

Dear Roslyn,

May 3, 2009

Please pardon the intrusion into your busy life with a story from Reseda High School that I hope will make you smile, if nothing else. It took place between 1957 and 1959, more than 50 years ago. You don't know me whatsoever, and so it may seem odd to have a person who doesn't know you write to you like this. However, your presence in high school had a life altering experience on me, "Artie" Rangno). Let me explain.

The existence of the four people shown below, whose relation to me are son (Arthur W., far right), and three grandchildren, (Morris, Lewis, and Natasha, left to right), are due to "Rozzi", you. All four live in Germany.



Incredible? Live in Germany? Huh? Where's the connection?

Let me explain, in a story about a 15 year old boy's incapacitating crush on a high school school classmate that began sometime in the fall of 1957. You and I were 11th graders¹. Sometime in those halcyon days of 1957 I noticed "Rosalind" Ritter. I don't remember the exact date or even place, but somehow she became a "person of interest" for me as I suppose happens to many boys at that time in life; someone leaps out at you, takes over a portion of your persona, or in your, nothing was left "up there" but thoughts of you.

¹I was generally younger than my classmates; I guess mom and dad wanted to get me out of the house and into school as soon as possible.

Why Rozzi R?

I don't know; there were dozens of cute girls at Reseda High. And I had never had a class with you at the point I became smitten. Maybe some sociobiologist or neuroscientist could explain it with arguments about pheromones and neuroreceptors that make certain attractions between people inevitable, a matter of science.

But there it was. And it grew the more I glimpsed you on campus. Who was this person?

After I noticed you, I began to hope I would see this breathtakingly cute, interesting, and well-dressed person at some point each day in high school. I began to go so far as to enter whether I had seen you or not at school in my log of weather observations, kind of a weather diary that now had personal "addendums." The crush was getting "pretty bad."

I will backup my story here for a moment, since having a "log of weather observations" seems like an odd insertion here. In my life, pretty much all of it to that time, there were only two items having any particular importance outside of family; clouds and weather, and playing baseball, in that order. Now, her hold expanding on me, there was a third: Rozzi R.

Of course, I could never talk to you. I was too shy, and clearly I was from a different background. Mainly I wore T-shirts and jeans to school; and hung out solely with my athletic buddies, ones that were also kind of social misfits, or really, just shy folk who disdained ordinary student social habits. We mainly practiced our respective sports after school and on weekends to a fanatical degree. Girls? Hah!

A high school procedural change was later to help me in my quest to meet you. They allowed us, in the spring of 1958 when we were juniors (I was now 16), to sign up for our classes in the order we would like to have them in our senior year. On that day, I deduced that if I signed up for a LOT of the same senior classes, one of them would certainly have Rozzi in it! It was a brilliant thought, or so it seemed. So, on that memorable, and fun day for me (I was so clever!), I signed into THREE of the same senior history classes, one of which had you in it. I was so happy!

At the end of the day there was a check by the teacher of your last class that you were going to attend that next fall semester. He was going to see if you had done it correctly. In my case, since it was fall football practice, the "teacher" was assistant football coach Hal Lambert. Hal Lambert was a screamer; a drill sergeant. I remember how furious he was when he saw that I had three of the same classes! "How could you do that?" he screamed; that, plus some other things. (In truth, I liked him a lot.) And he took pity on me; a poor, smitten boy whose brain no longer worked properly.

Lambert had to find me some classes that still had room for students, and after he had calmed down enough, he asked me which of the history classes I wanted. I did not hesitate; it would be the one with Rozzi! He then assigned me, after my choice, into an

afternoon Homeroom and Boy's Glee class with Margaret Hindee. Boy's Glee? Hey, I was "a athlete", not a singer!

Boy's Glee quickly collapsed due to too few students (surprise!) into Miss Hindee's *a cappella* choir class. I had never sung a note (except to mimic the rock and roll sounds of the day) and so I remember how silly and funny it was to try to sing something from "South Pacific" or "Flower Drum Song" those first few days in Miss Hindee's class. I REALLY couldn't sing or read notes; instead I often laughed at first, got red-faced, thinking about how my athletic buddies would view me.

But after a while, I came to love *a cappella* choir! Margaret Hindee was wonderful, and introduced me into so much more wonderful music that I had never listened to.

Eventually, toward the end of my second semester in that class, the spring of 1959, a girl in that choir came over and told me that her best friend, Melanie, would go out with me if I asked her. I had been noticed, and I did.

That was my first date in high school; I took Melanie to the Senior Prom. We were married four and a half years later, and soon had a son, Arthur Weldon, named by Melanie after me and her dad.

So, without having signed into three of the same classes to meet Rozzi, I would not have met Melanie, nor had the family I have today.

Can the results of a crush get more profound than that? I don't think so.

"Q. E. D.", as they say.

Melanie and I were divorced some seven years later, and Melanie, teaching English at UCLA, met and married a German foreign exchange student and moved to Germany with Arthur. Arthur W. married there, and soon I was the grandfather of three, Natasha, Morris and Lewis.

Back in that senior year, in that history class with you in the fall of 1958, I remember that you gave some student government reports from time to time. I remember as you went to the front of the class room to give them, how my face reddened, I felt hot, I perspired, my heart was pounding; I was SURE that everyone in that class room must surely know I had these fantastically large feelings for Rozzi with her low, earthy voice, that impeccably cute face, one that I could barely look at without revealing those secret feelings. Perhaps I would pass out in class while you were speaking! There was nothing that was not perfect about her!

But being in that class with you and being so close made me realize how much different the social divide between us was; I was pretty ill-formed in that day, and could only on one occasion, muster enough nerve to speak a few awkward sentences to you after class while we walked to different ones. It's funny how I remember that awkward moment so

precisely, though not the sentences, and not anything else about that history class! On the other hand, you, like many students, were a part of the rich social fabric of high school, one that seemed so distant to me.

Besides, had a conversation evolved between us at some point, it would have, at least on my part, perhaps devolved to only these subjects: Our football or baseball team, and the current “700 millibar height pattern anomalies” over the West Coast and what they portended for our weather².

So, there is the “story” of Rozzi R, and the profound effect she had on my life. I do hope you have enjoyed this vignette, this little bit of high school drama, the kind of drama that must take place in every high school as kids come of age, especially shy ones. You are and will be forever an inextricable part of someone’s memory of high school, someone you didn’t even know or meet.

I hope fervently hope that your life has been a good one, Rozzi, one filled with many happy moments and that many more are ahead.

Sincerely, fondly,

Art (aka, “Artie”) Rangno

PS: I attach my favorite high school photo, one that made our football team, looking on as individual photos were taken, boo and laugh simultaneously. This was because the action shown by me was inappropriate for the position I played (center) on the football team. I think this photo best captures my latent personality, one that tends toward (sophomoric) humor. However, I was a senior when this was taken, not a sophomore, to give a rather full example of that humor. I hope, too, I will see you at the 50th reunion. I promise more than two sentences.

²I subscribed to the *Monthly Weather Review* in those days, a technical, peer-reviewed journal, and that’s how they “talked” in it to describe where the high and low pressure areas aloft were. I tried to memorize phrases like that since I dearly wanted to be a meteorologist/weather forecaster even those days.

