

The Wedding Cake Caper

It is a wonder that Ruth married me after what I did the day before our wedding. We had gone together for five years and planned to get married two days after I graduated from The Ohio State University (OSU). Both of us were enrolled in programs which required us to remain single until graduation. Ruth was in the University of Toledo/Flower Hospital program to become a nurse and I was in the Navy ROTC program to become a naval officer. If she got married, she would be removed from the program and could not graduate.

If I got married, I would be removed from the program and sent to the fleet as an enlisted man for the remainder of my contract, or a minimum of at least three years. I also would be obligated to reimburse the government for all of the college tuition/books/stipends I had incurred for my education. Ouch!!! Needless to say, as much as we wanted to get married sooner, we couldn't afford to pay back all we would have owed.

So, after three years of dating and two years of engagement, we were about to get married! Ruth had obtained permission to be married several months before she was to graduate because I was in the navy and was about to be deployed on my first assignment one week after graduation. Rules are rules unless the director is patriotic and feels sorry for a newly minted ensign and his gal!!! The date was set...Sunday, June 9, 1957, two days after my graduation.

We were to be married in the United Methodist church in Findlay, Ohio and the reception was to be held in the basement of the church. We never knew anyone who had a dinner following their marriage and the standard for our community was a reception consisting of cake, ice cream, mints, punch and coffee. There would not be any alcohol served as only those Catholics had alcoholic beverages at their receptions...of course they played bingo in their church basements too...oh thank God we were Methodists!

The wedding cake had been ordered from Tony's Bakery. Tony's had a mobile bakery service and their truck came to local houses several times each week to sell all kinds of baked goods. We never bought baked goods from anyone except Tony's...and if you wanted great cinnamon rolls or hot dog buns or bread or Wedding Cakes, you got them from Tony's!!! Our cake was to be special...three tiers with a Naval Officer and his Bride topping the cake. That special naval couple cake topper required a special order, but you knew that you could count on Tony.

I graduated on Friday and we celebrated with lunch at the Worthington Howard Johnsons and the luncheon was attended by Ruth, my sister Alice and my mother and father (Ruth had shrimp as she did for our first meal together after marriage, and Alice had pistachio ice cream for dessert). That day was the first time my father has ever been to OSU. We were always a very close family, but times were different then. Your kids had to make it on their own and you didn't follow them around all the time. Even though I played Varsity Soccer and won a few awards, my parents (or for that matter

none of my friends' parents), ever attended those college events. The only other time my mother ever came to OSU was on the day I moved into the attic room with Jim Steyer...and after seeing the room, returned to the car and cried! But on Graduation Day, we toured campus....and had lunch at Howard Johnsons...my dad's favorite restaurant.

Saturday was a busy day as we were to have a rehearsal and rehearsal dinner that evening at my sister Alice's home. My family was also hosting and housing six young ensigns, my college buddies, who would be in the military wedding and would be forming an arch with their swords as Ruth and I emerged from the church. After the rehearsal dinner, Ruth invited me to her home to see the wedding cake.

The cake was beautiful, especially since it was adorned by a Naval Officer and his bride. When she told me that the cake had been baked in a circular formation, like an angel food cake, I asked to see how it looked without the couple on the cake. Ruth removed the couple and I peered down into the cake...and for some reason, rubbing my nose as I looked. A small booger fell from my nose and into the bowels of the cake!!! Ruth started to cry and ran to her mother...the wedding cake had been ruined by this farm boy who didn't know enough to cover his nose when looking down into a cake!!!

I rushed to their closet and got a yardstick, wrapped a tissue around the end with a rubber band and proceeded to rescue the booger...and my marriage. Ruth said latter that she wondered if she should marry such a clod (farm term) as me.

Several years later, she could laugh at the booger caper, but I am risking a few touchy moments by even telling this story...a story which must be told. I have done worse things in my life I suppose, but dropping a booger into one's wedding cake is not something I would recommend to initiate a marriage. The cake was delicious and we never told anyone about it until now. The marriage worked, as we have been married over fifty-four years.

My advice to men about to be married: Take your wife's explanation of how the wedding cake has been constructed....and stay far away from it until you help cut it!!!

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