

Vashon Island Wedding: a true story

By the only two paternal aunts of the bride

The expectation of the anxiously awaited invitation was intolerable. The thought of “it’s in the mail” was not enough comfort – there was still the dreadful doubt about not being one of the chosen.

Did Hillery know Sue’s address?

And then – YES – the grand arrival!

Syl called Sue, Sue called Mom, Mom called Syl, Sue called Syl, Syl called Mom, Mom called Sue – Oh Happy Day!!!

However – new anxieties were then created. With the invitation was the treasure map for directions to the wedding ceremony’s site.

For Sue and Syl, both Vashon Island aliens, this presented panic. Paranoia. Will we find it in time – map is unclear – the foreign land markings unfamiliar to “outsiders” – trick questions – where does one park – ferry schedules – should we meet at Sound Foods?

Mom called Syl, Syl called Sue, Sue called Mom, Mom called Sue, Sue called Syl...

Next – the preparations! What items might be necessary to pass the security guard at the gate and undercover agents? Maybe Social Security card, birth certificate, passport, photo ID, library card, VISA and a signed note from Mom stating Sue Jones and Sylvia Hustad were the only two paternal aunts of the bride?

What about proper attire? Oh please – this is Vashon Island and an outdoor wedding besides ... ANYTHING goes – be comfortable – be unique – be hippie – be creative – be avant gardé. DO NOT be yuppie, churchie, cocktailie, classy, power suitie, JC Penney’s catalogue, high heelie.

Mom called Syl, Syl called Sue, Sue called Mom, Syl called Mom, Sue called Syl. And without hesitation, Mom was adamant to wear the coral shirt-waist foo-foo she bought for her Caribbean cruise – with the broach (to close the V-neck opening).

After much deliberation, Sue and Syl decided to stay with the Vashon Island theme and they determined jumpsuits and sandals were do-able.

Sue with her limited budget – perused the consignment stores in her Seattle neighborhood. With her sharp shopping saving skills, Sue came up with an adorable purple jumpsuit and white shirt for underneath, a white brocade linen jacket and her silver necklace – \$55.00. PERFECT!

Sylvia, who enjoys a somewhat substantial income, shopped Nordstrom's for weeks (but she already had an invitation and therefore had some time) and found a lovely black and white floral print, a scoop-necked-flared-pants jumpsuit – exactly what she wanted. And on sale – \$55.00. PERFECT!

The appropriate gift? Again, Syl with the more substantial salary, went to the Bonn Marche Bridal Registry office, obtained a list of the bride's wishes and immediately picked out the item that was least expensive and also, to her delight, was on sale.

Sue's idea of an ice bucket she found at the consignment shop didn't seem sufficient to herself.

She looked in her cupboard and to her delight found six antique Riceville Iowa family heirloom glasses that had not been used or washed for 20 years. These seemed definitely an appropriate gift, since Sylvia always received from Mom an heirloom Riceville vase on her birthdays.

Sylvia didn't want the glasses when Sue asked her awhile back. They were beautiful purple and white hand-blown glass heirlooms. God only knows what they are worth!

Sue's roommate said to soak them in very hot water and the scum of 20 years should loosen.

Sue was also advised (in a secret conversation with the bride's mother, Hita) that all the guests were also going to give the bride a gag gift of an old toaster.

Sue, surprisingly, happened to find one at the consignment store and included that in her other gifts.

(It's not certain if others carried out the gag-gift plot, but the bride's mother, Hita, reassured Sue that she was not the only one who carried through with the joke).

Mom's gifts included money to go towards the bride's shoes, plus heirloom cups and saucers from Riceville, and the corset that Mom wore in the Vashon Island Fashion Show Musical – for Hillery to frolic in on her honeymoon. (The corset was one-size-fits-all and Hillery would model it stunningly).

Unfortunately, Sue and Sylvia, in their mind-boggling preparations and excitement, failed to remember to buy gift wrapping paper, which they realized only 15 minutes before Sylvia had to leave her house to pick up Sue.

Fortunately, Sylvia, because of her wealth, had some gift wrapping paper – so she picked out a couple pieces of floral print (Vashon guests would like the colorful array), and hastily wrapped her gift.

But there wasn't enough of this particular pattern to cover the entire box, so Sylvia creatively made the package somewhat arty with no paper on the sides.

Syl brought paper, Scotch tape and scissors with her for Sue to wrap her gift on the ferry, because Sue, realizing at the last minute, had no gift wrapping and had called Syl to rescue her.

Will Sue and Syl get to the wedding on time?

That answer involves eventful episodes.

Sue was extremely eager for Sylvia's arrival.

Anxious and excited, Sue waited out on the side walk, but had to return to her apartment six times, each time Sue having forgot to remember God only knows what. However, the sixth time it was for Kleenex – Sue running to and from her apartment crying out loud, "My little niece is getting married!"

When Sylvia arrived, Sue dashed to Syl's car – Sylvia apologetic for being ten minutes late and in an agitated state of mind – fearful they would not reach the ferry in time.

Two blocks later Sue claims she needs to pee and cannot hold it another minute!

Sylvia pulls into a restaurant, swearing under her breath “Why in the hell did Sue not take time to pee during one of her six trips back into her apartment?”

By the time Sue returns to the car, quite relieved it may be added, Sylvia has rationalized it would be all right to be fashionably late – plus only few of the Vashon Island wedding guests would realize the only two paternal aunts of the bride weren’t there anyway.

The timing to the ferry was perfect, with fifteen minutes to spare.

While waiting in the long line of vehicles, Sylvia feels and hears a jolting impact from behind her Chevy Blazer.

Being a 23-year veteran of insurance claim handling, Syl knows exactly how to proceed in such a situation, and automatically her mind clicks in prior to exiting her vehicle – need name, address, phone number, type of car, insurance information, license plate number, etc., etc.

However, upon Syl’s inspection of the rear tire mounted across the tailgate of her Chevy Blazer and rear bumper – Syl does not detect any scratches, dents or marks of any sort. Great – don’t have to mess with all the information – and she gets back into her Chevy Blazer and is ready to drive onto the ferry.

Once on the ferry, Sue has an opportunity to wrap her gift.

Both exit the car to hustle up a staircase to a coffee table topside.

Sylvia casually smoothes the back of her new jumpsuit and realizes there’s a large hole in the jumpsuit’s butt, exposing both panty and leg, causing Syl to swear.

Walking awkwardly with her hand clenching her buttocks, Syl grabs Sue’s Scotch tape and manages to make it up the staircase and into the ferry’s ladies room.

While taping the two-inch-wide hole together, Syl observes another ghastly hole directly above the jumpsuit’s butt and tapes that also – experiencing “a reality check” on why the dress had been on sale.

Syl curses the name of Nordstrom's and beseeches her Maker to have the upscale store burn for all eternity.

Sue returns with masking tape Sue obtained from a cafeteria clerk so that Sue could wrap her gift while Sylvia had the Scotch tape.

Sue did not have enough wrapping paper and left the side of her box exposed, artfully, as inspired by Sylvia's creative packaging. The Vashon Island wedding guests will think it is another piece of arty crafty décor. The masking tape added a nice touch.

Sue was thoughtful enough to purchase a couple of bagels. Their earlier conversation revealed their fears of hellish hors d'oeuvres, such as Mexican burn-you-in-the-throat chili whatyacallits with guacamole sauce or some fishy Northwest food-fad thing, and in Sue and Syl's famished condition, they could have had serious problems... especially after too much booze, which might also be the only beverage available.

Once off the ferry, attacking her bagel as if it were the President of Nordstrom's, Syl had to shop for a new dress – anything, knowing she has a VISA with her other ID. She was not going to attend a Vashon wedding taped together.

After walking Vashon's main street and after talking to a local islander, Syl learns there are no dress shops on Vashon Island. There is one consignment store, however.

In a disgusted fever and with Sue under severe instructions not to say a word – Sylvia tries on three second-hand whatevers and purchases a blue and white floral jumpsuit... \$4.35. PERFECT!

It is a size too small, maybe size 8, but Sylvia decides she will not eat or breathe for the next few hours.

Sue, who finally has Syl's permission to speak, advises the outfit she is wearing is a size 10 but she can easily wear a size 8. There was still time before the wedding and the switch could be made once they found another bathroom. They are certain no one would notice the change, as the two only paternal aunts of the bride at the Vashon Island Wedding look so much alike anyway.

Discreetly entering the bed and breakfast lodge at the wedding site, they head for a stairway that may lead to an upstairs bathroom.

As they ascend the staircase, they detect the drone of their mom's voice somewhere from the upper level and dart on down into a downstairs bedroom which miraculously has an attached bath.

The sister-switch-clothes act goes undetected and they return to the decorated yard.

As other wedding guests arrive (the only paternal aunts of the bride were actually very early, working on Seattle time, forgetting Vashon Island time operates an hour later), Sue and Syl discover the dress code was actually yuppie, churchie, cocktailie, classy and high heelie.

And Sue and Sylvia were the ONLY two guests wearing jumpsuits.

The guest book was on a nearby table. Sue suggests Sylvia should enter her name as Mary Tyler Hustad and Sue should enter her name as Carol Burnett Jones.

It seemed the natural thing to do. But they entered their correct names, with Sue adding her address, so that Hillery could send Sue a thank you note for Sue's wedding gift of Riceville glasses (which Sue later received from Hillery).

Mom approaches in her coral dress and broach, and not wearing her glasses (her optometrist advised her eyesight was improving – had nothing to do with maybe there would be pictures taken later) and Mom then presents a detailed dissertation about her placing ribbons on the front rows to reserve for immediate families, and the tremendous responsibility of her completing that chore.

Sue and Sylvia praised her for her excellent accomplishment and, once satisfied with the acknowledgement, Mom proceeded to mingle with the guests who looked familiar, as Sue and Sylvia proceeded taking their notes (to secretly critique the affair).

Though the string quartet commenced playing, the ceremony was delayed ... to Vashon Island time again. Supposedly the bride was concerned about looking absolutely perfect (as she must portray the beautiful model image).

So the guests resorted to serving themselves wine and beer and eventually proceeded to the chairs for the outdoor ceremony, their glasses in hand. It was uncertain if they were going to toast the minister or join in the chorus with the soloists.

Sue and Sylvia, alias Carol Burnett and Mary Tyler Moore, chose to sit one row behind the “ribboned area” (what rebels)!

But, of course, in their hearts they knew they were still the only two paternal aunts of the bride.

Sylvia was kind enough to indicate to Sue that Aki, the bride’s maternal uncle, was sitting behind her. But Syl did not tell her it was Aki, the bride’s mother’s brother.

Sue had not seen Aki for at least 20 years and did not recognize him at all.

But in her poised manner Sue behaved precisely as a paternal aunt ought to behave, especially when expressing to Aki how pleased and very happy she was “to see you again, George.”

The soloist sang something in French, or Latin, or Italian – and it probably was appropriate to the occasion. Later in the service, she and another soloist sang a piece from *Phantom of the Opera* – “Hillery, that’s all I ask of you.”

Everyone laughed at that part (they thought it was so cute).

Mom, Larry and Hita (the proud parents of the bride), and Sue, too – all reached for Sue’s Kleenex.

Sylvia took more notes.

Hillery, in her all-over-even tan, looked like a model from *Bride Magazine*, of course. (It must really be a bitch to be so beautiful and then have to wipe all that makeup off at night).

Hillery’s sister, Sarah, the maid of honor, in her purple and yellow floral calico print against black background dress, was gorgeous in her own way and presented the impression of being a very sane and sensible and mature young lady. Sarah’s younger brother, Jesse, a groomsman, was recognizable in his tuxedo and slicked back hair and one earring – some can’t quit at being hip-hop.

Both parents of the bride (Larry and Hita) escorted the bride down the aisle – power play?

The ceremony was faultless and one to be proud of. The readings, sermonette, vows, were well thought out and meaningful. The outdoor setting was simple, but lovely, with the Puget Sound as the background on a lovely day.

As emotions reached a peak, it was all too soon over.

Time to eat.

Everyone found their way back to the wine and beer canopy. The Hors d'oeuvres consisted of pastry rolls with salmon and possibly a guacamole filling.

Sue chose the champagne over the hors d'oeuvres. She doesn't like salmon and never guacamole.

During the delay of serving the food, the bride's father, Larry, played the keyboard with the string quartet accompaniment, certainly another highlight for a lifetime dream – only to be interrupted for photographs.

After numerous attempts, Larry was finally able to finish the last movement of Clemente and feel victorious enough to ask Sue for a cigarette and a toast.

Sue, Sylvia, and Mom were then honored to have the father of the bride join them at their unassigned table.

Dinner consisted of cold chicken with Mexican sauce, cold black beans, cold pickled carrots, and cold dinner roll. Larry and Sue conspired to sing "Happy Birthday" to Syl, and Mom and others joined in.

Sue thought Syl was a real sport to give up her birthday for this affair, but for sure Syl was enjoying it all along as one of the only two paternal aunts of the bride, borrowed clothes and all.

Sue could not find any coffee, so continued with the champagne and white wine, and red wine, and pink wine... pretty soon it all looked the same and she wasn't prejudiced about what it was that was poured, enjoying every toast to the most.

Prior to the rock and roll band commencing entertainment, dressed in their white-fringed shirts and black hats, and prior to serving the cake (which lacks comment as it was not observed for critique), Sylvia persuaded Sue it was time to say farewells as Sylvia had out-of-town guests to pick up at the airport, and Sue also was in need of a ride home.

Sue, who was unsure if she was totally sauced or just glad to be free from the wedding, agreed to leave.

She also agreed to navigate the way off of the island, but had difficulty in reading the treasure map backwards. She had trouble reading just about anything right at that time.

In a more profound mood – it is only accurate to point out the fact that the majority of this story relates to the preparation and anticipation of a wedding. But every wedding is 99% preparation and anticipation – the grand finale of the ceremony merits the 1%.

So this ends our story – except for the final incident: when Sylvia unhooks the mounted tire on her Chevy Blazer to load luggage at the airport, only to find a severely dented tailgate... \$875.00...

Susan, she landed in bed wearing the consignment jumpsuit from Vashon Island and later declared it's now a nice set of pajamas.

OBLIGATORY DISCLAIMER:

There is one and only one reason this story was composed by the only paternal aunts of the bride: the only paternal uncles of the bride did not attend the wedding.

One of the two uncles, Rick, never received an invitation because his whereabouts were unknown.

And the other uncle, Paul, while presenting a lame excuse for choosing to not attend, asked his two sisters to provide him with a detailed written account of the event; Paul declaring to his sisters, "Among all of the ceremonies I prefer to avoid, both weddings and funerals rank at the top of my list."