

Friday Follies 2/08/02

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Hey!

I am all written out! I have been writing a good bit at work for the past two weeks, and I am having a “block” with the Follies this week. Actually, numerous things have been praying on my mind, but I don’t know what the reaction would be. (Mine, that is...in sharing them...) I usually don’t know what I am going to write about, but just sit at the computer and start typing. It usually “goes” somewhere.

If I may be allowed to be serious for a moment...

As I approach an important milestone in my life, I have started to think about the paths I have taken and the numerous incredible experiences I have had. I can’t help but wonder if other such experiences are waiting out there. I look at my family and loved ones and see them having to cope with more “mature” problems, and that causes even more reflection.

As I was writing an article this week on one of our alums, Bebe Buell, who has had a VERY famous (or shall I say infamous) life, it caused me to reflect on some of the silly things I write about each week in the Follies. Also, because I have been thinking “deeper thought” recently, much seems to be coming into focus.

Lately, I have been thinking about a little project I want to start. See what you think...

Whenever I get to go home to Mississippi, I always spend some time looking through old photographs of my mom, dad, brother, sister, my children, and myself. I always get this overwhelming urge to tell a story. Why is that?

I have often told my husband that my life has been “charmed,” and I mean that. Not in any sense of having money, or wealth, or fancy schools, or huge accomplishments, but in the sense that it has been so “normal.” I am now old enough to understand that that is a GOOD thing. Often when you are growing up, you tell yourself that you are “special” and that there are “big things” out there waiting for you. Sometimes, though, there just aren’t. Sometimes, normal is better than anything you can even imagine. Why does it take us almost half a century to realize that?

Anyway, I have been thinking of taking the same idea I do each week with the Follies and writing a “story” to leave to my children and someday grandchildren. My mom, before she became so ill, sat and hand wrote numerous pages about hilarious experiences she had growing up. She wanted all of us to have something from her, and she wanted those stories to be permanent. I cannot tell you how valuable they are. I am sure not to anyone else, but they certainly are to the family that loves her.

So, the idea is to tell my story, but as it revolves around photos. There are so many classic photos. Somehow I think it will be a catharsis for me. And who knows, maybe my children and grandchildren will enjoy them someday.

It is sort of like when my babies were little, and we didn't have the money to buy one of those "new video cameras." Instead, I used a cassette recorder and taped sounds of my children. I started when they were babies breast-feeding, and I would simply turn on the recorder and set it on the table nearby. Soon I would forget that it was on, and when it was played back, it was simply a miracle...cooing, and humming, and gurgling, and patting, and baby noises, and soothing mothering sounds.

I continued this for years as my children learned to talk and sing and tell their own stories. The really neat thing is, when we sit down every ten years or so and listen to them, we are all amazed. They are truly fascinating! Since there is nothing visual, so much is left to the imagination. It is so interesting to watch their faces with varying shades of smiles, and then to make eye contact with them as they listen to themselves literally growing up.

That is what I am taking about. Preparing a photographic story as a present for myself as well as for my children.

This is the kind of thing I am talking about.



First day of school, and no front teeth

This is the morning of my first day of school, five years old, first grade. Little did I know that by the end of the day my dress would be torn, splattered with blood, and I would be in the doctor's office.

My very first day of school, the very first recess of my life, I ran onto the playground to ride on the merry-go-round. I couldn't wait! It was packed and every one was laughing and swinging their arms as it turned round and round and round. I found my spot, paced myself, and lunged to grab the handle as it revolved in my direction. Just as I grabbed hold, my classmate decided he didn't want me in that spot, and he swung his arm around just at the perfect angle to catch me right on my cheekbone with his elbow.

Ever heard the expression, "Down goes Frazier, Down goes Frazier!" Well, "Down went Judi!" right into the dusty trough plowed by hundreds of kids before me who had had no trouble at all hitching a ride. I must have blacked out for a moment, because the next thing I remember was seeing crowds standing over me and being very confused...and humiliated. I was rushed to the principal's office, my mom was called, and I was hauled off to the doctor's.

But the last laugh was mine. The next day as I came back to school with no front teeth, crooked bangs, and a swollen, totally shut black eye, I got more attention than I could believe. Even the little bully who had slugged me with his elbow apologized, and I have never had trouble getting on a merry-go-round since.

For what it is worth, that is my project idea. I would truly like to hear your thoughts on the subject. Worth doing, or a waste of time? Is it something that if a family member did something like that and gave it to you, you would appreciate it, or think, "Oh, man. Now I gotta pretend to be interested in this." Be honest! Email me a "yea" or "nay". I'll take a poll.

OK, now because it might be much more interesting for you to read about Bebe...take a look at this article I wrote this week...revised, of course. After I wrote it, I saw the same story, only much steamier, on 20/20 Thursday night.

ALUMNI FOCUS

by Judith Godsey, Director of Development & Communications

BEVERLE LORENCE BUELL
"BEBE"

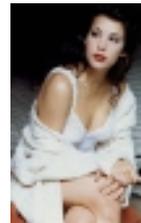


Halloween, 1958 at the Everett School. Bebe Buell was, ironically, dressed as the “bunny” on the left of the middle row. Current parent, _____, was dressed as the skeleton on the left of the top row. None of Bebe’s Everett School classmates suspected that the cute little “bunny” in the photo with them would grow up to become a 1970s Ford Modeling Agency Supermodel or a Playboy Playmate Centerfold - Miss November 1974.

...But she did...

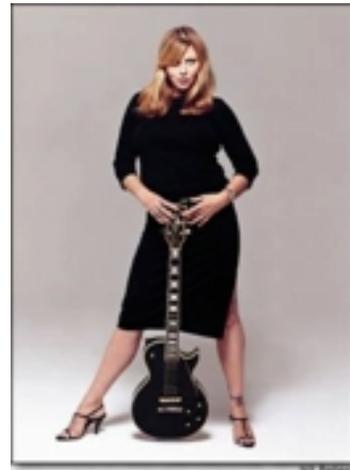
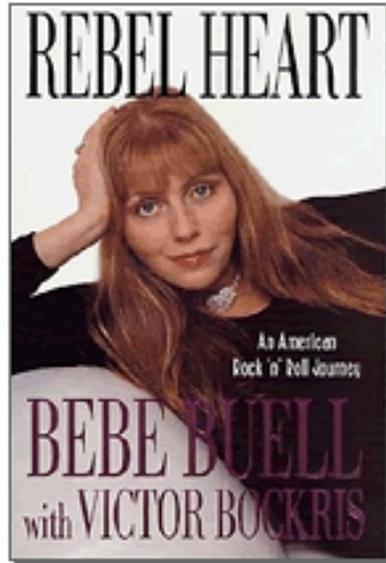
Many “Baby-Boomer” might remember her as the beautiful young girlfriend of Todd Rundgren, Steven Tyler, Rod Stewart, Elvis Costello, Mick Jagger, Jack Nicholson, David Bowie, or Iggy Pop, or they might remember her as one of their favorite fashion icons from the pages of practically every fashion and entertainment magazine of their day.

Today’s students would be more likely to recognize Bebe as the Rock N’ Roll “groupie” who was the inspiration for the Penny Lane character in last year’s Oscar-winning *Almost Famous*, or they might more readily recognize her as the mother and agent of the classic beauty and current mega-movie star, Liv Tyler.



Regardless of whether anyone suspected, remembered, or recognized Bebe Buell for any of these facts, the fact is, she was...all of them.

The fact also is this former Everett School student published her autobiography, "Rebel Heart: An American Rock and Roll Journey," in 2001 and is getting national attention once again.



Bebe begins her autobiography with a brief account of her teenage years in Virginia, a period when she says she, “drove her mother and stepfather nuts.” In 1972, shortly after her 17th birthday, Bebe began modeling and moved from her home town of Virginia Beach to New York City. While living in a women's home run by nuns, Bebe met rock star Todd Rundgren, and they quickly began dating. When she posed as a Playboy Playmate in 1974, she was one of the first fashion supermodels to do so, and the layout caused her to be fired by the prestigious Ford Modeling Agency. Bebe continued to model, but became better known in the media as a popular girlfriend of many rock stars.

Director Cameron Crowe met Buell in 1973 when he interviewed Todd Rundgren for “Rolling Stone.” He claims he wrote *Almost Famous* with Bebe’s picture taped to his wall. “I think she was 19 then, and she was, like, the queen,” he told NEWSWEEK. “That was my first dose of girlfriend-as-muse—the girl who transcends ‘groupie.’ It was amazing just to see Todd and Bebe walking together. It was my first real blast of what romantic love looked like. When a beautiful woman actually loves you?! I’d never seen that up close before.”

In 1977, Liv Tyler, Bebe and Steven Tyler's daughter, was born. By the 1980s, Bebe was living in Maine and had started such bands as the B-Sides and the Gargoyles. When the 1990s rolled around, Bebe had moved back to New York to become Liv Tyler's manager where she helped launch her daughter's successful modeling and acting career. Currently Bebe spends her time in her New York and Portland, Maine homes and performs in nightclubs as a solo act.

So, the next time you look back at your _____ class photos, you might want to take a closer look at the classmates standing beside you. Do you know where or what they are doing now?

Remember, life is short...we need to make it a good one.

Grow in peace and wisdom.

Your Friday Friend,

Judi Godsey

PS. NOTE OF CAUTION... 20 employees were fired from The New York Times here in Norfolk for sending lewd and indecent e-mails. (To my knowledge, none of the 20 were on our list - even though some of the attorneys who represent the company were!) I have asked each and every one of you on this list to tell me if these "Follies" place you in jeopardy, or even if they offend you. Please understand that they are intended to be light-hearted and are not mean-spirited in any way. If you are ever offended, do not hesitate to ask to be taken off the Friday list.

PSS. If you send a joke and I don't use it, it is because it has been used before, and I try not to repeat. Remember, I have been sending these since August of 1997. You tend to go through huge numbers of jokes that way.

Disclaimer: When anyone asks if I type all of these jokes, the answer is, "No!" I cut and paste one evening during the week (30 minutes, TOPS). I don't have time to sit, read, and retype jokes all day! If you would like to see a small portion of what I actually do, look up our homepage at www.chcs.pvt.k12.va.us and check out the Soundings section, a publication I produce four times a year which pretty much recaps most of what I am involved in.

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