

Happily Ever After...



An Annual Supplement of The Forest-Blade

January 27, 2021

Miss Cato, Mr. Wood exchanged vows in fall

Featured in July 2020, Miss Caitlin Cato and Mr. Zachary Wood announced their engagement and wedding plans set to take place August 15, 2020 in Madison.

The bride is the daughter of Dennis and Tracy Cato and the groom is the son of Spencer and Wanda Wood of Swainsboro.





MR. AND MRS. WOOD

What are Bridal Shows?

If you're new to wedding planning, you might wonder, "What is a bridal trunk show, really?" Bridal shows and wedding expos generally offer the same experiences. They can be hosted by national companies or local wedding organizations and pros, meaning you can find bridal shows all over the country. Bridal shows often highlight local vendors, allowing couples to network with pros in their area before securing their wedding team.

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How to Get a Marriage License

Your union won't be official until you obtain your marriage license. Here's everything you need to know before you head to the marriage bureau. Amid the blur of organizing your wedding and honeymoon plans, it's surprisingly easy to forget that you actually have to get married on paper. A marriage license is basically your permit for eternal love—the legal confirmation that you and your partner are free and eligible to marry one another. Sure, it's paperwork, but it's still exciting (not to mention

necessary). So where do you even start? The internet will likely be your best bet here. Most, if not all, states have a government website with ample information on what materials and documents are required and the office's contact information. (Psst—check out this helpful website on US marriage laws.) Once you know in which municipality (city, district and county) your nuptials will take place, you'll need to locate where to obtain the license. It might be city hall, the city or town clerk's office, or the marriage li-

cense bureau in the county where you plan to wed. For example, in Connecticut, marriage licenses are issued by the municipal clerk's office in the town where you'll be married, whereas in Iowa, couples may apply at any county registrar or recorder's office. In some states, like New Jersey, you can simply download a marriage license brochure and the license itself to be filled out by you and your spouse-to-be. Other than the physical paperwork, it's important to be wary of timing. Some states re-

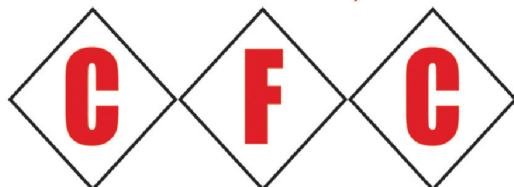
quire a several-day waiting period between granting the license and your nuptials taking place. Also, most marriage licenses are only valid for a window of time—anywhere between 10 days and a year—during which you must have the ceremony, sign the license (together with your officiant) and file for a certified license and marriage certificate. Requirements do vary by state, but they all want to confirm the basics: that you have proper identification, that you're not currently married to anyone else (if

you previously were, you need proper divorce or widowhood papers) and that you're of legal age to marry. A good checklist of necessities includes: birth certificate, parental consent if underage (usually under 18); you may also need court consent in this case, photo identification (driver's license, state ID card, passport or birth certificate), social security number, proof of citizenship and/or residence, divorce decree if divorced, death certificate if widowed.

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Therefore a man shall leave his father and his mother and hold fast to his wife, and they shall become one flesh
Genesis 2:24

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MR. AND MRS. ALLMOND

Meet Mr. and Mrs. Allmond

On November 21, 2020, Miss Margaret Ann Garrett and Mr. Kirby Allmond exchanged wedding vows at the home of the bride's parents.

The daughter of Asa and Bert Garrett of Swainsboro, Margaret Ann is a 2013 graduate of David Emanuel Academy. She now works as a full time employee at her family's store, Custom Furniture.

The groom-elect is the son of Rick Allmond and Gail and Shan Venable of Vidalia. Mr. Allmond graduated from Robert Toombs Academy, class of 2012. He now works as a registered nurse at Mead-

ows Regional.

Mr. and Mrs. Allmond were both very involved in their schools and their community. They each attended Georgia Southern to pursue their degrees. Prior to their marriage, the couple had crossed paths many times throughout their lives. From going to rival high schools, the same college, figuring out they lived in the same housing complex at Georgia Southern; it only took Margaret Anne moving to Vidalia for her teaching job for the couple to meet. The Allmond's now reside in Swainsboro.



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10 things to know before you go wedding dress shopping

Don't set foot in the bridal salon without brushing up on your gown shopping basics.

1. Limit Your Entourage

We've said it before, and we'll say it again—bringing a big group to the salon is a gown shopping don't. Enlist one or two of your closest friends or family members to help you start your search. This way you can find the gown that best suits you and your style and not feel pressured by too many opinions.

2. Hidden Costs Add Up

Remember, your wedding gown budget doesn't just include the dress. Your veil or headpiece, accessories (think jewelry and shoes), undergarments and alterations will also add to your bottom line.

Factor in these costs before you give the salesperson your final shopping budget.

3. Undergarments Are Optional

Most bridal shops have a few different types of bras in the fitting room. If you have a favorite strapless style or plan on wearing a particular body shaper, go ahead and bring it. You'll ultimately need your gown-specific undergarments for your first fitting but not your initial appointment.

4. Salons Can Sometimes Take Requests

Just because a bridal salon carries your favorite designer doesn't mean it'll have the exact wedding dress you've been wanting to try on. But, if you phone

in advance and request a specific style, your consultant may be able to call for a sample of that gown especially for you.

5. Don't Get Discouraged

There are hundreds of bridal designers out there with literally thousands of designs, which makes the odds of your finding a fantastic gown pretty darn good. We know that coming up empty-handed on your first trip can be a let-down, but don't give up.

6. Shop for Your Body

When trying on dresses, focus less on your weight and more on the shape and frame of your body. Your weight may be constantly fluctuating, especially during highly stressful situations, so don't let

that be the deciding factor in choosing a dress. Concentrate on finding silhouettes that accentuate the features you love and make you feel amazing.

7. Always Book an Appointment

While you may get lucky and snag a salesperson just by walking in, scheduling an appointment is the only way to ensure you'll get a full hour of undivided attention.

8. It's Okay to Pick Favorites

To help guarantee your gown shopping experience goes smoothly, ask the salon coordinator when you call to book your appointment if she can suggest a favorite consultant. Or get recommendations from friends and request a con-

sultant by name.

9. Skip Day One of Any Sample Sale

We know you're tempted to get there as soon as the doors open, but shopping on the first day of a sample sale can be overwhelming and crowded. Do yourself a favor and call ahead to ask how many days the sale will run. Then go on one of the later dates.

10. Try to Shop on a Weekday

If you're the type who hates being rushed when shopping, try to make an appointment on a weekday morning or afternoon. Saturday is the busiest day at bridal salons, so skip the crowds to get undivided attention if you can.

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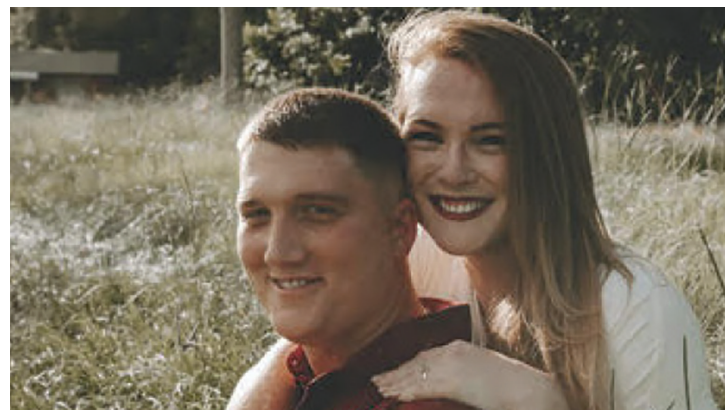
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MR. AND MRS. BRASWELL

Miss Whorely, Mr. Braswell become husband and wife

Miss Jordan Leigh Whorley and Mr. Michael Cameron Braswell announced their engagement and plans to wed in an August 2020 publication of The Blade. Honoring their love for one another, an intimate wedding ceremony was set for October 10, 2020.

The bride is the daughter of Jimmy and Michelle Milsaps of Metter. The groom is the son of Mike and Linda Braswell of Swainsboro.



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Miss Ellis becomes Mrs. McElveen

Announcing their engagement during the month of January 2020, Miss Laura Margaret Ellis and Mr. Steven George McElveen set their date for marriage for March 7, 2020. The ceremony took place at the Old Medical College in Augusta.

The bride is the daughter of Frank Ellis and Wayne and Gail Greenway of Swainsboro. The groom is the son of Steve and Beverly McElveen of Lincolnton.



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MR. WILLIAMSON AND MISS BROWN

Miss Brown, Mr. Williamson married in fall wedding

Featured in November 2020 was the engagement announcement of Miss Caitlyn Alexis Brown and Mr. Austin Regan Williamson. The wedding is planned for October 2021, with the date and venue to be announced at a later date.

The bride is the daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Nicholas Brown of Swainsboro and Mr. and Mrs. Alven Donald Bellew II of Mt. Vernon. The groom is the son of Ronnie Williamson of Thomson and Kelvin and Lisa Dailey of Swainsboro.



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The nine wedding tasks you don't need to do right away

1. Figuring Out When to Ask Your Bridesmaids

Of course, they were probably some of the first people you called after the proposal, but you don't need to rush to figure out when to ask your bridesmaids to join your wedding party. The rule of thumb is to ask one year to eight months before the actual wedding, so you have time to plan out related activities.

If you have the luxury of time, think over who you really want in your wedding party. (Read: you'll be less likely to ask someone in the heat of the moment).

2. Buying Your Wedding Outfit

Getting engaged doesn't mean you have to rush out and buy a dress in the next week (though you can if you want to). Take this time to browse magazines, social media and

designer galleries to gather inspiration. This way, you'll discover silhouettes, styles, colors or accessories you like most. Extra research will help your consultant during your salon appointment too. However, don't wait too long to buy an outfit, as ordering and tailoring takes time. We recommend buying your gown six to eight months before your wedding to leave enough time for shipping and fittings.

3. Planning Your Seating Chart

You'll want to use this time to figure out a rough estimate of your guest list so you can plan your budget and book your reception venue, but don't worry about deciding specific seating assignments yet. That can wait until after you've received your RSVPs and you've finalized your reception setup.

4. Picking Your First-Dance

Song

Your first dance song, and your wedding music, is one of those details you can keep tweaking closer to your wedding day (especially if you're hiring a DJ). So, there's no need to stress.

5. Choosing Bridesmaid Dresses

Your wedding party attire is one of the most impactful ways to carry out your overall wedding style. But, similarly to your wedding gown, it's likely your theme or colors will evolve during your planning process. Save bridesmaid dress shopping for when you've decided on a final look and feel for your wedding, and preferably do it after you've found your wedding dress.

6. Planning Your Honeymoon

Fewer couples than ever jet off on their honeymoons immediately following their wed-

ding, so it's okay if you need more time to plan your trip carefully—even if that means waiting a few weeks after your wedding to go. If you do want to leave for your honeymoon the day after your wedding, book your honeymoon travel plans six to eight months in advance.

7. Picking Out Your Smaller Decor Items

Details like linens, table settings, favors and escort cards can wait. Hold from moving ahead on these decor items until after you've made the bigger decisions, like booking your reception venue and securing a photographer. If you have the itch to plan right now, focus on the fun tasks, like tasting appointments with your caterer and cake baker or choosing your wedding colors.

8. Buying Anything Edible

You might have already

found the perfect chocolate wedding favors, but you don't need to buy them just yet. Plan to purchase all food-related gifts as close to your wedding date as possible (no more than a month in advance) to get the freshest goodies for your guests. Of course, this still means you should plan accordingly with pastry chefs and other local vendors in advance to secure inventory.

9. The Legal Logistics

There are legal steps you need to take before getting married, but you don't need to worry about that just yet. Other than filing for a marriage license and signing it before saying "I do", changing your name, combining bank accounts, updating tax forms can all wait until after your nuptials.

Making Life Comfortable Together



MR. AND MRS. SCOTT

Miss Freeman, Mr. Scott wed in Fall 2020

Miss Heather Nicole Freeman and Kevin Doris Scott announced their engagement and wedding plans during the month of June 2020. In the couple's announcement, wedding plans were set for August 1, 2020 at 6 p.m. at Rocky Creek Lodge

in Vidalia. A reception followed at the same location.

The bride is the daughter of Thomas and Donna Freeman of Swainsboro. The groom is the son of Ricky and Vicky Scott of Uvalda and Jan and Jeff Boatright of Blackshear.

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MR. AND MRS. OGDEN

Miss Harrison, Mr. Ogden exchanged vows

During the month of September, Miss Jennifer Megan Harrison and Mr. Bertrand Lee Ogden announced their engagement and plans for marriage. The ceremony was set to take place on October 10, 2020 at 6 p.m. at the home of Sidney and Renee Rhoney. A reception followed at the

same location.

The bride is the daughter of Jon Weston and Johnna Gay Lee of Garfield and Brent Howard and Susan Harrison of Clearwater, Florida. The groom is the son of KR and Deborah Eden Shockley and Gary Lee and Margaret Ogden, all of Millen.



MR. AND MRS. FOSKEY

Miss Hutcheson, Mr. Foskey exchange vows

During the month of October 2020, Miss Madison Hutcheson and Mr. Nathan Foskey announced their engagement with *The Forest-Blade*. A small, private wedding ceremony took November 21, 2020, with a recep-

tion that followed for family and friends.

The bride is the daughter of John Hutcheson of Soperton and Brande Barkley of Warner Robins. The groom is the son of Hugh and Donna Foskey of Adrian.

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Nine creative things to do with your dress after the wedding

Want to save your gown for sentimental reasons? Your first to-do is to get your wedding dress cleaned and preserved to remove party stains and smudges, like mud on the hem from your barn reception or berry compote from your wedding cake.

Having your gown professionally preserved also means that you can pass it down to someone else—saving them the cost (both financial and ecological) of buying a brand new gown.

Sell Your Wedding Dress

It may seem daunting to sell your wedding dress, but preowned wedding dress sellers such as Nearly Newlywed make it easy. In fact, it's our favorite, partly because you can get the gown cleaned as part of the selling

process, and also because of its amazing selection. But any resale service or store works if you're hoping to give your wedding dress a new life after your own special day. You can make some extra cash and pass along the dress for another to-be-wed to enjoy (a major win-win, if you ask us).

Donate Your Wedding Dress to Charity

Many organizations all over the country accept wedding dress and apparel donations. If you don't have a specific charity in mind, think local and inquire at your nearest thrift store. The shop may be in need of a white gown restock, in which case, you'll make a lucky, local bride-to-be very happy in the near future.

Get Crafty With Your Wed-

ding Dress

If you're savvy with a sewing machine and not afraid to see your dress in pieces, turn it into something you know you'll use and love—or that someone else will. You're most likely working with a fair amount of material, so you'll be able to create a range of creative household items and accessories.

Home Décor Ideas

Pillows (for your living room, your or a loved one's new baby, a friend's ring bearer pillow—the options are endless)

Tablecloths, table runners or napkins

Curtains

Clothing and Accessories

Scarf

Clutch

Necklace

Cocktail dress or a set of separates

Kid and Baby Accessories

Baby blanket

Bassinet cover

Child's costume (think: princess dress, mini wedding dress)

Doll clothing and accessories

Religious Clothing and Holiday Décor

First Communion Dress

Christening gown

Christmas tree skirt

Christmas ornament

Stocking

Dye Your Wedding Dress a New Color

If you're positive you'll never wear your garment again, but don't want to give it away or cut it up, consider dyeing it a new color—your wedding dress will transform into a formal gown perfect for any number of special occasions. We do have to warn you though: Not all fabrics and embellishments are compatible with color dyes (lace is permeable and won't soak up color, while a fabric like silk will usually take dye well), which is why you should trust a professional to dye the garment for you. You also need to make sure you get your dress cleaned before coloring—stains could set or be exacerbated in the dyeing process. Talk to a trusted cleaner about whether or not the chemicals they use to launder your dress could potentially react strangely with anything in the dye or the fabric of your dress—if so, this could definitely affect your plans, and it's smart to know beforehand.

Have a Postwedding Photoshoot

Some brides get artistic with a postwedding photoshoot called "trash the dress"—and no, that doesn't

mean the dress has to be completely ruined. It just means getting your picture taken in a less formal setting than you might have been able to on your wedding day: You might hit the beach, a pool, a creek, a nearby park or even somewhere funky like a carnival, arcade or bowling alley. Think about what places are meaningful to you, are fun and will make you feel like a fashion model for a day. Sure, you can totally trash your dress while you're there, but that part isn't required.

Host a Wedding Dress Party

Are you and your pals completely Friends-obsessed? Take a cue from the beloved sitcom and host your very own wedding dress party. Invite your friends over and ask them to wear their wedding gowns. It's a fun and creative way to give your wedding dress new life after your wedding day. Staging a flower toss is totally optional, of course!

Alter Your Wedding Dress

If you don't love the idea of retiring your wedding dress after wearing it once, consider getting it altered into a more wearable garment. Work with a tailor or seamstress to create a brand new piece of clothing you can wear again and again. Surprise your partner with it on your first anniversary to make the celebration even more special.

Turn Your Wedding Dress Into Art

Wish you could stare at your wedding dress all day every day? You can, with the help of professionals. That's right—you can turn your wedding dress into art by getting it framed. Hang it on your wall as a stunning art piece and sentimental reminder of your wedding day.

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Miss Jackson, Mr. Freeman swap nuptials in winter wedding

Miss Malanie Paige Jackson and Mr. Thomas Monroe "TJ" Freeman Jr. announced their engagement in *The Blade* during the month of September 2020. The wedding to place December 12, 2020 at 5:30 p.m. at The First Baptist Church in Swainsboro. A reception followed at the Mont Royal Clubhouse.

The bride is the daughter of Alton and Jodi Reynolds and Mitch Jackson, all of Swainsboro. She is also the sister of Maegan Nicole Jackson, featured bride-elect of Mr. Shafer in a January 2020 edition



MR. AND MRS. FREEMAN

of *The Blade*. The groom is the son of Tommy and Donna Freeman of Swainsboro and brother to Heather Nicole Freeman, bride-elect of Kevin Doris Scott featured in a June 2020 edition of *The Blade*.



MR. AND MRS. SHAFER

Meet Mr. and Mrs. Shafer

Miss Maegan Nicole Jackson and Mr. Cody James Shafer announced their plans to wed in January 2020. The wedding was May 16, 2020 at 5:30 p.m. at First Baptist Church in Swainsboro. A reception followed at the Reynolds Clubhouse.

The bride is the daughter of Alton and Jodi Reynolds and Mitch Jackson of Swainsboro. The groom is the son of Bart and Gayle Shafer of Warrenville, South Carolina.



MR. AND MRS. ELLISON

Miss Reinbold, Mr. Ellison become one

Miss Kristian Reinbold and Chet Ellison announced their engagement in October 2020. The wedding took place November 22, 2020 at 4 p.m. at The Copper Barn in Portal. A reception followed at the same location.

The bride is the daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Chad Reinbold of Statesboro. The groom is the son of Mr. and Mrs. Randy Ellison of Twin City.

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6 things no one tells you about your honeymoon

You'll forget to plan it.

Let's say you're planning a normal vacation. You'd probably takes months reading up on the destination, researching flights and hotels, and creating your itinerary. But this no ordinary time in your life—this is your “wedding planning life,” and you are busy. But set aside some time to orchestrate your honeymoon, because once you finally pick your head up from planning, you'll be so glad there's a relaxing trip on the other side.

It will be incredibly special.

Even if you swear all those clichés of couples cuddling at the airport or

holding hands while checking into their hotel is so not you two, don't be surprised if all of a sudden you find yourselves acting just like those other happy couples. You're celebrating a very big, very happy event—not to mention, you no longer have the stress of planning on your shoulders. Enjoy it!

You might not feel relaxed until a day or two in.

If you expect that it will only take an hour or two of sun and a strong cocktail for you to feel rejuvenated and focused on each other, you may be surprised. You'll have so much adrenaline pushing you through the wedding that you may be exhausted or just feel kind

of out of it for the first day or so. Prepare to go with the flow, be kind to yourselves and maybe push that adventurous scuba excursion or hiking to the top of the volcano until later in the week.

It won't always feel like a romantic fantasy.

After you've packed the fancy lingerie you got at your bachelorette party and pre-ordered the expensive champagne for your hotel room, you imagine romance will be in the air all day every day. But sometimes, too much sun, surf or sightseeing can really take its toll, and you can bet that at least one night you'll just want to do something sort

of lame, like watching a TV show in a foreign language (and trying to decipher the plotline) while eating some room service.

Mishaps might happen.

On a related note, be prepared for unexpected—and unwelcome—events. Your hotel room might not be as lovely as it looked in the photos, you might miss a connecting flight or you might even get sick, but if you roll with the punches when things go wrong, you'll be able to enjoy all the amazing things that go right. And keep in mind that most hotels have doctors on call to help and medicine in the gift shop, but pack a few Imodium and Advil in your

suitcase just in case (it'll be way cheaper than buying it there).

You won't want to come home.

Whether you've already been on tons of vacations as a couple or this is your first big one together, coming back from your honeymoon is a quick trip back to reality (sorry!) and everything you've been neglecting while you were planning your wedding, like a stack of work, your taxes or cleaning the bathroom. Planning your next trip can ease the pain a little, as can scheduling a fun date night for the weekend after you're back.

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MR. AND MRS. McCLISH

September wedding held for Miss Ely and Mr. McClish

Miss Amber Jade Ely and Mr. Nelson Arnold Ray McClish announced their engagement and wedding plans during the month of June 2020. The couple's became one on September 5, 2020 at 6 p.m. at DoeLee Pecan Grove in Lumber City. A reception followed at the same location..



MR. AKRIDGE AND MISS SAUSE

Miss Sause, Mr. Akridge to wed summer

Miss Kyler Sause and Mr. Daren Akridge announced their engagement in November 2020. The couple set the wedding date for June 5, 2021 at 5:30 p.m. at First Baptist Church of Swainsboro. A reception will follow at the Swainsboro Country Club.

The bride is the daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Brian Sause of Swainsboro. The groom is the son of Mr. and Mrs. Ed Akridge of Twin City.

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Do you need a wedding party?

The answer is: it's entirely up to you. Your wedding party is the group of people you want to include in the events leading up to the big day, during the ceremony, and at the reception. Giving your nearest and dearest a role is a meaningful gesture, but it's more than merely that. This particular group will support you throughout this period of your life; they will be right there to hold you steady through planning and executing this memorable occasion.

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10 special ways to honor your grandparents at your wedding

Weddings are rich with tradition, there's one thing we've always thought was missing from the wedding day rulebook: A prominent role for grandparents in the ceremony. Whether your grandparents are looking down on you from above or they're able to attend the event in person, we've rounded up 10 creative ways to include these special loved ones in your

wedding.

IF THEY'RE STILL WITH YOU...

1. Ask your grandma to walk down the aisle as your flower girl.
2. Have grandpa step in as your ring bearer.
3. Include grandma as one of your bridesmaids.
4. Invite a grandparent to do a special reading during

the ceremony.

5. Give your grandparents a boutonniere or bouquet to make 'em stand out.

IF THEY'VE PASSED AWAY...

6. Leave a seat open for the grandparent who would have sat there.
7. Create a photo display honoring all those family

members who have passed away.

8. Sew a patch of your grandmother's clothing onto your gown.
9. Attach a photo of your grandparents to your bouquet.
10. Light a candle and leave it lit during your ceremony.

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MR. AND MRS. WALDEN

*Miss Andrews, Mr. Walden
wed in September ceremony*

In July 2020, Miss Sarah Elizabeth Andrews and William Isaac Walden announced their engagement. The couple's arrangements consisted of a small family wedding set for September 26, 2020 at Three Oaks Farm in LaGrange.

The bride is the daughter of Gerald Bruce "Andy" Andrews of West Point and Gina Lynn McDiarmid of Pensacola, Florida. The groom is the son of Mr. and Mrs. William Athen "Bill" Walden of Metter.

Groom's guide to choosing wedding attire

Wedding Suit or Tux?

Ah, the age-old groom's attire dilemma: Should you stick with a wedding suit, or go all out with a tuxedo?

If you're not sure, a good rule of thumb is to follow your partner's lead! If they've chosen a formal gown or tuxedo themselves, then match

their look with a tux. It's up to you as a couple to set the vibe (and dress code!) you want for your wedding. Here are some of the differences to consider when it comes to choosing a suit vs. a tux:

- Suit
- Casual
- Versatile
- Trendy

Suits are typically made from one fabric (no satin detailing here!) and can be dressed up or down with a plethora of accessories. Get creative with a colored collared shirt, vest, belt, patterned tie, and matching socks and you'll look sharp when you step onto that aisle! Suits are available in two-piece or three-piece styles (pictured below), and are perfect for a wedding that's slightly more casual or taking place early in the day.

- Tuxedo

- Formal
- Traditional
- Timeless Satin

Details are the main thing that sets tuxedos apart from suits—besides the formality, of course. Tuxes have satin lapels, satin-covered buttons, and a satin stripe down each pant leg. There are no belt loops, so suspenders are used instead of a belt. You can opt for a long tie, but you may have noticed that tuxes are usually worn with a bow tie—hey, you don't

want to cover up the snazzy studs on your white dress shirt! Get cufflinks to match those shirt studs, and you'll be ready for your close-up. Bottom line: Opt for a tuxedo if your wedding is a formal or black-tie evening affair, and stick with a suit for a more casual or daytime event. That said, there's no hard and fast rule—so if YOU just want to feel fancy go ahead and strut that tux no matter what type of wedding you're having!



MISS WEATHERFORD AND MR. PARRISH

Miss Weatherford, Mr. Parrish announced wedding plans for 2021 ceremony

In December 2020, Miss Taylor Weatherford and Paul Parrish announced their engagement and plans for marriage. In the featured article ran in The Blade, the couple set their wedding date for March 13, 2021 at 5 p.m. at Beaver Creek Plantation, with plans for a reception to follow the ceremony.

The bride is the daughter of Ricky and Donna Weatherford of Twin City. The groom is the son of Paula B. Parrish and the late James "Jimmy" E. Parrish of Statesboro.

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Traditional wedding party roles and responsibilities

Maid or Matron of Honor

The maid or matron of honor is the bride's right-hand woman. Also known as the bride's honor attendant, this role is usually taken by the bride's best friend or sister. It's the highest honor in the wedding party and comes with a fair share of responsibilities. The maid of honor helps the bride with all aspects of the wedding from planning to selecting the bridesmaids' dresses. In the lead up to the special event, she is responsible for things like attending dress fittings and planning the bachelorette party.

During the day itself, she is there to offer emotional support to the bride as well as hands-on help like bus-

ting the gown or affixing the veil.

Best Man

The best man serves many of the same duties as the maid of honor. For that reason, the groom will usually choose his best friend or brother to fulfill this role. This person will stand by the groom's side during the wedding and will also offer any support that's needed throughout the day. The best man has a couple of core duties: plan the bachelor party, write a speech for the reception, help make wedding arrangements and, in some cases, hold onto the rings until the wedding ceremony.

Bridesmaids

Bridesmaids are close friends or relatives of the

bride. While bridesmaids are traditionally women, in recent years mixed-gender bridal parties have grown increasingly common. This group takes an active role in the planning of the wedding. They are also expected to help the maid of honor plan the bridal shower and, in some circumstances, split the cost of this event. On the wedding day, the bridesmaids walk down the aisle ahead of the bride. Bridesmaids often take on other responsibilities during the wedding as well. For instance, they may show guests to their seats or hand out favors.

Groomsmen

The groomsmen are the male counterparts to the bridesmaids and, as such, they take on many of the same duties. They are usually close friends or relatives of the groom and will be involved in many of the events in the lead-up to the wedding, such as the bachelor party. The groomsmen are there to support the groom in any way he may need. If there are no ushers, this group may welcome guests upon arrival and show them to their seats. Traditionally, groomsmen stand next to the groom during the wedding ceremony. They may also take on fun tasks such as decorating the getaway car.

Ushers

Often confused with the groomsmen, this group has fewer duties in both the lead-up and during the wedding. Ushers wear matching suits that are different from the groomsmen's attire. Their duty is to

greet guests and show them to their seats. Friends of the bride and groom may take on this esteemed role.

Mother of the Bride

Needless to say, the mother of the bride plays an integral role in the wedding day and the lead-up to the event. Oftentimes, she will spend the entire wedding day with the bride and help her get ready to walk down the aisle. She may also give a speech during the rehearsal dinner or wedding reception.

Father of the Bride

Traditionally, the father of the bride pays for the wedding. However, over the years, things have changed and it's just as likely that the cost will be split between the two families or by the couple themselves. The father of the bride has two major tasks: give a speech at the reception and participate in the father-daughter dance.

Mother of the Groom

The mother of the bride often takes center stage, but the mother of the groom has an equally important role. She is there to lend support to her son, should he need it, and be a host at the event. In some cases, she may also take part in planning the wedding and can give a speech as part of the wedding reception as well.

Father of the Groom

The father of the groom does not have many formal responsibilities, but that's not to say he can't play an active role in the special event. Depending on your wishes, he may help organize aspects of the wedding, give a speech, and welcome guests to the event.

Flower Girl

While not all brides and grooms choose to have a flower girl, this role is a charming addition to any wedding party. Often a niece, younger sibling, or family friend, the flower girl walks down the aisle with the bridesmaids, dropping petals as she goes. She may also wear a bohemian flower headdress to mark her role in the occasion.

Page Boy

The male counterpart to the flower girl is the page boy. He may walk alongside the flower girl when the wedding party heads down the aisle. Most of the time, this role is taken by a young boy who is part of the family or a close family friend.

Ring Bearer

As the name suggests, the ring bearer is the one who carries the rings down the aisle. This person could be another member of the wedding party—the best man, the page boy, or the flower girl, for instance. However, you may want to appoint another member of the family to take on the role or, if you're feeling whimsical, the family pet could take the role.

Officiant

Whether you're having a religious or non-denominational wedding, you will need to choose an officiant for the big day. This person may be a religious cleric or a celebrant. The role can greatly impact the wedding as the officiant performs the ceremony and is mainly responsible for taking care of the paperwork, including the marriage license.

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MR. AND MRS. COWART

Miss Kennedy weds Mr. Cowart in summer ceremony

Miss Katie Elizabeth Kennedy and Mr. Zachary Cowart announced their engagement during the month of June 2020. The wedding and reception were held June 13, 2020. The couple resides in Twin City. The bride is the daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Johnny Kennedy of Reidsville. The groom is the son of Mr. and Mrs. Jim Cowart of Garfield.



MR. AND MRS. PROCTOR

Introducing: Mr. and Mrs. Proctor

Miss Olivia Turner and Mr. Zach Proctor announced their engagement and plans to wed during the month of September 2020. The wedding took place September 26, 2020 at the Proctor Family Farm in Millen.

The bride is the daughter of Kelvin and Michele Turner of Canoochee. The groom is the son of Eric and Thresea Proctor of Millen.

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MR. AND MRS. SUTTON

Miss Williams marries Mr. Sutton

In March 2020, Miss Tazha LaMonica Williams and Mr. Michael Sutton Jr. announced their engagement. The ceremony took place August 8, 2020 at 3 p.m. at The Belle House in Statesboro. A reception followed at the same location.

The bride is the daughter of Charles and Tracey Williams of Twin City. The groom is the son of Phalisa Robinson of Garfield and Michael Sutton Sr. of Stillmore.

Miss Moore, Mr. Thompson exchange vows

Featured in the January 29, 2020 edition of *The Blade*, Tina Allison Moore and Justin Lynn Thompson announced their engagement and wedding plans set for April 18, 2020 at 5 p.m. at Sardis Primitive Baptist Church in Kite. However, due to COVID, the wedding was postponed to August 8. A reception honoring the couple's union followed at Swainsboro Golf and Country Club.

The bride is the daughter of Laura Moore of Kite and the late Chris Moore Sr. Mr. Thompson is the son of Lynn and Sandie Thompson of Swainsboro.



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Miss Williamson becomes Mrs. Page

Featured in February 2020, Miss Faith Williamson and Mr. Brandon Page were featured as *The Forest-Blade's 'Cooks of the Week'*. In this special feature, the couple announced their upcoming wedding plans set for February 29, 2020 at 5:30 p.m. at the Copper Barn in Portal.

The bride is the daughter of Barbara Williamson and Craig and Jami Williamson. The groom is the son of Burley and Connie Page.



MR. AND MRS. PAGE

The top wedding cake tips no one tells you

You have to go in for a tasting.

At tastings, clients are invited into the bakery to sample exemplary cakes, ask questions and review portfolios. This is an excellent opportunity to meet bakers, bond with them and fully understand the range of their abilities.

Picking your cake style should be one of the last things you do.

You may love a rustic semi-naked cake, but if you're hosting a black-tie ballroom wedding, that style may not jive. Deal with the cake after all decisions about dress style and reception décor have been made. These elements can serve as a blueprint for the design and structure of your wedding cake. Choose a cake that's compatible with the style of the venue, the season, your gown, the flower ar-

rangements or the menu. If you want colorful accents (such as sugar flowers or icing ribbons), give your baker fabric swatches. The cake should be part of the wedding, not a glaring sideshow.

There are tons of ways to save.

Order a small cake that's decorated to perfection but can only feed a handful plus several sheet cakes of the same flavor to actually feed the guests. Stay away from tiers, handmade sugar flowers and specially molded shapes. Garnish with seasonal flowers and fruit for an elegant (but less expensive) effect. If you'll have a dessert table (or another sweet) in addition to the cake, consider a cake sized for half your guests. Servings will be smaller, but the fee will shrink too.

Choose the right frosting.

Buttercream or fondant? That's the main question. Buttercream is often much more delicious. But if you love the smooth, almost surreal-like look of fondant as much as we do, consider frosting the cake in buttercream first and then adding a layer of fondant over the entire confection. You can also go for ganache—a decadently rich frosting with a fudgy texture made from chocolate and cream. Even though it's dark brown in color, you can ask your baker to make it wedding worthy with colorful fruit. (A white chocolate version, however, can be dyed practically any shade.) Don't count out swiss meringue either—it's icing made by whipping egg whites together with sugar. Even though it's less popular for wedding cakes, it has a light and fuzzy appearance that make it look instantly

whimsical and romantic. (And your guests will love the airy marshmallow flavor, which pairs perfectly with fruit-based cakes and fillings like lemon, raspberry or strawberry.)

Always consider the weather.

If you're having an outdoor wedding in a hot climate, stay away from whipped cream, meringue and buttercream: They melt. Ask your baker about summer icing options; you might want to go for a fondant-covered cake—it doesn't even need to be refrigerated.

Think about adding a second cake to your reception.

The popularity of the groom's cake, traditionally a Southern custom, is on the rise. The bride's cake—the one cut by the couple at the reception—is traditionally eaten as dessert. The groom's cake is usually darker and richer (often chocolate) and nowadays crafted to show off

the groom's passions and obsessions. Give slices to guests as a take-home memento, or cut and serve both for dessert.

You need to think about display.

Your cake will likely be on display before it's cut and consumed. Make sure there's a designated cake table that allows the most elegant presentation possible. A round table is perfect for round cakes, but a linear cake design may call for a rectangular table. Figure out your options. Once you have a cake table, have fun dressing it up: Drape it with sumptuous fabrics and decorate it with motifs, colors and flowers to match the cake (your florist can help).

Cake delivery takes coordination.

Complex cakes may not necessarily be delivered in final form. Allow time and space for assembly, if needed. Refrigeration may also be required.

Miss McDaniel, Mr. Brown unite in July

Miss Harlie Nicole McDaniel and Mr. Boulder Ryan Brown made an announcement of their engagement and wedding plans during the month of July 2020. The wedding took place on July 18, 2020 at 5 p.m. at Hawhammock Baptist Church in Swainsboro. A reception followed at the same location.

The bride is the daughter of Allen and Peggy McDaniel of Swainsboro. The groom is the son of Del and Joy Brown of Kite.



MR. AND MRS. BROWN

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