

GOOD OLD DAYS®

The Magazine That Remembers the Best • January/February 2026

Young Love

Tales of That First Crush

Snow Days!

Winter Fun When The Temperatures Dropped

Let's Get Cooking

The Ways We Helped In the Kitchen

GOOD OLD DAYS®

Volume 63, No. 1
January/February 2026



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JOIN IN ON
THE *Fun!*

Find the whisk hidden in this issue and then let us know you found it! Post on Facebook (but don't list the page number) at <https://www.facebook.com/GoodOldDaysMag/>.

We will announce the hidden location in next month's Welcome. Be sure to play along!

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Love and the Valentine's Day Vaccination

His Valentine's Day dance partner from years ago came to his rescue in the present day.

By Joe "Kirsch" Curcio

Most people can't imagine anywhere in New York City being like a small town, but I can tell you with heartfelt conviction that my little "town" of Greenpoint/Williamsburg in the borough of Brooklyn, N.Y., was once a place where you were just minutes away from the spot where you had your very first kiss and just up the road from the church where one day you'd marry that very same gal.

Susan was almost a cliché of an Irish Catholic schoolgirl. She had thick glasses, freckles and, yes, braces too. She wasn't the prettiest girl in the class, but her kooky, offbeat smile gave her a whimsical charm that was secretly irresistible to me. I say secretly because, as we're all aware, no neighborhood Italian boy worth his weight in Sunday meatballs and Pixy Stix powder could ever admit to being smitten by messy-haired Susan Farcley!

By 1970, we had already seen a man walk on the moon, witnessed world leaders being assassinated, and read homesick letters from soldiers in Vietnam. We learned about crushes from Greg and Marsha on *The Brady Bunch* and pretty much everything else from

Love American Style. However, there was one thing that had yet to be explored—how to find our valentine.



Joe dancing with friends and schoolmates at the Valentine's Day dance.

Our teacher, Sister Margaret Miriam, remedied that. Right after morning prayers and the Pledge of Allegiance, my crisp, white school shirt was elbow deep inside of a long red sock containing the names of my female classmates. The small piece of paper I retrieved revealed my valentine. *Oh my goodness! It's Susan Farcley!*

The very next day, my mom took me to the neighborhood variety store, Ben & Franks, where we purchased a red sequined heart filled with Brach's valentine candy and a gift set of Jean Naté

perfume. Hey, I would have been fine giving my valentine a few strips of paper-backed candy buttons and maybe some of those Pixy Stix I mentioned earlier, but my mother insisted on the body splash-and-perfume gift set. She even made a red bag to put the gifts in.

That night at the Valentine's Day dance, with my heart racing and feeling thankful that there was no mistletoe-type kissing ceremony associated with this exchange, I approached Susan from behind. With a quick stealthy tap to her shoulder

and a muttered greeting, I handed over the frilly red bag—and quickly got the heck out of there! But just short of my

retreat, I noticed something that I'd never seen before on the face of a girl. It was a kind of glow, a radiance. She was suddenly stunning—or maybe just stunned. Now I really had to get the heck out of there!

Soon after being stricken by all this unexplained luminescence and completely confused, I couldn't tell if I was unintentionally avoiding Susan or intentionally avoiding her in order to unintentionally walk past her to avoid her. Oh boy! Then, in a sudden moment of mercy, either for her or for myself, as she sat alone in the corner, I walked over and asked her if she wanted to dance.

A few days later, Sister Margaret decided to put up a slide show of the

photos she had taken at the dance. Suddenly there I was in living color, projected 6 feet across the blackboard in a full-blown boogie-on-down with Susan Farcley! Our arms flared out, and our upper teeth were clamped like gophers in an overbite across our lower lips. There I was—forever captured in a stop-motion moment that would leave me wide open for every future taunt and tease.

In the midst of all of the laughter, I recall regretting ever asking Susan to dance, and ever handing her that stupid

red bag! I was even disgusted by the scent of the perfume I had given her. This was pure and painful adolescent humiliation—for

both of us. I thought that the jeering of that day would never end, but then, in a flash, it did end. It was over—and it was suddenly 50-odd years later.

Decades had passed, and suddenly the world had plunged into the grip of the 2020 pandemic. My health had placed me at the top of the heap of those prioritized to need the vaccination. But the vaccine shortage was prevalent, and no matter how hard I tried, I couldn't get an appointment anywhere. Then suddenly, I got a message on Facebook:

Dear Joe, I hope you're doing well. It's been a long time. I saw your post on Facebook about not being able to find a place to get vaccinated. I hope it's OK and you don't

mind, but I was able to go online and make an appointment for you for next week not far from your house in Brooklyn. Take care and good luck, Susan Farcley.

Oh my goodness! It's Susan Farcley! I recalled using that phrase so many years before when I pulled her name out of that long red sock. It had been 50 years since our dance together. I was overwhelmed and truly touched by her message.

I will admit now that handing that frilly red bag of candy and perfume to Susan that night did get my young heart pumping. I suppose if things had worked out differently these many years later, sharing sweets with her would probably now send my A1C soaring as well. But we never did have that very first Brooklyn kiss or end up

together at the church where most of our old friends had long ago been married.

Susan did tell me that I was the first boy to ever give her a valentine. Of course, I never did admit that she was my first valentine as well. I did tell her how grateful I was to her for the way she reached out to help me, and we did get at least to share a hug. We occasionally chatted online and exchanged holiday cards for a while, but gradually we lost touch again not long after.

As I reflected on those wonderfully confusing days of youth, I wondered what I would title the story of Susan and me. I decided I'd have to follow suit with *Love American Style* and call it "Love and the Valentine's Day Vaccination." ♦