

## *Jim's Perspective...*

### A Little Romance

#### Water Tower

It is a hot summer evening. It is a weekend date with my girlfriend, Janie. After dinner and perhaps after visiting with friends somewhere, I drove to the east end of town and parked on the south side of South Street just before reaching the intersection of South Street and 84<sup>th</sup> Street. I jumped out of my four door Chevy Corvair and Janie did too. I came around to the south side of the car, we grabbed each other's hand, and took off running on a gravel road that headed south up a hill to a large aqua-colored water storage tank which was part of the city water system. It is still there today. We sat next to each other at the base of the water tower with our backs resting against the west side of the tower. It was dusk, no wind, and very quiet. We watched the sun set. At that time there were no housing developments near the water tower. There was no fire station nearby, and no fence around the tower. There was nothing in the vicinity of the water tower. It was a new structure in this area at the eastern edge of the city limit located on a hill. As darkness enveloped the city, there we were, looking at the stars – together and all alone. What fun! A perfect spot to be alone, together, on a summer night.

A boy and a girl, in love. Genuine affection and unconditional love is such a powerful thing. I rank it number one in terms of influence and impact on another person's life. When a man and a woman stand beside each other, and when the two of them are the number one supporters of each other, it makes a big-time impact on who they are and who they will become. We have helped each other, in both good times and not-so-good times, and have been together for 53 years. I just hope I came close to helping her as much as she helped me. I would like to go with her to the water tower, but there is a fence around it now. I am considering buying wire cutters. Don't tell the city!

Together – for 53 years. The secret of our success? We have absolutely nothing in common! Ha Ha! Stole this line from Paul Newman who was asked this question many times by reporters. Newman and his wife Joanne Woodward were married 50 years.

#### Bushwhackers

On summer weekend nights in the late sixties, all the high school kids were out in cars roaming the city. There were many couples who, after dark, found a place to park the car and – well – make out. It might be Pioneers Park. Perhaps somewhere around Holmes lake, or maybe in a newly developed subdivision with paved roads, but very few homes. Parking with your girlfriend was a new phenomena in the late 1950's and 1960's. In the early 1900's, a boy would court a girl by walking or riding a bike to her house and visiting with her on the family front porch, or perhaps they could sit indoors in the parlor and visit. There wasn't much time or opportunity to be alone. That all changed with the mass production of the automobile and the affordability of cars particularly in the 1960's. The late 50's and 60's also saw the widespread

development of the drive-in movie. Another place for a young couple to park and be alone. The young couples usually parked in the last two rows of the drive-in. A family with young kids parked near the front of the drive-in which had playground equipment in an open space below the movie screen. The kids ran around outside and played on the equipment while mom and dad got to watch a movie. I read that the drive-in movie is making a comeback due to the COVID-19 distancing requirements. Day light savings time, which started in the spring of 1970, also wrecked drive-in movie business since with its enactment, it didn't get dark until an hour later which was after 9:00 p.m. and movies couldn't begin until about 9:30 p.m. I have read that a number of additional states are considering discontinuing day light savings time!

Besides these young couples in love, there were also car loads of young people (usually boys) who operated as small tribes and sought out the couples parked in a secluded place. These packs of boys in cars looking for a boy and girl parked in a car were called bushwhackers. Once they found a couple in a parked car, they pulled up next to the car, stopped, got out, and started rocking the parked car from front to back or side to side. They might also pound on the hood or knock on the windows. Occasionally they might also find the couple in a compromising position!

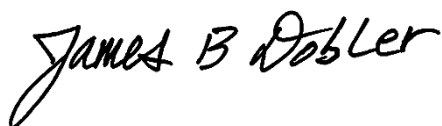
This harassing activity of the bushwhackers is another reason why we liked the water tower. We were off by ourselves and not subject to attack by the bushwhackers!

### Summer and the Outdoors

Our summers in the late sixties and early seventies were filled with outdoor activity in addition to spending time at the water tower! It might be a round of golf, or miniature golf at Cool Crest just north of 'O' street on the east side of 48<sup>th</sup> Street. We might go on a bike ride or for a walk in Pioneers Park, Antelope Park or Roberts Park. We might be out in the country at her parents' farm near Elmwood, Nebraska or we could be with friends on one of the Fremont lakes. There might be a "woody" on a weekend night. This involved a party at a farm where the farm owner had a cabin or barn located in a grove of trees which could be rented and used to hold a dance. It was indeed a magical time. As I have mentioned before, I had my own car, no debt, little or no responsibility, a little money in my pocket and a beautiful cheerleader by my side.

Below is one of my favorite songs, *Velocity of Love*. Indeed, it is so true, the velocity of love is magnificent – powerful.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zAhZpgeF0qs>



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