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## Partners at work and home

By LISA BOONSTOPPEL-POT  
 The Herald

They work together, live together and sleep together 24 hours a day, everyday.

You'd think after 14 years of marriage, Al and Janet Cunneynworth, owners of Al and Al Red Brand Meats in Acton, would be tired of each other.

But they aren't. In fact, they are the most compatible, loving and contented couple I've ever had the privilege to meet.

When I took on this assignment of interviewing local couples who live together and work together for a special Valentine's Day feature, I planned on writing a short, amusing story on the trials and tribulations of togetherness without really getting involved.

Then I met the Cunneynworth's and I realized I couldn't do their relationship justice without giving a personal account of what it's like to see these two together.

When I entered their bright and airy Acton butcher shop, Al was straightening items on the already neat counter and Janet was clearing boxes in the back.

Al greeted me with a warm laugh (something he would do often through our hour-long interview) and Janet entered with a welcoming smile.

As I settled down on some crates, the two banded jokes back and forth about not getting along but it was obvious the good-natured remarks were more to put me at ease than true.

As I started to ask them questions, they seemed to draw together, not physically, but mentally as they began talking about their lives. They finished each other's sentences and relished fond memories of the past.

I learned the two met at George Brown College in Toronto where Al was studying retail meat cutting and she barbering.

Al and a friend had apparently been 'eyeing' Janet as red-blooded males oft to do until finally, the friend dared Al to ask her out.

They'd been peeking at her through a classroom window at the time and Janet happened to look up and see Al crooking a finger at her.

"Hey," she said to her classmate, "I think those two guys are looking at you."

"No," said her classmate, "they're looking at you."

Surprised but intrigued, she left the classroom and immediately accepted Al's invitation.

They've been together ever since.

Two years later, on Aug. 27, 1977, they were married. Soon, while maintaining full-time jobs, they started their first business venture together—a flea market cheese house called 'Al and Al's Cheese House.'

A couple of years later, they sold it and purchased Al and Al's Red Brand Meats on Mill St. in Acton.

Their friends told them that even though they had a great marriage, they'd be heading for divorce court if they decided to work together.

But Al and Janet knew it wouldn't happen and six years later, they're still proving their friends wrong.

So how do they do it? How is it that they can withstand, even relish, the constant companionship?

Al and Janet believe there's a number of reasons why—among the most of important of which is that they have the same goals and interests.

"We both want to provide well for our family and we're willing to work hard to do that," says Janet.

Another reason their relationship is so successful is because they work hard to separate work from home.

"When we're at the shop, we're business partners and when we're at home we're a couple," says Janet. "If I'm upset with him over something at work, I'll drop it as soon as I leave the shop and won't bring it up again until we open the shop the next morning."

There's no lack of communication between this couple.

"We talk about everything," admits Janet.

One thing they both love to talk about is each other. Sure, I asked them to tell me why they love each other and why their relationship is so successful, but they didn't need a lot of prodding!

Both are honestly proud of one another and can't say enough good things about each other.

Al loved to comment on his wife's kindness, sincerity and good looks and Janet remarked on her husband's humor (I'll warn everybody now, beware the moogle!). Spontaneity and romanticism.

He spoke with admiration about how she relates to customers in the shop and she proudly revealed how her husband had saved money for 10 years to buy her something she's always wanted—a fur coat.

This couple doesn't need a special occasion like Valentine's Day to express their love, they show it everyday, all-day at work, home and play.

Both have a strong work ethic, believing hard work will get them the things they want in life and so far, it has.

They have a small but successful business and a loving family with their two daughters, 10-year-old Amanda Rae and seven-year-old Amber Lee.

Thanks Janet and Al for a giving me a good story and have a happy Valentine's Day.



Al and Janet Cunneynworth

## Working together with love

By LISA BOONSTOPPEL-POT  
 The Herald

Thirty-six years ago, Doug and Arlene Smith met while working at the same company. However, it

took them 32 years of marriage before they worked together again.

The Smiths own and operate 'Office Magic' at Guelph St. and Sinclair Ave. in Georgetown and have

been chosen as the Herald's feature Valentine couple from Georgetown.

This year, the Herald is interviewing married couples who work together and still have hearts full of Valentine's Day romance.

And, boy, did we find a good couple.

The Smiths will celebrate their 34th wedding anniversary this Valentine's Day and have a wealth of remembrances about their marriage.

The two met while working for the Ontario Northland Communications company in a town near Kirkland Lake. Arlene was a long-distance telephone operator and he repaired communications equipment.

It just so happened one day, that the switchboard Arlene worked on broke down and handy-man Doug was called in to fix it.

The work took a couple of days and as the hours wore on, Arlene and Doug became friends. They both admit it wasn't love at first sight but it formed the basis of a warm friendship that's lasted throughout the years.

Two years later, on Feb. 15, 1958, the two married in a ceremony which reflected the spirit of the day. The bridesmaids wore red dresses and Arlene was resplendent with her bouquet of red roses and imitation hearts.

They continued working for the same company in their separate duties for nine years before Doug left to work for a mining company and she left to work in a psychiatric hospital.

When the hospital closed, Arlene opened a decorating store in the Timmins area and over the next 10 years, gained the experience that would allow her to make 'Office Magic' such a success.

By then, it was 1986 and the two decided to move to Georgetown where Doug landed a job at Corrigan Instrumentation. Arlene began working at Color Your World

but yearned to have her own business again.

In 1988, the two purchased Guelph St. Stationary.

And so it was the two became business partners as well as marriage partners. Both say it was the best thing they ever did.

"Before, we were both working so hard at our different jobs, we never saw each other," said Arlene. "At least now we're together."

Doug says it's worked out well because there is no conflict of power. He and Arlene decided since Arlene had the business experience, she would be the boss.

It also works because they're compatible, said Doug. "We get along because we like each other. We have very few conflicts because we have a mutual respect for each other's opinions and directions."

Loving each other has a lot to do with the respect they have for each other says Arlene. She loves and respects Doug because "he's kind, loving, thoughtful and has a really good sense of humor."

And, he's romantic. For their 25th wedding anniversary, Doug got a florist in town to make a replica of the wedding bouquet Arlene had at her wedding.

"The little things he does are so nice," said Arlene. "He makes me feel loved and special."

This Valentine's Day, they're planning on going out to dinner and may invite his mother or their three children, Lorraine, Henry and Allan to share the day with them.

It's nothing wild and romantic but as Doug and Arlene say, it's the little things in life that make them happy—it's pretty obvious this attitude has worked for them.

## A loving tradition

By Linda Erskine  
 The Herald

With the "day of love" fast approaching, some people do not know why February 14 was set aside as a day for lovers.

Valentine's Day did not start off as a holiday in which roses are given or valentines cards are exchanged. In A.D. 270, February 14 marked the day St. Valentine, the patron saint of love, ended his life.

St. Valentine, a young Roman, became a martyr after refusing to give up Christianity and was subsequently jailed for his religious beliefs.

According to "The Book of Festival Holidays", written by Marguerite Ickis, in Roman times, February 14 was a day set aside for "love lotteries and to fine-feathered friendships."

But it was St. Valentine, who had befriended the jailer's daughter while in confinement, who made the holiday what it is today. Legend has it, on this day he sent the first valentine, a farewell note to his friend signed, "from your Valentine."

Different traditions followed, some remaining from Roman times. The red heart, like the rose, symbolizes love, emotion and eternity.

Ribbons and frills entered into the Valentine's Day celebration in the days of knighthood, when a knight would ride off to battle with a scarf or ribbon from his lady love.

There also may be more to sending roses to lovers on Valentine's Day. Ms. Ickis, author of "The Book of Festivals", stated by rearranging the letters in the rose, a second meaning can arise.



Doug and Arlene Smith