

“ABSENCE MAKES THE HEART GROW FONDER”

SUMMER 1962: Life couldn't be better. I've graduated from Cardinal Dougherty High School. I have a great Chick and Jules Capriotti just agreed to let us use his name to rent a PTC bus for our first ever J&I picnic. Jules always comes through for us in spite of the fact that we are constantly an annoyance to him. We are always hanging on the corner of J&I and many times, although inadvertently, block the entrance to his grocery store. BG is making the announcement to the guys on the corner. "The first annual J&I picnic will be held two weeks from tomorrow at Mermaid Lake. The cost will be \$4 per person. This includes transportation and beverage. You're on your own for food. We have limited space available, so get your money up as fast as possible!" I give BG \$8 for me and my chick Patti and rush into my house to get ready for my date with her tonight. I bought her a ring at Mirrodi's Jewelers on 22nd street and I'm going to give it to her tonight at the Lincoln Drive-In Theater. It certainly was a rocky start for me and Patti, but it seems as though we were meant to be together. Fate has brought us together. It took me over three months to find who it was pretending to be Dotty Heffren, (a girl from Corpus Christi that I had a crush on), and make a date with me then stand me up. I had vengeance in my heart until I found her. I took one look at her and the "Midigan" turned my heart to mush. Within a few hours Petchie, Mary Lou and I are on the way to pick up Patti at her house on Dover Street. This will be my first time picking her up, so I'll be meeting her parents. Arriving at her house I knock on the door and I hear a ladies voice say, "Andy I told you not to sit and read the newspaper with your underwear on. It's Patti's date, Aron!" "Helen don't worry it's just like wearing a pair of Bermuda

short's!" The man comes to the door holding a newspaper in front of himself and says, "I am Andy Gallagher." Seconds later Patti's sister Elaine and her brother Michael enter the living room and both warn me that Patti isn't ready. I patiently sit down and chat with Patti's mom Helen and her Dad. They are very nice to me and give me some ground rules to follow in regards to my being with their daughter. Patti finally appears on the steps from upstairs and walks quickly down to the living room. My heart skips a beat as she says, "Hello!" Helen gives me a parting look and says, "You be a perfect gentlemen with my daughter!" I quickly answer, "Yes Mamm!" In the car on our way to the drive-in I couldn't wait so I give Patti the ring. She is absolutely elated and surprised. She kisses me and tells me she loves me! The drive-in was fantastic not because of the film, but because of sharing this moment with Patti and the performance of "Lee Andrew And The Hearts" after the movie. Two weeks pass very quickly and today is the day of the picnic. But to my disappointment Patti could not make it because of a family vacation. BG and I are having an impossible time getting everyone off the bus that showed up and didn't pay in advance. Tino-Tino and his chick Dee are waiting patiently talking to Gloria Ditano. Marie Torzone and Yock are holding hands and graciously agree that they will ride in somebody's car just to get the show on the road. We eventually sort things out and in addition to a loaded bus we have a caravan of cars following closely behind. All of us are particularly interested in Joey Giangreco's car with Nancy Diciano and her brother Ralph and his chick Vickie Vitale and the most important cargo "the keg of beer." It seems like it's taking forever to get to the lake. Lavanga, Bony and No-

Neck are busting on Umberto about his fancy swimming trunks. Barbells, as usual has his swimming trunks rolled up under his towel tucked under his arm. I'm sitting next to Sheila Cutillo and her sister Joanne. Mike Vassallo is up to his usual shenanigans making all of us laugh. Livin shouts, "Mister Bus Driver, how about speeding it up! We're all very thirsty!" Balloons quips! "Yeah! It's gone a be a while before we get the keg cold again!" The beer and picnic were fabulous and to many of our regrets it took us over thirty years to have another J&I picnic. Many summer romances began the day of that picnic. Some lasted only for the summer. Others went way beyond the summer of 1962. Many of these puppy love romances have been tested by the trials and tribulations of life and have lasted way beyond a summer love. Some have lasted even despite the death of one of the partners. Life has taught me that you just don't stop loving someone because of their death.

For years I have been plagued with the nagging question. When will this longing for the fondness of yesterday be gone from my mind? This thought is apparently shared by many of the Judson Journal readers; otherwise we would not have so many satisfied subscribers. With this issue we celebrate our tenth year. It's been such a gratifying experience recalling our memories about what we all were "collectively" many years ago.

For me the summer of 1962 and particularly that picnic have become a life lasting experience. It gave me the first opportunity of longing for Patti who couldn't be at the picnic. I believe it is the same experience we all have when we think about the old neighborhood and our beloved friends, "Absence Makes The Heart Grow Fonder!"