

## STRIVING FOR 'IMPERFECTION'

# A long and happy future

Who could possibly have known?



**Scott Marcus**

Thirty years ago today, I was going through a difficult divorce. I shared custody of my two sons with my soon-to-be ex-wife,

dropping them off on Saturdays and retrieving them on Wednesdays.

This newly again single life was novel, exciting — and lonely. Not being the type to frequent bars, and internet dating was not yet a thing. I spent many nights at home, watching TV. Ah! The glamorous life of the 40-year-old single male in the mid-'90s.

Recently, looking to fill a spiritual void, I had started attending the Church of Religious Science (now called the Center for Spiritual Living) and was beginning to know a few people in that community. Some invited me to a dance that was be-

ing held in the social hall that night.

I politely turned it down, I didn't "do dances," never had and I assumed I never would.

Yet as Sunday afternoon blended into Sunday night, and I was faced with the prospect of yet again watching "60 Minutes" by myself, I opted to try something I had not done since my senior year in high school: I went to the dance.

I positioned myself by the door (in order to make a quick escape) and tried to focus on the band. The social hall wasn't large and the ensemble consisted of only a few players. There were fewer than a dozen people in the room — and that included the musicians.

Feeling as much at ease as a cat with a long tail in a room full of rocking chairs, I re-evaluated my plans for the evening and decided Mike Wallace and crew were more my style. I bid adieu to the few people I knew and headed out

the door.

She, in a blue blazer and black pants, was just arriving as I was leaving. I had briefly seen her earlier that day when I was invited to lunch with the group of new acquaintances that she too had attended.

She smiled as she approached. I returned the gesture, and desperately wanted to impress her with something pithy and clever, I added, "I always find a woman in a blazer to be very attractive," immediately regretting the world's dumbest pick-up line. (Remember, I was out of practice after being married for 12 years.) Fortunately for me, she didn't dash in the opposite direction but smiled again and walked by me into the hall.

"Hmm," I pondered, "Maybe I'll stay after all," and followed her into the building.

Pulling up the seat next to her, we began to talk. I kept asking her about herself, but she always re-di-

rected the conversation. After an hour or so, not wanting to monopolize her time (well, actually I did want to but I also wanted to make a good impression), I excused myself and returned to my apartment, kicking myself because I never got her name.

The next morning, I called the pastor, Patrick. "Reverend, I could use some help," I told him.

"What do you need?" "Last night, I went to the dance. There was a woman there and we talked for quite a while. I'd like to get to know her better, but I forgot to ask her name."

"Mary Ann," came his reply, without hesitation. "How do you know that? You weren't there."

I could hear the smile in his voice. "I know many things," he said and told me how I could get in touch with her. "Good luck," he said as we hung up.

With sweaty palms, I picked up the phone and dialed her number.

"Hi, you and I met last night at the dance," I began, my voice cracking as if I was going through puberty. "I don't know if you remember me."

"Of course I do."

"I really enjoyed talking to you and I would love to get together for a cup of coffee if you'd be willing."

"That sounds nice."

"Really? You'd like to get together?"

"You called me and invited me to go out with you and you're surprised I said yes?"

"Well, yeah, I guess I am, but I'm pleased."

We met for coffee four days later. It was the beginning.

There are now more days behind us than in front. Our hair is no longer brown. She doesn't wear blazers and we haven't been to a dance since then. My sons are grown. The locale has changed. Nowadays, we sit in pajamas in the morning and drink coffee on the couch together while perusing our devices, period-

ically showing each other what we found. We both work out of our house, she's an artist, I'm — well, I'm still trying to figure that out. We're together virtually 24/7.

We've been through celebrations and disappointments, lovely life events and devastating endings. We've had a few disagreements, but mostly, they're rare and far in between. Most importantly, we're still on this lovely ride together.

When we started to get serious, I used to say that I really wanted us to someday have a history. Now, my sincerest wish is that we have a long and happy future.

*Scott "Q" Marcus coaches individuals and consults with companies on implementing and handling change. He can be reached at [scottq@scottqmarcus.com](mailto:scottq@scottqmarcus.com) or his motivational Facebook page: [Intentions Affirmations Manifestations](https://www.facebook.com/IntentionsAffirmationsManifestations).*

## CAL FIRE

## Busy return for tankers at Ukiah

By Justine Frederiksen  
*Ukiah Daily Journal*

As usual, planes dedicated to fighting fires flew into the Ukiah Air Attack Base this week to settle into their summer of battling blazes. But within an hour, the settling was over and the battles had begun.

"We had just started in with radio checks and getting people familiar with the area when we were dispatched to the Sites Fire," said Battalion Aviation

Chief Drew Rhoades, taking over this season for longtime chief Ray Taglio, who retired last year after 14 years at the base and several seasons as Air Tactical Group Supervisor.

And while he hasn't spent nearly as many summers working at the Ukiah base as Taglio had, Rhoades said he has worked there long enough to know that Monday's start to the season was not typical.

"Usually we have time to get in some test flights and

perform other preparations before we're dispatched," he said, noting that the large fire that started in Colusa County Monday afternoon that the base staff were sent to was also not typical (if that term can even be applied to fires anymore at all), describing the Sites Fire near Stonyford as almost doubling in size overnight.

"The wind is just howling in the valley," said Rhoades Tuesday morning, explaining that the fire was about

5,500 acres in size at dark when he stopped flying Monday evening, but by 10 a.m. the next morning it was estimated to have grown to 10,000 acres, despite a Chinook helicopter dropping water on the fire after dark.

Fortunately, Rhoades said that the winds were expected to lessen Tuesday, but that staff at the base were still gearing up for another day in the air, though he still wasn't sure where and when they would



PETER ARMSTRONG PHOTO

Battalion Aviation Chief Drew Rhoades, on ladder, readies his air attack plane Monday.

be needed.

Another longtime fixture at the base, tanker pi-

lot John Butts, also retired recently, and Rhoades said his replacement, pilot Patrick Paup, was flying this week, with a second pilot due to arrive soon with the second tanker.

Cal Fire Engineer Sophie Bell, who worked with Taglio at the base last summer, said there were at least two other fires staff responded to Monday in addition to the Sites Fire, one on Branscomb Road and another fire to the south of Mendocino County.

PAID ADVERTISEMENT

## City of Clearlake Files Frivolous Lawsuit: Outcome Could Fleece Homeowners With New Development Subsidies

The City of Clearlake has sued the shareholders and residents of the Highlands Mutual Water Company in an effort to change the outcome of the company's April 10, 2024, annual shareholder leadership election. If successful, the City seeks to elect a majority of Highland's Board Members who would force the residents who own Highlands Mutual Water Company to subsidize hook-up fees for investors of new developments.

At the April 10th election, Highlands shareholders re-elected Mark Coats, Robert Kraft, Jessica Chernoh, Kathryn Davis and Rachelle Sapeta to the Board of Directors. Proxies to cast a vote were sent to all residents and businesses in the Highlands service territory with active water connections in accordance with the company's bylaws, California Corporations Code and the company's 99 year practice. The Directors received 217 votes. The City presented 177 ballots, only 83 from actual shareholders - the remaining were unauthorized ballots from owners of vacant lots who are not eligible to vote.

The City's frivolous lawsuit is a second attempt to hijack the Company from the shareholders/ residents who co-own it and replace the current leadership and their unique expertise with members of the Council. Highland's board of directors is highly committed to the community that we serve. Each of their biographies describes long histories of community involvement.

City Hall claims that they can manage the water system better than our seasoned experts who have competently run it for decades. The City already faces challenges in maintaining the basic services it is responsible for, and the idea of adding the management of a water system to its responsibilities seems unrealistic and irresponsible. We are concerned about who would take over if existing members of the City Council were to sit on our board of directors, some with histories of professional and legal improprieties.

As recently as June 6, 2024, at the last council meeting, the City of Clearlake expressed indignation when community members voiced concerns about what they perceived as a hostile takeover attempt of our water company by sitting members of the City Council. Despite the City's denial, their actions tell a different story. Simply put, we see it as another attempt at taking over our water company!

Ironically, a water expert invited by the City to the same council meeting commended Highlands Mutual Water Company for delivering high-quality water, despite the challenges of treating lake water. This contradiction highlights the City's lack of understanding about the complexities of water management. The water industry is highly technical and demanding. The City's approach, marked by feigned outrage and unsubstantiated allegations, threatens to destabilize a well-run operation and disrupt water service to the residents of Clearlake.