

Jim's Perspective...

G-L-O-R-I-A

The year 2020 brings a change to the social life of Jim and Janie. This year marks the end of our membership in a dance club. We have been in one or more dance clubs since the early 1980's. Our first dance club was called Madcaps. Most of the club members had graduated from high school in the 1960's. It was a dinner/dance party, and also required a coat and tie, with black tie optional. We were in another dance club about this same time called Cotillion. Its tradition was holding a dinner/dance every New Years' Eve. Couples had to be voted into the club by the current members. Upon voting in new members, the current members left the membership meeting and went to the home of each newly admitted couple and conducted a chivaree in front of their house to announce their admission to the club. Sixties music is what we primarily danced to in all of the dance clubs, although I think Cotillion went with an orchestra and some ballroom dancing occasionally. We stayed in Cotillion about four or five years but left this club because we decided we wanted to do other things on New Years' Eve. In the mid 1990's we joined another dance club called Monday Night Dance Club. It too involved a dinner/dance format, and for a number of years, it was mandatory black tie. Madcaps ended in the late 1990's, and so from that point on, until this year, we continued with Monday Night Dance Club. We continued with this dance club along with four other couples that we have known for a long time. All of us decided not to renew our membership this year since most of the other club members our age have, in recent years, decided not to remain involved.

Over the last twenty years, we often had the same rock band for Monday Night Dance Club. It was called The Fab Tones. All of the band members were our age, and grew up in the 1960's. We knew on a personal basis almost all of the band members which ultimately provided us with a few special privileges. We developed a tradition of a few of us guys singing the song *Gloria* sung by the rock band, The Shadows of Knight. I first started this tradition with Rich Butler, an attorney and friend of mine for many years. The two of us jumped on stage and belted out this song behind a mic situated near the middle of the stage. Rich died of cancer many years ago, and so after that, three other guys took up the cause with me and we continued to sing *Gloria*. Some of the lyrics I sang by myself, some we sang as a group and sometimes one of the other guys would sing a few lyrics solo. It was usually after ten o'clock before we took the stage. By that time, everyone had enough drinks, and thought the whole thing was very funny! I remember this rock & roll performance because I did the same routine for many years. I know I did a little of this vocal rock & roll gig in college, but don't remember what I sang or where. Maybe too much beer!

And so, here it is! My rock & roll Grammy award winning song! Kind of funny that I did it, but being a rock star on stage with a rock & roll band and belting out a sexy song was kind of fun! Maybe I missed my calling. However, being an insurance attorney rock star is also very exciting! Ha Ha!

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NdAezc-RX-o>

This primal urge of mine to take the stage with a rock band is no accident. It is part of my DNA! You will know why when you view the picture below which shows four men who are pretending to be The Beatles. The man in the middle who is bending forward and singing away is my dad!



What a fine genetic gift he gave me! As I have mentioned in the past, my dad was Editor of the Lincoln Star. The man seated in the back playing the drums is Cecil Sparks. He worked for National Cash Register. His son, Dick, was in my class at Holy Family and was a good friend of mine. He is a priest, and lives in Florida. I still stay in touch with him. The man to the far left is Mr. Piccolo. I can't remember his first name. He owned a beauty salon. His daughter Susie was in my class. She lives in Lincoln. The singer to the right is Angelo Manzitto who was involved in real estate. His daughter, Mary Jo, was in my class. She lives in Florida. The wives of these four men made the musical instruments. The drums are made of two wooden baskets used to haul apples. The guitars consist of a cardboard box with a broom handle extending from the end of the box. As you can see, all of the men are wearing wigs to make them look like The Beatles. They are singing The Beatles' first big hit song in the USA, *I Wanna Hold Your Hand*. Of course the DJ had the record playing, and much of their performance was lip sync, but they sang along vocally too, at times. These men performed this song at the first boy/girl dance held at Holy Family School in the fall of 1964, sponsored by the Holy Family PTA. For some reason, the PTA organization decided it would be fun to hold an occasional boy/girl dance at the school.

It was held in the basement of the school which usually housed the lunch room. I had no intention of going to the dance, but my parents were chaperones for the dance so I had to go.

There was one other incident that occurred at this dance that I still remember. There was an unusual social situation going on in the Lincoln Diocese between the Holy Family parish and the Saint Teresa parish. The fall of 1964 ninth grade class at Holy Family consisted of an incredibly large number of boys. At the same time, the fall of 1964 ninth grade class at Saint Teresa consisted of an unusually large number of girls. These two parishes competed against each other in many different ways. Thus, Saint Teresa parish had a girls' choir while Holy Family had a boys' choir. Many of the Holy Family boys were dating Saint Teresa girls. As the Holy Family dance approached, the Holy Family boys were very fired up because we learned that the beautiful Saint Teresa girls were going to attend our dance. I still remember standing on the dance floor with some buddies when, shortly after the dance started, about a dozen girls from Saint Teresa parish, fashionably late, waltzed into the room. Everyone stopped and watched them enter. It was as if royalty from Great Britain had entered the room. I liken it to Virgil's poetic line when Venus appeared to Aeneas, "She walks by, and her steps reveal a goddess."

As the evening wore on, I suddenly found myself standing all alone on the dance floor. I started to feel a little embarrassed when, suddenly, I felt a tap on my shoulder. I turned around and saw that it was one of the Saint Teresa girls. It was Janie Hendry (now my wife!). I only remember one detail of the conversation. She said hello, and wondered if I was Larry's friend who lived across the street from him. (Larry was her boyfriend) I said that I was. None of the other Saint Teresa girls talked to me. I was thrilled that Janie did, and yes, as they say in the movie, "She had me from hello." I never forgot her act of kindness. So, as I mentioned in the past, I got up the nerve to ask Janie to the Crystal ball in the fall of 1966, our junior year in high school, in part because a mutual friend asked her if she would go to the ball with me, and she said yes. I also got up the courage to ask her to this dance because I remembered how kind she was to talk to me in 1964. I knew that if I stood in front of her, and we were face-to-face, and I asked her to this dance, she would never be able to look at me and say no.

It always amazes me how the day-to-day experiences of life can sometimes have a lasting impact on our entire life. I think too, that sometimes we forget how important it can be to make a simple gesture to acknowledge someone, or to say hello to another person. And so it came to be:

My parents are chaperones at a dance in 1964 which forced me to go to the dance.

A "hello" from a beautiful girl was spoken to me at the dance in 1964.

A friend on his own initiative asks this same girl to go to a dance with me in the fall of 1966.

All of these events converge into a wonderful romance that has lasted almost 53 years.

Many of the Madcaps dances involved music provided by a disc jockey. Often, late in the evening, the DJ would play a song that had all of the traditional melody, rhythm and intonation of rock music in the 50's and 60's. Even today, when I hear it, I think back fondly to that time in the 60's when I danced with Janie and held her close to me, squeezed her hand, and thought how lucky I was to have won her heart! And so I leave you with this Madcaps song that always makes me smile and reflect upon all the good times we've had together.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=uHD4kGY7tbs>

James B Dobler

Jim Dobler, CPCU

PIA Legislative Coordinator

Questions or Comments? Please email jbdobler@outlook.com



Local
Agents
Serving
Main Street
AmericaSM