

April 23, 2009 in Washington Voices

Still bowled over after nearly seventy years **The Littles recall first date that sparked lifetime of love**

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Morris and Doris Little met on a blind date, and as luck would have it, they've been married for 66 years and counting. The only thing luckier than that fateful night is "Lucky," the dog, who joined them for this photo.

If first dates are a signal of things to come, then conventional wisdom would dictate that Morris and Doris Little shouldn't have had a second outing.

"It was a blind date," recalled Doris from their Spokane Valley home. "His friend set us up."

Morris hadn't had much experience with women. "I was girl-shy," he said. "I hadn't even hugged a girl."

When he asked Doris what she'd like to do she just shrugged and 'Cause that's what I smiled. "So I took her bowling," Morris said. "I knew how to do."

Unfortunately, his date did not. In addition she was left-handed, and there weren't any bowling balls for lefties at the lanes. Chuckling, Morris relayed what happened

next. "She sent a bowling ball flyin' three lanes over and then sat down and started bawling."

The flustered young man wasn't sure how to respond, so he asked, "Well. What do you want to do?"

"So off Doris picked up the story. "I said, 'I want to go dancing.' they went to the Slab Inn in Post Falls. The only problem? Morris didn't know how to dance.

"I stomped around on the dance floor and pumped her hand up and down like a water pump," he said, mimicking the action.

"He was pretty bad," agreed Doris. "He told me he couldn't dance and I said, 'You sure can't!' But I liked him real well." So well, that when a week went by and he didn't call to ask for another date, she gathered some friends and paid him a visit at the service station where he worked.

That was all the encouragement the smitten young man needed, and the couple were soon an item. When Morris took a job with the railroad in Wishram, Wash., he missed Doris so much that he found the courage to propose. "I called her and asked her over the phone," he said.

Doris's eyes light up when she remembers Christmas 1941. "He gave me a real pretty robe, ice skates and an engagement ring."

On April 18, 1942, the couple married. "I had to get his mother's permission, because he wasn't 20," Doris said. "He was 19, and I was a year older."

She moved with her husband to the tiny town of Wishram, where he'd rented a house for \$12.50 a month. Life in the railroad town proved difficult for the young bride. A family of rattlesnakes made their home around her backyard clothesline. "She waited till I came home, and I hung up the clothes," Morris said.

Soon, they were expecting their first child. The heat, combined with dry winds, made Doris miserable, so her handy husband got to work. "I scrounged around for parts and made an air conditioner for her," he said. His mechanical aptitude had started long before that. "I used to take my bike apart and put it back together again, just to get greasy."

After their son's birth, Morris received his draft notice. He was eager to serve his country and to get out of Wishram. Unfortunately, hearing problems kept him out of active duty. Instead, he helped the war effort as an aircraft mechanic, working at two different bases.

They settled in Spokane Valley, and two more children joined their family. Over the years Morris owned four garages, including Watts Wheel Service, which his son, Chuck Little, now owns. Doris did the bookkeeping for the businesses. "The office was hers, the shop mine and the house ours," Morris said with a grin.

Their two sons inherited their dad's mechanical aptitude. "The boys raced cars," he said. "Ron and I built them and Chuck took over the racing." That love of fast cars was also inherited by Chuck's son, former NASCAR driver, Chad Little.

Family is important to the Littles. Neither Morris nor Doris grew up in stable homes. "His mother raised him, and my grandmother and uncle raised me," Doris said. Together they created a nurturing home for their family. "She wanted to have 10 kids," asserted Morris.

"Oh, I did not," said Doris, laughing. "It would have interfered with my golf and bowling."

That's right – bowling. The young lady who burst into tears at her first attempt at bowling went on to master the sport and joined several leagues. Her husband taught her to bowl and she taught him to dance.

"We used to dance three or four times a week," she said. From ballroom dancing to square dancing, the couple enjoyed it all. "We belonged to four different square dancing clubs," Morris said. "I loved the polkas."

At 87 and 88 respectively, they've had to hang up their dancing shoes. But the memories of their time on the dance floor make them smile. Morris calls his wife Mom or Mother, and she calls him Mo, and they laughed as they wove the story of their marriage together, finishing each other's sentences and teasing with easy affection.

Morris summed up their marriage this way, "No one has had more fun in their lives than we have."

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