

Laura certainly was not going to call him, but couldn't resist repeatedly asking her grown daughter if she had broken some cardinal rule of dating.

Well, you know the rest of the story. Of course, George did call her again and spent a year burning up the road between St. Simons Island and Augusta. George's persistence paid off and they were married on Nov. 18, 1995. It was a limited-invitation wedding and reception, with only family and a few friends present. Both the bride and groom recalled the day as one of enchanting charm. Their family members from their previous marriages, all of whom approved and supported the match, surrounded them. Even today, 13 years later, they still speak to each other the words from Tracy Byrd's song, "Keeper of the Stars:"

*"It was no accident, me finding you, someone had a hand in it
Long before we ever knew.
Now I just can't believe you're in my life.
Heaven's smilin' down on me, as I look at you tonight."*

Lynell and George Stapleton

Another George and his wife, Lynell Stapleton, also had a wonderful time unfolding the story of their wedding in 1980 at Fort Eustis, Va.

As appropriate to his station in life as a colonel in the U. S. Army, he planned and directed the ceremony. George had proposed to Lynell earlier and they had a small window of time in which to be married because George had already received his orders to report to Saudi Arabia. The problem was that they were unable to pin down a date until the very last minute, literally. Lynell was packing up her apartment on April 10 when George called her to ask, "Do you think you will be finished in time to get married tonight?" She said, "Of course, darling." Then she started scrambling through her wardrobe and found the white suit she had chosen for the occasion. Thankfully, she remembered that their rings had not been packed; rather, George had them.

Ring, ring, who's got the ring? The practical joke played at many weddings was not funny this time. Before the ceremony began, Lynell discovered that the rings had already been packed and shipped to Saudi Arabia with George's belongings. She and George talked and Lynell agreed that they could use other rings symbolically until they could reach the real ones.



So it was that they were married and later boarded their plane to the Middle East.

If you will look closely at the comedic representation of their situation, drawn by a friend, you will see what are allegedly George's former girlfriends crying on the Virginia shore as he leaves with Lynell. At the time of their wedding,

George owned a red Karmann Ghia convertible and the artist has floated the car with flags representing all the organizations that had the good luck to be commanded by George. The shoreline on the other side depicts a camel with its rider holding aloft the all-important rings.

Laurie and Bart Altman

When Laurie McAllister and Bart Altman were married in May 1997 on Jekyll Island, the underlying theme of all their festivities was that of understated, calm, easy and simple rituals. They were determined to break the mold of rehearsal parties. Neither wanted to be dressed to the nines and sitting at a banquet table. Instead, they had a well-attended, casual rehearsal party. Held at the home of Bart's uncle, they ate and partied within the boundaries of a fish fry with all the usual side dishes, drinks and ales, and tales. You see, they had a direct "fishing pole" into the depths of the Golden Isles waters. Since Bart's father is a charter boat captain, the freshly caught and fried fish just multiplied as the night sped along.



Bride and groom remember that their wedding was perfect – with few exceptions. Each laughed aloud as they spoke over each other, telling a story from the preacher's message. He was a very young and very newly ordained priest who enthusiastically spoke about an "attitude of gratitude," ending by telling Bart he should be jumping and down, yelling, "Yippee Skipee, I got me a wife!"

Kim and Dr. Mark Hanly

As their wedding date grew closer, Kim and Mark Hanly were anxious to see each other. They had been in the states together earlier in the year, but Kim couldn't obtain a work Visa, so she returned home to Capetown, South Africa. Mark (or Mahk as Kim so charmingly calls him) stayed at the Medical College of Georgia to finish his residency, so they had not seen each other in nine months. Kim, Mark and their families traveled many, many miles to make the wedding a reality. Mark had to fly from the states to Zimbabwe, South Africa, where he picked up his parents and drove 14 hours to Capetown. There were so many mishaps along the way that the three of them missed the rehearsal. They had overcome two flat tires, a stolen purse (containing passports and travelers checks), and an unexpected overnight stay in a very small, rural hospital for Mark's mother.

