



SON OF A GUN

by Joe Lanier

As a youngster and still under the spell of Christmas, I wondered why no more attention was paid to Valentine's Day than was. To me, Valentine's Day was the second most important holiday, yet school was not let out as it was at Christmas. The grown folks didn't seem to get into the spirit of Valentine's Day as they did Christmas. . . To me, both days were about love, and that was very important. . . Still is. . . Love days were times of celebration, but it just wasn't happening. I would sit and ponder about such things, but would get scolded for "day dreaming," especially if I pondered during an arithmetic test, or on the wood pile while the fire was dying down. . . If everyone had let me be, I might have figured it all out, even grown up and made some changes. Those were my formative years. My good looks had not yet formed. . . Thus, being poor and unattractive could have been the reason I paid so much attention to the holidays that forced people to say or show love. It was also heart-breaking, as the prettiest girl in the class didn't send me a Valentine. Sometimes if it hadn't been for the teacher, I don't know if I would have gotten one at all. Except for the rich kids — they too bought one for everyone. That confused me, too. Why was some boy giving me a Valentine. . . The day has grown no less important as I grow older. It is still one of the most important — maybe not the second most important — as my first has changed too. But all my important days still hinge on love. . . As I shopped for my wife a Valentine, it was difficult to find a pretty one that had the proper verse. It seemed the verse I wanted was on one Valentine, and the one that looked the best was another one. My Valentine-buying has gone through stages. It was what cost the least, then which was the prettiest, then it was just what it says. . . Now I want one that doesn't cost much that is pretty and says just the right thing. I usually settle for the one that says it best, regardless of cost or looks. . . Up to a point, that is.

If you haven't noticed, James Kenan High School cafeteria has curtains up at their windows, and they look great. The JK FHA Club put them up and the "clothing services class" made them. Next time you drive by, glance over, and if you happen to know those youngsters responsible, give them a pat on the back.

There are a few politicians out there that won't have to worry about my comments until after May — those who are seeking office and have opposition. I don't write about those during this period of trying to be re-elected, but I do pay attention and make notes for later use — on the one in office, and on the one wanting to be. . . I leave these people to make their points and political promises. . . Before closing completely on these potential county leaders, I do have one thing to say. . . If they are running on "I am just a good old boy" or person. . . in my opinion, they have no need to be in office. Duplin County already has more than its share of these. If they have no plan to keep it as is, or change it, then for all our sakes, don't send them to Kenansville, or the ones already in, back. Sometimes I think there needs to be a place on the ballot to mark an "X" saying "none of the above." . . Son-of-a-Gun. . .

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