

Reconnecting across the years through cyberspace



BARB GUY

I never meant to join Facebook. From time to time people invited me to sign up for the Internet social-networking site so I could become their "Facebook friend." I always thought, "Good grief, I'm already your friend; why should I join some cockamamie Internet thingy when there's so much I already can't seem to find time for?"

Now I know why. I now know that my friend Victoria, whom I've barely kept up with since 1992 when I moved away from her in Washington, DC, is alive and well, looking glowing and fulfilled. I was surprised to learn that we've been on similar paths since we parted. In the interval, our moms and dads have all died and we've both faced breast cancer surgery, chemotherapy and radiation.

Since Victoria's breast cancer, she has become a peer counselor,

joined an eight-woman survivors' crew that rows on the Potomac, and she has signed up for Avon's two-day breast cancer benefit walk in May, while 2,000 miles away that same month I'll be the honorary chair of Salt Lake's 2009 Susan G. Komen Race for the Cure.

The best Facebook day so far was the day it reconnected me with my former next-door neighbor and BFF from 3rd through 6th grade, Julie. Because of Facebook, even though I moved out of her neighborhood in 1972, we sat down to lunch together yesterday, 37 years later.

After the shock of looking into a 48-year-old face where we had left a 12-year old face, we had so much fun telling stories, looking at old photos and catching each other up on our lives. How strange to live maybe 10 miles apart and yet need the Internet to get us together. But there you are.

My darling old-new friend Julie was the daughter of an LDS bishop and I was the daughter of Methodists from Denver who were sure that the LDS Church would not rest until it had me in its clutches. Julie's folks probably looked next door and saw a cigarette-smoking dad, social drinkers, and the downfall of their own children.

Despite that, or perhaps because of it, Julie and I became great friends. I was jealous of her for all her siblings. Her mom would come outside and ask Julie where one of the other kids was and I was so attracted to the idea of being one of so many that you could disappear for a while.

Julie came along to restaurant dinners with me, perhaps a rarity for her large family, and kept me entertained during the endless coffee and cigarette portion that inevitably followed every meal. We had sleepovers, played pool and held a wedding for the neighborhood rabbits.

I am so happy to have Julie and Victoria back. It's nice to know what they're up to and to be able to send them a quick message now and then. Somehow it's so much easier to reconnect this particular way.

Now I treat Facebook like a messy drawer in my computer. I open it pretty much every day and select a couple of treasures from inside to enjoy. Wonderful things appear out of nowhere. Old boyfriend. Biology teacher. College roommate. First boss. Connecting is cool.

BARB GUY is a regular contributor to these pages. © Salt Lake Tribune.