

# He must have thought he could ignore me until I'd go away

Stories of how you met the love of your life

## No more ignoring

I was working at a cafeteria. The prom was about two months away and I had not been allowed to date, so I didn't have a date for my prom. There was a sophomore who washed dishes in the back. I asked around and found out that he didn't have a girlfriend. So I set out to ask him. But he had been told what I was up to and was avoiding me like the plague.

I was getting desperate and running out of time. With only two weeks before the prom, I got to the cafeteria early on a Saturday while he was mopping. He must have thought he could just ignore me until I decided to go away. I walked right up to him and planted both feet on the mop and asked if he would take me to the prom. Four years later we were married, and 16 years after that we are still together.

*Shelly Hutchins, Spindale, Rutherford EMC*



## Hospital romance

I was 14 years old and Harry was 16. We both had appendix surgery at the same time in Cabarrus Memorial Hospital in 1951. We had the same doctors, Dr. Floyd and Dr. Liles. We were married November 21, 1959.

*Bette Blume, Concord*



## It took church, cabbage and 527 letters

In August 15, 1960, I met my future wife on a pair of roller skates. She was 17 at that time. For me it was not love at first sight. I did not know anything about this girl. So when I took her home and asked for a date for the next Sunday night, she said I'd have to go to church.

After about four Sunday night dates she told me that her plans were to go to nursing school after high school. My reply was, "I'll do anything to keep you from going."

Then came Christmas. My first present for her at the family Christmas Eve party was a very big cabbage. I'll never forget what her grandma said that night: "It better not be a diamond ring. If it is, I'll take it away from her and give it back to you."

She did three years of nursing school. When she was on her last nine months of nursing school, I got drafted in the Army. After 527 letters (she wrote 424, I did 102) and five years and two months, we got married, Oct. 2, 1965. In those letters she wrote over 1,000 times, "I love and miss you very much."

A few days ago, I told her, "I love you." Her reply was, "I love you, too."

*Louis Talmadge Mead, Elizabeth City, Albemarle EMC*



## Brown-eyed boy

It was a cold February day in Michigan in 1949. I was just beginning my junior year of high school. I was sitting in homeroom when a tall slim man with wavy brown hair walked into the room. He was wearing a uniform, and he had the most beautiful brown eyes I had ever seen. I turned to the girl next to me and said, "That's the man I'm going to marry." I soon found out that he was 21 years old and had just returned from three years in the Air Corps and was finishing high school.

We saw each other around school that spring, but I didn't see him all summer. We had our first date in the fall, when school started again. We went to a drive-in-movie. It was pouring rain and his car leaked, but that didn't matter.

We were married in February 1951. Now six children, 11 grandchildren and four great-grandchildren later, we are still together. The wavy brown hair is gone, but I still look into those beautiful brown eyes everyday.

*Mary Porter, New Bern, Tideland EMC*



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Thanks to everyone who sent us stories of how you met and pictures to go with them. You can see more at our Web site. Next month we'll publish stories of your first job in the working world. [Deadline was Dec. 15.] For more themes and rules in our "Nothing Could Be Finer" series, see page 19.



## Midnight madness

It was midnight, and I stood in front of her house. We were 19 and 16, had met that summer, and I was smitten. Following her home from a party, I shamefully stood in the darkness near his convertible listening to her argue with the now, ex-boyfriend. My heart pounded at the possibilities.

She fled to her house. He left in a huff, and I stood, scared to knock on her door. Was I standing at one of life's crossroads? To my horror, her mother answered the door, but welcomed me, and said, "Yes, Sue is still awake." Clammy palms didn't prevent the fateful question when I saw her.

The hike in the woods with this beautiful girl was a blur. Life was exceptionally sweet and showed the promise of wonderful things to come. Mom asked about this special date I had mentioned and was upset when I simply said, "I'll marry this girl someday."

Despite our age, separation during college and the Navy, we wed. Thirty-eight years have passed, each one more precious than the last as we age gracefully together.

Fools rush in where angels fear to tread, but I thank God for that nudge to take the first step.

*Larry Holland, Taylorsville, EnergyUnited*

## Reunited with Earl

My husband and I met through one of my family members. He told me that he was new to town and needed someone to be his friend. When I got the piece of paper with his name on it I thought it was funny. "Earl" is my dad's name, too.

I got home that evening and called him. He was so different, honest and very straightforward. I fell in love that first night. The second night we picked out our baby names. The third day we met. I found out that he wasn't a stranger and that we had gone to elementary school together in West Virginia. Here we were reunited more than 11 years later.

We have been married for almost three years and have a beautiful little girl, Mikayla, who is 1.

In life, every day is a struggle, but sometimes you can find someone who knows you so well they complete you. For every woman or man still out there looking, here is some advice: Look after yourself, and love will find you. It happened to me.

*Susan Caldwell, Cameron, Central EMC*



## Fatherly love

My husband Anthony is deployed in Iraq and returned home to Fort Bragg the very night before our son David was born at Womack Army Hospital. It was certainly love at first sight when David was born. Anthony was so excited about it, he followed the baby to the NICU unit and stayed with him the entire time, leaving me by myself in recovery for three long hours. He was so in awe of bringing a new life into the world he forgot to check on me. He had to return to Iraq right after David was born and left story-time recordings so our son can hear his daddy's voice on a regular basis.

*Andrea Valdez, Fayetteville, Lumbee River EMC*



## Two stepping

On August 24, 1997, Sam Allen and I met. It was definitely love at first sight, and a love that God had in store for us. We lived in different towns and had never met prior to this day. My younger sister (age 10) had actively been going to the Palimino Country Club in Fayetteville for family night. One night she begged me to go with her, and after a big guilt trip, I went.

Shortly after we arrived, a slow song began to play, and a young guy asked me to dance. My answer was "no," because I didn't really know how to dance. Dragging me onto the floor, he insisted that I was going to dance and enjoy myself. As we danced, he pointed to his friends who usually came with him on family night. That is where I spotted Sam. I asked my dancing man to introduce me to all of them. Later in the evening, they offered "two-stepping" lessons. They told the guys to find a partner, and Sam picked me.

We have been together since the age of 17. We dated for four and half years without ever being separated. We married in 2001. We had our first beautiful daughter, Olivia, in 2004 and our second beautiful daughter, Violet, in 2006.

It was definitely a God-sent marriage and family.

*Angela Allen, Tar Heel, Four County EMC*

## A day later, I knew

I was in the Marine Corps, stationed at Marine Corps Supply Center, and was looking for a place to stay off base. A buddy of mine suggested that I stay at his house that he rented with two others. There was a spare bedroom. I accepted and followed him to the house. There I saw a pretty little country girl standing in the kitchen cooking. I asked my friend

*continued on page 18*

if she was somebody's girl or what, and he told me that she was just living there helping with rent and was not attached. I went over and started a conversation with her and the next thing I knew we had talked until 4 a.m.

We finally went to sleep in our own rooms, and the next day I asked her to marry me. She told me that she had to know somebody at least two weeks before she would marry anyone. I waited the two weeks and asked her again. This time she said "yes," so we went downtown to the County Ordinary's Office and got a license and were married the next day.

Everybody said it would not last, but on Feb. 26, 2008, we will celebrate our 37th wedding anniversary.

*Gary E. Tice, Creedmoor, Wake Electric*



### A match made online

Dave was living in Wilmington and I lived on the beautiful Crystal Coast. We had both been married before and were living alone. We dreamed of finding someone special to share the rest of our lives with.

We had heard about Match.com and how you could read a person's profile and view their picture on the Internet. You could send e-mail and arrange a time to meet. We were both skeptical at first. For me, it was a little scary. I prayed about it and decided it was worth a try.

We each tried meeting other people in public places. None were our type. I was looking for someone who loved God as much as I do.

One day I was scrolling through the profiles with my grandson on my lap. He picked out Dave's picture and said, "Grandma, that's the one you need to go out with." I said, "O.K. Let's send him an e-mail." After sending e-mails, we talked on the phone a couple of times, then he

drove from Wilmington to meet me at a restaurant at Atlantic Beach.

Our next date was a day trip to Ocracoke Island on the ferry. It was a beautiful picture-perfect day. One year later we were married outside at Fort Macon.

*Faye Hashley, Morehead City, Carteret-Craven Electric*



### Chemistry

In the summer of 1995, Brent and I met and hit it off while taking summer classes at a local community college. My mother-in-law says, "They met in chemistry, which it turned out to be!"

We had a lot of the same friends back at college. In fact, months earlier one friend had tried to set us up with each other, but we both had declined.

In the fall of 2001, my grandmother passed away. My mother asked if I would like to keep a particular picture that had been her mother's. When we looked at it, my husband said, "I cannot believe this!" The picture had been at my grandmother's house for years. It was of a white bench at Dixon Gallery and Gardens in Memphis, Tenn. This was the exact spot where my husband proposed to me.

We still believe to this day that a higher power was guiding us to each other. With almost 10 years of marriage, one little girl and a little boy on the way, we know that it was nothing short of destiny.

*Mandy Styles, Pikeville, Tri-County EMC*

### A blow to the head

My first encounter with my husband was when I threw a piece of coal that hit him in the head. Back in 1953, I was in the 3rd grade at Beulaville Elementary School, and Jackie Creech was the teacher's pet. I did not like it or him! We used to play in the coal pile that was used to heat the school. One day, I picked up

a piece of coal and hit him in the head. Eleven years later we married. Shortly after, a cyst developed on Jackie's forehead. The doctor had to remove the cyst and said it was a reaction to a foreign object—the coal from 1953!

We will celebrate our 43rd anniversary in February.

*Kaye Creech, Beulaville, Tri-County EMC*

### Dunkin Donuts bargain

My husband and I believe in love at first sight. We met as teens in 1979. While I was working at Dunkin Donuts, his brother and father would come in, but Dale would just sit outside and wait. I told his brother I wanted to meet that cute boy and told him to make his brother come in and talk to me.

One day he got up his nerve and came in. He had the face of an angel, and he was dressed in paint-spattered work clothes. I took his order and served him with a big smile. When finished eating, he shyly walked up to the register to pay and said, "Do you want to go for a ride in my car?" Of course, I agreed.

I told a co-worker what had happened, and she offered me \$5 to let her go out with him instead. I turned her down.

We went out on a date that night and were married the next year. Now, 27 years later, we have raised three beautiful daughters and are very happy. What a bargain my husband got for his money: Soda pop, doughnut, and wife! And I'm glad I didn't sell him for that \$5!

*Mary Roach, New London, Union Power Cooperative*



### The good friend

Fifty years ago on an October afternoon, I was taking dictation from a telephone company supervisor when he dictated, "I know who would be the perfect match for you!"

This didn't connect with the dictation for telephone letters. But the supervisor continued, "My good friend just returned home from Germany after filling his two service years with the Army. You two would be good together."

I responded, "Thank you. I'm not interested."

Nothing more was spoken of the "good friend" until one Saturday morning shortly after that dictation when the office was working overtime. Dressed in jeans, a boy's plaid shirt, no makeup, and my hair in curlers, I looked up and who should walk up to my desk with the supervisor but a good-looking guy, the supervisor's friend. Apparently, my looks didn't discourage him. That evening we had our first date. It was the night I fell in love.

Three months later the "good friend" (now my best friend) was back at college finishing his degree. He called to ask, "Will you marry me?"

I became his June bride 50 years ago this past June.

*Mary Lou Helt, North Wilkesboro, EnergyUnited*



### The fisherman's daughter

What was I thinking? Her daddy had arms like a 9-pound hammer. He was a hardcore, lifetime fisherman from Alaska, a true salty dog. What was I thinking?

Her sister Cathleen invited me to her church one Sunday morning and dragged me right down front at the altar to be introduced to Pamela. Pamela had little interest in me at the time, because I was four years younger. I felt pretty much the same, because I was not looking for an "older woman" either. Also, I had this secret fear that after a few years with any woman our love would grow cold. But I never told anyone this.

One cold winter day, Pamela and I went with some friends at a restaurant and found that hot coffee and ice cream made a wonderfully romantic combination. We dated six months before we kissed.

We're going on 23 years and six kids later. My love for Pamela is stronger than ever. What was God thinking?

*Carter Eby, Huntersville, EnergyUnited*

### Young love

I am a young woman who loves your magazine. I read just about every article. I know you are probably looking for "old love" to respond to "How We Met." But I would like to share my story anyway.

I first met my love at work. It wasn't love at first sight. He walked up to me and introduced himself. He smoothly squeezed into the conversation how we should get together sometime. He worked at a different location, but when our paths crossed, he would ask me out and I would turn him down. I didn't believe he was really interested, like most young men.

I ended up working with him everyday. We became friends. One weekend we went out of town, with some friends, as friends. The day after we returned, he told me he loved me. I must admit I had very strong feelings for him.

Now we have been together six years, and I'm sure more to come. We have two children and one on the way. Our love for our family and each other constantly grows. My love and I are proof that you can't have "old love" without beginning with the young.

*Rosa Chauncy, Edenton, Albemarle EMC*



### "Last Dance" romance

In late 1970 I was getting over a bad relationship and some friends invited me to go dancing. We started going to Stony Gap Square Dance on Stony Gap Road in Albemarle (now a flea market). I commented to one of the girls that there were several nice-looking young men from Norwood. She and some of the others informed me that I had not seen the best-looking one, Billy Steen, but that he was engaged to be married. I thought no more about it.

In mid-December on a Saturday night, when I came off the dance floor, I walked the man of my dreams. I had often dreamed of marrying a tall, dark handsome man, but in my dreams I could never see his face. I was stunned, I wanted to dance with him, but all at once I was too overwhelmed to ask. Since he would not come to me, I had to go ask him to dance. We danced to Floyd Cramer's "Last Dance."

He held me so close and snug, my feet never seemed to touch the floor. I felt like a princess who finally met her prince.

We got married on August 5, 1972, and remain together still. After 35 years, three children and 11 grandchildren we still hold a special bond that despite all odds has kept us together. ①

*Sandra Steen, Norwood, Pee Dee EMC*

## send us your best **EARN \$50**

Here are the themes in our "Nothing Could Be Finer" series. Send us your stories and pictures about these themes. If yours is chosen for publication, we'll send you \$50. You don't have to be the best writer. Just tell it from your heart.

#### March 2008

##### Garden Photos

Send photos of your garden and the stories behind them.

*Deadline: January 15*

#### April 2008

##### North Carolina Vacation

Photos Where did you go, when, what happened?

*Deadline: February 15*

#### May 2008

##### A Pet's Palace

The best home your pet ever had. Send photos, if you have them.

*Deadline: March 15*

#### The Rules

1. Approximately 200 words or less.
2. One entry per household per month.
3. Photos are welcome. Digital photos should be a minimum of 1200 by 800 pixels.
4. E-mailed or typed, if possible. Otherwise, make it legible.
5. Include your name, electric co-op, mailing address and phone number.
6. If you want your entry returned, please include a self-addressed, stamped envelope. (We will not return others.)
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