

Gym Rat Rantings

by Bob Ring



The Holidays Remind Us to be Thankful

After I wrote the “Battle of the Pillbox” article, one of you told me, “At least you have someone to help you get those pills out of the package; I’m all alone.” That reminded me of something I’d like to share with you – how I met Pat.

In 1990 I was alone too. I had just lost my wife to breast cancer, after 25 wonderful years of marriage. My three boys – my pride and joy – helped me get through the next few years, but my social life was non-existent, as I buried my head in my engineering management job. In 2000 I retired in Tucson after a 35-year career in aerospace, raised my head to look around, and said to myself at age 60, “Bob, get a life!”

So how to meet women? I decided to try an internet dating service! I supplied a bunch of personal data, my education, interests, family background, and so on. Then I asked the dating service’s database to give me a list of all the women in Arizona, within a certain age range, who best matched my detailed profile. Would you believe that within 24 hours, I had a list of names and email addresses - and Pat was at the top of the list! Pat was also searching for a new relationship, having lost her husband of 29 years to ALS about a year previously.

Once we connected, Pat and I started emailing immediately, at least once a day for about six weeks – long, detailed emails exploring our mutual interests and an amazing number of coincidences. As a small sample: We both graduated from the University of Michigan. The first names of Pat’s husband, son, and father were the same as my three sons. And when I claimed that she had probably never heard of Warren, Arizona, a tiny suburb of Bisbee that I had just finished writing a history paper about, she told me that she had worked as a librarian for a law firm that started in Bisbee, and that she knew all about Warren.

It turned out that Pat then lived in Gilbert, and owned a business in Mesa. After six weeks of *burning up* the internet, we decided to meet – at Pat’s home no less. (Pat claimed that after so long exchanging emails, she wasn’t worried about a “risky” first meeting.) We quickly decided we were “right” for each other, and started *burning up* the highway (105.3 miles) between our houses. Over the next few years, Pat extricated herself from her Fiber Factory (knitting, weaving, and spinning) business and moved to Tucson to live with the old Gym Rat.

It’s almost seven years now, and we both will be eternally grateful for finding each other. And should you think that all has been blissful in our life together, it hasn’t. Pat experienced a second bout of breast cancer, survived it, and is doing great.

We are also thankful that we have befriended so many instructors and fellow-exercisers at the Fit Center, and that we are still physically able to participate and enjoy our workouts with all of you.

We truly believe that: “Life is an adventure.” And that, “It’s never too late for love.” Finally, “Live one day at a time – and enjoy it!”

Happy Holidays from Bob and Pat!