

The springtime I met the man with those eyes: reflections on dates

by Linda Barr Batdorf
Staff Writer

Springtime reminds me of the day I first met the man of my dreams who shall forever remain my handsome, fancy boyfriend -- my husband, Alan. He was in a dark corner, hunkered over an ailing VCR in the video department here at CCC when I first saw him.

I had graduated the year before and had come back to Clackamas to edit some footage I had taken for the medical school up on the hill. An old friend, Gary Eppelsheimer, was helping me with the project and in so doing, introduced me to my future husband.

"This is Alan Batdorf. We're working on a video project about Portland's bridges," Gary said.

Actually, he could have been talking about his latest dental bridge, because at precisely that instant, Alan looked up from repairing the sickly VCR and looked me right in the eyes.

Time stood still. Now this was odd, because I wasn't an "eye person." I had a friend who (believe me, this is true) would not date a man with blue eyes. Eyes were her thing. If the guy had brown eyes, he was in.

He could look like Quasimodo and smell like Mr. Ed, but if the guy had just the right "eye thing" going, she was prepared to have his children, and plenty of them at that.

It's said that the eyes are the windows of the soul. It could be that since Alan was destined to walk down the aisle with me on a rainy Valentine's Day in 1982, that it was indeed his soul that first attracted me to him in the springtime of 1978, because I just couldn't shake the memory of those eyes.

I had dated other men before I met Alan, but I had never noticed their eyes.

I didn't notice the eyes of the insane man who used to send me envelopes full of hawk feathers. I always wondered how he got the feathers. He called me once, and after telling me that "Bengal tigers don't LIVE in Oregon!" said he no longer had a hawk.



Gee, what did he do? Keep yanking them out of his deceased pet? Where was he getting them? Did he have a hole in his pillow or had he mugged a wandering sapsucker? This in itself was a bit unnerving. And just what was it about big bird feathers that he thought I would find appealing?

It certainly wasn't the smell. I didn't notice the eyes of the man in the theater department who used to sing at the top of his lungs to any old tune that happened to belch its way out of the radio, either.

He wanted our friendship to escalate and I was hesitant to hurt his feelings and say a resounding "no!" until one day when we were returning from a program at a retirement home and he insisted on singing every song from here to Oak Grove and back at a decibel level that Pavarotti himself has not yet achieved.

When he leaned over the back seat to sing directly into the back of my head to the tune of The Commodore's "You're ONCE, TWICE, THREEE times a lay-DEE," I am somewhat ashamed to admit that I switched the radio off before he could get to the "THREEE."

There he was, bellowing out his merciless tune, suddenly left with no Lionel Richie to do his back-up vocals.

Since I seemed to attract men with obvious mental problems, it was no surprise that another "gentleman" playing two socks short of a pair would want my phone number.

Had I looked into his eyes, I never would have gone to a movie with him, and I never would have had to walk home from Damascus to Estacada after said lunatic tried to slip something into my 7-Up.

The same loon called me the next day -- after I had walked 13 miles in the middle of the night -

- and asked me if I wanted to go to another show with him.

Good grief. I should have suggested that he and Mr. Hawk Feathers go together and see "One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest."

Many of my dates in the early 70's were similar. I came to consider the distinct possibility that all men were deeply disturbed.

I was just an innocent little "potato from Estacada..." what did I know of the heart of a true creepizoid?

In fact, most of my dates pre-Alan were so deranged that I wrote a play including many direct quotes from some of them, and it was produced here at CCC.

A little old lady sitting in front of me during the opening night said, "gosh, these characters are a little unbelievable..." She took the words right out of my mouth.

I remember the heartaches and hassles of dating "way back then," with all of the inherent bumbling and teenage awkwardness.

One of my friends here at CCC was Colleen O'Hara. I recall the vision of my friend standing outside, between the buildings, looking aimlessly about as if searching for someone.

With the heart and soul of a writer, she has always been quite the poetic type.

So when I asked her what she was doing and she replied, "waiting for Mr. Right," I stared at her for a moment or two and went to my next class. I didn't find out until much later that she was referring to her science teacher Mr. Wright.

It seemed as logical a place to meet Mr. Right. After all, I met mine here. Not only did he sweep me off my feet and save me from the loony-toons of the world, but after 16 years, I still love to look into those eyes.

Sterling

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"I saw a good deal of S. Africa. It was an overwhelming experience and I learned more than I ever would have had I not gone there, but it was nice to come home," he added.

So Patrick Sterling left S. Africa and came home. Not just back to the United States, but back to the area, and once again, back to CCC.

"I really believe there is falsity in the old adage 'you can never go back' because there is truly nothing in the world more important than family and friends. I am always drawn back to this area because of this very fact,"

Sterling said.

Currently, Sterling is a manager at Yeatsys Cafe Mexicano, a restaurant in Lake Os-

"If I were to die tomorrow, I would have no regrets in the experiences I've had. I still crave attention.

"I still desire to achieve my goals and reach that caliber of recognition. But I'm pretty satisfied.

"There's still tomorrow. It is something I will always be working towards, but I tend to get comfortable in any given situation, and I don't work to get past those boundaries. I'm pretty happy and comfortable with what I'm doing, but I still crave that recognition.

"Those hard core starving actors in LA who do the theater rep circuit deserve more respect than me," he said.

Sterling suggests that it is important for aspiring actors

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wego. And in his spare time, he ventures out to the theater at CCC where he spends time rehearsing for the spring play, "Betty the Yeti," in which he will play a logger.

Sterling said he was a jock in high school. Sports were his passion. Until he accepted a dare from one of his "jock friends. I auditioned on a dare by some of my jock friends, and I was cast as Lysander in Shakespeare's "A Midsummer Night's Dream."

"I was hooked. Now I audition as often as I can," he said.

While Sterling still hopes to find the big break someday, he said he is content with the successful acting career he's already had.

to keep their tools polished. "No matter what you do, how, when or why, whether it is at the community college level or on Broadway, the experience in and of itself is beneficial," Sterling said.

One day, Sterling hopes to open his own restaurant. "I love this business. I've been in this business off and on forever. I'm going to keep auditioning.

"The LA scene is questionable, if I get my big, lucky break. If I get a break, I'll take advantage of it from there," he said.

Until then, you can find Sterling in our own theater, preparing for his latest show, Betty the Yeti, which will run May 18 to 20 and June 2 to 4 in the McLoughlin Theater.

NATIONAL ASTRONOMY DAY

The Haggart Observatory,

in conjunction with

The John Inskeep Environmental Learning Center

will host its third annual National Astronomy Day.

Saturday May, 6

10 a.m. until 5 p.m.

The day's events will include: Hands-on exhibits, including crater building, lens and mirror demonstrations, models of the solar system as well as models of American spacecraft, and much more.

Admission is Free

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