

A VENT WINDOW VIEW  
**CARS, CRINOLINES, AND COEDS**  
OCTOBER 2015

Between car advertisements and the Rock and Roll music pouring from car radios in the mid-fifties, those of us who were young ... and perhaps a bit dumb ... were ripe fruit for the minions of Madison Avenue.

Romantic displays of automobile ads seen on television served to make every young man with plenty of “cool” and a “flat-top” haircut think that a standout vehicle was his ticket to success with the ladies. I had the flat-top.

Naturally, ownership of a car would have been my preference, with the vehicle of choice being a V-8 convertible equipped with air-conditioning, whitewall tires, and a “four-on-the-floor” transmission. A top of the line radio and duel pipes were absolutes.

Meanwhile, as I dreamed of white-wall tires and fancy hubcaps the lasses in my general age group who, for the most part, roomed in the girls’ dorms, were busily expanding the hemlines of their poodle skirts. The primary method selected by most of the females I knew was to add multiple layers of starched crinoline slips in the belief that particular style was key to their future happiness. They truly were “*Girls of the Fifties*” according to the K. T. Oslin song *80’s Ladies* that she introduced almost half a century later.

The crinoline-laden “college” beauties that I encountered in classes and when washing dishes in the college cafeteria were older, but they looked much like the girls that I had known during my last year in high school. Now, looking back, I guess that was largely due to their crinolines.

About the first lesson learned in my first semester in college was that the girls who shared my classes were far more advanced than I in everything considered important by young men who imagined themselves to be Lotharios. It soon became clear that what I’d learned about “romancing” girls in high school was truly “bush league” and yet, here I was trying to play in the majors!

It did not take me long to grasp that my skills were not up to playing the game at the level required for any success. I was lacking in experience, was low on cash, and had no car; I was a perfect example of the “*three strikes and you’re out*” adage. Oh, I figured that I could work some extra time at my cafeteria job and, possibly borrow a car for a date, but—my youth and lack of experience was an unfixable problem.

Up to that point in my life I didn’t know that age, be it too much or too little, had considerable bearing on one’s love life. An archaeologist, for one example, is probably the best possible husband that a woman can have simply because he will become more interested in her the older she gets.

Credit for that informative note belongs to Agatha Christie; I do not know if Agatha was ever interested in automobiles, but her understanding about how a man’s mind works suggests she might understand a guy’s interest in restoring a rusty four-wheeler born on an assembly line in Detroit as well as cuddling up to an older woman. Let me add that there may be just as many women interested in older vehicles and older men as there are men who adore older cars and, “ahem,” *older* women--miles and age-related wear and tear notwithstanding.

A big reason for an aging man’s continuing interest in those two subjects has to do with his recall of days gone by when the cars and women he most admired were too pricey for his pocketbook. That often led him into spending his money on base models (I’m referring to cars) only because they were affordable. (Think four-door sedan in basic trim with no options rather than a highly chromed red ragtop loaded with options.)

Choices for an aging guy are limited in too many areas; this tends to suggest that his safest ventures may involve placing his affections upon older cars--unless he is an archaeologist. In that case he might want to consider spending his senior years with an older woman. She’ll appreciate him.