



## LOVE at first sight

Ventura couples celebrate enduring love

By [Carla Iacovetti](#) 02/12/2015



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“I could not tell you if I loved you the first moment I saw you, or if it was the second or third or fourth. But I remember the first moment I looked at you walking toward me and realized that somehow the rest of the world seemed to vanish when I was with you.” — Cassandra Clare, Clockwork Prince

There is nothing like love. The invigorating, exciting, dynamic moment when two eyes lock and the world plumes with incandescent splendor. This kind of attraction is no respecter of time periods, culture or even age. Like two magnets, souls are mysteriously pulled together, and being apart becomes

unthinkable.

This kind of enchantment is nothing new. Poets have written about it and songwriters have sung about this “old black magic” that has kept lovers under its spell for hundreds of years.



Bob and Velta Lowry, of Ventura, were married on Sept. 10, 1949, and celebrated their 65th anniversary last year.

After receiving two Purple Hearts, the French Croix de Guerre, a Bronze Star, and the Presidential Unit Citation and the Army Superior Unit Award, World War II hero, Bob Lowry returned to his native Ventura in 1946. About a year later he enrolled at Ventura College (originally at Ventura Union High School), where he quickly fell under Velta’s spell. They met in a philosophy class; Bob was 24 and Velta was barely 18. For Bob, there was no turning back — it was love at first sight.

“She was young, but I knew she was it. There wasn’t a question in my mind,” Lowry said. “I asked her out three times, but she turned me down — she was always so busy. It was somewhat off-putting, so I sort of gave up.

“Bob was pretty outgoing and I really wasn’t sure that I could trust him. I was also very young. However, Bob didn’t have to wait very long,” Velta said.

“A week or so later she invited me to go on a hayride with a group from her church. From that day forward, we were never apart,” Bob said.

Bob and Velta were married on Sept. 10, 1949, and the fire has never gone out. Velta admitted that the excitement is still there. “I get sweet talk all the time. He’s a very loving man,” Velta said.

In a world where divorce is so rampant, how does a couple stay together 65 years? “We were pretty determined to make it work, and Bob is very easy to get along with. In fact, he’s pretty wonderful; he’s just a good man,” Velta said.

Bob chuckled and added, “The key word is, ‘yes, dear.’ ”

“Lasting marriages are a lot of things. Certainly it begins with mutual love and respect, and being able to compromise and bend is vital,” Velta said. “People today seem to give up so quickly. With reasons like unfaithfulness, alcoholism or substance abuse — actually, any kind of abuse oftentimes makes it difficult to continue in that kind of marriage — they’re biggies,” Velta said.

“You can’t just have your way all the time. You have to be able to bend. I’ve never found it hard to compromise. Velta’s a good woman,” Bob said.

The couples of today need to resist accepting defeat so readily. Even with so much divorce, Velta believes that people today are much better communicators than when she and Bob first got together. “I love that men today take a lot more responsibility with the children. That didn’t happen back when we first got married,” Velta said.

“My generation wasn’t as good at talking things out. It takes work to learn how to communicate your feelings,” Bob admitted. “Also, we had the belief that women belonged in the kitchen and at home. The responsibility of raising children was largely on the women, but that doesn’t seem to be the case today,” Bob said.

It was not the case for Velta either. She worked at Point Mugu for 30 years as a secretary and an administrative officer. Bob holds a master of education and worked as a teacher in Camarillo. “I taught seventh grade Eurasian history,” he said.

The Lowrys have spent 65 years looking for the humor in things. They believe it is an important aspect of having a healthy relationship and even dealing with difficult situations. “When our son was about 2, he disappeared. We were asleep in bed and he snuck out of the side door before we were awake. Everyone in the neighborhood helped us hunt for him, and an hour later I just happened to walk out the back door, and he was sitting with his legs folded in the dog house,” Velta said.

Bob added, “And the dog was asleep inside our house!”

When the Lowrys retired they bought property up in Nipomo and farmed 100 avocado trees for 21 years. Once they sold the farm, they returned to Ventura and now enjoy life with Bella, their rescued golden retriever, their four grandkids and four great-grandkids. Life is full.

Bob's advice for making a marriage work — “Tell her you love her every day.”

Ventura residents Jack and Amanda Peacock were inseparable from the start. “We met at a party,” Amanda said. “Jack and his friends were actually party crashers — they weren't invited. I walked into the kitchen and Jack and his friends were standing by a trashcan filled with beer. Actually, Jack's friend walked over and got me a beer,” Amanda added.

A little later, a very drunk guy was getting in her face, and it made her uncomfortable. She noticed that Jack was watching her from across the lawn and he noticed her concerned face. He walked over to her and said, “Beat it, dude” to the drunk guy and they have been together ever since. “We were together from then on out. I even went on a trip out of state for a month, but Jack was waiting for me when I got back,” said Amanda.



Amanda and Jack Peacock  
will celebrate 25 years of marriage this year.

Now, nearly 25 years later, the couple will celebrate their silver wedding anniversary in August and are more in love than ever. “I realize us making it to 25 years is unusual in today's divorce-driven world, but I love him more today than ever. He's my best friend,” Amanda said. “I mean, you cannot be married

without bumps in the road. We've had them, but we genuinely respect each other. We don't nag each other either, and we trust each other, which is so important," Amanda said.

Jack is not the jealous type. "I trust her, but I've got a lot of confidence in myself — you have to love yourself if you're going to love another person. If you have a hard time trusting, it's gonna be an issue in your relationship. Also, Amanda didn't marry me for my bank account. That doesn't bring happiness, anyway. You know, men don't really change — he's either a nice guy or he's not," Jack said. "I'm pretty easygoing. It's always family first, health second and then wealth; money is not everything, and if your husband wants to go fishing — let him go," Jack added.

Recent studies rank financial difficulties as the No. 1 reason for divorce, but over the last 25 years, the Peacocks have found balance even in the midst of a challenging economy. "Jack has supported me from day one. While I do have a thriving home-based photography business, he's never expected me to pay for my life. Even so, we help each other — we're a team and it balances us out," Amanda said.

Jack is a general contractor and owner of Peacock Construction. "With the crazy economy, it's been tough for contractors," Jack said. "But, Amanda contributes and it just works. I also believe the love and respect we have for each other is major," Jack added.

One of the biggest hurdles the Peacocks faced has been over the last year and a half. She was diagnosed with breast cancer in the summer of 2013. "I've had two mastectomies and reconstruction, and since then, I have had five other surgeries and countless other procedures since then. Jack came with me every step of the way. He held me close when I needed it. He is my biggest supporter — my rock! I cannot begin to explain what his unwavering love and support has meant to my recovery," Amanda said.

Amanda believes that love, patience, trust and respect are core for keeping a relationship together. "If you keep those in the middle of your relationship, it should last. Most of my friends are divorced. I consider myself very lucky. I count my blessings. I have a terrific man and we have an awesome 16-year-old son. Life is good," Amanda said.

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## A trip to remember

### Local couple celebrates 75 years of marriage

by **John Hankins**



Craig and

Ramona Van Velsor were married in 1940 at the age of 19.  
Photo by: Suz Montgomery

They've been married for 75 years and Craig Van Velsor can't help but remember how he first met his wife Ramona, in a Huntington, New York, high school.

It was on a trip, one that "Mona" initiated ... literally, a trip.

Apparently Craig had not particularly noticed the lively and intelligent student, so one day as he was walking down a school corridor, Mona stuck out her foot and tripped him. He fell for her instantly.

"She wanted to get his attention," laughed their daughter Janet.

Both were born in 1921 and were married at 19 years of age in 1940.

That date was a year before the Japanese attacked Pearl Harbor and Craig was working in a shipyard, but he joined the war effort on board a Navy ship in 1943. Later, he was in the Naval Reserve when he was called back to serve in the Korean War.

During those early war years he and Mona had two girls, Jill and Janet, and today they have three grandchildren and six great-grandchildren.

They moved to California after the war when a friend asked Craig to work for him on a new venture, a then-unique idea to put television sets in motels and hospitals. The opportunity to move across the U.S. “changed their life tremendously,” Janet said.

Craig ended up in the newspaper business, mostly selling display ads for the Los Angeles Times. One niche was travel ads, which inspired the couple to go to places that were relatively unknown at the time, broadening their knowledge and curiosity of the world.

Today, they live in assisted living, but that curiosity has remained strong.

“They exemplify what life-long learning is all about,” said Suz Montgomery, who had both of them participate in the Extended Learning Academy classes, which are part of the Ventura Adult Continuing Education program.

“They chose to come to class instead of watching TV and playing Bingo, to stay engaged in living and learning,” Montgomery said.

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