



A Rockin' Love

C.F. musician marries onstage New Year's Eve

TOP AND RIGHT PHOTOS COURTESY OF MOLLY WADE PHOTOGRAPHY. WWW.MOLLYWADEPHOTOGRAPHY.COM

Bob and Carolyn Dorr share a kiss during their first dance as husband and wife.

The crowd enjoyed an evening of great food, music, dancing and surprises at the Hilton Garden Inn in Johnston, especially those who stayed past midnight as Bob and Carolyn Dorr were wed on stage.



Carolyn's parents, Bob and Ruth Prins, got a chance to attend their daughter's wedding at the Cedar Falls Community Center on Jan. 2.



Pastor Darin Ulmer asked the bride and the groom to repeat the wedding vows after him first in Des Moines and then in Cedar Falls.



Friends and relatives who could not make the Des Moines party got an encore in Cedar Falls. And both bride and groom greeted them with open arms.

The experience, Dorr quipped, was "twice as nice."

At right, Carolyn and Bob at a New Year's Party in 1993 in Embassy Suites in Des Moines.



**"I always felt I was robbing the cradle with her. She had to grow older in order for her to feel she wasn't a baby any more and now she's my baby."
 — Bob Dorr**



Photojournalist Molly Wade and her partner, Tony Smith were tasked with the most pleasurable duty-- to capture both weddings in still pictures.

They took a breather to smile for this memorable photo-op.



Below, Morgan Schroeder, 6, and her brother, Alexander, 3, of Burlington, fancied the wedding cake, but their baby sister, right, balked at the color despite the gentle prodding of dad, Scott, to try it. Above, children gaze as a band sets up to play.



pot of coffee a day, but they are determined to make it work.

"We are independent, self-sufficient human beings and we are going to make things happen. The challenge is to be able to step out of safety zone. We are obviously not the traditional couple."

Adds Carolyn: "We will be the new Dorrs—that makes me laugh."



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In a touching gesture of camaraderie, Carolyn's sixth-grade classmates had deployed to Des Moines for the grand occasion. Her friend's husband, Duke Dewey from Ohio, who had cut his teeth at Woodstock with 'Country Joe and the Fish,' played second drums at the wedding. A Bob Dorr and his wife, Carole, admirers from Colorado, were also among the crowd.

All held their breath while pastor Darin Ulmer asked the bride and the groom to repeat the wedding vows after him.

When Mr. Dorr kissed Mrs. Dorr for the first time, the crowd erupted into a loud, intoxicating cheer.

Blending their lives together in a public ritual was a novel experience for both.

Truth be told, admirers and family members had started to get impatient and even worried if the big moment was going to happen for Bob and Carolyn.

"It was about damn time," one loving relative said in a card on the occasion.

But Bob, a numerology nut, had found the special sign in the advent of the New Year.

A ceremony at 12:10 a.m. on 01-01-10 seemed like a fitting finale for his bachelor years, the night of the blue moon, an appropriate celestial blessing for the bard of the Blue Band.

There was something magically blue in the fact that the two had ventured into their first marriage following Bob's recent retirement after 30 consecutive years at KUNI.

Having waited a lifetime for this decisive step, they were ready for an encore almost as soon as the first ceremony ended.

On Jan. 2, they married again in a more intimate setting for the benefit of family and friends who could not travel out of town, prompting Bob to quip to spirited applause that the experience was, "twice as nice."

That evening, a smiling Carolyn and her glowing father—also called Bob—slowly walked the short distance between the kitchen of the Cedar Falls Community Center and the microphone on the dance floor where the other Bob awaited them.

"Who gives this woman in marriage?" the pastor asked when the room fell silent.

"Her mother and I do," Bob Prins, the proud dad, said.

Their paths first crossed over the airwaves, when in 1974, at 16, she called the radio station to request a song from the then 22-year-old radio announcer, whose deep, melodic voice she admired.

Later, when she started dating a bass player in the band he launched, Bob Dorr and Carolyn Prins would chat when they'd run into one another at the Laundromat on 23rd Street on the Hill.

It had taken Carolyn and Bob 22 years to grow their relationship to the point where the score culminated into the crescendo of wedding vows.

The reason, Bob says with disarming honesty, is that for years, he couldn't bring himself to utter the "M" word, not even after they had lived together for seven years and then broke it up, each retreating to their own space for a reprieve.

But one evening late this fall, he sat at her dinner table, ready to make the leap. "There had been a few instances over the summertime that made me think about life without her and that was the epiphany of realizing that I didn't really want to face life without her. I have run after and then run away from her. To my great fortune, she would not stand for me running away. It was finally the realization that the real thing was here. And I thought, 'Stop running away from her and let her love cover me.'"

The night prior, she dreamed she would finally be getting the ring, but when it was about to happen, she did not let him drop on his knee.

"I didn't want him to because I didn't know if he would get up again," she laughs.

On at least one occasion, while they lived together, Bob's father had mentioned that he had found his wife's engagement ring, but Bob junior did not take the cue. He just stood there, like a deer caught in headlights, and left the room.

On Oct. 9, 2009, Bob had embraced the idea that it was time to move the ring out of the box and onto Carolyn's finger.

"I set it on the table," Bob says, "and I said, 'I think we ought to get married,' and she said, 'Okay.'"

Ripe as it still is, the story infallibly spurs flashbacks.

On the first morning of their married life, they sit at the same dining room table in Carolyn's house, reflecting on the transition from lifelong pals to husband and wife.

"I always felt I was robbing the cradle with her," Bob says, sporting a modest wedding band. "She had to grow older in order for her to feel she wasn't a baby any more and now she's my baby."

He then turns to his wife. "If we live long enough, you will catch up," he jokes.

Reaching out for his hand, she croons: "We're going to live a long time," she says. "We will go for walks every day."

They do not shy away from truths they had discovered together and on their own.

"I felt that we were committed together but I did not think it was readily apparent to those around us," he says. "I felt public acknowledgement of that commitment was needed for others to realize how important she was in my life and that was very necessary for me. There's a level of comfort in knowing that there was a public commitment to each other. I've never experienced that level of public commitment of myself to another person. Although in my mind I thought I was committed to Carolyn, I didn't convey it for her to see that I was."

Carolyn's explanation is simpler. "I wanted to get married because you asked me," she says.

"There's pragmatism and romance," he says as they both beam.

"That's why I married you," she says. "You make me laugh all the time and life is pretty funny."

Bob said he lived and loved the lifestyle of a local celebrity. Worshipped by fans, revered by musicians, and enthralled by the Beatles, he kept his blood boiling by shots of straight bourbon.

In fact, the first time Carolyn remembers seeing him in person was when she bartended at Tony's Pizza on the Hill and he dashed in from Stebs, the bar across the street, his wireless mic and harmonica still in his hand, to order a drink.

"I was a raging drunk," he admits matter-of-factly.

The wedding night marked 10 years of sworn sobriety for Bob.

"I maintain I was never an alcoholic, I was just a drunk. Drunks just like to drink and have fun; alcoholics are physically dependent."

As a junior majoring in speech, radio and television at UNI, Bob found himself craving the same attention in college that

he received as a star athlete at Davenport Central High School.

He could have started on the field his first year, but instead, he headed to the radio studio on campus to tackle the microphone where he knew he could shine for sure.

It had been a long road for the guy who debuted as a drummer in his own band, "The Tortoise and the Hair," at the age of 12. He sold his drum set when he came to UNI as a down payment on his first car, a Gremlin.

In 1975, a 10th row seat at a Bruce Springsteen concert set him definitively on his course.

"I was skeptical at first," Bob remembers, "but it took him 10 seconds to have me in his palm."

The hordes of young women, idolizing the pop star, left as indelible of an impression on Bob as Springsteen's signature raspy voice.

He coveted the lifestyle and worked to make it his own. In the meantime, he created and created and created in his studio.

"I invented the Beatles Medley, now in its 30th year on Iowa Public Radio Studio One Stream," he says. "I must have been a junior. At that time, we were given a lot of freedom. The Beatles were the biggest thing ever. One night, I strung together a half hour of Beatles and didn't talk and it was really, really popular."

Seductively insuppressible in the studio and on stage, Bob is visibly uncomfortable in his celebrity skin in private.

"The microphone was magnet, he says. "I needed some outlet to be recognized by other people and it offered an avenue to what has turned out to be a small-time celebrity."

But strings of gray hair have altered his fascination with life beyond the stage.

"The older I get, the more I realize the pitfalls of small time celebrity," he says. "But at the time I really needed that reinforcement for some reason."

The band business has also evolved and The Blue Band musicians do not play as often in night clubs any more.

"It has something to do with maturity