

HomeTown

Neighbors

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Neighbors for
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YEARS!**

In this issue:

Fall & Winter Bridal Edition

Celebrate Autumn at Local Festivals

Try a New Recipe Submitted by Your Neighbors!

And more!

September 2026

Banks, Jackson,
Habersham and
Clarke Counties



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9AM on Saturday,
September 26th for
the Lavonia Fall Festival

New Fall Fashions,
Purses, Home
Décor,
and MORE!



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Lately, I have been really struggling with the how Artificial Intelligence fits in our world as Christians. Honestly, the Holy Spirit has really convicted my heart of its dangers.

We can see how technology so far has both helped and hindered our society. I wanted to Biblically find scripture to back up my concerns. What I found may surprise you. In Genesis 1:27-28, God said, "Let us make mankind in our image, in our likeness, so that they may rule over the fish in the sea and the birds in the sky, over the livestock and all the wild animals, and over all the creatures that move along the ground." So, what exactly does like in our own image mean - Well, we have a human mind (and soul) to reason, we are functional and rulers and stewards of God's creation, and we are relational with other humans, and capable of a unique relationship with God.

Interestingly, our own creations, especially AI, challenge all three categories. Even before today's AI, computers were often able to handle reasoning tasks much better than humans, from basic math to winning at chess. Today's AI models are also able to do complex tasks, which means that theoretically, they could manage their version of society more efficiently than humans. Humans are also forming relationships with chatbots and robots, and spending hours of time engaging in unhuman relationships. All this challenges the Biblical image of humankind.

Honestly, with one verse in Genesis it bears to reason AI is something to worry about as a Christian. My promise to you is that I will never use AI to generate content for this magazine or ad design. This magazine was built on Christian principals, and I feel strongly the AI is just another form of technology that leads us away from our creator.

I am not saying you are not a Christian if you use it, but I am saying you should use it with utmost discernment. I personally will refrain from it as much as possible.

Sincerely,

Raina C Troxell

Raina C. Troxell

The deadline for the October issue is September 1st. Please call us at 706.356.0273 with submissions. Thank you!



Congratulations to Carol Shields for having this photo chosen for this month's front cover of our Franklin, Stephens, Hart and Madison county edition.



Congratulations to Randy Kanipe of Habersham County for having this photo chosen for this month's cover of our Banks, Jackson, Habersham and Clarke county edition.

For Photo Contest Rules, go to: www.hometownneighbors.com

HomeTown Neighbors

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Missed a copy of HomeTown Neighbors? Check out **WWW.HOMETOWNNEIGHBORS.COM** past editions!

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- 2 HOMETOWN HIDDEN TREASURES**
Can you find the treasure hidden in our pages?
- 3 FAIRS AND FESTIVALS**
Fall festival fun
- 4 IN YOUR OWN NEIGHBORHOOD**
H and H Homestead Fall Barn Sale
- 5 NEW BUSINESS REVIEW**
Chocolate Dog at Maysville Mercantile
- 6 SERVICE DIRECTORY**
Find the help you need!
- 7 NEW BUSINESS REVIEW**
Lavonia Corn Maze
- 8 SHOP LOCAL**
Support Local Businesses in
Downtown Commerce and Jefferson
- 9 LEGALLY SPEAKING**
What Happens If the Driver
Who Hit Me Doesn't Have Insurance?
- 10 AROUND TOWN/CALENDAR**
Community events and special days
- 11 FAIRS AND FESTIVALS**
Art in the Park Returns to
Hurricane Shoals Park September 19-20
- 12 COOKING WITH YOUR NEIGHBOR**
Fabulous Fall Recipes
- Special Section:
Fall & Winter Bridal**
- 13 THE FOOD
TAKES THE CAKE!**
- 14 PLUM'S
THE WORD**
- 15 YOUR DAY, YOUR WAY: THE RISE OF
THE RIGHT-SIZED WEDDING**
- 16 THE WEDDING
PLANNING CHECKLIST**
- Inside Back**
INDEX OF ADVERTISERS
Thank you to all of our wonderful advertisers!

AUGUST COVER PHOTO WINNERS



Comments continue to pour into the magazine from our wonderful readers. We love to hear from you! We also appreciate you supporting the local businesses that advertise with us. Be sure to mention to them that you saw their ad in the magazine, for without their advertising support we could not continue to bring you this quality monthly publication.

SEND US YOUR COMMENTS:

By email: hometownneighbors@windstream.net
Or postal mail: 5721 West Avenue; Lavonia, GA 30553

Hello, I found the August hidden treasure chest on page 10 in the ENT Head Neck Skin Cancer ad. Had fun searching for it! Thanks!
- J. B., *Clarkesville, GA*

I look forward to picking up your magazine each month with your inspiring articles!

- *anonymous*

I am so glad you write these thoughtful hello articles and are constantly bringing scripture to bear on what's going on around you.

- *M. B.*

Find the hidden treasure chest in

an advertisement in this issue for a chance to win a great prize. Send us your answer along with your name, address, and daytime phone number to: hometownneighbors@windstream.net, fax it to us at: 706-356-0274, or mail it to us at: HTN Magazine, 5721 West Avenue, Lavonia, GA 30553. We will draw a winner from all of the correct answers we receive. The deadline to get your answer to us will be the 9th of each month. Only one entry per person and no phone calls, please.

AUGUST TREASURE WINNER:

Rita Farmer of Martin, GA
won Beautiful Jewelry from Vintage Owl

DID YOU FIND IT?

The August treasure chest was located in the ENT Head Neck Skin Cancer ad on page 10

SEPTEMBER TREASURE:

Beautiful Jewelry from Vintage Owl

**60th Annual
MAYSVILLE
Autumn Leaf Festival**

Friday, October 2nd, 3pm - 9pm
Saturday, October 3rd, 9 am - 10 pm
Sunday, October 4th, 11 am - 4 pm

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Fall Festival Fun

Royston Fall Festival

OCTOBER 10TH

9am - 6pm

Toccoa Fest

SEPTEMBER 12TH-13TH

Noon - 10pm

Toccoa Harvest Festival

OCTOBER 24-25TH

Saturday 10am - 5pm,

Sunday 10am - 4pm

Bowersville Fall Festival

SEPTEMBER 19TH

9am - 3pm

Lavonia's Sweet Tea & Falling Leaves Fall Festival

SEPTEMBER 26TH

9 am - 4pm

Lavonia Corn Maze

SEPTEMBER 19 - OCTOBER 31

Fridays, 4pm - 10pm

Saturdays, 10am - 10pm

Sundays, 2pm - 7pm

6165 Lavonia Hwy. Lavonia, GA 30553

Maysville Autumn Leaf Festival

OCTOBER 2-4, 2026

Commerce's Bands, Brews & BBQ plus Commerce Cruisin

SEPTEMBER 19, 2026

Noon- 4 pm

Clarkesville Chattahoochee Mountain Fair

SEPTEMBER 11TH-19TH

Clarkesville Fall Festival

OCTOBER 17TH

10am - 5pm

Canon Fall Festival

OCTOBER 3RD

9am - 3pm

Cornelia Big Red Apple Festival

SEPTEMBER 26TH

9am - 4pm



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H and H Homestead Fall Barn Sale

The long-anticipated H & H Homestead Annual Fall Barn Sale is coming to Maysville on September 11th through 13th, 2025! This event brings the best of vintage, antiques, junk, fall décor, art, handmade, jewelry and so much more!

There will be indoor and outdoor shopping featuring barns, mobile bou-

tiques, food trucks, and tented vendors will be throughout the fields. Bring the whole family and enjoy a 3-day weekend with 120 plus vendors, live music, beer truck, petting zoo, and a vintage ice cream truck along with a kid's area and food trucks.

Helena Dale held her first barn sale in her backyard in 2013. Since then, her events have exploded with over 100 vendors and thousands of shoppers each



FALL MARKET

SEPTEMBER 11TH-13TH, 2026

BRINGING THE BEST OF VINTAGE,
ANTIQUE, JUNK, FALL DECOR, ART, HANDMADE, JEWELRY AND SO MUCH MORE!
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WWW.HHHOMESTEAD.COM

time. From antique and curio items of all kinds to sought after collectibles, you are sure to find that perfect treasure.

It all started with junk! Helena would find items at her family's recycling company, and she would just bring "the good stuff" home. Customers from all over the United States travel to her markets.

There is a little bit of everything. From salvage to repurposed pieces, there is something for everyone. Even dealers come from everywhere to shop for their antique businesses or booths.

Helena said, "They're [Dealers] are able to find pieces that they can take back and repurpose into DIY projects and sell." There are also great finds for those who just love antiques and are looking for pieces or home décor for their own homes. "We try to keep up with the trends, and mix in a lot of old antiques that are timeless that you would keep forever. It's new and old mixed together."

Inside the Market, you will find antiques, home décor, handmade items, jewelry and more. Helena does "picking" trips across the country. From Pyrex to old signs, she loves bringing back these finds and staging them for the markets.

"I love bringing it back to the barn and putting it together, making vignettes and giving ideas on how you can incorporate it into your house", Helena said.

Hours for the market are Friday from noon to 6pm, Saturday 10am until 5pm, and Sunday 10am until 4pm. Admission is \$5 per day cash and only at the gate. Children under 12 are free. There is also free parking. She also has several live sales on her Facebook page throughout the year. 🏡

CHOCOLATE DOG AT MAYSVILLE MERCANTILE

Are you a vintage or antique lover who is always on the hunt for great treasures? Well, there is a new store located in Maysville that needs to be on your list to visit! Chocolate Dog at Maysville Mercantile just opened August 6th, and the owner Kim Iannacone has been curating antiques and great vintage finds for over 14 years. We sat down with Kim to speak to her about her business and her new location in Maysville.

Q HTN MAGAZINE:
What made you decide to start your new business?

A KIM: I have been in the business for 14 years and the opportunity to have a store front came up and I took it.

Q HTN MAGAZINE: **What sets your business apart from other businesses in the area?**

A KIM: Vintage resale experience and being in customer service pretty much all my life. I love finding the perfect piece for my clients.

Q HTN MAGAZINE: **What type of merchandise or services are you offering the area?**

A KIM: Vintage, antique and primitive home decor. Also, I have taken courses in Interior Design with New York Institute of Art & Design. I understand that working a great vintage find can make all the difference in a

room or design.

Q HTN MAGAZINE:
How much planning, renovation, work was involved in opening?

A KIM: With me, everything takes planning. I am a planner by nature. The work is a labor of love. The beautiful historic church building where my new storefront is now located was already renovated so in that, I am very blessed.

Q HTN MAGAZINE: **Tell us about your family, hobbies, and interests outside of the business.**

A KIM: I have been married to my husband, Mark for 29 years. I am a Boy-Mom to Kevin & Christopher Paul. We have 2 beautiful daughter-in-loves, one granddaughter born last December



and another granddaughter that is due in November. We love spending time together, and going on treasure hunting adventures.

Q HTN MAGAZINE: **Is there anything else you think would be interesting to our readers about your new venture?**

A KIM: I am having my "New Business Open House" September 17th - 19th. Our Hours are Thursday, Friday & Saturday 10am - 4pm. We will be open during the H & H Homestead festival, and look forward to you dropping by while visiting the fall market. We are located in downtown Maysville behind Doc's Coffee Shop in the historic church building. Our vendors have stocked their booths with great finds, and I have curated some great pieces for our grand store front opening. We can't wait for your visit! 🏠

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LAVONIA CORN MAZE

Looking for something to do this fall in our area? Look no further than Lavonia! There is something new and exciting in Franklin County and it is the Lavonia Corn Maze! This brand-new attraction is brought to you by the husband-and-wife team, Brandon and Daley Porter. It opens on September 19, 2026, and is sure to be a hit for the fall season. We sat down to speak with both of them about what they are going to have in store for visitors.

Q HTN MAGAZINE: What made you decide to start your new business?

A DALEY: Brandon grew up farming and has been wanting to do a corn maze for a few years now. We were able to find a place to do it and decided to go for it this year. Brandon has a passion for farming and be able to do something that can also involve the community is an added bonus!

Q HTN MAGAZINE: What sets your business apart from other businesses in the area?

A BRANDON: We are the only corn maze in the area that we know of nearby. We hope that this will be something that the community will enjoy and also hope to continue to keep doing this and to be able to add to it every year!

Q HTN MAGAZINE: What type of services are you offering the area?

A DALEY: Well, of course the main attraction of the corn maze, but we

will also have other fall activities ready for families to enjoy including a hayride, corn pit, playground, pumpkins, pumpkin bowling, food trucks and more.

Q HTN MAGAZINE: How much planning, renovation, work was involved in opening?

A BRANDON: This year, being our first year, we basically started from scratch. We had to clear some of the land, put in a drainpipe, do some grading work, plow the land a few times, plant the corn, had a design made and then had to cut the design and have to keep the design cut to maintain it as the corn continues to grow. We also have had to build all the other activities... playground, corn pit, pumpkin bowling, etc. However, we are excited to bring something different to the area this fall.

Q HTN MAGAZINE: Tell us about your family, hobbies, and interests outside of the business.

A DALEY: Brandon is a Firefighter/EMT, farms and does grading work and he loves saltwater fishing. I am a Real Estate Agent at RE/MAX Classic and a mom. We have two kids, Kinley and Kip. We also have a beef cattle operation, Clarks Creek Cattle Co. where we sell custom cuts of beef.

Q HTN MAGAZINE: Is there anything else you think would be interesting to our readers about your new venture?

A BRANDON: Travel doesn't have to be stressful or cWe look forward to meeting all the visitors from our area and hopefully other towns. Our vision is to see this attraction grow every year, and become a popular fall destination. We look forward to seeing your family and friends this year. We open Saturday 19th and will continue to be open Fridays from 4pm until 10pm, Saturdays 10am- 10pm and through Sundays from 2pm-7pm until Halloween on October 31st! 🏠



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Sept. 19 - Oct. 31, 2026



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For more information please call
404-825-5852 or 706-491-0787

**IN DOWNTOWN
COMMERCE & JEFFERSON
THIS AUTUMN!**

The collage features a variety of items for sale, including a red tote bag with a Georgia Tech logo, a red floral tote bag, a red and black bag, a wooden bottle, a black bag, a pumpkin, a plate of food, a shelf of bottles, a lamp, a stack of books, a plate of food, and a display of gift boxes.



Happy
Fall Y'all!

- HomeTown Neighbors Magazine

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SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 19TH 2026 AT 12 PM

SPENCER PARK, DOWNTOWN COMMERCE

TRAIL 98

CHRIS CHAPMAN & TRAVIS VANDERHORST

What Happens If the Driver Who Hit Me Doesn't Have Insurance?

By Attorney Derek Hays, Derek Hays Injury Law

One of the most common questions we hear at Derek Hays Injury Law is, "What happens if the driver who hit me doesn't have insurance?"

It's a fair question and a common problem. The answer may surprise you.

Although Georgia law requires drivers to carry liability insurance, not everyone follows the law. Others carry only the minimum coverage, which may not be enough to pay for serious injuries, medical bills, lost wages, and other damages after a crash.

Fortunately, you may still have options.

Many drivers carry Uninsured Motorist (UM) and Underinsured Motorist (UIM) coverage as part of their own auto insurance policy. This coverage is designed to help protect you if the

at-fault driver has no insurance or not enough insurance to fully compensate you for your injuries.

Unfortunately, many people don't realize the benefit of having UM/UIM coverage until they are involved in an accident with someone uninsured. Others mistakenly believe that using their own insurance will automatically increase their premiums or put them at fault. Every situation is different, which is why it's important to speak with an experienced personal injury attorney before making assumptions about your rights.

At Derek Hays Injury Law, we carefully review every available insurance policy to identify all possible sources of compensation. Our goal is to make sure our clients receive every benefit they are entitled to under Georgia law while we fight the insurance companies on

their behalf.

If you've been injured in a car accident, don't assume you have no case simply because the other driver was uninsured. You may have more options than you realize.

If you have questions about your rights after an accident, Derek Hays Injury Law is here to help. We offer free consultations, and you pay no attorney fees unless we recover compensation for you.

Attorney Derek Hays has represented injured Georgians since 1997 and has recovered more than \$175 million for his clients. If you've been injured in an accident, call Derek Hays Injury Law at 404-777-HURT (4878) or visit www.derekhayslaw.com to learn more. 🏠



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Franklin County

SEPTEMBER 12, 2026 - THE SPLITZ BAND IN CONCERT,

Wellness Park, Royston, 6-8pm.

SEPTEMBER 16, 2026 - FC HOMECOMING PARADE,

Royston

SEPTEMBER 17, 2026 - FRANKLIN COUNTY AFTER HOURS,

Second Season Market & Consign

SEPTEMBER 19, 2026 - TASTE OF FRANKLIN, Downtown Lavonia, 2pm - 6pm

SEPTEMBER 19, 2026 - CITY OF CANON 2ND ANNUAL CAR SHOW,

4pm-7pm

SEPTEMBER 25, 2026 - CUTABLOCK WITH WAYWARD SONS IN CONCERT,

Royston at the Royce

SEPTEMBER 26, 2026 - DOWNTOWN LAVONIA FALL FESTIVAL,

9am - 4 pm, The Sweet Tea & Falling Leaves Festival welcomes more than 200 vendors!

OCTOBER 3, 2026 - CANON FALL FESTIVAL, 9am-3pm

Children of Special Needs September Events:

SEPTEMBER 1 - LATER YEAR'S DAY TRIP TO THE MOVIES,

11-4

SEPTEMBER 5 - CSP ANNUAL FAMILY FUN DAY,

10:00 AM-1:00 PM, 613 Cook Street, Royston (free community event with vendors, games, inflatables,

petting zoo, prizes, and community resources)

SEPTEMBER 9 - PARENT/CAREGIVER MEET-UP BREAKFAST,

9 am Duncan Hartwell

SEPTEMBER 10 - LATER YEARS EVENING, 6pm CSP new home.

SEPTEMBER 18 - RECHARGE PARENT MEETING,

At the new home of CSP, 660 College Street Royston (formerly Royston Elementary)

SEPTEMBER 23 - PARENT/CAREGIVER MEET-UP LUNCH,

12 Cracker Barrel Lavonia

Habersham County

SEPTEMBER 11, 2026 - CITY OF CLARKESVILLE CRUISE IN WITH A PURPOSE CAR SHOW

SEPTEMBER 11-19, 2026 - CHATTAHOOCHEE MOUNTAIN FAIR,

Clarkesville Fairgrounds

Stephens County

September 5, 2026 - Tugaloo Bend Nature Walk, 10 a.m. - 1:00 p.m.

SEPTEMBER 6, 2026 - TUGALOO BEND JAMMIN' AT THE BEND,

2:00 p.m. - 4:00 p.m.

SEPTEMBER 19, 2026 - TOCCOA WOMAN'S CLUB FASHION SHOW,

10 am at Toccoa First Baptist Church, contact any member for tickets or Shelby Hall at 706-491-3047 for more information.

SEPTEMBER 4, 2026 - IDA COX MUSIC

SERIES: THE EMBERS, 7:00 PM,

Doyle Street, Downtown Toccoa. Enjoy live Beach Music and R&B classics from North Carolina's Official Ambassadors of Music, featuring Hall-of-Famer Craig Woolard.

SEPTEMBER 12-13, 2026 - TOCCOA FEST,

12:00 PM - 10:00 PM, Doyle Street, Downtown Toccoa, A community Christian festival featuring live music, activities, and local vendors along Doyle Street.

OCTOBER 1-4, 2026 - CURRAHEE MILITARY WEEKEND & OKTOBERFEST,

Downtown Toccoa, A four-day celebration honoring Toccoa's rich WWII military history alongside Oktoberfest festivities, food, and family entertainment.

Jackson County

SEPTEMBER 19, 2026 - CRUISIN COMMERCE,

Spencer Park, 12- 4pm, For more information and to register your vehicle contact 706-3351899 or visit www.commercega.gov.

SEPTEMBER 19, 2026 - BANDS, BREWS, & BBQ,

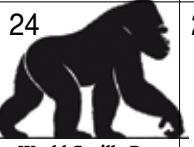
Downtown Commerce, 12-4pm, BBQ competition, live music, People's choice, trophies, cash prizes, food trucks, kid games, Craft Vendors.

Madison County

SEPTEMBER 25, 2026 - MADISON CHAMBER OF COMMERCE GOLF TOURNAMENT,

8 am - 2pm, Highland Walk Golf Course at Victoria Bryant State Park presented by Jackson EMC. Rain date Friday, October 2.

2026
september

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
		1	2	3  Skyscraper Day	4	5  National Cheese Pizza Day
6	7  Labor Day	8  Star Trek Day	9  Teddy Bear Day	10	11	12
13  National Peanut Day	14	15  Ice Cream Cone Day	16  National Guacamole Day	17	18  Cheeseburger Day	19  Rabbit Day
20	21	22	23	24  World Gorilla Day	25	26
27	28	29  National Coffee Day	30			

Art in the Park Returns to Hurricane Shoals Park September 19-20

Arts and crafts, live music, living history, family activities, Civil War skirmishes, Bluegrass Festival, Putt-Putt, Kids Zone, great food and the natural beauty of Hurricane Shoals come together September 19th and 20th for the 36th Art in the Park Festival at Hurricane Shoals Park.

Presented by the Tumbling Waters Society of Jackson County, the annual festival has become a favorite fall tradition, bringing visitors to one of Jackson County's most beautiful and historic settings for a weekend filled with something for just about everyone. The festival will be open Saturday, September 19th, and Sunday, September 20th, from 10 a.m. until 6 p.m.

A wide variety of artists, craftsmen and specialty vendors will fill the park, offering handmade and one-of-a-kind items. Visitors can spend the day browsing the booths, enjoying live entertainment, sampling festival food and taking in the scenery along the shoals.

Families will find plenty to keep younger festival-goers entertained, while history comes alive across the river in



the Heritage Village. Historic buildings preserved at Hurricane Shoals offer visitors a glimpse into life in an earlier Jackson County, with demonstrations and activities throughout the weekend.

One of the festival's most popular traditions is the historic Grist Mill, where corn is ground into cornmeal just as it was generations ago. The working mill is one of Hurricane Shoals Park's signature attractions and operates during Art in the Park each year. 🏠

Art ^{35th Annual}
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Sept. 19-20, 2026

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Sunday: 10:00 am - 6:00 pm

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No alcohol

per Jackson Co. Parks & Recreation regulations



- Heritage Village
- Civil War Battles
- Blue Grass Music
- Grist Mill
- Arts & Crafts
- Kids Zone
- Miniature Golf
- Living History
- Duck Dash



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PATRICIA LEE MONTAGUE
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KELVIN THOMAS "TOM" GRENIER
Jan 11, 1956 — Jul 10, 2026

WILLIAM "WOLF" WARE
Oct 15, 1960 — Jul 13, 2026

ROBIN FRANCES MITCHELL
MABRY
Jan 2, 1953 — Jul 12, 2026

CRAIG ALLEN LEEPART
Jan 4, 1959 — Jul 15, 2026

ANNIE RUTH TEASLEY
Apr 27, 1943 — Jul 15, 2026

MARTHA JEAN
MUNDY NOELL
Dec 26, 1948 — Jul 17, 2026

DR. MARTIN JOHN SIMMONS,
D.D.S.
Oct 28, 1933 — Jul 17, 2026

DELORES DENNIS
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WILLIAM STEVEN "STEVE" EVANS
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DAVID WAYNE ALEXANDER
Mar 7, 1956 — Jul 19, 2026

TONY DALE RICHARDSON
Jun 15, 1975 — Jul 19, 2026

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MARCENIGILL
Feb 6, 1976 — Jul 20, 2026

DOUGLAS WAYNE DIEGEL
May 4, 1942 — Jul 22, 2026

JANICE MARIE (BLACK)
ALEXANDER
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May 25, 1985 — Jul 22, 2026

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Sep 22, 1961 — Jul 23, 2026

FRANCIS P. WOODWARD
Jan 14, 1931 — Jul 23, 2026

JOEL BLACKWELL
Jun 28, 1961 — Jul 26, 2026

DR. JOSEPH ROBBIN "JOE" CLARK,
D.D.S.
Jun 21, 1956 — Jul 26, 2026

DONNA WHEELER
May 15, 1948 — Jul 26, 2026

DARRYL VINCENT WILLIAMS
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Chocolate Delight

From Reader Debra
Rousey of Royston, GA

2 small boxes of
vanilla instant
pudding
3 cups of cold milk
8 oz. cool whip
Graham crackers

Mix vanilla pudding and milk. Add 8 oz. cool whip to mixture. Layer graham crackers and pudding mixture in the bottom of 9 x 13 casserole dish. Put a layer of graham crackers on top.

Topping

1 cup sugar
1/3rd cup cocoa
1/4 cup of milk
1 stick of butter
1 teaspoon of vanilla

Mix topping ingredients. Boil for 1 minute, let cool, then pour mixture over graham crackers. Let set overnight in refrigerator.



Squash Casserole

From Jessica Lewis

4 cups sliced yellow squash
1/2 cup chopped onion
1/4 cup water, or more as needed
35 buttery round crackers, crushed
1 cup shredded Cheddar cheese
2 large eggs, beaten
3/4 cup milk
1/4 cup butter, melted
1 teaspoon salt
ground black pepper to taste
2 tablespoons butter

Preheat oven to 400 degrees and set aside a lightly greased 9 x 13 casserole dish. Cook squash and onion in water in skillet until tender. Drain. Mix cracker crumbs and cheese together in a separate bowl. Stir half of the cracker mixture into cooked squash mixture. Mix eggs and milk together in a small bowl, then add to squash mixture; stir in 1/4 cup melted butter, and season with salt and pepper. Spread mixture into the prepared baking dish. Sprinkle with remaining cracker mixture, and dot with 2 tablespoons butter. Bake in the preheated oven until golden brown on top and set, about 25 minutes.



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The Food Takes the Cake!

Food is now very much a part of the visual language of weddings. Menus are being designed as much for how they look and move, as for how they taste. Sculptural presentations, unexpected textures, and color-forward styling turn food into décor. Something that guests encounter, not just consume.

Food is emotional. When it's presented beautifully and generously, it does more than feed guests, it sets the tone for connection, comfort, and celebration. Food has become a central design element, with sculptural displays, layered textures, and abundant presentations that double as décor.

Thoughtfully styled stations encourage movement, conversation, and discovery, transforming dining into an experience rather than a seated moment. The return of the buffet isn't casual, it's curated.

The emphasis is putting the food... front and center. This creates interest,



and helps take something necessary to becoming the highlight of the wedding.

The wedding cake is also now becoming center stage again! Remember, in the 80's when the main 4 to 5 tower wedding cake would have mini cakes with bridges and floral arrangements around it? Well, what goes around, comes around! Wedding cakes are now being centered in the room of the reception with spotlights and its own table setting as the main décor piece for the event. 🏠

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Plum's the Word!

Plum is everywhere right now, and not burgundy, nor dark wine color, nor the dusty rose color seen a few years ago. It's something darker and harder to name: like crushed velvet or light mulberry.

Color is consistently the first decision couples make when researching fall 2026 wedding trends, and the oranges, pumpkins, and black chalkboards have gone with the past.

Natural is the beauty! An ivory gown with a mulberry bouquet. A wedding party in four different shades of plum, not coordinated, but chosen intentionally. Deep berry linens against terracotta ceramics. A mix of boho, but not overstated!

Here's how the color will show up at a fall 2026 wedding:



Florals: dahlias, dried pampas grass dyed deep plum, dark anemones, and black scabiosa

Bridesmaid dresses: varying shades of plum and will not be identical

Table linens: mulberry velvet run-

ners on raw linen or aged white tablecloths

Stationery: dark wax seals and hand-lettered menus in near-black ink on cream paper

Bridal accessories: deep amethyst earrings and mulberry ribbon tied around bouquet stems.

Natural is key! Not overstatements with tons of decor, but intentional statements. Think moss, wheat, and wildflowers that looked like they were grabbed from a ditch on the way

to the venue. 2026 fall wedding trends have done something nobody quite planned for: made imperfection the most expensive-looking choice on the table.

So, enjoy the new trend, where plum is the word, and less is more! 🏡



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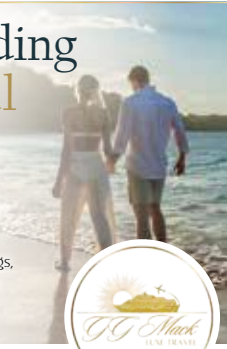
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Your Day, Your Way: The Rise of the Right-Sized Wedding

Submitted by **Aerial Mountain Springs Venue**

There's a quiet revolution happening in the wedding world, and it looks a lot like a couple standing under a string of lights with their favorite people, laughing so hard they forget to cut the cake on time. The big, do-everything-by-the-book wedding isn't the only dream anymore. More and more, couples are asking a better question than "How do we pull off the perfect wedding?" They're asking, "What would actually feel like us?"

For generations, weddings came with a script. The guest list swells to include second cousins you've met exactly once, and somewhere along the way the day starts belonging to everyone but the two people getting married. Today's couples are gently setting that script down. They're writing their own vows, keeping

the traditions they love, and skipping the ones that never quite fit. Nothing is required anymore, and that turns out to be wonderfully freeing.

Part of what's driving the shift is simple math. The average American wedding now runs north of \$30,000, and much of that is tied directly to the guest count. Every extra person means another plate, another chair, a bigger venue, and a longer bar tab. Plenty of couples are looking at that number and deciding they'd rather spend it on a down payment or a dream honeymoon.

Here's the good news: cutting the cost doesn't mean cutting the magic. When you trim the guest list to your nearest and dearest, your budget suddenly stretches in all the directions that actually show up in photographs — the gorgeous florist, the incredible photographer, the good champagne, the view that makes everyone gasp.

A great place to start is to look for venues offering small elopement and micro wedding packages. Aerial Mountain Springs is one of them — and while we can seat up to 150 guests, we've designed our space so that a party of 25 still feels full and intimate, never swallowed by the room.

There's a smart move on timing, too. If you don't want to spend a year or more planning, check with venues about dates three to six months out. Sometimes you'll find a really great date at a lesser rate — an opening someone else's long timeline left on the table.

And the Pinterest-worthy part? It's still absolutely yours — the soft light, the meaningful details, the mountain backdrop, the toast everyone actually gets to hear. A smaller wedding isn't a lesser wedding. Your day should fit you like your favorite pair of shoes, and these days, it finally can. 🏡

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The Wedding Planning Checklist

RIGHT AFTER ENGAGEMENT

- ☐ Set the wedding date
- ☐ Make the Guest List
- ☐ Set the Wedding Budget
- ☐ Start getting wedding Vendor Quotes
- ☐ Find an Officiate
- ☐ Select your wedding party
- ☐ Start shopping for the wedding dress and bridal parties dresses

9-11 MONTHS BEFORE THE WEDDING

- ☐ Send "Save the Dates" reminders
- ☐ Find and book a caterer
- ☐ Book entertainment
- ☐ Find and book a florist
- ☐ Book the photographer and/or videographer

6-8 MONTHS BEFORE THE WEDDING

- ☐ Buy the wedding gown
- ☐ Find and book a cake baker
- ☐ Find and book transportation
- ☐ Find and confirm ceremony music
- ☐ Order the bridesmaid dresses
- ☐ Start the wedding registry if you haven't already
- ☐ Confirm the rehearsal dinner

4-5 MONTHS BEFORE THE WEDDING

- ☐ If you're taking a honeymoon, start planning
- ☐ Investigate formal wear, get details, book it
- ☐ Figure out if you're doing a post-wedding brunch, start getting those details
- ☐ Order wedding favors
- ☐ Order wedding invitations
- ☐ Find and buy wedding bands
- ☐ Find any rental equipment you'll need

3 MONTHS BEFORE THE WEDDING

- ☐ Finalize Guest List
- ☐ Get updated addresses, confirm spellings
- ☐ You may want to create a spreadsheet to track wedding gifts
- ☐ Find all the other wedding helpers you may need such as Ushers/ Host or Hostess, and Ceremony helpers
- ☐ Perhaps a day-of wedding coordinator is a nice splurge at this point
- ☐ Mail invitations
- ☐ Find and book your hair and make-up
- ☐ Work with the host of the rehearsal dinner to coordinate

1-2 MONTHS AHEAD

- ☐ Work on your wedding vows (if not using traditional ones)
- ☐ Figure out any gifts you're giving to bridal party, parents, attendants, others
- ☐ Enjoy any bridal showers; get thank you notes done quickly!
- ☐ Confirm marriage license details

1-2 WEEKS BEFORE WEDDING

- ☐ Walk through the flow of the entire event
- ☐ Confirm seating chart if applicable
- ☐ Confirm all vendors

3-7 DAYS BEFORE THE WEDDING

- ☐ Make sure the men all have their formal wear (or details on when/where/how to pick it up)
- ☐ Confirm the rehearsal dinner details
- ☐ Pack for honeymoon and your day-of gear for the wedding
- ☐ Have all tips/payments in special envelopes for a trusted friend (often the best man) to deliver to the vendors on the wedding day

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Index of Advertisers

Aerial Mountain Springs	15
Art in the Park Hurricane Shoals	11
Athens Eye Doctors	14
Bebop's	13
Beretta Equine Veterinary Services	2
Bright Sunny Days	14
Car Point Automotive	2
Chocolate Dog @ Maysville Mercantile	5
Coile and Hall Funeral Directors	12
Commerce DDA	8
Cure Podiatry	3
Dental Home	11
Derek Hays Law	9
Doc's Coffee House	7
Flaunt	12
GG Mack Luxe Travel	14
H & H Homestead	4
Hart EMC	13
Hometown Interiors	16
Hot Shot Dance & Cheer	12
Jefferson Civic Center	Back Cover
Jewelry Expressions	13
Lavonia Corn Maze	7
Luma Pain Relief Laser Center	3
Maysville Autumn Leaf Festival	2
Monika Woods Travel Advisor	12
North Georgia Credit Union	Inside Back
PrissEllies	8
Puerto Nuevo	7
Sanders Furniture	8
Skelton Morris Insurance	14
Spoiled Rotten Boutique	13
The Artfull Barn	5
The Community House	16
The Haven Zoo	5
TruVista	Inside Back
Village Apartments	13
Vintage Owl	Inside Front

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