



Peconic Landing
1500 Brecknock Road
Greenport, NY 11944
www.PeconicLanding.org

PRESS RELEASE

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CONTACT: Julianne Wenczel, PR Coordinator
631-593-8247 • jwenczel@peconiclanding.org

10th Annual Veterans Day Wedding Giveback is a Success

GREENPORT, N.Y., November 14, 2022 – The tenth annual Veterans Day Wedding Giveback took place on Sunday, November 13 at Brecknock Hall, celebrating the marriage of Lieutenants Damen Weeks, 31, and Katherine Bertschi, 27, of Southold. The annual contest, sponsored by Peconic Landing, provides a free wedding each year to current or former military personnel in recognition of their service to our country.

The giveaway is made possible through contributions from local businesses and organizations who donate their time, talents, and services to create an all-expenses-paid wedding for one lucky couple. Unfortunately, the contest was canceled in both 2020 and 2021 due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

“All of us at Peconic Landing are so excited to resume this heartwarming tradition,” said Robert J. Syron, Peconic Landing’s President and CEO. “Damen and Katherine are a truly deserving couple, and it is our absolute honor to recognize their tremendous service to our country and support them on this special occasion.”

The winning couple was chosen by a panel of Peconic Landing members with military ties, who judged the contest based on the number of years served, special military honors, and each couple’s personal love story. The couple was notified during a surprise Zoom call (bit.ly/3zZSME1) on April 14, with family members, Peconic Landing members, and Peconic Landing team members present.

Damen is on his fifth tour of duty after enlisting in 2012 and serves as an Operations Officer on the USS MASON (DDG 87) where he is responsible for the management of almost 100 sailors. He has earned the Earned Navy and Marine Corps Achievement Medal (NAM) and Navy and Marine Corps Commendation (COM) Medal, among others.

Katherine is on her third tour after enlisting in 2016 and is a Basic Division Officer Instructor and Department Head at the Mariner Skills Training Center Pacific where she is responsible for training thousands of Junior Surface Warfare Officers to enter the fleet

and drive ships. She, too, has earned the Earned Navy and Marine Corps Achievement Medal (NAM) and Navy and Marine Corps Commendation (COM) Medal.

The couple met onboard the USS PREBLE in 2016 and have been in a long-distance relationship ever since. They travel thousands of miles to see each other on weekends and holidays, between Hawaii, San Diego, Denver, Memphis, Monterey, Newport, Norfolk, Alabama, and Southold, Katherine's hometown. The couple also spends time volunteering in the communities where they are stationed, including working at food shelters, building with Habitat for Humanity, and organizing ship tours for children.

On New Year's Eve 2021, Katherine's mother and sister accompanied her to Alabama and while they were at Damen's family cabin, they got engaged.

"The many vendors and most importantly the Peconic Landing Committee made our dream come true! Brecknock Hall was the perfect venue for our journey together to begin," said Damen. "We feel truly blessed and humbled to be selected for the Veterans Day Wedding Giveback and will never forget the hard work and coordination it took from everyone involved to make our wedding ceremony the unforgettable experience it was."

Vendors and volunteers who contributed to the 10th Annual Veterans Day Wedding Giveback were Arni Paperie, Bali Bay Boat Charters, Beautiful by Dina Reilly, Beauty By Devonn, Blooms by Design, The Boho Bay Stay, Brugger and Co Balloon Décor, By Hand Catering, East End Events Catering, Fire Monkey Hair Design, Fresh Face Photoboosts, Garrett & Tamara, Greenport Harbor Brewing Company, Greenporter Hotel, Greenport Wines & Spirits, Jarred Austin Photography/Videography, LI Nights Entertainment, Leanne's Specialty Cakes, Lieb Cellars, Libby Koch, Luxury Picnics NY, Macari Vineyards, Magnif-A-Tent, Make Some Noise DJs, Mattituck Environmental Services, McBurnie Tent, Nailah's Rentals, Noah's Restaurant, North Fork NJROTC, North Fork Bridal Shoppe, North Fork Picture Cars, Riverhead Flower Shop, Santa Cruz Photography, Saporita Sweets, Southold Fish Market, Sterlington Deli, Sunrise Bus Company, and True Elizabeth Flowers. Times Review Media Group was the media sponsor of the event.

"The Peconic Landing family is so grateful for the many sponsors that volunteered their services to create the perfect day for Damen and Katherine," said Syron. "Without the support of our generous local vendors, this giveback would not be possible."

For more information about planning a wedding at Brecknock Hall, please visit www.brecknockhall.com or contact Valerie Tirelli-Hallock, Brecknock Hall Sales & Events Coordinator at info@brecknockhall.com. Applications for the 2023 Wedding Giveback will be posted in January.

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Peconic Landing is a nationally recognized, equity-based Continuing Care Retirement Community overlooking the breathtaking Long Island Sound. Located on the North Fork on a half-mile of private Sound Beach, the organization works on a mission of being the retirement community of choice for individuals age 62 and better by encouraging our members to enjoy a vibrant lifestyle and presenting ample opportunity for members to pursue their interests and passions to the fullest. For more information on Peconic Landing, please visit www.peconiclanding.org.



*Katherine and Damen meeting the Peconic Landing members who selected them as the winners.
Credit: Santa Cruz Photography*



*Katherine and Damen outside of their wedding venue, Brecknock Hall.
Credit: Santa Cruz Photography*