

The Bandera PROPHEET

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The View From Dry Creek Hill

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My first date with my wife lasted under five minutes. After I gave her a free box of french fries she drove away into the Houston night and left me at the Jack-In-The-Box drive-thru window. I'd never seen her before. She won the french fry lottery because she was my last customer of the night. I gave no thought to ever seeing her again, closed up, and went home.

A few months later I learned a girl in my apartment complex was moving out and had seen "one of those Rice students" driving a station wagon one day. Word got back to me, I borrowed my parents Oldsmobile, and I spent the day moving my future wife away from where I lived. In retrospect, getting left at the drive-thru window and helping a woman get away from you look like bad ways to build a relationship, but that night at the Jack-In-The-Box was 50 years ago. I didn't know she was the french fry girl when I agreed to help her move, but we put it together as we hauled boxes and furniture that day. We've been together ever since.

I've thought long and hard about what this little story says about how well we can plan, predict and understand our lives. I'd certainly worked harder at other relationships and spent a lot more money on dinner, tickets and whatever else. But those fries cost me nothing. They weren't even mine. Neither was the station wagon.

I only know that a totally unplanned and improbable series of events led to the most influential and positive event of my life. These last months have certainly been just as unplanned and improbable, and I hope something worthwhile comes out on the other end. I'm having trouble figur-

ing out what it might be, but I had no idea where those fries and that station wagon were taking me, either. Let's all keep our fingers crossed.