

# The Dating Game

By Jim Turner

"I want to ask for your daughter's hand in marriage." We were sitting on the screened porch of our home in Durham, surrounded by a forest of mostly pine trees and trying to communicate above the steady drone of the cicadas. At least the cicadas and the mosquitoes were outside of the screen; the person making the request was not. He was yet another in a long line of boys she had brought home over the years, but this felt different.

Her braces from junior high were long since gone, along with the aspiring motocross driver and the talented but hot-headed baseball player. The high school libido-enriched dudes were history as were the college crowd. She had earned a degree in journalism and started her career in another state that felt more like another planet, and there she had met and discarded a JAG officer, a few television anchors and reporters and some others I didn't know about. Finally, she had migrated back to High Point—not far from the roost, but still far enough to allow her independence.

My first instinct was to suggest to this guy that maybe he should discuss the proposal with our daughter before approaching me. But, surely he had. Maybe this was a scene he remembered from a 1940s movie or a rerun of "The Andy Griffith Show," and I should probably just be polite and say how nice it was of him to check with me before loading up the pickup with rocking chairs and bed springs. But you know me well enough by now to know that is not what I did. "We will let her go for six bags of grain and two goats. Not negotiable," I replied. He didn't know me well then. In fact, he never did, but after a series of rapid eye blinks he just said, "Done." And so the event was planned and executed to brilliant perfection at an old castle near Greensboro. The resulting union yielded two fantastic grandchildren, although the groom never did come across with the grain or the goats.

One of those precious offspring is a girl, now 15 years old, and herself beginning to date. She is going out with boys who are having the same boy thoughts as those who went out with her mother. She's bringing home boys and getting into cars with them just like our daughter did all those years ago.

Jim Bishop, a New Jersey-born journalist and author said, "Watching your daughter being collected by her date feels like handing over a million dollar Stradivarius to a gorilla." Yes, it does. So now the circle is about to close. But the difference with this new edition of The Daughter-Dating Game is I am not there to give the escorts the evil eye. This job falls to her mother, along with the other very important task of putting the fear of God in these cretins before they depart the house. She must make the little aliens believe in their hearts that there really are listening devices in the car and a protective grandfather who will be hovering only feet away regardless of where they go. So there.

It is important to remember that all little boys are made up of snakes and snails and puppy dog tails. This is not good stuff like the composition of little girls who have that sugar and spice and blah, blah, blah. This is likely the reason for the double standard that has always existed between the two genders. I'm talking about the standard that dictates all little girls are to remain pearly white throughout their youth while


little boys should go out and sow their wild oats. What a conundrum that is. The big problem here, especially for the young farmers, is that most parents feel the way I do about this wild oats dictum. Bluntly stated, "Don't you be plantin' no seeds near my plantation."

Sociologists will suggest that dating is the natural order of things. Boys and girls meet and go off as a couple or in groups and learn about each other. The pairing off allows a time and place for important information to be shared. People can then decide if spending more time with a certain individual is something that is appealing or not so much. A date is an opportunity for Rupert to tell Wanda what he really thinks about biology and how weird he feels when he dissects a toad. And it is when Wanda says to Rupert that social studies makes her want to puke, then proceeds to inform Rupert that Brenda wears falsies and picks her nose when people are not looking. These are important things to know about your classmates.

The first official social date can be traced back to Les Eyzies in France some 35,000 years ago and was experienced by the Cro-Magnons. Pictures found on walls in caves in the French village appear to depict a tall, muscular male grasping a female by her braided hair and dragging her to a lovely site overlooking a stream. You can Google this if you don't trust my research. Anthropologists (actually, just me) speculate that this was the location selected for the getting-to-know-one-another exercise. Here the male, MMMAAWAP, told tales of building hammers from smooth stones and sticks and using them to drive sharpened poles into the ground with great force. He boasted of his skill in making perfect spears for hunting the meats, which could be brought back to the caves and prepared on an open fire pit by the one with the braided hair. His escort for the evening, UgaUgaMayB, listened attentively as she slowly rubbed his massive, muscular arms. Soon she began to tell him about herself and about her secret desire to become a superhero and to fly with the birds high above the ground. Her mission in life, she believed, was to help those in peril and to rescue all who were in danger. The more she talked the more comfortable she became with MMM and, although she was attracted to his muscles, eventually made it known that she had little interest in mopping caves or in braising the slain animals over open fires.

Uga finally confided to MMMAAWAP that there might be another female Cro-Magnon better suited to his needs who lived only three caves up the way. This lovely creature, UgaUga explained, very much enjoyed cooking and cleaning, although she had been known to wear falsies and pick her nose when others were not looking. Before the evening was over UgaUga probably got around to asking the meaning of "March Madness." Ah, love in bloom.


So what do you suppose is the difference between 2017 and Cro-Magnon years some 35,000 years ago? I have a theory. The difference is the smart phone. Today's version of going out on a date includes the ever-present smart phone and the multitude of friends who will electronically impose themselves on the private tête-à-tête. Rupert and Wanda will certainly check in at the mall or the movie or the basketball game or wherever they travel. There will be multiple selfies transmitted and conversations enjoyed—and sooner or later Wanda and Rupert might learn some important information to help them decide if this is a friendship that should be more fully explored. Maybe this is not all bad stuff. After all, Wanda's father will have a smart phone, too.



**Crystal Bluffs**  
Rehabilitation & Health Care Center

**PHYSICAL THERAPY • OCCUPATIONAL THERAPY**  
**SPEECH THERAPY • SKILLED NURSING • RESTORATIVE NURSING**

4010 Bridges St. Ext. Morehead City • 252-726-0031 • [www.crystalbluffs.com](http://www.crystalbluffs.com)



**WILLS, TRUSTS, ESTATE PLANNING & ASSET PROTECTION FOR SENIOR CITIZENS**



**Jane Gordon,**  
Attorney at Law

**KIRKMAN, WHITFORD, BRADY,  
BERRYMAN & FARIAS, P.A.**

GENERAL PRACTICE ATTORNEYS  
[jgordon@kirkmanwhitford.com](mailto:jgordon@kirkmanwhitford.com)

710 Arendell Street • Morehead City, NC 28557  
**252-726-8411**  
[lawyers@kirkmanwhitford.com](mailto:lawyers@kirkmanwhitford.com) • [www.kirkmanwhitford.com](http://www.kirkmanwhitford.com)