

THE SECOND - LAST WORD ON 'SURPRISES': -

WHILE RAISING OUR CHILDREN, JEAN AND I DID OUR BEST TO IMPRESS UPON THEM THE VIRTUES OF HONESTY AND STRAIGHT DEALING WITH OTHER PEOPLE.

AS FAR AS WE KNOW, THEY HAVE ALL GROWN UP TO FOLLOW THESE PRECEPTS, BUT THERE HAVE BEEN OCCASIONS WHEN THEY, EN MASSE, HAVE FORSAKEN HONESTY, AND TURNED INTO A BUNCH OF CONNIVING, CRAFTY, DEVIOUS SCHEMERS! NOT, MIND YOU, TELLING ME OUTRIGHT LIES, BUT BEING ECONOMICAL WITH THE TRUTH.

THIS DEVIANT BEHAVIOUR BEGAN, AS I RECALL, IN 1979, AND APPEARS TO STRIKE (AT ME) EVERY 10 YEARS OR SO. JEAN HAS ALSO HAD TO PUT UP WITH IT ON A COUPLE OF OCCASIONS, AND WE WERE BOTH DECEIVED IN 1985.

IT BEGAN WHEN THEY SPRUNG A PARTY FOR ME ON MY 50TH BIRTHDAY, WITHOUT TELLING ME, OR EVEN ASKING PERMISSION. AND, IMPROVING WITH PRACTICE, THEY REPEATED THE DOSE WHEN I TURNED 60, THEN 70. AND, TO KEEP THEIR HAND(S) IN, MANAGED TO DELUDE JEAN ON HER 50TH AND 60TH BIRTHDAYS.

BETWEEN TIMES, THEY HAD A 'DRYRUN' ON OUR SILVER ANNIVERSARY!

SO, I HAVE SOME DIFFICULTY IN GIVING A TRUTHFUL ANSWER TO PEOPLE WHO ASK - "HOW DID YOUR LOT TURN OUT?". I HAVE TO COMPROMISE MY OWN STANDARDS OF HONESTY TO SAY "OH, PRETTY GOOD ON THE WHOLE".

I CAN'T VERY WELL TELL ANYONE THAT MY CHILDREN, WITH NO HELP FROM JEAN OR ME, WOULD PUT THE KGB AND MI5 TO SHAME IN THE DECEPTION BUSINESS, I'LL JUST HAVE TO LIVE WITH THE SHAME.

WELL, THAT'S IT, EXCEPT FOR MY MOST UNFORGETTABLE, FATEFUL EXPERIENCE -

MY FIRST AND ONLY BLIND DATE! AS BACHELORS IN THE 1950'S, WE NEVER SEEMED TO LACK A PARTNER FOR WEDDINGS, BALLS AND OTHER OUTINGS, BUT I WASN'T INTERESTED IN GETTING 'CAUGHT' AND SETTLING DOWN WITH ONE GIRL.

BUT, DURING EARLY 1957, PETER LINDUPP HAD BEEN URAING "YOU MUST MEET JEAN".

THIS MYSTERIOUS 'JEAN' WAS A GIRL IN SECOND YEAR NURSING TRAINING WITH PETER'S GIRLFRIEND, MARION. EVENTUALLY, I CAVED IN, AND WENT ON MY FIRST 'BLIND DATE', WITH PETER AND MARION, DON AND ANOTHER NURSE, AND JEAN, TO DINNER AT MARIO'S RESTAURANT, TO CELEBRATE MARION'S 19TH BIRTHDAY. OF COURSE I STILL DIDN'T INTEND TO GET 'CAUGHT', AND ENJOYED THE NIGHT OUT.

AS ALL OF YOU WHO READ THIS WILL KNOW - THE REST IS HISTORY!

FINI

Brian Wash