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Weddings



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Barbara Lauberth is shown with a large selection of bridal gowns available at Barbara's Boutique in Westphalia. She began offering the line in October of 2019, just ahead of the COVID-19 pandemic, which threatened to shut her down. Lauberth continues to do her best to remain open despite the challenges.

Photo by Neal A. Johnson



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Barbara's Boutique finding a way to survive during pandemic

By Neal A. Johnson, UD Editor

Barbara Lauberth knew it would be a challenge when she decided in 2016 to move from gently used clothing to new merchandise, including when she launched bridal gowns in October of 2019. What she couldn't possibly know is that COVID-19 would threaten to shut down Barbara's Boutique on Hwy. 63 outside of Westphalia in 2020, but she has found a way to survive.

"Sales plummeted in March of 2020," said Lauberth, noting that in 2019, she generated about \$150,000 in sales, while 2020 saw just under \$100,000. "Everything was going well before the pandemic hit, and it's been a very scary situation."

One of the biggest challenges now is deciding what to buy. "I feel like it's rolling the dice to buy new merchandise," she said. "That money would be tied up and I could use it to pay other bills, and there's no guarantee that I will even be able to stay open unless sales increase again, and without merchandise you can't increase your sales, so it's a catch-22."

Lauberth's venture with bridal gowns was an outgrowth of her connection to high school students who had purchased her dresses for prom, homecoming, and other events.

"They're my girls and I love them all," she said. "They graduated high school and when they decided to get married,

they came back to me."

In early 2019, she only had catalog options, but that wasn't advertised. "They knew I could get things for them, and I couldn't say no," Lauberth said with a smile.

Another contributing factor to her decision to putting in formal wear was the ongoing commitment to providing dresses for young ladies who could not find what they needed elsewhere at a price they could afford.

"These ladies need to feel welcome and loved, and they did not have an unlimited budget," said Lauberth. "They want to feel beautiful and I love being able to make that happen."

In 2015, she began dabbling with new prom gowns, and with increased demand, she had to make a tough choice.

"I talked to my parents, and they told me a hard truth," said Lauberth. "They said the prom part was great but I needed to decide whether I wanted to offer new or gently used merchandise. I couldn't do both."

She decided to forge ahead with new prom gowns and new clothing and changed the name of her business in 2016.

"I found beautiful but inexpensive labels and went from there," said Lauberth. "I'm so excited to see these girls come in and get a great dress at a great price."

With sales booming, Lauberth hired

several people to help run the store.

"We first started hearing about COVID-19 in January of 2020, and in February, girls were starting to question whether prom would be held," said Lauberth.

In March, the bottom fell out.

Lauberth noted that traditionally, her prom sales were concentrated in the first quarter of each year, with March being a strong month for prom sales.

"January of 2019 was amazing," said Lauberth, adding that January of 2020 was pretty good as well, while this year, she saw a 66% decrease in sales compared to the same period in 2020.

Despite the awareness of her bridal offering becoming more widespread in 2020, those sales were not enough to pay the bills, and Lauberth knew it was going to be even tougher to close the doors because of the bonds she had created with her customers.

However, as the pandemic changed the manner in which businesses were allowed to operate, Lauberth was forced to let go of the employees that were working for her. "That was really tough," said Lauberth. "I didn't have a choice."

A month later, she was approved for a Paycheck Protection Program allotment, which she used to cover the hours she put into the store as its lone employee.

"There just wasn't enough revenue coming in to sustain the store," said Lauberth, who closed for a while per

the advisory implemented by the Osage County Health Department, as Barbara's Boutique was not an essential business. "I wasn't sure I'd be able to reopen due to lack of revenue. This has been very difficult."

When it seemed like everything was aligned against her, Lauberth found relief from Osage County, which approved her application for Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security (CARES) Act funds.

"That happened in the 11th hour," said Lauberth, whose funding was approved in mid-December, just two weeks before the deadline. "I feel blessed, and I want to thank Osage County for its help. I know God was watching over me."

Lauberth requested only the amount she needed to get out of the red but even now, it's still a tough proposition because sales have not returned to normal.

"I'm careful with my budgeting and I'm guarding my money so I can keep the store open as long as possible because this can't last forever," said Lauberth, who is doing everything she can to stay open, including limiting the use of fitting rooms, from eight to three, and maintaining social-distancing and the use of masks. "I have a fear of being shut down and I want to protect my customers. I love the people who come into my store and I'm so grateful for the support of the community, the Bank of Freeburg, and my #barbgirls."

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Dos and don'ts of caring for wedding and engagement rings

Jewelry is a key component of weddings. The financial resource CreditDonkey notes that, in the United States, the average amount spent on an engagement ring is \$5,500, while Canadians spend an average of \$3,500. Jewelry costs can add up, especially when adding in the cost of wedding bands, which can cost as much as \$1,000. The cost of jewelry only underscores the importance of learning how to care for it and preserve its value.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Throw a safe bachelor or bachelorette party

The consensus from public health professionals around the world is to maintain continued social distancing to help prevent further spread of the COVID-19 virus. Various events have been modified due to the pandemic, and weddings and bachelor/bachelorette parties have proven no exception.

Couples may need to make certain changes to traditional gatherings like bachelor and bachelorette parties to stay safe. Wedding parties average four to five close friends or family members on each side, according to Martha Stewart Weddings. Gatherings of five will likely comply with the limitations set for gatherings for indoor and outdoor venues. However, it's essential to check local regulations before planning festivities. Even if gathering with your wedding party is doable, you may have to think outside the box when it comes to how to enjoy these last hoorahs before the wedding.

HOST IT OUTDOORS

The likelihood of spreading respiratory viruses like COVID-19 is greatly reduced in outdoor settings where respiratory droplets are more likely to be dispersed rather than concentrated. Restaurants and bars still offer outdoor seating options in many areas, and an intimate gathering for food and drinks outside can be a low-key way to spend an evening.

TRY AN "EXTREME" ACTIVITY

Weekend travel has become a standard option for many bachelor and bachelorette parties. But travel

restrictions or personal health preferences may mean it's not prudent to take a trip to Las Vegas or Cancún. Booking activities that are a little edgy can add some adventure to the festivities if travel is a nonstarter. Some amusement parks are still open, so an evening of riding zero-gravity coasters or free-fall bungee jumps could satisfy everyone's adventurous side. Race tracks offer tourist options where novices can take high-speed spins around the course. When traveling in small groups, these activities can be possible.

VIRTUAL KARAOKE

In-person karaoke nights may be unavailable, but there's a bevy of online sing-a-long apps that enable participants to sing with backing tracks either for solo performances or with others—even people around the world. Each member of the bachelorette or bachelor party can download the same app and then sing together. Laugh along to renditions of classic tunes or modern favorites.

CELEBRATE AT HOME

It may not seem as glamorous as a night out, but home cocktail parties can be customized. Hire a mixologist to whip up special drinks for the occasion. Caterers may be available to cook personalized meals in your home, providing lessons along the way.

Bachelor and bachelorette parties may have to change as the world continues to confront the pandemic. With a few tweaks, these events can still be enjoyable and memorable.



Love marches on even under the weight of a pandemic



Sam and Caitlin Wieberg, of Kansas City, held their wedding June 13, 2020, at Westphalia Trading Co.

Photo provided by Caitlin Wieberg and photo taken by Toni Wieberg Photography

By Edward Gehlert, UD Staff Writer

The COVID-19 pandemic continues to negatively impact virtually all walks of life, but nothing stands in the way of love.

While most companies have felt the economic impact of the coronavirus in one way or another, it has been particularly devastating to the hospitality industry. Tanya Kempker, along with her husband Dwayne, owns and operates Kempker's

Back 40, LLC in Osage County. Their business specializes in event planning and venue hosting. Most of these are weddings and receptions.

"We provide the venue and have a lot of decorations," said Tanya, whose company opened in 2015. "We help with planning and the setup."

Their business actively promotes and

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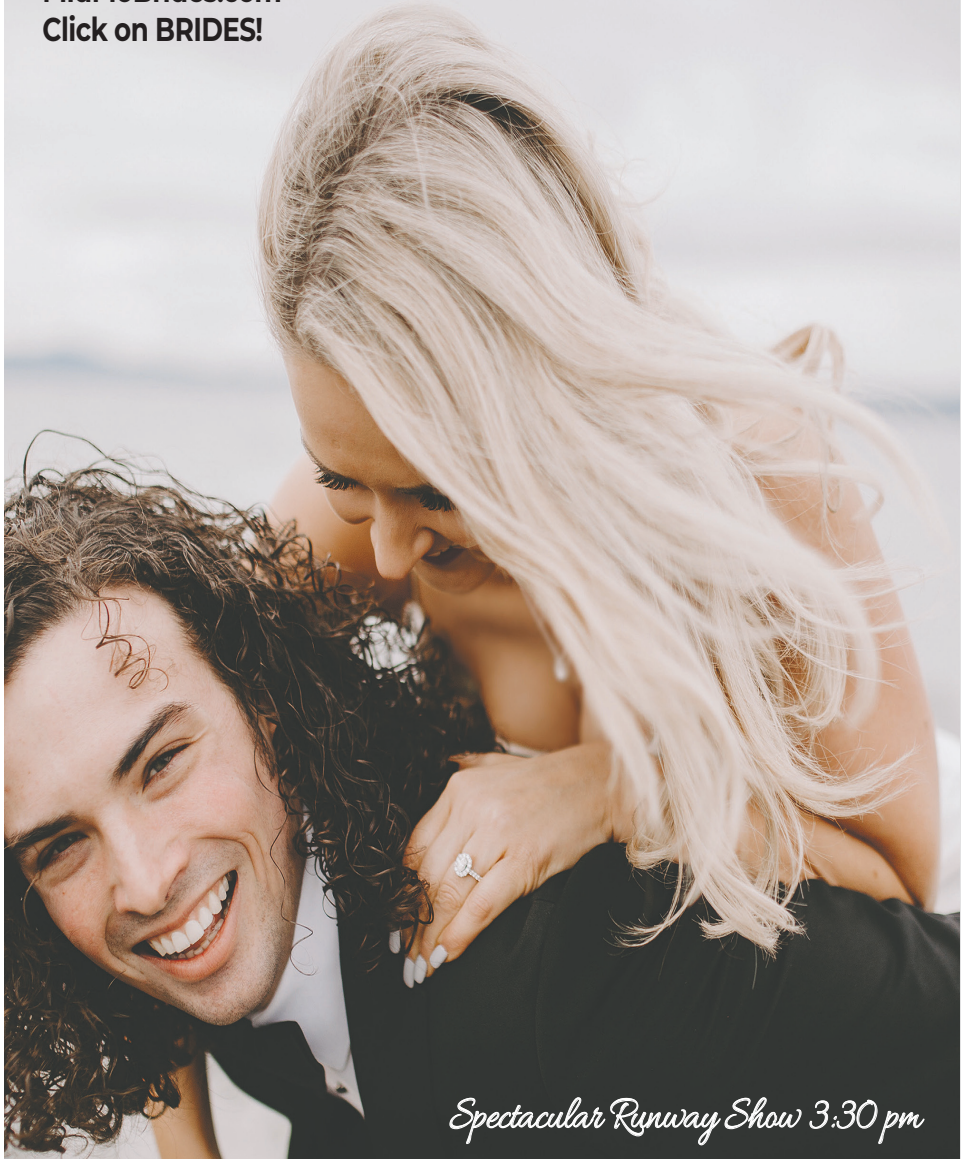
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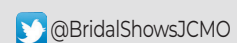
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Sparkling wines can make special occasions even more enjoyable. That is why they're generally reserved for big events that warrant toasts, like weddings or New Year's Eve celebrations. But bubbly can be enjoyed at any time of year. Many people mistakenly believe that all sparkling wines are champagne, so much so that the term champagne has become something of an umbrella term. However, true champagne is made in the Champagne region of France from a combination of chardonnay, pinot noir and pinot meunier grapes. It can only be made in the region's traditional method, called Méthode Champenoise, and the taste will typically be nutty and toasty. Sparkling wines can be produced across the globe in various ways. The taste will vary depending on how it is produced. Sparkling wines are named depending on where they are made. Prosecco is an Italian sparkling wine, cava a Spanish variety and sekt is a German version.

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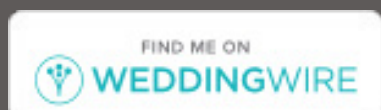


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Useful ways to incorporate social media in wedding planning

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

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

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

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

Instagram page and post all the photos you want to share.

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

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

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

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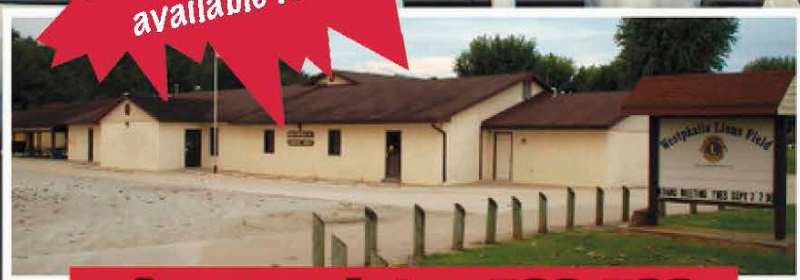
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Love marches on

continued from page 5B

works with, other local companies in the area.

"I have a huge referral list I give to clients with a lot of businesses from Osage County on there," said Tanya. "I do have a some businesses on there from Jefferson City and the surrounding areas, but we definitely try to steer them towards people out here if we can."

Like most other businesses, they have had to make adjustments during this national crisis to comply with guidelines and keep customers and their guests safe.

"We have a lot of outdoor space, along with two barns and a covered pavilion," said Tanya. "Definitely during this time we try to steer them to have as many things as they can outside. We didn't have any COVID outbreaks stemming from our venue that we know of. I think we would have heard about that. We spaced out tables and also discouraged assigned seating for the comfort levels of their guests. I ask clients if they want masks, temperature checks, and encourage them to provide that and hand sanitizer."

With many places having to close due to social-distancing guidelines, Tanya says that they were lucky enough to be able to offer alternate dates to their clientele without charging any kind of cancellation or other additional fees.

"I always say you have to look at things

as part of God's plan," said Tanya. "It ended up that we didn't lose that many customers and we were able to give them a different date. All of them ended up using the back-up dates except for one. Of course, it's still a financial hit when you lose a couple, but it could have been worse."

One of the couples that held its wedding at Kempker's venue during this last season was Sam and Caitlin Wieberg, of Kansas City, who met at the University of Central Missouri in 2013 through a mutual college friend.

"We had the same friend group and hung around each other for a while until he asked me to be his girlfriend," Caitlin said. "We started dating on the month of my birthday in August of 2014. We dated for six years before he proposed."

The proposal came on Feb. 16, 2019, when the couple visited friends in Jefferson City.

Caitlin said, "We almost didn't come to town because of the snow and ice. We planned to meet some of our college friends on Saturday for brunch near the capitol building. We arrived early and were waiting in the car when we decided to walk around the Governor's Garden because that was where his brother was getting married in August and we were both in the wedding party. I thought the tunnel looked cool and said we should walk through there. Little did I know that was where he wanted to go. In the middle of the tunnel, he got down on one knee and proposed. Our friends we were meeting for brunch were around the corner watching. My best friend

was taking pictures and her husband was recording a video of it. Sam had completely surprised me and I don't surprise easily."

The planning of the ceremony was done almost equally by both Sam and Caitlin.

"We planned together and went to every meeting or taste-testing together," Caitlin said. "When choosing vendors we planned and communicated together so we both liked who we chose. As far as decor, colors, flowers, and attire I chose a majority of those options."

The theme was a vintage rustic wedding with burgundy, navy, blush, and mauve. "We had a lot of rustic elements as well as vintage," Caitlin said. "I also wanted to include a lot of love quotes from books, movies, and shows. I created a lot of the calligraphy signs and centerpieces as I own a small calligraphy business."

Even with intensive planning, things can always go wrong, and no one ever plans for a pandemic.

"We had many different things that changed because of COVID-19," Caitlin said. "We originally planned for June 13, 2020, and had already sent out 'save the dates.' We had to send our 'change the dates' for our family and friends to let them know of our new date in September. As far as the guest list, we did cut down on the amount we invited. We also had a lot of family and friends that chose not to attend due to them being high risk or not being comfortable. We provided masks for those that wanted to wear one. Our little gift was a small bag with personalized hand sanitizer bottles with our name on it. We had many COVID-19 guidelines signs around the wedding and signs saying to please sanitize."

Having a back-up date encouraged the couple to get the most out of their nuptials and celebration of their love.

The couple had a smaller family ceremony on June 13, 2020, at Westphalia Trading Co., followed by a small family dinner that was catered by Madison's restaurant, which was eaten on the patio at Westphalia Trading company after the short ceremony.

"June was our original wedding date, but we had to reschedule because of COVID-19," Caitlin said. "For June we had only our immediate family attend and it was a more intimate ceremony."

The Sept. 19, 2020 ceremony at Kempker's Back 40 was held with all of their extended family and friends with Alex Earl as the officiant. The reception was held there too.

Honeymoon plans for the couple have also been put on hold due to the ongoing COVID-19 situation.

"We had to cancel the original honeymoon we had planned for after June and haven't been able to reschedule a new trip," Caitlin said. "We do have plans to take a trip in the future, but our flight credits are saved for when we do plan to reschedule."

The young bride does have some advice for other engaged couples out there saying, "Don't stress on the small details. In reality, during your big day, you are honestly not worried about it. You are more ready for the ceremony, to see your soon-to-be-husband, and celebrate the night away."

Even though concerns regarding COVID-19 are still present in our community, people can take comfort as some semblance of normality manifests itself.

After all, what can be more encouraging than finding that special someone with whom to spend the rest of your life?

Make a statement with your wedding cake

Brides and grooms may pour over every detail of their weddings, but few components of the festivities may be as fun, especially for foodies, as deciding what the wedding cake will look like. Couples who want to deliver show-stopping visuals often express some measure of their creativity and personalities through statement wedding cakes.

Many couples now eschew the classic three-tiered white cake in favor of a dessert that garners instant attention. Whether the cake is brightly colored or hand-painted, a towering architectural marvel or shimmering in metallics, couples are opting to make a statement with their confections. Apart from clever cake-toppers, here are ways to stand apart when dessert is served.

- According to the Perfect Wedding Guide, a rising trend in cakes is to cover a white or naked cake with translucent glaze tinted in the couple's wedding colors. This artistic expression can be especially stunning in boho-chic weddings.

- Statement tiers also are popular. The cake may be traditional in nearly every way, but couples then set the cake apart by featuring an elaborate design or a different hue in one tier.

- Martha Stewart Weddings advises that more than just color can be used to make a statement. Lifelike sugar flowers can really set cakes apart. Guests may not be sure if they can consume all aspects of some cakes. But delicate sugar flowers taste as good as they look.

- Hand-painted tiles on a cake are another way to add panache. A bride and groom may be inspired by a European vacation or the stained-glass effects of religious windows and want to add that feel to the tiers of the cake.

- Sometimes a statement comes by way of texture. Even an all-white cake can be dressed up with interesting textural effects. Ruffles, lace, embossing, and 3-D rosettes are different textural components that can be incorporated in cake designs.

- Couples also may want to tell their unique stories with cake. Individual tiers designed to reflect various milestone moments from the couple's relationship can be quite engaging.

- Capitalizing on the trend of edgier weddings, couples may opt for darker hues on their cakes — even a black tier — or nontraditional geometric shapes to the cake itself or its design elements.

Statement cakes can really say something about the couple getting married. Much like other wedding elements, cakes provide a window into the minds of happy couples.



Sam and Caitlin Wieberg, of Kansas City.

Photo provided by Caitlin Wieberg and photo taken by Avani Photography

Gibson wedding a success despite COVID limitations

By Neal A. Johnson, UD Editor

Josh and Melissa (Thoenen) Gibson of Linn had long planned to marry, though neither expected to do it in the midst of a pandemic and while there were complications due to COVID-19, they made the best of it and pulled off a tremendous Aug. 1, 2020, wedding at St. George Catholic Church.

“COVID-19 was the biggest stress factor for the entire wedding planning,” Melissa said. “As March and April were the months that everything was shut down, it was challenging to get things done.”

During those months, the couple had to order things off the internet and hope everything was available. They also had to make sure there was enough time to get the items because the shipping process was delayed due to COVID.

Josh and Melissa were high school sweethearts and graduated from Linn in 2013, after which Josh enlisted in the Marines for five years. He was stationed in the state of California.

“We went our separate ways when he left for the Marines,” said Melissa, who attended State Technical College of Missouri and Graduated in 2016 with a Physical Therapy Assistant degree.

Melissa was employed at Gasconade Manor Nursing Home until COVID-19

hit and now she is employed at the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education as a billing specialist. She also provides physical therapy on the weekend.

Josh was honorably discharged in 2018 and returned to Linn, where he enrolled at State Tech and earned a dual degree in Biomedical Equipment Technician and Electrical Engineering Technician. Currently, he is in the work force.

The couple reconnected and started to date again. A year later, Josh proposed to Melissa on Aug. 10, 2019, with a clever approach.

Josh set up the proposal with Melissa’s family and their two dogs, Miley and Maverick. Her dog, Maverick, had a sign around his neck reading, “Will you marry me?” and after she said yes, Josh’s dog, Miley, was wearing a sign that read, “She said yes.”

While marriage was always their life plan, and they had talked about it before, Josh picked out the ring of her dreams and surprised her with the proposal.

That gave the couple a little less than a year to prepare.

“Josh and I made some of the decisions, but a lot of the planning was done by my parents, Joe and Donna, Jan Crowe, Josh’s mother, and my sister, Megan,” said Melissa. “Josh and I are not big planners, but we knew the important part of the day

was when we said would be married and celebrate with our family. Josh and I were very pleased with the entire day.”

They wanted a simple and elegant wedding, with a deep burgundy theme.

For decorations, the wedding had barn wood boxes with a flower arrangement on each table. The barn wood was from the Keilholz farm in Chamois.

Her uncle, Dennis Block, made 30 wooden boxes from the barn wood, and Melissa’s great-aunt, Shirley Keilholz, arranged the flowers in the boxes. A bar was made by her uncle from the barn wood and he used tin from the farm of Melissa’s late Grandma Thoenen.

As many couples have come to realize, complication are a big part of any wedding. COVID-19 was on their mind as the big day neared, and there were last-minute complications to be handled.

It was a nice, cool August afternoon the day of the wedding.

“Everything was perfect, with some minor dilemmas, but we expected something would go wrong, so when it happened, we did not really freak out,” Melissa said.

On the day of the wedding, unknown to Melissa at the time, Josh could not find his dress shoes for the ceremony. That meant he had to make a phone call to Melissa’s aunt and uncle, Ed and Stacy, who had to grab another pair of shoes for him.

“They brought the shoes to the church right before he had to take pictures,” Melissa said. “The timing was perfect and it was a little stressful, but it all worked out.”

Josh had many Marine friends that were scheduled to arrive, with rooms reserved at Stone Hearth Inn in Linn but at the last moment, they could not attend because of COVID reasons or quarantine. On the other hand, many Marines were able to make it from Texas, Kentucky, Connecticut, and Pennsylvania, so it was nice for him to celebrate with them, Melissa said.

“Though COVID played a very big part in our wedding, we were fortunate enough to continue with the ceremony as planned,” she added. “We just wanted to get married with our family and friends and that was the most important part of the day.”

Father I.C. Medina officiated the ceremony, which was live-streamed for anyone that could not attend.

Following the ceremony, the wedding party took a hayride to Maguire Park, while Rob Schaefer of Infinite Moments took photos throughout the entire day to capture the moments for the couple and guests.

“Rob and with his wife Abby did a fantastic job capturing all of our memories of the day,” Melissa said.

COVID-19 also played a role in the development of the reception.

“It was challenging for my parents to know what to order for the food because we didn’t know until the time drew closer



Josh Gibson set up the proposal with Melissa Thoenen’s family and their two dogs, Miley and Maverick. Her dog, Maverick, had a sign around his neck reading, “Will you marry me?” and after she said yes, Miley was wearing a sign that read, “She said yes.”
Photo by Donna Thoenen

if there would be a reduction of the number of guests,” said Melissa. “We were lucky because we were in the right timeframe as nothing was reduced to a smaller number. Food was prepared in accordance to how many guests we believed would attend due to current COVID restrictions.”

The couple was deeply saddened that many guests were unable to attend the wedding for various reasons.

Food was prepared and served by Glenda and Kevin Bexten and family, while the cake with topper, a silhouette of a couple with two dogs, was created by Melanie Brandt.

Attendance at the wedding/reception was a lot of fun and bigger than the couple expected, considering the COVID situation. Josh’s brother, Shawn Crowe, with A Touch of Class, provided the music at a dance following the reception.

“We had a wonderful wedding party,” Melissa said. “Everyone got along and made the day just perfect.”

Josh was fortunate enough to include multiple Marine friends in the bridal party alongside Melissa’s bridesmaids.

Josh and Melissa initially planned to travel to Ireland for their honeymoon, but plans were changed when COVID-19 hit. After that, they decided to wait and possibly take a trip on their first anniversary.

Instead of traveling, the couple focused on making their house a home.

“We bought our first home in July, a week before the wedding,” said Melissa. “The house was in great condition. Luckily, we had most of the wedding planned and had the extra time to paint and move a majority of our belongings in so we could stay in our new home on our first night of marriage.”

For brides-to-be planning their wedding, Melissa said the key is to take it all in.

“Your wedding day goes by in the blink of an eye,” she said. “The best advice I can give is to remember to take a moment during your big day – step back and look at your husband, knowing you married your best friend, and enjoy that moment. Also, look around and see all the friends and family that support you. Celebrate and have a great time.”



Melissa (Thoenen) Gibson on her wedding day, Aug. 1, 2020.

Photo by Rob Schaefer/Infinite Moments



Josh and Melissa (Thoenen) Gibson of Linn took advantage of a beautiful day as the wedding party took a hayride to Maguire Park, where photos were taken to celebrate the occasion. Josh, a Marine veteran, was joined by several of his Marine brethren, including some in the wedding party, along with his brother, Shawn Crowe, with A Touch of Class, provided the music at a dance following the reception. Josh and Melissa were married Aug. 1, 2020, at St. George Catholic Church and said they feel fortunate to have overcome all the challenges due to COVID-19.

Photos by Rob Schaefer/Infinite Moments



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Wedding photos provided by Rob Schafer owner of Infinite Moment Photography. Photos of the Stone Wedding.