

## How We Met: *The Smeads*

The setting is the Fall of 1954 and involves an 18 year old dairy farm boy near Greenfield, Massachusetts, and a 17 year old girl living four miles outside Ashfield, Massachusetts, (a town of ~1,000). The boy is in the first semester of his freshman year at the University of Massachusetts, majoring in Agricultural Engineering. The girl is a senior in high school and a participant in most girls' sports as well as a cheer leader [in her class of **fourteen!**]

Two friends convinced Phil to accompany them the Saturday night following Thanksgiving the 23 miles up into the country to a square dance on a large dance floor above the Ashfield Town Hall [a dance with *live* music and a *live* caller]. There he met Barbara, who he recalls stood out from most of the girls her age because she was fun, very nice, polite ... and downright pretty! They enjoyed dancing together and, as luck would have it, he possessed the winning ticket for the \$50 door prize. Barbara let Phil and his friends drive her to her home those four miles out to ***Spruce Corner***. A first "real date" followed on December 4th to see the movie "**White Christmas**".



A few months later, Barbara's family moved to ***Williamsburg*** (Massachusetts, that is). She graduated from High School, and worked as a bookkeeper at a bank in Northampton, MA. About the same time, Phil changed his major to Civil Engineering. They spent time together almost every weekend, usually utilizing Phil's personal transportation (a 1946 Willys Jeep). There were trips to square dances, auto racing, to help or watch Phil at work on the family farm ....and often just exploring the country roads of Berkshire and Franklin Counties of western Massachusetts. Since the family dairy farm also included a retail milk route, there was involvement in that aspect also.

Phil's parents seemed not too concerned with what time he arrived back home from his usual 50 mile Saturday night round-trip ....just so long as he was up (and fairly alert) by 5:30 am to help with Sunday morning farm chores. [You'll note he didn't become a dairy farmer!]

After dating for approximately two years, Phil proposed (she accepted!) and thence followed an eventful year of 1957. The year included Phil's conversion to Catholicism, the almost total destruction of the family farm by a devastating fire on his 21st birthday, Barbara's vehicle accident that injured her leg and totaled the family's car, attendance



at Air Force ROTC summer camp at Ethan Allen AFB in Vermont, ..... and a simple yet grand wedding on August 3rd [just prior to Phil's senior year of college]. As they say, "the rest is history", and when you read this they will be working on their 59th year of wedded bliss.

— Barbara and Phil Smead —