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## A dumb supper serves future bliss



Dear Gambella,

What can you tell me about a "dumb supper"? I am 37 and still unmarried. My aunt says I should have one, but neither she nor my mother can remember how it is done. Does it work?

Joey K.

Dear Joey,

A dumb supper is a ritual meal, prepared and served in silence, to call forth the spirit of a girl's future husband so that she may see who he will be.

The ritual varies greatly in different sections of the country. Sometimes several girls try this at once. They prepare the meal silently, each taking her turn at stirring the food. Each girl sets two plates on the table—her own and another beside it for her future mate.

The girls then sit at the table in silence and wait. At the stroke of midnight, the phantom bridegrooms are supposed to enter and take their seats. Each girl is supposed to recognize the man who sits beside her. If she sees no one, this means she will not marry.

Another form of the dumb supper is a ceremony in which a single girl's entire family takes part.

The girl herself prepares the meal and sets the table in complete silence, walking backwards all the while that she is cooking the food and carrying things to the table.

The table is set as usual, but with one extra place and an empty chair. The entire family partakes of the food, but throughout the meal, not a word is spoken by anyone or the spell will be broken.

The maiden herself must not look directly at the empty chair, but view it only in a mirror. At sometime during the meal she is supposed to see the image of her future husband seated there eating the food she has prepared.

I have heard people who have taken part in dumb suppers tell of all sorts of unnatural phenomena that have taken place at these meals. They say that often the wind begins to blow at gale force, lights go out and strange noises are heard.

This may be so, for in a ritual where emotions reach a high pitch and no verbal release is allowed, tremendous energies resembling poltergeists might well be released. The excited girl might also alter her state of consciousness to the point where she indeed might see someone sitting in the empty chair.

I can't help but wonder, however, what might happen to a girl destined to be married twice. Would both husbands show up? And if so, would they fight over the chair?

You may write Gambella at: Box 694, Garden City, N.Y. 11530. For a personal reply, please include a self-addressed, stamped envelope.

## Safety tips for bikers

Being a good bike rider involves more than staying upright without training wheels.

The Traffic Safety Association of Detroit has issued some guidelines to make summer bike excursions safer and more enjoyable.

Bikes should be equipped with rear view mirrors and plenty of reflectors. A working light is a must for night pedaling. A good horn is also an attention getter as well as a warning device.

Bike riders should practice hand signals when making turns. The left arm goes up for a right turn, straight out for a left and out and down for slowing or stopping.

According to the TSA, a safe way to make a left turn at a busy, signalized intersection is to cross the street and then turn and cross the other street with the light.

Don't forget to watch for cars turning right on a red light when crossing on a green signal, cautioned the association.

Above all, traffic laws apply to bikers as well as motorists. Always ride with traffic and not against it. The best way to ride is single file and as far to the right as possible.

## Foster was prolific

Bryson Collins Foster, America's first great composer of music, was born on July 4, 1828. In his brief lifetime of 37 years, he composed 189 songs and a number of instrumental works. Several of his works, such as "Old Folks at Home" and "Oh! Bananna," were known internationally and sung in different languages. At Greenfield Village in Dearborn you can visit Bryson Foster's home and see many handiworks that belonged to the Foster family.

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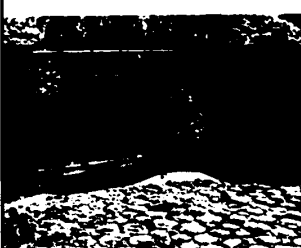
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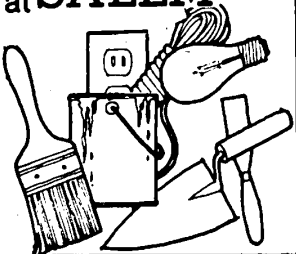
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