

Introduce Yourself: Myrna Hant

What's Your Story?



Hi, my name is Myrna Hant. For me, the biggest yontif of the year is February 2, Groundhog Day, 'cause I was born and raised in Punxsutawney, Pennsylvania where the groundhog comes out to predict the weather for the rest of the winter. When my father saw that his 3 teenage daughters were beginning to date non-Jewish boys he decided it was time to leave our small town (with 20 Jewish families) and come to Los Angeles. I remember being so shocked in L.A. that people would actually mention in public that they were Jewish – something we didn't do in Punxsy. But gradually I got used to being surrounded by Jews and I actually became comfortable with my heritage.

My husband, Bill, and I met 60 years ago at a Hillel dance right after we had fasted all day on Yom Kippur. I was all of 17 at the time and in high school but when this sophisticated and older guy asked me whether I went to college I immediately lied and said "Yes". And darned if he didn't ask me, "Where do you go to college?" and all I could think of to say was, "I forget." Oh boy, he must have been mighty impressed with me!

But college I did go to and somehow couldn't stop going – a bachelors at UCLA, a masters in English at Cal State Northridge, an MBA from Loyola Marymount and a Ph.D. from UCLA. Finally, Bill said, "Enough already." Our kids always said my main religion was education. Bill got his Ph.D. after we married, and our two

kids followed the family tradition – our daughter, Jackie, is a physician in Beverly Hills and our son (whose main love is his rock band) got his Ph.D. and is a manager at Aerospace Corporation. Of course, the best gifts they've given us are five grandchildren, 22, 19, 18, 15 and 13.

Reluctantly I stopped going to school and worked as a college administrator at Chapman University and as an instructor at Santa Monica College, Loyola Marymount University, and now at UCLA Extension. But nothing ever rivaled my glorious days as a student.

Bill and I have had a marvelous run, trekking mountains all over the world from Nepal to Turkey to Norway. And I became a reluctant skier, a terminal intermediate, an enthusiastic backpacker and a devoted biker. Little did I know at the ripe old age of 18 when I asked Bill to marry me that we were starting a terrific adventure that hopefully will continue for many more years.