

FROM WHERE I SIT

JOHN COONEY

Green With Envy

My wife broke her arm a while back. Tripped on some foreign steps, went down like a sack of spuds, and smashed it real bad. (I suggested later that she may have had a senior moment. She told me she had no such thing, that she was pushed. I suggested that she was in denial. She offered to push *me* down some steps.)

Anyway, we were remembering all this just the other day, eating lunch, outside, on the deck. She told me how, centuries ago, when she was still at school, she used to envy kids who broke an arm or a leg.

And I remembered feeling the same ...

Kids who fractured bones were heroes. They would strut around school with their arm or leg in plaster like they were King or Queen of the Whole Wide World and all the other kids would stop and stare and run over and say oh what happened oh you poor thing ouch I bet it hurt and sign their names and draw pictures all over it and offer to carry their books and lend them a rubber and even give them a sandwich.

Yep, kids in plaster were lucky kids indeed. And unlucky kids, like me and my wife, used to wish that one day (please God) it might happen to us.



Well, we laughed so much as we shared this memory that we've shared it since with some friends. And, as often happens on these occasions, other confessions have come out of the woodwork ...

I recall being envious of David who went to Boys Brigade, because he got to

WOULD YOU LIKE SOME CHEESE TO GO WITH THAT WHINE?

march around in a uniform with badges on, and I wanted to march around in a uniform with badges on. So Mum borrowed me a uniform and David loaned me a badge and I went to Boys Brigade – but for only one night, which was the night we learned to tie knots.

My sister recalls wishing she was deaf, because a deaf man we knew could do sign language really well – and my sister was so envious she used to stuff cotton-wool in her ears and practise sign-language in front of our bathroom mirror.

I remember wishing I could kiss girls, because Max from our church was always kissing girls – which was something I'd never done. I wished it so much that, one day, on the way home from school, me and my best friend Doug kissed Beverly, the girl down the road, and it felt so weird that we had to do it again, three times.

A work colleague remembers wishing she had bandy legs, because kids with bandy legs looked so athletic – whereas her knees used to rub when she walked. She was also envious of girls who used

hairspray – so she made her own, out of sugar and water, which used to attract ants.

But *it's* my wife who came up with the most bizarre confession, and she wins first prize ...

She used to envy kids (*can you believe this?*) who had braces on their teeth! And the bigger, shinier and more-sticky-outy the braces, the greener was her envy!

But wait ... there's even more:

She admits (*I kid you not*) that she used to sneak into her father's shed and use his pliers and his wire to fashion for herself a set of braces. She'd bend them around her teeth, hold them in with her fingers, and walk along the street to the IGA store thinking how cool she was.

Makes me wonder what else I've yet to learn about this woman who, for 37 years, has been sharing my bed ...

JOHN, GRAPEVINE'S FOUNDER & EDITOR, NEVER FELT THE NEED TO KISS ANOTHER GIRL ON THE WAY HOME FROM SCHOOL – BUT HE STILL QUITE FANCIES HIMSELF IN A UNIFORM.

THORT



My doctor told me I needed to get in shape, so I joined this aerobics class. I bent, twisted, jumped up and down, and sweated like a pig for over an hour. But, by the time I got my shorts on, the class was over!