

THE SPOKESMAN-REVIEW

[News](#)[Sports](#)[A&E](#)[Obits](#)[Search Q](#)[Menu ≡](#)[Washington](#)[Idaho](#)[Business](#)[Health](#)[NEWS > FEATURES > WASHINGTON VOICES](#)

Broken watch, lasting marriage

Thu., June 24, 2010



Barbara and Louis Anderson were wed on July, 7, 1946, and now live in Mead. (Dan Pelle)



By Cindy Hval, Dchval@Juno.Com

The Spokesman-Review

Sixty-four years makes relationship 'richer'

Barbara Anderson could scarcely believe her luck when her secret crush walked into her parent's jewelry store in Longview, Wash., in 1945. Tall, handsome Louis Anderson was home on leave from the Army Air Corps and wanted to get his watch fixed.

Louis and Barbara had attended the same high school, but he was a couple of years older than she. When he graduated and left to join the service, Barbara clipped his photo from the yearbook and carried it in her wallet.

From her balcony perch, where she worked as an engraver, she watched her father slowly shake his head. The store had been flooded with soldiers home on leave and her dad had backlog of repairs waiting.

"I didn't have the nerve to come down," Barbara recalled. "After he left, I bawled out my dad for not fixing his watch. I felt like I would have worked up the courage!"

Louis hadn't been around much. The young B-17 pilot was part of 305th Bombardment Group and had been stationed overseas. "In 35 missions there was only one that I didn't get shot at," he said, and shrugged.

On one memorable flight left a lasting impression. "Flak went through the floorboard of the cockpit and out the windshield, shattering it," Louis recalled.

"I was hit in the back of the leg and a small piece of flak lodged there." And 66 years later, he's pretty sure that souvenir is still stuck somewhere in his leg.

Louis had returned to the states for B-29 training, but his mother's ill health prompted an extended leave. Barbara decided not to keep her crush a secret, and a month after seeing him in the jewelry store, a mutual friend arranged a date for the couple.

"We went on a picnic at Crystal Lake, near Kelso," Barbara said.

Other dates followed. "I was impressed," said Louis. "She was a beautiful girl."

When his leave was up, he rejoined his unit, but returned for another visit just in time for Christmas. Barbara smiled at the memory. "He brought me a bottle of Joy perfume and a box of candy."

On New Year's Eve 1945, the couple headed out to a dance at a local Grange. A winter rainstorm descended with a vengeance. "The rain poured down and the mud flowed," said Barbara. They couldn't get to the Grange, so they sat in Louis's truck and listened to the New Year come in on the radio. And as 1946 arrived, Louis asked Barbara to marry him.

"My dad said he was the first guy I dated that was real man and gentleman," Barbara recalled.

Louis bought her a small diamond engagement ring at her father's store. He felt bad about the size of the stone, but he was just getting out of the service and planned to attend college. There just wasn't enough cash for more elaborate ring.

Barbara said, "I told him he could get me a bigger diamond for our 25th anniversary." That became a running joke between them. "Every time he missed a birthday or anniversary, the diamond got bigger," she said, and chuckled. "I told him I don't accept apologies just add it to the cost of the new diamond."

 Louis shook his head. "I'm still not sure of the accounting on all that!"

On July 7, 1946, they married. Louis enrolled at Washington State University. Following World War II, housing for couples was in short supply. For the first year of their married life the couple lived in one room in a boarding house.

In 1950, Louis graduated with a degree in education and Barbara gave birth to their daughter. His teaching career took them first to Prosser, Wash., and then to Spokane where their son was born. That move also brought Louis back to his rural roots.

Barbara said, “He lived on a farm in Longview – he was a country boy and I was a city girl.” In 1967, the family bought 80 acres in Green Bluff. “It was part woods and part cleared land,” Louis said. “The years up on the farm were the most enjoyable and the least stressful.”

However, his wife wasn’t eager to explore farm life. She asked him, “Do you want me to look weathered and old?” He didn’t – so she took care of the bookkeeping and sold the plentiful apples and cherries. “But no actual farm work for me!” she said.

They leased out the orchard, but when Louis retired after teaching 30 years at Mead High School, he took over the orchard. They sold the bulk of the property in 2003 and moved into town, but their son still lives on the 21 acres they retained. “He was awful anxious to get off the farm,” Louis said. Then grinned and added, “That changed when he got married and moved back to Spokane.”

The Andersons have stayed busy during their retirement years. Louis is a Master Gardener and Barbara an avid quilter. Every Wednesday morning Louis attends the St. Luke’s Lutheran men’s prayer breakfast, but even then, Barbara is on his mind. “He always brings me back a scone,” she said.

As their 64th anniversary approaches, the couple reflected on their years together. “You can’t take back bad words,” said Barbara. “We’ve never said one thing we’ve had to take back.” She said their love for each other has changed over the years.

“It’s truer, deeper and richer.” Then she smiled at her husband. “I feel sorry for those who don’t grow old together.”

PUBLISHED: JUNE 24, 2010, MIDNIGHT

i Subscribe and login to the Spokesman-Review to read and comment on this story



The Scary Truth Behind This German WW2 Photo — This Will Leave You Speechless

Discover the unbelievable WWII photos previously lost to history...

Watch The Video

🔥 70,574

Promoted Content

Most read stories

Vandervert’s financial troubles spill into Spokane construction projects, sites around the region ...



Aquifer falling, central Washington farmers ask: Where will the water come from? ...

Footage shows violent altercation between army vet, officers at Coeur d'Alene hospital; both sides b ...

Dave Nichols: Jack Blair Memorial game brings together several future collegiate players ...

Plan to combine Spokane's regional 911 call response draws rebuke from police, fire and clerical wor ...

Latest headlines

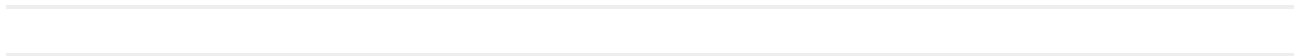
Grip on Sports: The weekend was beautiful around here, so if you missed something we understand – and have a helping hand

Grip on Sports: Don't let all the sporting events distract completely from the reason for the day


Grip on Sports: Another year of building memories is over for high school athletes

"Non-renewable" central Washington water source nearly run dry

Grip on Sports: As summer looms, the promise of a strong pitching staff gives Mariner fans hope



Follow us elsewhere:

-  Facebook
-  Twitter
-  Newsletter



Print edition home delivery
Newspaper Routes Available

Help

Customer Service
Sitemap
Directory
Subscriber Services

Classifieds

Classifieds
Advertising
Obituaries

More

Masthead
Staff
Cowles Jobs
Archives/Research
Buy photo reprints
Jumble
Crossword
Horoscopes

Contact Us

Downtown Spokane
999 W Riverside Ave
Spokane, Wa 99201

Mailing Address
P.O. Box 2160
Spokane, WA 99210

Main switchboard:
(509) 459-5000

 **ustomer service:**
(509) 747-4422

Newsroom:

(509) 459-5400

(800) 789-0029

© Copyright 2018, The Spokesman-Review | Community Guidelines | Terms of Service | Privacy Policy | Copyright Policy

© Copyright 2016, The Spokesman-Review

