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Yellow roses a mystery

"Okay, what's with the yellow roses," I was questioned upon entering The Tribune office the other day. There they go again, I thought, pulling my leg and trying to take advantage of my gullible nature.

I found an empty desk and set to making my required long distance calls. "No really, did you have anything to do with it?" asked our ace advertising sales rep, Susan Berry. "They have your initials and mine on them. Is

there something I should know about?" "What flowers? What initials?" It smelled more like some sort of set up than a rose. All fingers, and eyes, pointed in the direction of editor Jim Thomas' office. As I walked in to see three gorgeous yellow roses in a vase on Jim's desk, I immediately put the little mystery together. And it almost brought a tear to my eye.

The previous night, I had wearily entered Jim's office just after midnight, bringing him some last-minute copy, and a Coke.

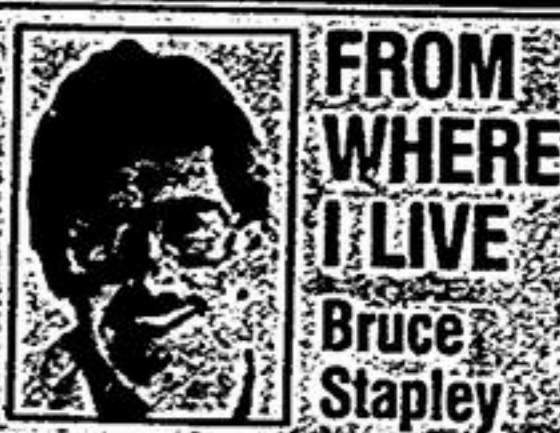
He had bought me around 100 Cokes, coffees, and hot chocolates, so I thought I owed him one, especially on a Monday night, when community newspaper editors always burn the midnight oil.

"How's it going, Jim? Will you be done before morning?" My standard Monday night quip.

Something was very wrong. "The entire front page, along with a whole bunch of other copy, has been lost. Something to do with a technical failure. I'll be here all night."

The computerized system is terrific, a real time saver - 'til it decides to get temperamental on you.

There was nothing I could do.



FROM WHERE I LIVE
Bruce Stapley

All the material had to be rewritten, and it was all in Jim's head and his note pads. I sheepishly left the office and went home to bed.

The next morning I received a call from Susan Lavine, the Summitview Public School Grade 3 teacher with the penchant for the unexpected. She was asking if I'd got all my work done from the night previous. I told her that I had, but that poor Jim hadn't fared so well.

I related the mini-tragedy that had befallen him, and I could sense her empathy for the man she had only known through his dashes in and out of the school as he shot photos and covered school events. Jim wasn't available for Summitview's "Participation" event a few weeks ago, and so I was able to go instead.

It was there that Susan had seen fit to dress up as "Super Broccoli", assuming the joint role of cheer leader and mascot for the school's "green" team.

And that explains the initials "S.B." she had attached, along with mine, to the card that sat on the yellow roses she had delivered to Jim the day after his nightmare.

"Don't worry, be happy," the card had started out, along with the words, "You did it," which indicated she already knew of Jim's reputation as a consummate professional.

For when she had the flowers sent, she hadn't even heard if Jim had survived the ordeal or not. But with some people, you just know they will.

And it wasn't Susan who told me about her act of sympathetic compassion. No, I had to do a bit of my own digging to find out for sure.

After all, Jim was more than a little anxious to learn the identity of his secret admirer. His wife, Jean, had denied any knowledge of the caper, so it was important that we keep peace in the family.

I won't tell you how I pried it out of the flower shop. Reporters have their ways. But I did reassure them I wasn't out to blow the whistle on some illicit affair.

Now I know it's not fair to embarrass people by hanging up their good deeds for all to see. For that is never the intent of these good Samaritans.

But I just thought you might like to know that the world is still capable of throwing a wonderful surprise our way.

And for Jim Thomas, and myself, this was one of those surprises.

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