

Cupid can strike at any age

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Ah, love!

As couples are gearing up for Valentine's Day, it's a great chance to focus on some local lovebirds who are pretty delighted to have found each other in this big, crazy world of ours.

One is a tale of a match made in heaven while the other is a story of late -- but great! -- love.

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When Brian Elliott and Linda DeVito dated as teenagers in Brantford, it was a tempestuous relationship.

"We planned to get married but things ended badly," says Brian. "It was a bad break-up."

Which might explain why the two didn't see each other for more than three decades.

Both married and had children and both of their marriages ended almost ten years ago.

In 2010, Brian and Linda were reminded of each other.

Brian was telling his son about the girl he was crazy about as a youngster.

Linda was looking for another Brian Elliott on FaceBook and stumbled across her old boyfriend.

"She got in touch and asked if I was interested in getting together for coffee. The main reason I wanted to see her was to apologize," says Brian.

"When I got to the coffee shop she surprised me by asking for my forgiveness."

It turns out that both Brian and Linda had become Christians since their big split and that decision had changed them for the better.

One coffee turned into another, and another. Soon the pair had a standing date every Friday night at Williams on King George Road.

"The staff has seen us come in every Friday at 7 p.m. and sometimes they're cleaning up after us."

After months getting to re-know each other, Brian and Linda are going to marry on Feb. 24.

The ceremony will smell like coffee because -under special dispensation of the owner of Williams -the wedding will be performed in the coffee house, followed by a more formal dinner later.

"This is a first for them," says Brian.

"At first they said no, they couldn't close, but we told them our story and explained how much meaning Williams has for us."

The Christian aspect of the couple's relationship won't be left out, though. Faithful members of the Yes Church, Brian and Linda have also arranged to bring a cross from their church to be set up at the ceremony.

"God is always front and centre with us now."

And so is coffee.

For the last 17 months, Brian and Linda have been meeting at 7 p.m. every Friday night to chat over a Williams coffee.

"And we still haven't run out of things to say!"

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When you get to a certain age, meeting the love of your life seems oh-so-difficult.

The bar scene seems ridiculous and once you've explored the hobby and church groups and dabbled in online dating, you learn just how precious a commodity it is to find the perfect mate.

Carol Gowland, a busy nurse, finally turned to an age-old method designed to meet Mr. Right.

She hired a matchmaker.

Linda Miller from Misty River Introductions works all over the province matching people.

"I've matched many people in the Brantford area over the years and I come to the area to meet and interview people on a regular basis," says Linda.

And even though Carol lived over in Listowel, Linda's service matched her with Earl Schooley from Harley.

"Earl's picture and profile was one of the first that Misty River sent me," remembers Carol.

"I waited a while, being new, but finally decided to talk to him and we talked for a long time. There were a few others I talked to but I just knew after a few minutes of conversation it wasn't anyone I wanted to meet."

The two finally met for supper and Carol found the Harley businessman to be honest and sincere.

"We had a lot in common and he was a real gentleman. We married a year ago in December and I've never regretted it."

In fact, Earl and Carol became that adorably cute couple that's always together either running their business, volunteering on the local fair board or travelling.

Carol left nursing when she moved in this direction but has taken to rural life like a duck to water.

Aside from their matchmaker's assurances that they would make a fine pair, it's really their dogs that have assured the lovebirds that they were destined to be together.

"I always wanted a big dog but I knew with my job I didn't have time to spend with one so I got a little Sheltie named Kaycee," says Carol.

Earl has a big Rottweiler named Holly.

But as soon as the two adults merged their households, the dogs made an executive decision.

"My dog is now his dog and his dog is mine! It's very cute."

Their matchmaker says Earl and Carol are one of her best bits of work and the couple clearly agree.

"Sometimes it seems like we've been together forever," says Carol.

"We both say that we wish we would have met 40 years ago."

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If you have news about something funny, interesting or quirky, give Susan Gamble a call at 756-2020, ext. 2233, fax her at 756-9470, e-mail her at sgamble@theexpositor.com or drop a line to Word Has It, 195 Henry St., Brantford, N3S 5C9.