

Heartwaves

What will this summer bring for Jane, Joe, Ron, Michelle, Barbara, Melissa and Sally? Will it really mean romance for those that want it? Will it mean romance for those who don't expect it? Will it wreck romance for those who have it? The Emerald will be following the progress of these "very real" lives throughout this summer.

Romance can happen any time, but there's something definitely special about the summer variety. Students we talked to who had had summer romances agreed with this observation and most of those who had not had the experience yet yearned to learn if it's true.

Take Jane, for instance.

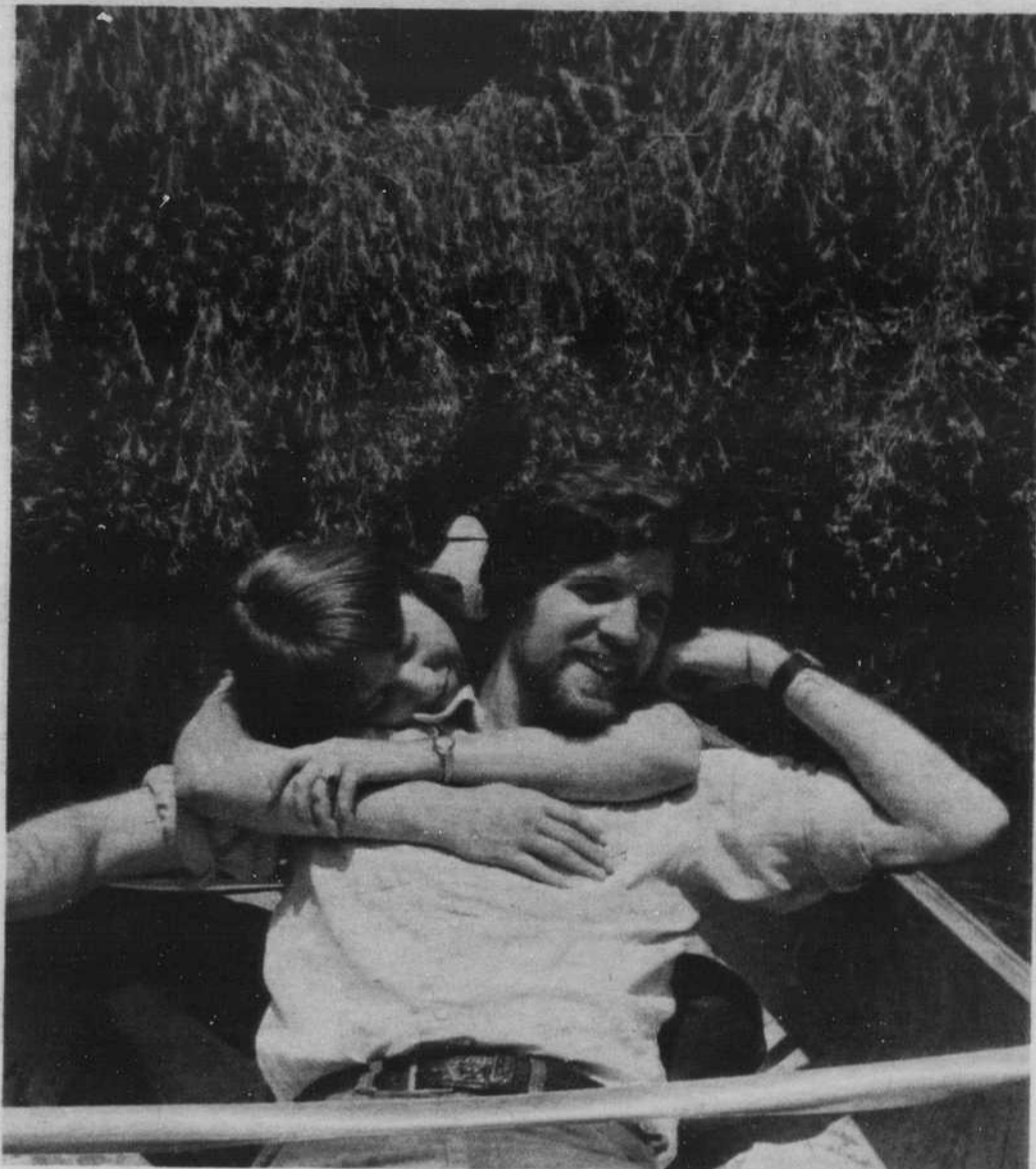
"I've always thought of summer as a time for work or travel," she says. "I've never had a summer romance, so I wouldn't know what it's like. It's tragic."

But she hopes the time may be right for that tragedy to end. Like two other spring and summer romances, her latest romance ended with "goodbyes forever" at the start of the summer. He left for Houston and Europe this past Monday. "It was nice, I'm not bitter," she says, apparently mentally set for her first summer romance.

In contrast to Jane, Joe has had several summer flings. "The season lends itself to carefree romance," he says, enthusiastically. "There's a certain attitude, short term, no commitments."

"Incredible" is how he immediately describes his summer dalliances. Joe's most memorable romance occurred in the wilds of northern Wisconsin, where he was a camp staff member. His summer girlfriend was a fellow camp worker from Sweden.

Photos by Mark Pynes



The summer sun brings a special flavor to romance for some — and nothing out of the ordinary for others

"I got a lifelong friend out of (the experience)," he says, adding that the opportunity was there for a more permanent relationship, but that he and his friend are happy being separate at this point. Stretching things beyond the summer just didn't seem right, he says.

For Ron, a summer romance led to his recent marriage. His wife-to-be was involved in a crumbling marriage and secretly arranged a rendezvous with him. The two shared a sandwich and a bottle of wine by the Umpqua River. Ron had been going out with "two or three" women at the time — his theory of summer romance had been that the summer was a time to meet many members of the opposite sex.

"But when you get one you like, you kinda have to make a decision. So I guess I made a decision," he laughs.

He's sad, however, about the passing of his days of summer romance, but takes a philosophical attitude. "When the sun comes out and the shorts go on, things start looking attractive again," he laments, comforting himself with the motto "just because you bet all your money on one horse doesn't mean you can't watch the race."

Sailing on the Prineville Reservoir last summer brought Michelle together with an old friend who eventually became her fiancé — and recently, her ex-fiancé.

She's not sulking, though. The promise of a new summer seems to have piqued her optimism. "I'm a romanticist," she says.

She has fond memories of her very first romance. It lasted a week. She was "15 or 16" though, she and her best friend told some guys in Lincoln City

they were older. The guy who became her summer boyfriend has since passed out of her life forever, but Michelle thinks of him whenever she visits the Lincoln beaches.

Barbara is not so optimistic. "I don't feel the summer will offer anything," she says. New in Eugene after a stay in Boston, she doesn't seem to have anyone in mind for a summer encounter. Though she never had a summer romance, she still wants one.

Yet, for some students, the summer holds no special romantic promise. "A summer romance would be fine if I had the time," says Melissa, who is taking 15 hours of classes. "School is more preoccupying."

But for other students, this summer even threatens romance.

Aaron's fiancée is off in Africa for the summer and he's trying to keep his eye from wandering. Ironically, some hanky-panky last summer spurred his present engagement, which came after a 5½ year relationship.

"Knowing I could fall in love with someone else conquered anxiety I had had about becoming too dependent on one person," he explains.

Sally's new fiancé just went to the Midwest to look for work. It's tough to be away from him, she says. "I'm looking forward to school ending." Then she'll join him in the Midwest.

Nevertheless, the summer means something special to Sally. She began going out with her fiancé two years ago during a summer, so "in a way it was a summer romance," she says.

And she had had a summer romance before. She was 15 and on vacation with her family in Montana when she fell for a 17-year-old. "Looking back, I think he's a creep," she laughs.

By William Kogut



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