

Across Oceans, Across Time[®] . . .

Stories from the Family History & Genealogy Center



Long-term Lovers – Gerhard “Harry” Andersen & Jane Kay Stevens

After receiving her teaching credential Jane and two girlfriends signed on for an 82-day tour of Europe in 1955 as part of their pact to see the world before settling down. In London they linked up with a group from UC-Berkeley and met their tour guide, a friendly young multi-lingual Dane from Svendborg named Harry. Harry enjoyed Jane’s warmth and problem-solving ability and was soon smitten; he semi-proposed to Jane on the 74th day of the tour, and in turn, she gave him a semi-answer. After a wonderful tour, Jane returned to her parents’ home and resumed her teaching career. One day the telephone rang and Jane’s father answered. On the other end was Harry, about whom he had heard a sentence or two. “Do you call all of the girls after each of your tours?” he inquired. “Yes, but I am calling Jane first,” responded Harry. He asked for permission to visit, and thus their whirlwind courtship began. Harry visited Tacoma several times in the following months before suggesting they get married on December 28th. Jane had made other plans, so told him to put it in writing. They were married in Tacoma on December 28th, 1955, Harry’s 31st birthday, a date purposefully chosen so that he could never forget their anniversary. Following their wedding the couple honeymooned in Acapulco, surviving a huge earthquake, and Taxco, where they skirted a revolution, experienced the coldest night in a half-century, and Harry fell ill. Despite such a rough start, it was the beginning of an enduring, happy marriage. Harry and Jane had 4 children, Steven, Karen, Niels and Erik. Harry passed away on December 25, 2011, three days before their 56th anniversary and his 87th birthday. His and Jane’s story are part of this year’s photo exhibit at the Family History and Genealogy Center.

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