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Photo by Matt Long photography

The wedding party cheers at the Livingston Depot during the 2018 wedding celebration of Ashleigh and Ray Carlson.

# Getting married at the Depot

By Justin Post
Yellowstone Newspapers

When it came time to tie the knot, Ashleigh and Ray Carlson had multiple reasons for choosing the Livingston Depot Center as the ideal venue to exchange vows among family and friends from across Montana and beyond.

The fact that Ashleigh, the daughter of Paul and Gerri Lyman, grew up in Livingston was among the reasons why the Depot rose to the top of their list.

Ray also has ties to the area, where his great grandmother, Julia Phillips, worked at the Depot baking pies for railroad workers passing through the city during its days of railroad glory. In fact, Julia Phillips met – and later married – a railroad engineer named Williams while working at the Depot.

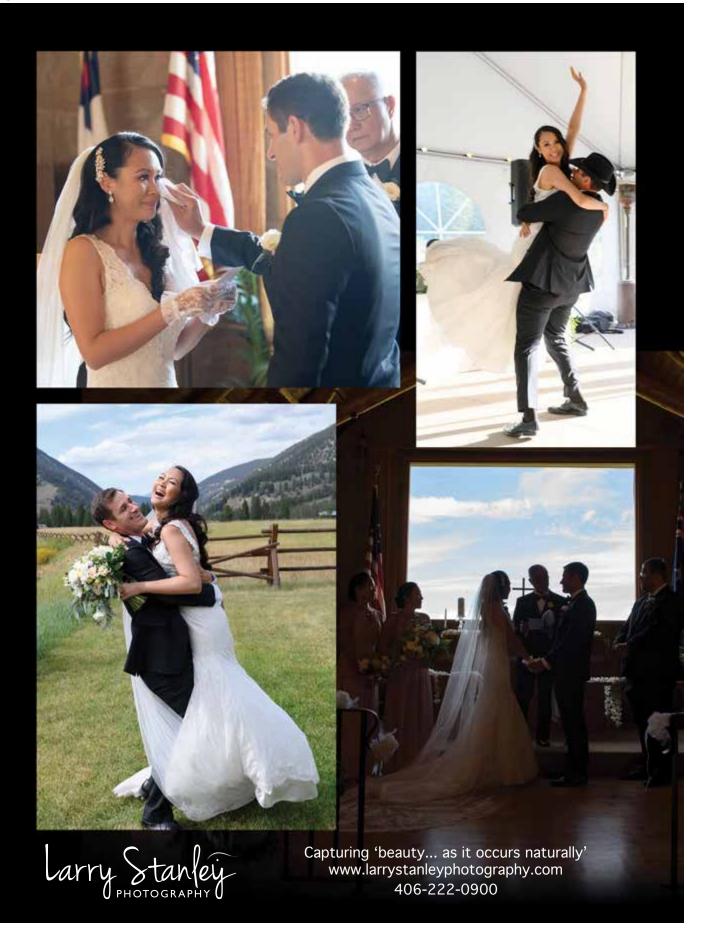
The icing on the wedding cake, if you will, is the fact that Ray and Ashleigh actually met at the Depot during Ashleigh's sister's wedding there on Sept. 19, 2015.

Their family connections to the building aside, the Carlsons are like dozens of couples who choose the historic and iconic Livingston Depot every year for their wedding reception or ceremony, or both.

"It's always been the focal point of town," said Ashleigh, who works as a physical therapist in Helena where she and Ray, who works in information technology, make their home.

At the same time, the non-profit Depot was an option that didn't smart the pocketbook, she said.

"It was really affordable compared to most places we looked at," Ashleigh said. "The affordability was great."



#### **Depot,** from Page 3

When it comes to planning a wedding, having a contact who is willing and eager to work with the bride-to-be is key. And Ashleigh said those qualities are exactly what she found in Depot Executive Director Laura McCarthy Cota.

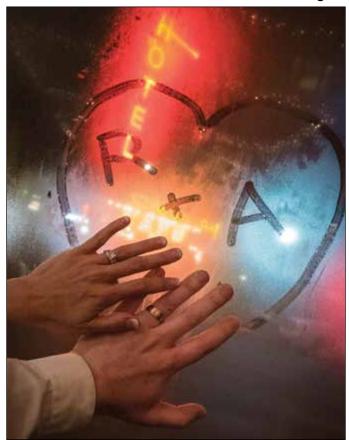
"She was awesome to work with," Ashleigh said of McCarthy Cota.

Ashleigh said the Depot staff was flexible and accommodating when it came to access to the building and preparations for the big day on Sept. 29, 2018.

The fact that the historic Murray Hotel is located just across the street from the Depot was an added bonus. The couple rented the Murray's expansive Peckinpah Suite, where the groomsmen prepared for the wedding and a majority of the wedding party stayed that night, Ashleigh said.

The Depot also fit the couple's need for a venue that could accommodate a couple hundred people. Ray, the son of Nikki and Joe DeWolf of Helena, and Ashleigh have family spread throughout the state as well as friends from other parts of the country, including California where Ashleigh attended college.

"We had quite a lot of people coming from different parts of the country, so it was a nice space to accommodate everything," Ashleigh said.



Photos by Matt Long Photography

Ashleigh and Ray Carlson use the neon lights of the historic Murray Hotel for a wedding photograph in 2018 at the Livingston Depot.

See **Depot**, Page 6



Ashleigh and Ray Carlson kiss in the courtyard of the Livingston Depot Center.

#### **Depot,** from Page 5

The couple planned an outdoor ceremony in the Depot's courtyard, but woke up on their wedding day to cold temperatures and snow. They were quickly able to move everything inside and used the building's architecture, both inside and out, to make for memorable wedding photographs.

"It's such a great picturesque place," Ashleigh said. "It's a very cool place to take pictures."

McCarthy Cota agreed. She said the Depot operates as a museum with exhibits from May through September, with multiple events planned during those months in the facility's courtyard.

The Depot also hosts rehearsal dinners, receptions and other wedding-related events within the exhibit, where gatherings are commonly structured as a cocktail party or a networking event in addition to the outdoor gatherings where people are seated, giving guests the opportunity to mingle among the indoor exhibit or in the courtyard.

"Guests really like the opportunity to walk around the exhibit while the bridal party is busy taking photos," McCarthy Cota said. "The guests really enjoy perusing the art and history exhibits."

At the end of September, the Depot's exhibits are dismantled and the interior of the building is available for use as "an elegant event hall," she said.

"One thing that makes the Depot different is, as a small nonprofit, part of our mission statement is promoting economic development," McCarthy Cota said. "There's a lot of event venues that are all-inclusive. We are the exact opposite."

She said the Depot encourages people to hire a local caterer, photographer, baker, bar server, band, DJ, or other service provider.

"We've worked with most, if not all, of the caterers in the area and statewide," McCarthy Cota said.

Some couples have even chosen to go the do-ityourself route, recruiting aunts, cousins and other family members to pull together a potluck meal during the reception. She said the facility is available to rent throughout the year, and at a discounted price for members of the Depot.

"It's incredibly affordable, especially because we're not all-inclusive" she said.

Another reason couples particularly enjoy booking the Depot for weddings, she said, is the fact that little or no effort is required to make for a memorable event in the facility.

"The space is so elegant that they don't have to do anything," McCarthy Cota said. "All they have to do is show up and everything looks classy."

For more information, contact McCarthy Cota at 406-222-2300 or email getinvolved@livingstondepot.org.





Courtesy photo

Gladys and Bruce Townsend met and fell in love, only to discover the difficult task of clearing immigration hurdles to finally be together in Montana.

# LOVE ROLLERCOASTER

### Couple clears immigration hurdles to be together in Montana

By Elias Baer Yellowstone Newspapers

A wild rollercoaster of love brought Gladys and Bruce Townsend together against all odds. From Peru to Alaska, the ride came to an end in Big Timber.

Raised in Pisco, a small village near Lima, Peru, Gladys Farfán Townsend married at age 15, following cultural norms. After being married 24 years and having two children, however, things changed.

"I didn't know what to do, but I knew I was lonely and I wasn't happy, so I decided to travel. I quit my job and everyone said that I was crazy."

Gladys had a Peruvian friend living in Anchorage, Alaska, in need of a babysitter for two months and, having never visited Alaska, Gladys jumped on the opportunity. In the summer of 2003, she got a six-month travel visa and hit the road.

"I was just wandering," Gladys said.

While babysitting full time, Gladys also studied English in Anchorage.

"I could read and write English very well already," she said, "but I couldn't speak at all."

Then Bruce came into the picture. "My Peruvian friend's uncle

introduced us. He was actually his (Bruce's) boss," she said.

It wasn't a romantic introduction. Gladys said that Bruce intended to show her around and help her learn some English.

"He would read books to me," Gladys said. "I couldn't talk but I could write so I would write notes for him on the McDonald's napkin or whatever was around."

The pair met for the first time on August 10, 2003, and spent a lot of time together.

However, they didn't have their "real first date" until August 30, Gladys said.

See Together, Page 8

#### **Together,** from Page 7

"She couldn't talk (English) when we first met," Bruce said, "and everyone was jealous that I had a woman who couldn't talk and didn't like to shop."

But Bruce and Gladys were up against a ticking clock. Gladys' visa was running out and she was going to go home to Peru.

"He asked me to stay with him. He said, 'you can't leave,' " Gladys recalled.

Besides the visa, there was another big problem: Gladys didn't come to America divorced and she didn't immediately take the time to file the necessary paperwork to complete her divorce.

"I didn't think of it when I left Peru because I didn't come to America to get married. I had to do the divorce from the U.S. and it wasn't easy," she said.

Against all odds, Gladys remained in America, and even-

"Going through the immigration process legally is extremely difficult without getting married. It was a horrendous process keeping her here."

- Bruce Townsend

tually, after stacks of paperwork, finalized her divorce.

"Going through the immigration process legally is extremely difficult without getting married," Bruce said. "It was a horrendous process keeping her here. There were never any legal problems but there was a tremendous amount of paperwork."

In 2005, Bruce brought Glad-

ys to Sweet Grass County where he was raised, to visit the family ranch.

"We visited and I just fell in love with Montana," Gladys said.

The two stayed on the Thompson ranch where Bruce's aunt, Annette Thompson, lived at the time. Annette had several serious health problems and, coincidentally, Gladys was a registered nurse, so Annette asked if Gladys wouldn't mind coming to live with her and take care of her. Bruce still had to finish out a work contract in Anchorage, but Gladys wasn't tied down so she decided to move to the Thompson Ranch.

"I came out here in February 2005 and Bruce came in June. We've been here ever since. We took care of her for two years before she died. It was Annette that introduced me to this beautiful community," Gladys said.





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When Annette died in October of 2006, leaving half of the ranch to Bruce, the couple finally stepped off their rollercoaster ride, landing at the Thompson Ranch.

The couple has been happily married since November, 2006.

"We got married so late that we decided to count our anniversary in dog years," Bruce said. "And depending on how you figure it, that's a pretty long time."

Ten years later, in 2015, Gladys' son Luigi Clavarino Farfán visited his mother in Big Timber and hopped on his own coaster ride. After he met Dulcie Bue Clavarino, a Big Timber resident, he



followed his mother's footsteps and stayed in Montana.

Luigi and Dulcie were

married June 2016 and still live in Sweet Grass County. They have two children, Massimo and Gladys and Bruce pose for a picture on their wedding day at the Thompson Ranch in Sweet Grass County. The couple is at the confluence of the Boulder and Yellowstone Rivers.

Courtesy photo

Apollo.

After 12 years on the waiting list, Gladys' daughter and her family are set to emigrate to Montana some time this year, completing the Farfán family unit in Sweet Grass County.



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# Capturing the marriage proposal

**By Justin Post** 

Yellowstone Newspapers

If you have ever been married, you are probably already aware that people like to ask the question, "how did he propose?"

Grooms-to-be have come up with some creative and elaborate ways to pop the question.

And now, there's a growing trend to immortalize the big moment with the help of a professional photographer.

Livingston photographer Larry Stanley jokes that he calls it his "secret photography."

Stanley said he typically is contacted by men who want to propose to their girlfriends in Yellowstone National Park. Stanley then works with the boyfriend to arrange a time and place to meet and is sent pictures of the couple to help him identify them on location.

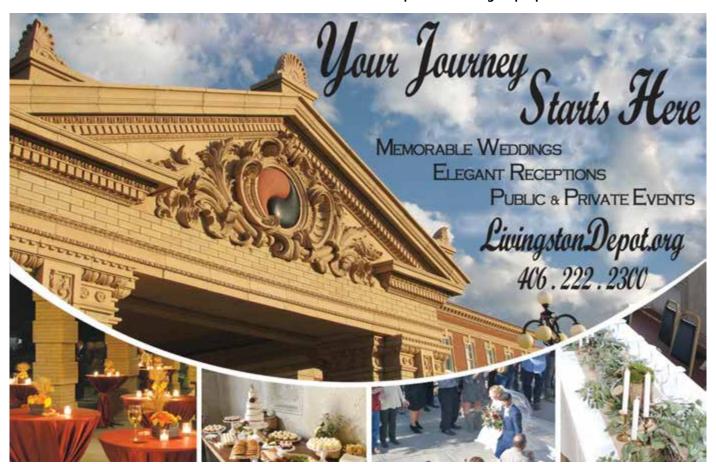
Stanley blends in quite well in Yellowstone, where tourists often are carrying cameras.

See **Proposal**, Page 11



Photo by Larry Stanley Photography (montana-wedding-photographer.com)

An unsuspecting Sarah Johnson takes a picture of Yellowstone Falls in Yellowstone National Park as Seth Sullivant pulls out a ring to propose.



#### **Proposal, from Page 10**

"I look like just about every other middle-aged guy with a camera and a hat and I sit around and wait for them," Stanley said. Stanley has photographed a number of proposals in recent years in Yellowstone, and said the trend of photographing marriage proposals continues to grow.

He said he enjoys being there to

witness the proposal, and to capture the emotional moment for couples.

"I think most of them are genuinely shocked," he said. "I call it shock and awe."

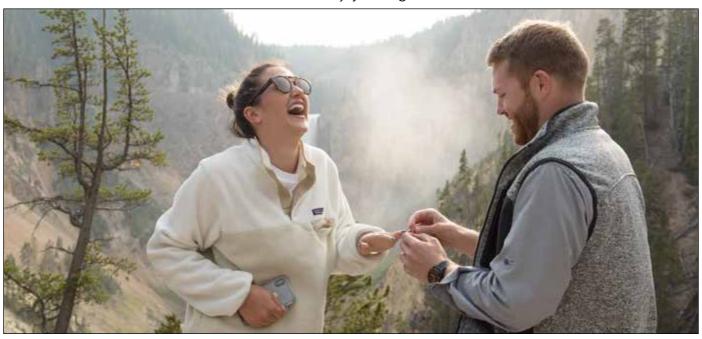
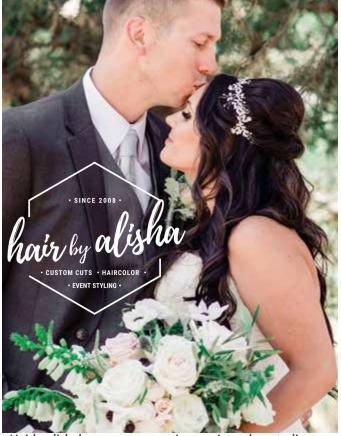


Photo by Larry Stanley Photography (montana-wedding-photographer.com)

Sarah Johnson reacts as her longtime boyfriend, Seth Sullivant, proposes in Yellowstone National Park.



Hairbyalishabozeman.com Image: Ivorydoorstudio.com

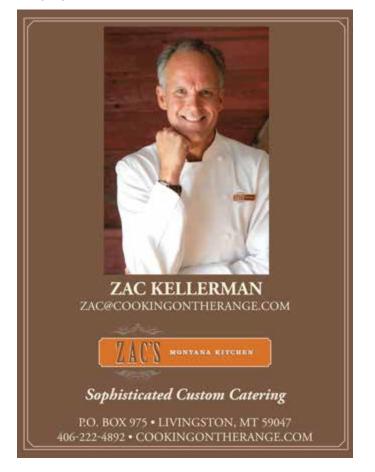




Photo by Larry Stanley Photography (montana-wedding-photographer.com)
Sarah Johnson and her, as of the moment pictured, fiancé, Seth Sullivant, pose by the Grand Canyon of the Yellowstone.



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# The Place



### Make First Decisions First

You're engaged, you've announced the news, maybe you're finally able to say "fiancé" without giggling, and now you have some serious planning to do. Planning an event is a long series of decisions and not a little bit of problem solving.

Three decisions will dictate most of the others and need to be made at the start. Where will you hold your ceremony and reception? Who will you invite? When will you be married? A fourth decision, to avoid the inclination to feel rushed, may help with all of the others.

Venues in Park and Sweet Grass Counties are often booked two years, and for favorite dates longer, in advance. Many of them have the amenities and scenery to make them worth the wait. Allowing yourselves to enjoy your engagement until your top location is available

may help the event happen just as you like.

Your venue will dictate a maximum number of guests, or the number of guests will narrow your choices for venues. The decisions need to be made together along with the decision about when. Summer is the season, but many families who enjoy winter recreation plan storybook winter weddings and find reservations and rentals easier at that time of year.

You'll make other decisions, whether you're using an app or a spreadsheet or notes to stay organized and to keep up on lists and schedules, what a realistic budget might be and how to manage it well, wedding party members, food, flowers, rings, honeymoon, rehearsal dinner. Being certain at the start about where, who and when will make all of the other decisions easier.





### Attend to the Details

Whether you decide to use a wedding planner or to take on the job yourselves, creating and following a detailed schedule and checklist might help you plan your big event–less stress, more joy, as it should be for this once-in-a-lifetime experience.

#### One Year (or more) to go:

- ☑ Say "Yes!"
- ☐ Have engagement photos taken.
- ☐ Choose a date.
- ☐ Announce your engagement.
- ☐ Decide size, time and place.

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- ☐ Set a budget.
- ☐ Choose rings.
- ☐ Create a system to track expenses.

- ☐ Create a guest list.
- ☐ Send "Save the Date" cards.
- ☐ Create a website.
- ☐ Reserve venues.
- ☐ Book room blocks for lodging.
- ☐ Choose an officiant and confirm date.
- ☐ Book photographer and videographer.
- ☐ Select wedding party.
- ☐ Begin shopping for gown and attire.



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#### 8 - 12 Months to go:

- ☐ Select wedding stationery including *RSVP* cards and thank you cards.
- ☐ Reserve caterer, select menu.
- ☐ Choose florist.
- ☐ Decide music, create playlist, book band or DJ.
- ☐ Finalize attire decisions.
- ☐ Plan your honeymoon.
- ☐ Reserve rehearsal dinner venue.

#### 4 - 8 Months to go:

- ☐ Mail invitations and RSVP cards.
- ☐ Reserve rental equipment.
- ☐ Establish registries.
- ☐ Shop for gifts for each other.
- ☐ Check in with all service providers, especially for alterations.
- ☐ Check in with wedding party.
- ☐ Select rehearsal dinner menu and order flowers and decorations for rehearsal.

#### 1 - 2 Months to go:

☐ Purchase guest book, ring pillow, cake knife, glasses for toasts.

☐ Obtain a marriage license.

#### 2 - 6 Weeks to go:

- ☐ Make schedules for rehearsal, wedding day and morning after.
- Make final fittings.
- ☐ Review ceremony details with officiant.
- ☐ Assign seating for dinners.
- ☐ Check with guests who have not responded or who may need help with arrangements.

#### 1 week to go:

- ☐ Give caterer and venue final guest count.
- ☐ Pack for honeymoon.
- ☐ Review schedules with family and wedding party.
- ☐ Confirm travel reservations.

#### 1 day to go:

- ☐ Delegate. Assign as many details as possible to friends and family.
- ☐ Give checks for the band and the officiant to the responsible family or wedding party member.
- $\square$  Spend a few minutes together alone to enjoy the view from where you are .





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# Your Wedding Day

### Weather the Day, Weather the Future

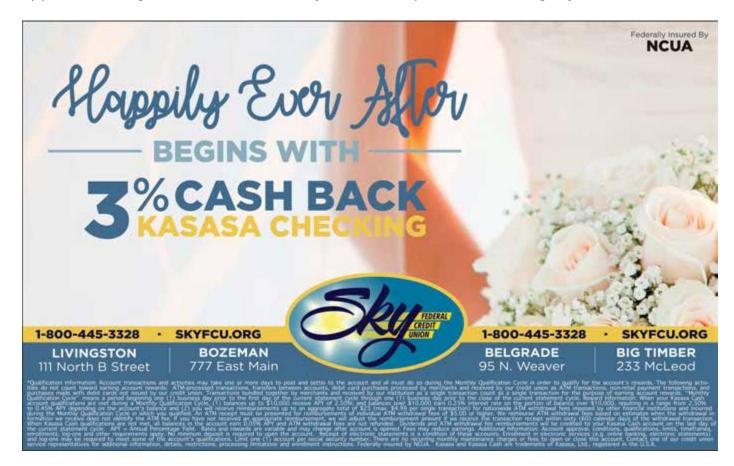
It's the beginning, and while every morning from now on you get to begin again together, you might choose to approach your wedding day the way you intend to approach your future. Share it with friends and family and lean on them to help you according to their strengths. Let your most outgoing friends act as a welcoming committee, the most responsible carry the rings, the most empathetic help an elderly relative.

Have a little cash and a few sundries on hand for last minute emergencies, and greet the unexpected like all of your guests, with a smile.

You're in Montana, so it's clear you know the value of being in an inspiring place. You also know that, whatever the weather, it's likely to change before the day is over. You're in Montana, so you appreciate toughness and no doubt you're

prepared to carry the event through all kinds of weather with grace. A tent, golf umbrellas, waterproof makeup and a good pair of boots may be waiting in a rig or at the venue, and everything is secured well enough to handle hurricane force winds.

Wind and rain rarely manage to completely dampen spirits in Park and Sweet Grass Counties. After all, they happen under our big sky, and the sun appears almost every day here. The clouds often make the sky seem even bigger and add to the play of light on the landscape. On certain days in the summer, the moon may rise on one horizon while the sun sets on the opposite. Enjoy the magic of moments like those and the fact that you get to share them, and the moments will add up to one spectacular wedding day.





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### Share Your News & Make It Official

#### **Announce Your Engagement & Wedding**

The Livingston Enterprise and The Big Timber Pioneer offer free engagement and wedding announcements. If neither the prospective bride nor the groom resides or has resided in Park County, include information about her or his connection to the community, unless it is obvious from a parent's residency. Information about educational background and current residences of the prospective bride and groom may be included along with any other information desired. A photo may be included free of charge.

Emailed submissions of both text and photo are strongly preferred. Email communitynews@livent. net for announcements in *The Enterprise*. Call *The Pioneer* for information, (406) 932-5298. We offer

forms in order to indicate the kind of information often included. Time, placement and amount of text included in an announcement is at the discretion of a newspaper's editor.

#### **Obtain A Marriage License**

Both of you must appear before the Clerk of District Court to obtain a marriage license. Bring your identification and brides under 50 years of age should have the results of a Rubella blood test or plan to sign a waiver. Be prepared to give some information about yourselves and your parents including birthplaces. A marriage license in Montana currently costs \$53. Solemnize the license at your wedding by having a qualified officiant and witnesses sign it.









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