



A lasting love story

THE ALESSONDRA ECKSTROM & BRIAN RICHARDSON WEDDING

STORY BY MARILYN GILBAUGH • PHOTOS BY MAYA DOOLEY

Alessondra (Allie) Eckstrom is 26 years old and Brian Richardson, 27. Both love old things, Victorian things and family things with a long history together of all three.

Their courtship began (kind of) when mutual friends introduced them during their freshman year at Linfield College in McMinnville.

“Brian told me later that he had picked me out of a crowd, thinking ‘that girl is beautiful’ but not seeking me out. I mean who’s not going to like hearing that!” Allie said. “Six years of exclusive Allie and Brian

togetherness followed. I took him home to Manzanita. My family loved him. He took me to Gig Harbor, Washington, to meet his family. I loved them. We graduated from Linfield, and after college I got a nursing job in Washington. Brian stayed in Oregon working in the wine business. Two years apart was too much. Brian got a job in Washington; we were together again, but discovered we missed Oregon. Back we came. Through it all, we were always a couple and talked about getting married someday, but it was always that ‘someday’ in our future,” Allie added.

That someday got closer as these two avid hikers, along with Brian’s parents and sister, were making their

annual climb up central Oregon’s Smith Rock. It was a scathingly hot day and Allie was begging off the climb. After much urging from Brian’s family, she acquiesced.

Reaching the top of the mountain, they paused on a lookout encompassing the valley. Brian loves scavenging old locations for antique bottles. He had slyly placed one of his finds, a special one that he knew Allie loved, in the loose rocks at the top of their perch.

He asked Allie what she saw. What she saw was a bottle with a note in it. She picked it up, read Brian’s request to be his wife and found him on bended knee. While he popped the question, Allie accepted, and his family from afar shared photos of the happy event. >>