

SENIOR MOMENTS

Sharing cheese that never lost its flavor

We happened upon the cow by chance, on a road trip to the Oregon coast. The life-size replica was positioned just outside the entrance to the Tillamook Cheese Factory.



Patricia Bunin
Columnist

George, accustomed to car trips with his cow-loving wife, knew the drill.

"We have to get a picture of you with this baby," he said, pulling into the parking lot. "Then we can tour the cheese factory. I always wanted to see how cheese was made."

It took me a few minutes to put on a little lipstick — and George a much longer time to set up the picture just the way he wanted it.

"Lift up your head up so I can see

your pretty smile; you, honey, not the cow."

By the time we finished, the cheese factory was closing. For the next 20 years my husband teased me relentlessly that, because I took so long, he never got to see how cheese was made.

For our 30th anniversary last year, I announced that I wanted to clear my name and take him back to Tillamook so he could have the tour he claimed I made him miss. He loved the idea and we decided to add the Shakespeare Festival in Ashland. We had fun planning our route over wine and Tillamook cheese.

When he became ill, and we could see the trip was not an option, we celebrated our anniversary with a late lunch at a favorite restaurant.

Looking dapper in his trade-

mark ascot and navy blazer, George surprised me by reaching into his jacket and pulling out two cards — he always gave me one for his wife and one for his girlfriend.

I will never know how he managed to get them, given he was weak and unable to drive. When I asked, he flashed his winning smile and said, "I have my ways."

Even dying from liver cancer, my husband never lost his sense of humor. He signed the wife card, "I love you with all my heart and liver."

This week, on our anniversary, I will leave a wedge of Tillamook cheese at his grave. And somewhere, I know, he will be laughing.

Email Patricia Bunin at patriciabunin@sbcglobal.net. Follow her on Twitter @PatriciaBunin.