

The bearer of 'Glad?' tidings

Haven't we all been invited at one time to one of those beautiful sunny, summer Saturday afternoon weddings where the bride, as radiant as a Lili Marlene rose, the groom handsome as all get out solemnized their vows with dignity and grace? Sure we have.

And during the sacred ceremony has your heart not filled with pride and good wishes as you anxiously awaited the moment to embrace and congratulate them?

It's happened to all of us. Sometimes now, intuition and past experience tells me marriages are so short now-a-days the possibility exists they might not leave the church together, still married.

I hated going to weddings while I was still the Deputy Sheriff.

For some reason I just couldn't help but think what might be in store for the youngsters from a legal perspective.

What caused my discomfort and uneasiness was the minister or priest, after the exchange of rings, pronouncing solemnly "Those whom God hath joined together let no man put asunder." I always cringed.

That line bothered me to no end.

Heavens above, on my job I was putting marriages asunder faster than they could be consummated.

One of my duties was to personally serve documents described as "Notice of Petition and Petition for Divorce."

Forgive me for being immodest. I became pretty slick at it. Served lots of them. Why, goodness gracious, it got so I could recite paragraphs from the documents by heart, I'd served so many.

I always looked at it from the perspective you were being given the pink slip by your mate when I laid those papers on you.

Those sunny summer Saturday afternoon wedding photos were no longer prized possessions on the family mantle. They too had been given the heave-ho long before I arrived upon the scene.

You've all heard that expression "Shoot the messenger" when the bearer of bad news descends upon you. That's exactly the way I felt lots of times when a former happy newlywed wanted to take his or her anger out on me when I quickly presented the documents.

Experience had taught me to get the message across quickly then exit quickly. Never, never try to act as the marriage counsellor. If you got out of the house or apartment unscathed then you could consider a valid service had taken place, and you might set asunder another one or two before your evening was complete.

But every once in a while a warm welcome awaited, a happy couple living together often anxiously awaited the deliverance of these documents with anticipation so they could legitimize their unholy union.

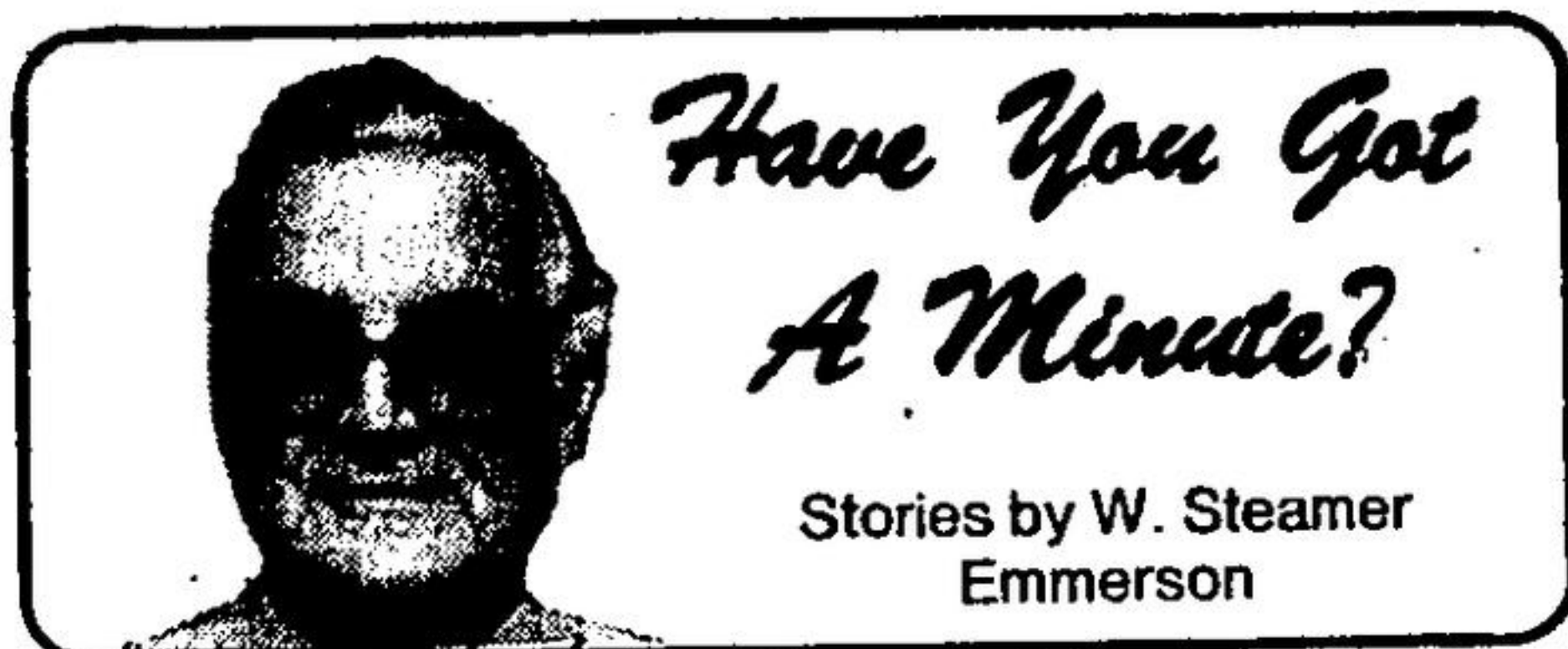
Max Storey, the famous auctioneer of these parts, once told an auction crowd that up around Rockwood living together in sin was considered by the locals as "light housekeeping."

I met several light housekeepers in my line of business.

One particular evening I bounce-

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Have You Got A Minute?

Stories by W. Steamer Emmerson

ed up the front steps and knocked on the door. A good looking young fellow answered and certainly was pleased to see me. This definitely was a rare occurrence.

He made me welcome and shouted to his co-light housekeeper who was in the bath that the Sheriff had arrived with the papers they were expecting.

The gentleman in me came to the fore as I willingly suggested I could call back at a more convenient time.

No way. This little light housekeeper was whooping and hollering for joy amid the soap bubbles and demanded I be ushered in to her most private of private rooms and serve her wrapped only in a shower curtain.

When you're the Sheriff, a Deputy Sheriff or a Sheriff's Officer, you see everything life has

to offer, good and bad, nothing surprises you.

I had other marriages that night to put asunder so to save a little time why not serve her in the tub.

Before I entered I had the documents opened at the appropriate page for signing.

On the side of the tub she signed, soap suds and all. Before she could say wash my back I was in and out. In this line of work you learn to get in quick and get out quick.

In my office I was considered adroit at serving deadly documents.

Nowadays when I go to weddings and everyone is gushing about how lovely the bride looks, I can't help but wonder through my past experiences how she would look in the bath tub if things go asunder.

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