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Corie popped into the school office and screamed, "It happened!" at which point all the staff who were present joined her in screams of joy.

Unbeknown to Corie — and even to her mother, Nancy — Ryan had spoken with her father, Gil Eckerle, during Ryan's special family birthday dinner at Hagen's Restaurant in French Lick. It seemed visits to French Lick had become a recurrent theme, woven into the fabric of their lives. Gil gave his blessing and waited for a call.

Corie had not been expecting an early morning proposal but Ryan's plan hit all the right notes. "I always said I didn't want a Christmas proposal," Corie notes, "because Christmas is special on its own."

Valentines Day had also come and gone, and Ryan managed to catch Corie completely by surprise with his sunrise proposal.

She adored her engagement



Corie is an artist, so she had a grand time with all the little touches that make a wedding day personal and special. The basket at right is filled with wedding programs.

ring. It happened to be one they had spotted six months earlier while shopping and afterwards Ryan made the purchase without Corie's knowledge.

Planning begins

Ryan, Corie and yes, Maddie, did not begin wedding planning immediately. First, they spent some time basking in their love and commitment.

But eventually they started making some decisions. They hoped to find a venue where both the ceremony and the reception could be held without requiring the wedding party and guests to travel.

Corie had picked up a pamphlet about The Legend, an all-inclusive venue in French Lick.

The name was apt. The property formerly served as the home of French Lick basketball legend Larry Bird. Now owned by Debbie and Mike Hicks, The Legend also hosts Branson style shows and dinner theater (see details in an upcoming issue of this newspaper).

The couple visited The Legend in May of 2016. "We liked it a lot," says Corie. "We knew we could rent the house and have everything there. It's gated and all inclusive and we didn't know anyone who had been there or gotten married there. They had only had a very few weddings at that point."

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