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All photos by John Lanford

Wedding bells ring despite COVID-19



Officiate Callie Roberts - the same officiate as originally planned, to be present via Google Hangouts. Check.

Cupcakes - courtesy of volunteer photographer's daughter. Check.

Photographer - Lauren's friend from childhood and fellow church member John Lanford of Clinton. Check.

Family - present via Google Hangouts. Check.

Ring-bearer - the same as originally planned, Buddy the dog. Check.

The wedding at the Bruenburg neighborhood gazebo was actually the couple's third plan of action.

"This was plan C," Lauren said. "Plan B fell through, which was to have less than ten people and meet at Clinton Springs, observing the six-foot social distancing rule. "Then on April 1, we had to cancel [Plan B]."

"I hate change. It kind of killed me a little bit to change two times in such a short period of time," Lauren said. However, she admits that now the big wedding [in August] is a lot less stressful. "I don't even have to think about the wedding reception for four

months."

In the days preceding the wedding, Ian worked overtime, as he is part of an emergency response team. Working around Ian's long hours of work, the couple arranged to mail in their license after talking to the court and learning that they could have an on-line wedding, with parents, siblings and their officiate virtually present.

"It came to the point where there's nothing we could do," Lauren said. "I'm such a control freak; if there was something I could have done, I would have done it. All you could do is laugh and go with the flow."

At 1 p.m. on their original wedding date, April 4, the couple walked up the street from their home in their wedding finery, accompanied by the couple's dog, Buddy.

Their friend, John Lanford, a videographer, had volunteered to take photos.

"He doesn't usually do photography," Lauren said. He did it as a favor for Lauren and Ian. "He said: Pretend I'm not here." Then he presented the

couple with masks and gloves, everybody observed social distancing, and John took photos - lots of photos.

"As we were walking up, a little boy rode past on a bicycle," Lauren said.

Then, it started to rain. "It only rained when we were up there [in the gazebo]; it only rained during our wedding.

Although Lauren referred to the wedding as a "Skype" wedding on her Facebook page, the couple opted for Google Hangouts, because it is easier to use. "It is 'older-friendly,'" said Ian. "It only took a click of the mouse for older people [to] access it."

During the ceremony, family members were virtually present, but could only be seen, not heard.

"I wanted people to be able to see. It felt so impersonal, because we had our parents on the video, but had to ask them to mute in order for us to hear the officiate," Lauren said.

On the morning of the wedding, Lauren's mother, Jennifer Duncan, who lives about a mile away from Lauren and Ian, called and said:

"I'm crying my eyes out because I can't hug my daughter." Jennifer sent champagne, which was at the couple's front door that morning.

After the wedding, Lauren's father's girlfriend had pizza delivered to the Dettwillers' home from The Bank in Clinton.

A big ceremony and reception are planned for August 15 in Soso, which was the original wedding and reception venue. The European honeymoon has been postponed to September, or even later, if necessary.

"In August, we do plan to walk down the aisle and exchange rings," Lauren said.

According to bride.com website, it is good luck for rain on a wedding day.

"In some cultures, rain on your wedding day is considered good luck, symbolizing fertility and cleaning." As for a virtual wedding, Lauren said, "I wouldn't recommend it, but it's a good option during a pandemic. If you have to get married during a global pandemic and be socially responsible, it's a way to do it."

"Off the Rails" summer camp planned

Special to The Clinton Courier

Clinton's Olde Towne Depot is going "Off the Rails" again this July for summer camp.

Targeted for students that have just completed second, third and fourth grades, Off the Rails will take students on a wild ride around the world learning about transportation, history and other cultures. Organizers say students will participate in group challenges, complete art projects and have lots of fun. Projects will be exploratory and require both critical and creative thinking. Students will work individually and in groups.

The camp will be held at the Olde Towne Depot Monday through Thursday, July 20 - 23, from 9 a.m. until noon. The cost for the camp is \$75 per child and will include all materials needed. Students can expect an interactive camp experience and an exciting ride on Turner the Train.

"Off the Rails is one of the things we look forward to most each year! This camp is a fun opportunity for us to teach our campers about our community's rich history, as well as discuss various cultures around the globe. In past years, we have 'travelled by train' to California, London, Paris, China and Australia, and the camp's structure will be very similar again this year," says Depot Director Anna Boyd Hawks.

Spaces are limited for camp, and registration is open at www.oldetownedepot.com/OffTheRails. For additional information, call the Olde Towne Depot at 601-924-0113.

Davis of Clinton graduates from Ole Miss



Announcing the graduation of Corey Davis of Clinton. Corey earned a Bachelor of Arts degree from the University of Mississippi. Corey majored in English with a Creative Writing Emphasis and minored in Philosophy. She is a member of the Sally McDonnell Barksdale Honors College and Phi Kappa Phi Honor Society and Phi ETA Sigma National Honor Society. She is the daughter of Chuck and Debbie Davis of Clinton.