

Love Connection

By Walter M. Bortz, II, MD

I've just returned from wonderful trips west and east. The west portion was to Hawaii. The east leg was to Williamsburg, Virginia. Both ventures leave shimmering memories.

It was June 1941 when I first went to Hawaii. I was 11 years old and was accompanying my parents as Dad was giving some medical talks. I fell in love with the many glories of Hawaii and promised to return there for my honeymoon—then still 12 years in the remote future.

Fast forward—high school, graduation from Williams College in 1951, and the first two years of medical school at the University of Pennsylvania School of Medicine. Fell in love with Ruth Anne which brought us to our wedding day in Boston May 14, 1953.

We debarked on schedule beneath the Golden Gate Bridge on our way transpacific to fulfill my honeymoon commitment of 12 years before. Five idyllic rapturous days brought us offshore to Oahu where the Royal Hawaiian Hotel still reigned.

Waving to us from the gallery at the dock was Dr. Nils Paul Larsen an old friend of Dad's who was to become one of our dearest friends and our first child's godfather.

Previously I had arranged to do epidemiologic research with Dr. Larsen at the Queens Hospital. Dr. Larsen paid me a dollar an hour and I dutifully reviewed autopsy records that generated several scientific articles in good medical journals.

Our 10 week Hawaii honeymoon was sumptuous, and not surprisingly, featured our first born, Danna Sheldon Bortz, still 63 years later a total glory.

Return to medical school in Philadelphia, graduation in 1955 with M.D., internship 1955 to 1956, bringing me to the inevitable armed service obligation. I was ordered to Fort Sam Houston in San Antonio where I baked for six weeks awaiting assignment. I nearly convulsed when the critical order read "Schofield Barracks," Hawaii.

The ensuing two years in Hawaii were about as close to heaven as is possible on this planet. Our two young daughters never wore shoes as they were on the beach of our front yard.

We plundered Hawaii. We explored every niche, savored every breeze and again it was the birthing ground of a child, this time a son, Edward Charles Bortz.

Hawaii infected us. Our delicious years there still resonate. Ruth and I returned numerous times at Christmas and on vacation.

My recent close affiliation with friend Jeanne Kennedy inspired a re-immersion to Hawaii. The Royal Hawaiian Hotel is still as grand and glorious as 77 years ago. Jeanne and I were giddy over the rediscovered treasures of Hawaii. She had been unaware. But we were no sooner unpacked than we were off again, this time to the East.

The occasion was the fourth annual Walter M Bortz lecture sponsored by the American College of Sports Medicine, many old friends resurfaced.

Being in Virginia afforded the opportunity to revisit Williamsburg. I had been there as a teenager, and I bore pleasant memories of this colonial reconstruction created by John Rockefeller.

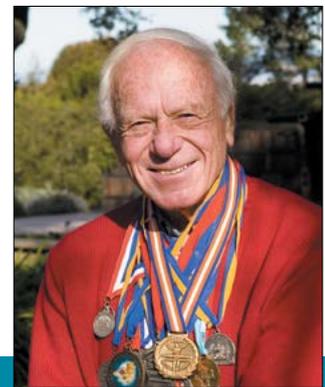
Jeanne had not been there before so we took communal pride in hunkering down in John's splendid quarters and

wondering whether Thomas or George may be joining us for dinner to our early history.

As meaningful as these two major trips are they are dwarfed by the trip I did not make. Today was the Boston Marathon and vicariously I was there as I was five years ago when the bomb punctuated the occasion. I rendered my proxy to Amby Burfoot, past editor of Runner's World and good friend.

Amby WON the Boston Marathon 50 years ago and today he ran it again. MY KIND OF GUY!

Editor's Note: Happy to learn that friend and long time A050 columnist Dr. Walter M. Bortz, 88, recently made a "love connection" with Jeanne Kennedy, 85. Dr. Bortz lost his wife Ruth Anne two years ago after 62 years of marriage.



Dr. Walter M. Bortz, II is one of America's most distinguished scientific experts on healthy aging and longevity. He spent his entire career at Stanford University where he holds the position of Clinical Associate Professor of Medicine. An active marathoner, he has written seven books including "Dare to Be 100" and "Next Medicine." To learn more, visit walterbortz.com or email: DRWBortz@gmail.com.