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Sun shines on spring wedding at the Res

By Pippa Fisher



Lafayette couple have a perfect sunny day for their wedding at the Lafayette Reservoir March 30. Photo Pippa Fisher

With the iconic Lafayette reservoir as a backdrop, and under glorious sunshine, a local Lafayette couple tied the knot March 30 on the Rotary stage in front of family and friends. It's not an everyday sight up at the res, and although not a first for the park, it was especially meaningful to the couple.

The couple, Ginny Wehrmeister and John Quell, are known to many locally, having worked for years in theater and music right here in Lafayette.

It is a tale of two people destined to be together in what, it turns out, is a very small world. Despite having many of the same connections, knowing many of the same people and even attending some of the same events prior to meeting, it took an online dating app for the two to finally meet in the fall of 2016.

"It still befuddles me that we knew so many of the same people but not each other," says Wehrmeister.

"Our very first date was at El Charro - I'll never forget when we were planning our first date and we realized we both worked in Lafayette. Realizing that he knew Rena Wilson and Renee DeWeese (co-founders of Performing Academy), longtime friends and future bosses of mine, and worked at Lamorinda Music - a place I frequented. It was mind-blowing," says Wehrmeister.

"We saw each other a total of six times that week - including a picnic lunch at the Lafayette Reservoir," remembers Wehrmeister.

"We probably crossed paths a few times before we met since we worked in such close vicinity to each other," she says. In fact, Quell had taken a date to see "Play it Again, Sam" at Town Hall Theatre for which Wehrmeister won a Theatre Bay Area award.

Quell, originally from Norwalk, Connecticut, is the instrument repair technician at Lamorinda Music. A talented musician, he plays locally for a number of bands and is first chair alto sax player for the Walnut Creek Concert Band. He also plays clarinet and flute. Wehrmeister works right above Lamorinda Music at the Performing Academy as their program manager where she oversees all their after-school and summer programming and provides support to families, students, and teaching artists.

"It's funny, the repair tech prior to John ended up marrying a Performing Academy employee as well," says Wehrmeister.

As it happened, the previous Lamorinda Music instrument repair tech was someone Quell knew from school in Washington where he worked for a time after graduation. "When he (the previous tech) moved to another job he reached out to me to apply. I came down and loved the store, (and) John and Colleen (McCormick), and moved down shortly after the interview and have been here since the fall of 2015," explains Quell.

Prior to working at the Performing Academy Wehrmeister, who grew up in Concord, worked at Town Hall Theatre. She explains "After graduation I moved home and found a job working as a teaching artist at Town Hall Theatre. I started out there doing whatever they would allow me - I costumed student productions, I was in a handful of their main stage productions and I taught the love of theater to ages 5-18 years old. I began working full time at Town Hall as a resident teaching artist and then later their director of education."

And it was on the same Rotary stage at the reservoir that Wehrmeister brought many of her THT students to perform at the annual Concerts at the Res over the years. "I've personally overseen about six Concerts at the Res," she says. "Town Hall was invited back every year, our students have performed everything from Gilbert and Sullivan to Sondheim to Carol King. It's always a highlight to the start of summer."

The wedding was a truly local affair with Stanley Middle School music teacher Bob Athayde, playing piano. Wehrmeister explains that Quell met Athayde while working on the school's many instruments.

In yet another example of the small world in which they both knew the same people but not each other, Wehrmeister relates how local realtor and THT Board Vice President Tom Stack knew both of them separately. "Tom Stack met John at Lamorinda Music and learned John was interested in buying a house. Tom took John around when he first moved here and showed him real estate. Flash forward to two years

later when I brought John along as my date to the Shelly Awards. Tom was very surprised - two worlds colliding," she says.

Stack says that Wehrmeister's contributions at THT were groundbreaking, noting, "The inroads she made into the community were spectacular. She was a big part of the family we have there. Operative word - family."

And yes, it was Stack who found them their home. "They are two fantastic people and putting them in there first home together was as good a feeling as you can get in my business. I couldn't be more happy for them," he says.

Reach the reporter at: pippa@lamorindaweekly.com

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