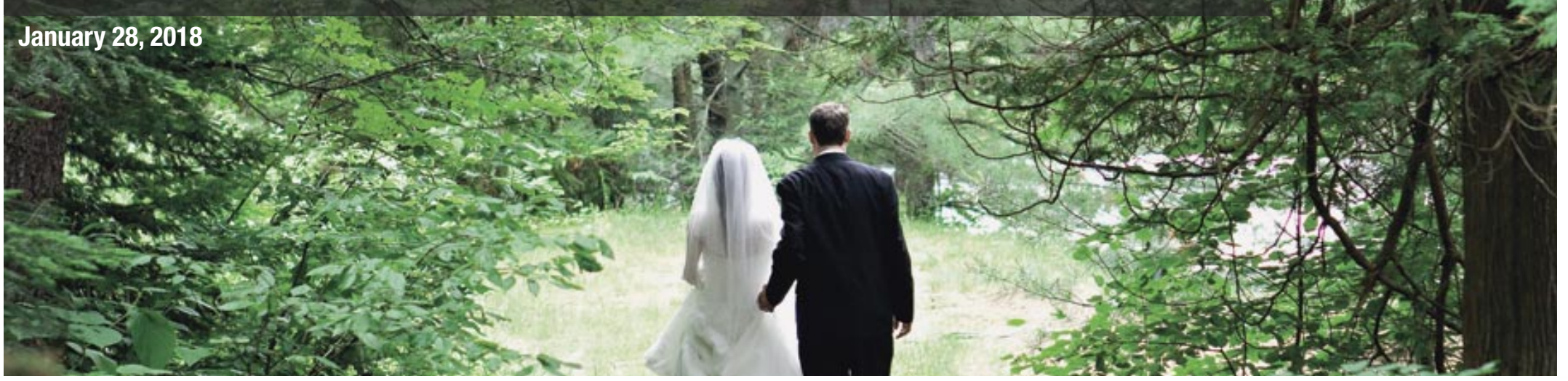


# 2018 Bride & Groom Guide

January 28, 2018



## Married couple of 61 years shares their story and secrets to marital success

By Katie Ballalatak  
Staff Writer

Gene and Wanda Litzau of Glencoe have been happily married for 61 years.

At ages 84 and 81 respectively, the Litzaus have three children, eight living grandchildren and “have enough stories to write a book,” said Wanda Litzau.

Gene Litzau, who grew up in Glencoe in a family of 10 kids, and Wanda Litzau, who grew up on a farm by Watkins in a family of 11 kids, went on their first date in 1955.

The couple met through their older siblings, because Gene’s older brother, John, married Wanda’s older sister, Jeanette, in 1952.

“Gene kept coming around wanting to give me a ride on the ferris wheel or in his convertible and I really didn’t want to because I was more interested in the other brother,” laughed Wanda. “But he didn’t give up! And finally I said, ‘Well, I guess I should go on a date with the poor guy.’ So I did. For our first date we went to Cold Spring to a ballroom for a dance. Then we had a couple more dates and on the third date, my mother said, ‘Now, Wanda. What do you think of that Litzau boy?’ And I said, ‘Well, Mother, I’m going to marry him. He’s just what I’m looking for in a husband.’ My mother dropped her dish towel. I was barely 19.”

Gene asked her to marry him nine months after they started dating, because he was planning to volunteer for the war and he wanted

to be engaged before he left for training.

Wanda, however, had a different plan. “I said, ‘If I’m going to put an engagement ring on my finger, I’m going to put a wedding band on my finger, too! Because when you get done with your basic (training), Gene, I’m coming with you.’ So that’s what we did.”

The couple got married on Aug. 11, 1956, and, true to her word, once Gene finished with his basic training, Wanda left Minnesota to be close to her husband.

They welcomed their daughter, Lynn, in 1958, while Gene was stationed in California. After he was honorable discharged in 1958, Gene and Wanda made their home in Glencoe where they welcomed their second child, a boy, Eugene Jr. “Butch”, and, 12 years later, their third child, Bill.

It was always Wanda’s dream to have 12 children and, although they never got their 12, she and Gene frequently opened up their home to children and teenagers who needed somewhere to stay.

Some children include Gene’s younger, 9-year old brother David (Gene’s mother died when many of her children were still very young), who lived with them for 10 years, a 16-year-old boy named Ethan, a friend of their son’s, who lived with the Litzaus until he turned 18, and a little neighbor girl who often needed somewhere to stay after her mother passed away.

“We’ve helped raise so many children through these 60 years,” said Wanda.

Both Gene and Wanda have lived very full, busy lives with their family here in Glencoe.

Gene worked at Sam’s Tire, managed Glencoe Co-Op for 23 years, and after retirement, delivered auto parts for Auto Value for 12 years.

Wanda, on the other hand, worked in the school system in Glencoe as a substitute teacher and as a cook before leaving to manage the bakery at Super Value in town for 10 years. She also worked for Meals on Wheels, organized congregate senior dining in Glencoe for another 10 years, taught Sunday School at Church of Peace in Glencoe for 50 years and continues to volunteer there with Gene today.

As for advice Wanda and Gene have for couples, keeping God and religion in the picture and going to church are all important.

Wanda urges married couples to go to church

together (“Italicize and underline it; I mean it!” she said.)

She also adds to never go to bed angry, never be afraid to say ‘I’m sorry’ and to be compassionate. “Everyone in this whole world should be more compassionate towards people,” said Wanda.

Gene and Wanda are excited to share that they will be in a wedding, in just four months’ time. They have been asked to be the ring bearer and flower girl for Jamie Rainwater’s and Joshua Schroeder’s wedding in Hutchinson. What started as a joke on Wanda’s end became a heartfelt request from the couple, after Wanda advised them that they should “just get married, for goodness sake!”

Gene will be wearing a black button-up shirt, black pants and a turquoise tie and Wanda is still trying to find a turquoise dress to wear for the big day.

“It’s been a fun ride,” says Wanda about their marriage. “I wouldn’t want to change a thing.”



Photo by Katie Ballalatak

Gene and Wanda Litzau pictured in their Glencoe home. They have been happily married for 61 years.



Gene and Wanda Litzau’s wedding photo; Gene is on the left instead of on the traditional right, because he had broken his arm in a car accident not long before the wedding and they decided to hide it behind Wanda’s waist.

*“Married couples (should)*

*go to church together,*

*Never go to bed angry,*

*never be afraid to*

*say ‘I’m Sorry.’ and to be*

*compassionate.” -Wanda Litzau*

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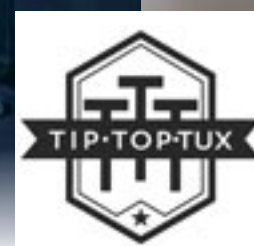
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# Personalized labels, wine glasses help make weddings memorable

By Lori Copley  
Editor

Every couple wants to make their wedding day unique and personal. Peter Goettl of PJ's How 2 Spirits has just the way (actually a few ways) to help couples do that just that.

PJ's is specialty shop in Glencoe that sells wine- and beer-making kits and offers classes and all the supplies needed to make them.

One thing that people who make their own can do is create their own label, and Goettl said that is an option for soon-to-be newlyweds.

"Anyone who is good with a computer can come up with a label," said Goettl.

Goettl said one couple designed a label with a tree and a saying about their "roots in love." The unique label also had their names and wedding date on it.

Once the artwork is designed, it can be put on labels that Goettl has available at PJ's.

There is a caveat to the personal wine — couples either need to buy a kit and make

it themselves, or buy a kit and have Goettl make it for them. And they have to pay for the kit before Goettl can make the wine.

"I don't have a liquor license, so I can't sell wine to them directly," Goettl explained.

One kit makes 30 bottles of wine, and Goettl estimates that there are at least 100 different varieties that can be made. He has samples for those who wish to taste them before purchasing a kit.

Most wines take at least six weeks to make, and Goettl said he needs plenty of lead time if he's going to be the one making the wine.

"It could be even longer if we have a lot of them to do," said Goettl.

Couples should also make note that not all wedding reception venues will allow families to bring their own wine. Many have designated liquor distributors who must be used for events.

In that case, Goettl said, couples can either give the wine as gifts to their wedding party and others, or use at a groom's dinner or another related event.



Photo by Lori Copley

PJ's How 2 Spirits, owned by Peter Goettl, above, can help couples plan a personalized wedding with unique wine

bottle labels and hand-painted wine glasses.

Goettl also suggested that couples put a few bottles of their personal wine away for special occasions, such as anniversaries.

Speaking of wedding parties, Goettl said a fun activity may be to have a wedding party take a wine-making class together and make their own wine.

"That's a memory that will last a lifetime, too," said Goettl. "There is a saying that a couple that makes wine together will stay together longer."

Another service offered at PJ's is custom, hand-painted wine glasses. He has examples of some of the artwork at the shop.

PJ's How 2 Spirits is located at 712 E 10th St. in Glencoe. The phone number is 320-864-8466, and its website is www.pjshow2spirits.com. It can also be found on Facebook.

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# Rustic Oaks Barn, a new wedding venue, opens north of Brownton

By Karin Ramige  
Publisher

After attending a barn wedding in 2015, Sheila and Thomas Hagel of Brownton thought, "we could do this," and the planning for The Rustic Oaks Barn began.

The Hagels had built a house on Sheila Hagel's family farm north of Brownton. They say it is a typical farm, with cows, chickens, pigs, goats, donkeys and one pony. They rent out the cropland.

Sheila Hagel is a McLeod West High School graduate; Thomas Hagel grew up in New Brighton. They have four children, William, 14, Matthew, 12, Elizabeth, 11, and Jonathan, 10, who help out on the farm.

The Hagels visited a number of similar venues as they were planning their new venture to see what they did and didn't like. The biggest take-away: bathrooms. The Rustic Oak Barn features indoor, climate-controlled bathrooms, something the Hagels said many venues they visited didn't have.

The barn is "nicely isolated" away from major roads, but easily accessible on paved county roads. There is no noisy traffic going by the barn or neighbors to com-

plain about the noise.

The wooded property overlooks the stunning rolling countryside and Mary Lake, with two beautiful oak trees that frame the nuptial area. The beautiful gardens and pastures are surrounded by a white, three-rail fence. There also is a large children's play area to keep little ones entertained.

A loft in the barn provides an area where the ceremony could be moved if the weather doesn't cooperate. The loft could also be ideal for a social hour or dance. The main area barn can comfortably seat 350 for dinner.

Thomas Hagel has been making the rustic tables. They also have Chiavari chairs, table decor and wine barrels available for decorating.

The venue also features a groom's room and bridal suite with private restroom; both are heated and air conditioned.

There is a caterer's kitchen, a buffet and separate bar area.

The Hagels have been busy attending bridal shows and are getting bookings for 2018 and 2019.

They still have space available in 2018.



Photos courtesy of Rustic Oak Barn



## Marriage License information



### To obtain a Certified Copy of a Marriage Certificate: Effective 8/1/2007

(You may make your request in person or by mail)

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2. Send \$9.00 for the first copy and \$2.00 for each additional copy requested for the same record. Make your check payable to McLeod County Auditor-Treasurer.
3. Send the request and the correct dollar amount to:  
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2391 Hennepin Ave. N.  
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4. If either has been divorced, we need the official date of divorce and the name of the court.
5. There is a 5-day waiting period, not including the day that you apply.  
(On the fifth day you may marry.)
6. The Marriage License is valid for 6 months. You must marry within that time or the license will expire.  
(No Birth Certificates, Driver's License, or Blood tests are required in Minnesota)

Information courtesy of: <http://www.co.mcleod.mn.us>

### To apply for a Marriage License:

1. Complete a Marriage License Application.
2. As of August 1, 2009 BOTH parties will need to be present when applying for a marriage license. If you are not able to both be present than the Marriage Application Supplemental form will need to be filled out & notarized.
3. The fee is \$115.00 if no pre-marital counseling has been completed. The fee is \$40.00 if 12 hours of pre-marital counseling has been completed AND we have a signed & notarized form from the person who provided the counseling. As of August 1, 2009, the form will need to have a notarized signature to be accepted.



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 School(s) Attended by Bride \_\_\_\_\_  
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Chronicle photo by Katie Ballalatak

## Couple find long-lost love, daughter; write book about it

By Katie Ballalatak  
Staff Writer

Denny and Karen (Lehmann) Vinar, formerly of Brown-ton, got married in 2015 and have released a family memoir titled “How Did You Find Me ... After All These Years?” which tells the story of their high school relationship, how they reconnected 50 years later, and how their experience and marriage has blessed their families today.

The couple dated in junior and senior high and briefly in college for six months before eventually going their separate ways. Their journey to reconnecting again began when Dennis Vinar attended a dinner party on Oct., 25 2014.

At the dinner party, a friend of the hostess stood up and asked if everyone would like to play a game. Everyone agreed and she posed this question: “If your primary physician gave you 60 days to live, who would be one person you would want to take to Starbucks or take out to dinner?”

Many people in the room listed celebrities or politicians as candidates. Denny Vinar, on the other hand, thought of his high school sweetheart and said, without hesitation, “Karen Lehmann.”

In a stroke of luck, Denny Vinar found her on LinkedIn. “I just smacked my hands and said, ‘That’s my lady,’” said Vinar.

He then called her business phone number in Everett, Washington. She did not answer the phone, but he left a message with her assistant: “Just tell her Denny called, an old friend of about 50 years from Eden Prairie, Minnesota.”

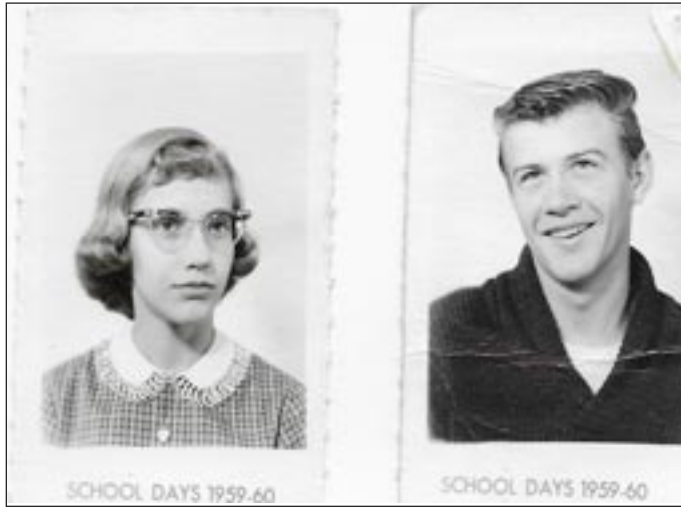
“She called me back in 10 minutes,” said Vinar.

After their first phone call, the couple began regularly talking on the phone and texting (“I call it our electronic courtship,” said Karen Vinar) and eventually the conversation led to marriage.

“She said, ‘Would you ever ask me to marry you?’” said Vinar. “I said, ‘No, never. I’ll never ask you to marry me.’” He had previously proposed twice, once in high school when she was 15 and again when she was a junior in college.

“[When Karen asked why] I said, ‘Well, Karen asking you to marry me is like baseball — three strikes and you’re out.’

“She said, ‘Well, I have a different take on that. It’s the third time’s the charm.’”



Above are Karen and Denny Vinar’s school photos from Brownton Public School.

Originally the plan was to marry in April 2015 but they ended up getting married in Washington on Jan. 22, 2015, instead, just two days after meeting each other in person again.

Two years later, both retired and relocated to Northfield, where they began to write their book.

The couple credits the Rev. Duane Everson, a retired ELCA pastor and good friend, for continuously encouraging them to actually write down their story. “If it weren’t for him, we’d probably still be thinking about it. He pushed us until we did finally write a book,” said Karen Vinar.

Published and edited through Mill City Press, “How Did You Find Me ... After All These Years?” has four authors and follows a chronological order, starting in junior high in Brownton and ending in the present day.

Karen Vinar believes that their story brings a small-town point of interest for readers who also grew up in small midwestern towns in the 1950s.

The book is more than just a love story set in a small midwestern town, however. It also introduces long lost family into the picture — Denny and Karen Vinar’s daughter, Jean Voxland, who was born and adopted by loving parents when they were in high school.

“It was sometime after we had gotten married that Denny said, ‘Have you ever thought about looking for our daughter?’ And I said no,” said Karen Vinar. “She’s 50-some years old. It wouldn’t be fair to locate her and get involved in her life at this time. But he didn’t give up. After many times mentioning it, he finally said, ‘I found you now my life would be complete if we could find our daughter.’”

“So that’s when I said, ‘OK, we’ll contact Lutheran Social Services.’”

The Vinars reconnected with their daughter in May 2016.

Karen Vinar said that in their book, Jean Voxland writes a couple chapters from her point of view and her experiences as an adopted child. Near the end of the book, Jean’s husband, Andrew, also writes a couple chapters from his own perspective.

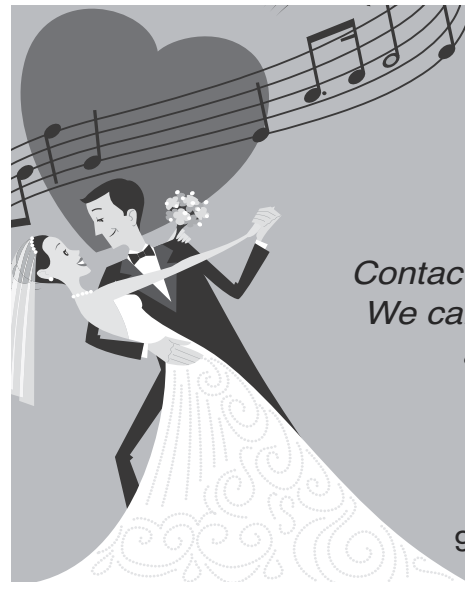
“So it’s not just a single love story. It’s actually a double love story about a family reunited,” said Karen Vinar.

The Vinars have been busy with book signings and book events since the family memoir was published at the end of November 2017.

They are excited to announce that they will be coming to the Brownton Public Library at noon and the Glencoe Public Library at 3 p.m. on Feb. 15 to present their book and sign book copies.

“How Did You Find Me ... After All These Years?” can be found on Amazon and in select Barnes & Noble stores (including the one in the Mall of America). Content Bookstore in Northfield also has it, among other small bookstores.

For more information, reviews and book locations, the Vinars encourage readers to visit [www.howdidoifoundme.com](http://www.howdidoifoundme.com).



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# The Glencoe City Center

Originally, the Glencoe Grade and High School building, later known as the Glencoe Middle School and now the Glencoe City Center, began its transformation in 2009 after numerous years of planning to save the historic school building and repurpose it for future generations. Now on the National Register of Historic Places, the Glencoe City Center continues to be a gathering space for the community.

On any given week, the facility is filled with a variety of activities. Girl Scouts, Boy Scouts, local youth dance clubs, and senior citizen groups are just a few of the groups that are meeting at the facility on a regular basis. There also is a church service that takes place most Sunday mornings.

The building includes a state-of-the-art event and meeting facility. Events held at the Glencoe City Center include concerts, graduations, reunions, confirmations, anniversaries, bridal and baby showers, birthday parties, business meetings, and other community happenings.

Whether planning a small or large wedding reception, the Glencoe City Center offers an elegant space for celebrating your wedding. The Grand Ballroom is a one-of-kind venue offering historic charm and sophisticated style. Some of its focal points include its expansive dance floor, towering exterior windows, and high ceilings.

### Grand Ballroom

The Grand Ballroom is the ideal venue to hold wedding ceremonies and receptions along with banquets, fundraisers, concerts, and other large scale parties. With two walls of large windows, gorgeous hardwood floors, and restored Art Deco chandeliers, the Grand Ballroom requires minimal decorating to make your dream event a reality. The Grand Ballroom can be split into two separate spaces, creating the North and South Grand Ballrooms. Linens are also available for rental, along with dishware.

### Martin McLeod Room

The Martin McLeod Room, also known as the Senior Community Room, is adjacent to the Grand Ballroom and can hold up to 80 people, depending on the seating. The Martin McLeod Room has played host to bridal showers, baby showers, birthday parties, gift openings, and more. The room includes an adjoining kitchenette and is included in the room rental. It includes a small oven, refrigerator, microwave and sink.

### North Conference Room

The North Conference Room is our newest meeting space and is our second largest conference room. It has a seating capacity of up to 65 people. The North Conference Room is ideal for shower events, birthday parties, and other social functions. The room includes a refrigerator. Linens and dishware are also available if needed.

### Henry Hill East Conference Room

The Henry Hill East Conference Room is adjacent to the Grand Ballroom and can hold up to 45 people, depending on the seating. This room has been used for things such as meetings, trainings, confirmation parties, graduation parties, birthday parties, and more. With towering windows along one wall, the natural lighting creates a bright and welcoming room. The adjoining kitchenette is included in this room rental and includes an oven, microwave, refrigerator, and sink.



### West Conference Room

The West Conference Room is used most often for meetings and trainings. With a seating capacity of up to 45, number is dependent on the layout of the room, the West Conference Room is ideal for your meeting needs. The room offers an optional technology package (screen, projector, microphone, audio, conference calling, document reader, television).

### Basement Meeting Room

The basement meeting room, formerly the cafeteria space for the school, is available for rental. The room is used throughout the year for 4-H, Boy Scouts, Girl Scouts, and other community meetings. The space is ideal for birthday parties, family reunions, and other similar functions.

For more information, scheduling tours, or booking your event call Dan Ehrke at 320.864.6951.

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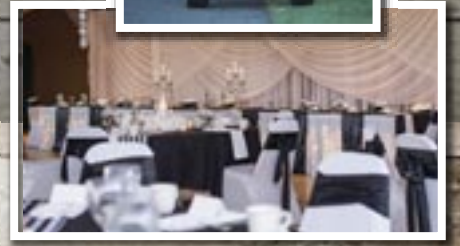
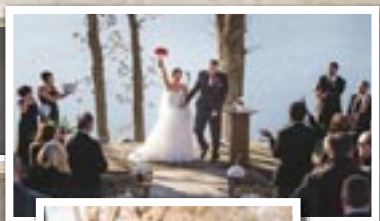
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