

Something More About Me

I stayed almost 4 years in the USA. The reason is called Sara, which also happens to be the first name of my present (Nov. 2022) spouse. Here is an excerpt from my personal notes that can serve as a guide for present-day (male) scientists of how (not) to score in more ex/rotic fields involving females:

I do not remember how I managed to get her into a coffee bar (or was it the other way around?). I was completely stricken by the appearance of the angel and in violent emotional turmoil. Nevertheless, I realized that serious wooing was indicated, and, with the unerring instinct of the true scientist, I found the most suitable topic for openers, a topic that could not fail to enthrall all and sundry, and commenced to introduce the angel (in detail) to the fascinating world of elementary particle physics; including quarks, in particular charm quarks. I explained how quarks and *Finnegan's Wake*¹⁾ are connected, and how all that ties up with *Zettels Traum*²⁾ and electron microscopy – after all she was an English literature major and presumably interested in this lighter and literary side of quarkness too.

She passed the test - neither did she fall asleep, nor did she attempt to kill me. Sara, that was the name of the angel, was very interested in quarks - and in bosons, fermions, leptons and strange interactions, although, looking back, I sometimes have a nagging suspicion that her interest was more in the guy than in charm quarks. Somehow I forgot to ask her telephone number, so the only thing left to do was to wait for the next volunteer opportunity (*restoring an "old" (ror Americans) theater*) coming up. I went there as often as I could - she wasn't there. Unfortunately I couldn't go as often as I wanted to, because in between was a Gordon Research Conference and some other contingencies that kept me from going to the Strand theater. Sara, being practical (and more experienced), tried to find out my telephone number in between, as it turned out later, but had no success either. The big chance for another look at the angel presented itself about four weeks later on Saturday, the 30th of July 1977, because the Strand restoration committee had scheduled some fund-raising festival in the Ithaca commons (a pedestrian area in downtown Ithaca, a far-out thing in an American town by then).

So a few cold showers later – glory be, there she was again, trying to get one of those blow-huge-soap-bubble things to work for the kids milling around. She definitely needed help, and expert help she got, which led to smiles, talk, and ice cream. So I did charm her with smiles and soap, after all! Exactly how we proceeded from there I do not recall, my memory is blurred and mostly covered with pink fog. What I do recall is that after some joint bubble blowing we wandered off and soon found ourselves at the edge of the commons, close to a big parking lot.

I married her (or did she marry me?) on Dec. 12th 1981 and we lived happily (most of the time) ever after.

¹⁾ **Finnegan's Wake** is one of the most famous books in English literature that nobody has ever read. It was written by **James Joyce** and the word "quark" for an elementary particle comes from there.

More to that [here](#)

²⁾ "**Zettels Traum**" is the German equivalent of *Finnegan's Wake*; its author is **Arno Schmidt**. It is bigger of course, and just as unreadable. I had on copy with me at Cornell.