

The Island Yankee

By Suzanne Williams

I have noticed that many people who have either uncommon names or way-too-common names hate the name they're given. I am one of them. I don't hate my name exactly, but I wish some people would just know how to pronounce it!

I had a job last summer at Canobie Lake Park, an amusement park in my hometown back in the States. Like many other jobs people have, I needed to wear a nametag. This was probably for the employers' sake, but guests tried to say my name, and most of them thought my name was Susan. Well, Susan is a nice name unto itself, it's just not my name. Sometimes, during a hard day, I just wanted to scream at the people, "Look, why don't you cover up the first three letters and say it? Is it pronounced 'un'? No, it's ANNE! Therefore, my name is Suz-anne! Now say it right!"

Throughout school, I had to suffer with people singing, "Oh, Susannah" or "Wake Up Little Susie". I will admit I was called Suzy often enough during my childhood, and I still am by family members and friends back home. (But I did not ruin my reputation by falling asleep at the movie theatre while on a date, like the girl in the song.)

No, but my reputation was ruined quite a lot throughout schooling... Public schools. Ugh! The teachers don't realize what's going on. They think teasing is just for fun. ("Oh, isn't that cute? The kids are fighting again!") School is a cruel place, where kids can get away with anything they want. I used to wish that I could have been home-schooled, but because my mother was raising my sister and I alone, it wasn't possible.

Maybe if I had been home-schooled, my outlook on life and society would be different...

My parents got divorced. I used to think that if I hadn't have been born, I could have prevented it. I also used to think that they were going to get divorced anyway and just kept suffering because they found out I was on the way. I was jealous because they stayed together long enough for Darlene's fourth birthday but they couldn't stay together eight months longer to celebrate even my first.

Divorce. What a cruel word. In the United States, the last time I checked, one out of two marriages ended in a divorce. It may be higher now, sadly enough, maybe three out of five or two out of three. I was primarily raised by my mother, but also by her parents. She had moved us out six hundred miles from Pennsylvania to New Hampshire when I was four months old. I miss my grandparents now.

My grandmother passed on almost seven years ago, and my grandfather has since remarried. I miss my grandmother so much. I am what she looked like fifty years ago. She was the happy woman, with a marriage that lasted forty-four years. Why can't people be happy after they get married? Or is it just fashionable to get divorced in this day and age? There is no assurance at all if a marriage will work out. People seem to get angry and break up for no apparent reason.

My history professor, David Weale, has constantly mentioned that "the more civilized a society is, the more angry it is". I tend to agree. Especially when it comes to

driving. I have a twenty-mile drive on the TransCanada before the Hillsborough Bridge, and I can't stand it when some bozo can't go fast enough to do the speed limit. People come out from side streets and slow you down and ruin your gas mileage. I miss the four-lane highways we have at home. They are raised off of the ground so the only times you get slowed down are when some idiot doesn't check to see if anyone is coming before he zooms in from the entrance ramp. I will admit, however, that entrance ramps off Canadian highways are longer than the American ones, in terms of keeping the lane longer by the dotted line, so that helps to prevent accidents better. It's really dangerous to pass someone you can't see past on these two-lane highways, though. You dart out into the other lane (when the broken line allows it, which is practically never) and then a car coming the other way almost hits you. Either that or you play the game of chicken before someone finally swerves out of the way. This usually happens to me when I am halfway past a car, so I'm not the one who has to sacrifice. Before I had to live with two-lane highways only, driving used to be the one thing that I really enjoyed... It's almost as bad as having someone call you by the wrong name for your entire life, huh?.

My mother has mentioned to me in the past that she wanted to name me Susannah, but her friends in Pennsylvania had warned her that the children at school would make fun of me by singing that song. She took their advice, but it happened anyway.

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