

Short Memories

Egg Rolling Was All It Was Cracked Up to Be

EASTER MONDAY was a big deal in my Washington, D.C. neighborhood during the late 1940s and early '50s. No, we didn't go to the White House for the annual Easter egg roll. We had our own egg rolling.

About a dozen of my neighborhood friends and I would walk with our mothers from 44th Place S.E. to Fort Dupont Park. While our moms carried picnic baskets, we carried baskets loaded with Easter eggs.

We'd search until we found the ideal spot at the top of one of the park's long, steep hills, then roll our eggs down the hill to crack them. We'd run down the hill after them so we could eat each cracked egg—dirt and all! (No one ever got sick, either.)

Then we'd do it all over again. Because each person rolled only one egg at a time, this event lasted for hours.

If it rained on Easter Monday, my grandmother would set up her ironing board in a leaning position so we could roll our eggs down the ironing board and crack them on the kitchen floor.

After all, a peeled egg that hadn't been rolled just wouldn't have tasted the same!

—Shirley J. Bates, Fredericksburg, Virginia

Icy Manner, Warm Heart

EVERYONE was afraid of Miss Duschak, a large woman in her middle 50s with large, cold eyes. She ran the school.

She wasn't the principal or assistant principal. She was the senior

boys' homeroom teacher at Fosdick-Masten Park High School in Buffalo, New York. But everyone knew that she ran the school.

One day, in 1951, was different. We were assembled to honor Memorial Day. After the principal finished talking, Miss Duschak got up to speak.

Before starting, Miss Duschak looked around the room and seemed to be looking at us, her senior boys, in the back rows. She then began talking about World War II and was naming names: Capt. Billy Scott and Capt. Peter Willis, shot down over Germany; Lt. Francis Price and Lt. Willy Carter, lost at sea in the Atlantic; Sgt. Peter Sears and Sgt. Max Goldman, Marines who died in the Pacific.

On and on she went. Tears ran down her cheeks, but her voice never cracked. She remembered them all —so many names, names that we couldn't attach faces to, but she could. They had been in her homeroom, same as us.

—Gerald Boye, Amherst, New York

A Girl's First Fragrance

I CLUTCHED my \$1 allowance as I rode my blue bike, with its multicolored, plastic handlebar streamers, to a nearby Woolworth's to purchase my favorite perfume.

It was a warm Saturday in 1958, and I was prepared for shopping with my white bicycle basket. I had tested every brand of perfume the week before, so I knew which one was fit for me to wear to the seventh-grade dance. It was my first bottle of perfume, and it had to be the right one.

I parked my bike and raced inside to the perfume counter. My heart dropped. Where was it? I looked for the blue top. In a panic, I asked the saleslady, "Please, could you help me find some Blue Waltz perfume?"

The lady looked through all of the colorful bottles—pink, amber and blue ones with names such as Perfect Rose and Midnight in Paris, but no Blue Waltz. She saw a tear running down my cheek.

“Wait a minute!” she exclaimed. “Last night, when we were closing, I saw a bottle under the counter that another clerk was saving for a customer, but she never returned for it. It’s yours!”

I held out my dollar. Walking back to my bike, I pressed the bag with the sacred scent close to me. I opened the bottle for one intoxicating whiff of sweet roses before putting it in my basket and pedaling home.

—Barbara Baranowski, Richmond, Virginia

Leo Had a Little Lamb...

My dad, Leo Cazeault, was 9 years old in 1936 and in the third grade, in Oxford, Massachusetts. His family bought him a lamb as a baby, and my dad called her “Minnie.”

Evidently, Minnie loved Dad as much. She’d follow him around the yard like a puppy and even followed him to school, which was a walking distance from home.

Minnie would jump the fence, go up a hill, cross the main road and go right into the school building to see my dad. She’d baa until my dad noticed her!

Dad would have to leave school to bring Minnie home. This didn’t sit too well with his mother, and the family ended up giving Minnie away to some folks they knew. Dad still laughs heartily when he tells the story of his little Minnie.

—Bonnie Bray, Oxford, Massachusetts