

2015 Christmas News from the Browns

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50th Wedding Anniversary

This year is a milestone year for us as we celebrate our 50th wedding anniversary. We were married on a dull winter day by a justice of the peace in Plentywood Montana, USA, on Friday, February 12, 1965.

STORY BY GORD

When I first joined the R.C.M.P. I had to make a commitment to remain unmarried for the first 5 years of service – an out dated regulation that cost the Force many good members who would otherwise have made a career of it. I was first posted to Edmonton, Alberta and then on to Lethbridge where the local Staff Sergeant was good enough to send me on prisoner escorts to Regina where Marilyn lived at the time. We soon grew impatient and decided to get “secretly” married in the United States where there was little or no likelihood of being discovered. Montana State law required that we submit to blood tests before a marriage certificate could be issued so, on a fine but cool day in early February, we headed for Plentywood, Montana which is 190 kilometres south of Regina. On our way home, after we had crossed the border into Canada, we drove straight into a blinding snow storm. Having been raised on the west coast of Canada where the closest thing to a blizzard was an afternoon rain shower, I was not prepared for a white-out. In fact, I didn't even know what a white-out was. With only a foot or two of visibility, we crept along the highway in the tracks of a preceding vehicle. When the car suddenly refused to go further, we realized that we had been following a tractor that headed across a field seeking the

shelter of a farm building. We were stuck in the ditch beside the road. After hitching a ride to the nearest gas station where we were joined by other stranded travellers, I managed to call the Regina detachment and have one of the patrol cars pick us up and take us back to Regina.

The next day was clear and sunny with a hint of some bad weather to come late in the day. With some difficulty, we managed to find a tow truck driver who was willing to drive down to pull our car out of the ditch, despite a weather warning for late in the day. Unfortunately, the weather closed in earlier than expected and, half way to our stranded car, we were, once again, stuck in the middle of a blizzard. As we drove along at a very slow pace with virtually no visibility, the tow truck driver detected a break in the blast of snow and thought there might be a shelter close by. The wind and snow were blowing so hard that we tied a rope around the driver's waist and played it out so he could make his way back to us. Luckily, it was a farm house so we all trudged through the growing banks of snow to the front door where we were welcomed by a little old lady and her three aging sons. The storm raged on for three days which were spent playing cards, talking and being served some of the finest meals that we have ever experienced. One night we had roast goose along with all of the trimmings as our hosts turned out to be very accommodating. After the storm blew itself out we said goodbye to our new friends and managed to find the car despite the fact that it was now completely covered with drifting snow. We managed to get it towed back to Regina where Marilyn's brother-in-law made me a deal on a new car which was only fitting for the return trip to Plentywood to tie the knot.

On Friday, February 12, 1965,

we headed south once again to pick up our marriage certificate and find someone to marry us. We checked the weather this time but didn't know that February 12th was Lincoln's birthday, a statutory holiday in the U.S. We arrived at the court house only to discover that it was closed for the holiday. Fortunately, the clerk of the court had taped her card to the door in case of emergencies so, considering this to be an emergency, we headed for her house which, in this very small border town, was not far away. We were relieved when she kindly offered to open the court house and retrieve our marriage certificate so we could get married that day. We had thought that the justice of the peace would be in the court house but, being a holiday, she told us he was home. She provided us with his address which turned out to be a quaint three story home with a large front porch. Our knock at the door was answered by a man that looked to be in his 60s. Of course, we were only 21 at the time so everyone over the age of 30 looked as though they were ready for retirement. He had a pleasant disposition and, when we asked if he would marry us, seemed happy to oblige. Looking around, he asked us if we had a witness which, apparently, was required in the State of Montana. When we told him we didn't have one, he picked up the phone and asked his next door neighbour to join us. She was a relatively young woman of average height clad in a red plaid dressing gown and slippers. She must have been preparing for a day of celebration as her hair was done up in large curlers. The only other guests were the justice of the peace's wife and dog which barked incessantly during a ceremony that lasted about 5 minutes. Once pronounced man and wife, I paid the fee of \$10.00 US and tipped the wit-

ness \$5.00. To this day, my brother, who had a very lavish wedding, still accuses me of being so cheap that I'd only pay \$15.00 to get married.



February 12, 1965

FOOTNOTE

After the wedding, Marilyn returned to Regina while I was stationed in various parts of Southern Alberta. In the spring of that year, I was given a boat and car and assigned to the Cypress Hills National Park where I patrolled the lakes and camp grounds. Marilyn joined me there and we spent her summer vacation together during the times I was not working. Marilyn was told by her doctor that, because of a medical condition, pregnancy would be unlikely but, shortly after our time at Cypress Hills, her doctor's diagnosis was proven to be incorrect and we were faced with the dilemma of living apart during her pregnancy. It was decided that she would move to Lethbridge where I was stationed at that time. Having been with the same law firm for several years, Marilyn had a tearful lunch with her boss to explain the reason she was leaving. He said that he was wondering when they would have this conversation. It turns out that the little old lady at the farm house was a client and had told him all about his secretary and her “husband” who had stayed with her during a snow storm in February.

- NOT THE END -

Mississippi Anniversary Cruise



In April, we travelled to New Orleans which we had last visited in 1989. We thought that it would have changed since the hurricane but, other than more tourists, it was the same as ever. After exploring the new & old sights of New Orleans and going on a swamp tour, we boarded a

paddle wheeler cruise boat bound for Memphis, Tennessee. Since it was a river boat where the water was swift but calm, the rooms were spacious and more like a hotel room than a cruise ship. There were only 150 passengers on the eight day cruise so we got to know most of them before it

ended. This was a Civil War theme cruise so on board were historians that provided daily lectures on the battles that were fought along the river during the Civil War. Also aboard were experts on the river system who explained the history of the levee system and how it is maintained by Army Corps of Engineers. At each stop, the entertainment arrived on board for the evening show. It was an all-inclusive cruise with a lounge on each deck that was reserved for providing drinks, snacks, books and game tables 24 hours a day. The evening activities started at 5pm with a cocktail hour. At 6:00 we were ushered into the dining room where we are served a meal that we had been ordered by us during lunch. The show started around 8pm where they came around with coke floats and popcorn. Less than half of the crowd made

it through the show without falling asleep or heading for their beds. Seniors are a tough crowd.

After docking at Memphis, we rented a car and drove down to Beale Street, parking in front of the famous Peabody Hotel and watched the ducks march in (long story—use Google). Then it was off to Nashville, a four hour drive from Memphis. We spent a couple of days exploring before attending a show at the Grand Ole Opry.



Memphis, Tennessee

Grandsons

Ben is now 20 years old and has been living on his own for almost two years. He continues with his auto mechanic apprenticeship, rebuilding his car & partying with his friends. Mathew is now 17, doing well in school and playing ball hockey and soccer. He has his heart set on law enforcement and, unlike his brother, spends much of his time on his computer



BEN

MATHEW

or playing street hockey with his gaming buddies.



Paige & Mitch

Paige and Mitch bought an older house and completely re-built it from the inside out. It was a huge project but the end result was a beautiful home with all the modern gadgets you can imagine. Gord's favourite is the command center which runs the home entertainment throughout the house, including the home theater. Paige went to India with some friends and they both went to Mexico in November. Mitch has a general manager to run his copier business now so that frees him up to spend time on other projects. After selling her interest in the computer business, Paige has embarked on consulting project advising and managing Google advertising for her clients. Both own their respective office buildings so they will be in good shape to pay for Mom & Dad's senior living space down the street.

Grand Canyon Drive Holiday

In September, we continued our plans to start visiting more places on this continent by driving to the Grand Canyon. The most popular route from here is to blast South down i5 to Las Vegas then East to the South entrance of the park. Instead, we crossed the mountains at Leavenworth, WA, then down through Salt Lake City and into Bryce Canyon before arriving at the back side of the park on the East side. This way, we were able to travel 20 miles along the South rim of the Grand Canyon with its many uncrowded view points. After seeing all the view-points, we headed South out of the park to a waiting helicopter which took us on a one hour ride through the Grand Canyon to the strains of Frank Sinatra singing "Come Fly With Me". This turned out to be the highlight of our trip as we were taken to every corner of the canyon by air.

visit friends. We covered over 5,000 kilometres of highway in two weeks but we only drove for about 4 hours a day. We were in no hurry to get back so took the driving one day at a time, stopping at rest stops for lunch and usually getting to our hotel by 3 or 4 in the afternoon. It was an interesting drive, taking us through Washington, Oregon, Idaho, Utah, Arizona and California from two lane roads with a speed limit of 50 Mph to 10 lane divided highways at 80 Mph. Next road trip — Yellowstone National Park, Wyoming .



We returned to Vancouver through Redding & Sacramento, California where we stopped to

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