

After 40 years, love grows fonder, couple marries

By Sharon Dargay
staff writer

If absence makes the heart grow fonder, John Yuchas and Sally Jones are head over heels in love.

"When we picked up after 40 years, it was like we had always been together," explained the Southfield man, who met his bride-to-be while stationed in England during World War II.

"I was happily married for 39 years,"

added Jones. "But I always had him in the back of my mind."

The couple will tie the knot on Valentine's Day, capping a fairy tale romance that has weathered four decades, thousands of miles, marriage, divorce and death.

The classic "boy meets girl, loses girl and marries girl" story began in 1943 when Jones, then a 19-year-old clerk for the British War Department, stumbled into an American army office

searching for a paper clip.

"Half of the building was occupied by Americans. John was a sergeant," Jones recalled. "I went into the office one day, looking for something silly like a paper clip. We took an instant shine to one another."

BUT BEFORE the year was over, Jones had married a Welsh-born officer and Yuchas, then 21, was sent to France.

Ten years later, Yuchas was living in Southfield with his wife and four children. Jones and her husband, Idris Gibbons, were rearing three children in Wales.

"My husband had known John during the war," she said. "In 1978 I said 'I wonder if he ever got back home?' My husband said, why not write and find out."

Yuchas had written several letters to Jones at her old address in Gloucester, but she never received them. He wrote back to Jones in 1978, but she didn't reply.

"I knew he had gotten home safely," she said. "And besides, we were both happily married."

She wrote again in 1982 after her husband died. Ironically, Yuchas' wife had left him two years earlier.

I enclosed my telephone number. The next thing I knew, there was this telephone call in May 1983," Jones recalled.

"Can you imagine being in bed doing a crossword puzzle and hearing your daughter say, 'Mum, there's a yank on the phone?'"

Yuchas invited Jones to Southfield. She had planned to vacation in Spain, but her children helped change her mind.

"They said, 'Mum, if you don't go you may regret it. Go.' So I went."

grainchildren, her daughters and a sister behind.

wedding in Oakland County Circuit Court. The couple will repeat their vows this September for family and friends.

Greeted by television cameras at Detroit Metro Airport on Monday, Jones and Yuchas have become overnight celebrities. Publicity has prompted telephone calls from well-wishers and a spate of press interviews.


"We haven't had time to make other plans," Jones said. "I haven't even had time to unpack my case."



John Yuchas shares a moment in his Southfield house with Sally Jones. Their romance, begun during World War II, was renewed 40 years later.

MINDY SAUNDERS/staff photographer

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Hawaii, Smokies trips offered

Trips to the Smokies and Hawaii are on the YWCA of western Wayne County Travel Days itinerary for this spring.

YWCA Travel Days are planned for the pleasure of a group of YWCA men and women. Basic YWCA membership dues are \$10 annually. For full information call the YWCA 561-4110.

April 26-29th members and friends will holiday in Berea, Ky., Gatlinburg, Tenn., travel over the mountains to Asheville, N.C., and wind over to Lexington, Ky.

Travel is by deluxe motorcoach and includes lodging at Boone Tavern Hotel on Berea College Campus with dinner and breakfast. The next two nights will be spent in Gatlinburg.

The third day features a trip to North Carolina with a tour of George Vanderbilt's fabulous Biltmore House with lunch at Deepark Restaurant on the estate. The day ends back in Gatlinburg.

Sunday the group will get an early start for Lexington with stops at the Headley-Whitney Museum and the Kentucky Horse Farm before the ride home. Cost of the trip is \$259 per person double occupancy with a \$50 deposit due by March 1.

The Hawaii adventure is May 22-29, leaving from Detroit by air with seven nights at the Ala Moana Americana Hotel on Waikiki, Honolulu.

Airfare, double occupancy lodging and transfers are offered at \$618. A deposit of \$100 is required by Feb. 24. However, full payment guarantees this price.

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