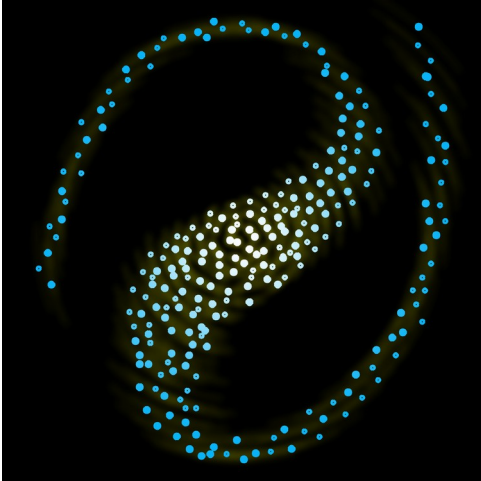


How We Met



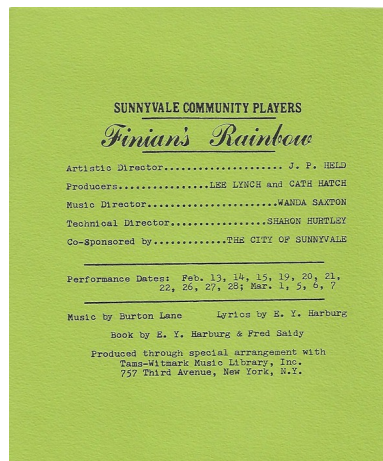
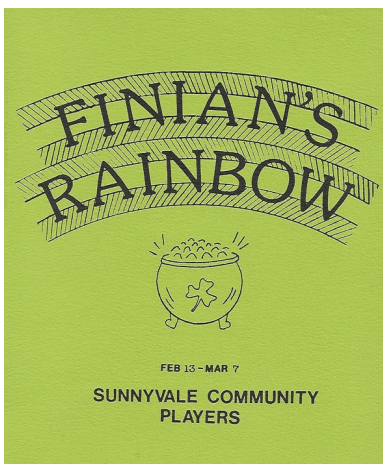
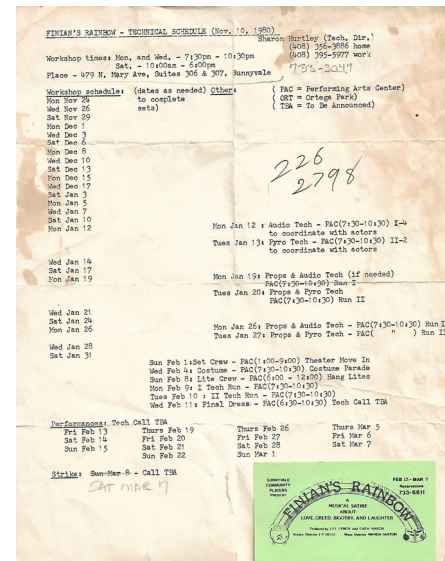
Long long ago on a planet far far away, two people met.

It wasn't us. Fast forward to late in the 20th Century.

At the time Jerry was traveling through the multi-verse when he fell into the attractive field of a lady named Sharon. He was surely caught and pulled through multiple dimensions until he appeared in Sunnyvale, California. There was a big party going on with fireworks, he, of course, assumed it was for him. The date was 4 July 1978. To pass the time Jerry became a sponsor of the Sunnyvale Community Players, a theater group he accidentally ran

across on an outing.

In late December, 1980, Sharon was the technical director for Finian's Rainbow for the Sunnyvale Community Players and needed volunteers to help build sets. Jerry answered the call, and then, there was the dead mouse.





WANDA SAXTON (Music Director) ... An accomplished musician with expertise in musical theater, Wanda has the added plus of a congenial and witty personality. She owns and operates the Saxton School of Music where she teaches piano, organ, guitar, voice and theory. Wanda earned her B.A. in voice from the University of New Hampshire and, after 25 years, has an M.A. in progress at San Jose State, studying musical theater. At West Valley College, Wanda has completed courses in Lyric Theater Workshop and Drama under the tutelage of J. P. Held. Evidently one of his favorite students, the two have worked together on such shows as ANNIE GET YOUR GUN, THE FANTASTICS, GODSPELL and BITTER SWEET. Also included in Wanda's voluminous list of performing and directorial credits are such shows as HELLO DOLLY, MUSIC MAN, CAMELOT, THE KING AND I, KISSME, MY FAIR LADY, PAINT YOUR WAGON, ANYTHING GOES, SOUND OF MUSIC and A LITTLE NIGHT MUSIC, for which she received the "Newcomer's Award" from the Saratoga Drama Group. Community theatre, in Wanda's words, "has become my life".

SHARON HURTLEY (Technical Director) ... An artist since the age of 6, Sharon is not only endowed with talent but is an extremely intelligent young woman. She earned her Bachelor of Philosophy degree at the University of Santa Clara and very nearly has her B.A. in music (classical composition) from the Music and Arts Institute in San Francisco. She also wants to add a degree in theatre and is busy gathering experience towards that goal. Her theatre experience includes doing makeup for HOT L. BALTIMORE at West Valley College, acting as stage manager for THE FANTASTICS for Los Gatos Community Players and performing the role of Mrs. Blacktooth in ANNIE GET YOUR GUN, also for LCCP. This will be her initiation as technical director but she likes the challenge. She is enthusiastic about the "beautiful" Sunnyvale theater and feels her biggest problem now is getting things organized so that it "all happens in time for opening night". Future plans include doing special effects for a movie in February, continuing school and pursuing her hobby of astrophysics. Some of Sharon's artistic endeavors go into designing wrought iron, where she does all of the construction work such as welding.



SHAUN BUTLER (Stage Manager) ... Shaun got the theater bug at Del Mar High School, where he participated in such shows as THE MIRACLE WORKER, 17 ANGRY MEN and PYGMALION. He did a little acting but his first love is tech work. He was stage manager for MAGNIFICENT MUSICAL MOVIE MACHINE for Santa Clara Youth Village and assistant stage manager for Sunnyvale's APPLAUSE. Responsive, empathetic and good-hearted, Shaun always roots for the underdog. His ambition is to make a living in theatre and to someday own his own little theater, perhaps to start a new theater in a small town. Shaun feels one of the most important aspects of stage management is learning to handle people tactfully. The hardest thing about the job is all the responsibility. His greatest joy after working on a show is watching the response of the audience on opening night... closing night...any night!

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Jerry showed up to the theater and they went over to the theater warehouse in a sparsely populated industrial area on the other side of the town. While looking through the stores of props and sets, they found a dead mouse on the floor. Sharon went to go pick up the mouse to toss it out onto the field next to the parking lot. Jerry stopped her and scooped it up in a dustpan and tossed it outside. She said, "What? It's just a mouse." He didn't know that Sharon was used to feeding live mice to her pet owl. Jerry decided she wasn't a normal lady.

We became friends right away and found we worked well together.

Our friendship grew as we spent all our free time working together on the play. Our first meal together was fast food roast beef sandwiches during a dinner break.

One of the workers backstage cut his hand badly, we found the medical kit in the theater was empty but Jerry had a medical kit on his motorcycle, so he and Sharon tended to the injury. The injured person was then able to go to a doctor.

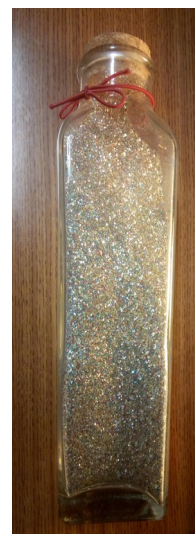
One of the items we had to build was a tree that actors could climb into. Jerry and Sharon came up with a clever counterbalanced design and headed off to the lumber yard to buy the large board needed for the main limb. The man in the lumber yard asked what we needed a single large board for, we said we were building a tree. He looked at us like we were just a little bit crazy (a look we'll see many times in the future) but sold us the board we needed, anyway.

When we were done with the tree, the actor decided it wasn't safe to climb all the way up and out to the end, so we had the entire backstage crew climb up into the tree and sit on that limb all at the same time. Proving the point, and the actor was a small person.

Another item needed in this play was a Pot Of Gold (POG) that would glow at appropriate times. Sharon had the perfect clay pot to use as a model so we made a translucent fiberglass casting of it and Jerry rigged a battery operated light that would fade up and down depending on how the actor moved the pot.

Backstage people, please don't cringe at the following: We needed a "magical explosion" but the theater budget couldn't pay for a pyrotechnician for a show that ran every weekend for a month. So with no budget we used a fireplace bellows that Sharon had and a photo strobe from Jerry's camera to create the effect. The bellows blew metallic glitter into the air and then triggered the strobe to make a white flash aimed straight up making the glitter sparkle in the air. Of course glitter is hated on stage as it gets into everything and is almost impossible to clean up. But it cost almost nothing and looked good from the audiences point of view.

We've kept a bottle of the leftover glitter as a souvenir and good luck charm of our meeting (as Finian's Rainbow is all about luck).



With all the long hours working in the theater shop, we needed to get out and just do something fun. Our first not-work outing was an hour long drive up a narrow and winding road through the foothills and oak and pine forests to Mt. Hamilton where we enjoyed the view of the Silicon Valley, 1300 meters below, and a tour of Lick Observatory that belongs to the University of Santa Cruz. The observatory was built in the 1800's using mules to haul the materials up over rough trails.

On Valentine's Day, we decided to play hooky and get away by ourselves. Early in the morning, we drove over to the coast and went down to the wharf in Monterrey. There we bought the makings of a picnic lunch: a freshly boiled and cracked Dungeness crab, and a loaf of San Francisco Sourdough bread. We had brought a bottle of chilled champagne, glasses, plates and napkins with us. We then headed North to find a nice beach for our lunch. The state beach at Seacliff looked like a good place. It had a wooded picnic area with BBQ's a bit up from the beach that was protected from the wind, but still had a good view of the ocean and being February, though nice weather, there weren't a lot of people around. When we unpacked our lunch, there was a family at a nearby table that were grilling hot dogs. The father looked at our lunch and back at his hot dogs and remarked that his next picnic would include a better menu.



By the time the play closed the following March 7th (just after Jerry's birthday), we'd decided to get married. We announced our engagement at the cast party the following weekend and

our mothers both said “it’s about time”. It’s not like we’d known each other all that long but spending so much time working together proved that we could get along. Obviously they could see that. We we’re both working the 9 to 5 job, five days a week, and every evening was spent grabbing some quick dinner and then working til 11 or 12 at night at the theater.

Our weekends also saw a lot of the inside of the theater shop.



We both had an interest in space exploration and somewhere in all of everything else got involved in the local chapter of the L5 Society which promoted civilian space travel and colonization of space. Sharon found a rock shop in Campbell, a nearby town that had a jeweler who made rings, bracelets, etc. out of interesting rocks. Jerry and Sharon decided to design their wedding rings with a space theme. Jerry’s ring was shaped to be a black hole sucking in the surrounding space objects. Sharon’s ring was similar, but was set with a piece of amber colored tektite, the result of a meteorite strike. The back of the setting was open to allow viewing through the rock to show

off its color when held up to the light.

Over time our rings have shown wear, the stone has gotten chipped and both rings have gotten out of round making them difficult to wear.

In the photos they are as of 2019. We keep them in a safe place and Jerry made simple stainless steel bands in our machine shop as replacements for our everyday wear. So far we haven’t managed to damage these.



We set the wedding for April 25th because it was the same day of the month as Christmas, Sharon’s favorite holiday, and then we started looking for an interesting place to go for our honeymoon.



Jerry received notice there were a few openings left in a short course on alternate energy production for electrical engineers in Hawai’i that was starting at the end of March. We decided that sounded good and booked the trip.



The only detail was it was before the wedding, but we've never been ones to do things in the prescribed order. It makes life more fun and adventurous.

Photo of us on a very windy lava field in Hawai'i wearing our Finian's Rainbow SPFX (Special Effects) T-shirts.



While there in addition to classes at the University of Hawai'i we took tours to see the Puna Well geothermal and MINI-OTEC ocean thermal power plant prototypes.

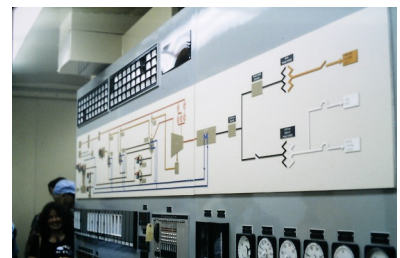
MINI-OTEC was intended to generate electrical power from temperature differences in the ocean.



The Puna Well plant was to generate electrical power by generating steam from an active volcano.



Photos of the Puna Well control room and the well head.



We asked questions about things the engineers hadn't thought of such as how they would handle the volcano next to the well erupting. They said they would simply hire the one crane from the other side of the island to drive over (a 4 hour trip) and put a big cement cover over the well. They didn't see why this would be a problem WHILE the volcano was erupting.

The well, along with a nearby housing development, was later lost due to an eruption and lava flows.

Asking questions like this would become pretty common for us.



We visited a wind turbine site where we got wind blown and asked more hard questions such as why not use a lightweight alternator in the nacelle instead of a heavy, complicated AC synchronous generator. An inverter on the ground could handle several wind turbines and simplify both assembly and maintenance.



Photos of us at the wind turbine site.



That Spring, Sharon was taking a class in the theatre department at West Valley College in Dialects for Actors. Since we would be in Hawai'i for a while, she would miss a couple of classes.

She decided to do a paper on the Hawai'ian dialect to make up for the lost time. While we were

in Honolulu, we took a few hours to visit The Polynesian Cultural Center. There, she found several native speaking Polynesians at the various exhibits and found some that didn't mind her taping their talks for her research.



One night on The Big Island a luau was planned for everyone in the course. We decided not to go as we had already been to one on Oahu. As it turned out, a storm came up and it was rained out. Instead we had a quiet dinner in our room and later we passed the time on our hotel balcony tossing ice cubes at the swimming pool way below, trying to hit a pool float. It was pretty late at night so no one was around to get upset.

On another day in Honolulu, high on an upper floor of our hotel, we had the door to the balcony open and a bird landed and walked into the room to see what we were up to. We didn't have any food for him so after a while he just walked back out and stepped off into the air. It seems that the birds were pretty confident around tourists. We had breakfast on a covered terrace at the hotel restaurant and a small bird flew over from the railing, landed on the table, snatched a crumb off of a roll, ate it, and then flew off.

Yet another evening we were at an outdoor restaurant near the waterfront. We watched in semi horror as a small crab crawled across the dock and climbed straight into a woman's purse at a nearby table. We decided to pretend that we knew nothing and went on with dinner.

When we returned to California Jerry moved in with Sharon and her mother. This is the same house we're currently living in today, in 2019.



Instead of the usual cash payment to the church where our wedding was to be, we designed and built a pair of large wrought iron candle stands with special adjustable feet to allow them to be used on ramps, stairs, or flat floors.

The church was pleased with these and our wedding only had one small issue. We were going to have both Sharon's and Jerry's ministers perform the ceremony, but Sharon's minister was called to another church duty at the last minute so we only had Jerry's minister there. It's good that we had a spare minister.



We had a simple ceremony with a few friends and family.



At our wedding reception a hint of our interesting life appeared in the form of hermit crabs for a wedding present. We built them a nice, large enclosure and they had a long, and hopefully, happy life.

Photo of our wedding cake, unfortunately the lighting wasn't very good, an overhead lamp was too bright and confused the camera.



The cake was chocolate with a raspberry filling, Jerry and Sharon's favorite flavor combination.



Photos of our wedding toast and with our mothers. On the left is Jerry's mother, Harriet, and on the right is Sharon's mother, Josephine.

To Be Continued...

It was now time to move on to more adventures together such as founding our own company, helping start a new industry, co-founding another company, selling it, building and shooting professional fireworks, a lot more stuff, and eventually building a house in and moving to Russia where the adventures are sure to continue.