



# The Art in Romance

*Couple marries creativity with commitment*

**BY**  
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SWITZER

**W**hile his photographer wife, Mary Ann, framed a great gray wolf with the Canon 5D MKIII, Henry Melton breathed in the scents of pine, fir, and spruce that intermingled with unmistakable odors from sulfur pits at Yellowstone National Park. Henry shifted the camera bags and pulled out a notepad, jotting down ideas for a scene in his next novel. Before day's end, the

couple would track coyotes, bear, elk, buffalo, wolves, and—after sunset—the Milky Way. They would tumble into bed close to midnight, only to wake again at 5:00 a.m. for another day of Mary Ann capturing pictures and Henry stealing moments to write.

“We each work long hours to produce something new and unique,” explains Henry, author of eighteen books along with dozens of short stories, speaking of the couple’s forty-plus-years of marriage. “It’s easy to support her—we speak the same language. I know she’ll ... [make] the same sacrifice for me. From the beginning, we have loved travel and being out in nature. Many of these expeditions had me in the driver’s seat, with her taking pictures. She would hop out and take a nature walk, while I would prop my laptop up on the steering wheel and edit a scene [in a story].”

Ever since a church picnic

where a young scribbler of stories met a soon-to-be shutterbug, the couple has made supporting one another’s creative pursuits central to their relationship, regardless of challenges. “Creative projects take time and isolation,” Henry notes. “Life, particularly family, also takes time and makes demands that can make isolation impossible. This conflict of family togetherness versus work time was particularly hard while raising children. With demands of family [and our] creative time all competing for the same hours, sacrifices had to be made. But we [worked] it out.”

Now grandparents, Mary Ann and Henry care for their one-year-old grandson, Tobyn, and juggle Henry’s science fiction conventions and publicity trips with Mary Ann’s nature photography expeditions. “Right now, we can’t both be gone at the same time,” explains Mary Ann, “[so] I sched-



ule my photographic trips at times when [Henry's] schedule is free. It is good to be connected with another creative person who understands that cycle and helps keep spirits up until the creative juices start to flow again. Creative work can be draining ... so having a spouse that [understands] is especially beneficial."

As Mary Ann compiles a photographic image library, submits to competitions and magazines, and writes magazine articles and children's books, Henry continues to craft young adult science fiction, with settings more far-flung than the couple's wide-ranging travels. "Decades of living together, traveling for weeks on end at each other's elbows, and conflicts resolved bit by bit over time have worked together to make a partnership that comes naturally," Henry reflects. "She gave me room to grow, and I did the same for her, and our creative life [has] bloomed." ■



Catch up with Mary Ann and her photographic work at [www.MaryAnnMelton.net](http://www.MaryAnnMelton.net), and find matted prints and notecards of her work for sale at

Handcrafts Unlimited on the Square. For more information about Henry's books and other written works, go to [www.HenryMelton.com](http://www.HenryMelton.com) or visit his Facebook page at [www.facebook.com/HenryMeltonFan](http://www.facebook.com/HenryMeltonFan).



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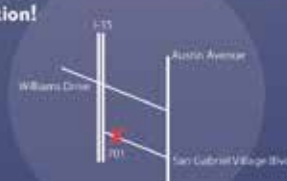


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