

# Mesa Butte Romance

By Nora Maidman



People sometimes ask how Rick and I met. Our marriage is the second one for both of us with our previous partners long gone and no children to tie us to them. Rick is seven years younger so I was 42 and Rick was 35 when we met.

Not surprisingly, it was horses and music that brought us together. The Mesa Butte Equestrian campground in Kananaskis Country has a group camping area and my Riding Club had it booked for the long weekend in September. The Club has booked a weekend at Mesa Butte every summer since the early 1980s. The more experienced riders taught the newer ones the fine art of safe, responsible trail riding in the mountains. We had room for more people so some friends from other riding clubs came out for the weekend. Rick was one of these. We both rode with our own friends but in the evening the community campfire attracted everyone. I was sitting at the fire playing my guitar and singing when this bearded fellow in a fringed leather jacket showed up carrying his guitar. That was Rick and that was the first time we met.

That night was quite special. Among the group around the campfire were a couple of professional musicians from the Foothills Brass. He had his trumpet along which was normal for him. You might wonder how a trumpet fits into a sing-song around a campfire but he made it work! He did beautiful little fills in between the words of the songs and it was magic. Then, as the moon came up over the ridge, the whole group sang “Amaz-



ing Grace” with harmonies and that trumpet singing too. Those who were there would never forget that night!

The next night we played music again at the campfire and I invited Rick to start coming to a friend’s weekly jam session. He did and the rest, as they say, is history.

At our next Riding Club meeting, my dear friend (only time I ever questioned that) reported on the Trail Ride pointing out that “Nora got lucky on the Trail Ride.” Great choice of words. So much for my reputation! Anyway, everyone had a good laugh and three years later in 1999 I ended up with a husband. ♡

After obtaining a BSc in Environmental Biology from the U of C, Nora joined AWA and worked as an Animal Health Technologist for nearly 20 years. As her story suggests, Nora also is a musician. A past president of the Foothills Bluegrass Music Society she released the solo CD *Angel of St. Mary’s* in 2018. She lives with Rick on an acreage near Carseland.

Nora’s husband Rick... their courtship and marriage may perhaps be one of the more unusual gifts offered by Alberta’s provincial parks system. PHOTO: © N. MAIDMAN