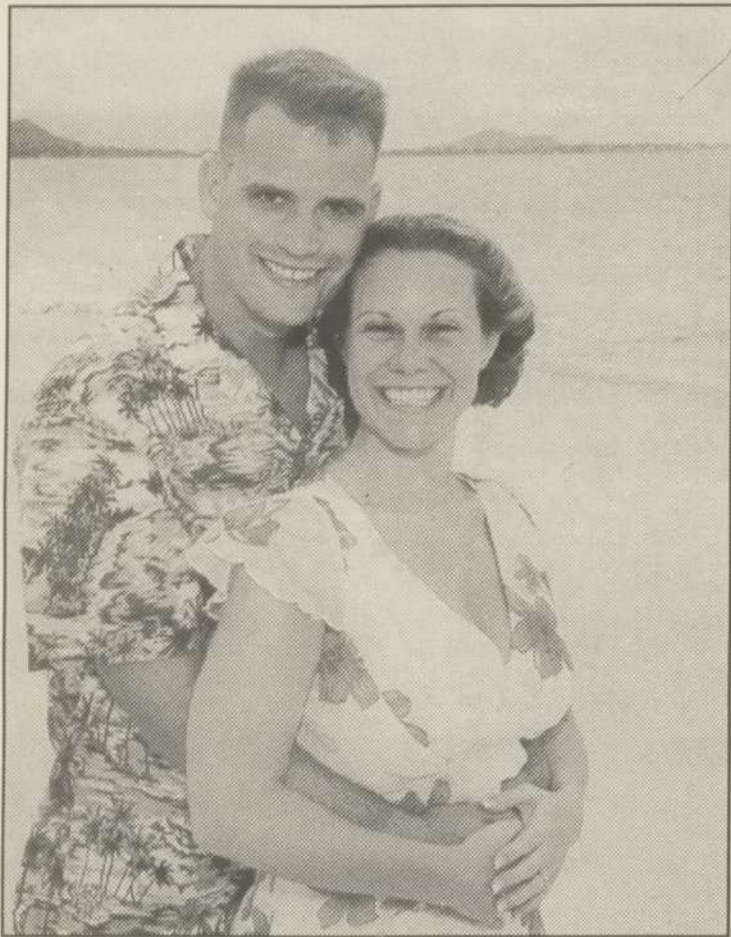


State lines are no border for love

Student's wedding moves up as Marine fiancé deploys to Japan



DOVE ANDES Contributed

Dove Andes and Bill Mitchell enjoy a Hawaii beach during her visit to the town where he is stationed.

Cyndee Mady
The Clackamas Print

Not unlike many other CCC students, Dove Andes strives to maintain a balance of school, work and home life.

What distinguishes this 28-year-old education major from her fellow students is her impending wedding nuptials.

People get married all the time, so what makes Andes so different? The exceptionalism stems from the fact that Andes and her 26-year-old fiancé, Bill Mitchell, have never lived in the same state.

They met last August at a club in the village of Carlsbad while Andes was vacationing in California. Mitchell is a Marine, and at the time he was stationed at Camp Pendleton in Oceanside, Calif.

Andes and Mitchell spent four days of her five-day visit to California embedded in a whirlwind romance. But this was no fly-by-night affair. They maintained subsequent contact everyday via telecommunications and air travel. In fact, in the eight short months this duo has been a couple, Mitchell has flown to Oregon three times, sequestered Andes to his hometown of Egan, Minn. so they could spend New Year's Eve together and

arranged for Andes to visit him in Hawaii, which recently became his home base.

Andes and Mitchell originally set their wedding date for July 12; however, Mitchell just received orders of deployment to Japan beginning June 1.

"The way the deployment rotation works, I could be over there a year, but they want you to believe it's only going to be six or seven months," said Mitchell.

Needless to say, the wedding has been moved to May 24. Andes will fly to Hawaii prior to the wedding and accompany her fiancé back to Oregon for the ceremony. After spending a few days with her family, whom she now resides with in Wilsonville, they will return to Hawaii for their honeymoon where they can steal a few romantic moments before Mitchell's ship sets sail and the two sweethearts are separated yet again.

Having known each other only a short while, it may seem as though they are rushing things, but the couple couldn't disagree more.

"We're old enough to know what we want. Our love is strong, because it's not just based on the physicality of the relationship," said Andes. "We're in constant communication, sometimes talking

anywhere from two to eight times a day and on weekends, one conversation can last more than five hours."

Just three months after they met, Mitchell knew he wanted to spend the rest of his life with Andes. He also knew their relationship would be a challenge.

"The drawbacks are that you don't get to spend that quality personal time together, but the advantages are that you are forced to work on your relationship and you never take things for granted," said Mitchell.

Andes moved to Oregon from her hometown of St. Louis, Mo. two years ago and is currently certified by the state to teach kindergarten at The Learning Tree, a private facility in Tualatin. She is working towards her teaching certificate with the ambition of becoming an elementary school teacher in the public school system. Andes maintains a high GPA and is a member of the honor society.

"This is my second year at Clackamas," said Andes. "I'm in a grant program this year for education technology."

Andes will continue to live with her parents and attend CCC until her husband returns, at which time they will make Hawaii their home.

Student proves that life's hurdles are never too high to overcome

Kimberly Steele
Guest Writer

Eighteen years ago Jennifer Voelker attended junior high school. She played volleyball and went out with her friends. Then two freak accidents changed her life dramatically.

The first mishap occurred while Voelker was at school. Several of her classmates were arguing and the scuffle led to a math book being hurled across the room. The book hit Voelker in the side of the head. A long recovery time followed, but she was able to regain her health.

Eventually, she found herself on her school volleyball team, which led to her second misfortune. On the court one day, one of the girls served a ball that hit Voelker in the back of the head. The only thing she can remember before waking up in the hospital is hearing a loud bang.

The blows to the head that Voelker sustained from the two accidents caused injuries to her inner ear, leading doctors to remove her stapes, a bone in the ear that helps transmit sound. These and other injuries that are less easily defined resulted in a vestibular disorder that turned her world upside down.

When Voelker's inner ear was injured it caused her to lose many things that most of us take for granted. On a good day Voelker constantly feels like she is falling, like the world around her is spinning, but on such a day she is able to do school work and concentrate for varying lengths of time on the day-to-day activities that most people do not give a second thought to. On a bad day it is excruciating and nearly impossible for her to get out of bed at all. Movement, sound,



CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

Jennifer Voelker (center), Clackamas student, suffers from an inner ear injury that causes movement, sound, light, patterns and smells to make her dizzy.

light, patterns and even smells make her dizzy and nauseated. Nearly all of the stimuli that the rest of the world takes in without conscious acknowledgement makes Voelker ill.

Despite all these things, Voelker is living proof that nothing can stop a dedicated person from achieving ones goals. She graduated from high school with a 4.0 grade point average and is currently taking classes at Clackamas Community College, impressing her teachers at every turn.


Voelker, who has had 13 surgeries to date, moved here from Colorado soon after her accidents happened. She is currently receiving care from Dr. F. Owen Black and is making plans for future operations to restore hearing to her left ear. NASA is doing new research

that gives her, and others with similar problems, hope for future recovery.

Voelker is quick to give credit where she believes it is due.

"My family has stuck by me, and all the people whose names no one will ever know," said Voelker. "It's not like, 'Well, we'll help Jennifer for a month or two and then she'll get on her feet.' It's faithful friendship and assistance to somebody, and there's lots of people like that in my life and I think that's kind of a neater story than just about me."

The message Voelker spreads with her life, her personality and her words is a simple one: "I don't have a choice in my situation but all those other people, they certainly have a choice. They don't have to help me, and they do."



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