

Ab What Memories

I thought I'd take another week off from reporting on our quest to right the wrong with our legislators on the lack of affordable health insurance and the 1.4 million of us who remain uninsured. I did want to tell you, however, that I've written several letters already to some of our legislators and am doing more research, which I'll elaborate on in next week's column. In the meantime, many thanks to all who've sent me e-mails concerning their individual situations. I'd appreciate hearing from anyone else on this important matter so please address your e-mails to pegdemarco@earthlink.net or send me a letter in care of the News Herald. Your individual situations are the backbone of what's truly wrong in health care today and every situation is im-



As I See It

Peg DeMarco

portant.

My topic this week will be a matter that concerns almost every teenage girl's ultimate dream — the junior prom. The gals of GAB did a fabulous job on their feature article about what they did on their proms and the teens' prom photos in this Friday's paper brought a smile to my face. And for those who know me well, you've already guessed that it's almost impossible for me to sit still without putting in my two cents and telling my story.

My junior prom story has to begin with Tommy. Dateless up until the age of 16, one of my high school buddies took pity on me and fixed me up on a blind date with Tommy, a fellow two years older than I.

Tommy came to my door to pick me up. He was tall and thin with blond hair that was slicked back with one of those pompadours in the front that was so popular at the time. He shook hands with my father while my mother grinned in the corner and then escorted me out to a white Chevy Impala where my girlfriend and her date were waiting.

We traveled from Long Island into Manhattan to catch Murray the K's Live Rock and Roll Show (Murray was a popular DJ in the '60's). Some of the featured acts included the original Supremes, Martha and the Vandellas, the Ronettes, and a brand new phenomenon Murray was promoting — a blind youngster who sang powerfully and played a mean harmonica — Stevie Wonder.

On the long ride into the city, I remained mute except for one or two words that I managed to squeak out because I was petrified of the young man sitting next to me. Once we settled into our seats at the theater, Tommy got up and returned a few minutes later with a large soda and a box of something he handed to me. As the show progressed, and the box remained untouched, I began to feel something cold and wet in my lap.

Suddenly, the audience jumped up to cheer on Stevie and I did the same — only not because Stevie was belting out "Fingertips," but because the box of ice cream bon bons that Tommy had handed me were melting in my lap. Then, in my haste to throw the dreaded bon bons off my lap and onto the floor, I kicked over the large container of soda, spilling it all over Tommy's shiny black leather shoes.

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Although I longed to go home and cry into my bedroom pillow as we exited the theater, my girlfriend refused to give up and instead decided to prolong the agony. We drove back to her house and her Italian mother fixed us all a big bowl of spaghetti and meatballs. Have any of you tried to tell an Italian woman you couldn't possibly eat a mouthful of her spaghetti because your stomach was churning due to frazzled nerves? I attempted to, but failed miserably. Needless to expand on the particulars, I managed to get

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down what was piled on my plate, excuse myself quickly, and throw up in the downstairs bathroom. I returned to the table, still queasy but relieved until I saw the angry stare of the cook and the concerned faces of the others at the table who obviously heard me gagging.

A few days later, and to my surprise, Tommy called me and had the courage to ask me out again. This time, we went to a carnival with no serious repercussions other than my fear at saying more than a paragraph the whole evening.

The junior prom was in two weeks and, at my mother's urging, when Tommy phoned me again, I managed to ask him if he would take me. Again, to my surprise, he actually said yes. He obviously was intrigued with the thrill of the chase. However, even forty years later, I still can't figure out why he was chasing me.

I wore a blue chiffon dress and a tiara on my head and have the picture to prove it.

The thin spaghetti straps haunted me all evening because they refused to stay up and the tiara wobbled every time I moved my head. When Tommy showed up at my door, he handed me a corsage box and I was pleased until I realized the corsage was made out of fake flowers.

He said he thought I'd like the plastic orchid because it would last forever. The thought was there, of course, but later on it was difficult to press the fake orchid between the pages of a book.

I don't think we danced at all and I said very little. Since I refused to wear my black, horn-rimmed eyeglasses, I didn't see much either. My girlfriend and I went to the ladies room, and I grabbed on to the back of her dress as we exited together so I could find my way back to the table.

When the roast beef dinner arrived, everything was going okay until I tried cutting the tough meat with a dull knife and it went flying off my plate and on to the white linen tablecloth. Not missing a beat, I casually scooped it up and put it back on my plate, wiped the gravy off my hand, and settled on a few safe rolls for the rest of my meal (butter-less because I couldn't find the butter).

After the prom, the four of us drove to a nearby nightclub to see Little Anthony and the Imperials. Well...of course I didn't see them, but they sure sounded good.

I think I experienced my first kiss that night because I do recall taking extra care with brushing my teeth and gargling once I was in my pajamas.

I also remember that my mother was waiting up for me when I stumbled in at around three o'clock in the morning.

"Did you have a good time?" she asked and of course I lied. "It was wonderful," I said, removing the tiara from my head. "I'll probably remember it for the rest of my life." Now that statement happened to be true.

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