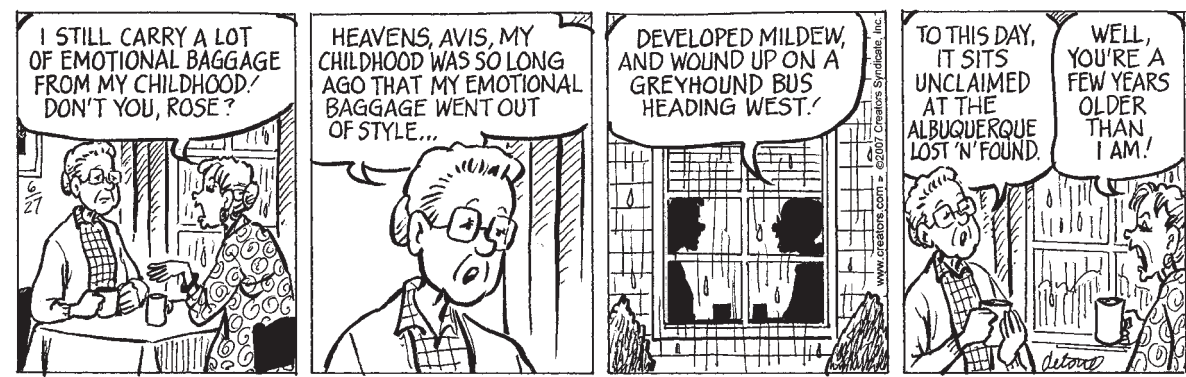


One Big Happy



Annie's Mailbox

Dear Annie:

Lately, my mother has been all over the place, mood-wise. For starters, she has accused me of stealing from her and hitting her (neither is true). When a family member became seriously ill, Mom accused her of faking it. One of my in-laws was diagnosed with cancer, and Mom rolled her eyes and said, "Big deal."

Mom has pretty much cut off all contact with the family. She hasn't talked to any of her relatives for years, yet all she does is complain about how they cheated her and used her. My dad has been dead for two decades, and my mother grows angry with anyone who has anything nice to say about him. I have good memories of Dad and don't appreciate hearing her insults about him and his side of the family.

Mom had a feud with a former neighbor and would call the police and drug hotlines constantly, trying to get the woman arrested. I don't know if this woman sold any drugs, but my mother called the police so often, the officers contacted her doctor, and her doctor contacted me.

I told the doctor of my concerns, but he offered no advice. Meanwhile, my mother just gets angrier and more paranoid. She remembers conversations we never had, yet insists her memory is perfect and that I'm forgetting on purpose. If I could forget anything, I'd like it to be her behavior and how horrible she makes me feel.

I have a sense of obligation to watch out for her, but if she weren't my mother, I'd probably walk away. I see a therapist to vent my frustrations, and it helps, but my relationship with Mom is not improving. Is there anything I can do?

Sad Daughter

Dear Sad:

Call Mom's doctor again and suggest that she be evaluated for dementia, and, if that is ruled out, ask the doctor if he would refer Mom to a therapist who can prescribe medication, because she seems mentally ill. You also can contact the Alzheimer's Association (alz.org) at 1-800-272-3900 and ask for assistance.

Dear Annie:

I am a 65-year-old widow who would like to find another husband someday. I am active, attractive and own two small businesses. I'm

even a pretty good singer. I joined a seniors' dating site, and in one month received 335 messages from men my age and younger. The problem is, the ones I reply to don't answer me. The few who do respond become invisible after a short time. One man was so pleased with my answers to his questions, he wrote, "Thank you for being you!" He called me twice and then disappeared.

I know if they met me, they'd like me, but I can't get them to meet me. Do men think 65 is old even when they are older than that?

Angie

Dear Angie:

Unfortunately, many of them do, but not all. It might work better for you to meet men in person. You sing? Join a choir or a musical theater group. Take dance lessons, work for a political candidate or travel. Get out there and let your friends know you are interested.

Dear Annie:

I read your answer to "Wondering in the Northeast," who has gastric reflux and can't eat anything on the menu. I'm a banquet manager, and we handle many special dietary requests. Having advance notice is always great, and our chef can usually accommodate any request. "Wondering" should ask the bride to put her in touch with the caterer, then let the caterer know what her food requirements are.

I would rather serve special meals than have guests bring their own food. Also, to all vegetarians eating in a banquet situation, let your host know in advance of your dietary requirements. Our job is to make all guests happy.

Here to Serve in South Dakota

Dear S.D.:

Our thanks to you and all the caterers who wrote.

Annie's Mailbox is written by Kathy Mitchell and Marcy Sugar, longtime editors of the Ann Landers column. Please e-mail your questions to anniesmailbox@comcast.net, or write to Annie's Mailbox, P.O. Box 118190, Chicago, IL 60611. To find out more about Annie's Mailbox, and read features by other Creators Syndicate writers and cartoonists, visit the Creators Syndicate Web page at www.creators.com.

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Romance Novelist

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who has a brain tumor who begins to find joy in the everyday chores people take for granted — changing diapers, doing laundry . . .

Schlegl said she sets many of her romance stories in a small town. It's what she knows.

Schlegl grew up in Washington, the daughter of Glenn and LaVon Schroeffer. She went to Our Lady of Lourdes Grade School and graduated from Washington High School in 1991, where she was a scholar athlete in volleyball. While she was in high school, Schlegl worked at Cedarcrest Manor.

Each story includes a little bit of something from Schlegl's childhood days in Washington — a reference to the smell from a pig farm, an old farmhouse, or local fare (particularly a dish that combines green beans, boiled potatoes and ham with onions).

All of Schlegl's books end on happy notes. That's one point she insists on.

"That's very important, because I always think there's enough chaos in my life and I hope there's a happy ending for everyone," she remarked.

Another pet peeve — loose ends. You won't find one in Schlegl's stories.

"I hate loose ends," she said. "In my books, my goal is to have all of the pieces tied up at the end so people don't wonder what happened."

Much like her novels, Schlegl's personal story has a bit of romance to it. She met her husband, Paul, on a blind date when they were both students at Maryville University in St. Louis. They were married at Christmas one year and went on to have two children.

He was the one who encouraged her to get her first book published and who has encouraged her to keep writing.

Years ago after she decided that working physical therapy wasn't for her, Schlegl considered going into another med-

ical field, but it was her husband who said, "If you're not happy with it, don't do it."

These days, however, romance is something they — like most couples — have to work at, particularly as the parents of young children.

"I live through my books," Schlegl said.

Romance, she understands, isn't something everyone knows instinctively what to do. So she has help for all those husbands — and wives — who need a little help.

On her Web site, www.SLSromance.com, she includes a list of romance tips for both sexes.

SIGHTS and Insights



By Chris Stuckenschneider

Competing for Face Time in the Newspaper

"You seldom see a good community without a good newspaper."

— The late Al McIntosh, editor/publisher, the *Rock County Star Herald*.

They've yellowed with age, but have lived for decades between the pages of a family Bible that belonged to my grandmother Ruth. Others were collected by my husband's mom Iva, who never missed a Borgia basketball game or the chance to snip a picture of Spark when his photo ran in *The Missourian*.

Long before I started working for *The Missourian*, I kept the tradition going and clipped pictures out of the newspaper. They mark highlights in our daughters' lives: Jen as a 6-year-old modeling an outfit at a children's shop on Main Street; Becky with lopsided wet pigtailed standing next to Lou Brock at Franklin County Country Club; and Kate signing to play golf at University of Missouri at St. Louis.

Will Score Big

It's a sure bet Mary Eleanor Farrell and her grandson Jon will save this issue of "Sights" because it's about a newspaper competition Jon kicked off with his grandmother Aug. 11, 2004. This week each will rack up 20 points for having their picture in *The Missourian*, 10 points because it's above the fold and another 20 because they're both identified.

In my interview with Mary Eleanor and Jon, the bond between the two was obvious, a tie peppered with good-natured teasing. When Jon was a youngster he'd try to get his grandmother to play soccer with him.

"But, Jon, why me? My knees are shot. I'm no good at soccer," Mary Eleanor would say.

"Because I know I can beat



you, Grandma," was Jon's response.

Mary Eleanor might not be able to head the ball, but Jon admits she's given him a run for his money. The newspaper game began soon after Jon, his two sisters, and parents, Dr. Tom and Gretchen Farrell moved to Washington from their South County St. Louis home.

Jon had just completed his freshman year at Oakville. His soccer team went undefeated until the last game, and Jon had high hopes of landing a spot on the Washington High School team. He was thrilled to make varsity.

Jon Had a Plan and Rules

Prior to moving to Washington, Jon was familiar with *The Missourian*. Mary Eleanor made sure the family had a subscription. Jon was especially interested in the sports page, and knew if he was playing soccer here he'd get his picture in the paper from time to time.

Jon also knew his grandmother was involved in numerous civic organizations. He decided it would be fun to compete with her to see who could get the most mention in *The Missourian*. In church one day he thought up the rules,

later jotting them down on a Post-it note that stayed on Mary Eleanor's frig front for three years.

A photo was worth 25 points, unless it was on the front page — then it counted for 40. In color, it netted the player another 25 points. Minimal points were given for background scenes without name recognition. And no cheating was allowed, no forced photo opts or negative publicity, like name recognition for loitering, jail time or spitting. Mary Eleanor said with a laugh.

The game led to lots of ribbing, phone messages left on recorders that went like this: "Section B, Page 4, above the crease. Eat your heart out, Baby."

Not a Sore Loser

At times, Mary Eleanor had crafty ideas about ways to pull ahead of Jon. Her fantasy plan was to have funeral fans made up with her photo on the front. She could pass them out at a soccer game in hopes that Sports Editor Bill Battle would take a picture of a bleacher scene with everyone fanning away.

Sad to say, in May, Jon blew his grandma away; what with baccalaureate, graduation, and the signing photo with name recognition about his decision to attend Wartburg College in Waverly, Iowa, on a soccer scholarship.

With publication of this column, Mary Eleanor has conceded, but she's not a sore loser. In fact she had a little surprise for Jon. While he didn't clip photos of himself out of *The Missourian*, grandma didn't miss a one.

So in the years to come, those too will yellow with age, but will provide a glimpse into the past for Jon, an heirloom as valuable as any a loved one could pass along, all thanks to our community newspaper.

'Voyage on the Godspeed' Is Theme of Reading Session

Eric Lause, the principal at South Point Elementary, will be the guest reader for "The Mystery at Jamestown" reading session this Thursday, June 28, at 3 p.m. in the Washington City Council Chambers. The theme this week is "Voyage on the Godspeed." Lause will read chapters 13-14.

After the reading session, children's librarian Katie Cranmer will draw a giant ship on the floor and have all the kids get inside to show

them how cramped it would have been for weeks on the journey to America.

The reading sessions will take a break for the July 4 holiday and pick up again Thursday, July 12, at 10 a.m. The theme will be "Sense of Smell." Cathy Peterson, librarian/PE teacher at St. Gertrude School in Krakow, will read chapters 15-17.

"The Mystery at Jamestown" is *The Missourian's* summer reading

serial story. Kids who attend the reading sessions will be given the chapter icons to be pasted on their *Missourian* Summer Reading entry form. Kids who collect all of the chapter icons and submit their completed entry form will win a free ticket to the Washington Town and Country Fair for Thursday, Aug. 2.

Chapters of "The Mystery" are being read aloud each Thursday in the Washington City Council Chambers.

Mountain Bike Champ

•Continued From 1D

mountain bike riding. He just ordered a Scott mountain bike and plans to compete in a few more races this summer.

King also won the junior race in last month's Washington Circuit Race that circled through downtown. He plans to continue road racing as he takes up mountain bike

racing. "Road racing is fabulous around here," King remarked. "It's quiet, and the hills make it challenging."

During most of the year, King trains on the road every day. In winter months or when the weather is bad, too hot or too cold he relies on a station-

ary bike he has at home.

Cycling is an expensive sport, King noted. In addition to the cost of a bike, cyclists have to invest in a helmet, all of the gear and, if they compete, racing fees. Still, he finds the experience well worth it.

"It's a great union of man and machine," said King.

| Depart | Return | Tour | Cost |
|-----------|-----------|---|---------|
| July 7 | Same Day | Meramec Music "Kentucky Opry" | \$59 |
| July 21 | Same Day | Evening at the Races | \$45 |
| July 30 | August 1 | Cavalcade of Comedy | \$445 |
| August 3 | Same Day | "Big" - The Musical | \$68 |
| August 7 | Same Day | Fairmount Park | \$42 |
| August 11 | Same Day | Missouri State Fair (\$36 - 12 yrs old) | \$50 |
| August 13 | August 17 | Mystery Tour | \$604 |
| August 14 | August 16 | Tunica Mississippi | \$182 |
| August 18 | Same Day | Illinois State Fair | \$40 |
| August 21 | Same Day | Fairmount Park | \$42 |
| August 23 | August 24 | Lake of the Ozarks | \$177 |
| August 31 | Sept. 3 | Old Threshers Reunion | \$442 |
| Sept. 5 | Same Day | Lincoln Museum (Reserve soon!) | \$56 |
| Sept. 13 | Sept. 15 | Branson | \$414 |
| Sept. 15 | Sept. 20 | Greenbrier & West Virginia | \$1,392 |
| Sept. 17 | Sept. 21 | Shipshewana & More (NEW) | \$744 |
| Sept. 18 | Sept. 19 | Amish Country Tour | \$174 |
| Sept. 23 | Same Day | Cardinals Vs. Astros Baseball Game | \$66 |
| Sept. 27 | Oct. 7 | A New Fall Foliage Tour | \$1,968 |
| Oct. 3 | Oct. 7 | Music City Song & Dance | \$893 |
| Oct. 15 | Oct. 18 | French Lick Resort & Casino | \$846 |
| Dec 7 | Same Day | Gaither Homecoming | \$64 |

There is More Than What You See Here

Space limitation prevents us from listing all of our tours here, so you might want to check our web site, listed at the bottom of the page, or contact us for a complete list of our tours.

Just added is the **Gaither Homecoming** program. We will be going to in St. Louis on Dec. 7. It always sells out. If you want to go, **reserve now!**

A tour that sold out the last time we offered it is the Lincoln Museum Tour. It's being offered again on Sept. 5 (Listed at the left). **Reserve now** to go with us when we visit the Lincoln Presidential Library and Museum, plus the Lincoln Home.

We take your traffic and parking worries away. There's no expensive gas to buy. We know where to go and how to get there. All you do is sit back and relax. Come along with us!

Call us for more information!

www.mid-americancoaches.com