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# The Judson Journal

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SUMMER EDITION  
VOL. 55, NO. 3  
JULY 15, 1999

## “MEET ME AT THE CAHILL FAIR”

### SUMMER SATURDAY, 1959:

Using the scotch tape to remove the last speck of white fuzz from my black pants, I look into the mirror and make sure that my white Ban-Lon shirt is spotless. With two bucks in my pocket I quickly run down the stairs and out the door to join the guys on the corner of J&I. The gang of guys gathered on the corner are all waiting to go to the “Cahill Fair”. Roger, Ronny, Bart Yearn and Squid start the walk up Indiana Ave. Squid says to the rest of us, “We’ll meet you at the fair.” Trignani is talking to “Livin” about these two chicks Ginny and Anne from K&A he expects to “meet at the fair.” Horn and Petchy have decided to take off and as they leave they whistle the tune. “Meet Me At The Fair.” Chuck Wagon tells me about this new electric box that he hooks up to his accordion to make it sound like an organ. Walt whispers into my ear, “I can’t stand to hear another bar of “Lady Of Spain” even if it sounds like Prez Prato is playing it.” I begin to walk up Indiana with the rest of the guys. Passing Taylor St. we all greet “Ziggy” Cappa and his wife Norma sitting on the step at the side door to their house. At 25<sup>th</sup> St. Anita Saulino and her mother, Catherine, are talking to her Uncle Frank Nicastro sitting in his brand new shiny black Ford. Franky Grosso joins the gang at the corner of 26<sup>th</sup> St. I stop to talk to young Joe Petruzzelli for a while. Rushing to catch up to the crowd, I bump into Earl Mercadante knocking this very thin large black leather case he is carrying out of his hand. “Man these are my drawings!” I help Earl retrieve his case and put his art work in order. He continues to walk after informing me, “No harm done.” Moving as fast as I can in these “Cuban Heel” shoes without falling,

I pass by Whittier playground. On the basketball courts I see George Gavioli, and Dave Karracoff playing against Albert Nanni and Louie Torendi as Mickey Finn watch from the side line. Approaching the Clearfield Street entrance to the Fair, Jeannie and her brother John D’Orazio are coming out of their house near 28<sup>th</sup> St. My mind quickly turns from wanting to catch up with the guys to the smells of popcorn, french fries and cotton candy. The cotton candy wins out over the others. While standing in line at the “Cotton Candy” stand I notice Marianne Kenny buying a caramel apple taffy. Pat Buscio is walking pass with a group of girls who I think are from St. Columba’s parish. Walking very slowly eating my cotton candy, I stop and talk to Vinny Saldutti who is with Jeannie Johnstin and her brother Bud. Charley Atmore and Billy Stinson are making their way over to a group of girls who are not familiar to me. One particular chick is looking at me and smiling. I wave to her, as I pass by where she is standing. She waves back to me, but I am distracted by Barbell who calls out my name. Together with him and his girlfriend Peggy Finn, I walk over to the “Bottle Pitch” stand. On the very first throw Barbell manages to knock the three bottles down, but only two of them fall off the table they were stacked on. His second shot proves to be a perfect bulls-eye and the three bottles go tumbling off the table. The three of us begin to shout and jump up and down, as a crowd begins to gather around us. The man who is running the stand doesn’t look pleased about the situation. Peggy reaches over the counter and takes hold of her white teddy bear with a pink bow tied around its neck. My mind quickly turns to the thought

of the chick who waved to me. I look over to where she was standing, but she and the crowd are gone. I begin to walk quickly around all the stands to see if I can locate her. Lucille Machione and her boyfriend Rich Paone are standing behind Bob Lucarini who is trying his skill at the shooting gallery. I hear someone shouting my name and as I look up at the Ferris Wheel I see my cousin Sophia Vassallo and Dolores Vianello waving to me from the swinging seat stopped at the top. Waving back to them with my head facing up, I am pushed forward by the crowds of people walking over to the “Test Your Strength Stand.” Michael “Nails” Mangini is winding up the heavy large mallet over his head. He brings it down forcefully on the metal plate; the metal disk rises up the column to the top and rings the bell. The crowd cheers, as Carmen D’Amico, “Bucky” Lardoni, Joe and Ralph Diciano pat a smiling Nails on his back. My focus turns, should I find the guys or the pretty chick who waved to me? Approaching me are Mario Amici and Joe Stellacio. I ask them if they have seen any of the guys, but they give me a negative answer. Just then out of the corner of my eye I see the chick. I walk over to her with my heart pounding. I tell her my name and she replies with, “My name is Pat McGrath. I’m from St. Columba’s.” We begin to trade some small talk about where we go to high school, when we are interrupted by her friends asking her to hurry up, because they have to get home. Out of the crowd from every direction come the guys. I quickly say to Pat, “Meet me here at the fair tomorrow night” She waves and says, “Okay near the Caterpillar Ride!” Thank God I didn’t spend all of my two bucks. **Fair-well for the summer!!**