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WE'RE HUSBANDING OUR STRENGTH



by Dick Emmons

I F I CAN BELIEVE the calendar on my kitchen wall (and these days you have to believe in something), it won't be long until the horns come out and 1959 comes in.

That means you fellows haven't much time left in which to draw up your list of resolutions. Tough!

Now if you belonged to the Ardmoo Avenue Husbands Self-Preservation Society, as I do, you'd have your work all finished.

I called an emergency secret meeting of the group in my garage the other night, and it was an inspiring experience. The fellows gathered tensely, the candle-light reflecting eerily off my collection of old license plates, to take concerted action for the year ahead.

"Gentlemen," I said hoarsely (after the last husband had given the countersign—Economy Forever—and been admitted), "a frightening New Year is almost upon us. Nineteen fifty-nine will be either a year of united defense against drains on our income or—"

"Financial ruin," Fred Phelps glumly finished for me. My voice dropped. "As we all know, 1958 will go down in the annals of Ardmoo Avenue as the year of the automatic dishwasher debacle."

"Charley started it!" an accusing voice snapped. "Now there isn't a house on the street without one," another added grimly.

Charley sprang to his feet, flushed and excited. "I bought Gladys a dishwasher in self-defense!" he shouted.

"She saw Sally Phelps' wall-to-wall carpeting, and it was either the \$300 dishwasher or a \$1,000 rug job!"

There were audible groans when the Phelps' carpeting was mentioned.

"Gentlemen," I pleaded. "I know it's been difficult for all of us. But recrimination won't help. My point is that with the Christmas bills dead ahead of us, we must open an effective holding action."

"Hear, hear!" someone cried.

I smiled. "I suggest you repeat this pledge after me: 'I, (then insert your name), being a grown man of free will and head of my household, do hereby promise that I will not knowingly or willingly approve the expenditure of funds for furniture or other home appurtenances in the year 1959 without first obtaining the unanimous consent of this association.'"

I saw Fred Phelps' lower lip tremble. "Does that include electric frying pans?" he gulped. "I already told Sally she could have one if she lets me get my tennis racket restrung." He looked around worriedly.

Hostile eyes met his. Then Jim Bradbury leaped to his feet. "I can get Fred an electric frying pan at cost through a guy I know!" he announced. "It won't go more than 10 bucks!"

A cheer rang through the garage and suddenly everyone was pumping Jim's hand and patting Fred's back.

There was wetness in Fred's eyes when he finally gained the floor. "Thanks, fellows," he choked.

We spent the rest of the meeting drawing up our 1959 resolutions. They go like this:

1. No man shall spend more than \$10 on a household item without the group's prior consent.
2. However, if such an expenditure becomes necessary, he will arrange to have the item delivered after dark.
3. Any man who willfully breaks the rules shall automatically be dropped from club membership, become ineligible for participation in car pools, and be refused loans (monetary or garden implement).
4. No wife shall ever learn of this solemn pact.
5. If it works, we'll do it again for 1960.



I Was Just Thinking...

. . . HELLO, NEW YEAR. Are you waiting for me?

There is crimson at your throat and a cloud around your head. Are these an omen for me? And is it good or bad?

This is the time to put away remembrance and wear expectation like a new coat. This is the time to begin and the time to forget.

What have you begun for me, New Year? What is hidden in your morning and concealed behind your eyes? Am I on the threshold of ecstasy or tragedy?

Don't tell me. Let me live you out.

Let me laugh, New Year. Let me love. Let me cry if I must and comfort me then with the pendulum of time.

Give me no more heartache than I can bear and, if it must be more, give me the hours and days and weeks to learn endurance.

Give me more happiness than I anticipate, for I am hungry for it. And, if I find it now in your first morning, let me find it also in your last night.

You may be a year with fire in you. Or ashes. You may be a year of light. Or darkness.

But give me the peace of you, New Year, and the relativity of your calendar. Let the moments I cherish linger with me like a sigh and let the hours I suffer of you pass as swift as passion passes when love is done.

I am a little afraid of you, New Year, a little enamored of you. You are a promise and a threat. And, if you destroy the past, give me the future. For I must cling to something, even if it should be only what lies beyond.

Hello, New Year. Are you waiting? Take me.

Patty Johnson

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