

# Taking a chance on romance

*They say love is blind. And for some local couples, the first date was too.*

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For Bill and Janet Sichel of Upper Moreland, 51 years of marriage started with a blind date.

The pairing dawned on their relatives in 1955. Her aunt said, "I have a nice niece. And his mother said, well, I have a nice son."

recalled Janet, now 77. The rest is history.

We asked for your blind date stories last week, and responses showed that leaving your roman-

the fate to chance can be a great move. With Valentine's Day

around the corner, a few area couples shared stories of how their shots in the dark led to love.

For Bill and Janet, Lambcreekville was the setting for their blind date. Bill was fresh out of the Navy and enjoying the

as a pharmacist. Both were dating other people at the time.

They went to a show, then dined riverside on boiled ham sandwiches.

She didn't hear from him again for months.

Bill, now 80, said he wanted to play the field after four years away from home. He eventually consid-

ered the idea of settling down with that nice pharmacist. But after weeks upon weeks of silence

to take his calls.

"If that's Bill Sichel, I don't want to talk to him," Janet remembers telling her mother

when he phoned the house. She decided that she would reconsider if he called a second time.

He did just that. Two children, four grandchildren and half a century later, the Sichels joined six other couples this week in a vow renewal ceremony at Wesley

Enhanced Living at Maple Village. Dressed to the nines — Bill in a suit, Janet in a sparkling silver blouse — they renewed their 51-

year commitment before dozens of cheery, bubble-blowing retirement community neighbors.

Warrington resident Maureen McClellan found herself on a blind date through a more modern, less willing approach.

Divorced eight years and just growing her hair back after breast cancer treatments, the nurse and

single mom wasn't expecting to find love again. But a patient insisted she try

March.com, and Maureen, 49, obliged.

She had almost reached her self-imposed one month limit when she heard from Scott. He was also divorced and also a single parent. He attempted to send her a picture of himself from a recent trip, but mistak-

enly sent one of his guide with an arm slung over another woman's shoulder. Scott, 56, Maureen said, nice photo — but who's she?

Sparks flew when they met over dinner.

They arrived at Maureen's house to watch an Eagles game and were greeted by the sight of her 16-year-old son polish-

ing his sword collection. He let his mother's new suitor know where he stood by staying in the living room, tending to his arsenal while they

watched the game. Scott wasn't deterred. He and Maureen married barefoot on the beaches of St. Lucia a few years later.

Jan and Mike Mercure didn't cross paths too often as students of the Central Bucks

East Class of 1974. Years after graduation, they didn't think much of seeing each other again at the wedding where

one of her best friends was marrying one of his.

But when both decided to take a more intense interest in Christianity — both were baptized as adults on the same day, Jan's friend knew what she needed to do.

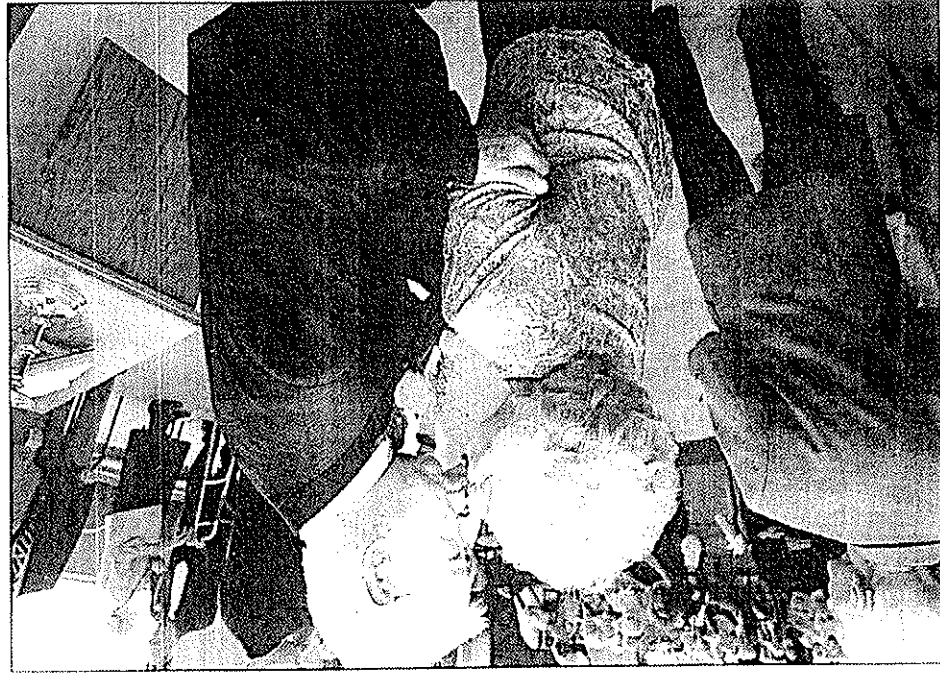
That friend, who had successfully set up 11 other Christian couples who eventually married, paired them off at a barn dance she was hosting. Jan said she was nervous and almost bailed out at the last minute and had to be dragged down the hill to meet the future father of her children.

They talked for a while, and Jan said Mike, 52, shared her dreams — including one they eventually fulfilled to adopt children from

Asia — and accepted her daughter from a previous marriage as his own.  
Jan, 53, has been married for about 15 years to the man she could just faintly picture from their high school days.  
"It must have been a picture that was meant to stick, because we ended up together," she said.

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*Maureen and Scot  
McClellan, of  
Warrington, met  
on Match.com.*



*Bill and Janet Sikel, who have been married for 51 years, met on a blind date arranged by their relatives.  
Rick Kihlert/Staff Photographer*