

The Romantic's Guide to popping the question

*101 award-winning stories and tips to
create a world-class marriage proposal*



Michael Webb
"The Master of Romance"
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The next section is 101 winning stories are followed by 18 BONUS ideas and then 25 ideas you do NOT want to try. To help determine which ideas might be of interest to you, we have sorted the winning ideas by several different categories. Most stories fall into more than one category.

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How **NOT** to propose (real life examples are included at the end of the book):

- *Don't give conditional proposals like I'll marry you if you lose 40 pounds, when you cut your hair or get a better job.*

- *Don't ask someone to marry you so you can stay in the country or gain some other monetary benefit.*
- *Don't get the deliveryman, your mom or anyone else to pop the question for you. Do it in person unless very unique circumstances give you good reason not to be there.*
- *Don't get engaged at depressing occasions like funerals, trials and IRS audits.*
- *Don't get engaged in grocery stores, fast food restaurants, parking lots and other un-romantic places.*
- *Don't let anyone tell you when or where to propose. Just because your mom gave you birth doesn't earn her a front row seat at the proposal.*
- *Don't propose with body parts like umbilical cords, toenail clippings or extracted teeth.*
- *Don't begin a proposal by those fearful words "we've got to talk."*
- *Don't TELL your boyfriend or girlfriend that you are getting married. Ask them.*
- *Don't begin a proposal by deliberately picking a fight*
- *Don't EVER propose in a bathroom*
- *Don't place the ring where it can be easily ingested*
- *Babies out of wedlock are unromantic enough. Don't make matters worse by using their diapers to propose.*
- *Don't be so impatient that you cheat your girlfriend out of a decent proposal.*
- *Don't forget that sand and expensive jewelry are a potentially bad combination.*
- *Don't do something illegal or something that will get you fired during your proposal.*
- *Don't even try to win someone in a poker game*

HOW THIS BOOK CAME TO BE

After my first book ([The RoMANtic's Guide: Hundreds of Creative Tips for a Lifetime of Love](#)) became a best-seller, I thought it would be fun to promote it with a contest. I contacted media around the world, telling them I was searching for the most romantic, creative and unique wedding proposals. The grand prize was a spectacular Aruba vacation, staying five-nights at the luxurious Radisson Aruba Resort. Pairs of Martini & Rossi Asti Millennium toasting flutes were to be awarded to 150 second-place winners.

Over 7,300 entries flooded in from all around the globe and I have chosen the 101 best (and 25 worst) to be included in this edition.

HOW TO CREATE A MEMORABLE PROPOSAL

The story of how you popped the question will be told and retold dozens or hundreds of times during your lifetime. Friends and family will certainly ask for the details as soon as they hear news of the engagement. Your future grandchildren will want to hear the story of how their grandparents fell in love and decided to get married. How you proposed will hail you or haunt you for the rest of your life.

Here are some general guidelines that will help you craft your proposal into one that is worth remembering and worth repeating.

WHO DOES THE ASKING?

Who should do the proposing? A few decades ago, the answer was a given. Women waited and waited for their men to bend to one knee and ask for their hand in marriage. While men still do the vast majority of the proposing, women are now popping the question nearly 10% of the time. Sometimes a guy will ask the question and the response is “not yet” so she decides to propose when she is ready. While some men might have a bad case of crushed ego if his girlfriend beat him to the punch, most would be extremely flattered.

HOW SOON SHOULD YOU PROPOSE?

While asking on the first date might indicate that you are really smitten, it also shows that you are probably rather shallow – wanting to make a lifetime commitment to someone you barely know. One of the leading indicators of divorce is the amount of time couples have spent getting to know each other before they get married. Those who have married after knowing each other just a few months are far more likely to get divorced than those who have dated for a much longer period. A good rule of thumb is to wait until you have been seriously dating at least a year before you pop the question. While it might ruin the element of surprise, you might want to begin discussing the “M” word before you actually go through with a formal proposal. The only thing worse than a “No” in response to your proposal is a “Yes” given because she didn’t want to hurt your feelings at such a dramatic moment.

PUBLIC VS PRIVATE

An important consideration is who should be present at the proposal. While the majority of women desire their proposal to be done in a private or semi-private way, some are particularly close to their family would enjoy having the proposal take place in their presence. That could be at a family reunion or even a holiday like Christmas or Easter. Some guys make a private proposal, but secretly plan

for a family celebration to take place afterwards at a restaurant or someone's home.

Remember that the goal is to create the proposal of her dreams, not yours. Just because you are a lifetime Yankees season ticket holder does not mean that you should put it up on the big screen at one of their games. However, if she paints her body purple and yellow for every Lakers game, then a very public proposal at half court might just be the ticket. If you listen v-e-r-y carefully, you can probably hear some hints being dropped at what she might think is the ultimate romantic expression.

LOCATION

Where you ask those four big words can turn even an ordinary proposal into something extraordinary. Here are just a few considerations of romantic settings. Beaches, nature trails, mountaintops, on a lake, the location of your first date/kiss/I love you. But as you will read in the really creative proposal stories in this book, even ordinary locations can be extra romantic with a little thought and ingenuity. Overall, it's best to steer clear of locations like fast food joints, grocery stores, used car parking lots and places that have no romantic properties.

TIMING

The three most popular days of the year to get engaged are Valentine's Day, Christmas and New Years. If you want your proposal to be unique and a surprise, you probably want to pick a different time to pop the question. Other popular (but less suspect) days are birthdays and anniversaries of special events such as your first date, first kiss or the day you met. If you choose just an "ordinary" day, your chances of pulling off a surprise are even greater. One caveat: if you are a very un-romantic person, suspicions will be raised if you are doing something romantic some other time of the year other than Valentine's Day.

TRADITIONS – WORTH KEEPING?

There are several traditions that revolve around the engagement ceremony. Remember that they are just that – traditions. Men used to ask the potential father of the bride for her hand in marriage because it was more than a declaration of love; it was a business agreement. Family wealth, dowries and social positions were all part of the package deal. Even though most people now marry more for love than money or power, the tradition has continued and is probably something worth considering if your sweetheart is close to her father.

Another tradition is to drop down on one knee. Most women find it chivalrous and a sign that you will treat them royally. It is certainly not a requirement (for most women at least) and in some cases it is practically impossible.

THE RING

Most people don't think about it, but the matter of the engagement ring is really another tradition. There is no commandment that states, "Thou shalt give a diamond engagement ring when proposing." While a very high percentage of suitors (probably 99%) do include a diamond ring with the proposal, some wait until after the engagement to go shopping for one together. And you aren't limited to diamonds. Rubies, sapphires, emeralds and other gems can be a girl's stone of choice (if you have any doubt – ask). While some ladies love being surprised with a ring their boyfriend has picked out for them, most would like to have some input into the purchase. For that reason, some guys will propose with an inexpensive ring and then take their fiancée out ring shopping at a later date so she can pick out her own.

The diamond industry has promoted the formula of two months salary as the amount a man should pay for an engagement ring. The real romance comes from genuine love, not the amount you spend on a ring. Whether you spend \$5 or \$50,000 on the ring (or pass down a family heirloom) it should have little reflection on how much you are in love. Some couples have decided that a better long term investment for their marriage was to put aside the money that would have been spent on a fancy ring (or lavish wedding or costly honeymoon) and save it for a house down payment instead. If you go this route, be sure you openly discuss it first.

CREATIVITY

It is really amazing that someone will spend hundreds or thousands of dollars on an engagement ring but won't even spend ten minutes considering a meaningful way to present it. You can spend your life savings on a spectacular engagement ring, but if you give it to your sweetheart in a thoughtless manner, most of the romance is lost.

Take the time to read through at least several dozen of the ideas in this book. You don't have to mimic them, but they will certainly inspire you to make your engagement an extra special day to remember.

CAPTURING IT ON FILM

The only thing better than telling others about your proposal is “showing them.” With a little advanced planning you can have your special day captured with photographs and/or video footage. You will have to take special care to make certain that this does not ruin the surprise. If you propose somewhere that is already being taped or photographed (like a play, birthday party, family reunion, etc.) then it is easier to do without raising suspicions.

If you want the quality of the photographs or video to be really good, here are some tips.

- Have more than one person capturing the event on film in case there are technical problems – preferably from different locations. It is also a good way to capture all the expressions in case someone turns away from the camera.
- Make sure those who are taping the event know what they are doing. Have them practice taping something else and view their work before they tape your proposal.
- Plan the proposal for daytime for a better image on film
- Put the camera on a tripod. The person taking the shots might get shaky when the emotional big event takes place.
- Contact the local television station and tell them about your planned proposal. If it is unique, they would probably film it for you to show on the news. Everyone loves watching a tearjerker, feel good sort of moment like this.

If your proposal is really creative and the video turns out really well it might be worth \$500. Go to <http://www.theromantic.com/tvspecial.htm> for details.

To view the more than dozen photographs of these fantastic proposals check them out on our website at <http://www.theromantic.com/poppingphotos.htm> (we didn't include them in this version of the ebook since the photographs are very graphically intense and would have caused it to be a HUGE file to try to download)

#1
NOT BALING OUT
Teresa Smith

City guy. Country gal. One hundred hay bales. Unique and absolutely unforgettable.

He touched the core of me. The farm on which I grew up, the foundation of my whole self. It was there that my family triumphed, struggled, lived, loved. He used graph paper to plan this fairy tale. Each square a fifty-pound bale of hay. One hundred squares, one question perfectly placed on the steep hillside backdrop over-looking our valley amidst the bluffs of Wisconsin.

Our harvest baled with twine Eric unloaded on the hottest day in July. I away to work, expecting a proposal at one of Chicago's finest restaurants, where Eric grew up. On this day of another visit from his city to my country, a proposal far lived from my mind.

Dust flying behind my car and sweat beading from work and lazy afternoon heat, I found at the end of the dirt driveway my companion. With cow manure on his jeans, enflamed scratches and perspiration on arms, he brandished one of his calming smiles "Yes, I've been helping your Dad today. Want to take a ride on the three-wheeler?" I smirked again in amazement that my "Yuppie City Boy" held the appearance he did, obviously helping haul manure earlier that day.

Together we climbed the difficult roads leading to the top of the hill behind the barn. So high that the silo even shrunk. Honestly, I was not in the best of spirits, walking in the sun on a 90 degree July afternoon. Yet his determination pushed me on. Finally, we reached the top while dodging cow pies, old and fresh alike. The breeze softened my attitude and instantly he began to breathe words of gratitude and promise, romance and future. I was struck and at once numb – overcome with the realization that this was the moment. Perfect, at the top of my world.

Then the finale. He directs my eyes to a view beyond the present. The hill, opposite ours, proposing the words written to perfection, "Will you marry me?"

#2

IT'S A KEEPER (Grand Prize Winner)

Andrew Armstead

I love to fish and often enter bass fishing tournaments for fun. When I met my girl friend, Katie, she didn't know a thing about fishing and had really no interest. After several lessons and a lot of patience, she finally developed a love for the sport. It wasn't long until she desired (just like all fishermen) to catch that fish of a lifetime!

During one of our annual bass tournaments, I urged Katie to be at the weigh-in. I had explained to her that all the wives and girlfriends of all the fishermen show up at the docks to support their men. I also added that it's the best time to catch that BIG fish because all the tournament fish are released right near the docks.

In preparation for this proposal, I went to the local hardware store and purchased a large, brass towel ring and a glass-handled doorknob. With ingenuity, I fashioned the ring to the doorknob in such a way that it looked exactly like an oversized diamond wedding ring. I have a good friend that scuba dives and I asked for his assistance.

At the weigh-in, there was Katie right where she was supposed to be cheering me in along with other family members of fishermen. After I weighed in my fish I asked Katie to step into the boat. Most all the people on the docks (around 100) knew what was about to take place. As I positioned my boat in such a way that we were in full view of the crowd, I convinced her that if she were to cast her lure near a row of nearby house boats that she just might catch a fish.

What Katie didn't realize was that I had pre-rigged her pole up with a lure that had all the hooks filed off and was connected to the line by a giant snap-swivel. After her second cast she hit the spot perfectly! Twenty feet under water, where the lure had landed, was my scuba diving friend with the fake ring. As the lure sank to his depth he grabbed the lure and replaced it with the diamond ring. His job now was to swim around like a fish while tugging violently at her line. It worked perfectly! She thought she had the biggest fish in the lake and the crowd helped by cheering her on. After a minute or so he released the ring and she began to reel it to the surface. Her expression went from excited to confused as this large, bright, shinning object began to appear. As she hoisted the ring out of the water with her fishing pole it was clear to all, especially her, what it was.

I, of course, had the real ring in my hands and as she turned to look at me, I knelt in front of her and said, "Katie! I hope I'm the catch of your life, will you marry me?"

#3
STORY OF A LIFETIME
Joey Reiman

Cynthia Good was a dedicated, determined and dependable anchorwomen for CBS. She always got her story, and I knew she'd get this one. In 1990, a story came over the wire that there would be a drug bust in the penthouse of Atlanta's tallest building, the IBM tower. I convinced her news director to give Cynthia the exclusive story.

Cynthia and her news team, cameras rolling, showed up at the scene of the crime. Surrounding the building were squads of police cars with lights flashing, yards of yellow tape and a Red Dog SWAT Team with machine guns loaded (I couldn't swing the chopper.) At first they wouldn't let Cynthia into the building but, like always, she persuaded them. Still they informed her that she was risking her life. Cynthia and a bullet-proof SWAT force took the elevator to the 50th floor, raced down the corridor and broke through the door. But instead of finding Noriega, she found me at a table for two with a bottle of champagne, musicians and an engagement ring. She came thinking that she would get the "story of a lifetime." What she didn't know was that it would be her own.

#4

NO BEACH BUM

Jaime O'Brien and John Pedrolli

John and I love the beach and have planned on a romantic picnic on the beach since we met but something always came up. John decided to make the plan happen. On a Thursday afternoon, I picked up the mail and there was a card from John that said people say marriage is no picnic but with you it will be nothing but. It was strange because there was no address on it. When I arrived at the door John met me outside and made me close my eyes. He lead me into the living room and when I opened my eyes the furniture was gone and my living room was transformed into a beach. He had trucked in tons of sand, lit candles everywhere, ordered food from our favorite restaurant and had the ocean sounds playing in the background. The most beautiful sight of it all was he took my seaglass collection and spelled out "will you marry me" in the sand and when I opened my eyes he was on his knee with the ring. We finally had our much-anticipated picnic on the beach (in November) and plan on many more...hopefully this time not in our living room

#5
PROPOSAL IN THE COURT
Jerry Batek

My girlfriend and I had been dating for over 8 1/2 years when I finally decided it was time to make the big commitment. I had been working for about a year at the District Attorney's office as a prosecutor.

March 3rd, 2000 was the day I decided to "pop the question". I told Wendy that the judge I'm assigned to was having a reception on Friday afternoon to kick off her campaign (a little white lie). Wendy waited in my office, while all of our family, friends and curious co-workers sneaked up the back entrance to the courtroom.

I had the bailiff come down to my office with me and we escorted Wendy up through the prisoner's elevator to the 8th floor where the courtroom and Judge's chambers are located. Wendy seemed oblivious to what was ahead and was enjoying the "tour" of the prisoner holding cells. As we reached the 8th floor I told Wendy wait in the Judge's chambers because court was still in session and that I would come and get her soon.

I entered the courtroom to see our families packed in the jury box and at least 50 more people in the audience. The judge and her staff even called a local television station to come out and film the event. A good friend of mine was even so gracious as to purchase a bouquet of flowers and a cake for a "mini reception".

Well, it was time! The bailiff escorted Wendy into the courtroom. The Judge called the case of Batek vs. Russell and I said, "We would call our first witness, Wendy Russell." A stunned Wendy walked in, stopped and looked a little confused. She then smiled and blushed after recognizing family and friends watching her every move. She was taken to the Judge and officially sworn in. Wendy took the witness stand and I took my role as prosecutor and began the "questioning phase". I began asking her questions about our relationship that began in 1991. I was afraid she might be too choked up to talk, but she did surprisingly well. We laughed and made jokes.

Then I asked the judge if I could approach the witness. I marked "the box" as exhibit #1 and I asked Wendy if she knew what it was and she exclaimed, "I hope so!!" I then went down on one knee and asked her to marry me. Through tears of joy she said, yes! We hugged and kissed and were followed by cheers and clapping from the audience.

We celebrated with everyone afterwards at our reception and then were amused at watching it again on the 6 o'clock and 10 o'clock news.

#6
A LITTLE STAGED
Jeffrey M. Revels

I proposed to my wife Karen onstage in front of 400 people. I am a theatre director and had spent the summer directing 35 middle school students in a production of "The Music Man". I knew that I wanted to propose sometime in July, so I thought that I would do it onstage after the last performance of the show. I told this to the kids in the cast in June and the show wasn't until the end of July. The excitement level was high all summer to say the least and the kids wanted to be involved and I thought, why not?

Karen came to see the show on opening night, but I had arranged for her to accompany her family to the show for the closing performance. They were in on the plan. The theatre was completely sold out and people were also standing as 35 kids had been advertising this performance as "an event." The show went off without a hitch.

At the end of the curtain calls, I came out and thanked the audience for attending and then I asked my girlfriend Karen to join me onstage. The spotlight operator had scoped her out earlier and shone the light on her at this point as I went to escort her. Onstage, I proclaimed my deepest love and admiration and asked Karen to bestow upon me the honor of becoming my wife. Through many tears (and camera flashes), she nodded yes as she could not speak actual words at that moment.

At that point, the 35 kids in the show came from the wings, each with a long-stemmed red rose, and presented them to my bride-to-be. Then, our orchestra of piano, bass, trumpets, and trombones played the chorus of the popular love song from the show, "Til There Was You," and the cast and myself sang the words to Karen. The proposal was greeted with a standing ovation. The kids from the show sang during the wedding ceremony. They were a part of the proposal, so it seemed fitting to have them at the wedding.

#7
LIGHTS, CAMERA, POP THE QUESTION
Ramon Munoz

My fiancée's sister gave me the idea of making a fake movie preview and inserting it into a video rental. I discussed the idea with one of my best friends who is an aspiring director/screenplay writer. He commented that the point of making a fake preview was the element of surprise so he suggested to tell my girlfriend that I was helping him with his short video.

We brainstormed for a couple of weeks and came up with a few storyline ideas. I told my girlfriend that I was cast as the lead in my friend's video as well as doing the editing on my laptop and that's all she ever knew; this also justified all the time I was spending with my friend and not her. My friend wrote a 10-page script and it took another two months for him to shoot, direct and edit the video and for me to gather the cast, locations and necessary equipment. He invited all his/my friends to a screening of "his" film

The last line of the movie is of me proposing and that's when I pulled out the ring. She was so much in shock that five minutes after her just standing there with a new ring on her finger and jaw on the floor, someone yelled from across the room, "Well... what's your response?"

#8
PUMPKIN SURPRISE
Melissa Colon

Fernando knew that I loved Halloween, so he kept that in mind when he thought about how he would propose to me. It was an unseasonably warm Sunday afternoon in late October. He took me to a park in Wayne, NJ that was very special to us. We used to go there to talk when we first met.

We walked around the park on that afternoon, just talking and reminiscing about the past two years we've been together. It seemed like hours went by. Little did I know that he had a beeper in his pocket that he was waiting for to go off. His friends were in the park too, helping with the surprise. They were to beep him when everything was ready.

Finally, the beeper went off, and he led me toward a hilly spot in the park. From a distance, all I could see was a glowing light. But as we got closer, I realized that this glowing light was for me! "Will you marry me?" was carved out in pumpkins, each pumpkin with a letter, with white Christmas lights strewn inside them. Then he got down on his knee and proposed with the most beautiful ring I'd ever seen. I could not stop crying! Then his friends came out from behind the bushes (with video tape and camera in hand) to congratulate us.

#9
EASTER EGGSTRAVAGANZA
Julie Johnson

Church is a major part of my family so on Easter Sunday my now husband, Riley Johnson III dressed up as the Easter Bunny for the kids. Of course church was packed so he started handing out plastic eggs full of candy to the children at the end of the service. Everyone in church knew it was he except for me. I thought he was at work because he's on-call 24/7.

My sister asked me to go and get an egg with my 3-year-old niece at the front of church. So I did and when I got her egg, the "Easter Bunny" grabbed me and handed me a huge blue plastic egg. I didn't catch on to everything until he opened it up on one knee and I looked over to see my 2 sisters Angie and Shelly crying then he took off his bunny head and asked me while everyone was taking pictures and VHS recordings. Everyone was crying and cheering. I was sooo shocked and had not one idea of what was going on. It was so romantic and it was nice to know that I could share an important day with all the ones I loved. He is truly my knight in bunny armor!!

#10
FIRE! FIRE!
Sharon P. Borders

Bruce is a fireman and we met playing tennis on a mixed doubles tennis team. After 15 months of dating, Bruce popped the question.

Bruce invited me over to his condo, which had 2 tennis courts. He was very adamant that I arrive on time. Once there we started playing tennis and within 20 minutes, I heard a fire truck with the sirens going full blast. The fire truck pulled up behind the tennis courts with the sirens blaring and the lights flashing.

There was a huge banner across the side of the fire truck that said "Will You Marry Me?" Bruce got down on his knee and with the ring in his hand, proposed to me. After I said "YES!", he presented me with flowers and champagne that he had hidden behind a wall. It was truly a memorable event!

#11

I'M NUTS FOR YOU

Carol Yaeger-Rosario

My marriage proposal happened in a unique and creative way on a Christmas Eve, 14 years ago. After opening our presents with each other, my husband handed me a final gift. Inside was a wooden nutcracker doll (quite symbolic for the season). He then handed me a small wrapped box. When I opened it, inside was a walnut. My husband told me to use my nutcracker to open the nut. When I did, wrapped in tissue paper inside, was an engagement ring. He then asked me to marry him.

My husband tells of the numbers of nuts he cracked until he finally split one in half so that he could put the ring inside and glue it back together. It was truly a thoughtful, creative and unique way to propose. Since that Christmas, so we will always remember, my husband and I alternate giving each other a nutcracker doll as a special Christmas gift.

#12
WOOD YOU MARRY ME?
Daina Monroe

I was working for a large home improvement company in Atlanta when my husband decided to pop the question. My husband is and was in the construction business and drives a truck for work purposes. I work on the 11th floor of a high-rise building.

The day he decided to pop the question he called one of my co-workers and had her meet him in the lobby and gave her a dozen red roses, a balloon and a card. She delivered them all to me at my desk. I opened the card with shaking hands and read his proposal that instructed me to go to the window and look out when I got to the window he had his truck pulled right up front with a large piece of plywood in the back with the message "Daina will you marry me?" in bright orange spray paint. I immediately went down to meet him and accept and as I looked back toward my building all the employees on all 20 floors were looking on.

#13
FRIENDS & FAMILY PLAN
Kim & Boyd Kulyk

My husband and I live in a small town about 70 kms northeast of Williams Lake. We only have 1 cafe and 1 bar so when Boyd asked me out to dinner in Williams Lake, I eagerly agreed. We had a wonderful dinner at a place called the Laughing Loon pub. As we were leaving Boyd was heading in the wrong direction. I asked him where he was going and he said to please not ask any questions, and to just sit back and see what happens. We arrived at the airport, and I was totally bewildered!

Boyd looked at me and reminded me not to ask any questions, which I found quite difficult to do. After a short delay, we were flying through the air. I managed to guess that we were headed to Horsefly, and arrived there after a short 15 min flight. We flew over the Horsefly airstrip (a small grassy strip of land) and there were over 60 of our closest friends with their vehicles lined up to spell out "MARRY ME" and our friends were lying down on the ground to spell out "KIM!"

I was speechless, Boyd looked at me and said "so...will you marry me?" and held out a beautiful ring, I told him "yes, of course I'll marry you!" We flew back to Williams Lake after circling the crowd (and buzzing them too!), and drove back to Horsefly to join our friends at a bar-b-que. It was a day that I'll never forget!

#14
CROSS STITCH MY HEART
Tom Wyant

I had thought of several different ways to propose but none of them were romantic enough or seemed very memorable. Then I came up with what I thought was the perfect idea. I decided to cross-stitch my proposal and have it framed.

I bought graph paper and drew out exactly what I wanted to say to the woman I hoped to marry. It said, "Melissa, You are my miracle. You have made my life better than I ever dreamed it could be. Your love is the best gift I have ever received. I want to spend my life with you. I love you. Will you be my wife? - Tom" Next to my proposal I cross-stitched a long stemmed rose.

After a few months of late-night sketching, stitching, and sweating it out, I had finished my handiwork. I had the proposal framed in cherry wood to match her bedroom furniture. I nervously wrapped the picture the night before I was going to ask her to marry me. On Saturday evening, after dinner, I told her I had a gift for her. I brought in the wrapped picture. She said she knew what it was and my heart fell. I had been so sure that I would surprise her. Then she said that it had to be the latest print in the series of artwork she was collecting. I had to smile to myself.

When she ripped open the picture, she was more than a little stunned. I was delighted. She said, "YES!" Then I was really excited! For almost seven years that cross-stitch picture has hung on the wall in our bedroom as a daily reminder of our love.

#15
OPEN SESAME
Brian Riddle

Trying to be unique and get away with it is sometimes difficult. So as a Christmas gift I gave my fiancée a full day spa get away on New Year's Eve. During that time she was gone, I mounted Christmas lights on very large cardboard sheets and hung them on the front of her house. I wired them into the garage door opener along with several dozen fireworks and rockets. I met her after the spa (which she really enjoyed) and we went to celebrate the New Year with friends.

All through the evening she had been fighting a terrible sore throat and feeling miserable. Returning her home after midnight, I stopped in the darkness at the top of the drive and said "What do you ask yourself when you open your garage?" Befuddled and not in the mood for games, she said she didn't know. As I pressed the garage remote I asked "Will you marry me?" and simultaneously all the lights on the sign blazed "Donna, Marry Me !" across the front of the house and the fireworks lit up the night sky (and probably woke the neighbors). She later said her sore throat completely disappeared for about 15 minutes as she was in euphoria. I returned the next day and we put up another sign of lights above mine. It said "Yes!"

#16

WHY DO LOVEBIRDS SING SO GAY?

Jeff and Tonya Clark

Jeff and I were walking along Lake Eola in downtown Orlando and came upon a brass birdcage hanging in a tree. I walked up to the birdcage and there was a black leather glove on the swing inside the birdcage with a diamond ring on the ring finger of the glove. Jeff opened the birdcage and got out the ring and got down on one knee and " said will you marry me."

He then told me that the glove in the birdcage (I collect bird cages) was the exact glove that his father had used when he proposed to his mother. His father had wrapped up the gloves with the ring on the glove. Jeff's parents were hidden in the bushes to make sure no one stumbled on the ring in the birdcage before we did.

#17
I DIG YOU
Gina Hoogendoorn

I met Scott about two and a half years ago. From the moment we met, we spent every spare second together. About a year ago, we started talking about marriage and looking at rings but he just kept telling me that I would have to wait until he saved up enough money for it. I always told him that I would wait forever if I had to. Little did I know, he had the ring already but was just waiting for the perfect time to give it to me.

Scott is a pilot and I had never flown with him before so he decided that we were going to go for an airplane ride, just the two of us. We left in the morning and the weather was perfect. The sun was still rising as we took off. It was beautiful! We flew over my hometown and then decided to fly over his family farm because he wanted me to see it from the air. As we got closer he kept trying to point it out to me but I couldn't find it. I finally saw it, but he wasn't pointing at his house. All I saw was the field behind his house where he had written in huge letters "MARRY ME GINA?" by using a disc hooked behind their tractor to dig up fresh earth.

The moment I saw it, it felt like my heart jumped right out of my chest. I turned towards him and he was holding a little box in his hand. He asked "Will you marry me?" It all seemed so much like a dream to me that I don't think I was sure that it had really happened. All I could manage to say was "Of course!"

#18
WILL YOU BE MY GROOM?
Joyce Tio

Early in our relationship my boyfriend Dave had asked me if it would be too soon to start thinking about marriage. At the time, I thought it was too soon and so I told him I wasn't ready yet.

Six months later I was ready. I knew that Dave was waiting for some sort of sign from me so I figured, "What would be a better sign than for me to propose to him instead!"

Since we both work in the IT industry, I decided to do something technical and create a special website for the occasion. I took him for lunch at the historic "Pillar and Post" Dining Room in the Picturesque town of Niagara-on-the-Lake. Then I took him to the Business Centre upstairs so that he could check out this cool website I made for "us".

On the website I had gathered up "Before" and "After" pictures of all his family and friends (with the help of his mom) and "Before" and "After" pictures of all of my family and friends. When he finally clicked on the "Scrapbook" button on the Homepage, he was able to click through a slideshow of selected journal entries I had made about significant dates we had together.

The last journal entry was about how I took him out to lunch in Niagara-on-the-Lake and then proposed to him. As "I Will Always Love You" started to play from the speakers (both of us in tears at this point) I pulled out the ring and slipped it on his finger. He took me out that very day and bought me a diamond ring!

#19
FLOATING ON CLOUD NINE
Michael Miller

It all started with my fiancée and I taking a hot air balloon ride over the mountains. It was planned with a farmer to cut into his wheat field "Will you marry me" As we were floating approximately 1000 ft I had a bit of trouble locating the field, the next thing I knew Cindy had spotted it and jumped and said "Oh my God look what someone has done, that is so very romantic"!!

I had already taken a knee with her ring in hand as she turned to me to see my reaction...Well lets just say I have never seen a look like that my whole life!! When she finally realized all of this was for her she fainted in my arms!!! It was something that neither one of us will never forget!

When she came to we laughed through the rest of the trip! We went to visit the farmer after we had touched down and the farmer had invited us in for coffee and cake.

#20
HEART NOT OF STONE
James Julian

I had to prepare for the proposal the week before the actual date. I went to a craft store and bought one of those "create a stepping stone" kits, the kind where you mix the cement together and can carve anything you want onto the stone. Well, I molded a heart shaped stone and wrote, "Haley, will you marry me" on it, along with the date of my planned engagement.

We had planned to go to the mountains and celebrate my birthday. All day, I had joked to Haley that this was MY day and we would do things for MY birthday. We went shopping in Boone and Blowing Rock, North Carolina. In the afternoon, we decided to go to Grandfather Mountain and hike like we had first planned.

When we got there, we took off hiking on the main trail and stopped for a short break on top of one of the first peaks. Haley was turned around and looking at the view when I pulled out the stepping-stone from my backpack. She turned around to me and I handed it to her. As she turned the stone over to read it, I got down on one knee and pulled the ring out of my pocket.

She couldn't believe it at first but when she saw the ring, she started crying. She said yes and we both stood on top of the world together thinking about our future.

I left the stone there on Grandfather Mountain so that others can see it. If you ever go hiking on the main trail and happen to take a break on one of the peaks (first peak on the trail) look on the ground to your left and you will see my heart shaped proposal to Haley Tyger. We hope that it will still be there when we have children so that they too can come and visit the place where it all began.

#21
HE WHO FINDS A GOOD WIFE
Dave Brown

I planned an “innocent little” Christmas eve dinner with another couple that my girlfriend and I are close to, and called her up several hours in advance to let her know what time we’d be by to pick her up. She FORGOT about it and almost backed out, but agreed to go, wishing to get home fairly early so she can spend some time with her 5 year old son. I managed to convince her, saying that we’d “try” to get her home as early as possible. When I arrived, I gave her an “open me first” Christmas present, a 35-70 automatic zoom camera, to take on the date.

We had a nice dinner where I presented her with a nice printed poem, an acronym of her name. (Jean - J is for the joy you’ve brought to my life...) Then, we went to the Gainy Ranch Hyatt Regency in Scottsdale Arizona where we meandered under the full moon over the various walkways, admiring the many fountains, ponds, pools and overall beautiful scenery. We strolled our way to a place where I had arranged to meet with a friend who plays guitar professionally, on top of a circular staircase, to a second floor patio with a fountain, small bench, and a fantastic view of the grounds, lake, gondolas and a full moon-lit night. We tried to act nonchalant, but she was VERY suspicious by this time!

My friend who came with us asked Alan, the guitar player, “What have you been working on lately?” and he starts playing “Now And Forever” by Richard Marx, while I sang it to my soon to be fiancée. I had the words in calligraphy on nice paper with burnt edges, in a scroll, which I gave her. We hugged, and then I gave her a nice card, and had written a Bible verse reference - Proverbs 18:22. She wondered what this referred to... so I gave her a “Christmas present.” She opened it up, a new Bible, with “Jean Brown” inscribed on the cover. (Her face REALLY lit up then!!!) I told her to look at where the ribbon bookmark was, and she read the verse: “He who finds a wife finds what is good and receives favor from the Lord.” Then, on my knee, I popped “the question...” Obviously, she said “YES!!!” Then I presented her with a basket with a dozen white roses in it, which my guitar-playing friend brought. White, for purity, because we have dated and maintained absolute purity in our dating relationship! Yes, we DID wait until our wedding night!

Afterwards we celebrated with champagne in the Hyatt restaurant. Needless to say, we didn’t exactly get home “early” as she had originally hoped, but she didn’t mind at all!

#22

A CIVIL WAY TO ASK
Amanda McSwain Morgan

Last September, my then-boyfriend conspired with my parents to plan the proposal of a lifetime. He had convinced my parents to invite the two of us to Wilmington, NC as if it were their idea for a long weekend. I was just starting my senior year in college and was reluctant to go away, but since my parents invited us, I agreed to go.

My boyfriend is really in to Civil War history, and while we were there we had planned to visit a few historical homes. We visited three Civil War homes and at the last, during the tour my boyfriend disappeared. He had been acting strangely all weekend long so I thought he might be ill. A few minutes later, a mansion employ interrupted our tour to ask if there was anyone by the name of Amanda there and if so there was someone waiting to see me at the bottom of the huge grand staircase. I immediately took off down the stairs. Only half way down did I look up to see my boyfriend on one knee dressed in full confederate uniform on the platform below.

When I reached the bottom, he told me he loved me and wanted to spend the rest of his life with me. After the proposal, he had someone at the mansion to play the song, "You had me from hello", and we danced in the grand ballroom with the remainder of the tour watching. After our dance, a horse-drawn carriage was awaiting to take us to dinner on the Cape Fear River. It was wonderful!

#23
SET IN STONE
Jo ann Larson

My husband's proposal was one that could not be taken back - it was written in concrete - literally.

While I was on a business trip Eric had a front porch 'laid'. This required planning, pouring concrete, laying forms, etc. When I returned from my trip, I was very surprised. I had mentioned that I would have like a 'front porch' that we could sit out and enjoy the evening view of the mountains and sunset. Little did I know, this was not his only surprise.

Eric had enlisted my 13 year old son, Mike, in assistance in his scheme. While the concrete was being poured, Eric had set wooden letters and hearts into the side of the porch. He had spelled out "Will You Marry Me". He covered the proposal and told Mike that when he was ready and sure that he 'was ok' with his mom getting married, that he could be the one to 'expose' the proposal.

When I arrived home, I was surprised with the porch. My son had apparently decided right away he was ok with us getting married. First, he tried to have me go out on the porch to 'see the spider' stuck in the concrete. Like I was interested in doing that! Next he tried to have me go look at some 'paw prints' that were imprinted. Again, I wasn't interest. He was pretty frustrated, and while I was unpacking, he called Eric to tell him that he was having a hard time getting me to go look at the 'message'.

Eric then called me and asked me to go out and look at the porch. Not having my glasses on I failed to see the 'message'. I came back inside and Eric asked me what I had thought. I told him the porch was great and thank you very much. He thought I had seen the proposal, but didn't want to hurt his feelings! To make this long story short, he ended up having to tell me where/what to actually go look for. When I finally did see the proposal – I of course cried and said YES.

I think this proposal was truly romantic and unique in the fact that Eric was sensitive and thoughtful enough to include my son with the planning and decision. My son felt special and a part of the new family from the beginning.

#24
MOTION PICTURE PERFECT
Rob & Catherine Kirbyson

One Tuesday evening I shocked moviegoers to Fifth Avenue Cinema. I had everything planned out perfectly - it was like an episode of Mission Impossible.

I was to wait for a certain ad during the previews, at which point I excused myself to 'go get some popcorn.' An usher waiting outside the theatre led me to the screening room where I had stored a change of clothes earlier in the day. I had only a few minutes to change into my suit and get into position for the surprise. Everything was planned down to the second and coordinated with radios.

My girlfriend Catherine was still in the theatre watching the previews, when the lights dropped lower and a familiar song began playing. On the screen were projected the images of famous movie couples, followed by several wedding portraits of Catherine's family.

Catherine didn't recognize the first couple of pictures but then a slide came up of my parents, and she recognized my mom. That's when she suddenly realized that something was going on. The next picture was of her parents' wedding and then she knew that this was the proposal. She was looking all around trying to find me but couldn't see me anywhere.

I had been led through the adjacent cinema - cutting under the screen where a movie had already begun - to get to a door that opened at the front of the theatre where Catherine was getting anxious.

The audience watched as several slides introduced Rob and Catherine and how they met while working on a movie together. Then a slide of me came up with the text, "She is in the theatre right now." I don't think the audience realized what was going on yet. The next slide was a picture of Rob in a tuxedo with the words, "He is about to propose to her." And then the door at the front of the theatre opened and I walked out all dressed up"

There was a collective gasp from the audience as they all realized what was going on. I walked over to Catherine's seat, knelt down and proposed. She was so shocked that she couldn't really speak. I think that she said 'yes' but it came out more like a squeak with a nod.

We didn't stay to watch the movie.

#25
I'LL MARRY YOU MY PRETTY
Kelley Engle

When Tom and I lived in Florida, we used to remark about all the airplanes skywriting messages and advertisements in the sky. As our relationship began to get serious, he started to tease me that I would look up one day and see his proposal. One day he said he would probably use black smoke and write, "Surrender Kelley", just like The Wizard of Oz. And so the idea began...

In February 1994, I was sitting in a late afternoon meeting at the resort where I was a manager. Suddenly, there was a knock at the door and a Munchkin entered the room (okay, someone dressed like a Munchkin). I was getting a lot of strange looks as I asked, "Will I be returning?" and packed up my things when the Munchkin answered, "No."

So, we left the room and headed toward the front of the resort. He took me through the main glass doors where I could see yellow ribbon draped through the trees and along the pathways. He said, "You must go the rest of the way on your own. Just remember to follow the yellow brick road." With that, I began to follow the yellow ribbon on a footbridge over a small river where the path divided...and so did the ribbon. Out of nowhere, a Scarecrow appeared to offer me directions. He handed me a bouquet of flowers and said, "This is the path you need to take...just remember to follow the yellow brick road." As I wove through the trees, I met the Tin Man who handed me a bottle of champagne and said, "I'd ask you for your heart but someone already has it. Keep following the yellow brick road." As I was crossing another bridge to leave the island, the Lion jumped from the bushes, handed me some champagne flutes and said, "I'd go with you but I'm too cowardly. You'll have to go the rest of the way yourself."

I soon saw the witch walking quickly toward me. She had her head down so I could only see her cape and the brim of her hat, but as she got closer, I recognized my boyfriend's walk and the cuff of his sleeve. He stopped right in front of me, threw off his hat and said, "I'll get you, my pretty". With that, he got on his knee and proposed. I accepted, of course.

He had a small canopy boat in the river, so we floated awhile with our champagne. We ended up at another resort where 30 of our friends were there to congratulate us with cake, champagne, and shrimp cocktail. And The Wizard of Oz was playing on the VCR.

#26
THE TIMELINE OF MY LIFE
Stacy Ackerman

I was on a business trip in London for a few days. When I returned, I walked into my apartment to find rose petals all over the floor, music playing, and candlelight. At first I thought that Dave was just doing something nice for me to welcome me home from my trip.

After I took a few steps inside, I saw laminated posters hanging from the ceiling in a timeline that Dave had made. They had all of the restaurants, trips and inside jokes that had made up the year we had been together. There was a sheet hanging in between the entrance way and the living room, preventing me from seeing what was on the other side of the sheet. On the sheet itself hung the last poster in the timeline. It said July 1st with a questions mark, to mark that day.

I entered the other room to find several dozen roses covering the room. Dave was standing there and I was overwhelmed with excitement, surprise, and awe. We hugged for a while and Dave finally said to me that he wanted to ask me something. He got down on his knee, spoke about how sure he was of spending the rest of his life with me and a few other things that I unfortunately did not hear because all I could do was cry. The ring sat on the table beside us with a spotlight shining down on it. I did not even see it there until he picked it up and placed it on my finger and asked "Will you marry me?"

At first I thought my answer went without saying, but soon realized that I should actually give a verbal response. I said yes, of course, and he had order a catered dinner for us to share at home together because he knew I was going to be tired from my trip. I never thought he could surprise me, but he did. It was the best night of my life.

GIVING MORE THAN HOPE
Theresa Shepherd

I am an accomplished woodcrafter and I knew that my proposal would be something I would build. Being a creative thinker and a bit of a romantic, I knew that my proposal had to be special. So I immediately began planning.

With the help of Theresa's friends, buying the ring and planning her surprise 40th birthday party was easy compared to the task of finishing the hope chest I wanted to give her. Building it consumed all of my free time. It was a challenge to keep it all a secret from Theresa.

On the day of the big event, Theresa did not suspect anything. We walked into the restaurant where she saw the decorations and banners saying "Happy 40th Birthday". Fifty-five of our closest friends and family awaited her. Guests were asked to come with a funny story or experience shared with Theresa. Stories were shared over drinks. After the laughter died down, we enjoyed a terrific dinner. I tried to hide my nervousness thinking about the speech I was about to give.

After dinner I decided it was now time. I stood up and got everyone's attention. I proceeded to tell everyone how much I cared for Theresa and how terrific our relationship had become. I then presented Theresa with long-stemmed roses. I asked a friend to give me a hand with the large gift. Everyone clapped when Theresa unwrapped the box. The chest was solid oak with hand carved joints. The center panel was made of stained glass with a red heart, backed by a brass plate. Theresa stepped back, looked at it and turned to me with a big hug and said "thank you". She lifted the lid and watched in delight as the helium balloons rose out of the chest.

Theresa's sister, Missy, yelled out "look in the box!". The crowd made a loud sigh which caused Theresa to glance back at them and then back to the hope chest. Engraved were the words "Will you marry me Theresa?".

I will never forget the look of shock and surprise on her face when she turned back around to see me kneeling on one knee, holding out a box with her engagement ring. She stepped forward and we embraced. The crowd was spell bound. Once again Missy yelled "What's the answer?!". Unable to speak or move, Theresa gave thumbs up as she wept on my shoulder

#28
READING, WRITING, PROPOSING
De'Aundrea Dupree

I am fifth grade teacher at Cedar Bluff High School. My long time boyfriend always pops by to entertain my class whenever he is in town. He is in the military so that's not often.

This specific time he told me class he had a game for them to play but I had to go out of the room. I was puzzled at first but then I played along. While I was outside of the room he got up a game of hangman with my students. For every letter they guessed right they received candy. One boy asked that if they knew the answer could they guess. He said yes. The boy answered...the board read WILL YOU MARRY ME? From the look of the children's faces through the glass window in the door I knew something was up so as I went into the room I noticed all my surroundings.

I looked over at my boyfriend and he was in front of the board on his knee with the ring in his hand and asked me to marry him. I was shocked but I immediately said YES when I figured out he was serious.

#29

THE BUCKEYE OF THE BEHOLDER

Lori Collison

I was born and raised in Ohio, the buckeye state. I met my future husband (he is from Iowa) after we graduated from Ohio State. He found it funny that I collected buckeyes, said to bring good luck.

Five months after meeting him we went to my hometown to visit family the most beautiful snowfall occurred. He suggested we take a walk thru the park where I spent my childhood days. It was beautiful with a thick swirl of snow and heavily flocked trees. On the trail ahead something dark was barely peeking through the snow...a buckeye. I scooped it up to add to my collection and it opened to display a diamond ring within. My love knelt down on his knees and asked me to marry him. The past 16 years have been a honeymoon. I still cannot look at a buckeye or chestnut without seeing a diamond ring...from a small seed dreams come true.

#30

THE HEART OF THE MATTER

Angela Thompson

The proposal began with requesting my hand in marriage from my father. He promptly said, "Hell, no." After some convincing from my husband-to-be, Daddy agreed but made him promise to always treat me like a queen. That hurdle out of the way, the proposal was set in motion.

Frank asked me to go to the doctor with him for a routine physical. He had prearranged with the doctor to take a chest x-ray. He put the ring in his shirt pocket, as close to the middle of his chest as it would go.

The doctor came back and put the x-ray up on the lighted screen. He looked puzzled and said, "There's something very close to your heart I can't identify." Frank, looking concerned, says, "Is it something you can get rid of?" The doctor said, "I'm afraid you will have it the rest of your life."

They both hem hawed around for a couple of minutes while I panicked. Frank, walked up to the x-ray, looked closely, and said, "That looks a lot like this!" At the same time, he pulls the ring out of his pocket and holds it up against the x-ray. He said, "I guess your right, doc, I'll have it for the rest of my life."

He turned around, put the ring on my finger, and said, "Will you be keep this close to my heart forever and do me the honor of being my wife?"

I cried, said, "Yes". I have remained his wife and close to his heart for the past 24 years.

#31
AW SHUCKS!
Carl Miller

Linda and I were visiting the 1964 World's Fair held in New York. We were at the Polynesian Booth watching Polynesian boys dressed in their native outfits dive into a pool for oysters.

Every oyster held a pearl inside. For \$5 you could purchase an oyster with a pearl and for additional money you could have your pearl set into a ring or necklace setting. I had prearranged that when the diver came up with the oyster, Linda would hand the diver \$5 thinking she was purchasing an oyster with a pearl inside. When the diver opened the "special oyster" for her inside was her diamond engagement ring. The World's Fair is long gone but not my love for Linda.

#32
TWO BECOME ONE
Marc Schlegel

It was our one-year anniversary, and I had planned the whole thing months in advance. I asked her parents and my mother for each a piece of cloth to show a joining of the two families, and I made a pillow to kneel upon when proposing.

It was now February and her birthday was in August. For her birthday I had continued a old Irish tradition of giving her a cladagh ring. This ring was significant because of what it symbolizes. The ring meant that the individual who is wearing it has a person special in their life; if the heart faces inward towards the person it represents true love.

I walked her out onto the patio of a winery in the Finger Lakes region of New York at sunset, and I sat down next to her on a bench and said, "Susan in August I gave you that ring to symbolize more than just friendship, I gave it to you knowing that I wanted you to spend the rest of my life with you. If you chose to join me in eternal love then please remove the ring you have on and place it inside this pillow and give it back to me."

As she did I pulled out the engagement ring. She handed back the pillow to me and I placed it on the ground and said, "Susan will you marry , me?" I showed the ring to her and she began to cry, I extended my arm out to her and she pick up the engagement ring and placed it on her hand, and said "Yes, Yes I will Marc."

#33
A JACK UP MY SLEEVE
Jack Judy

At the time I proposed to my girlfriend Joye she was living 250 miles away; she was a college student at Taylor University. She was planning to make the 250-mile trip and come visit me one weekend. We'd been dating for 2 years, and she had no idea I was about to propose.

A few days before she left to come visit, I mailed her an envelope containing one simple item...a JACK of diamonds. I thought maybe it would be a big enough hint, but it went right over her head. That weekend when she arrived, we went out for a quiet dinner, then went back to my house where I informed her that I wanted to give her "something that would take her breath away".

I produced a ring box from my pocket, and at that point, I think she understood the meaning of the "JACK of DIAMONDS". Much to her surprise, she opened the ring box to find something that WOULD indeed take her breath away...a small red balloon. I watched the disappointment come into her eyes as, thinking I was playing a sick joke, she reached in to pull out the balloon. That look of gloom was soon replaced with elation as she discovered the shiny diamond ring I had placed inside the balloon!

#34
RUN FOR YOUR WIFE
Colleen Sanders

Rick had been an avid runner all his life. He was number #1 on his High School Cross Country team. I, on the other hand, never cared much for running, until, that is... I realized something early on in our courtship. If I wanted to see much of my boyfriend, I would have to take up running. After all, he ran every day, and sometimes for hours at a time! So, reluctantly, I began jogging myself.

When we went to Ohio one weekend in early February, both Rick and I packed our running gear, knowing we'd probably try to fit at least one run in, while we were there. Since Rick was more the running enthusiast than me, he could run about twice as long and twice as far as I could. So he'd usually leave about a half hour before me. He'd run his first few miles alone, then come back to get me. Then I'd join him for the last two or three miles of his run.

On this particular day, Rick went for his run as usual. Then he came back a little while later to pick me up. It was a sunny wintery day and we ran on a lovely snow covered path, in the woods near my brother's home. After a while, Rick suddenly stopped, dead in his tracks. He grabbed me, and proceeded to hold me tightly in his arms. Slowly he turned me around. As I peered over his shoulder, I saw some words written in the snow up on a huge hill. There I read the words "Will you marry me, Colly?"

By this time, I had tears streaming down my face. Then I noticed Rick had somehow managed to smuggle a pair of wine glasses and a small bottle of champagne! I hadn't even noticed the small bulge in his sweatshirt, where he had been hiding the evidence, the whole time we were running.

As Rick filled our champagne glasses, I ran up to the snow-covered hill. Using my feet, as Rick had done earlier, I wrote my own message in the snow. It simply said, "Yes!"

#35

ICING ON THE CAKE

Mary Jo Robinson

My husband and I were students at the University of Iowa. We had been dating about 8 or 9 months before we started talking about marriage. Ted and I looked at rings but had not specifically picked one out.

Ted asked me into his apartment for supper. I was always leery of this because he had four other roommates and I didn't think that we would have much privacy. Imagine my surprise when I walked into his bedroom to see a table set for two. He had borrowed a linen tablecloth, silver and china, had a vase of fresh flowers in the center, a bottle of wine cooling, and two menus to "T R's Cafe". I was very surprised.

He proceeded to feed me a wonderful supper of steak, baked potato and salad. Dessert was the best. He had special ordered a pralines and cream ice cream cake from Baskins and Robbins.(my favorite) The words on the top of the cake said "Will you marry me?" Ted then got down on one knee and proposed. He slipped on the most beautiful ring and we have been married for 14 wonderful years!

#36
THE CONSPIRACY
Russ Moorehead

Always one to enjoy a good practical joke, I persuaded a reluctant Brenda to help me convince everyone we knew that we'd flown to Las Vegas and eloped. Brenda didn't think the deception would work, as we'd never discussed marriage, and no one we really knew would believe it. I thought differently!

We decided to have a Halloween party for about 60 of our closest friends and family. She borrowed a wedding dress; I found a tux. We each took the Friday, before the party, off from work and disappeared for the day (gotta have an alibi). A friend with connections to the travel industry was able to get me actual hard copy on airline tickets, hotel and chapel reservations, confirmations and billings... and I forged an authentic looking wedding certificate. We were ready to go!

Dressed as a "Bride" and "Groom", we displayed the proof of our deeds proudly on the front door and waited... My parents and a favorite aunt and uncle arrived first..., let's see... "disbelief", "tears", "congratulations",... "marriage advice"... Brenda's parents arrived next,... "stunned", "more tears",... you know, I don't remember them congratulating us? Her sisters and husbands followed,... "total belief" (seems Brenda had always told them she'd just elope out of the blue someday), "bawling",... "condolences" (from the brother-in-laws, seems they had some idea of what I had gotten myself into).

And the flow of people continued with emotions ranging from excited to regretful that they were unable to share the moment with us,... but, EVERYONE believed

Over and over and over again, (in great detail) I retold the story of our elopement. Brenda just smiled and said she didn't remember much,... thought she must have been in shock. At one point I heard her Dad tell mine, "I'll be damned, I think they actually did it!" My mother and hers were in the kitchen, calling relatives all over the country with the "BIG" news!

About two hours into our conspiracy (Brenda calls it my conspiracy), we asked everyone to join us in a toast... they toasted us and we called them guppies... Ouch! You could have heard a pin drop. My own mother actually used profanity! A few people started to laugh, and eventually the rest lightened up,... we had a great party!

Oh I forgot to mention one bit of information... an hour before anyone arrived I gave Brenda a porcelain giraffe (she loves giraffes). She opened the gift and said, "cute"... then whispered, "oh my god, what's that" (he was wearing a diamond engagement ring that she hadn't seen at first).

On second thought maybe it was my conspiracy... and I think Brenda may have been in shock, but it made her a more convincing partner in our crime. It also made it easier to face the crowd once they realized it was an "engagement party".

#37
PUZZLING PROPOSAL
Lorraine Schmid

I wanted a surprising and fun way to "pop the question" to my boyfriend. So, I bought a child's puzzle, painted it a shiny copper with a big red heart in the middle, with the two innermost pieces containing the message "Will you marry me?"

Then, I hand made some paper boxes and put each piece in a separate box, decorated them and hung them on our Christmas tree. On Christmas Eve, I let him unwrap the puzzle tray first, while my daughters started bringing him the boxes. He put the puzzle together, and when he got to the last box, he put in the last two pieces, and said "Isn't that clever!" Then, he got the message. He turned a cute shade of red, and said "I guess so." Then he gave me a big hug and kisses.

#38
HAVE YOUR CAKE AND EAT IT TOO
Joe Stewart

It was my girlfriend's birthday. We had planned a relaxing trip to the mountains. We spent the morning shopping at antique stores in Boone, NC. We then got on the Blue Ridge Parkway and drove to a spot we had visited earlier on our first daytrip together.

We found a nice spot alongside the road to have a picnic. I had packed all of the picnic supplies. We ate and I gave her a birthday present; a video she had been wanting. Afterwards, we were to have birthday cake. I had made a small cake for two. She ate from her side while I ate from mine.

I had hollowed out a spot in the middle of the cake and placed her ring in a film canister packed with cotton to prevent rattling. As we ate, my girlfriend became so full she said she couldn't possibly eat another bite! I urged her on and said that the cake was too messy to take with us and that she should eat a little more. Reluctantly she did.

Finally her fork hit the canister. She exclaimed, what is this?! I told her I didn't know maybe she should open it! She did after some prodding. She burst into tears. I took her by the hand and led her to a boulder that was behind us, sat her down, and pulled out a letter I had written to her. I asked her to marry me and of course she said yes.

#39
THE SALES PITCH
Susan Bishop

Since I had been in the car business, I knew all about the technique of selling. I told my boyfriend all my best features, such as:

Low mileage
Smooth ride
Well lubricated engine
Nice exterior
All the bells and whistles
Low maintenance
Comes with a warranty

How could he turn a deal down like that!

#40
AMONG BROTHERS AND SISTERS
Wanda Harris

Kenneth and I both grew up in the country and attended the same country community church. The church bulletin listed the week's events. Imagine my surprise when I opened the bulletin to read the events only to find a message with a heart around it with the words "Wanda would you please marry me" in bold print. Everyone in the church was looking at me or whispering about the question.

I told him I would let him know the answer soon. I waited until next weeks bulletin was due out and I had the secretary write my reply "God willing, the answer is YES".

In a small community your business is also everyone else's. It wasn't long before everyone we knew was aware of our engagement.

#41
HEART ON A STICK
Ana Robertson

I invited Gary and his two daughters, Alex and Emily, for dinner at my home. My two children, Jason and Jennifer, helped me fix a very lavish meal.

After dinner, Gary instructed me to sit on the living room couch while listening to my favorite song, "Lady in Red" (it played over and over). He sat down next to me on the couch, and suddenly all four children came into the room. Each one held a large red paper heart on a stick with a word written on it. The words spelled out "WILL YOU MARRY ME"!!! Then Gary pulled out a beautiful diamond ring, and proposed to me. He also gave me a dozen perfect red roses, and a heart shaped box of chocolates. I said "YES"!!!

#42
EASTER EGGSTRAVAGANZA
Larry Erdman

I knew I wanted to do something very special to propose marriage to my love. We had been dating since the previous summer and it was the following spring. Her birthday that year fell on Easter Sunday and I knew her whole family would be getting together Easter morning. So, I made my plans. Armed with home-modified pyrotechnics, 300 balloons, a helium container, 6 empty cardboard crates, a dozen rolls of duct tape and a flashlight strapped to a bicycle helmet, I set out at 2am. My plan was to erect all of the props behind the fence in her backyard that night. What I hadn't counted on was the unseasonable cold front, which had come through that evening. Not a problem said I! A few libations to keep the blood flowing and thin and I was on my way.

By 4:45am, everything was in place and I was a head of schedule. But, unfortunately, the family wouldn't be getting up for several hours, and it was getting colder. Again, no problem thought I. More libations! I huddled in one of the balloon crates.

By 5:30am, I realized what a "lethal" combination drinking, being sleepy, cold and huddling a dark homemade shelter with what amounted to enough duct tape to span 2 football fields could do to unprotected body hair. No problem, more libations!

When everyone did awake, I told Beth that I had hidden some special Easter Eggs in the back yard and wanted to take her on a hunt. I provided her with a home made "Acme Easter Egg Finder", which among other things consisted of a portable tape player and headphones. On the tape, I had carefully timed and recorded the necessary beeps, which got louder and faster as I led her around in the backyard and then the tape beeps went steady as she placed the finder over the "special egg" I had hidden.

She reached down to pick up her egg and I turned briefly to start the show. Unfortunately, I didn't see the fact that she had taken the headphones off, so she missed the proposal I had taped. As she opened her egg, the ring dropped to the ground and she stood there confused, not having seen it happen. Just at that moment, I cut the rope, which kept a heavy weight aloft. Doing so, it opened the boxes and the balloons began their ascent. I then hit the switch igniting all of the rockets and fireworks that I had setup behind the fence.

She must have realized at this point that this wasn't an ordinary Easter egg hunt and that her find was no ordinary egg. I stooped down onto one knee, retrieved the ring and placed it on her finger. Her beautiful blue eyes got huge when she saw her misplaced prize. With her whole family plastered against the windows overlooking the scene, she hugged me and accepted my second, verbal proposal.

#43
MAKING GRUMPY HAPPY
Angie Anderson

Our story began with a "grumpy" guy getting set up with a divorced mother of two. A mutual friend had introduced us and after a few chance meetings, we ended up dating. It was easy to see that this man was not only a great person who treated me with respect, but also a man who was willing to accept my young sons as his own.

After several months of spending endless hours talking about our relationship and what the future held, I made a brazen decision to propose.

We both were working for local motor home manufacturer. Craig was working in Customer Service while I was employed by the parent company's subsidiary. The company newsletter was sent out bi-monthly to all employees. The Valentine issue of this paper was to include "Valentine Poems" submitted by employees. The winner would receive a gift package, which included dinner at a local restaurant.

Something told me that this was the right time to propose. Craig's nickname had been "Grumpy" since high school and everyone knew him by that name, so I thought I'd incorporate it into the poem. I submitted the following:

To Grumpy:

Ours may be a fairytale romance,
but I believe it was meant to be,
so someday in 1990,
will you marry me?

Love,

Snow White

My poem was read by a few thousand employees and one very surprised "Grumpy". He was greeted at the door by a co-worker that made him read it on the spot. After he got over the initial shock, he called my office to say "yes"!

Needless to say, the poem won the contest. The company newspaper was asked to print a response from him in the next publication. He was pleased to inform the editor that the answer had been "yes".

#44
SPECIAL PETALS
Brian Davis

Melody and I had been dating for 2 1/2 years, so to celebrate we went out to eat at an Italian restaurant. After eating, we walked around the Texas A&M University campus until we came to the MSC fountain, a secluded fountain that Melody and I had often spent nights together at.

My friend had placed all the items there earlier in the night, and had secretly safe guarded them until our arrival, then he was gone. We sat down on a blanket, and I set some roses next to her. I then handed her a gift, a crystal potpourri dish with a heart on the lid. I told her that ever since we started dating, she had always kept every rose and the fallen petals. This dish was for special petals. I then handed her the three roses, 2 white and one red.

I told her to gently place the petals of the first rose into the dish, and as she did, I told her, "This rose represents our relationship with God. God brought us together, and has always been first in our relationship. Inside this rose is a small vine cross, to represent our relationship with God." Inside the rose I had wired a small cross, unseen until the rose's petals were removed.

Two more surprises awaited in the roses. I gave her the second rose, and as she delicately removed the petals, I told her, "This rose represents our walk with Christ together in our relationship. We have always looked at our friendship in our relationship as walking with Christ down a beach, where our footprints are in the sand. In this rose is a small glass bottle of sand from Padre Island, from last Valentines Day."

Then I gave her the red rose, and as she removed the petals, I said, "This red rose represents my love for you and God's love for you. God's love is eternal, and mine is for our lifetime. Inside this rose (and I waited until the very last moment) is an engagement ring. Melody Miller, will you marry me?"

The way she was pulling the petals off from the back of the rose, Melody didn't see the ring until she had removed the last petal, and the ring was left at the end of the rose stem. This whole night she had thought I was just being romantically creative, and hadn't even suspected the ring! She first was shocked, then cried, and then finally said yes. We stayed there for about an hour cuddled up together sharing memories of our relationship, then went to share the night with her friends.

#45
LET IT SNOW
James Hudson

My girlfriend, being from Miami Florida, had never seen snow.
I hear about a company in Utah on NPR that would sell me a snowball.
They promised it would not arrive as ice. So I call them and had them send me one for delivery on Valentine's Day.

I put her engagement ring inside the snowball, which was inside a plastic ball. She was surprised and went crazy for the snowball but failed to notice the ring. While playing with it she licked it and got her tongue stuck to the snowball. Then in the process of removing her tongue with warm water, she noticed the ring. So on the floor of the bathroom in her apartment, I asked her to marry me. She said yes.

Then after a pause asked if she could go play with the Dry Ice the snowball came packed in. Which she had never seen either.

#46
GOT THE JOB
Tracey Moreno

I have known Steve since Jr. High but we did not start dating until we were 24. I decided to send him a resume of why he should continue to date me. I made it silly saying things like "I like to eat-You have money. I like to be seen with a handsome man and you are a handsome man, etc." I thought it would make him smile.

Since he was in Dallas and I was in Austin, we talked nightly but he never brought up the resume. At the end of the week, I received a very official letter from his office while I was at work. As I started reading it, I started shaking. I still have the letter framed in my room. It said:

Dear Tracey:

Thank you very much for sending your resume and sharing interest in job opportunities with me. At this time I would like to offer you full, permanent, and lifetime employment with me. You will start at a beginning salary of what I have is yours. The benefits consist of full lifetime commitment, everlasting love, and death do us part insurance benefits.

The career opportunities with Steven S. Moreno are limitless and hope you consider employment with me.

Waiting on your commitment.

Very Truly Yours,
Steven S. Moreno

I almost fell out of my chair. I married that sweet man within months and now after 15 years, I know that I truly am the luckiest person in the world.

#47

DO YOU KNOW YOUR ABC'S?

Michael Scott

For my proposal, I made 12 note cards called "The ABC's of Love". Each card was inscribed with a phrase about my love for my soon-to-be wife, each of the 12 phrases beginning with a successive letter of the alphabet (e.g., "I Accept you as you are", "I Believe you are valuable"). Each card also had a single, cryptic letter -- the letters were a scrambled "will u marry me".

Then I bought a dozen red roses, and paired each card with a rose, and left them at key spots where Julie would find them. The first I snuck into her car the night before, so she would find it as she left for work. The second was where she worked, and so on.

Several of the card/rose combos were left with clerks at certain mall stores. That evening, I took her to each store, bought her a little gift, and then the clerk would pull out the surprise. This continued on to dinner, where another surprise was waiting at our table when we arrived. Still another card arrived with the check.

By the time we finished dessert she had 11 cards. I had saved the final card ("I Join as one") for our stroll to a quaint gazebo in the park. I pulled out the final card, and the engagement ring, got down on one knee, and asked this beautiful woman to marry me.

#48

YOU HAVE THE RIGHT TO SAY "YES"

Desiree Harrington

We were driving from New Jersey to Wisconsin for Christmas. We were still in town and got pulled over. The cop proceeded to tell us we were in a stolen vehicle and for my husband to please step out of the car. He told me to put my hands up on the dashboard and keep them there. So I did.

He searched my boyfriend head to toe and puts him in the back of the police car. He comes for me now and yells at me a little and tells me to get out of the car and puts me in the back of the police car and handcuffs me to my John, my boyfriend. He asks if there is anything we want to tell him about before he searches the car. I jeered at John, because in my mind he was a thief.

The policeman searches the car and finds a box and comes back and says he thought there was nothing in the car to be found. Meanwhile I am literally on the verge of an anxiety attack because I am thinking this was a set up, he's not a real cop, we're going to jail on Christmas morning and never going to be able to get out, I want my mom, especially because I was in a weird state. I am from New Jersey, so you know I'm thinking crazy stuff.

I look at John like what is this, still not knowing or having any idea he is proposing. John looks at me and says nothing. In the midst of my panic attack, he opens the box and proposes. I think it took me five minutes to realize what was going on. The cop had to finally say, well? And that's when I answered yes. Before you knew people were taking pictures, his friends. Here they were in the truck behind the cop car watching the whole thing. It turned out the cop was one of his high school friends.

#49

MAY I HAVE YOUR HAND – AND FEET?

Mary Kathleen Lins

Our first date was at a small state park called Poe Valley. There we sat elevated by a dam at the edge of a lake, watching the full moon rise. It was wonderful!

Two years later, Benjamin brings me back to the lake. Its late August, the first Monday of my senior year at Penn State. He tells me that he found some great bike trails with his buddy (how romantic, right?) We sit down in the same spot where it all started.

I look to the end of the dam and notice two candles lit against the moonlight sky. Benjamin suggests we check it out. As we arrive at the end of the dam, I notice that there is a spillway where the water from the lake flows down a little path of cutaway rocks into a pool. Around this small stream and pool are hundreds of beautifully lit candles shaped in the form of a heart.

At the bottom of the pool under a willow lies a blanket. Two stones, a flat one lying across another created a seat for me. Roses and flower petals are everywhere. There is also a cloth and a basin of warm water there. As Benjamin slowly takes off my shoes and socks, he explains that he loves me with a true love, one that desires to serve and honor. And, as he uses the water in the basin to tenderly wash my feet, he asks me to spend the rest of my life loving him back as his wife. There we cry together and spend some time enjoying the moment.

Our dear friends come out of hiding to play/sing a love song on guitar. They also pray blessings on the coming marriage. We head back to town while they graciously clean up the scene of love. The romance hasn't stopped since the proposal. Something tells me that it never will!

#50
UNDER WRAPS
Michelle Yoder

My first job after college was at a hospital. My best friend also worked there, but on a different unit. One day they called me from her unit to assess a burn victim that had been transferred from another hospital. Upon entering the patient's room, I noticed a patient wrapped up with gauze over his head and one arm.

He was laying on his stomach with a hospital gown on. The board above his bed stated the patient's name, "Frank Edwards" and stated "patient can hear but cannot speak" (due to injury sustained from his burns). I carried out my duties as I typically would. After some difficulty removing the wrap from around his hand, I asked him to open his fisted hand so that I could take a look at the scarring and assess the need for a splint.

After a little hesitation on his part, his hand opened and he held a beautiful ring. Still set on finding his "burns", I had not caught on. I thought that perhaps due to the tragedy of the injury, his wife had given him her ring to hold for comfort, or something of that nature. I had seen similar things done with necklaces in the past. However, after I noticed his shoulders going up and down a bit (he was laughing at my reaction, or lack of), he sat up and unwrapped his head. It was only then, that I realized it was Matt Yoder, not Frank Edwards.

With tears in his eyes, he proposed sitting on the hospital bed, with a large group of people listening and anxiously awaiting outside of the room. And yes, it was a private room! I was glad that it wasn't videotaped, because I couldn't believe how naive I was and that I had been tricked!

#51
A FINE CATCH
Allyison Merritt

Tom's family was building a lakehouse on Lake Jocassee, which is 30 minutes away from where we were students at Clemson University. We had not been able to spend much time together because of schoolwork and activities, so Tom decided for us to get away for the afternoon and go check on the progress of the house (of course, there was an ulterior motive).

We stopped at a tackle/gas store and Tom ran back to the car with a bucket of crickets. He thought we might fish awhile off the dock to relax and talk. No problem. After checking out the house, we headed to the dock. I was not an expert in fishing, so it didn't take long to mess up my line and hook. Tom gave me his rod and I sat on the dock and threw it out. While Tom fixed my hook, he attached the diamond ring very tightly with the fishing line and proceeded to GENTLY lower it back in the water. I had no idea because I was concentrating on my own pole.

We switched back and Tom told me that it looked like something was nibbling on my line, so I needed to pull it up. Once I pulled it up, I said, "Look, Tom, I caught a screw!" For some reason, that is what it looked like. Tom fell on the dock and said, "Well, put that screw on your finger and marry me!" I dropped the pole on the dock and fell off the dock out of shock. It didn't take Tom long to realize that the ring needed to quickly get on my finger or that diamond could have been long gone!

#52
THE LOVE NOTE
Keila Hatley Finot

I spent months putting together a handmade book for my boyfriend. Inside of the book, I wrote little sayings that we had come up with over the six years we had been dating, funny and sad stories that we shared, and oh so many photos. The completed book was about 50 or so pages that reminded us of our love and how much fun we have together. On the last page of this beautiful book I asked\wrote him to marry me and tied his ring to the end of the book.

I waited for months for the perfect time to give him my gift. One day I came home and he was sitting outside in the grass and it just all came into place. I told him to stay there, I ran inside, grabbed a bottle of bubbly and the book and plopped down in the grass with him. We both laughed and cried through out the entire thing and then came the end of the book...I think he almost had a heart attack...His eyes swelled up and he said it was his dream come true.

#53
KISS MY BOO BOO
Mary Beth Hasselbrinck

After being married since April 18, 1964, I still laugh when I think of how my husband, Wayne, formally proposed to me and gave me my engagement ring.

We were in college and had already chosen the engagement ring, but I didn't know when I would receive it.

While we were on a date, Wayne was complaining about how his hand hurt from the injury he had gotten from playing around with pencils with a fraternity brother. He said his fraternity brother had stabbed him in the hand with the pencil. Wayne had a large band-aid over the area. Of course I sympathized with him.

After the date, we went to the local rest area to have some special time. While we were sitting there, Wayne was still complaining about his injury and wanted me to look at it. Of course I was squeamish and didn't really want to see it. So I very slowly started peeling back the bandage when I then saw the diamond engagement ring underneath. I laughed and thought it was great that he had thought of a unique way to give me the ring and ask me to marry him.

FAITH, HOPE CHESTS AND CHARITY
Mark Thomas Moorman

Missy never wanted to discuss marriage. So, one day I decided that it was time to plan a proposal. She was very fond of the Victorian period. Therefore, I began collecting the items necessary to make the proposal.

First, I found a picture of a Victorian engagement ring in the Smithsonian magazine. I took the picture to a local jeweler and had him make a similar one. The ring was a large garnet surrounded by pearls. The shaft of the ring was in a gold filigree pattern. Next, I purchased an old steamer trunk from a junk/antique store. I spent several days rebuilding and refinishing the trunk. I then purchased a silver heart shaped box to put the ring in. I placed the box with the ring in the trunk. I also placed an old doll, a bible, and other artifacts that would have been found in a young ladies trunk.

Finally, I covered the items with three handmade quilts. The top one was a double wedding ring quilt the second was a young girls bonnet quilt and the third was a young boys Stars and stripes quilt. These quilts were to represent my desire to marry and eventually have a family with her.

Earlier in the week, I invited my girlfriend over for a home cooked dinner. Her birthday is in December and she always complained about losing out to Christmas. So, I told her that we were going to celebrate her birthday in July. She laughed, but was excited about the idea of receiving a gift. She arrived and I had a candle light dinner prepared. The trunk was tucked away in a corner covered by a white tablecloth. After dinner, I directed her to the steamer trunk and told her that her present was under the tablecloth. She removed the cloth and was excited to see that I had bought her a steamer trunk. At first, she paused and I instructed her to open the trunk. She opened the trunk and began removing items. As she removed the third quilt and began looking at the other contents, she pulled out the silver heart shaped box.

As she held the box, I went to my knees and told her that I was presenting her with this "Hope Chest" as a memory of where she had come from and a hope of where we would be going together. The moment she opened the ring box, I asked her to be my wife. She began to cry. She did not say a word. It seemed as though an hour had passed when she looked up and through her tears, shook her head "Yes." There we sat hugging and kissing. Missy and I have been married for seven years and we now have a beautiful daughter named Emma who sleeps under a handmade bonnet quilt.

#55
RED HOT LOVE
Laurie Emerson

The year was 1970. It was a cold February Valentines Day evening where the stars themselves, so clear in clarity, looked like diamonds. I was 18 and a senior in high school and sitting next to me in the ski lift car was my very loved boyfriend of 21.

Although we were both of tender years we knew that what we had was something sweet and special and both thrilled as well as frightened of it. This night should have been the romantic night of our lives as we were young, healthy and so much in love. Unfortunately though the cloud of war hung over our heads as he had dropped out of college to enlist in the Air Force. I was proud of the fact that he really cared about serving his country, as my father was in the military at the time, but heartsick at the thought of him leaving me. On January 3 he was told he would be going to Vietnam and my heart sank. Since that day till this night we had talked about what we would do about us.

I had told him over and over that I would wait for him, but he told me that I was much too young to sit at home and worry about what could happen to him. It was the first thing I thought of in the morning and last thing at night. I desperately wanted him to realize that I knew he was the one I wanted to spend my life with and would wait forever if that is how long it would take. He still refused however to take me seriously and on this night, when the world below was so soft and at peace my heart was heavy with sorrow.

As we neared the end of the ride all at once several spotlights came on and the cars stopped. You could hear others on the ride murmuring, trying to figure out what had happened when all at once over the loud speaker a voice called "Laurie Young, please look down". In total confusion I looked down at the frozen snow and there in a thousand cinnamon hearts were spelled out the question "will you marry me?" My own heart stopped for a second and I looked over at this man I loved and adored and said yes. The other riders clapped and all of a sudden the world seemed like the most wonderful place to be!

He returned safely from Vietnam and we have five children, two daughters-in-law and one absolutely beautiful granddaughter, and each Valentines Day they all want to hear the story again of that magical night when two young people decided to take on the world.

#56
CRUISIN' FOR A PROPOSAL
Brook Bourgeois

On our first date, we were supposed to go ice skating on a local pond, when, one hour before she came over it was broadcast that someone fell through the ice leaving the pond off limits. As I didn't have much time left, I decided we could just watch a movie at my place instead. The movie choice was Top Gun. Through our relationship that was always "our movie."

When things got more serious and proposal was in question, I thought what better way than to incorporate "our movie." I rented out a local bar for the evening, and invited all of her and my closest friends. She was meeting me there at 7. I showed up at about 7:15 with all of my guy friends dressed as naval aviators, just as in the movie. My best man "Goose" started the routine, and we broke into a reenactment of "You've Lost that Lovin' Feeling." She was so surprised! I got on one knee in the bar, and proposed.

Needless to say, she said "YES!"

#57
APPOINTMENT FOR LIFE
John Dokler

The techniques learned in dental school for the fabrication of gold dental restorations are the same as those used for making cast gold jewelry. I had done a little jewelry making in school and decided to make my future wife's engagement ring.

After scrapping several ideas, I settled on a design I thought was elegant and unique and created it in wax, then cast it in gold, finished and polished it and had a jeweler mount the diamond for me. (Thought I better leave that to a professional!) The ring turned out very nice and was finished just in time for my girlfriend's dental appointment.

After children's dental appointments, I would let them pick a ring from a display box of toy rings I kept in the office. Well, I put the ring I had made in with the toy rings in the display box and after my girlfriend's appointment, got the box out and asked her if she would like to pick out a ring.

There was an agonizing pause and I began thinking maybe she didn't see it, or --gasp-- couldn't tell it apart from the 10 cent toy rings! But finally she looked at me with surprise and joy and mouthed those three letters I longed to hear.

#58
HOME RUN
Russ Phifer

In the mid 1970's, I acquired a home plate when my softball team disbanded. Since it was starting to show the scars of many a spike crossing its path, I retired it from active duty. It has continually graced the front of my house since then, wherever that might be, greeting my visitors courteously and without complaint. Like me, though, this plate has never stopped searching for a home, not a house... a place of permanence, not one of transition. A place of trust, of love, of commitment. For 24 years this plate and I have been seeking a home with a woman I could live with and love forever.

Exactly a year ago, I met the most wonderful woman on-line; we have a fantastic relationship, and she's gotten used to my quirky but romantic ways of expressing my love. For a present last Christmas, I wrote and produced a love song for her and recorded it on a compact disk. For Valentine's Day, I printed out copies of all the email letters I'd written her (over 200!) and had them bound into a book. So, I knew she would be expecting a romantic proposal when the time came.

I wrote my proposal on my home plate (after cleaning it up and repainting it) and gave it to her as a present (graced by a single white rose)... She was speechless (but said yes when she recovered!).

#59
HOMEROOM TO HONEYMOON
Karen Fioravanti

I have known Mark, my husband, since first grade. We met in the sandbox playing with Star Wars toys and Legos. In high school we finally confessed to each other that we were in love and started going out.

On our first anniversary of dating we agreed not to get each other expensive gifts, as we did not have the money. He bought me a box of pirate Legos. I was thrilled as I saw them as a reminder of our time in the sandbox, but Mark told me to look in the treasure chest. He had placed a beautiful heart pendent in the toy treasure chest and resealed the box.

Later, he gave me an emerald ring in the same manner, sealed in a box of Legos held by an octopus. We were got engaged, he surprised me by getting down on his knee holding a ring case with a Lego driver sitting there holding a beautiful platinum emerald ring. He said he had finally found his treasure. He had chosen emerald for an engagement ring instead of diamond, because an emerald stands for true, unending love and that is what he had to give to me.

#60
PLANTING OUR ROOTS
Tom Hicks

The farm was on the end of a dead end road. It was just 2.4 miles from the Hasty exit which is between Monticello and Clearwater on I94.

If you came to visit, the closer you got to the farm, the narrower and narrower the gravel road became. Then, just past my mailbox, you'd make a sharp right turn and come up the driveway. Along the length of that 300-foot driveway and for a full 25 feet wide was... the garden.

I bought this four acre farm in 1972. I was young, single, filled with ambition and idealism. I was bound and determined that I was going to live off that land for the rest of my life!

I raised all my own food. I had ducks, geese, chickens, steers, pigs and goats. I did all my own butchering and made my own butter, cottage cheese and yogurt. I grew my own wheat, ground my own flour and made my own bread. In short, I was remarkably self-sufficient! As well as very, very lonely.

I met Carol and she began to spend time with me at the farm. We were out next to the driveway, planting the garden. For some reason I was spontaneously inspired to dig a small hole right in the middle of the garden. This hole was about two feet in diameter and two feet deep.

I called Carol over and asked her to put her feet into the hole. She did it, although reluctantly. By this time my mind was starting to catch up to what my heart was up to. I too then jumped into the hole with both feet. We bumped and of course ended up falling on our behinds and laughing. I quickly started to scoop and pack the soil over our feet in the hole. I then came nose to nose with that beautiful woman and impulsively said, "Carol, let's plant our roots, get married and raise a family right here on the farm."

She looked me straight in the eye, and said, "I'd love to".

We stood up, (feet still held firmly in the packed soil) kissed and tightly held each until the sun made it too hot to stay.

So, that's how I proposed over 20 years ago, on that small farm between Monticello and Clearwater. If you came to visit you'd turn right, just past our mail box and come up the long driveway past rows of tomatoes, green beans, carrots, broccoli and potatoes. And for each of the years we lived there, if you looked right in the middle of the garden, you'd see a small patch of flowers about two feet in diameter, blossoming and blooming all summer long.

#61

HAVE WE MET HERE BEFORE?

Brian Naugle

I wanted to propose to my wife in a meaningful place so I chose the Church where we met. I arranged for the Church to be empty on our one-year dating anniversary. I picked her up for dinner (she thought we had reservations at our favorite restaurant) and mentioned we needed to stop by the Church and pick up a few things (I'm the youth minister at the Church).

When we walked into the Church, I had a small table set up with a white table cloth, two white roses, two white candles, and an easel with my leather bound journal on it. All the lights were off so the only light was the candlelight. I mentioned that this was the place where I first laid eyes on her - entering the doors of the Church.

I then led her to the back of the Church where I had a slightly larger table set up with a dozen white roses and six white candles on a purple tablecloth. Once again, the only light was from the candles. After mentioning that this was the exact spot where we first met. I then knelt on one knee and picked up one of the white roses which had the engagement ring embedded in the petals. As she began to cry, I said, "Christine I love you very much. Will you marry me?"

She said yes and we exchanged a kiss and a hug. Yes, she was crying - and so was I. At this point, I turned to a small room to our left and I told her that someone would be joining us on our date that night. This was our parents signal to walk out of the room (they were watching the whole thing but my wife couldn't see them) and all four of them gave Christine a rose. Her parents are from Hayden, ID and I flew them to Boise for the event - Christine had no idea they were there.

After hugging and exchanging congratulations, all six of us drove to Bogus Basin (a mountain ski resort 20 minutes away) and took a sleigh ride to a cabin in the mountains where we enjoyed a delicious steak and shrimp dinner.

#62
LUCKY BEAN
Richard Gobin

Ruth was living in Florida. I was living in California. We met while I was on travel for my company at 30,000' somewhere above Texas. We exchanged greetings, yet my heart felt a sweetness, a peace, an overflowing of "something" special. I told myself, "follow your heart Richard." I did and mustered up the courage to ask if I may call on her. She kindly said "yes."

Following months of E-messages, cards, phone calls and also my visits to Florida from California and her visiting California from Florida, I invited Ruth to spend a weekend California, along with the sounds of the shorebirds, an ocean view, a soft November breeze and dazzling sunsets. While I was visiting her in Florida, a few weeks before, we came across a small fist size dark pod, washed up on the beach, which Ruth told me was a bean sent adrift from a bean tree miles away in the Caribbean. I seized it and together we made a wish. Ruth had told me it is a "lucky" bean.

I kept that lucky bean and brought it back home to California. During the weekend which I invited Ruth to in Monterey, I snuck to the beach and tied a long string to the lucky bean. On the other end of the string I tied a heart-shaped tin of chocolate, inside I placed a poem I wrote which directed her to turn towards me as she finished her read. This tin, and 30 feet of string was buried in the sand. Only the bean was visible.

I carefully managed to convince Ruth to stroll along the beach (it was sunset). As we approached the "bean", I said, "look honey," and pointed to the bean in the sand. She was startled, and actually said, "Gee, that looks like a Florida bean. How in the world could one get this far?" She picked up the bean and noticed a string was tied around it. I remained cool and calm. She followed the buried string to its end, where it was attached to the tin. She opened the tin, read the poem. I was not cool and calm at this point. I was nervous and had tears in my eyes. My heart was racing.

Ruth read the poem and turned as I was kneeling in the sand with a diamond engagement ring snug in its velvet box. I simply asked, "Ruth, will you honor my heart and become my wife forever and a day." She knelt in front of me and said, "It is I who is honored. I will" We have our lucky bean, in full site, on our mantel.

#63
DIVING FOR DIAMONDS
John Moldt

I placed the ring in a treasure chest 10.2 nm off the coast of Florida in the Gulf of Mexico. I marked the small ledge/reef with fishing line and a soft drink can so the ring would be easily found, but only if you were looking for it.

My girlfriend met me at the dock at lunchtime. I took her to the spot so she could shoot some underwater photographs. I let her dive a little ahead along the ledge line. She found the chest and we brought it up, agreeing to split whatever treasure was inside.

But the small chest was sealed with an old rusty lock (you didn't think after all this planning and hard work I was going to make it easy). I suggested we wait until we get back to the dock and I would hacksaw the lock off. Her response was to grab my spear gun and beat the poor chest to death until it submitted (patience is not one of her virtues). She was scary. The final score was the girl got the ring and the chest got a burial at sea.

#64
AS SEEN ON TV
Doug Richardson

My girlfriend and I were watching television several months ago and saw a proposal that was on a hidden video. I saw a huge smile go on her face and I knew I had to propose with a hidden video.

I told her that I couldn't afford a ring this year and she fell for it. I am a deputy sheriff in my city and thought I could use the video from a patrol car.

On her birthday I had a city officer pull us over for a traffic violation. He got us out of the car and began speaking to her. I walked behind her and got the ring ready. The officer handed her a "consent to search form" which was really a poem I wrote for her.

She turned to me after she read the poem and there I was with the ring. After the shock of being stopped was over she accepted my proposal.

#65
FLYING HIGH
Rick Rodriguez

With the help of American Airlines Special Services Department at DFW airport, I arranged for roses to be delivered to the jet-bridge of my flight from New York to Dallas. I called the local newspaper, the Fort Worth Star-Telegram and told them what I was about to do and suggested that they might want to send a reporter to cover the story.

Before departing from New York, I was escorted into the cockpit by Special Services, New York and asked the captain to make an announcement once we were airborne to enlist the help of everyone on the plane with my proposal. He did so and with the help of the flight attendants, I circulated a picture of Karen among the passengers and asked that when each of them got off the plane to pick-up a rose, walk down the jet-bridge to Karen and say, "Rick will be right with you."

As the passengers walked off the plane, some of the men said, "Do you know how hard you're making it for the rest of us?" The women were saying, "If she doesn't marry you I will!" And the kids were all giving me high-fives. I was the last person off the plane and had a special, two dozen more roses. As I walked down the jet-bridge I could see all of the passengers waiting for what would happen next. None of them left!

There in the middle of everyone was Karen. She has a beautiful smile and right then it was incredible. My heart was racing and I really can't remember ever being so nervous. As I exited the jet-bridge I saw three times as many people as were on the plane standing around to see what all the commotion was about. I walked up to Karen, got down on my knee and said, "Karen, I love you with all my heart and I want you to spend the rest of your life with me. Will you marry me?" I then opened the box containing the ring I had specially made and presented it to her. To the sound of everyone cheering and applauding Karen said, "Yes."

I didn't know until it was over but there was a reporter there from the newspaper with a photographer. We were interviewed and the next day, on the front page of the paper there we were. One of the local radio stations called the next morning and spoke to Karen for ten minutes on the air. I remember them saying how pleasant it was to read something on the front page that was good for a change.

#66
THE LOVE BOAT
Jarilyn Jones

Trevor took me on a gondola ride in Newport Beach in California. It was just divine. In the gondola there were three red roses that signified how many years that we had been together. I saw a video camera inside the gondola and I said, " Why is there a video camera in the gondola?" Joey the gondolier driver said, " Well I am video taping couples, and whoever is the most romantic I will enter this video tape in a sweepstakes and if I win, I will win \$25,000."

Trevor and I smiled at one another and we began our journey. Once Trevor and I were seated, I saw bottled water, champagne, two glasses, candles, and two silver trays. Inside the domed trays were chicken, salad and pasta. There were also chocolates in a gold Godiva box. I was shocked and extremely appreciative.

As we began to sail, Trevor and I were talking about how beautiful the night was. The gondolier said, "When a man kisses a woman under a bridge something special happens." Someone lowered a basket from the bridge into the water. Inside was a wrapped box, which Trevor grabbed and handed to me. I excitedly opened it and found a beautiful purse and perfume. My night was complete. It had been so perfect.

Then I heard a gentleman on the bridge playing my favorite song on a saxophone. At this time the driver asked if we wouldn't mind picking a glass bottle that he saw in the water. He said it could damage someone's propeller. When I took it out I was just shocked to find that it had a message inside that he wrote. Trevor asked me to marry him but said that he couldn't afford to get the ring right now. It didn't matter. I was so excited (and hyperventilating).

A few minutes later towards the end of the ride a scuba diver comes out of the water with a green treasure box and inside was a beautiful platinum ring. The proposal couldn't have been more perfect.

#67
FLASHING LIGHT PROPOSAL
Robert Wyckoff

I am in my last year of school at the University of Texas and Danielle is in her last year at Southwest Texas State University about 30 miles away. She is a Criminal Justice major so I decided to try and propose in a way that would be memorable, sweet, romantic, and extremely unusual. I also figured if I could relate it to her future career field it would be great as well.

I called her up and told her I wanted to meet to go see a movie. What she didn't know is that I had no intention of going to a theater. Earlier in the week I had called the Police Department and set up my idea for my marriage proposal. I spend nearly two hours at the police station signing forms and getting things cleared through the Police Chief and Captain.

At 7:30pm we met and she got into my car. After a minute on the road there were flashing red and blue lights behind us. I immediately grumbled at the thought of being pulled over and she was worried we would be late for the movie. I stopped and when the officer approached the window she said I had a taillight out and asked to see my license and insurance. I handed them to her and waited for her return.

Upon returning she told me that I had a warrant out for my arrest for an unpaid ticket and was driving on a suspended license (of course I really didn't.) She told me that she was going to have to take me to jail and for both of us to get out of the car. We walked around to the back of the vehicle and she told my girlfriend to turn around. Danielle was so scared that she thought she was going to get frisked. The officer calmed her and said I was the one going to jail and explained the situation.

I immediately asked the officer if I could just pay the fine right there and she said no but that if I had a family member with me I could be released to them. I then told the officer that Danielle was practically family and she said that girlfriends don't count. I then said, "well what if I ask her to marry me?" The officer then asked me if I was serious and I said, "of course I am!" The police officer then pulled the engagement ring out of her gun belt which I had given to her a couple hours beforehand and said well go ahead and do it then. I then proceeded to get down on one knee and tell Danielle how much she meant to me and asked her to marry me.

At this point Danielle was so scarred and worked up by the whole fake arrest and police stop that she didn't even realize that it had all been set up. She began crying and smiling and jumping up and down for joy and in the middle of her reaction she hugged me tight and said "so your really not going to jail sweetie?" I said no and then my friends hopped out from behind the bushes where they had been videotaping the entire event.

There were also about 4 or 5 police cars that had been parked across the street in an empty parking lot that had watched the entire scene. After she said yes they broadcast it over the police radios and they came over to congratulate us. There was also a female police radio dispatcher who came along in the police

car just so she could watch the event unfold. All the people I met at the station wanted to come and watch but she got to the car first.

It wasn't the most romantic spot to propose and I didn't have candlelight and soft music but hey we did have police lights and sirens.

#68
AMRRY EM
Ron Nelson

I've always admired the bravado of proposals etched hundreds of feet tall by a skywriter or emblazoned on a diamond-vision scoreboard at Yankee Stadium. But when it came time to devise my own proposal strategy, I realized my heart lies not with the sensational but the subtle.

I decided that my future bride, Teresa, wouldn't have to look skyward or beyond the center field bleachers to learn that I wanted her to share her life with mine. She'd have to glance no further than the Scrabble board at our fingertips.

The setting was the snow-capped mountains towering above Squaw Valley near Lake Tahoe in California. First, we rode a cable car to the summit and hiked the trails as we drank in breathtaking views of the lake. Then I suggested we take a break in a beautiful lodge set atop a cliffside and play our favorite board game.

As Scrabble players, we're very evenly matched - but on this occasion every move I made was gold. I beat her by 150 points. Just what I needed - a confidence booster. Instead of putting the tiles back in the box, I then began to rearrange them on the board. As I'd hoped, she was too enraptured with the view of Squaw Valley below to notice what I was doing.

Finally, I turned the board around to reveal my handiwork. What the tiles spelled out wasn't exactly poetry, but it was simple and from the heart: "I love you, Teresa. Will you marry me?" (Actually, the "y" in the second "you" was a blank tile; I needed three "y's," and as all Scrabble fanatics would know, every set includes only two.)

When she looked up at me, speechless and smiling, I showed her the ring. And for the past seven years, she has shown me how truly rich and loving life can be.

On the other hand, I don't think I've beaten her at Scrabble once since then.

#69

A LITTLE HELP FROM MY FRIENDS

Eric Van Dorin

We both work with a high school youth group and we had a large conference over Christmas break. She and I arrived together to the hotel. While she was in the restroom I went upstairs and changed into a tux. I had three of the students hold signs on the first level balcony, which overlooks the lobby. I had another youth worker direct her towards the signs. They said SARAH , WILL YOU , MARRY....then I rode down the escalator with the ME sign, and the ring in my hand.

There were about 200 people in the lobby. She was so excited and surprised that she just collapsed as she saw me on the escalator. She said yes, and we hugged, I, with my hand shaking, put the ring on her finger, and all the people cheered. Her parents and mine were there and they came down the escalator and hugged us. It was exactly what she wanted, and had hoped for. Then that night at the conference they showed the video footage to all 2000 attendants.

#70
IF THE SHOE FITS
David L.Baldwin

After much thought, I decided to take Lisa to the Atlanta Ballet's production of Cinderella at the Fox Theatre in Atlanta, Georgia. I made arrangements to propose on stage before the show in front of the entire audience of 3000 people. I called the Atlanta Ballet and spoke with Ken Anderson. I explained that I wanted to propose on stage before the show. He got approval from his boss, and called me the next day to say my request had been approved.

We arrived at the theatre and almost sat down when I told Lisa I had a surprise for her. I told her one of my college friends, Ken Anderson, worked for the Atlanta Ballet and he was going to give us a back stage tour. Ken and I had actually never met or even seen each other. When I saw Ken, we acted as if we had known each other forever. He took us back stage and introduced us to the dancers.

While someone distracted Lisa, Ken took the ring from me and gave it to someone to place in the glass slipper to present to Lisa on stage. After several minutes, Lisa began to ask if we should take our seats, but I told her we still had a few minutes. Then, before I knew it, an announcement came from the stage that said "We have two special guests in the house tonight, David and Lisa from Marietta and David has something he would like to share with all of us tonight".

I was so excited; I rushed through the red curtain onto the stage while stagehands had to push Lisa through the curtain. She couldn't believe what was happening. I grabbed the microphone and as I knelt to one knee, I said, "Who says fairy tales don't come true? Lisa is the love of my life and I want to ask her to marry me". The ring was then brought out in Cinderella's glass slipper on a red pillow. As I was trying to get the ring on Lisa's finger, I grabbed the microphone again and said, "I hope the shoe fits". The audience laughed.

I slipped the ring on Lisa's finger and she made me the happiest man in the world when she said YES. The audience applauded and I really felt like Prince Charming who had found Cinderella. We embraced and kissed, then walked on air back to our seats to enjoy the ballet. During intermission, we were congratulated by hundreds of people. The women asked Lisa if I had a brother and the men said I just got them in big trouble.

#71

DECORATE MY LIFE

Kimberly Proto

Danny had always told me that he would not propose around the holidays, so when my father asked me if I thought I was getting a ring for Christmas I said no. When Danny heard this he knew immediately that then was the perfect time to get the ring because I had no idea.

The week before he gave it to me he called both of my parents and told them that he had bought it. We live in different states so he invited my mother and me to his house for the day to decorate his family's Christmas tree. He has a big Italian family so when there were 11 people there, the fire was lit, and Christmas music was playing I thought nothing of it. They told me the tradition was that each person puts one ornament on the tree, and then they all help to decorate it together.

So Danny and his siblings put their ornaments on the tree, and he then got on his knee and said it was my turn. He opened a box with a clear ball ornament that with "will you marry me" on it, and the ring was inside. To make the event even more personal the ornament had a Yankees sign on the other side of it, because my fiancé is a die-hard Yankees fan.

#72
FORECASTING A BRIDAL SHOWER
Ryan Weagle

My older brother was a meteorologist on a local television station at the time of the proposal. My girlfriend was from a small town (the kind where everybody knows everybody else), and her family was all down to visit her for Christmas in the city where we lived.

I informed the family that my brother would be sending out a "Merry Christmas" to their family on Christmas Eve in order to ensure that everyone's attention was focused on the television. I arranged for my brother to congratulate my girlfriend and me on our engagement. When he said it, her whole family was a bit confused at first, then I hauled out the ring from my pocket, got on one knee and proposed to her.

She said "Yes".

ONE DAY, HER (DIME STORE) PRINCE DID COME...

Rusty Fischer

My girlfriend, Martha, worked on a cruise ship before becoming an elementary school teacher. She often told me about the lonely nights at sea when the poolside steel drum band would play a calypso version of "Someday My Prince Will Come," just to remind her that things would one day get better.

When it came time to propose, Martha's principal gave me permission to sneak into her room during the last half-hour of the day and propose in front of her class. As I was working at a junior high school right up the street at the time, I next asked my own principal if I could skip that week's faculty meeting for "personal reasons." By the time I had changed from my shirt and tie into my complete princely regalia, right down to baggy green leggings, purple satin slippers, a bright red Dracula cape and a jeweled plastic crown, she had reconvened the faculty meeting: It was now being held in the parking lot—right beside my car!

I hastily sped away from the other teacher's good-natured jeers and drove up the street to my wife's school. The buses were already there, and of course the concerned bus drivers wondered why a tight-wearing, crown-capped, cape-flowing young man with a goatee was sneaking up to one of the portables carrying a gray felt ring box.

I wasn't the only one sneaking that day, however. Just as my principal had "leaked" news of my proposal, so had Martha's. Middle aged heads, apple sweaters and numerous pairs of beaded eyeglasses poked out from behind the trees dotting my girlfriend's elementary school lawn.

Their twitters nearly drowned out the sounds of my approach at the back of my girlfriend's portable classroom. In fact, I had to knock three times just to get her attention! When I did, I almost died from embarrassment at her hilarious outburst at the sight of one unexpected dime store prince at the back door.

Somehow Martha regained her composure and allowed me into her classroom. 30 very confused, excited and nervous 4th graders crowded around us as I bent on one knee in front of the chalkboard and proposed to my girlfriend of almost exactly one year. Meanwhile, her nervousness and shock before answering allowed plenty of time for the school librarian to enter the room with a video camera to record the entire scene for posterity. Not to mention the next day's televised morning announcements!

"Miss Richard," I croaked, forgetting the stately, prince-worthy speech I'd spent the entire night before composing, "Will you...marry me?"

"Yes," she finally gasped. "But—why did you come on the day when I'm wearing a FAT outfit?"

Laughter and celebration ruled the day, and a few confused children leapt outside the door just as the final bell rang and announced to the entire school, "Miss Richard just got married!"

And, eight months later, she did.

#74
A KNIGHT TO REMEMBER
Rene' Curlee

I am a 43 year old, extremely happily married woman. Never thought I'd be able to say that. I was divorced and the mother of two. I met Scott and knew right away I had found a man after my own heart. He was a terrific romantic, just like me.

After dating for a little more than a year he had his brother pick me up and not let on where we were heading. We went to a local mountain park, a place we had picnicked many times. His brother had a boom box. I was totally surprised when after a bit his brother hit the play button and I heard "our song" (which was "Everything I do" by Bryan Adams) and saw someone riding up to me on horseback in full armor!

He got down from the horse...handed me a long stemmed red rose and recited some beautiful words he had memorized. He then asked me to be his wife! I, of course, said yes, as his family watched from the woods! We were married at that same mountain six months later

#75
A TEACHABLE MOMENT
Ray Horton

MaLisa, and I are both teachers. Where better for my proposal story to take place than in the classroom?

I had made a date to meet MaLisa at her school for lunch. I arrived a few minutes before the lunch break with a paper sack. I sat off to the side as she finished her morning lesson.

I arrived and MaLisa knew something was up. So did the fifty or so 11 and 12 year-old students. I told MaLisa I had something in the bag for her. She anxiously opened the bag to find a small, but not ring-size, box. "Go ahead, open it," I prodded. The stuffing filled box had a love note on a small piece of paper on top with a piece of string attached, leading to another note with string attached, leading to another piece of paper taped to the bottom of the box. This last piece of paper, however, was not a note but a claim ticket from a jewelry store.

By this time MaLisa was getting very nervous and her students very anxious, anticipating a ring. When MaLisa said, "That's all." One student actually grabbed the box and turned it upside-down looking for something else. After a very long pregnant pause, I approached my soon-to-be fiancé and said, "Let me tell you what the receipt is for...it's for this." I then pulled the ring out and asked MaLisa to marry me. She cried, "Yes;" and we hugged.

I placed the ring on her left ring finger; and her students cheered!

#76

READ ALL ABOUT IT

Bryan Strickland

I'm a sportswriter for the Herald-Sun newspaper in Durham, N.C. I had easily convinced my boss to allow me to propose to Leigh through the newspaper. After setting up a graphic that included a picture of both Leigh and me, and after carefully choosing my words, I declared the page ready for the printing press.

There was, to say the least, no turning back now.

The next morning I was at her place and Leigh went through her morning routine, grabbing the newspaper from outside her front door. Leigh isn't much of a sports fan, but does make an effort to read my articles.

Needless to say, Leigh had never enjoyed the sports page as much as she did that day.

At first she didn't spot the proposal, even though it was across the top of the page and had her picture on it. Then, all of a sudden, Leigh's eyes fell upon it: "Herald-Sun preps editor Bryan Strickland asks Leigh Charles to be his teammate in marriage."

Leigh didn't know quite what to do. She stared blankly at me, asking for answers. Was this for real? Did every newspaper in Durham contain the proposal?

Yes, it was for real. And yes, it was there for the reading for more than 50,000 Herald-Sun subscribers.

Just how shocked was Leigh? When I handed her the engagement ring, a ring she had waited for oh-so patiently, Leigh took the ring box, placed it on the coffee table, and went back to staring at the newspaper. Leigh also seemed oblivious to the fact that as I knelt in front of her, I had the world's largest bow hanging from my head. Whenever I had asked Leigh what she wanted for her birthday, she always responded without hesitation: "All I want is you wrapped up in a big, red bow."

Ten days after blowing out her birthday candles and making that very wish, it finally came true. Leigh eventually did try on the engagement ring and eventually did accept my marriage proposal.

That, I believe, is what they call "power of the press."

#77
KISS THE FROG
John Miles

Tracie and I were vacationing in Steamboat Springs, Colorado with some friends. While Steamboat is known for its incredible ski slopes, it also has magnificent natural hot springs where people go to relax and soak after a hard day of skiing.

One afternoon our group went to Strawberry Park Hot Springs for a well-deserved soak. While our friends were setting the stage, I managed to distract Tracie in a separate pool. We soon joined the others, and Tracie spotted a yellow rubber duck floating toward her. (Unknown to her, the duck was tied on a fishing line that was being pulled toward us by a friend.) Her instant response was, "Hey, someone brought a rubber duckie!" She then realized the duck had her name on it. She said with excitement, "That's my duck! It's got my name on it!"

Following closely behind was a second rubber duck that read 'I LOVE YOU'. Tracie looked puzzled at this point and began squirting me playfully with water from the first duck.

Finally, a frog came floating along following the ducks. Tracie picked it up and glanced at me as if to say ... What's going on? She seemed to hold it forever! I waited as long as I could and said, "Read the frog!" She flipped the frog over and read my proposal on its belly - 'PLEASE MARRY ME - JOHN'. Attached to the frog was the temporary engagement ring, a \$10 cubic zirconium. The real ring was safely home where it wouldn't be lost in the springs.

With all of our friends and their families looking on, she began to cry and managed to squeak out a "YES" between snubs. For the rest of our hot springs soak, the other vacationers congratulated us. The people who worked at the hot springs said this had been a first!

#78

TENNIS PARTNERS FOR LIFE

Ryan Young

I met my sweetheart at a local tennis court. Strangely neither of us is an avid tennis player. We were both there with friends and partnered up for doubles. We have been together ever since. Very much a case of "right place, right time."

Three years later, I invited her to play a little tennis to commemorate the occasion. Imagine her surprise when four consecutive balls were "dead." Each one contained a cloth bookmark on which I had painstakingly cross-stitched a single word: "WILL" "YOU" "MARRY" "ME?". Dangling from the final bookmark was a perfectly sized engagement ring.

#79
YOU LIGHT UP MY LIFE
Murray Reimer

My parents have a small fiberglass boat that we often use on the rivers in our city. I took my girlfriend of approximately one year out for dinner one evening with the boat to a place called "The Forks", which is a famous intersection of two rivers in our city. The Forks has a bunch of restaurants and shops with boat docks along the river. We chose to eat dinner on the outdoor patio of one of the restaurants.

After we had dinner we went for a walk along the river walkway before getting back in the boat and heading home. As we were cruising down the river, in the dark, I told my Wendy, that I had just bought a new spotlight for emergencies, etc., for the boat. I pulled it out and plugged it in to the cigarette lighter, that I had installed only a couple of days earlier for this event.

I shone the one million candle power light on the bank of the river to show her how bright it was and then I swung the light onto a bridge we were coming up to. The light illuminated a 30 foot long sign that I had made up that said, "Marry me Wendy", that friends of mine had tied to the bridge. When we drove the boat under the bridge, my friends lowered a basket of sparkling grape juice and wine glasses into the boat with a rope.

I started flashing the lights on the boat to signal a local fireworks company to light off fireworks from the bank, that I had previously arranged. Then I dropped anchor, plugged in a radio with pre-recorded romantic music playing on a tape, gave her the ring and formally asked her to marry me. She said yes, obviously. We drank the grape juice and smooched for a while under the moonlit star filled sky before we pulled anchor and headed back to the dock where the car was parked.... Perfect!

#80
UNDER MY SPELL
Fred Leonard

I can honestly say that ever since the first time that I saw Esther I knew she was something special. Therefore when the time came to propose to her I wanted her to experience the depths of my love and commitment to her through my words and actions. It was a beautiful sunny day and we planned to go to Stanley Park and walk around the sea wall and watch the sun set.

We parked at Third Beach and as we walked down to the beach to watch the sun set I brought two duffle bags out of the car. As Esther watched I laid out a blanket, covered it with a white tablecloth and spread out place mats, fine china, crystal goblets, napkins, candles, flowers, etc.

With Zamfir playing on the tape recorder we feasted on the food I had prepared that afternoon, stuffed cornish game hen, spinach salad, mixed vegetables and rice pilaf. As the sun was dipping into the ocean I brought out dessert. It was cookie letters that I had baked that afternoon. They were all mixed up and Esther had to unscramble them. It took her about 10 minutes but finally she had spelled out, "Esther I love you". I then gave her the next set of letters. I knew that if it spelt, "Will you marry me" that might be too easy. Thus, they spelt, "Will you be my wife".

About 15 minutes later she had figured it out. She was speechless. Before she answered we again talked about our life goals and I reminded Esther that I was heading to be a pastor or missionary and that she would be joining me in that. She said a big yes and I was full of joy. I gave her 12 long stem red roses and we prayed and committed our marriage to God.

The next day Esther showed up at my house with a three large baked cake letters, Y.E.S. We ate the cake but we still have the cookie letters.

#81
PAINT YOUR OWN PROPOSAL
Stephanie Banks

On Valentine's Day my boyfriend, Tom Pugh, sent long stem red roses to my office (I was to think they were my gift) and reservations at Ruth Chris Steak House.

Our dinner was delicious but very filling. We had a cocktail, an appetizer, and entree with side dish and wine with our entree. I was so full I had planned to pass on dessert but our server let us know that they were having a special for Valentine's Day and that we would be receiving complimentary champagne and cheesecake.

When dessert arrived fresh strawberries, raspberries and blackberries accompanied the cheesecake. The plates were pink and white with hearts painted on the rim and I thought how charming for Valentine's Day. I could not fathom how I was going to eat this slice of cake, so instead I took a small bite and then picked out my favorite berries and placed my fork down to indicate that I was done.

Tom thought for some reason that I should have his berries, so he put them on my plate pushing against my piece of cake. I ate them but said I could do no more. He insisted I have all of his berries and again dropped them on my plate brushing against my slice of cake.

This time when I picked up a berry I noticed that the plate had a portion of my name written on it "anie". When I moved the cheesecake to the side of the plate I read the words "Marry me Stephanie". It didn't register right away but the second I moved that cake flashbulbs started to go off and there was a very white, bright light shining in my face and when I turned to ask Tom what was going on he was on bended knee with a ring in his hand and then the impact of it all hit me.

I was completely taken by surprise and totally swept off my feet by the romance of it. Tom's plate read "I love you always and forever". Of course I said yes and those plates a now hang in our home.

The plates were made at a paint-your-own pottery store and photographers were there so we always have the pictures for our memories. The proposal aired that evening on our channel 9 news.

#82
LOOKING FOR A HEART
Stephanie Hofmann

It was Halloween night and knowing that Halloween was my very favorite holiday, Mark had encouraged me to dress in costume, and go to his Mother's house to pass out trick-or-treat candy. Little did I know that the stage was set as I arrived. Mark wasn't home, and had supposedly gotten called to his Grandparent's house for a plumbing emergency. After awhile, Mark's Uncle stopped by with his son, complete with costume, so of course, all the cameras came out in addition to the camcorder. After everyone had taken a few pictures, the doorbell rang.

As I approached my first customer, I saw an amazing costume outside the door. It was The Tin Man. He was dressed from head to toe, complete with a mask and an oil can. It was fabulous! I opened the door, threw him some candy, and told him how much I admired his costume. There was no response from the Tin Man, so I assumed he or she was shy. As I started to close the door, Mark's mother invited the Tin Man in so she could photograph his costume.

"What a great costume!" she marveled. Well, this made me a little nervous. First of all, he was large for the average trick-or-treater, and a little too quiet. Until he spoke. He said "I've got a treat for you, too." The Tin Man reached into his trick-or-treat knapsack and pulled out a little silver gift bag with little red hearts all over it. I was confused and frozen (mostly out of fear) until he said, "I'm looking for a heart. Can you help me?" With that, the Tin Man swooped onto one knee, as I finally realized who the familiar voice belonged to... and it said, "Will you marry me?"

#83
TAKING THE PLUNGE
Brian Schloff

Debbie's birthday was last August and I surprised her with a trip to the airport. She opened some gifts along the way to keep her busy because she didn't know where we were going. When we arrived she realized I was taking her skydiving!

We took the class in the morning and were jumping out of a tiny 4 person capacity plane by shortly after noon. The planes were so small that we had to take separate planes up to the 10,000 ft height. Mine went first, hers followed with a cameraman on board to capture the whole flight and dive. Debbie was interviewed in the plane and the cameraman jumped with her to record the fall.

Meanwhile, I had just landed after having the time of my life (if you haven't skydived, I highly recommend it), and the cameraman landed before Debbie because he dropped a couple thousand feet after Debbie's parachute opened before opening his own. I was interviewed on the video while I prepared to propose.

The upcoming proposal had buzzed through the entire hangar that day and as I waited anxiously. Finally, Debbie landed and I greeted her with a hug as the camera rolled and a crowd had gathered. I asked her if she had a good time. She said, "That was the best!" I said, "Do you want to take another dive?" Half kidding, she replied, "Yeah, let's go again!" I bent to one knee and brought forward an engagement ring and asked, "Let's take this one together. Will you marry me?" She cried immediately and I waited nervously on my knees and said "Is that a yes?"

"Yes! Yes!", she cried. I slipped the ring on her finger and with a kiss and a hug, as they announced our engagement over the hangar loudspeakers

#84
SOUNDS LIKE "SCARY FLEA"
Angela Mills

Chad and I love to play the game Guesstures with our church so it did not surprise me when he wanted to buy the game for us to have. My Mom's birthday was coming up and he decided to bring the game to my Aunt's house (where we were celebrating her birthday). This was kind of a weird situation because my family does not play games like this very much and we never bring the video camera out because my Mom really does not know how to use it that well.

Chad and I were on opposite teams and we finally got everybody rounded up to play Guesstures (a form of charades). We played a couple of rounds and it came to his second turn. His card was rigged and said "Marriage" on one end and "Proposal" on the other. He was supposed to act out Proposal. When it came time for him to act it out he got down on one knee in front of me started acting like he was going to propose to me. Mine and his whole family was saying "beg, plead, knighthood" and finally they screamed "PROPOSE"! Then he told me all the sweet stuff and that he loved me and asked me to marry him. I said yes...the rest is history.

MIDSUMMER NIGHT DREAM COME TRUE

Maggie LaBranche

On a midsummer day, two years ago, my boyfriend took me to see the Stratford, Ontario production of my favorite Shakespeare play, "A Midsummer Night's Dream" to celebrate the anniversary of our first date. After a wonderful afternoon in Stratford we headed to the theatre and took our seats. I was pleasantly surprised to find our seats were the best in the house! "How did Pete manage to get these great seats?" I thought.

The production was amazing, and I watched in awe as the actors performed brilliantly. As Pete and I sat side by side, I was mesmerized by the play. Unknown to me at the time - he was sitting in nervous anticipation. About 30 minutes before the play ended I noticed that Pete's leg was shaking beside me. I asked him if he needed to use the bathroom. He said he did, but that he would wait.

Twenty-five minutes later he leaned over to me and said, "Can't hold it anymore, I'm going to the bathroom," and off he dashed before I could stop him. I was a bit confused by his sudden departure, since the play was reaching its final scene! Could he not wait five more minutes and see the ending? I was so consumed in the play however, that my attention quickly returned to the actors on stage, and I watched intently until the play's completion.

As the audience began applauding at the end of the last scene, one of the main characters (Puck) stepped forward and quieted the crowd. "Before we go into the night, young cupid has one more delight. A couple who first courted have come to Stratford every year... to the book of love we add a page in calling Maggie LaBranche to the stage." And, with that I was summoned up onto the stage! (Now, the only reason I remember the details from here on in is because the theatre company kindly videotaped the following.)

As I was guided to the stage by two fairies from the play, there was Pete walking out onto the stage. Had he taken a wrong turn out of the bathroom? No. To my utter surprise, Pete took center stage, turned to the audience and declared "Before this summer's night draws to a close, allow me one brief moment to propose." (At this point I was having an out-of-body experience... thank goodness for the videotape!) Pete then turned to me. The spotlight followed him as he got down on his knee and finished his rhyme with words that I will never forget: "Maggie, you would bring completeness to my life if you would take this ring and be my wife." My next memory is of my hand, shaking madly in the spotlight for poor Pete to delicately decorate with a beautiful ring! Unable to speak, I sealed the moment with a kiss in front of over one thousand open-mouthed strangers who were now clapping in delight. It was a Midsummer Night's Dream come true.

#86
BE MINE FORE-EVER
Kara Breunle

On our seven-year anniversary, David and I made plans to go golfing at a nine-hole course we really love to play. By the time we got there, it had turned cold and rainy. I didn't even want to get out of the car but David insisted. We teed off and walked down to the first hole to putt. When I got up to the hole, there was a red rose next to the hole and a golf ball with the letter "I" written on it. The second hole also had a rose next to it and a ball with the letter "L" on it. It goes on like this up to the eighth hole. After collecting all the roses and balls spelling "I Love You", we said our anniversary greetings to each other. David made it seem like it was all over, but the best part was about to come!

We were wet and cold by this time but we moved on to the ninth and final hole, teed off and walked up to putt in. There were roses all over the place. David suggested that we putt in together, at the same time. When we went to putt, he threw a ball down in front of me with the words "will you marry me" written on it. I was so shocked that I just hit it in the hole. David kneeled down to pick the ball up and stayed down on one knee. He asked, "didn't you see what it said?" I was so excited and speechless that I couldn't respond.

He asked me to marry him and opened the golf ball then placed the most beautiful ring on my finger. Of course I said "yes!" and we were both on our knees hugging and crying. He started to wave to someone behind me and it was his sister who was placing the roses and balls at each hole way ahead of us while filming the whole thing. When we went back to the car there was champagne set up for us to celebrate and a phone to call our parents! It was so exciting!

The best part about it was that I had thought David had gone to Minnesota to see a game with a friend of his about a week before. This is pretty common because David works for an airline and is always taking short trips places. But not this time. He actually flew out to Colorado to speak with my parents and ask my dad for permission to marry me.

ONE GOOD CEREMONY DESERVES ANOTHER
Steven Ambriz

Since Bridget has access to my email, I had to open a "secret" email address to explain to family and friends, my engagement strategy. I also asked my friend Diane, who is the Secretary to the City Council, to help me orchestrate my proposal.

I had Bridget believing that I was nominated for the "Outstanding Citizen" Award, but in reality there is no such thing. I repeatedly stated that I didn't deserve the award, but we agreed that if I were selected, I would accept it on behalf of my father, a cancer survivor.

Upon my request, Diane sent a "confidential" email to Bridget requesting information about me, personally and professionally and Bridget excitedly responded. Bridget was writing what she thought was going to be the speech that would be used during the "award" ceremony. I will never forget the day when Diane shared with me what Bridget wrote, as I was completely overwhelmed with emotion and Diane confidently stated "Bridget truly adores you."

Bridget began telling everyone about the "award" and asked that they be present at the opening ceremonies of the Orange International Street Fair where the presentation was to take place. However, our family and friends, well those who could keep a secret, knew the real "plan." Without my knowledge, Bridget worked diligently preparing my acceptance speech, as she watches out for me and sees to it that I am always prepared.

Arriving at the opening ceremonies, we saw family and friends and I asked Bridget, "what are they all doing here?" and she just smiled. She was a little surprised to see a number of friends there, who she did not contact about the "award." When the opening ceremonies of the Orange International Street Fair began, the Mayor started by introducing the dignitaries. After the introductions, Diane presented the Mayor with an envelope and the Mayor began to read this "love letter" and asked me to come up.

Once on stage, in front of thousands of people, I informed everyone how I met someone very special at the Street Fair the previous year and I asked Bridget to join me on stage. Bridget crying uncontrollably was escorted up and I took her hand and asked the crowd of family, friends and "new" friends to say "helloooooo Bridget" and they responded. A friend then presented an emotional Bridget with balloons, a bottle of wine and a dozen red roses.

After saying a few words, I got down on one knee and asked Bridget to marry me and become my wife. Shaking and trembling, Bridget nodded yes, "grabbed the ring" and the crowd erupted with cheers. I then kissed, hugged and held my one and only true love.

#88
ONE FINAL QUESTION
Ray Lozano

When you are a teacher, it takes a lot to surprise you. We all know that “kids say the darndest things” and every day brings a new surprise, so I needed to make sure that my clever girlfriend was caught totally off guard when I proposed to her. I’d like to think I gave her a proposal she’ll always remember.

At the time this plan was put into action, I was an administrator at the local junior high school. My girlfriend, Kristin, was a 2nd grade teacher at a local elementary school. It was a Friday afternoon, and Kristin’s entire school was holding a rally inside the cafeteria. I had prearranged with the school principal to have his teachers involved in a school version of the TV Show “Jeopardy.” Kristin had no idea that she would just happen to be the final contestant left on the stage, and she had no idea what was really about to unfold.

Kristin was told by her principal to stand alone at center stage, and prepare to see if she alone could answer the Final Jeopardy Question. The principal gets the students quiet, and announces, “Miss Wells, to win the game today, and all the prizes that go along with it, your Final Jeopardy question is...”

At that moment, I went into action. Holding a wireless microphone, and still hidden at the very back of the cafeteria in the teacher’s lounge, I turn on my mike. I say, “Hey, I’ve got a question.” Students look around, not sure who said that. Kristin, not quite sure what was happening, looks shocked that she heard a voice that kind of sounded like me. But she still had no idea what was really happening.

I then made my entrance into the crowded cafeteria. Wearing a tuxedo, holding a dozen wrapped roses, and accompanied by two violinists from my school, I made my way through the sitting students. As Kristin saw me, she started to cry. She figured out what was about to happen. With the violinists playing beautiful music, the children not quite sure what was going on, and Kristin’s cheerleaders screaming in excitement (Kristin was their coach), I made it to the stage.

Walking over to Kristin, flanked by my violinists, I took a knee in front of her. I handed her the flowers, and asked my Final Jeopardy question. “Kristin, I love you more than words can say. Will you marry me?” I handed Kristin the ring, and she (thank goodness) said “yes.” Kristin and I embraced, and the principal asked the student body, “What do you think, boys and girls, should Miss Wells marry Mr. Lozano?” The cafeteria thunderously screamed their approval. I said, “Thanks, boys and girls. I promise to take good care of Miss Wells!”

I had arranged to get class coverage for Kristin, and took her immediately to our limousine waiting for us outside. I whisked Kristin away, cracked open a bottle of champagne, and we’ve been smiling ever since!

#89
READ IT AND WEEP
Amy Whitlow

It was Thanksgiving and all of the food and festivities were over with. We went home and were just relaxing by watching TV. Suddenly Jeff handed me an envelope and said to read it. I opened it and there was a 3 page letter inside. The letter was the sweetest thing that I had ever read and brought tears to my eyes.

After I was done reading the letter, he handed me a book about dating and relationships. I had no clue why he had given me this book! As I opened it and started reading, I decided to flip through. As I was flipping through the pages, I noticed that some of them were stuck together. I of course opened the book up to these particular pages and there was a large square cut out of several pages resulting in a little box type space. Inside the box space, there were a few pieces of tissue paper. I lifted pieces of tissue paper out and inside, there it was, my engagement ring. My husband took it out of my hand, got on one knee in the middle of the living room and popped the question.

#90
PSYCHE!
Gregory Ruffner

It was a Monday morning when I awoke from a relatively sleepless night. I was a bit nervous in anticipation of the day's events. Karen had no idea what was in store for her. We had been discussing marriage for the past six months so I had to do to great lengths to make this proposal a surprise.

I am a college student and I had befriended one of my instructors. She agreed to help me with my plan to stage a mock Organizational Psychology class. I told Karen that I would be required to conduct an in-class interview. She agreed to be my interviewee. My best friend and his wife, the couple that introduced us, accompanied us that night to class. Their task was to videotape the interview, which was part of my assignment.

I convinced several of my fellow students to show up for a class that would alter Karen's and my life forever. Everything went very smoothly; I breezed through my fake interview and Karen had no idea of my upcoming proposal. I took a deep breath and I stood in front of my classmates and began to tell them just how much Karen means to me.

Karen began to get a look of shock and amazement on her face. She now knew what was coming and before I could continue she, along with some other classmates and the instructor, began to well up with tears. After I told her that I wanted to spend the rest of my life with her and that she is the reason for my happiness I began to feel some tears coming on myself.

I pulled the ring from my pocket, got down on bended knee and asked for her hand in marriage. After she said YES the class whooped and hollered and applauded our engagement.

#91
WALKING THE PLANK
Carolyn Lighthall

John and I had been dating for about two years when we both knew we'd be together forever. We'd both been married before so we were taking it slow . John had said to me " I asked someone to marry me once and it didn't work out so next time I'm going to wait till I get asked" Deciding I would ask him, I had to wait for just the right opportunity.

The Mall where I worked, was making plans for the Jerry Lewis Telethon after hours party on a Sunday night. The festivities were to include a live band, mc "Wolfman Jack" and a fashion show. I was asked to model for the Lingerie Factory store. I met with the manager from that store and told her my plan. We picked out the outfit I would wear and the music.

Finally the night arrived. When it was my turn to model boy was I nervous! John had been asked to "help" with the sound crew, so he was up in front of the stage. As I modeled my outfit a " white Merry Widow", to the tune "Going to the Chapel" I stopped center stage, taking the microphone with 150 people watching I said " Johnny, the last few years with you have been wonderful, will you marry me? He jumped up on the stage took me in his arms and said "YES"!! We were married 16 months later.

#92
ON A MISSION
Barbara Hartman

Rob and I were supposed to go out to dinner with a friend of his and his new girlfriend. We hopped in the car and Rob said he forgot the wine so he ran back inside. We started on our way and a mile down the road Rob groaned and told me he had forgotten his wallet. This is typical Rob Hartman behavior so I wasn't suspicious of anything. We pulled into the driveway and he asks me to run in and get it from off the stereo. I was so focused on searching that I managed to ignore the shiny object hanging on the wall until my roommate pointed it out. It was then I took notice of a tinfoil sign with a large arrow pointing down and the words "press play". I hit the button on a small tape recorder and the Mission Impossible theme began. The message: "Your mission is to locate 'Mr. Man'. You will be given various clues, the first of which is on the bedroom dresser. This message will self destruct in 10 seconds."

I ran to the dresser and looked out the window to find that my car was still parked and running but Rob and his car were gone. The paper stated that at 6:30 the doorbell would ring. It would be my escort, I was to go with him and ask no questions. I was to dress formally. I threw on a dress and as stated, the doorbell rang right on time.

My escort took me to a waiting limousine. In the back seat was another clue and a basket. The clue led me to the local pet store, with the instructions that when I arrived, my contact would ask a question to which I was to respond, "Rob, Rob, he's my man, if he can't do it, no one can."

I did as I was told and was handed another clue and a hollowed out egg with something inside, with I put in my basket. This process continued until I had three eggs and was headed to "the place where we first danced", a seedy bar that the limo driver was actually reluctant to take me to. (Classic quote, "you don't look like a Tic Toc kind of girl!")

There I would meet my contact, a six foot rodent. We arrived to a large rabbit holding a sign "Now that all your eggs are in one basket, hop over to the table." I noticed a lot of my friends along with my mom, seated at the table.

A boom box played Mission Impossible again and congratulated me on my success. It instructed me to break the eggs in numbered order. Each held a piece of paper that when put together read "Will you marry Rob?" The tape told me to choose Egg A if the answer was yes or Egg B if no. The message in A was that Rob was in the rabbit suit, of course I had to peek at B, which stated "you owe the limo driver \$300". I turned to the rabbit and took off its head and it was my best friend from North Carolina who Rob brought all the way to Maryland!

At that point, Rob who had been watching from outside, ran in, got down and proposed.

#93
SNAPSHOT OF OUR LOVE
Thomas Leeper

My wife and I had known each other as friends for over thirteen years, but one day the magic happened and we couldn't stop seeing each other.

She is a photographer, and I had secretly stolen some of her equipment to plan my proposal. I had spent weeks sneaking out of work to take pictures of places that were significant to the two of us. All these pictures were taken in classic black and white, and in each picture I had included an old-fashioned movie pinboard (black background with white letters you can arrange). Each picture/board asked her a question about our future life together. For example, a picture of a playground with the question "will you raise a family with me?", picture of a collection of favorite CDs and a black dance instruction feet on the floor with the question "will you dance with me forever?", a picture of an old run-down shuffleboard court with the words "will you grow old with me?", etc.

Finally, one day we were out on a hike at one of our favorite parks. Secluded on a hill in the middle of the park, we sat down on a little bench for a break...a bench she and I had been on many times before talking about our life together. It was here that I handed her a small photo album. She was obviously very confused, and began to flip through the pages... "will you raise a family with me", "will you always laugh with me", "will you build a home with me" and finally on the last page, a picture of the bench we were sitting on with the sun shining down on it... and next to that bench, the board asking the question, "will you marry me?".

Through the tears and the laughter, the answer was "yes."

ABLE TO LIGHT TALL BUILDINGS IN A SINGLE BOUND

Marc Greenberg

I met my wife in a towering office building in Los Angeles. Sophie and I worked for the same company, but on different floors. We'd occasionally bump into each other on the elevator, but that was the extent of our relationship for a long time. The company had discouraged in-office relationships, suggesting that employees socialize outside of the office, not at work.

After months of elevator flirting, I finally summoned up the courage to ask Sophie out. Much to my delight, she agreed. We dated for 9 months, keeping our relationship under wraps, hidden from our fellow employees. Although it was difficult, the enjoyment we shared while together made it well worth it.

On the bottom of "our" office building was an elegant restaurant. On occasion, Sophie and I would joke about dining there someday as our astonished employers watched, taken aback at the fact that two of their employees had met and actually fallen in love. Of course we weren't willing to take the risk yet.

But we weren't far into the relationship when we realized what we had. It wasn't a question of if we'd get married, just a question of when.

I asked Sophie to dress up for a nice dinner, then blindfolded her, begging her to trust me. Although reluctant, she agreed and we took a short drive to the restaurant. I arranged to have an intimate table in the back. Dim lights, a piano playing in the background, the works. The meal was wonderful and it wasn't until we left the restaurant that Sophie realized where we had eaten – the restaurant at the bottom of "our" building.

"Are you nuts?" she asked. I explained that I knew the only way I would get her to go there with me was to blindfold her. She was a bit upset at first, but it quickly faded. I suggested we take a walk down to the fountain by the front of the building. She agreed and we sat on the fountain's edge, talking for a good half an hour, taking in the moonlight. Little did she know that besides enjoying her company, I was also stalling.

I glanced at my watch to confirm the time – 12:00. I took Sophie's hand and told her what a wonderful night it had been. But could she do me just one more favor? I asked her to take a look at the building. She looked and froze, startled by what she saw. The lights in the windows were lit up to spell "MARRY ME." I had arranged with our employer to have the building's lights turned out, leaving only enough to spell out my request.

After what seemed like an eternity, Sophie turned back to me and said the single word I had been waiting to hear..."Yes."

#95
GORILLAS AND CRACKER JACKS
Larry Davies

"You are going to have a guest speaker," the principal informed one of her kindergarten teachers early one morning. "He is an education student who will be demonstrating a sample lesson on storytelling to young children. The session needs to be video taped and your kindergarten class will make a perfect audience. Do you mind helping out?"

"No, of course not," replied the teacher.

"Oh, by the way, the student will be in some sort of costume, a gorilla or something."

Indeed, later that day a gorilla did visit the kindergarten class and told several stories to the delight of the children, but then something very strange happened. The gorilla approached the teacher, dropped down on one knee and offered her a box of Cracker Jacks, "Open it, please!"

The teacher's jaw dropped as she reached into the box and pulled out an engagement ring.

"Will you marry me?"

The kindergarten teacher said yes to the gorilla and kissed him while the children cheered.

A few months later her kindergarten class was given special seating at the wedding. How do I know? Her name is Mell Davies and we've been married for seven exciting, amazing years.

Has the love between Mell and I always been this wild? Of course not, but that is where another aspect of a loving relationship becomes important...forgiveness.

#96
A JAR-RING PROPOSAL
Grant Gore

My girlfriend and I had been dating for over 6 years now and I finally decided to ask her to marry me.

We are avid collectors of North Carolina pottery and have become friends with several Seagrove potters. I commissioned one of them to make a special vase for the occasion.

The proposal took place on Christmas Eve once the other family members had gone to church. We decided, actually she insisted, we open our presents to each other then. She gets very excited at Christmas time and can't wait to open presents. I opened my presents first which prolonged her torture. Then I finally presented her with "one of two presents that go together." As a collector of pottery, I knew she would instantly look underneath the vase to see the artist's signature. I had the potter write the first few lines of the song "You Are My Sunshine, My Only Sunshine." She sings and hums this song to me every day so I thought it would be fitting to return the gesture. The rest of the writing was basically "Carolyn, will you marry me? I love you."

She opened the present and immediately flipped it over and read the bottom. She just looked up at me and smiled. I asked her "Well?" She said, "Well what?" I told her to read the whole message. I pulled her second wrapped present from my pocket and laid it in front of her. She burst into tears and her hands started shaking. She put the pot down gently and lunged hugging and kissing me screaming "YES." She tore open the box and put on the ring. I found out after she had calmed down that she had only read the first line and thought the remaining lines were the rest of the song.

The pot is now sitting in a special spot in our house. Everyone that comes over insists on seeing it. I am officially "Sooo Sweet" in the eyes of everyone.

#97
MARATHON ENGAGEMENT
Mark Ismond

My girlfriend Pattie and I were traveling in northern Michigan to visit her family as well to compete in a triathlon on the weekend. We had been dating for a little while and were enjoying sightseeing and adventuring together, but had only talked about marriage that same week.

On Saturday morning my mind, and body, were totally focused on completing and successfully competing in the 1k swim, 40k bike and 10k run, so thoughts of marriage had not totally taken hold in my mind. Not at least until about half way through "Heartbreak Hill", a joyously long and steep cycling hill that is known to cause heartbreak to athletes, thus the name. However, possibly because of the delirium induced by the effort, or because of the name, I started to think about asking Pattie to marry me. It would all have to be at the end of a race later in the summer, and my mind drifted over some details about how I might go about doing it.

Further into the race, I started to realize that I could ask her to marry me at the end of this race. I realized that I was wearing a ring that could be used and began to picture that I might actually do it. During the first part of the run, I was able to pry the needed ring off my swollen knuckle and managed to make it another five miles without dropping it.

Finally I approached the finishing area and spotted my cheering sweetheart, who along with all the others was excitedly cheering me to cross the finish line.

However, I stopped in front of her and pointed for her to come out into the race area. Everyone was telling me the finish line was still 50 feet further down the road thinking I was lost or out of my mind. Pattie could tell that something was up, so she came out of the crowd, grabbed my hand and gasped as I dropped to one knee in front of everyone. Even though I was covered with sweat, bugs and smiles, I popped the question. She immediately said yes and kissed me.

I jumped back up and went about ten feet on my own when I realized only a moron would leave her standing there without me. So turning around, grabbing her hand, we scrambled back towards the finish line amidst the cheers of the spectators who were realizing what was happening. We crossed the finish line together and although my race time suffered by about 45 seconds, it was a great finish and an even better beginning.

The local newspaper article, which described our special moment, was included with all the race results sent to all the triathletes later in the month. About two weeks after getting the results and the article I received a package from another athlete from the race. He included his third place age group medal, saying that it was rightfully mine as he had only passed me at the end of the race. He and his wife totally agreed that it was ours to keep as a reminder of our special day and a race just begun.

#98
A CRUMB-Y PROPOSAL
Lisa Fickensher

My sweetheart and I had been planning on getting married; we even picked the ring out together. So it was no surprise that we were indeed getting married. The ring was being specially made so we had to wait a few months and I didn't know when it would be finished. I kind of felt like the whole romance of being proposed to was lost.

However, my wonderful, creative man had a different idea. One of the things we love to do is cook together. Our favorite thing is to make bread or biscuits or dinner rolls and carve letters into them and spell out a message to each other. One night we were making dinner and Mike asked me to get the biscuits out of the oven. He had carefully arranged and spelled out: "will u marry me?" and on the last biscuit, the ring was stuck into it. I was completely surprised and even though I knew we were going to get married, I had about a million butterflies in my stomach.

#99
GOING APE OVER YOU
Nicole Saponari

Daniel and I are animal lovers. We love all sorts of animals and enjoy activities that involve them i.e. playing with our two dogs, watching documentaries or even visiting the Adelaide Zoo.

The Adelaide Zoo was having a project to raise funds to build better enclosures for the animals. The idea was to purchase a paver from the Zoo at a cost of \$100 and design something to be laser copied onto the top. The paver would then be laid down into a path within the Zoo called "The Millennium Walk".

I decided that this was the perfect opportunity to do something special in my relationship with Daniel. I purchased a paver and in the top I had the words, "I love you...will you marry me?" with our initials hand drawn by myself at each end.

About a month and a half later my paver was layed right in front of the enclosure for the Orangutans - it was perfect, we both loved the Orangutans!

I waited about another month and previously organized a romantic dinner for two. I planned with Daniel to visit the Zoo one Saturday afternoon, which was nothing out of the ordinary so Daniel was not suspicious at all.

We started out at the Giraffes, laughed at the Hippos, quietly watched the Lions and then made our way towards the Orangutans...saving the best till last! As we approached the area where the paver was I strategically stumbled upon something only to look down and see the paver. Daniel noticed the paver (plan coming along nicely), read it and looked up at me as I said, "Well, will you? Marry me that is..." Daniel kissed me and answered, "Yes! Yes!"

We can now re-live that moment whenever we want, we have been back to visit our special place twice since we became engaged and often talk about how maybe our great grandchildren might have a chance to see where it all began.

#100
TRADING ONE TITLE FOR ANOTHER
Rhonda Jackson

In 1996 I was Miss Duplin County. It was a tremendous year for me. I had the opportunity to travel across the state, meet so many exciting people, and to top it all off, I was a top ten finalist in the Miss North Carolina Scholarship Pageant that June. As the year drew to a close, I wondered how anything could ever compare. I soon found out!

On the last night of my reign, as I gave my "farewell speech", I thanked all the people who had made the year so very special for me, including my boyfriend, Shawn. My family and friends made their way to the stage to give me flowers, balloons and such. I did not notice the figure standing behind me on the stage until the crowd began to cheer and point. I turned to find Shawn standing with a dozen roses in his hand and a huge grin on his face. "Oh, how sweet!" I thought. "He wants EVERYONE to see him give me flowers!"

Boy, did I underestimate his intentions! He pulled a microphone from behind his back, and began to speak. He thanked my pageant association for being so good to me, and for allowing him to share in my experience.

"Tonight," he said, "you are giving up your title as Miss Duplin County. I want to give you another title. It doesn't come with a crown, but it does come with a lifetime of love". With that he handed me the bouquet, pulled out a tiny velvet box, and dropped onto one knee. Amidst the cheers from the crowd he asked me to be his wife. After bouncing excitedly across the stage, I happily accepted!

#101

THE WEDDING SINGER

Josh Waite

It happened at a bridal show in Salt Lake City at the Salt Palace. Before the show began they had a drawing for prizes. I arranged to have my wife's name drawn out for a prize from the Shane Co., Tuxedos by Lee, and Floral Expressions. She came up on stage and the announcer said he had forgotten the prize and had to run back stage to get it.

He came back to where I was waiting in a tux with a dozen long stem white roses and handed me the microphone. I proceeded to sing the song from the "Wedding Singer" and halfway through I came walking out to meet Angela who was shaking and had tears streaming down her face. When I finished the song I got down on one knee and asked her to marry me in front of the entire crowd (mainly brides to be) who gave us a standing ovation.

BONUS IDEAS

1. The magician. Work the proposal into the act by getting the proposee to be an assistant. Using a blindfold the magician says "I will attempt a trick none of my peers have ever successfully performed. I will produce before your very eyes," the magician removes the blindfold and the proposer is on bended knee, "A marriage proposal."

2. The survey. Hire a local college drama student or actor to be a plant or even someone your girl/guy doesn't know that can pull it off without tipping off the proposee.

After you get your beloved into a store buy something or wait to see if he/she wants to buy something. As you are leaving with your purchase the student/actor, playing a survey taker, offers a fabulous gift, since you bought something, if your beloved will answer a few questions.

You can prearrange standard lead in questions or just jump right in. Eventually the actor says, "I'm going to show you some photographs and ask a question about your opinions of them." One of the photographs is a picture of the proposer. The actor reveals the picture and says would you marry this man/woman at which point the proposer gets on bended knee and takes over.

3. The Birthday Party. Fake a birthday party or use a real one of an accomplice. Everyone has to be in on it. During the singing of happy birthday when the part comes to go Happy Birth Day Dear Whoever... everyone sings Happy Birthday Jennifer will you marry Joey? Or whatever the names are and the proposer takes over.

4. Cheap idea. The T-shirt. Best to use during sweater weather. Have a t-shirt made, there are tons of places online that will do it, that reads "So and So will you marry me?" Put it on under a jacket or sweater. Go to a pre-arranged event. When the time is right complain about being hot. Even better would be going someplace cold that your woman is underdressed for. When she complains about the cold offer your jacket or sweater. When the t-shirt is revealed you can act perfectly natural or go right to the knee however you want to play it.

5. The dogs. A lot of couples have dogs they both love and this is a way to get them in on the proposal. It could be tricky to pull off, but the general idea is to put them in clothes/sweaters or some sort of item they can wear which writes out the proposal. It would work best with 2 or more, but one dog could pull it off. Get your pooch in wardrobe and offer him a treat. Let poochy know you have more treats then head to the room where your man/woman is. Most likely your dogs won't stay in order "So and so will you marry me," but your proposee will get the idea at which point you take over.

6. The Trivia game. Lots of sports bars have trivia games like NTN trivia. You'll need friends to help you with it, but basically you arrange it with the manager of the place so that only you and your friends that are in on it have the trivia boxes. You have to enter a name for the boxes so what you enter is Box 1: "Person's Name" - Box 2: "Will-you" and Box 3: "Marry-me".

If timed correctly they should display on screen in that order. The proposer takes over from there.

7. Scrabble. Pre-arrange the tiles so that you and those in on it have the exact letters to spell out. Will you marry me...

8. Trivial Pursuit. Your fake question: On "today's date" "The proposers name" asked the "Proposee" if he/she would marry him. What was his/her answer?

9. The sandcastle. If you live near the beach or are planning on visiting do a web search for sandcastle artists. They actually exist and would appreciate the work. Talented ones can create anything you can envision.

Work with them to get what you want and on the day it is ready go visit the sandcastle which will include the words: Will you marry me?

10. The art gallery. You can do up a cheapie yourself or if you have the cash contract with a professional to do a painting that features the words "Will you marry me?" prominently on the painting. Pre-arrange it with a local art gallery to allow you to hang the painting in their gallery. Visit each of the other paintings and art works first working up to your painting. When you reach your painting... take your knee.

11. The Renaissance Faire. These faires usually come once a year to most states. Get in touch with the organizers and tell them what you are planning. These historical anachronism performers KNOW how a medieval proposal would take place and can walk you through what you need to do.

They will probably be very happy to have such a lovely real life event taking place at the Faire. The Faire King and Queen as well as Knights and Ladies in Waiting can all get in on the act.

12. The Amusement Park. Most amusement parks now sell photo keepsakes that are taken on their various coasters. Call the park and tell them what you are planning. With their approval ride the coaster you are both planning on visiting later, holding a sign that reads, "Will you marry me?"

After you and your bride to be ride and get off the coaster they can bring up your previous photo of you with the sign you had on their viewing screens.

Take over from the point your lady sees you with the sign.

13. The race/dog track. Contact the track and let them know your plan. Before or after a race have them announce this dog or horse: "Proposee's name-willyou marryme? So if your ladies name was Betty the announcer would say "Bettywillyoumarryme? Bettywillyoumarryme? At which point you take over. If you really have the cash you might be able to get a few owners to run a fake no-betting race featuring your dog/horse in an actual race where the winner will always be, "Bettywillyoumarryme?"

14. The Ocean View. Go somewhere with an ocean view. Arrange a carpenter or florist or anyone that can make something that floats, flowers can be placed in styrofoam for example, that spell out the words, "Will you marry me?" You'll have to hire someone with a boat to transport the flowers to where they can be viewed from your balcony and anchor them. When they are ready suggest to your bride to be that you enjoy a glass of champagne on the balcony. Take over once she sees the display.

15. The Parade. You have to get someone that is going to be in the parade in on this. If they can walk along with a float it works better. Also it has to be the kind of parade where beads are thrown to the crowd.

Go to a craft store and have something made that says "Will you marry me, So and so?" that can be attached to the beads. On the day of the parade your accomplice tosses the beads to you and you display them and place them on your beloved and take your knee.

16. The package. Put the following items in a box in such a way that they must be removed in this order.

1. A fake Will
2. A picture of her
3. A picture of the Virgin Mary or any famous Mary
4. A picture of yourself

Mail the package to yourself or your brides residence. You must arrange it so that you both open the package together and ideally it would arrive while you were both home. If you know a UPS, Post Office or Fed Ex worker that will be all the better.

The package should be in your Bride to be's name. As she opens the package help her along...saying hmm a Will, that's you.....Mary...that's me? Will you marry me? Take your knee...

17. The restaurant. Let the staff know what you are planning because they have to help. During your meal leave to go to the restroom. Inform the manager to put the plan in action. The staff walks by one at a time and places a rose on the

table, saying nothing. When all the roses are in place you head in, take your knee and pop the question.

18. Hidden message. There are tons of ways to do this. Using flowers, long dry and quick dry paints and a ton of other items depending on what you want to spend.

With flowers you could put the display somewhere at a distance where your bride to be can look down on them - a field or even a street where you look down from a building. The message "Will you marry me" will be spelled out in flowers and the extra flowers will be fitted around them so that they obscure the message. As workers remove the ancillary flowers the message is revealed.

With Paints it can be done on any surface where the "new" paint is added in the same color as the old dry paint that reads will you marry me. When you arrive at the spot someone is waiting with a hose to start spraying away the extra wet paint and revealing the message. This idea can be adapted to work with anything that can be taken away to reveal the message.

Special thanks to Joseph Jay Michael Redner who helped craft these bonus ideas.

DON'T TRY THESE AT HOME!

Along with thousands of terrific marriage proposals that came in from the Popping the Question contest, some really bad proposal stories arrived too.

Here are some great examples of how NOT to pop the question. All the authors remain anonymous for obvious reasons.

- *Don't give conditional proposals like I'll marry you if you lose 40 pounds, when you cut your hair or get a better job.*

I set a conditional proposal on my girlfriend. I wanted her to increase her self-confidence and independence so I had her join the army reserves with the promise that I would marry her when she returned from basic training.

- *Don't ask someone to marry you so you can stay in the country or gain some other monetary benefit.*

My boyfriend said, "we should get married when your alimony stops."

I said "let's get married so we can get the mortgage to buy a house."

We had been seeing each other for 5 years. We had both said from the beginning of the relationship that we did not want to marry again. (He's been married once before and I've been married twice.) Then one day he said, "I'd like to marry you. I like you more than anyone I've ever met; you look good naked so I can take you to nude beaches; and I need health insurance. Because of my past health history I'm being turned down by insurance companies; if I marry you I can be insured through your employer."

- *Don't get the deliveryman, your mom or anyone else to pop the question for you. Do it in person unless very unique circumstances give you good reason not to be there.*

Nervously I waited all day, my marriage proposal in the hands of the deliveryman carrying a dozen red roses to my girlfriend at work. My co-worker, Lynn, had told me (okay, most of it was her idea, but I was a willing partner in this) to specify a delivery in the morning but being the casual type. I never said anything. So by 1 pm I was a wreck. Waiting for the phone to ring, anything! I went to lunch with my girlfriend and she was acting normal, I was starting to think she was torturing me. I get back from lunch and the phone rings.

She said 'yes'. I almost cried (both happiness and relief)!

- *Don't get engaged at depressing occasions like funerals, trials and IRS audits.*

My boyfriend proposed to me during the funeral services of his big brother (right in front of the casket!). His brother always looked forward to the day when Andrew would get married and my man felt compelled to put one last smile on his brother's face. Unfortunately, due to his unexpected death, he was only able to attend the wedding in spirit.

- *Don't get engaged in grocery stores, fast food restaurants, parking lots and other un-romantic places.*

I took my girlfriend to a grocery store where a friend of mine that delivers for a soda company had placed a special can in the machine for me. I had a piece of paper taped to the can that said "will you marry me."

I waited until my friend was done filling the machine and my girlfriend and I went up for a soda. It worked perfectly. I knew which soda she would pick. But her answer was "not right now."

I attached the ring to a straw tied into a knot in a McDonald's shake (the ones that are tough to drink through a straw in the first place!). After trying to get the straw working, I suggested that she pull it out and see if it had anything stuck in it... Needless to say, it slipped onto her finger pretty easily!

My boyfriend and I were arguing earlier that day, and we were trying to make up with each other. I can't remember what we were arguing over but it was pretty heavy. Later that evening we discussed what we were going to eat for dinner. We decided to go to McDonald's. We were sitting in the dining area and he was holding my hands under the table and we were apologizing to each other and I kept asking him to give me my hands because he wouldn't let go. And then out of the blue he said, "Will you marry me?" and my eyes almost popped out of my head and I said yes and kissed him. Then I brought my hands up from under the table and saw my ring and I almost passed out.

I took my boyfriend to look at cars at a dealership because I was looking into buying a new car and wanted to shop without being hassled. After we were finished looking and as I was getting ready to pull out onto the road to leave the dealership he said "STOP" and I said "what?" He said turn the car off. I said "right here in the middle of the drive?" So I did and he was getting all giddy and smiley.... and he said close your eyes...so I did and he was struggling with something and then he said open them (your eyes) and I did and there he was holding a ring in his hand and he said "will you marry me?" I said YES!

The day that I proposed to my beautiful bride was a normal day. We were visiting my parents in a city some 200 miles from where she lived.

After having spoken, at length, with my mother the previous night about how to tell if a woman is "the one", Kristi and I were alone in a very public place. We had gone to my little sister's school to pick her up that afternoon.

I wasn't very suave and sophisticated. I didn't kneel. I looked at her from the opposite side of my Chevrolet Chevette (romantic car huh?) and said "Will ya?"

She looked puzzled at first, then with an exclamation of excitement told me that I had to say the whole thing. After some banter back and forth, I did ask this woman to marry me. She accepted.

My husband and I met at the local Wal-mart. We dated for a while and talked about marriage. One day I was in the store shopping and an announcement came over the intercom. It was Jim. He said, "attention Wal-Mart shoppers if Kathy R_____ is in the store I would like to ask her to be my wife and walk through life's journey with me hand and hand to share my hopes and dreams and love. If the answer is yes please come to the service desk now." I ran to the front and he got down on one knee in front of about 50 customers and asked me to marry him and gave me my engagement ring there.

- *Don't let anyone tell you when or where to propose. Just because your mom gave you birth doesn't earn her a front row seat at the proposal.*

It's amazing how reality and your preconceived notions clash. I had a vision of a quiet place for proposing to my wife.

My mother had worked for Macy's Herald Square for over 25 years. She knew so many people that some times she acted as if she owned the store. My Wife (then fiancée) had been going together for four years and Christmas of our senior year at college we decided to get engaged. We went to Macy's because my mother knew the manager of the jewelry department and she would get an employee discount.

When we met my mother at the jewelry counter, she immediately took over and basically picked out the ring. She then commanded me to kiss my intended bride on the main floor of the world's largest department store. Furthermore, she insisted that I propose right there.

- *Don't propose with body parts like umbilical cords, toenail clippings or extracted teeth.*

My high-school sweetheart and I were separated because I was attending college in another state. She started to accuse me of being too aloof and impersonal. I knew that our love was being tested and I was desperate to do something to assure her that I was madly in love with her. At the same time, I was suffering from impacted wisdom teeth and had to get them pulled. I had a brilliant idea and convinced the dentist to help me make hoop earrings out of two of the perfectly unblemished teeth. The next holiday from school, I placed the earrings into a jewelry box and met her at the airport. I explained to her that

although I was currently poor, and seeking wisdom from one of the finest colleges in the USA, I was madly in love with her and "Would give my wisdom teeth for her to marry me". I then gave her the box and told her that she could trade this in for a real diamond after I graduated.

We were at her college apartment for the evening just kicked back watching TV and having a pretty normal night together. I was very nervous, knowing what I had planned and she noticed something was up. I assured her that everything was OK. So, I was on her bed pretending to read while she was washing her face etc. When she came out, I had a pair of nail clippers and I asked her to clip my toenails for me. She of course refused but I persisted. She's pretty strong-minded but somehow I convinced her to remove my sock and much to her surprise there was an engagement ring on my toe. After she buried her head in her hands and laughed, she came over and hugged me saying yes, yes, yes.

- *Don't begin a proposal by those fearful words "we've got to talk."*

For about a week, my boyfriend kept telling me we had some issues to discuss. We are both in our 40's and both divorced (once). We laugh a lot whenever we were together and always have fun. I considered him to be my best friend so I couldn't understand why he was making an issue out of talking. I began feeling a sense of dread. Just when I was really getting comfortable, he was going to change things. I had not been in a relationship for quite a few years but my intuition was telling me he wanted out.

We had planned on attending his sister's birthday party. That Saturday he arrived about 4:00 pm to pick me up. While waiting, he again reminded me we needed to talk. Well, I was truly anxious at this point and simply said, "Let's go ahead and talk now," before we leave. He said we didn't have time and we left the house.

While en route, Stanley needed to stop by his apartment for something. Reluctantly, I accompanied him inside. Once inside, he said we may as well have that talk. I took a deep breath and said, "go ahead." Then Stanley asked if I wanted a glass of wine? Well, I was ready to make this simple for him. I was ready to tell him that if he wasn't ready for the relationship, I would understand. (I had children and he didn't) No hard feelings. But, instead, I graciously accepted the glass of wine and sat quietly, ready to listen.

In the meantime, he had put on a CD by Staphane Grappelli (jazz violinist). I thought, "boy, he really knows how to dump someone." I had been relaxed while seated on the sofa but by now I was on the edge of the seat. I finished my drink in two gulps.

Stanley was talking, going on about what he needed in a relationship, half of which I didn't even hear. I kept waiting for him to tell me the inevitable. I was sort of in a daze because I was trying to remain civil because we had a party to attend.

Somewhere between the music, the wine, and the words, Stanley held up a beautiful engagement ring. He said, "I have found all the qualities I need in a wife, in you." and asked, "would you marry me."

I was completely taken by surprise. My eyes filled with tears and I cried fifteen minutes before I could talk enough to answer, "yes." Then, we both laughed, kissed and cried, together. Then we held each other, sat in silence and he "wiped" my tears.

- *Don't TELL your boyfriend or girlfriend that you are getting married. Ask them.*

My boyfriend took me to the jewelry store and said pick out a ring because we are getting married next weekend. We went to the courthouse and got married.

I took my girlfriend to the beach and said "here, you can have the ring now."

My mom called me one day and asked if we would ever get married because there was a store closing that sold wedding cake toppers etc. and she would like to take a look and hey why not save some money too! So we went down there and purchased a couple things. After that my mind kept coming back to marriage and I went home one day and said "Honey, we're getting married next year" and well we did. I didn't get a ring until I picked one out that I liked and told him he was buying it for me.

- *Don't begin a proposal by deliberately picking a fight*

I let my then girlfriend think I had forgotten to get her a Christmas Present. Secretly, I had snuck into her room earlier in the day and put the ring box on her dresser along with her other jewelry boxes. After all the presents had been opened she dejectedly went to her room. I followed her there and struck up small talk about her jewelry, which she loved to talk about. I feigned surprise at a new box I had never noticed and she was prepared to tell me which of her pieces it was until she opened it and was struck speechless. I asked her to marry me and she said yes on the spot.

- *Don't EVER propose in a bathroom*

My girlfriend was in the restroom using the toilet. I accidentally walked in on her. She said "that's o.k. it's not like you're going to ask me to marry you or anything" Well I had bought a ring already and was planning on asking at the right moment but this one I couldn't resist I said "Oh yea" and proposed to her right there.

- *Don't place the ring where it can be easily ingested*

I had been dating David for a couple of months, and we got along really well, better than I thought, really. Anyway, he took me out one evening for a very romantic dinner and, later, for drinks at the club where we met. I'd gone to the "ladies" to freshen up, and when I returned, he'd ordered our drinks. Two shots of tequila.

Now, I don't care for tequila, but David didn't know that. There were also two airline tickets on the table. He said, "I have a surprise for you. How would you like to go to Mazatlan for two weeks?" Of course, I was thrilled. He said, as he raised his shot glass, "Here's to Mazatlan, part one of your surprise." Well, I looked at that tequila and thought, the only way to not gag is to just gulp it down and hope I don't taste it. So I did, but the tequila wasn't the only thing that got gulped. I felt something sharp go down with it and began to cough and choke. You guessed it. He'd put an engagement ring in the bottom of my shot to surprise me.

We had to make a trip to the emergency room that night because I was coughing up some blood. Thank God it wasn't serious, I'd only scratched my throat. To make his humiliation complete, I turned him down. He was much too impetuous for me.

- *Babies out of wedlock are unromantic enough. Don't make matters worse by using their diapers to propose.*

My wife had recently had our 1st baby and was staying home. I called from work and told her I was going to the dentist. I went and picked up the ring and came home. I was too excited to wait so I put the ring in the baby's wet diaper and told my girlfriend the baby needed changing and I was in too much pain. So when she finally saw the ring I got down on one knee and did the deed.

- *Don't be so impatient that you cheat your girlfriend out of a decent proposal.*

I had planned on this amazing proposal, ya know the whole surprise, romance, and the whole nine yards. Well, I have this problem with keeping secrets and surprises. I couldn't wait to ask her to marry me because I just needed to know if she would make me happy forever. It was after we went out to dinner, just a nice Italian meal.

We were talking on the way home when she said something to me that just stole my heart all over again. I couldn't wait. I pulled my car over in a mall parking lot and got ready for the question. I started by telling her how happy she made me and how much I loved her and she started to tear up. I winged my whole speech, but it was very good because it was straight from my heart. Well, I went to get on my knee and she started to cry. It turns out that her leftover rigatoni was right where I decided to kneel. It didn't matter to me, I kept on going

and asked her to spend forever with me and marry me, she began to cry some more, and she said yes.

- *Don't forget that sand and expensive jewelry are a potentially bad combination.*

My boyfriend took me to Myrtle Beach to propose to me. He placed my ring in a conch shell hoping I would find it and be surprised. He got the surprise when I picked up the shell, dumped out the ring unknowingly, and kicked the sand. He immediately started sifting through the sand, I realized what I had done and started crying.

He got on one knee and proposed without the ring. He went to find a flashlight, while I stayed glued to the spot. An old man with a metal detector came along and through my sobs I was able to get across to him what had happened. He found my ring.

- *Don't do something illegal or something that will get you fired during your proposal.*

My wife and I work in computers form a large aerospace company with our desk back to back for 3 years. It was only naturally that we would become good friends over time. Eventually it grew into a nice little interoffice romance that we kept secret for 2 of the 3 years. The only way to talk to one another was through private chat sessions on the computers.

To propose to her, I spent 2 weeks writing a chat program that would display everything we typed to each other to over 2000 computers in the company at that exact moment. People in company were finding out about our relationship at same time I proposed to her over the computer.

The day I popped the question, the entire company froze and was glued to their computers for a 15 minute period watching the entire wedding proposal play out. She had no clue that 2000 eyes were watching, she was so focused on what I was typing to her in the chat session.

When she types YES the entire company cheered and our telephones were ringing off the hook. She then figured it out at that moment and of course could believe all the attention. We were soon pushed out of our jobs.

- *Don't even try to win someone in a poker game*

I have been proposed to several times but I think this one takes the cake for bad proposals. I had been dating a guy that had somewhat of a gambling problem. One morning a friend of his shows up on my doorstep with a suitcase in hand. He states that the previous night he had "won" me from my boyfriend in a poker game. (That said, I did find out I was worth thousands...who knew?) He had had a crush on me for sometime. He declared that with this situation I deserved a better man and that I should marry him. Some might consider this

romantic but all I could think of was being considered a prize that could be traded. Needless to say I am still single.

Romantic Proposal Resources

To help you in your quest to make a magical proposal, here are some resources you might find useful.

TheRomantic.com

My website has a comprehensive listing of romantic resources and ideas. While some of the information in this book can get outdate, the website stays current. I can sometimes get you special deals you can't get elsewhere. Go here before you go anywhere else. www.TheRomantic.com

Fancy Fortune Cookies

These gourmet cookies come in over a dozen fun flavors and you can also order jumbo sized cookies (even dipped in chocolate) for concealing the ring or fortune. Tip: wrap the cookie in a moist paper towel and microwave on high about 30 seconds and the cookie will open up – insert item and quickly remold as it hardens). 888-776-6611. www.fortunecookiesonline.com

Sign Language

Want to put your proposal on a banner? Custom design your own – maybe even include a photograph. Create several and hang them all over town. 888-797-0069. www.americanbanner.com

Create a Calendar

You can create a personalized 12-month calendar and include special events like the anniversary of your first date or first kiss. Maybe include the day you proposed (or a photograph of you proposing) for your sweetheart to discover. 718-252-8125. www.personalgiftcalendar.com

Star Light, Star Bright

If you can't propose under a star lit sky, you can assemble a glowing night sky on any ceiling with glow in the dark stars. You can even arrange the stars to say, "will you marry me?" You can purchase at most children's stores or at The Space Store 877-742-2311 www.thespacestore.com

Puzzled for a Proposal Idea?

Have a puzzle custom made with your photograph (perhaps kneeling down with a ring box in your hand) or just the words "marry me please." There are several sources for this type of product. Try Romance Her at 865-525-3035 or www.romanceher.com/puzzles.htm. For an heirloom quality wooden puzzle, contact 888-604-7654 or www.4apuzzle.com

Melt My Heart

There are few things more romantic than a burning candle. And what could melt her heart more than to discover a ring embedded in the melting candle? You probable want to use a substitute ring for the project and when she discovers it,

bring out the real deal. Go to a craft store to get a candle making kit or supplies. You can also order online at www.michaels.com

Beary Special

If your one and only is an animal lover, you can visit a Build a Bear workshop and create a custom stuffed animal (not just bears) and record the personalized greeting the animal you create will speak when squeezed. 888-560-BEAR or www.buildabear.com

Sing, Sing a Song

Perhaps you aren't very musically gifted but would like to serenade your proposal to your darling. Ask a friend or hire someone to write a personalized song that helps set the mood or even pops the question to a tune. 800-725-SONG or www.giftsongs.com

Diamond Help

How do you purchase a diamond ring? It is easy to get scammed and this is a pretty big investment you will be making. Read up on diamonds before a salesman sucks you in, pressuring you to make a purchase to fatten his commission check. Also, find out which online jewelry stores are reputable and will save you money. www.diamondhelpers.com

Name That Tune

Do you want to propose with "your song" playing in the background? Or how about the sound of waves crashing or birds chirping? Music is one of the simplest ways to create a romantic atmosphere. Search through hundreds of thousands of songs or special mood creating music at www.cdnw.com

My Love is Like a Red, Red Rose

Everyone is a poet. Some are just better than others. For your proposal, consider including some of the best love poems ever written. Or read through classic love poetry to be inspired to write your own. www.TheRomantic.com

I'll Stick to You Like a Magnetic on a Fridge

Playing with a set of Magnetic Poetry can bring a lot of fun to the evening. Have poetry competitions. Write sonnets, haikus or limericks. With a set of Magnetic Poetry's Romance Edition, you can even pop the question. Found at most bookstores and gift shops or order online at www.magneticpoetry.com or by calling 800-370-7697.

Up, Up and Away

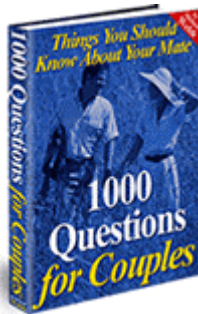
Does your sweetheart work a few stories up? Here's a clever idea. Get one or more balloons custom printed with your proposal – on two sides if possible. Fill them up with helium and tie to a long string and let them float up to your sweetheart's office window. Use a cell phone to get him or her to look out of the

window if necessary or solicit the help of a co-worker. Contact 800-564-2234 or www.advertisingballoons.com

Enter Your Story

After your proposal, feel free to share your story with us. We might use it in a future book. Enter it online at <http://www.theromantic.com/popping.htm>

Books By Michael Webb:



What you ABSOLUTELY MUST know about the person you are with. This ebook also comes with a free 300 Days of Questions e-course.

www.questionsforcouples.com



Have you ever had a dull date? No more. This book features nearly 6 years worth of creative date nights. Tips on first dates and asking someone out for a date too. www.300creativedates.com



Hundreds of fun, creative, inventive and wild tips to spice things up. Written in Michael's typical, classy style – none of the material is raunchy, immoral or in bad taste. Includes over a dozen lovemaking positions to try out. <http://www.500lovemakingtips.com/>



Less than 1% of marriages rate themselves as “blissful.” What are the secrets of the most successful marriages? www.50secrets.com



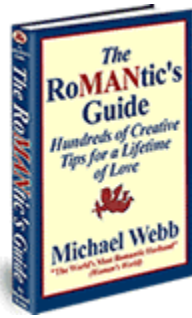
Unknowingly, the most way people have been taught to date actually destroys relationships. If you want to find a perfect partner and date the right way towards marriage, you must read this. www.datingbible.com



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A sequel to Michael’s wildly popular 50 Secrets of Blissful Relationships. Contains many more insightful tips and advice by one of the world’s most trusted relationship experts. www.50secrets.com



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