

The courtship and marriage of Corie and Ryan

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What do Karaoke, French Lick, outdoor power equipment, Strassenfest, a stunning sunrise and the Cheesecake Fairy have in common?

The simple answer is Corie Eckerle and Ryan Schwartz.

But of course it's far more fascinating to follow the strands connecting these elements and leading to the solution, than to go with the simple answer. So to begin at the beginning...

Actually, pinpointing the beginning may be the toughest task of all in this love story.

"We've known each other for a long time," explains Corie, when asked how she met the man she would marry and share her life with.

Ryan agrees.

That not-truly-knowing-but-kind-of-being-familiar-with-all-changed-in-an-instant on a random Tuesday night in 2012 at Snaps in Jasper. Open mic night in fact.

Corie Eckerle dropped by with a large group of girlfriends.

Ryan Schwartz was there with a bunch of his guy friends.

The two did know each other, had even worked together, "But we never really talked," notes Ryan. For some reason on this particular evening they began to chat. "We really hit it off," Ryan adds, so he asked Corie out for the following Friday night.

Hmmm, a bit of a backstory may be needed.

The two more officially met while working in the warehouse at Sten's in Jasper.

Ryan, a 1999 graduate of Southridge High School, got his degree from ITT Tech in 2004. He sells outdoor power equipment. His life followed a particular path and Corie was not then a part of it.

Corie, a 2004 graduate of Jasper High School attended Ball State and accepted a position as an art teacher for the North Spencer School Corporation, working at Nancy Hanks Elementary, so by this point in her life the Sten's experience was rather a distant memory.

Besides working together there had been a photo from the past, the two with friends in the Jasper Strassenfest Beer Garden, sort of a glimmer of what was to come. But neither knew that at the time.

Flash forward to this random night at



Gil Eckerle crafted an entrance to the outdoor ceremony using doors from his parents' former home.



Ryan Schwartz and Corie Eckerle on their June 3, 2017 wedding day. The ceremony and reception were both held at The Legend in French Lick.

Snaps when neither was necessarily looking for "the one."

For that first date the next Friday night, Ryan took Corie to French Lick where they toured the sites and eventually perched themselves on the comfy rockers gracing the veranda at the French Lick Springs Resort.

"We just talked," recalls Corie.

And talked, and talked, and talked.

"We were both cautious," Ryan explains. His caution had a lot to do with another girl.

Not another girlfriend but a young miss by the name of Madilyn Ryan Schwartz — Ryan's daughter — who turns nine this month but was several years younger at the time.

Ryan did not want to introduce his daughter to someone prematurely. Corie, who was then a volleyball coach as well as a teacher, understood completely and was also hesitant to insert herself into their lives while the relationship was so new.

But things progressed (as they are wont to do) and finally the time was right, "so Ryan planned a date for all three of us," Corie recalls. "We hit it off really well, but we definitely wanted to take it slow."

In short order, the adult woman and young miss fell into a truly loving relationship, and the trio continued to triple date. As time passed, three became one. This was it, the

real thing. Now all that was needed was to seal the deal.

The engagement

It was March of 2016 and the couple (or triple) had been together three and a half years. Spring had not quite sprung on this particular day, but a magnificent sunrise was waxing over the horizon. Easter came early that year and it was a few days past. By this point Corie had moved into Ryan's Huntingburg home. Corie called Maddy outside to share the glorious sky before she had to depart for school. Corie brought her iPad, ostensibly to capture the beauty of the burgeoning sun.

Ryan joined them. He presented Corie with a golden egg. Tucked inside was a carefully written note asking her to become his wife. He dropped to one knee to officially ask for her hand in marriage, then placed a ring upon her finger, all while Madilyn captured the moment with the sunrise as a natural backdrop.

After face-timing with her mom and calling her dad, it was time to head for Nancy Hanks Elementary. "It was difficult driving to work that morning," Corie reports with a smile, although she did manage to phone one or two friends to share the good news.

CONTINUED on page 3