

A SISTERS COUNTRY

Valentine's Day

Valentine's Day is a celebration of romantic love — one of the great passions that give life shape, purpose, and meaning. The day is about a great deal more than roses and chocolate — though those things are, indeed, sublime. It is about connection on a deep level, with ourselves and our partners. It is about being our best for ourselves and for those we love — inside and out — and manifesting that in our daily lives.

Done right, Valentine's Day marks merely a moment in which to acknowledge how important our love is to us, and to shape the year-round, day-to-day of building a life that exalts the best in each of us.

A love story spanning decades

By Karen Keady

It was the winter of disbelief in Eugene, Oregon, January 1969. My sister and I, both in our 20s, were traveling from Ashland where we lived and worked, to spend a long weekend with family. The snow began falling, heavily and thick, as quoted from the *Eugene Register-Guard*: "It came without warning and left the city under a record-setting blanket of white."

We arrived safely and unloaded our meager weekend travel bags. By morning my sister's VW Bug was invisible under a mountain of VW-Bug-sized snow. We laughed. We were 20.

In our family home there was a young man, a University of Oregon engineering student renting a room. He was 6-feet-8-inches tall, a basketball player, and pretty darn cute.

The snow continued to fall and fall and fall. The City of Eugene did not have the resources to deal with such weather extremes. No snow plows, nothing. On the front page of the *Register-Guard* there was an aerial photo of the freeway and the farmlands, blended as one. No traffic. No buses. Nothing could move.

We were stranded for 10 days. We played endless games of pinochle, cooked endless pots of spaghetti. University of Oregon was closed! My sister and the basketball player spent endless hours gazing into each other's eyes. We walked to Safeway for groceries, more spaghetti, more pinochle, more snow.

I totally remember those days, and the tall handsome man who used the top of the fridge as a platform to make his Dagwood sandwiches.

One day the snow melted enough to allow travel. We headed home to Ashland, my sister lost in a quiet space, me chattering away.

Weeks went by and it became obvious we were moving to Eugene for good. My sister was pregnant. With twins. Marriage was not an option. With great resolve and a broken heart, my sister gave birth to twin sons, each weighing in at a respectable 9 pounds — *each!*

The adoption was handled through an attorney.

Fast forward to 2002.

My sister by then was also a U of O graduate, her career was her life. She had never married. One day she got a phone call from one of her twin sons. He had found his birth mother and wanted to know about his birth father, and family.

My sister knew approximately where the family was from and was able to locate the bio-dad. Through reconnection, 30 years later my sister once again met the love of her life. He had been married, fathered two daughters and subsequently divorced. The twin sons brought my sister and their father together again.

At age 60, my sister married for the first and only time in her life, to the love of her life. She once told me if she ever saw this story on Oprah she would kill me. Well, this isn't Oprah, it's *The Nugget*. This is a real love story. It's about how strong those bonds can be, how time cannot alter real love, about forgiveness, about family. Love is timeless. As in forever.

Love and well-being

Something about the month of romance and Shibui Spa just fit together — like soulmates.

Shibui has become a center for wellness and self-care in Sisters, reminding us that living well means taking care of ourselves as well as others. It's an oasis of peace and centeredness in a hectic world.

Make a visit to Shibui a part of your mid-winter romantic interlude. Taking care of yourself makes you a better partner, and it certainly makes you feel more relaxed and romantic!

And giving the gift of ongoing well-being is one of the greatest gestures of love and affection a person can make for someone they love and want to share their years with.

Guests of Shibui Spa know that their time there is so much more than an indulgence (though it certainly feels indulgent!) — it's an important part of a lifestyle based around health and wellness. Shibui restores the body and the spirit so you can live better every day.

And you can keep on giving the gift of health and wellness with a Shibui Spa wellness gift certificate for your Valentine!

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