

## Popping the Question

I decided after we had been dating for two years I would sell my motorcycle and buy an engagement ring for Jeannette with the money. On the next visit to St. Louis Jeannette and I went shopping and we just happened to pass a jewelry store where she saw a ring she liked. Later I returned to the store and purchased the ring with the intention of popping the question on our next date.

Since Jeannette and I spent so much time dating in Forest Park I decided when it was time to ask her to marry me that I would do it there. I found out years later that my friend Marvin Ross, the artist in residence at the Institute for Creation Research who also grew up in St. Louis, asked his wife, Nancy, to marry him in the same place. We both made our proposals at the lake at the foot of Art Hill just below the giant statue of St. Louis riding his horse across the front of the Art Museum.

But, that's where the similarity ended. I decided to not only ask Jeannette for her hand in marriage but also determined to make it memorable by cloaking it in a riddle. Since I was a science major at an engineering school, I decided to combine a mechanical analogy with child rearing. I remember asking her, "Would you like to help me make some tricycle motors?" Jeannette told me later that I forgot to offer her the ring. So, she was completely stumped and had no idea what I was talking about. After a long pause I finally decided I needed to decode my question and said, "Would you marry me and help me make tricycle motors? You know, have children to ride tricycles!" She continued to look perplexed and finally answered, "You mean right now!" Apparently, she was thinking I had proposed a science experiment, that completely confused her. By this time, I was embarrassed and realized I had forgotten to offer her the ring. "Of course not," I said. "I meant after we get married", pulling the box from my pocket and opening it. "I mean, ahh, I, umm ..., do you want to marry me and have children?"

Somewhat timidly after seeing the ring and with a hint of a question in her voice she said, "Yes". Fortunately, she took the ring and honored her commitment to marry me, but it took almost three months for her to select a date for our wedding.

I was never quite sure if she wanted to have more time to contemplate my fumbled marriage proposal, or if she truly wanted to wait until the next year to get married.

That evening we celebrated by going to Cyrano De Bergerac's -- one of our favorite restaurants in St. Louis. The waiters in the restaurant were students at Concordia Seminary across the street. They served an ice cream dessert called Cherries Jubilee. It was slightly-melted vanilla ice cream covered with a mixture of hot bing cherries, brandy, and orange zest. The mixture was heated in a skillet and the brandy burned off in a blue flame at your table. It was a wonderful way to celebrate our engagement. So, all's well that ends well.