

*Written for Ron and Janet Dumroese's 50th wedding anniversary party, July 28, 1996, at First Lutheran Church in Freeport, written and read by their son, Kas.*

Keep it short and simple; nobody wants to listen to you anyway. That's what my loving mother told me yesterday. So, to keep her happy, I'd like to just hit the highlights of September 8, 1946.

It started two years earlier. The blonde dairyman's daughter met the son of the dairy's accountant. Love at first sight? Maybe they'll confess later. It wasn't long before they knew life's destiny, but the young Ronny was too young - not yet 21 - so his father, Ernest, wouldn't let him get engaged, much less married. Finally, his 21st birthday arrived in March of '46, and he presented the engagement ring in a blown-out Easter egg. The date was set. Young Ronny and Jan would marry on September 8, 1946, the 23rd anniversary of her parents.

The Journal-Standard on September 7 carried headlines about post-World War II Europe and that the Catholics had been in Freeport 100 years. Two movies were opening: "Night in Paradise" at the Freeport and "The Well Groomed Bride" at the Patio. The Daily Brothers Big 3-ring Railroad Circus would be in Taylor Park. Admission was \$1 for adults, 50¢ for kids. The Hillcrest Airport was advertising flights with former war pilots. Naturally, the Chicago Cubs were in 3rd place, 14 games out. You could follow the adventures of Alley Oop and Red Ryder in the comic section. Kroger's Supermarket had a 10# bag of onions for 29¢ and sauerkraut was 2 cans for 27¢. The heaviest man in the world, who hailed from Baylis, Illinois, just weighted in at 719 pounds. March corn was going for \$1.33 a bushel. A Notre Dame professor was suggesting the world use the flashes from atomic bombs to signal folks on Mars. Perhaps noticed by the impending bride and groom was a story about a Batavia, Illinois, minister who forbid the bride and groom from kissing after the ceremony because he didn't want to turn the wedding into a side show. And finally, a polio bulletin was reminding folks to avoid crowds in all places.

Despite that, it was approaching 8 pm on Sunday, September 8. As usual, it was a hot and humid day in Freeport. Ronny's Uncle Al Dumroese was playing the organ. Everything was ready. At 7:55, Ernest Dumroese approached the bride and asked the immortal question, "Where's the groom? Your brother was to pick him up!" Well, Lowell was in the process of having the fear of God, no, worse than that, the fear of Pastor Otto Schumacker, pounded into him. Seems the best man was also a recent jitterbug champion at the YWCA, complete with a newspaper photo, and well, good Lutheran boys shouldn't jitter like bugs.

Ernest left immediately to retrieve his son. Unknown to him, Ronny's cousin Wilmer Troike and his wife, Esther, thinking they would get to Freeport too late for the wedding, drove to the Dumroese home, only to find the groom waiting patiently on the porch. Now realizing they had a chance to make the wedding, they gave the groom a ride, flagging down Ernest along the way.

With all in order, the wedding began. . . Ah, we can imagine. . . Little Rita Kasten, the flower girl, dressed in her blue taffeta frock. Then the bridesmaids, Margie (nee Hill) Eilders and Dorothy (nee Cook) Ackerman in green taffeta and Margie (nee Bloom) Hosely and Nathelia "Sissy" Plummer in rose taffeta gowns. They carried their colonial bouquets of rose and purple asters, grown in LeeRoy Kasten's yard. Then, the maid of honor, Muriel (nee Dumroese) Cannon in her gold brocaded taffeta gown, carrying Talisman roses and delphiniums. At the front of the church the party was now assembled - the bridesmaids, the groom, the best man Lowell, and the ushers as they were called: Dick Walters, Orville Edwards [Ron Dumroese's first cousin], Louis Ackerman, and John Matthews. Behind them the altar was backed with ferns, palms,

candelabra and white baskets of hydrangeas, picked from a local yard. The bride, escorted by her father, wore a white, brocaded satin gown, made on princess lines, with a sweetheart neckline and long train. A tiara of, as the Journal-Standard had it, “paralyzed” orange blossoms held her finger-tip veil in place. Jan wore her grandmother Meta’s pearls and carried a cascade of gardenias and forget-me-nots.

The sweat dripped from the groom’s nose as Pat (nee Selke) Bordner sang her two solos: “O Perfect Love” and “The Lord’s Prayer.” Although the bride thought the groom might faint, the groom assures us to this day he was under control. It was a perfect wedding, the bridesmaids in their rainbow of shower curtains and the bride wearing her drapes. That’s right, immediately after the war, cloth was hard to get. Jan and Dorothy had driven to Stewards in Rockford and bought taffeta shower curtains, available by the boxcar, for the maids and lovely white draperies to fashion the wedding gown.

The reception was at the Hotel Freeport, in the “Crecian Room” according to the Journal-Standard. The serving table in the Grecian Room was covered with lace and centered with a four-tiered cake, decorated with pink tapers and white asters. Georgine Latz, Marian Alder, Joyce (nee Stiegman) Brockhausen and Mesdames Eugene Holdeman assisted with the punch. Telegraphs from Ronny’s Uncle Art and his wife Florence, and from Harry S. Truman, President of these United States, arrived. Anyone want to confess?

The party then moved to Jan’s parent’s home, with guests milling about or sitting on chairs on the long driveway. Jan’s godparents, Herman and Meta Kasten, spoke a few words. The evening was topped-off with a rousing rendition of “Sioux City Sue” featuring Jan’s Uncle Archie Schwarze and the aforementioned jitterbugger.

As the Dumroese’s before him, and unfortunately like the Dumroese’s after him, it seems my Dad finds it too difficult to say those special words to the one he truly loves. But he did find the right words through his pen. . .

February 22, 1945

*“It takes two to make a bargain you know. And two crazy people like you and I would be able to make anything we plan work.”*

November 28, 1945

*“I love you so darn much I just want to be with you all the time. . . We are going to have to take a good many chances and do a lot of praying for the things we want in life. As long as you have your loved ones you will keep on trying and make the best of the things. . . I pray that the good Lord will grant me a long and happy life with the one I love most of all...”*

Well, Dad, Mom, you got your wish. Ruth, Rhoda, and I are so proud of you and thankful for all you’ve given us. Congratulations.