

Sunday Shoes

This story was told by Loretta Frei Adams.

The Dixie Round Up Rodeo has been an institution in Washington County for over 80 years. As part of the 3-day festivities, a parade was held for each of the 3 days: Thursday was a children's parade, Friday was a general parade, and Saturday was a "beauty parade" with lovely young women wearing swimsuits.

In about 1954 Loretta and Patsy (Pat) Gubler, two very attractive young ladies from Santa Clara, had been asked to ride in the parade. Being asked to represent a business or organization in the parade was considered an honor.

The shopping opportunities for nicer, fancier swimsuits was very limited in St George, so Loretta and Patsy, with their mothers (Wanda Frei and Thelma Gubler), went to Las Vegas to shop for beautiful swimsuits.

After they found their swimsuits, they decided they needed high heels to wear with them, so they went into a shoe store to look for shoes to match their swimsuits.

The clerk, a man, approached them and asked how he could help them. They replied that they were looking for "Sunday shoes." Now, to these innocent young girls, they typically only wore high heels on Sundays, and we all differentiated our Sunday shoes from our everyday shoes, so the term was common among our small communities.

The clerk looked at them with an amused and condescending look and asked, "What are Sunday shoes? Are they different from other shoes?"

They realized that he had pegged them as naïve little country girls and were very embarrassed. It was one of those devastating moments that stay with us forever, but, as the years pass, become a funny story!



Loretta on the Elks Club float in the beauty parade.

The story also shows how society's norms have changed. A "beauty parade?" Even the term sounds sexist to modern ears. And young girls parading in swimsuits? Even that term has a different connotation than what comes to mind today. Swimsuits in the 1950s were very modest, with panels that covered the top of one's thighs, and had no plunging and revealing designs on the top, either. Oh, for the good old days!