

Eric Runyan
By Ken South

In 1962 President John F. Kennedy addressed the nation about Russian missile bases appearing in Cuba and imposed a naval blockade, beginning what became known as the "Cuban missile crisis". In addition, John Glenn became the first American to orbit the earth. Barbara Streisand made her Broadway debut in *"I Can Get It For You Wholesale"* and Walter Cronkite began anchoring the CBS Evening News.

On March 21st of that year, Mr. August was born in Springfield, Ohio, with a brother joining him a few years later. Mr. A attended elementary school in Springfield and graduated from nearby Kenton Ridge HS in 1980. He was an active leader in HS, being voted "most likely to succeed". He was Student Government Class President, active in the drama club, and ran track, including cross country.

Mr. A was also active in his local Methodist church and considered becoming a minister. To that end, he enrolled in DePauw University's pre-seminary program but soon switched to a psychology major and earned a full scholarship. He went on some mission experiences like building homes for the poor through Habitat for Humanity in Georgia. He started to wrestle with his sexual orientation in his senior year. He graduated Suma Cum Laude in 1984.

Following graduation, Mr. A returned to Springfield and for the next 3 years worked for the Head Start program, teaching pre-school students from very traumatic home environments. Later he moved to Georgia, where he became an onsite counselor for disturbed teenagers. The program was conducted in a wilderness setting and included camp-like activities, including hiking, canoeing, woodworking, etc. Mr. A, like all the staff, was on duty 24/7 for four days a week and then had three days off. The sponsoring organization also provided Mr. A with funds to earn a Master's Degree in counseling.

On his days off he enjoyed his home in Atlanta, where he explored the experiences of the city's Gay life. In fact, through a mutual friend there he met his first partner, Matt.

Matt was an airline attendant for a small company named Tower Air, which was exclusively an international carrier. Mr. A then also became an airline attendant in 1989. For a number of years they flew together all over the world and enjoyed "down time" together in places like Paris, Rome, Miami, and Stockholm. He stayed with the company for 12 years.

On one of his trips to Paris in the late 90s he met Frederic at a gay

club. After managing a long distance relationship for a while, Fred moved to Fort Lauderdale so the couple could live together, which they did for the next 9 years. From the beginning however, there were significant stressors on the relationship due to a lack of immigration options for LGBT bi-national couples and a lack of marriage equality. Additionally, securing healthcare for Fred who is HIV+ was difficult. They parted ways in 2003 and Mr. A remains eligibly single.

When Tower Air closed in late 2000, Mr. A found an IT job with Broward Health. When he was later laid-off by them, he became eligible for a computer science training program. By 2014, Mr. A was ready to start his own IT business, which thrives to this day.

In 2002, Mr. A bought a duplex home in Hollywood, FL, which he truly enjoys. He is active in the community with both AA where he is celebrating 10 years of sobriety and with Front Runners & Walkers Fort Lauderdale of which he has been President since 2017. Through running, Mr A gained his latest passion for sprint triathlons in which he has placed in his age group a few times.

