

THIS NEW YEAR'S RESOLUTION SHE KEPT FOR HIM

Second Thoughts

By J. B. Leftwich, Columnist

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I make one resolution each New Year's Day, break it before the day is over, and forget about it.

On the first day of each year, I resolve not to spend the day in front of the television set looking at football games. And each New Year's Day I spend the day in front of the television set looking at football games. Sort of a wasted effort, that resolution, but it saves me from trying to think of something else to resolve about.

New Year's Day 1991 was different. I kept my resolution. Not by choice, mind you, but at the instigation of my bride.

"What a beautiful day," she exulted after dressing and applying a smidgen of Elizabeth Taylor's "Passion" perfume which one of her daughters had given her for Christmas.

"Have you noticed I smell like Elizabeth Taylor?"

I didn't respond to this. I didn't want her to think I had been sniffing Elizabeth Taylor.

But she was in such a good mood that I doubt even that random thought would have affected her frame of mind.

"This is my day," she announced.

I understood her meaning. The last child, child-in-law and grandchild had returned to their own domicile, and she no longer was faced with cooking meals and cleaning house for a large family.

"This is my day," she repeated. I could imagine her walking in the sunshine or reading a good book. I thought, well this also is my day.

Then the other she fell.

"I think we'll wash all of the tumblers and cups and saucers in our collection," she announced.

The first person plural pronoun wasn't lost on me. I noticed but said nothing. Maybe she was using the editorial "we."

She wasn't. She was using the inclusive "we."

Several hours later, with two TV sets in place, I set down to watch Tennessee play Virginia and Notre Dame play Colorado. As I had predicted, Virginia made the Sugar Bowl game one of the most interesting of the series.

A football team is not the same team after several days layoff between the end of the season and date of the bowl game. Players' injuries heal, a last game loser becomes motivated with the hope of restoring its prestige. And a Virginia team with a healthy Shawn Moore is worthy of national ranking.

I pulled for Notre Dame in the Orange Bow. I like Notre Dame for its reputation, its program and its integrity. In addition, I like Georgia Tech. If the Rocket's long touchdown run in the closing minutes of the game had not been nullified by a clipping penalty, Tech would be the AP's national champion.

But one of the greatest thrills was in the Liberty Bowl at Memphis where Air Force beat nationally ranked Ohio State. I have never been a Big Ten fan, and I usually root for the service academy teams. It was a pleasure for me to watch Air Force, an underrated underdog, dominate a larger and more talented Ohio State team. And Air Force did 99 percent of it on the ground, throwing three passes in the game.

Despite Notre Dame's loss, the day went well for me. Tennessee managed to come back in the second half with a thrilling and almost flawless performance to edge Virginia, my bride had her day, and all of the tumblers and cups and saucers are clean one more time.

And, indeed, she does smell like Elizabeth Taylor.

I guess.

(J.B. Leftwich is a veteran journalist and a columnist for *The Lebanon Democrat*.
Email: leftwichjb@charter.net)

<http://www.ajlambert.com>