

Second time 'round

by Sandra Phinney

It's a balmy September afternoon and I'm standing with my husband, Barrie MacGregor, in front of a wedding arch on the edge of the beach at White Point Beach Resort. Justice of the Peace, Darlene Ruhs is facing us, performing a ceremony. Her words float like motes in the air:

Life is a lot like this beach. There is time when the sea is calm and tranquil, and life is gentle and easy; but, as in life, storms will come along, and all you can do is hold tight to, and be so very grateful for, the love of the person standing with you.

For a few seconds, my mind spins with memories – then, jarred into the present, I realize we are one of 10 couples standing here, renewing our vows. It was one of many celebrations White Point had planned for the year as part of their 90th anniversary.

Will you continue to have each other as a loving spouse and partner through life? Do you reaffirm your love for each other?

I repress a giggle, thinking, "It's a bit late to back out now," and squeeze Barrie's hand. We were renewing our vows, 40 years after the first time 'round. When we married in 1978, I co-owned a music store. As it would have cost \$1,000 to change my name on the business documents, it was easier (and cheaper) to keep my maiden name. We also couldn't afford rings – and had been ring-less for 40 years.

As soon as we decided to renew our vows at White Point, I said to Barrie, "We should get rings!" Our daughter Margo had married the year before, and I remembered admiring the handcrafted silver wedding bands she and her fiancé bought. With days to spare, Barrie and I had rings to take with us.

Wedding rings are the symbol of the vows you are renewing

today. . . Barrie, please place your ring on Sandra's left hand. Sandra please place your ring on Barrie's left hand.

Then, to all the couples the JP said:

You may seal your vows, and your continued commitment and love for each other with a kiss. . . . Ladies and gentlemen I am happy to present to you, the re-newlyweds!

A big bonus to the weekend was meeting other couples, like Lisa and Chris Richard from Prince Edward Island. They met about 10 years ago, became friends and confidants. Lisa says, "After five years, he proposed. He came into my cubicle at work, got down on one knee, and asked me to marry him." Chris had three children; Lisa had two. They found a big house and melded the two families. They also visited White Point for a get-away, and decided it would be the perfect place to have beach wedding. However, arranging to get their extended family together on the same date was a trickier proposition.

Then Lisa saw a notice from a bus tour company with the question, "What would you do if you won a trip to New York?" She replied, "Elope!" She won the contest and five months later – unbeknownst to anyone save their two best friends who accompanied them – they did just that.

When Lisa read about the vow renewal weekend, they didn't have to think twice. She says, "That weekend at White Point, we got to have our perfect beach wedding. Everything from the ocean in the background, the bunnies running around everywhere, the beautiful cottage with the wood fireplace, the bottle of chilled wine, home-made chocolates – the entire weekend was geared towards love and comfort. It did not disappoint!"

I recall the first time Barrie and I stayed at White Point, about 35 years ago, when he worked in the tourism industry. When notified that a regional tourism meeting would be tak-





Photos by Sandra Phinney and White Point Beach Resort



ing place at White Point, Barrie asked if I'd like to go. I asked a friend to take care of our offspring. Two weeks later, as Barrie was zipping up the suitcase, I blew air kisses to the three kids and raced to the car.

I've since had the pleasure of staying at White Point at various times with either my husband, daughter, sister, or writing colleagues, but the most memorable of all was last September, when we renewed our vows.

Some of the 20 people who had come to renew their vows included three couples from New Brunswick – Patricia and Morel LeBlanc, Thelma and Phil Cassidy, and Denise and Jacques Leger. Over the years these best friends have celebrated anniversaries and birthdays – and vacationed – together. Twice a year they also make special themed dinners, alternating between men and women cooking the meals.

About two years ago, when it was the gents' turn, they made a romantic supper, and, after dinner, they got down on one knee and asked if their wives



Black Loyalist HERITAGE CENTRE

PRESENTED by EMERA
A PART OF THE NOVA SCOTIA MUSEUM

The Black Loyalist Heritage Centre tells the story of the largest & most influential communities of free

Black people in the world outside of Africa from 1783 to 1791 in Nova Scotia.

Open Daily 10am to 5pm
June 1 to mid-October
In off season, open by
appointment
Admission \$9.20/adult
\$5.75/senior/student
\$23 Family Passes



119 Old Birchtown Road
Site 10, Mod. 3, Comp 14
Shelburne, NS B0T 1W0
Office: (902) 875-1310
Museum: (902) 875-1293
www.blackloyalist.com
blackloyalist@blackloyalist.com

would marry them again. But here's the clincher: shortly after that dinner, Patricia LeBlanc looked online for "Romantic weekends in the Maritimes" and the renewal ceremony at White Point popped into view.

"When it was our turn to make supper," Patricia says, "we proposed that we renew our vows again, and that we had a plan! They were so overwhelmed, there wasn't a dry eye in the room."

The actual weekend surpassed everyone's expectations. Barrie recalls, "It was neat that we did that procession from the upper floor of the lodge down dual staircases and onto the lawn. This was a lot more elaborate than our actual wedding 40 years earlier."

After dinner, a reception followed. The spacious room was formally decked out in white; photos of the day graced the elaborately decorated tables; and each couple had their own personalized miniature wedding cake. We topped off the evening by dancing up a storm. It had been some time since Barrie and I had boogied, but shimmy and shake we did. Before long even a few guests strayed into the room drawn by the music and merriment.

Then it happened. The DJ played a rendition of "If," the song that Barrie's brothers, Neil and Brian performed at our wedding:

*If the world should stop revolving
Spinning slowly down to die
I'd spend the end with you
And when the world was through
Then one by one the stars would
all go out*

Then you and I would simply fly away
Perfect ending to a perfect day.

Postscript: Because I had registered for the weekend using my name, the assumption was that Barrie's last name was the same. We now have an official wedding renewal certificate made out to Sandra Phinney and Barrie Phinney. It's taped to the wall in Barrie's office and always makes me smile when I see it.

When asked for a few last words, Barrie mused, "I've always felt a sense of renewal at any wedding I've gone to since we got married in 1978. I would do this again." I'm now thinking ahead to our 50th.

Talk about renewable energy! White Pointers know that wedding vow renewals, family gatherings, and reunions of all kinds add a surge of togetherness to their world! And what better backdrop for saying, 'hello' or 'I do' (again) than the beautiful Atlantic. Over the decades, we've hosted milestone celebrations for generations of beach lovers. Picture New Year's Eve nuptials. Valentine's commitment ceremonies. Autumn pop-up weddings. Christenings. Anniversaries. And, getting hitched near the Christmas holidays is a twinkling event, second only to the starry sky! Contact Betty or Karen to plan a beach get-together guaranteed to wow everyone. Renew what matters, at the ultimate place of renewal.



EVENTS@WHITEPOINT.COM WHITEPOINT.COM