

Bing and C.J. are grooming for success

If you think Bing and C.J. Sickles are an unlikely couple, it's because they are.

Think about this: What are the odds that an American kid from Pittsburgh would meet a girl from Cebu City, Philippines, marry her in Okinawa, Japan, and not even know they were married?

Let's face it. It's a long shot.

C.J. Sickles came to be overseas the same way many young men do. He was serving his country at Camp Foster in Okinawa when he decided to visit the Philippines on leave and was hanging around Ali Mall in Cebu.

It is the mall that was named for the legendary Mohamad Ali after his epic victory over Smokin' Joe Frazier in "The Thrilla" in Manila.

It was also the mall that changed C.J.'s life forever, for it was there where he met and fell in love with the beautiful Bing. The year was 1986.

The fledgling romance was subsequently put on agonizing hold when C.J. was sent to Korea on temporary assigned duties (T.A.D.) for three long months. During that time C.J. wrote faithfully and did some soul searching. Upon his return to Okinawa, he sent for Bing on a fiancé visa.

There was paperwork to be filled out for anyone who was contemplating marriage, so C.J. took Bing to the courthouse and they started writing. When they were finished, they were handed a document in Japanese and told to take it to the American consulate to be translated to English. When they received the translation, it turned out to be a certificate of marriage!

Well, I guess that cuts down on the catering costs.

As is the case in most military careers, there were several places they called home, but none as special as Camp Lejeune in North Carolina, where in 1989 the Sickles welcomed a brand new baby girl. They named her Abby.

C.J. rose through the ranks and finished his career as a Master Sergeant, overseeing a staff of 200 instructors and pumping 300 students a day through the Motor Transport School.

When, after 22 years in the military, the bean counters decided to amalgamate the North Carolina facility with another in Missouri, C.J. took



Pictured above, Bing, left, and C.J., stand in front of their full service dog care shop, which is only steps away from On Top of the World.

retirement over the inevitable move.

In the meantime, Bing had graduated from working the saw at a furniture manufacturer, all the way up to computer-aided design (C.A.D.), but quite frankly, she was bored. So she went back to school and became a certified dog groomer.

During a week's vacation in the Sunshine State, Bing and C.J. were struck with wanderlust. They sold their home in Hickory, N.C., and headed down I-95. After six months living in their R.V., they settled into a house in Riverview, Fl., and set up "Bing's Dog Grooming" business in south Tampa.

A couple of years later, when Abby moved out, C.J. and Bing started looking to down-size and simplify their life. That's when they first entered the front gate of On Top of the World.

They uprooted the business and the newly renovated "Bing's Dog Grooming" is now located a few steps east of that imposing OTOW arch, in the Sunset North Plaza.

As the name clearly indicates,

Bing is the boss and C.J. is the hired hand.

To be accurate, C.J. handles all the money and shmoozes the clients, while Bing does the business of making beautiful dogs.

It's a synergistic partnership that seems to thrive ... as long as C.J. continues to do as he's told.

Bing and C.J. offer a full slate of dog-grooming services at rates that are lower than their competitors.

Why?

Because of their proximity to OTOW and the residents who call it home.

They offer dog bathing, shampooing and grooming, as well as nail and ear service.

Bing and C.J. were sponsors at the Halloween Pet Costume Contest last October right here in our own dog park.

You can reach Bing's Dog Grooming at 727-223-8958 or look left as you approach state Route 19 on Sunset Point Road. Remember, you get a \$5 discount on your first visit.

Pictured below are Bing and C.J. (a little younger) with their marriage liscence imposed behind them. At first, the couple did not know this certificate officially made them husband and wife.

