



*First wedding at the restored Lebanon Church (top);
The new Mr. & Mrs. John Furnas (right)
photos by Chris Fritchie*

The Big Day

By Kathryn MacDonell

THE PERFECT SETTING for your wedding can be as exciting as love itself. Staging a wedding says a lot about how you relate to your partner and to your community. The ceremony is technically about the joining of two souls, but in an increasingly disconnected world, it's heartwarming to find young couples including families in their plans. Instead of getting lost in wedding fever, some couples are letting love lead the way and make choices to reflect their personalities, values and histories. This is the story of two young couples that chose to celebrate the most important day of their lives in a romantic history-filled Baptist church originally built in 1879.

The newly renovated but original Lebanon Baptist Church today is quaintly picturesque and visually stunning. The exterior is a whiteboard, steepled, structure with a three-tiered bell tower. It's the perfect setting for fiancées to exchange the traditional vows of "I do." Inside this storybook structure beats the heart of the original walls and wooden floors. The ceiling supports sparkling chandeliers and elegant pressed tin tiles; the stained glass windows and wainscoting add character and beauty. The brightly refinished oak gleams beneath the luxurious red velvet cushions on the pews. It's the kind of place that makes you want to sit down and ponder the rituals of the romantic

ceremony. The small, intimate space can hold 110 people comfortably and invites family and friends to be an integral part of the wedding pledges.

Allison Claunch and John Furnas decided to hold their big day in the old Lebanon Church on the grounds of the Frisco Heritage Museum Center in Frisco Junction on July 6, 2008. Allison, a fourth grade teacher at Boals Elementary School, says, "We both loved growing up in Frisco. The church has an old chapel feel and epitomizes small town. It was exactly what we wanted for our ceremony."

Both families are long-time residents of Frisco (which was originally named Lebanon, before the 1900s) and have



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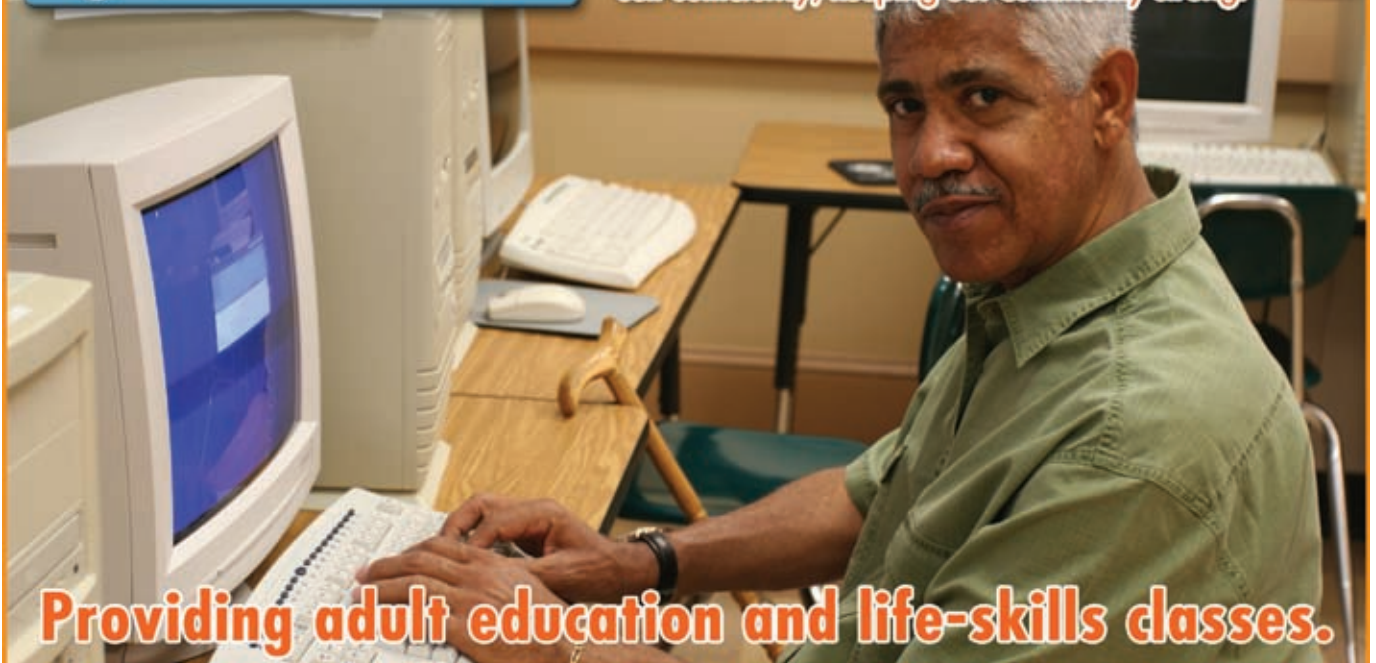
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Joy & Lindsay West researching details for the big day

photo by Chris Fritchie

great ties to the church. John (the groom's) grandparents attended the church at its original location on Preston Road. His great grandfather, Dow Baccus, was very involved in community affairs and presided over the election that authorized Frisco to become an incorporated town. Mr. Baccus then served on the first city council in 1909. He also served as Frisco's second mayor from 1911 to 1912 and as the fourth mayor from 1916 to 1917. Allison and John affirmed the love and support they'd received from their parents and families by honoring the past and choosing to begin their new life together in Frisco. "It seemed a great place to bring all that history together," remarks Allison.

The couple was engaged in December 2007 and watched as the church was transformed and moved to the historic village. The Furnas newlyweds had the distinct privilege of being the first couple to be married in the renovated church. "It just feels like home," sighs Sarah Claunch, mother of the bride and successful lawyer, who attended Lebanon Baptist Church as a child and graduated from Frisco High School. She has fond memories of her early Baptist training,

under the guiding hand of Peter Hosp, who was her Sunday School teacher and is now the liaison for the City of Frisco for the museum. In 1971, Mr. and Mrs. Claunch were married at the church, in its former location. This wedding in the new Old Lebanon Church is the first and took place on a Sunday. A family friend who is a pastor performed the service. The 1890s piano was played and the couple chose ferns and a few white flowers for decoration. "We didn't want to take away from the beauty of the church," says Allison. It was a beautiful and simple family celebration and will be remembered forever.

"Frisco and the Heritage Village have our hearts," says Mrs. Claunch proudly. You can see her glow when she reflects on the unfolding of the perfect day her daughter joyfully crossed the border into the land of marriage.

Another happy crossing was put in motion when Frisco City Council took a tour of Frisco Junction. When they visited the church, Joy West, Deputy Mayor Pro Tem of Frisco City Council fell in love with it. But she wasn't the one getting married. Ms. West had to convince her daughter, Lindsay. So Ms.

West explained the charm of the Old Lebanon Church with the words, "It's the kind of church you dream of getting married in."

In 1971, Mr. & Mrs. Claunch were married at the church in its former location. This wedding, the first in the new Old Lebanon Church took place on a Sunday.

Initially, Lindsay, and future husband, Jeremy Stevens, were planning a destination wedding. That was until they saw the church. "I thought it had always been my dream to get married on a beach. I'm not really into big extravagant weddings. We wanted to just get away," recalls Lindsay.

Lindsay was overcome when she saw

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Leg pain, limb swelling and varicose veins in particular have been misconceived as being solely issues of "cosmetic" nature. The truth is that venous disease is prevalent in the American population and many people do not seek medical attention for this condition. Patients now have a number of alternatives to living with the discomfort and skin changes common to this entity.

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Before



After

Varicose veins and other vein disorders are common within families. Occupations requiring prolonged standing, obesity and pregnancy cause pooling of blood with vein dilation and dysfunction. Additionally, the use of high heeled footwear decreases calf muscle flexion which otherwise serves as an effective pump for emptying the leg of venous blood.

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One of the most common types of dysfunction can now be treated in an office setting by using a catheter to deliver energy to the lining of the vein causing it to collapse. Catheter treatment is very well tolerated with most patients returning to work and normal activity the next day. Any remaining veins can be managed with injection sclerotherapy or removal.

A vascular surgeon can best determine how to improve a patient's venous health. Fortunately, treatment modalities are many and all are very well tolerated. With so many options for relief of symptoms, one can hardly have a reason not to seek help today!



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the church. "It was beautiful – small, quaint and just perfect for us. It wasn't even close to being finished yet either. I got to see the church every other week and I fell in love with it more and more. I kept thinking about our pictures and how beautiful they were going to be inside and outside of this church. When Jeremy got to see it, he loved it as well. It fits our perfect perception of small and not extravagant. It seemed like a better decision to get married in Frisco, so more of our family could join us. Jeremy doesn't have any roots here in Frisco, but he enjoys the town very much."

Close friends and supportive family members joined together to watch these lovely young women and handsome young men begin their new journey. The couples are both very close to their families and included them in the pleasure of wedding planning, as a natural extension of their relationship.

Nurturing children is a fitting career for Lindsay, who also is a teacher and educates children at the pre-kindergarten level in Lubbock. She is in her third year and loves it. One can't

help but envision a baptism down the road at the Old Lebanon Church. Our future is built on ceremonies that invoke hope, commitment and love.

I thought it had always been my dream to get married on a beach . . . This was beautiful – small, quaint and just perfect for us.

"If the walls could talk there would be amazing things being said," remarks Ms. West, "between the baptisms of new life to the funeral services of loved ones. At night, when the lights are on, the church glows through Frisco Junction as a beacon of life and happiness."

Incorporating something old into the wedding ceremony acknowledges the continuity of life from the past to the present. The spirits who dwell in the

walls of the church may well be blessing these unions. With the sad statistic of nearly 50 percent of marriages today ending in divorce, it makes sense to get the solid backing of heritage and family to give newlyweds extra grounding when times get tough.

If you haven't visited the Frisco Heritage Museum Center, plan to go. You will enjoy seeing a living village replicated and understand why the City of Frisco received a Leadership in Preservation Award for the project. The Frisco Heritage Center in Frisco Junction is a six-acre joint project between the City of Frisco, the Community Development Corporation and the Frisco Heritage Association. And, if you have a wedding in your future or maybe want to do something unabashedly romantic such as renewing your vows, the Old Lebanon Church might be the best place to preserve the past while helping build your future.

Kathryn MacDonell is a freelance writer living in Dallas. Website references are also found on page 84.

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