

Couple become believers in fate Danielle Wink and Thomas Rayhill



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The way Danielle Wink and Thomas Rayhill met on a late June evening in 2011 is ironic in two ways. First, they were in a group of mutual friends who dragged them to Chippewa Street, a place they both hate. Second, she gave him her business card after they had a disagreement over whether she should buy a round of drinks for the group. “I hate telling people where we met, because it doesn’t give the right impression of us,” said Danielle Rayhill. “Our friends dragged us out downtown to Chippewa. We both hate Chippewa and we never go there and we both ended up going there, where we met.

“That’s why we both believe in fate now,” she said. The night got off to a rocky start for Danielle, who was out with a girlfriend who was in a bad mood. Danielle was planning to head home when she got a text from another friend named Rikki. “Rikki said she was going to meet up downtown with some of her friends from high school and they were going to go to Chippewa. I said, ‘I don’t want to go there,’ and she said, ‘Well, I made an executive decision and I’m going to pick you up.’ So she picked me up, I hopped in the car, and he was in the car somewhere.”

The group arrived at “some stupid dance club – we don’t dance,” Danielle said. Then, as the night wore on, something started to bother her. “All the guys that we were with just paid for everything for us, and I felt weird about it,” she said. “I said, ‘I’m going to buy a round for everyone,’ so I bought a round, and he sort of refused to let me buy him a drink. He’s just chivalrous, he doesn’t like girls paying for things. I don’t like that.”

Stung, Danielle whipped out her business card. “I said, ‘You know what? I have a good job!’ and I gave him my business card to prove it.” Not one to let such an opportunity slip by, Tom called her the next day and asked about some plans she had mentioned. “He said, ‘Hey, how was the beach?’ and I said ‘Who is this?’ He said, ‘It’s Tom from last night!’ ” They made a date to go out, Danielle said, “it was awesome.” They clicked right away, she said. A year and a few months later, they got engaged. The pair were married at 4 p.m. June 21 in Templeton Landing, in a ceremony performed by the bridegroom’s aunt, Catherine Rayhill, an ordained

minister. A reception was held there following the wedding. Rikki, whose “executive decision” resulted in their meeting, was a bridesmaid. The bride is the daughter of Anne and Troy Caswell of Palmyra, and a graduate of Palmyra-Macedon High School. She earned a bachelor’s degree in international business and Spanish from Niagara University and works as a project manager at David Communities LLC, an assisted-living and senior-housing development company.

Rayhill, the son of Donnette and Michael Rayhill of Grand Island, is a graduate of Grand Island High School. He earned a bachelor’s degree in mechanical engineering from Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute, and is a project engineer at Praxair. The couple has returned to Chippewa twice since they met there, once for the birthday of one of their friends and also right after their wedding reception, still in their wedding clothes. “All of our friends wanted to go there, so we did,” said Danielle. “We had a lot of people watching us the whole night, but that was OK.”

The couple is living on Grand Island.