



Legends in the Making

By Joy Blackburn MSA Staff Writer



It's the kind of story that could only happen in America. Two kids growing up in the 60s in different parts of the country - each with little to no musical training but possessing raw talent and high hopes - would eventually find each other and form one of the longest lasting, successful, and musically-diverse bands Colorado Springs has ever laid claim to. Kent and Debbie Weagel,

the founding members of "Legend," have been wowing audiences since 1982 and are still going strong. This December, they will be performing at the MSA's annual Christmas Luncheon.

"We're having more fun than we ever have before," Kent told me recently when he slowed down enough to take my interview. The band produces their own original music which they weave into their popular sets of cover songs, featuring the country rock and rock & roll artists of the 50s, 60s and 70s. "I guess it's a successful mix," he chuckled, "because we keep getting booked!" They are the house band of choice at a variety of clubs in town where they play between

higher profile gigs like the County Fair, Grand Junction's Country Jam, and the Broadmoor Hotel.

Meet the Band

After taking a few guitar lessons, Kent joined his first band at the ripe old age of 10. The family had just left Watertown South Dakota to open a Suzuki dealership in Colorado Springs. The sweeping Front Range vistas of the 1960s left young Kent feeling like he could do

Top photo from left to right: Paul de Burgess, Richard Sealock, Debbie Weagel and Kent Weagel - The Legend Band members in 2014.

anything. “I grew up in the motorcycle shop,” he told me. “My mom did the books. My dad did the sales and served as mechanic. I swept the floors, washed motorcycles, cleaned the toilets, whatever they needed.” This, of course, was between school, band practice, and Kent’s other developing passion: racing motorcycles.

Meanwhile, about 50 miles to the south, a young Debbie Weigel was practicing her vocals and entertaining family by singing into a spatula.

“I read a little music,” Kent told me, “But Debbie plays strictly by ear. She’s the real talent.” Never formally trained at any instrument, including the keyboard she now plays in the band, Debbie was, and is, a musical tour de force.

Debbie started Legend when she was barely out of high school. Her range of vocal stylings is enormous – she was selected to do tributes for both Patsy Kline and Donna Summer. A two-time winner of the You Can Be A Star show, Debbie helped lead her band



The Colorado Springs that young Kent discovered in the 1960's was open, free, and ripe with opportunities, which he enjoyed by working and studying hard, joining a band and racing motorcycles.

to victory in the 1996 Battle of the Bands, and the 2001 Colorado Springs Music Awards where they took both “Instrumental of the Year” and “Band of the Year.”

Back when Debbie and Kent were dating, several different bands had roped Kent into working with them, “Because of my outstanding talents and ability,” he joked. “Debbie finally told me, ‘Join my band, or hit the road, Jack!’” That was in 1984.

The third member of the band joined more recently; in 1984, Bobby Gartlet was negative-10 years old. His dad, Bob Gartlet, was busy building his own music career at the time with his two bands, Three of a Kind and The Jinx.

Bobby grew up surrounded by musicians. At two, he was given a custom-made guitar, and at five he was given a full drum set. At 17, he began playing gigs around town alongside his Dad.



Forever a go-getter, Debbie started the Legend band before rediscovering Kent outside of high school. By the time the two started dating in 1983, Legend was performing all over Colorado Springs.



MSA Executive Director Nikki Pfeiffer and both Kent and Debbie Weagel graduated from Mitchell High School in 1974 without ever knowing each other.

“We got to know Bob,” Kent told me. “Sometimes Legend and Three of a Kind would team up and play together,” with young Bobby on the drums.

“Then one day Bob suddenly died of a massive heart attack,” Kent recalled. “Three months later, Bobby joined Legend,” adding, “Bands would have fought to sign him. He’s a fantastic musician.”

Noting the gap in their ages, Debbie laughed, “Everyone assumes he’s our son!”

The MSA Connection:

The MSA’s Executive Director, Nikki Pfeiffer, graduated from Mitchell High School in 1974, the same year Kent and Debbie Weagel graduated from the very same school. As a baton twirler, Nikki moved in a different circle than the Weagels, and the three of them never met until Mitchell’s 50th Reunion of the Class of ‘74. Legend was hired to play at the reunion, and Nikki fell in love with their music. “Everyone around me was raving about the band,” Nikki told me. “I knew right there that I wanted them for our Christmas party — even before I found out that they were my classmates!”

“I jumped at this chance to play for the MSA,” Debbie told me. “Multiple Sclerosis runs on both sides of my family. Anything I can do to help out will have real meaning for me.”



Above: Kent sets up for an outdoor performance.



Above: Debbie and Kent Weagel welcome Bobby Gartlet to the band (pictured left).

Coming This December!

The Legend Band has opened for Dina Shore, Michael Martin Murphy, Eddie Raven, Vince Gill, Lawrie White, Toby Keith, Darren Norwood, and many others. This December they will be playing for the MSA! “We’ve been looking to cut an album,” Kent mentioned. “Maybe we can record it live with the MSA audience clapping and whistling!”

I suspect he was joking, but speaking for myself, I plan to be at the Christmas party listening to Legend play, and to clap and whistle like crazy! ✨