

# I WOULD HAVE HAD MORE FUN BUT SOMETHING CAME UP

by Nancy Nichols

Do you know what last year's theme for the North Carolina State Fair was? Food. I love food. I am a connoisseur of any and all types of food. I said to myself, "This must be my year, first college and now this."

So, a friend of mine and I drove to Raleigh to go to the State Fair. Incidentally, my sister lives in Raleigh so she went with us.

By the time we got to the fair it was lunchtime and I was hungry, very hungry in fact. I wasn't worried though. After all, with food as the theme of the fair how hard would it be to find something palatable to eat?

We walked past the usual cotton candy/carmal apple stands and the hot dog stands, which, by the way, were numerous. They were not really what I was looking for. Finally, I spied something different: Egg Rolls and Terryaki--\$1.25 each. "Hey, there's something different. Let's get that. What do you think?" "Ok, sure." We proceeded to the Egg Roll Stand. I, being the closest to famished, ordered and received my food first.

Well, to be truthful, it was a little less than what I had expected. The

little cartoon cloud above my head featuring a steaming golden brown wrapper filled with tiny shrimp and crisp vegetables gave a loud pop as I received a weird-shaped, shoe leather brown egg roll. I looked at it. I bit into it. It really wasn't that bad. And besides, what the heck; if I have to eat greasy food it might as well be something different that's greasy than something familiar that's greasy. (This is called rationalization.) Well, after wolfing down the food, I was ready for the rides.

Rides, rides, rides? Which one first? Well, I rode a ride that wasn't too complicated, it just went around in a circle, something like the Himalaya if you know what that is. No big deal. The next ride we came upon was called "The Loop." Two people wedge themselves in a cage together and swing. First forward, then backward, then all the way around, then around and upside down. I didn't ride that one. I watched my sister and my friend do that. Next came "The Spider." This is one of my favorite rides . . . usually, I've never ridden it with three people in one car though. Well, none of the three of us

were all that big, but together the three of us were totally squashed. I couldn't move a muscle. Unfortunately, I didn't have to worry about it because the ride moved my muscles for me. The first muscle it decided to move was the big one that connects my head to the rest of my body. My head snapped back and the back of my head hit the back of the car. I had no arms to speak of--they were lost somewhere in the depths, so the next part of my body that was damaged was the muscle in my shoulder which was trying to aid my head in retrieving its natural position. While my face was distorted in pain and agony, my friends were laughing and happy for me because they thought I was having a better time than anyone. (I'll blame their behavior on the ride also because I'd hate to think that my facial expressions while in pain look the same as when I'm laughing.) Anyway, the ride finally came to an end. We all staggered out of the gate and I said "I have to sit down. I think I'm gonna' be sick." My sister ran to get me a coke, hoping that would help me. I thought at first that it was but then I felt every sip swooshing around in my

stomach. I asked my friends to please go on to the next ride. I really just wanted to be left alone for a few minutes. Within three minutes after they left I knew I was just buying time. The shoe leather egg roll was haunting my inner being. I was afraid to leave my spot though for fear we would never be able to find each other again. So I waited, and waited. Finally they were coming towards me. They stopped in front of me. "Your sister just threw up." Well, just those two little words were all the encouragement I needed. Without getting graphic it will suffice to say that I ran across the midway to a secluded spot and relived my \$1.25 lunch.

After comparing notes we figured we should sue the egg roll stand and the fair and the State of North Carolina, but we were just too darn tired. We also decided that no more rides would be graced by our presence.

We walked down the midway, looking for the exit and when I stopped to have my age guessed I found out that this year's North Carolina State Fair had put at least two years on me in a matter of two hours.

## THE EERIE MATURITY OF NOTHING

a college student reflects on a high school friendship

by John Smith

He walked inside from where the bright sun had caused droplets of sweat to form in beads on his forehead and upper lip, and was promptly greeted by a breeze of the cool air-conditioned climate therein. The environment was familiar enough: the couch and the chairs were in the same place, the dusty table, the crowded bookcase, the large-screened television, the family pictures. But the pictures. Although the same, there was something different about them, as if a transparent, fingerprinted film draped the beauty of the memories which before had seemed to shine so much brighter.

Curious, he walked closer, putting his personal property on the couch (he let his books drop quite suddenly and unexpectedly), and discovered that the non-existent transparency on the wall before him was tarnished in one area only, not all over as it had appeared a couple feet back. He searched diligently for this invisible stain (for he knew it was there) and finally realized that it lay on the picture, framed as all were, on the bottom row, far right corner.

Upon closer examination, two males in their late teens stood side by side and before a white, twisting staircase elaborately lined with flower pots, all of which were nearly hidden by the beautiful yellow tulips that seemed to

crowd the soil in which they were planted. Each had his hands clasped tightly in front of him, and both had beaming smiles that conveyed the excitement and happiness they experienced on that special night. The taller one was wearing an attractive black tuxedo with a red bow tie and cummerbund; the tuxedo, also black, of the shorter was accentuated with its blue accessories. The long blonde hair of the latter and the short brown hair of the former blended together to create a striking feature of the pair, as striking as the impenetrable friendship which brought them together for the very picture into which he was presently staring.

And then the wondrous magic of something quite indescribable took place: It was something which many have experienced, something which many will experience. As clear as if they were standing directly before him, the two friends turned to each other and laughed, the taller saying, "My grandchildren will see this picture someday!" Then he saw their dates, who suggested a return to the ballroom, and the two couples suddenly disappeared from the picture.

But another scene arose, just as quick, and he saw the two friends again, clad in jeans and t-shirts; he was not certain of their exact location

this time, but how they laughed and carried on so! Then scene after scene appeared in the picture, as if he were viewing a movie; in some places he knew exactly what was happening and where they were. In others, he only had a vague recollection of the action. In every setting, though, the two friends were there, laughing, joking talking, and--look--there they are being called down in class.

The scenes quickly flashed by. There was the homecoming dance. The Snowball, the Prom. The football games, the basketball games. There was the jeep and the infamous camping trip. There were the awesome inside jokes, the immature Wendy's excursions, and the overabundant meetings and movies. There was Randy, the expensive limousine driver (a two year veteran), and Parmin, the

steward-chief. And the dates! Oh, the dates! Jo, Kris, Mary, Karen, the midget . . . the parents . . . Dale, Jan, Mike, Elaine. The arguments. The reconciliations. The plans and the hopes and the dreams. And, of course, the typical senior prophecy: "These are the best of times. But, just think. Someday they're gonna' end." And graduation--the joy, the excitement, the tears, and the sincere, mutual promise that it would never die.

Then he saw the friends in the tuxedos again. "Come on," hurriedly spoke the shorter, "let's get our picture, just the two of us. We can show it to our grandchildren someday!" A light flashed, and so it was that he, who, earlier, had unknowingly fallen into the chair in front of the picture, was staring into the eyes of two friends who were in their late teens. Each, standing next to the other, was clasping his hands in front of him, and both had beaming smiles which conveyed not only the excitement and happiness they experienced on that special night, but also the apparent beauty for which their special friendship stood.

He slowly arose, as if the difference he now felt was weighing him down, and wished he could rub away the misty stain that the unknown vapor (which had indeed somehow penetrated the relationship of the unaware friends) had left on the picture, and on the memories. He took a deep breath and wished in vain someone would, if one could, explain what had happened and why it was so different. He tried to ignore the eerie maturity of nothing, but the feeling would not leave him as he gazed through the window and outside where the unforeseen rain fell from the pallid sky and pitter-pattered against the pavement.