

1956

Golden Honeymoon Memories

My dear wife, Laura (the girl next door) and I will be celebrating our 37th wedding anniversary in 1993. The way our marriage started thirty seven years ago, the odds said it wouldn't last.

Both South Buffalo natives, we had arranged our wedding day for the Saturday of Labor Day weekend in 1956. Uncle Sam had different plans and I was drafted into the Army that summer. Consequently, I spent our intended wedding day in Basic Training in the worst dust bowl in Texas; Fort Hood. Phone calls and letters helped but didn't alleviate the sorrow we both felt that intended day.

I was assigned to Fort Ord, California for my second eight weeks of Basic Training from which Laura and I tried to plan a second wedding day. We decided a Christmas - New Year holiday wedding would work out if I could get Holiday leave. My First Sergeant decided that his new Company Clerk was indispensable and denied my request for leave. As the holidays approached, I finally told him that if I couldn't get my leave to get married he could be sure his new Company Clerk would go AWOL. He relented and I was flying home for the holidays.

Throughout this uncertainty, Laura was trying to accomplish all of the plans for a 250 guest, all day, traditional wedding Ceremony and reception. With very little time she pulled it off and our wedding day was scheduled for the Saturday between the Holidays; December 29th.

A wedding on the Labor Day weekend in Buffalo may have been predictable; on December 29th it was impossible. One of Buffalo's famous, old blizzards hit and continued all day. It did not, however, deter family and friends. All of Laura's arrangements came off as planned. By nightfall, all 250 guests were enjoying the festivities and insisting the Bride and Bridegroom be toasted and participate in the abundant liquid refreshment. When it was time for Laura and Ed to leave, the Bridegroom was feeling no pain.

Having no car at the time, two of our friends drove us to the Buffalo Greyhound station and left us. I bought our tickets for the trip to Niagara Falls. We waited for the departure announcement, missed hearing it and realized we missed the bus.

We flagged a cab and shouted instructions to chase the missed bus. Quite a few miles down Niagara street the cab pulled the bus over and we boarded. Laura found us the only two seats available and we were on our way. Unfortunately, the seats were empty because the window wouldn't close shut and Laura and I spent the full 26 mile trip with the blizzard as our uninvited guest.

The blizzard continued and we arrived at the bus station on the American side of the Falls. We had arranged to spend our honeymoon at the Hotel Sheraton Brock on the Canadian side so I hailed a cab. The cab driver agreed to take us across the Rainbow Bridge but

the fare turned out to be more than the cost of the two bus tickets from Buffalo. In view of the weather conditions, we had no choice. He drove us across.

We arrived at the Hotel and went up to our room. After all of our travel the time was now well past 2 A.M. All the Bridegroom could mutter was "Please get me a cup of coffee" . . . At that hour of the night all services were closed and all Laura could do was get her Bridegroom to bed and sleep.

Being Buffalo natives, Laura and I had visited the Falls countless times but seldom during a snowy winter. Neither of us was prepared for the morning view from our Hotel room of the glorious winter wonderland after the previous day's snowfall. Both sides of the Falls and the Gorge were heavy in snow and afforded us a beautiful new landscape of our honeymoon site. Over room service breakfast, we began our first day of married life. We spent a few more days of joy at this idealic setting; enjoying it and each other and forgetting all of the trials we had to endure to achieve our dream.

We returned to Buffalo, spent a few days with family and then boarded a plane for Monterey, California and our extended year and a half honeymoon together on the west coast.

We now live in Fairport, a suburb of Rochester, but often remember the way our 37 year old marriage started and our glorious honeymoon at Niagara Falls.

LOVE

Help the falls rise again in romance

By PATTI SINGER
STAFF WRITER

It was the Honeymoon Capital of the World — *the* place to bask in newlywed bliss, celebrated in the popular song *Shuffle Off to Buffalo*: "To Niagara in a sleeper / There's no honeymoon that's cheaper, and the train goes slow . . ."

But today, it's the romance trade that's slow in Niagara Falls. And in response, the Canadian and American cities of Niagara Falls are trying to rekindle the romance of what they call the Honeymoon Capital of the World.

Couples who honeymooned at the Falls are being asked to write about their Golden Honeymoon Memories, with the winners having a chance to do it all again.

The aim is to help restore the allure of Niagara, before the neon lights on the strip turned it into Las Vegas without the casinos, and before the easy accessibility of Europe and the Caribbean turned a honeymoon by the falls into

something ordinary.

The contest is sponsored by the daily newspapers in both cities, which have enlisted 700 papers in the United States and 300 in Canada to search for Niagara Falls honeymooners. Other co-sponsors are tourist agencies and the Canadian Mint, which has issued a limited edition \$200 gold collector's coin to be awarded to the winners.

Couples must keep their memories to between 200 and 2,000 words. Entries will be judged on originality, style and creativity.

Entries will be accepted through the first week of February. The grand prize winners will be flown to Toronto and chauffeured to Niagara Falls on Valentine's Day weekend. They will be put up in the \$1,000-per-night honeymoon suite at the Sheraton Fallsview. Nine runners-up will receive a weekend in Niagara Falls.

Send entries to: Golden Honeymoon Memories, *Niagara Gazette*, 310 Niagara St., P.O. Box 549, Niagara Falls, NY 14302. □

