



FAMILY TIES — When Charles Ashley and the former Margaret Cook (center) spoke their vows of marriage May 23, 2015, at the Eddie Cox Senior Center, family members were not only there to witness the event, they were a major part of the event. It was a family-centered ceremony and celebration, with many members of the wedding party coming from Union City or Troy. Representing the bride’s side of the family were (front row, from left) her great-grandson and ring bearer, James Ryan Scates; her grandson and a groomsman, Matthew Cummings; her granddaughters and flower girls, Kaylee Cook and Kinleigh Cook; her great-grandson and ring bearer, Bradley Buffington; (middle row) her granddaughter and a server at the reception, Diana Dial; her granddaughter and keeper of the register for the celebration, Jennan Dial; the bride’s daughter and the maid of honor, Shanna Dial; her granddaughter and bridesmaid, Raegan Cook Perry of Memphis; her daughter-in-law and wedding coordinator, Lori Cook; her granddaughter and bridesmaid, Jaime Buffington; (back row) her grandson and groomsman, Nick Dial; her son-in-law and groomsman, Greg Dial; her grandson and groomsman, Dustin Perry of Memphis; her son and the family member who “gave the bride away,” Shawn Cook; and her grandson and groomsman, Josh Buffington. The groom’s family were represent-

ed by (front row, from left on right side of photo) the groom’s daughter and bridesmaid, Donna Ashley Perry of Massachusetts; the groom’s niece, Vicky Ashley of Jackson; the groom’s sister, Margaret Ashley Moore; his niece, Ceilia Ashley of Memphis; (back row) best man and son-in-law of the groom, Mike Perry of Massachusetts; a friend of the family; great-niece of the groom Merideth Ashley; a friend of the family; great-niece of the groom Madelyn Ashley of Lexington, Ky.; nephew of the groom, Ralph A. Moore; and brother-in-law of the groom, Ralph Moore. The bride is the daughter of the late Herbert and Helen Shannon and the groom is the son of the late Herbert and Alleen Ashley. While it was necessary to change the location of the wedding just a short time before the ceremony, the new Mrs. Ashley said the family pulled together and made sure everything went off beautifully at the senior center. The location has special significance for the bride, who is the director of the senior citizens program in Obion County, and the groom, whose office was also at the center before he retired as the Veterans Service Officer for Obion County. Not pictured were the bride’s sisters, Janie Dickerson and Joyce Russell, who served at the reception.

Here are stunning engagement ring alternatives

White diamonds have been the traditional engagement ring stones for decades. While shoppers have experimented with gold, silver, platinum and other precious metals for ring bands, the star of the show has long been that twinkling, pristine diamond.

Even though diamonds may be a “girl’s best friend,” they may not fit every woman’s style, particularly the bride who likes to buck tradition and think outside the box. According to Money magazine, the average engagement ring costs more than \$5,800. In addition to being one of the most expensive gemstones, diamonds have become quite commonplace. Some women even eschew diamonds for moral reasons.

Whatever the driving force behind shopping for alternative gems, women who want to set themselves apart from others — and men who want to “wow” their significant others with unique and eye-catching rings — may opt for other dazzling stones.

- Moissanite: This crystal

naturally occurs in meteorites and is nearly as hard, dense and scuff-resistant as a diamond. Some feel moissanite offers more brilliance and fire than diamonds. Moissanite is a white-colored stone, so it can mimic the look of a diamond. And since it can be made in the laboratory at a fraction of the cost of even lab-made diamonds, it’s a frugal option. A nearly flawless one-carat moissanite gem can cost less than \$1,000.

- Lemon quartz: This is the trade name for a lemon-yellow stone that is a variety of color-enhanced transparent quartz. Quartz is turned into this sunny hue through an artificial gamma ray irradiation process. Like other quartz gemstones, lemon quartz is considered to be very durable and is therefore suitable for all types of jewelry.

- Sapphire: Sapphires tend to be blue stones (of varying intensity), but they also come in peach, pink, yellow, green and white. Sapphire may not sparkle as much as a diamond or even moissanite. However,

with the right cut, it can be around the same hardness



RINGS AND THINGS — Diamonds have long been a girl’s best friend, according to the song, but new gems are coming into that exalted “friendship” circle.

hard to distinguish any lack of luster. Sapphires are the third hardest mineral, and at about one-third the price of diamonds, they make an ideal diamond substitute.

- Morganite: According to the blog Bridal Musings, morganite is currently one of the most popular choices for engagement rings. Its pretty pink hue is romantic and feminine. It also sits at

as sapphires, ensuring the rings will endure.

Vividly cut rubies, emeralds and tanzanite — all gems that are rarer yet less expensive than diamonds — can make beautiful engagement rings. Some couples also may opt for rings without gemstones, such as traditional Claddagh or “true lover’s knot” rings to signify their union.

Jewelry care and cleaning guidelines listed here

Bridal gowns and tuxedos may get their fair share of attention at weddings, but the subtle details of brides’ and grooms’ wedding attire also garner guests’ attention.

Breathtaking jewelry worn by the bride, groom and members of the bridal party looks great on the day of the wedding and in photos couples will keep for decades to come. Naturally, engagement rings and bridal bands are the shining stars of the celebration. However, other pieces of jewelry also make for cherished accessories for weddings.

Bridal jewelry is an investment worth maintaining.

According to a 2013 report by the Jewelers of America, couples spend an average of \$4,000 on engagement rings and more money on wedding bands. Considering several thousands of dollars may adorn the necks, fingers, ears, and wrists of bridal party members, individuals should learn how to keep their jewelry investments looking pristine.

- Remove jewelry during hard work

Exercise caution when wearing jewelry during strenuous activities or when jewelry can be damaged. Also, watch when handling slippery substances such as soaps and oils, as jewelry may fall off and become lost. Instead, remove precious jewelry and store it in a safe location, such as in a jewelry chest or a drawer.

- Use caution with beauty products

Apply lotion, cosmetics, perfume, cologne, and hairspray before putting on

jewelry. These substances can discolor certain metals or even damage stones. Prolonged contact with perspiration and bodily oils also can cause discoloration over time. Gently wipe down jewelry with a soft cloth after wearing it to remove oils and sweat.

- Be careful around swimming pools, spas and the ocean

Couples should remove jewelry before partaking in water-based activities on their honeymoons. According to jewelry retailer Zales, chlorinated water can react with the metals found in jewelry, causing color changes and even structural changes. Don’t risk jewelry falling off in the ocean. Store it in a secure location before

diving in.

- Beware the sun, too

The Gemological Institute of America, Inc. states that sunlight can affect the durability and color of colored gemstones. Over time and in excess, the sun and heat can fade or damage some stones, such as amethyst, topaz and pearls. Other stones can darken with exposure to the sun.

- Clean jewelry with care

Rely on mild detergents and a light touch when cleaning jewelry. Use products specifically designed for jewelry care, and read labels to ensure safety. The International Gemological Institute says seriously soiled jewelry should be professionally cleaned.

- Inspect and know your



TAKE CARE — Protect jewelry by cleaning it regularly and exercising caution when engaging in certain activities.

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