



Craig Plechura

Newlywed offers advice

Somewhat I figured once I was married I'd lose that lonely-guy look.

But there I was Wednesday night waiting for the light to change on Woodward when I was approached by two blonde ladies of the night — hookers. One looked high and the other looked shy.

"Hey, baby how much money do you have to party?" asked Sly.

"I'm just headed for home," said I.

"To my wife," I almost added. But I stopped myself in mid-sentence.

That never stopped anyone from hiring a hooker, and besides I don't think she wanted to know me that well.

Still, it made me think. Here I'm not even married a month and already I'm being enticed to commit adultery.

"He's no fun, let's go," said the high one. Hah, my wife knows different, thought I, as the light changed and I accelerated.

Before I continue, let me settle a few pronoun matters. "We" includes Louise Okrusky Plechura (hold the hyphen), a reporter for the Farmington Observer, who will want to know why the lead sentence in a column about our wedding was about hookers.

Up til now I resisted all encouragement to write about the wedding. Even after Louise's cat had to be rushed to the animal hospital on the second day of our honeymoon after eating my gladiola boutonniere that poisoned him, I was reluctant to exploit my personal life in print.

Now I feel different. Going through the matrimonial experience may have given me insights that could benefit other young men.

A FEW tips for the engaged. Be prepared to answer the questions "Getting cold feet?" and "Getting nervous?" a lot.

I wasn't really nervous until an hour-and-a-half before the ceremony. It was a normal Saturday afternoon. Sleep in late and watch the sci-fi flicks on Channel 50. I was alone and suddenly the refrigerator started humming much louder than usual. The bow tie on my rented tuxedo started to tighten. I loosened the tie and steam escaped through my collar.

An hour before the nuptials I entered the elevator. As the elevator dropped so did my stomach.

My brother had dropped off my dad's Cordoba earlier so I wouldn't have to ride with my bride in a brown subcompact. Of course the key wouldn't unlock the door on the driver's side as the seconds ticked away. So I got in from the other side, scooted across the front seat, and put the air conditioner on "Arctic."

Just then I felt icy water from the coolant system seeping into my patent leather shoes.

Damp, but undaunted I drove toward the expressway. On the entrance ramp I realized I'd left the rings back on the dresser. Classic Rock Hudson/Cary Grant type move. Despite the delay, I still made it to the church way before Louise. That's one of the reasons I married her.

But getting married is the easy part. Before you get married there are a number of other rituals in which one must participate.

SURE, you say you plan to avoid all the hoopla and have a simple, inexpensive, non-traditional wedding. There is no such thing.

Louise vowed to go the simple route. She even entertained thoughts of being married in a sensible suit that she could wear again.

That was before she got into the bridal salon, and her mom and her Aunt Jane started crying when she put on the lacest veil and a gown with a train longer than the Rock Island Line. Louise never had a chance.

We even registered for gifts. You go to Hudson's — or another fine store — where they have a special shop for the betrothed. It's sort of like the "For Children Only" shop they have at Christmas time except instead of men's cologne and scarfs for Mom this place is loaded with dishes, forks and glasses.

I'd never been in this department before. All around us were starry-eyed youngsters walking hand-in-back-pocket. They'd stop at the color-coded dinnerware displays and plant perky kisses on each other. Me, I felt the same way I did when I had to go shopping with my mother. My legs hurt and I wanted to head for another department where I could sit on the floor and watch cartoons on the color TVs.

DESPITE registering, which is supposed to avoid duplicate gifts, we still got doubles on the four-slice toaster, received two blenders and eight pillows. That's not bad though. I know one guy who got four bun warmers and that's not even counting his wife (yuk, yuk).

But we're happy at home with all our new appliances. And now that we're married we field different dumb questions. The usual query is "How's married life treating you?"

I wink and say something equally profound like "Well, so far, so good" and wait for the mandatory poke in the ribs or chuck on the chin.

Gee, ain't love grand?

Sometimes housework comes unstuffed

Have you ever noticed how every piece of furniture in your house starts to fall apart at just about the same time?

It hasn't been that long ago that we had a passable living room outfit. Suddenly we find we're surrounded by Early American tacky. Everyone in the family is walking around with tiny pieces of couch foam stuck to them. I remember the salesman telling us that Herculon was extremely durable. Not once did he mention the possibility of escaping foam.

But it doesn't seem to matter, since the dog is using the couch for a chew stick, the cat thinks the loveseat is a scratching post, and the kids are doing a great job of "antiquing" the end tables. It doesn't give one much incentive to purchase anything new when you know the kids and pets will kill it.

At least it's fortunate that no one is about to show up at our door asking to do a pictorial layout on interior design. Not only is the furniture suffering from senility, but I've also discovered after 11 years of giving it my best shot, that I'm really lousy at housework.

As I pointed out to my husband the other day, "Eleven years ago I fell madly in love with a lean and sexy poet only to find myself today scouring toilets, doing tons of laundry and scraping Play Dough out of the carpets." How was I to know that the one would lead to the other?

I suspect that one of my problems lies with the fact that I just don't seem to be able to work fast enough. It's embarrassing when a neighbor pops over during mid-morning to tell me of her latest trip to San Francisco and sees a shoe (my husband's) on the family room coffee table, underwear (my 4-year-old son's) in the middle of the living room floor, and dirty dishes (everybody's) covering every available inch of kitchen counter space.

How is that I'm so busy all day and yet the place continually looks as if I hadn't done a thing?

And then my mother comes over and makes some silly remark like, "Nancy, you really should wipe those finger marks off the front of that hutch!" Usually I just snarl. Only a mother would notice obscure finger prints. She is getting better — she used to run her fingers along the tops of every door-frame in the house. I'm just happy if I get the beds made before nightfall and enough dishes washed to make the next meal.

It's not that I'm bitter. It's just that I hadn't planned on making a career out of car pooling and kitchen duty. My dreams were more along the lines

of wasting away in some garret as I produced great artistic masterpieces on charcoals and oils while having terrific philosophical insights that I would record for posterity.

The last thing I painted was the bathroom and my greatest insight of late was the realization that I really hate housework.

And to add insult to injury, I'm walking around with couch foam in my hair. Geeze.



Nancy Walls Smith



A morning hero gets an audience

There's a battle raging among America's night owls.

To folks who tuck in themselves at 10 p.m., the controversy might as well be as far away as Afghanistan. But to late nighters it has all the trappings of a major onslaught.

At the controversy's center is one Tom Snyder, host of NBC's Tomorrow Show.

Over the last decade, Snyder has been sneaking into homes at the unforgivable hour of 1 a.m. To many he has become a friendly, albeit sometimes obnoxious, visitor — but welcome, nevertheless.

His nightly visits have been like having a one-on-one conversation with this sort of cloddy wise guy who you just can't help but enjoy having over.

It's just you and Tom talking over the day's happenings. Sure, he always brings along a friend or two. But when it gets right down to it, you watch the Tomorrow Show to visit with Tom Snyder.

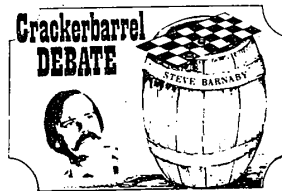
But now some innocuous network executive boob has ruined the insomniacs' nightly visit with Tom.

Now, instead of Tom and his interesting friend coming to visit, we have to contend with an entire studio audience laughing, gurgling and, of all things, applauding in our living room.

THE WORST PART is that, while before we had Tom all to ourselves, we now must share him with a bunch of faceless, awe-struck tourists. At times the show sounds more like a Saturday night recreation room party. You can almost hear the beer cans popping and billiard balls colliding while the audience guffaws.

Prior to the format change, we always were sure that Tom knew we were in the room. When interviewing one of his more bizarre guests, he occasionally would glance at us with that knowing twinkle in his eyes as if to say, "boy, isn't this guy a real banana?"

But all of that is gone now. No longer does he



spend the first few minutes of his show reading newspaper clippings or commenting sardonically on the state of the world.

Instead he has been forced to pay attention to the intruders in the audience. Gone are the subtleties which he could bring to an interview.

The audience always seems to give it away with an inappropriate laugh or indiscriminate boo in defense of some guest.

Now, to Tom Snyder fans of old, this all is quite disgusting. Our early-morning hero has been reduced to the likes of some mid-day talk show host like of Mike Douglas or John Davidson.

FOR YEARS NOW, I have been putting my journalistic credibility on the line by telling journalism students that Snyder is one of the best interviewers around.

And I, like many Tom Snyder fans, will stand by that statement. But the audience has ruined the fun.

Phooey on the NBC executive who thought up this new gimmick. We want the old Tom back in our homes — the guy who brings his friend and tells us silly stories in the early hours of the morning.



TOM SNYDER

Yes, I know it's a foreign car, but . . .

I'm really sorry about this. Really.

But there's a good reason why I'm driving this little foreign car. Let me explain.

I used to drive a Ford, but it died of natural causes — cancer of the door panels. So I went to my in-laws' car dealership to buy myself a new vehicle. I figured that my in-laws, at least, would give me a good deal on a nice American car.

As it happens, they own an American Motors Corp. dealership. And, as it happens, AMC recently linked up with Renault. And, as it happens, they convinced me that a little Le Car was a fine automobile.

ALL THE BUMPER STICKERS I see on the road tell me "Real Americans buy American cars." I keep wanting to stop the people sporting those bumper stickers and talk to them. I want to tell them I bought my car at an American Motors dealership.

A couple weeks ago I was stopped at a traffic light. A guy in an old Chevy came around the corner of the intersection, and as he passed he leaned out

the window and yelled to me, "Buy an AMERICAN car."

I guess what I feel is a sense of discrimination. And it's an uncomfortable feeling.

There is obviously a rational reason for supporting local industries. A strong, healthy local economy helps everybody. But there's also a good argument, carried by other bumper stickers, that says "Real Americans have a choice."

I guess what bothers me the most is this notion of what a real American should and should not do. Real Americans buy American cars. They also buy cars made in Germany, France, Sweden and

Japan. Real Americans are Catholic, Jewish, Protestant, Chaldean and Hindu. Real Americans are Republicans and Democrats and Libertarians. And real Americans are liberals, conservatives, humanitarians and bigots.

If there is any truism, it should be that real Americans are free and that such freedom must be vigorously protected. And, if all things were perfect, real Americans wouldn't sneer at people who disagreed with their own opinions.

Of course, that's difficult to inscribe on a bumper sticker. So until the auto industry picks up, I'm practicing my handgrip expression.

Now when people stop beside me at a traffic light, glare at my car and curl their lip, I go into my routine. I look amiable, stare off at the ground and sort of shrug like some idiot who accidentally ended up inside a foreign car.

I guess my best bet is to buy one of those bumper stickers that says, "Well, excuse me — next time I'll buy an American car."

Carl Stoddard