



# Celebrate Weddings



Submitted photo

## Verna and LeRoy Thomsen

One neighbor even had a siren. Thirty to forty neighbors came that night expecting a treat from the new bride and groom. LeRoy and Verna had purchased candy bars as treats.

### What was your most memorable wedding gift?

LeRoy and Verna got a set of dishes from LeRoy's parents and cash from Verna's parents, as well as several small gifts. Wedding gifts in those days weren't anything like today, they said.

### Where did you go for a honeymoon?

LeRoy and Verna went on a week's trip to the Black Hills in South Dakota with LeRoy's brother and his wife. On the way home, they visited LeRoy's brother and sister who were living in Nebraska.

Then, they returned to Union Grove Township and went to work on the farm. They purchased a farm adjoining Verna's parent's place in February 1947, farmed until 1985, and lived together for 55 years on the farm, until moving to Paynesville five years ago.

They celebrated their 60th wedding anniversary last summer.

### What do you do to keep romance alive in your marriage?

Talk to each other and communicate, they said. And tell each other that you love 'em, they added, which is something they still do every night. They were rarely apart during 60 years of marriage, LeRoy said, so most every night they have done that.

*If you could travel back in time to your wedding day, what advice for maintaining a happy marriage would you give yourselves?*

LeRoy and Verna don't think they would do anything differently. They still feel fortunate and blessed. A farm, said Verna, is the best place to raise a family and they were

blessed with three good boys. They now have six grandchildren and two great-grandchildren.

God, Verna added, has truly blessed them with all these years together.

### Verna and LeRoy Thomsen

**Date of Marriage:** July 30, 1946

### Place of Marriage:

At Verna's parent's farm in Union Grove Township

### How did you meet?

They met at a house party when Verna's sister was dating LeRoy's brother. They lived a couple miles apart on farms in Union Grove Township, but while Verna had lived there all her life, LeRoy and his family moved to Union Grove from Nebraska when he was 17.

### Who proposed and how?

LeRoy gave Verna an engagement ring before joining the U.S. Navy in March 1945.

### How long were you engaged?

Nearly a year and a half. LeRoy and Verna got married a couple weeks after LeRoy was discharged from the U.S. Navy in July 1946.

### How large was your wedding?

Only immediate family in the living room of Verna's parent's farm house. It was very simple, they said. Her bouquet was gladiolas from the garden. The minister came from Crow River Methodist Church to perform the ceremony. Verna's sister and LeRoy's brother were the two attendants.

Verna bought a new dress, and LeRoy got a new suit. They drove to Eden Valley to take their wedding pictures that day.

### What food was served?

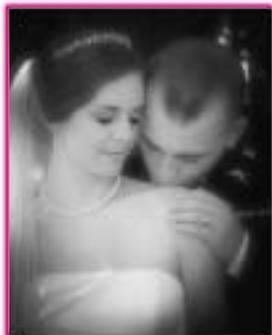
Verna's mother roasted a farm-raised goose with trimmings for the meal, and they had angel food cake for dessert.

### What was the most memorable thing about your wedding?

It was hot, according to LeRoy and Verna. Mighty hot. And there was no air conditioning.

### Whose relatives, or friends, had the most fun at the wedding?

Another memorable moment of their wedding day was all the neighbors coming that night to shivaree them - honking horns and making noise as they came to the house.



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# Celebrate Weddings



## Paul and Lisa Bowden



Photo by Michael Jacobson

### Paul and Lisa Bowden

**Date of Marriage:** August 19, 1990

**Place of Marriage:** Paynesville Lutheran Church

**How did you meet?**

Former track coach and match-maker Darrel Carstens introduced us during track practice. Ha! Ha! Thankfully, we met in track that year because Paul was graduating in less than two months.

**Who proposed and how?**

We decided that we wanted to get married while attending a Christmas conference in Chicago in 1989. Paul officially proposed by holding Lisa under water, in April 1990, until she agreed to marry him, but Lisa's been in control of the relationship ever since.

**How long were you engaged?**

We had a short engagement of just five months.

**How large was your wedding?**

It seemed our wedding invitation

list was quite large, approximately 350 guests. Thankfully, our parents helped us with a lot of those details.

**What food was served?**

We had a traditional dinner at the Blue Heron on the Green near Willmar along with our "signature" chocolate-covered strawberries with dessert.

**What was the most memorable thing about your wedding?**

One of the most memorable moments at our wedding was arriving at the reception. It was pouring rain, and some relatives teased that it meant we would have lots of children.

**What was your most memorable wedding gift?**

Our most memorable or cherished wedding gift was an engraved cross that says "United in Christ" and has our names and wedding date. We received this gift from some close college friends.

**What wedding gift do you use the most today?**

The wedding gift that we use most today is a crystal dish, but unfortunately we do not recall from whom it was received.

**Who caught the bouquet and did they have to shove to get it?**

We do not know who caught the bouquet at our wedding.

**Whose relatives, or friends, had the most fun at the wedding?**

We think the kids, namely Lisa's niece and nephew along with Paul's brother, had the most fun at our wedding reception. The deejay had lots of dances and games to keep everyone entertained.

**Where did you go for a honeymoon?**

We were financially-struggling college students at the time of our wedding, so a real honeymoon was out of the question. We managed to go to Duluth and up the North Shore for a few days. Hopefully our second honeymoon will be somewhere warmer!

**What do you do to keep romance alive in your marriage?**

We keep the romance alive in our marriage by making date nights a priority, being gracious toward one another, and finding humor in everyday life.

**If you could travel back in time to your wedding day, what advice for maintaining a happy marriage would you give yourselves?**

Our advice to ourselves as a newly married couple would be to get a dream or vision for your future and pursue it together as a team. Also, remember to put the needs of your spouse ahead of your own, communicate often, and know that marriage, like fine wine, should get better with time.

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# Celebrate Weddings



## Mary and Don Heinen

**Date of Marriage:** August 3, 1974

**Place of Marriage:**  
St. Agnes Catholic Church,  
Roscoe

**How did you meet?**

We were in the same grade in high school. In May of our senior year 1971, there was a shower dance in Spring Hill. Don told a friend he was going to take Mary Schaefer home that night. He did, and we've been together ever since.

**Who proposed and how?**

We went out to dinner one evening (Nov. 3, 1973) with Don's co-workers. On the way home, Don proposed, and Mary accepted.

**How long were you engaged?**

Nine months.

**How large was your wedding?**

310 guests. Two attendants, two groomsmen, and two ushers. Reception at Al's Tavern in Roscoe.

**What food was served?**

Chicken, ham, mashed potatoes and gravy, dressing, corn, and cole slaw - for \$2.75 per plate. Mint ice cream patties for dessert. (The wedding cake was fake.)

Don wanted baseball food at the reception - sauerkraut and hot dogs - but his mother-in-law said "no."

**What was the most memorable thing about your wedding?**

For Mary, walking down the aisle. Dad was pulling me on the right arm while Mom was holding me back on the left side.

For Don, the whole day.

**What was your most memorable wedding gift?**

Everything.

**What wedding gift do you use the most today?**

Our hamper and kitchen bowls especially the Tupperware ones - aqua, olive green, and bright orange. They would be perfect for "That '70s Show."

**Whose relatives, or friends, had the most fun at the wedding?**

Don's Roscoe baseball teammates and Mary's softball teammates and her aunts and uncles, who always end up singing old-time German songs at the end of wedding receptions.

**Where did you go for a honeymoon?**

We traveled to northern Minnesota taking in Paul Bunyan Park and Itasca State Park. We stood at the headwaters of the Mississippi River.

**What do you do to keep romance alive in your marriage?**

We do almost everything together: church, bowling, golfing, baseball and other sporting events, and family events. An occasional glass of wine with good conversation at home is great for any marriage.

**If you could travel back in time to your wedding day, what advice for maintaining a happy marriage would you give yourselves?**

Talk to each other. Never assume you know what the other one is thinking.



Submitted photo

Mary and Don Heinen

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# Celebrate Weddings



## Mark and Renee Eckerly



Submitted photo

### Mark and Renee Eckerly

**Date of Marriage:** October 23, 1999

**Place of Marriage:** Silver Bell Chapel in Las Vegas

**How did you meet?**

On Yahoo personals on June 12, 1999. I had a personal ad on yahoo.com, and Mark e-mailed to see if I knew David Parrott, who is my brother. We would chat online for hours after Mark came in from fishing, usually 10:30 p.m. to 1 a.m. I lived in Farmington, and he lived in Bemidji.

We met in person around June 20, 1999, for the first time to go out for lunch. He brought me a rose, and we had a great time. We continued to

chat online and to travel to see each other until July 12, when Mark proposed to me. We moved in together in Farmington in the beginning of August. We decided in October it was time to go to Vegas and get married. So we planned our wedding in one week: rings, dresses, suits, plane tickets, hotel, and chapel.

On Oct. 23, 1999, we had an outside ceremony at the Silver Bell Chapel in Las Vegas with 12 members of our families there.

My Dad gave Mark a rifle as a dowry for marrying me, because he thought it would never happen.

Some of my sisters said our marriage would never last because we

went too fast and didn't know each other. And eight years later, we are still very happily married with a great daughter and have never had a serious argument.

We believe we got to know each other better in the first 30 days than most people do dating for a year because we didn't pretend to be someone we weren't and we were honest with each other from the start.

**Who proposed and how?**

Mark proposed while we were talking about each other's past life experiences at my apartment. It wasn't planned. It was right in the middle of our discussion. I thought he was kidding, but he wasn't.

**How long were you engaged?**

Three months.

**How large was your wedding?**

12 people. My wedding ring was Mark's late mother's ring.

**What food was served?**

We don't remember. We think everyone ordered off a menu.

**What was the most memorable thing about your wedding?**

Mark's is standing on the bridge together after the ceremony.

Renee's is Mark holding my forearm and his voice when he was saying his vows looking into my eyes.

**What was your most memorable wedding gift?**

Cookware.

**What wedding gift do you use the most today?**

Cookware.

**Whose relatives, or friends, had the most fun at the wedding?**

There were only 12 people. Eight were from Mark's family (siblings, husbands, and kids) and four were from mine (sibling, husband, and kids). We think everyone had a lot of fun. It was at a casino!

**Where did you go for a honeymoon?**

We didn't have a honeymoon.

**What do you do to keep romance alive in your marriage?**

We go on dates a few times a year.

**If you could travel back in time to your wedding day, what advice for maintaining a happy marriage would you give yourselves?**

Pack a padded tool bag, as we had car trouble on our wedding day and a mishap with the tool bag.

Nothing! We discussed, before we got married, that to make our marriage work we had to communicate, never go to bed angry, and always be willing to compromise. No matter how bad things can get in life, we can always make each other laugh.

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