

Shirley Zink

Becomer's Mystery Person of the week - August 24, 2008

1. Born in Santa Monica
2. Lived with my mother until I was 3
3. Visited my aunt in Iowa for a year
4. Lived and raised by my grandparents from then on
5. My first boyfriend was a boy in my kindergarten class. His parents would take us to the movies and I got to have dinner at their house sometimes.
6. Got in trouble in 1st grade because I was paint monitor and this boy, Steve Smookler, said I didn't give him flesh color paint. I said I did and to settle the argument, I painted his arm. My grandmother was called to school.
7. When I was 8, I started taking accordion lessons. As a teenager I played in orchestras, a quartet and a little professionally.
8. My first boyfriend was my accordion teacher's son which made it hard to break up with him. He was 16 and I was 13. My first kiss was after his school dance.
9. I went to Rosewood Christian Church with my grandparents. The pastor was the son of one of their friends. He was a fun guy. I remember him cheating at basketball.
10. Later I went to the local Methodist Church. I started a children's choir there.
11. My boyfriend, when I was 16, was another student of my music teacher. He was a wonderful piano player and we played together in performances often.
12. I belonged to every club I could in high school and became president of several. I was given several leadership roles - organizing a school-wide carnival, etc.
13. I received the Paul Fisher award at graduation. There is only one given a year so it was quite an honor
14. I went to El Camino College, majored in music
15. I worked during the summer as a dental assistant for two Jewish dentists & their wives (that's a story in itself)
16. Graduated in 1 1/2 years and went to Long Beach State University - majored in music
17. Receive the Division Citation for the Music Dept.
18. Fell in love for the first time
19. Severely broken hearted for the first time
20. Met my future husband in the music building. Of course, I was still broken hearted, so wasn't going to get involved
21. First date was on his boat - we had talked about how much I loved going fishing with my great-uncle in Oregon on his boat, so this was a natural, he thought As we were leaving the harbor, nature started calling and I noticed he didn't have a head like my uncle's boat. Of course that was a 44' boat and Don's was 16'. He turned around and took me back to his apartment in Naples but told me not to look in the shower. He lived there with another guy and you can guess how well they took care of the place. Naturally I had to look - it was covered in black mold. It's amazing that didn't cinch the deal.

22. I dated two guys for a while because I wasn't getting involved
23. My mother was now living in Las Vegas, so Don asked me to go over Thanksgiving- He stayed at the hotel with his friend and I stayed at my mother's. My sister had a little baby she had abandoned with my mother. It was the saddest situation ever. My mother was a horrible housekeeper and none of that family were responsible people. When Don came to pick me up, he saw how tortured I was to leave that precious baby. He said if I married him, we could raise my sister's baby. That's when I fell in love. It still took him a lot of talking to actually get me to say yes but that was the turning point. My sister eventually came back so we didn't actually take the baby.
24. We were married after I graduated from college in 1965
25. I got a teaching job at Peralta Junior High School in Orange teaching choir and general music
26. I taught there for 3 years until we decided to start a family
27. Steve was born May 14, 1969
28. My life became totally filled with Steve and then Tami in 1971
29. We started an Amway business in 1975
30. Don had been teaching high school band until 1979 when he quit to work the Amway business
31. Don started working part-time for a fund raising company which then led us to another company and eventually in 1989 we started our own West Coast Fund Raising
32. Steve died by suicide on his 19th birthday. May 14, 1988
33. I became a New Hope Counselor in 1990 and trained all of the counselors in suicide intervention for the next 14 years
34. I am active in the suicidology arena, speaking at high schools, etc. and now on a team to visit new survivors
35. I helped Jim Kok found the International Conference on Care & Kindness and worked on that for 5 years
36. In 19981 founded the SACK Foundation (Simple Acts of Care & Kindness) By Nov. we will have hosted over 3200 children at our World Kindness Youth Conference. We send out over 3000 Kids Club Newsletters every quarter and have established a character education program for elementary schools called the KINDER KIDS program. Many 1000's of kids have received the Kindness Kid of the Month Certificate
37. I have a beautiful daughter who is very active in the autism community and co-authored her first book: The Lyme-Autism Connection. She's also a very popular speaker at conventions and has held 3 conferences for her foundation, the LIA Foundation (Lyme Induced Autism)
38. I have two fabulous grandchildren. Michael is about a year away from losing his autism diagnosis and Jenna is a bright, healthy, artistically talented 6 year old.