Stephanie Newkirk. Her personal attendant was Katrina Bostwick. Tyler's best man was Evan Hansen, along with groomsmen Zach Heikens, Kory Swanson, Matt Burrell, Jason Gilmore, Jeff Perkins and Adam Reiter. Ushers were Anthony Bock, Bryce Hansen, Braeden Lehmkuhl, Ethan Faust and Dylan Seivert. The couple had four flower girls: Reese Newkirk, Emery Sievert,

Avery Newkirk, and Peyton Kaminska. Ring bearer was Carter Ross Stettinichs.

Sonya's wedding dress came from Marie and Marie Bridal in Sioux Falls. Bridesmaids dresses were from Azazie with the flower girl dresses from Grand Bridal in Spencer. Tuxes came from Squire Shoppe in Spencer. Lidderdale Catering brought the food while the cake was from Hy-Vee Catering. Courtney Johnson of Aesthetic Essence Photography took the pictures. Wedding Decor by Ruth did the flowers and All4Fun in Sheldon

provided the party bus. The rings came from Spirit Lake Silver and Gold and Mastbergen Jewelry. Hair styling was by Posh Salon in Spencer with makeup and spray tan at Boji Breeze Face & Body. The couple served popcorn from Coated Kernels in Sioux City and rented decorations from Hummingbird Events in Sioux Center. They designed their save the date cards, invitations and wedding signage on Canva. Shante Whalen of Spencer played guitar.

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# “Cutest Couple that never was” is now happily married

By Kim Meyer  
Bancroft Register/Swea City Herald  
Press

Reminiscing through high school year books, can make you laugh and bring up memories that you have forgotten.

One of those memories for the newly married couple of Brady and Hallie (Reese) Anderson of Armstrong was voted as the “Cutest Couple that never was”. Since the two were classmates at North Union High School, they had several classes together and were involved in sports together. But they were just friends.

That is until their senior year when they started hanging out with friends and heading to the bowling alley for a night out. And all of sudden, the couple that never was became the couple that was.

Hallie noted that she isn't sure if the “We might have gotten switched to attached at the hip after that instead of the couple that never was but I don't remember.”

A small detail that is one little part of their life together. Being friends for so long Hallie noticed that Brady was a very kind person and even before they started dating, he would ask her how her day went. And it stuck with Hallie.

Brady stated what he found so admiring was that Hallie didn't care what people thought of her and she did what she wanted but she was still a nice person and fun to be around.

Right before Christmas break of

their senior year, on December 15, 2017, Brady and Hallie became a couple.

Fast forward, the couple experienced high school graduation, college, work, and more before Brady proposed.

So on April 17, 2022, Brady capitalized on Easter Holiday tradition of hunting for Easter eggs. Each year Hallie was the one to find the golden Easter egg with the big prize. But this year, somehow, Brady found the egg, which may have upset Hallie just a bit. That didn't last long once she cracked open the egg and inside was her diamond engagement ring! That is when Brady proposed to the love of his life and of course, Hallie said yes!

Commence the wedding planning for the Anderson and Reese families. Hallie stated, “I always wanted a darker theme so I chose fall to get married. We also had to accommodate our families that farmed.” And with that all in mind, they chose September 23, 2023 as the date they would say “I do”.

About two years prior to getting engage, Hallie had attended a wedding at The Timbers in Northwood, Iowa and she loved the look of the place. She knew her chosen colors of burgundy for Brady and black for the groomsmen and bridesmaids and white for Hallie with hints of silver would definitely compliment their style.

Hallie headed to Andi's Floral and Embellishments in Bancroft to help

complete her look.

“Andi's floral did our flowers that had baby's breath for the bridesmaids to make it nice and simple and tie into the simple yet beautiful decor done by “Wow Weddings” and a variety for mine,” Hallie stated.

One of the biggest parts of the wedding is the dress. Hallie purchased her dress in Spencer at Grand Bridal. “I loved the floral straps and the 3D floral on the dress, loved the sparkle and that it was comfortable for the whole day!”

To help make the day special for the couple were friends and family.

The wedding party consisted of maid of honor Samantha Hagedorn and bridesmaids, her sisters, Rebekah Peterson and Shayla Reese and friends Samantha Horak, Ashlyn Waite, and Dana Nowak.

Jake Anderson served as Brady's best man. Groomsmen were Brendan Anderson, Brady's brother; Bryer Prochniak, Brady's cousin; and friends, Hayden Nicoson, Colton Nicoson, and Mitchell Nowak.

Ushers for the couple were Derek Thompson and Travis Peterson

Helping throughout the day were Hallie's personal attendants- Hailey Schmidt and Breanna Diestelkamp.

Rounding out the bridal party were flower girls Ari Horak and Saylor Schliemann. Ring bearers were Ezra and Asa Bell.

Also helping make the day special for them were Hallie's parents, Justin and Jay Reese, and Brady's

*Cutest Couple  
continued on page 4*



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## 2024 color of year has warmth, compassion

by Amy H. Peterson  
Staff Writer

PANTONE, a company famous for aesthetics, announced its 2024 color of the year – Peach Fuzz (PANTONE 13-1023). The Pantone Color Institute chooses a color each year that reflects the hope or the reality of each coming year. In a statement, Leatrice Eiseman, executive director of the Institute, explained the inspiration behind the color: “In seeking a hue that echoes our innate yearning for closeness and connection, we chose a color radiant with warmth and modern elegance. A shade that resonates with compassion, offers a tactile embrace, and effortlessly bridges the youthful with the timeless.”

The wedding party can be dressed in varying hues and prints of peach and earth tones with the men suited in grey, blue or shades of brown with peach bowties.

Peach Fuzz can complement the greens and earth tones that have been popular with couples in recent years, as well as cream, a dark pewter grey, or light slate blue, according to wedding planners. Suggested color combinations with Peach Fuzz include:

- forest green and white
- sage green and fuchsia
- butter yellow and plum or lavender
- coral and taupe
- mixing with tangerine and a rust color for a sunset palette
- light pinks and bold magentas
- burgundy, silver and white
- cornflower blue with the addition of green foliage
- emerald green and cream
- ice blue with navy blue accents
- champagne and a variety of earth tones
- mustard yellow and celery green

For couples that see Peach Fuzz as a less is more idea, incorporating accents of the shade into florals and cake will incorporate the trend without overpowering the day. A peachy signature spritzer or cocktail could refresh an otherwise neutral or dark-hued wedding theme.



**Cutest Couple** continued from page 3  
grandparents, Jerry and Donna Ulrich. Also present but in spirit only were Brady's late parents Nathan and Amy Anderson.

Hallie said that with all the planning for the big day, one of the most memorable moments for the couple was “getting ready and taking

pictures with our closest friends and family and knowing that the people we love and support do the same for us!”

Following the big celebration, the couple did not go on a honeymoon, since they had taken a trip in March of that year. They are now heading on another excursion this March.

If Brady and Hallie could give one

piece of advice to a couple planning their wedding, it would be, “Don't sweat the small things, take your time enjoying being engaged and plan at your own pace. Your wedding is about the two of you so don't try to please everyone else. Do what you want regardless of what others say and think.”



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# Auto parts run leads to wonderful Fort Defiance wedding

It was December, 2022 when Tyson Enerson, owner of Center Tire in Gruver, asked then-girlfriend Shelby to go on a parts run to Fairmont, Minn. "I hopped in with him in a dirty sweatshirt and muddy boots," Shelby remembers. Instead of pulling in to a parts store, Tyson stopped at Sovell Jewelry in Fairmont to look at rings. In January, the couple took a trip to Steamboat Springs, Colorado, where Tyson proposed while on a horse-drawn sleigh ride. Shelby said the romantic gesture was an easy "Yes!"

The couple had been together for seven years, so they didn't draw out the engagement or wedding planning. The date was set for Sept. 18, 2023.

Shelby's parents are Bruce and Penny Guse while Tyson is the son of Dave and Robin Enerson. "We can't thank them enough for all of their continued support," Shelby said.

Tyson gathered his guys, including brother Trevor as best man, Evan Klinbeil, Bob Weideman, Ryan Tjepkes, and Mike Hansen as groomsmen. Shelby's matron of honor was her sister Chelsey Smith. Bridesmaids were Kristi Guse, Morgan Klingbeil, Kynlee Smith, and Kolby Smith. The littlest nieces, Sloan Enerson and Karter Smith stole the show as flowergirls. The wedding was officiated by Jack Brashear, close friend of the couple.

"He did a wonderful job, and having such a good friend marry us is something we will cherish forever," Shelby said.

Ushers were Dave Mart, Adam Metcalf, Andy Gosch, and Cody Hantelman. Tricia Blass of

Tricia's Flowers created fall floral arrangements. A reception followed at the Elks Lodge in Estherville with food catered by Barry Bonner of Hillcrest Golf Course in Graettinger.

Of the Elks Club, Shelby said, "Pam Caboth was absolutely amazing to work with. She was so helpful and went out of her way to make our day special."

Erin Rahm of Erin Elise Photography took pictures, and Rosie Harvey and Jessica Baddeley made sweet treats. The dresses came from A Heavenly Celebration in Emmetsburg, while the men found their ensembles at Boot Barn.

Shelby said, "Honestly, the whole night was perfect. We were surrounded by such great family and friends. We really felt the love and support from everyone who came to celebrate with us or sent their wishes! We are very blessed."



Tyson and Shelby Enerson stand with their close friend Jack Brashear, who officiated their wedding.



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## Coakleys emphasize fun and friendship in Estherville wedding

by Amy H. Peterson  
apeterson@esthervillenews.net

Royce and Abrianna Coakley got engaged July 28, 2019 on vacation in Gatlinburg, Tennessee in a cabin in the mountains, with their best friends Kory Rezac and Seane Theesfeld sharing what Abrianna called a perfect moment.

The couple was married at St. Patrick's Catholic Church in Estherville with Father Paul Kelly officiating.

Abrianna said the ceremony was special because of the "outpouring of love and support we had from all of our loved ones in one room, and that we finally did it after six years of talking about it."

It was a dream day for the couple, Abrianna said.

"Walking down the aisle after our wedding, knowing that we did it was the best feeling ever". The nerves went away and the couple could enjoy the day.

Abrianna's parents are Anthony Schmaus and Staci Schmaus. Royce's parents are Alison Coakly and Cory Coakley.

The group of friends and family in the wedding party included: Alyssa Schmaus, maid of honor, Kory Rezac, another maid of honor, Haeley Crees, Jayci Theesfeld, Laticia Whiting and Noelle Fluegum were bridesmaids, and Dawson Baddeley was flower girl. Tanner VanWhye was best man, and Seane Theesfeld, Ethan Crees, Brennan Nyren, Lincoln Coakley and Zac Mann were groomsmen, and Grayson Crees was ring bearer. Ushers were Bryce Van Whye, Jordan Roberts and Riley Theesfeld.

Abrianna's dress came from David's Bridal and the bridesmaids' dresses were from Azazie.

"I just chose the color I wanted, and they chose the style," Abrianna said.

The groomsmen ordered tuxedos from Style Loft in Estherville.

"They were amazing to work with and made sure everything was right," Abrianna said.

The entire wedding party wore matching shoes purchased from Hey Dudes.

Emily Marie Photography took photos at the ceremony and the reception venue, Five Island in Emmetsburg. All 4 Fun provided the party bus.

Pam Mittrucker from Shear Attractions did hair and Tasha Welch did makeup. DJ Nate from Okoboji provided music and entertainment, and Happily Ever After from Okoboji decorated the reception.

Hy-Vee catered two of the side dishes, along with buns, and the couple had homemade goodies at the reception, including baked beans by Abrianna's mom, Staci Schmaus and Chad Nordhausen smoking his famous pork butt recipe for pulled pork sandwiches. Hy-Vee also provided the wedding cake, while cupcakes at the dessert table came from Eventful Sweets

"We have not yet planned a honeymoon as we do travel together quite frequently and have no rush in planning one, but do plan on going on one in a year or so!" Abrianna said.

The couple expressed their thanks for the outstanding work contributed by all of the vendors as well as friends and family who helped make their wedding day special.





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Royce and Abrianna Coakley, along with their bridal party sported the same socks and shoes at their wedding reception and had fun showing them off.

## Diamonds? Not always. Couples seek alternatives

Iowa is one of only eight states in which people searching for information on gemstones prefer moissanite, not diamonds. New data from the diamond engagement ring and fine jewelry experts Mark Broumand used

Google search data for over 45 gemstones and nearly 500 keywords to pinpoint the most-searched gemstones across Iowa during 2023. Moissanite is a more affordable alternative to the diamond, and has overtaken diamonds as

the most popular gemstone in searches taking place at Iowa locations. Rounding out the top five are pearls, opals and gemstones.

Moissanite has grown in favor, with a 131% surge in online search popularity over the last

five years. The rare gem is now simulated in a lab, but the original version was found in fallout from a meteorite, making it possibly a great fit for area couples wanting to create a custom, unique engagement or wedding ring.



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# Diekmanns set clock to launch marriage

Spenser and Lauren Diekmann start marriage under water



The proposal had fireworks. Lauren said, "Spenser asked me to marry him during the fourth of July fireworks in Davenport. We had just finished watching a Quad Cities River Bandits baseball game and would have been able to see the fireworks from the stadium, but he insisted on a walk along the Mississippi River, where he got down on one knee."

Lauren wore her grandmother's necklace, the same one her mom and sister wore during their wedding ceremonies.

Launch: the couple had a unity ceremony during which they started a launch clock. "We started this special timer with crazy-long battery life right before we kissed. Now we only have to look at our clock to know exactly how long we've been married, Lauren said. The launch clock can be found here: <https://cwandt.com/products/time-since-launch?variant=19682206089275>

The colors for the wedding revolved around ocean blue as the party got started in the aquarium.

The ceremony dress and veil came from Azazie, and a reception dress from David's Bridal. The bridesmaid's dresses were Kennedy blue and groomsmen attire from Generation Tux. Photography was provided by Complete Weddings and Events and Videography from Fitzgerald Films. Alexxus Entertainment was

the DJ and the flowers were DIY using Sola Wood flowers. Catering came from J& D Catering and desserts from Frosted n Filled Bakery. Kalyn Schemmel of Embrace Salon, Spa and Lash Boutique did the hair and the couple honeymooned at Secrets Wild Orchid in Montego Bay, Jamaica.



The bridal party had a lot of fun by wearing fun and colorful socks to the wedding.

by Amy H. Peterson  
apeterson@esthervillenews.net

Spenser Diekmann and his brother, Noah, also featured in this section, got married the same year, each to women named Lauren, but their weddings were completely different and hundreds of miles apart. Spenser, an Estherville native, married Lauren Larson, hailing from Owatonna, Minnesota, at the National Mississippi Aquarium and Museum in Dubuque.

Larson's parents are Charles and Diane Larson of Owatonna, and Diekmann's parents are Jim and Nancy Diekmann of Estherville.

Larson had her brother, Greg Larson as a bridesman, and Spenser had friend Bailey Gonzalez as groomswoman. Other wedding party members were Cassandra Larson, maid of Honor, Sam Brigham, matron of honor, Katelyn Larson, bridesmaid. Noah Diekmann was best man, Kyle Thompson, Anselmo Salazar, and Gable Bonner were groomsmen. Austin Parrish, Eli Chapple, Kent Radtke, and Alex Quastad were ushers.

Alex Nelson officiated. Lauren said, "Our friend Alex proclaimed early in our relationship that if we ever got married, he'd get ordained and marry us."



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# Noah & Lauren brave the cold for a March wedding

by Amy H. Peterson  
apeterson@esthervilleneews.net

Noah Diekmann and Lauren Newgard were high school sweethearts at Estherville Lincoln Central High School who tied the knot in the Lakes in March, 2023.

Lauren's parents are Ronda Newgard of Estherville and Stacy & Michelle Newgard of Milord. Noah's parents are Jim and Nancy Diekmann of Estherville. Lauren is now one of two Lauren Diekmanns as the former Lauren

Newkirk married Noah's brother Spenser last summer. Their wedding is featured elsewhere in this magazine.

The ceremony was officiated by Emily Chrestiansen, Lauren's cousin. The cousins have always been close.

"It meant a lot to me that she agreed to officiate our wedding ceremony," Lauren said. The ceremony was held at The Majestic Pavilion in Arnolds Park, with the reception at The Roof Garden Ballroom.

Yolanda Castillo was Lauren's maid of

honor, and Nicole Intermill, Emilee Dalen, Natalie Lindsey and sister-in-law Molly Diekmann were bridesmaids. Zoey Huntley was Lauren's personal attendant. Noah chose Logan Dalen as his best man, Spenser Diekmann, Tyler Lowe, Travis Erickson, and Dalton Rucker as groomsmen and the couple's ushers were Cody Newgard and Thomas Harvego. Flower girls were Conley and Camryn Newgard, nieces of the bride, and ring bearers were Everett and Jace, two cousins of the groom.

Noah's proposal was out of this world. Lauren remembers, "We were on vacation at Secrets in Jamaica in November of 2021. Noah had been secretly planning a proposal on the beach. He had told me we were getting a private dinner on the beach because we were repeat guests at the resort."

Lauren noticed hotel workers setting up a candlelit milieu on the beach, and she mentioned to Noah that she hoped they could see what it was. After a blindfolded walk along

the beach, Lauren took off her blindfold and saw a candlelit path that formed a heart shape at the end with the words, "Marry Me." Noah was waiting for her on one knee. After the photographer took a few pictures, the two had a private dinner on the beach.

The couple used rentals for their reception from Oak Shores Events in Wallingford. April B Photography in Sibley took pictures while Films for You Co. out of Minneapolis took video. Nate T of Arnolds Park was the DJ. Lauren purchased her dress at Luxe Bridal Couture of Eagan, Minnesota. The designer was Essence of Australia. The bridesmaids' dresses came from Azazie.

The men wore Michael Kors suits rented from Elegance Bridal in Okoboji. Central catering provided the food. The cake was from Cakes by Kimmi in Estherville while Lauren's Aunt Lori Chrestiansen baked cupcakes. Doug Girres of Graettinger provided transportation, and the couple returned to Secrets Riviera in Cancun for their honeymoon.



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— Nicholas Sparks, *The Notebook*



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## Time management tips for your wedding day

### Can anyone be a wedding officiant?

Though it's been awhile since the poll was conducted, in 2017 the data-tracking firm Wedding Report surveyed couples who had recently tied the knot, and one of the questions participants answered concerned who officiated their weddings. Roughly 25 percent of couples indicated a friend or family member had served as their wedding officiant, and that figure pales in comparison to older studies, one of which determined the number was around 40 percent.

But anyone who has attended more than one wedding in recent years has likely noticed that it's no longer unique to see laypersons officiate a wedding instead of more traditional officiants, which historically has meant clergy or other individuals with some formal affiliation with a house of worship.

Though local or provincial governments may have their own unique rules and restrictions, in many places it's easy and open to anyone to become a licensed officiant. Couples who want a friend or family member to officiate their wedding are urged to make that request well in advance of their wedding, which can assure the person has ample time to complete the licensing process

As any married couple can attest, a wedding day has a tendency to fly by. Couples have much to do on the day they tie the knot, which can make the day feel like a whirlwind.

Certain skills can come in especially handy on a wedding day, and the ability to manage time is certainly one of them. As their big day draws closer, couples can employ these time management tips to slow the day down a little bit.

- Create and distribute a schedule. A schedule can ensure the happy couple and all members of the bridal party know when and where they need to be at certain times during the day. Include all pertinent information on the schedule, including when and where hair and makeup appointments begin, when transportation to and from the ceremony and reception site will arrive and, of course, the start time for the ceremony. A printed copy can help, but a digital copy sent via text or email can guarantee the schedule is accessible

via smartphone at all times during the day.

- Collaborate with your photographer in advance of your wedding day. Couples can streamline wedding day photography sessions by collaborating with their photographer in advance. During these sessions, identify the bridal party shots you want to take and then create a schedule of photos so all party members know where they need to be and when. Some couples choose to schedule bridal party photoshoots before the ceremony, while others prefer theirs after the couple has made it official. Regardless of which option couples prefer, schedule these photos so no time is wasted finding bridal party members.

- Don't forget to set aside time to eat. Anything can derail a wedding day schedule if it's forgotten when couples devise their initial plan for how the day will unfold. Couples might be less inclined to forget hair and makeup appointments and photo sessions because such components are integral to wedding planning. But couples

should not forget to leave time for themselves and their bridal party to eat. Schedule a breakfast for all bridal party members (separate ones if couples insist on avoiding each other until the ceremony) to ensure no one sleeps in and throws off the day's timeline. Include time to eat lunch if the ceremony is in late afternoon or early evening. If you forget to schedule time to eat, the timeline will almost certainly be thrown off when everyone gets hungry and requires some sustenance.

- Go over schedules with your vendors. In the weeks prior to your wedding, reach out to your vendors to confirm the day's timeline. Do this prior to handing out a schedule to your bridal party so no one is confused if any last-minute changes are made.

Couples have much to manage on their wedding days. Perhaps no component is more important to manage effectively than time.

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# Ruth and Marvin Duhn to celebrate 75 years of marriage

by Diane Weiland  
Emmetsburg Record Democrat

Ruth was 16 years old and Marvin was 18 years old when they first encountered each other. It wasn't the most pleasant introduction. Ruth was riding her bicycle and Marvin jumped on the back of her bike and said he wanted a ride. Ruth said no.

Eventually they started conversing and seeing each other at the skating pond. This was in part of a field that was converted to an ice rink during the winter months. Both of them grew up on a farm and they learned they had other things in common that drew them together.

It was a stormy snowy Saturday night on February 12, 1949 when the couple exchanged vows.

Despite the weather relatives and friends made it to the wedding. The bride wore a white wedding dress that years later was worn by her daughter when she married. The groom was dressed in a striped brown suit.

Marvin stated, "I was almost baptized." He further explained that the pastor got mixed up during the vows and began, "I now baptize..." He quickly realized his mistake and proceeded to announce them as husband and wife.

On that snowy night they left for a Chicago honeymoon. Some cousins who were at the wedding rubbed limburger cheese on the manifold. When they stopped at a hotel in Algona, the smell was quite pungent. They paid \$6 for a room. They

were not long into their stay when the place started on fire. They gathered their things and started down the road where they were able to find a room that cost them \$7.

Their first home together was eight miles

Emmetsburg where they resided for 28 years. They farmed at each of these locations

Then it was a move to Alexandria, MN where Marvin was employed as a grounds keeper and Ruth was a cleaning person at the

She passed away from cancer at the age of 51. Their oldest son Tom passed away as a teenager. When Ruth was pregnant with him, she was given a medicine. It was a common pharmaceutical at the time. In later years it was deemed detrimental to the fetus. Children who were exposed to it died between the ages of 16 and 17.

Chuck, Kurt and Jeanne are still living. Kurt lives south of St. Paul, MN. Jeanne lives in New York State near Buffalo.

Last year before Thanksgiving, the couple moved to Lakeside Lutheran Senior Care in Emmetsburg.

Recently their living quarters experienced a flood. The work to renovate the suite is almost completed and the couple is looking forward to returning to their original space.

In reminiscing, Ruth said that they have had some bad luck but it was better than no luck.

The question to both Marvin and Ruth was, "What attracted you to the person you married?"

Ruth said she liked seeing Marvin at the skating pond and that he could skate. Marvin said, "It was just her." They both enjoy puzzles, in particular the boxed pieces that number in the hundreds. Last year they completed 12 or 13 of them. They recently finished an intricate design of Noah's Ark.

Sincere Congratulations are extended to Ruth and Marvin on their 75th Anniversary.



west of Emmetsburg between Ayrshire and Graettinger. They lived there for four years. Their next residence was four miles west of

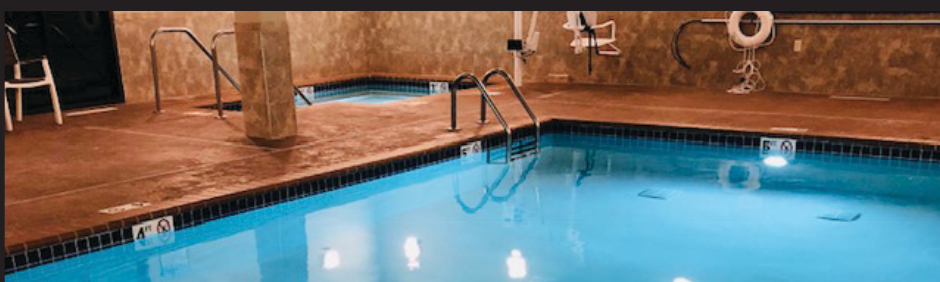
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The couple had five children. Their oldest daughter had polio when she was young.

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# Wedding Reception Trends

by Diane Weiland

Today's wedding receptions feature a variety of items that include guests and families of the couple. All in attendance learn more about the partner each has chosen.

Often the DJ will lead the crowd into a fun contest. One of these is asking married couples to come to the dance floor. They start eliminating couples until the two people who have been married the longest are left on the dance floor. It is a way for the crowd to get to know others in attendance.

The Shoe Game is basically an introduction of the couple. The

bride and groom sit on chairs that are back-to-back. Each takes one of their shoes off and gives it to the other person. They are ready for the game to start when each has one of their shoes and one of their partners. A member of the bridal party or a family member then proceeds to ask a series of questions. The couple raises the shoe of the person that fits the answer to the question. Sample questions are:

- Who is the better driver?
- Who said, "I love you" first?
- Who is smarter?
- Who is better at keeping secrets?
- Who spends more money?
- Who takes more time to get

ready?

Who spends more money?

This game is a way for guests and family members to get to know the couple.

The reception dinner is still very traditional. It is usually a buffet that includes a salad, protein and vegetable. Wedding cakes are not always a part of the reception. Platters of cupcakes and/or cookies are now in vogue.

Along with the meal there is usually a bar. Sometimes a certain amount is paid for an open bar. Sometimes a bar features a signature drink from both the bride and the groom. Often a keg is included.

It is becoming more common for all of the guests to receive a bracelet towards the end of the evening that lights up.

Instead of a guest book, now an old type telephone is outfitted with a device that records a message to the bride and groom from guests at the reception. This can be listened to after the wedding and for years to come. A memory table has also become part of the day. It is a way to honor those who have passed.

Alissa Kliegl, community Center Manager at The Shores in Emmetsburg, Iowa provided information regarding these wedding trends. She estimated that

50% of the weddings are still the traditional church wedding. The other 50% choose different venues such as The Shores. The lake front view is an attraction for many.

Alissa recalled a winter wedding that was held at The Shores. The couple was married in front of the east sliding doors. As the vows were being said someone was ice skating on the lake.

This year The Shores is booked for 12 weddings. Alissa said that if someone contacts her about a wedding, she will do what she can to get them the date they want.



PHOTOGRAPHY: CB STUDIO



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# Easy going personalities make for easy wedding planning for Derrickson-Sundall

by Connie J. Reinert; Ruthven Zipcode

Hailey Derrickson and Michael Sundall of Ruthven say they are both easy going. That trait is making their wedding planning a bit easier. Hailey believes she is no bridezilla and since becoming engaged last October, many of the wedding details have been decided.

Michael is a 2011 Ruthven/Ayrshire High School graduate and Hailey is a 2017 Graettinger/Terril graduate. They knew each other casually and through each other's siblings but did not really connect until the summer of 2022.

"She was in my younger brother's class," said Michael. Eric Sundall and Hailey graduated together. "I had been working with his sister, Amy, at Bully's Bar and Grill in Ruthven. So, we just kind of knew each other. There isn't a crazy story on how we met or how we started dating," said Hailey.

The surprise proposal came October 22, 2023. With the help of his family, Michael created a secret plan to surprise Hailey. And it worked.

"I really didn't have a hint that it was coming," laughed Hailey. It was his sister and brother who handled a few details that weekend that at the time felt like normal things to Hailey. Getting nails done, going to the Sundall farm, all things that could happen in a typical weekend for the couple.

Michael explained, "I had been planning it for a few months. I was going to do it a week earlier, but the ring wasn't ready. I knew I wanted to propose on our small prairie near our farm."

He directed his brother to head to the designated spot in advance. It was a spot where Michael had found some special wildflowers.

"I just told Hailey that we needed to stop down and see my brother to see what he had found in the prairie. We started walking that way, but I had to make sure that she was going to follow me. I told her there was something I wanted her to see."

Hailey added, "I think he told me that Eric had been out training the dogs and found something cool to look at, so I didn't think that was unusual. But then, I saw that Eric had his phone out to take pictures."

Michael admitted to being nervous. "I did get the courage



Hailey Derrickson and Michael Sundall of Ruthven say they are both easy going. That trait is making their wedding planning a bit easier. The surprise proposal came October 22, 2023. With the help of his family, Michael created a secret plan to surprise Hailey. And it worked.

to do it. I don't know how you can't be nervous. I was nervous I would lose the ring in the grass. I was nervous that I would ruin the surprise. It ended up being a really cool moment and it was really exciting."

Michael had talked to her parents ahead of time, who left for a Hawkeye game that weekend making a bet as to when the proposal would happen, over the weekend or a few days later on Hailey's birthday.

"Both of our parents were excited. My parents were with me through the whole process. They even came with me when I looked at rings. I had a good idea of what I wanted but it was nice to have their thoughts," he said.

One of the more challenging details to figure out was a date for the wedding. Working as an accountant, the tax season was out for Hailey. Then add planting and harvest seasons for the Sundall's plus hunting season along with matching that up with the venue's calendar, there was a lot to consider. But they were able to choose June 1, 2024, for their big day.

The wedding will be at Zion Lutheran Church in Ruthven and the reception and dance will be at a location on the Clay County Fairgrounds.

"With the size of our families and the large number of people we know, we knew we needed a large space. We have a large guest list of about 600 and the building at the fairgrounds will be large enough," said Hailey.

"Things are coming together. We haven't had headaches or disagreements. We have our colors picked, sage green and blush pink; and we have asked our attendants and planned for the food. I have some things I want, but I am not super picky."

The special day will conclude with a dance with Nacho Karaoke as the deejay. As for a honeymoon, that option is on the table but so far, they are undecided.

"It will all work out and we will have a fun day, no stress," said Michael. "I am looking forward to the ceremony, especially the part where we say, 'I do.' I think if you approach it with a good attitude, it should be a good time. I don't know how you can't be happy about it - it's a wedding." For Hailey, she is looking forward to having her entire family together and

having everybody dressed up.

Michael is a wildlife biologist for Pheasants Forever where he drives to his duty station in Sibley each day. He works with private landowners to accomplish wildlife goals using government programs. "I am a resource and I work through the NRCS offices and provide a free service to help with wildlife conservation." He has worked there for nearly four years after earning his bachelor's degree and master's degree at South Dakota State in wildlife and fisheries.

Hailey works full-time as an accountant at Winther Stave in Spencer. "I work with businesses and individuals. I love my co-workers and I am glad to be there."

When it comes to Bully's Bar and Grill, she doesn't have an official title. "My dad always says I am in charge. I have been here since I was 12 so this is just a part of my life. I do the bookwork and scheduling. I like to tend bar and waitress - it is nice to socialize. At my job, I am at a computer all day long. I have made a lot of close connections with people here."

They plan to continue living in Ruthven where they own a house and can be near both their parents and other extended family members.

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# Hailey B's making delectable baked goods for all to enjoy

By Sandy Kohlhaas  
West Bend Journal

Hailey Banwart, owner of Hailey B's located at 401 2nd Ave. NE, West Bend, has been baking cakes for as long as she can remember. Her mother made cakes while she was growing up and Hailey started making cakes after high school as a side hobby, so it is no surprise that she continues to make delectable pastries for wedding and parties.

Hailey B's Bakery really took off in 2020 during the pandemic. She and her husband Trent discussed the idea of putting a second kitchen in their basement and that Hailey expand her business. At that time, she was creating cakes for friends and family. She started posting on Facebook and, like so many home based businesses that began in the pandemic, it took off. When the present location became available, they decided to move the business due to the larger space.

At the time of this publishing, Hailey B's Bakery is open on Friday and Saturdays and although not full scale bakery in the sense that it will be loaded with different kinds of pastries, she does have cupcakes and hand decorated sugar cookies. "I do plan on expanding however at this time, there is not enough time or me to go around," Banwart replied when asked about it. She can also make gluten free cookies and cakes. "They take a bit longer and require a certain amount of finesse, but they are doable." Banwart wants to clarify that she is NOT a gluten-free facility. She has a facility that can produce gluten-free cakes and cookies.

Banwart does custom wedding cakes\* and can do a one tier, two tier, three tier and on up. The last few years the cakes Banwart has been doing range from one to two tier white cakes, maybe some floral wrapped around it with cupcakes. "The trend the last couple of

years has been simple," said Banwart, "but trends change all the time and I am open to all kinds of new ideas." If the couple doesn't

will decorate. When asked how she figured out how many portions of cookies or slices of cake needed, Banwart replied, "that question

left. I figure one slice of cake or 2.5 cookies per guest."

Banwart likes about a six month timeline when ordering a wedding cake. There is so much that goes into baking and decorating a wedding cake. It has to be perfect. Next to the bride, the wedding cake is most likely the next important thing. "I do my best to make the bride's vision come to life," Banwart says. Here are the steps that Hailey goes through to ensure your cake is exactly what you ordered. First she gets her scheduling book out and checks the date. General information is gathered like the number of servings for guests, time of year, venue, date of wedding, indoor/outdoor, wedding colors and other general information. If they have inspirational photos, these are very useful if there something specific in mind. If they want floral and have it, bring it along. Over the next few months there are meetings to ensure that the cake is what the couple is wanting. One month before the wedding, the client is contacted and all the details are finalized. This is the crunch time. The point of no return if you will. Hailey states, "Make sure that the cake is what you want, because once the cake is started there is little possibility of switching in mid stream". If the cake is over two tiers, Hailey delivers and sets up.

Some tips that Hailey has for the new bride is: Have an idea of what you want, have flavors in mind. Minds get changed and if that happens, notify your baker ASAP. Another point to remember, is that not everything you see on Pinterest or any of those other sites, can be replicated, so the baker may have to improvise.

If you are interested in contacting Hailey for your wedding cake or any other special occasions, you can contact her at Hailey B's Bakery on Facebook or call 712-358-2773.

\*Deposit required. Cake tasting is available for a charge.



care for cake, Banwart has some alternatives. There are chocolate chip cookie cakes and sugar cookie cake which is a very large sugar cookie that guests can either decorate or Hailey

gets harder every year. It is so hard to predict. Even with the RSVP's. I have made an exact number and ran out and then turned around the next time with the exact number that had a bit

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# Songs tailor-made for father-daughter dances

Weddings can be as novel or traditional as couples prefer. Couples who go the traditional route will undoubtedly include certain spotlight dances in the reception.

The father-daughter dance is a staple of a wedding reception. According to the experts at Fred Astaire Dance Studios, the history of father-daughter dances can be traced back decades. The dance once was one last nod to Dad before the bride's husband became the most important man in her life. Now it's more symbolic of general love and affection.

Times have certainly changed from the first father-daughter dances and this tradition no longer carries the same meaning. In fact, despite what the name may imply, father-daughter dances needn't take place with a father at all, especially if he passed away or is not in the bride's life. She can choose any special person, whether a father figure, uncle, brother, mentor, etc. to honor during the dance.

Traditionally the father-daughter dance (and mother-son dance) takes place immediately following the newlyweds' first dance together. However, some opt to have it after the toasts or before the cake cutting. Couples can make their preferences known prior to the reception and schedule these dances any time they desire, especially since they are frequently preceded by a special announcement.

While many brides prefer to dance to a slow-paced, heartfelt song, this needn't always be the case. In recent years, some daddy-daughter duos have opted to put on shows with humorous dances or even entertaining showcases of fancy footwork to songs of all types. The song should match the vibe of the wedding. That said, certain songs seem tailor-made for the times during the reception when love and gratitude are expressed during these bittersweet dances.

#### Country

- "The Man Who Loves You the Most," Zac Brown Band
- "My Little Girl," Tim McGraw
- "Just Fishin'," Trace Adkins

#### Big Band

- "Unforgettable," Nat King Cole
- "The Way You Look Tonight," Frank Sinatra
- "Swinging on a Star," Bing Crosby

#### Indie/Singer-Songwriter

- "You've Got a Friend," James Taylor
- "Let it Be Me," Ray LaMontagne
- "Father and Daughter," Paul Simon
- "Wildflowers," Tom Petty
- "Constellations," Jack Johnson

#### Rock

- "Sweet Child O' Mine," Guns N' Roses
- "When You Need Me," Bruce Springsteen

- "Scarlet Begonias," Grateful Dead

#### R&B

- "Ain't that Love," Ray Charles
- "Daddy," Beyoncé
- "Dance with My Father," Luther Vandross
- "Love of My Life," Brian McKnight

#### Tried and True

- "Butterfly Kisses," Bob Carlisle
- "Wonderful World," Louis Armstrong
- "Hero," Mariah Carey
- "You Are So Beautiful," Joe Cocker
- "Lullabye (Goodnight My Angel)," Billy Joel



# Make memories with mother-son dances

There is nothing quite like the love a mother has for her children. When it comes time for a son to get married, Mom has already seen him through plenty of milestone moments like birthdays, proms, graduations, and other achievements that showcased his transition from boy to man.

A wedding is a momentous occasion in a family's life. During a wedding, couples opt to show their love and gratitude to their parents or guardians in many ways, including through traditional dances. The mother-son dance gives the groom an opportunity to honor the special woman in his life who saw him through thick and thin.

Much like the father-daughter dance, the mother-son dance traditionally takes place during the reception after the newlyweds take their own first turn around the dance floor. However, this spotlight dance also can occur at other times during the festivities.

Typically the groom chooses a song with the right sentiments, but the decision also can be a joint effort. There are no right or wrong answers when it comes to song selection. However, for those who need some inspiration, certain songs are tried-and-true options.

- "How Sweet It Is," James Taylor
- "You Raise Me Up," Josh Groban
- "Time After Time," Cyndi Lauper
- "Letter to My Mother," Edwin McCain
- "Mother Like Mine," The Band Perry
- "God Only Knows," The Beach Boys
- "Beautiful Boy," John Lennon
- "Wonderful Tonight," Eric Clapton
- "The First Lady in My Life," Paul Todd
- "Because You Loved Me," Celine Dion
- "You're My Best Friend," Queen
- "Thank You Mom," Good Charlotte
- "The Wind Beneath My Wings," Bette Midler
- "Forever Young," Rod Stewart
- "You'll Be in My Heart," Phil Collins

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