

Press Release

Real Weddings-Maine News Advisory

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Maine Organization Giving Worthy Couple Their Dream Wedding

The economic situation of our country may be dismal and news of war and death disturbingly ordinary, but every once in a while a story comes along that reminds us of the dreams, dedication and American spirit that our country is founded on.

This -- a true tale of love and devotion -- is one of those stories.

It started in 2008 when Jessika Brooks, owner and CEO of The Retreat at French's Point, began searching for an opportunity to offer a worthy couple their dream wedding with all of the services donated by the talented vendors who make up the coastal Maine luxury wedding industry. Brooks dubbed the group Real Weddings Maine.

She donated her high-end destination wedding venue, the perfect setting for a fairytale wedding, and in February she floated the idea by upscale Maine wedding planner Amber Small, owner of Sweetest Thing Weddings.

The two instantly shared a vision for Real Weddings Maine and began searching for the perfect love story and couple with which to share this gift. A few weeks later, after seeing the Orono, Maine premiere of the movie "The Way We Get By," Amber knew she'd found her couple.

She quickly learned that the love story of filmmakers Aron Gaudet and Gita Pullapilly is as sweet as they come. They have sacrificed so much to create their award-winning documentary that Amber knew right away they would be grateful and worthy recipients.

Their story started five years ago when Aron and Gita were introduced by a mutual friend. Gita was a TV Reporter at the ABC affiliate in Grand Rapids, Mich. and Aron was a Promo Producer at the FOX affiliate.

"The first thing I said to her was, 'I know you don't want to work in television news, so what do you want to do with your life?'" Aron recalls. "She has always said that she couldn't believe I was so forward with her, but that she knew I was someone that thought the same way she did and wanted something more out of life."

Before they knew it, they began falling in love as they continued to look for the right story to tell.

In December 2004, a trip to introduce Gita to Aron's mom in Maine revealed what they'd been looking for.

Aron's mother is a troop greeter at Bangor International Airport – a frequent refueling stop for military flights. For years, she and a host of others have left home at all hours of the night and day to drive in snow, rain and sun – in sickness and in health – to ensure the troops passing through BIA know they're appreciated. They hand out cell phones for the soldiers to call loved ones, provide handshakes and hugs of appreciation, and are there to lend an ear and a shoulder to the men and women defending our country.

The movie "The Way We Get By" tells the greeters' tale of life and how to live it. What starts as a story about a group of senior citizens who gather daily at a small airport in Maine to thank American soldiers quickly turns into a moving, unsettling and compassionate story about aging, loneliness, war, and mortality.

Together, Aron and Gita shine a light on some truly selfless individuals through their heartfelt masterpiece of patriotism, determination and inspiration in a time when America and the world most need stories of hope.

"It's definitely been extremely rewarding and challenging to work together and be together, but I'm not sure how we could ever make it work any other way," says Aron, who asked Gita to marry him on the Fourth of July last year. "It's great being able to do this together and share all of these experiences."

While it's been a great experience, Aron and Gita have given up their entire savings and years of their time to make the film a reality.

"I think we would have been married sooner, but we really have poured everything we have into making the movie," says Aron. "And the thought of having to find the money for and also plan a wedding was completely overwhelming to us on top of everything else."

After hearing the whole story, Amber and Jessika began rallying the troops of Real Weddings Maine to give a dream wedding to the couple that has given so much.

"Aron and Gita gave everything they have to make this movie, just like the cast gives all they have to greet our troops," says Amber.

The 2009 mission of Real Weddings Maine already is under way with over 20 vendors secured for the Oct. 15-17 celebration for 150 guests at The Retreat at French's Point.

Amber and Jessika have already enlisted vendors to donate tents, photography, flowers, music, and more. Jessika's venue donation provides a place for Gita's family from India to stay for the week at The Farm at French's Point, her Shoreline Lobster Bake Company will supply a gourmet beachside rehearsal dinner, and her private estate The Retreat at French's Point will host the ceremony and festivities. Details and donations continue to pour in, and the generosity of the Real Weddings Maine vendors appears limitless.