

Jim's Perspective...

Reminiscing About our Time Together

The month of June is always special for me, because it was in June, many years ago that I managed to convince my wife, Janie, to give me another chance to be with her and to go out on a date with her. It was early June of 1967. That summer, we had just completed our junior year at Pius X high school here in Lincoln.

I think I wrote about this in the past, but before going out on a date in June of 1967, I also took her out on a date in the fall of 1966, but I was nervous and dumb on that date. In the weeks leading up to this first date with her, after football practice my junior-varsity teammates would gather around me and start signing the song *I'm in the Mood for Love*. A number of my teammates had been a boyfriend with Janie. They all knew I was going out with her and they kept giving me advice on how to go on a date with Janie since they also knew I had never been on a date – not ever! They explained that Janie, being an experienced dater with many boys, would expect me to behave like an experienced dater. I kind of thought this meant I needed to park with her. However, I had arranged a double-date with another friend, so I thought dinner and a movie would work fine. But on Friday, the day of the date, my friend didn't come to school. He was sick, so now I was on my own on my first date. The evening of dinner and a movie went fine, but I followed my football buddies' advice and parked with her after dinner and the movie on a street in a new subdivision with few houses in east Lincoln. I parked the car next to the curb, turned off the motor, and looked at her. She bolted from the vehicle. I then also got out of the vehicle and went over to her where she was building a snowman. She looked at me and suggested that we go home. I said, OK. I took her home and I pulled into the driveway at her house and turned off the motor of the car. She looked at me and said, "Jim, this is not my house." She was right! I had mistakenly pulled into her neighbor's driveway instead of hers! Needless to say, she had a new boyfriend a few months later and it wasn't me. Also, on Monday, following my Friday date, after football practice, we all filed into the locker room and there was complete silence. My teammates all gathered around me, and then someone said, "Well, did you kiss her?" I said "no." The entire locker room exploded with a roar, and much towel snapping, as everyone told me I'd never have another chance to date her. In May of 1967 she broke up with her latest boyfriend and I decided to ask her to give me another try, and go out with me again. She agreed, and we started going out together on a regular basis in the summer of '67, and eventually became boyfriend and girlfriend. It would be two months, however, before we ever kissed. She kissed me at the drive-in movie. To this day, she teases me about how I was afraid to kiss her. But do you blame me? I figured if I tried anything, this devout Catholic girl would just bolt from the vehicle and I would never see her again.

And so, now, the two of us have been together for 55 years after that bumpy start on the first date! I have one question for you: knowing what happened on our first date, how many of you would have ever predicted that the two of us would end up husband and wife for over 50 years? Thus, the serendipity of life!

Recently, Janie met with some Kappa Kappa Gamma sorority friends and they reminisced about life in college in the early 1970's. That evening, we visited about some of the things the KKG

girls talked about. In the fall of 1971, Janie was student teaching in elementary education. She was also the Rush Chair for the Kappa House. This is one of the most important positions in a Greek house because the Rush Chair is the person who is in charge of running the process of convincing freshman college kids to become part of the incoming freshman class in the Greek house and that sets the tone for the house's reputation and image for years to come. Finally, Janie was also planning our wedding on November 20th. She graduated in three and a half years at the end of that fall semester. Me, I started 6 weeks of basic training at Lackland Air Force Base in late August. So I wasn't much help with her fall activities. However, Janie had excellent help on the wedding from her mother and her mother-in-law!

Once we start to reminisce over an evening cocktail, we drift off to many other past experiences. For example, we started laughing about another item related to Kappa Kappa Gamma. Sometime in the mid to late 1980's, Janie was the Chapter Advisor for her Kappa house in Lincoln. The Chapter Advisor is the top Greek alumni position for a sorority or fraternity. The Chapter Advisor works with the current undergraduate officers of the house and provides advice on how to govern the house and meet requirements of the national Greek organization and comply with university rules. The Kappa Kappa Gamma national organization holds an annual convention of all Kappa Chapter houses at some metropolitan city and the Chapter Advisors of each house throughout the country are part of the Kappa entourage that attends the annual meeting (all fraternities and sororities do this). And so, Janie went to the annual meeting held in Scottsdale, Arizona. I think she was gone on a Friday and Saturday night. She had never been gone out of town, overnight, from our family home by herself since we had our first child, and at the time of the Scottsdale convention, we had three children. Now she was gone, and I was in charge of matters around the house which was a completely new experience for me. I made dinner that first night that she was gone, and it included grilled hamburgers, pork and beans, peaches and chips. I thought I had prepared a superb dinner! However, as I placed all the food on the table, the kids were in a state of shock as they sat at the table. From the look on their faces, you would have thought they had been sent to prison and were sitting in the prison compound for dinner. The peaches were served in the metal can in which they are stored until used. The beans were served out of the kitchen pan that I used to heat them up. They had never seen anything like this. Janie always served things in very nice dishes. She used family fine china. I threw out some paper plates. The kids never forgot this dining experience and to this day the whole family still laughs about the kids and their first dinner prepared entirely by dad.

Well, I've reminisced about a few of our experiences in the 60's, the 70's and the 80's. So I am going to finish with something from 2016. That fall, we were at the Grand Hotel in Stockholm, Sweden. This was the scheduled meeting place for all of the travelers who were going on a Baltic Sea cruise. The morning after our first night at the hotel, we were in the lobby when a young lady came into the lobby area. She had a leather file and wore attire that suggested she might be a tour guide. She then announced in the lobby area that she was looking for Jim and Janie. We hadn't made any plans to use a tour guide that day, but since she was looking for Jim and Janie we thought we better go talk to her. Maybe she was from the cruise ship and needed to speak with us. We went up to her and said we were Jim and Janie. Soon after stating our names, another couple came up to the three of us and said that they too were Jim and Janie! We couldn't believe it. So there we were, two couples in the lobby of the Grand Hotel in Stockholm, both with the first names of Jim and Janie. We all started laughing about how crazy it was. What are the odds of this

happening? As I recall, the other Jim and Janie were from Minnesota. They weren't on the cruise, but had planned to tour Stockholm with this guide.

Below, I have a picture of the two Jim and Janie couples.

As I look back on our 55 years together, the beauty of it all, is that I'd do it all over again in a heart-beat!

I leave you with a song that I think has a theme, or feeling to it, that fits this article about the two of us, some of our experiences, and a life together for 55 years. It is a song from 1958 titled, (*'Til*) *The End (of Time)* by Earl Grant, pianist, organist and vocalist. It is a beautiful song with words that reflect the long lasting meaning of love.

<https://sbitube.com/uploads/mp4/11i157j24w3hyrvw4uo.mp4>



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