

Introducing ... Mr. and Mrs. Entertainment

Getting to Know You

by
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A monthly
feature
about the people
in your
On Top
of the World
community



Jan and Doug Springer have been entertaining audiences with music, song and dance for the past 30 years.

Our On Top of the World community is home to many talented people. Have you ever wondered where such talent comes from?

Well, this is a story that should answer one of those questions. It's the story of Jan and Doug Springer, two dyed-in-the-wool entertainers.

Jan Springer was a 20-year-old single girl in Kalamazoo, Mich., when a friend asked if she could invite her brother, Doug, to go bowling with them. He had just returned from military service and his sister wanted him to socialize.

When asked, Jan looked her straight in the eye and said, "Invite whoever you want. I'm not going to marry the guy!"

One year later, Jan and Doug tied the knot.

We've all known marriages, especially in show business, that have crashed and burned, because of fame, infidelity and drugs. I can happily report that 47 years later, Jan and Doug are still going strong, despite the fact that, at the time of their retirement, they were actively making drugs.

Wait! Don't jump to the wrong conclusion.

Both of them worked for Pfizer, where Doug was a shift supervisor in the manufacture of the active ingredients in some of our most potent pharmaceuticals. The products were so volatile that staff worked in fully encapsulated suits inside a blast control room.

Jan and her sister started gymnastics, tap dancing and ballet dancing when Jan was 4 years old. Jan tolerated gymnastics, but loved tap and ballet. She danced pointe from age 12 until 17.

In the '50s, Jan and her fellow dancers were featured tap dancers on local television.

She still tap dances today, and is quick to point out that dancing is more fun as an adult than it was as a child.

Jan has a brag sheet of her plays and performances that is as long as your arm. The list runs from 1980 until 2014 and reads like a who's who of song and dance, with names like Carmen, Ten Little Indians, Lend Me a Tenor and Christmas Carol. There are many more.

She was the choreographer for Vicksburg, Michigan's Main Street Revue from 1989 until she retired in 2014.

Jan loves dance of all kinds and her repertoire also includes hula, ballroom and belly dancing. Here at OTOW she has added line dancing to her list.

It's safe to say that Doug is not a dancer, although lately he has ventured far beyond his comfort zone thanks to Ed Foland's class for people with two left feet. Now, whenever Electric Slide bursts from the speakers, Doug appears on the dance floor.

Doug's true talent lies in his rich and powerful voice. He has been showcasing those pipes for more than 36 years in Vicksburg Rotary's Showboat. It is a variety show based on the template of paddle wheeler entertainment on the rivers of America starting as early as 1914.

Doug joined up after his return from military service and has never missed a year with the cast since. He moved up from a chorus position to captain – that's code for more lines, more solos and more work.

During the '80s, Doug and three friends formed a band called Endless Summer. As the name suggests, they featured the music of The Beach Boys, but their repertoire was much wider. Doug is one of two founding members left. They still do a few gigs when he heads back home to Michigan in the summer.

In addition to his beautiful wife and belting out songs, Doug has another love in his life. That is his love for tractors. In the great scheme of things, it might be dangerous to speculate on where tractors place on his list of greatest loves. According to Doug, nothing runs like a Deere. Not even Jan.

Jan and Doug have been coming to OTOW for 34 years, first as visitors to Doug's parent's unit on Ecuadorian Way and now as second generation seasonal residents.

For Doug, there is a bonus to our sunny, southern location. It places him an easy two hour car ride from the Florida Flywheelers, in Fort Meade. It's there where he gets his regular fix of all things tractor.