

From Henry's Desk by Henry Holland

## TIME and CONTRAST

In the 1986 film, *Peggy Sue Got Married*, the main character portrayed by Kathleen Turner, is going through a divorce and attends her twenty-fifth high school class reunion. At the reunion event, she is recognized as her class's high school prom queen, and as part of the reunion celebration, she is crowned again on the stage. In the *deja vu* (the sensation or illusion that one is seeing what one has seen before) excitement of the event, she faints and when she regains consciousness, she is lying in a hospital bed, but the year is the Spring of 1960, or twenty-five years earlier when Peggy Sue was a senior in high school. Her life had gone back in TIME twenty-five years, but she had retained total knowledge of the next twenty-five years. The plot of the story revolves around her dilemma in what to treasure and what to attempt to change with this foreknowledge. For example, she tries to tell her boy friend, who is in a rock band, that he should write a song entitled "You Love Me, Yeh, Yeh", and she tries to make a pair of panty hose to no avail. She does call and visit her grandparents; an event which she treasures since they had died by 1985. The film raises the question of what would we do different if we had a second chance or what we would choose to savor at some time in the past in CONTRAST to what we know now. This might prove to be a perplexing dilemma if we experienced this Peggy Sue phenomenon.

If I fainted at a party among old friends and awakened in July, 1950, the first thing that I would do would be to run through my entire neighborhood including the school yard playground. I would run until I could run no more because of exhaustion. I would race up stairs two and three steps at a time. I would avoid all elevators. I would play football, baseball, basketball, dodge ball and go swimming. I would go everywhere on my bicycle. I would do many things, but mostly I would RUN. I last ran on September 16, 1950. The next day I became ill with the polio virus. If I had the "Peggy Sue" opportunity, I would give serious thought to convincing my family to send me to a different school at the beginning of that year. I would do everything I could possibly imagine to avoid exposure to that virus. If I had been able to do just that, what would be the CONTRAST in my life now? Would I have still gone to medical school, become a psychiatrist, married, and had three children? How would each of you answer this same mystery? If you had avoided that destructive virus, what might have been? Would your life have been vastly different, better, or possibly worse? Of course, some of us were more severely affected by this virus than others, and maybe for those who experienced good recoveries, the virus had little effect on the events and choices made in your life, but NOW after much elapse of TIME, we have post polio syndrome. We really do have a *deja vu* experience and the playing field is once again not level. We have another CONTRAST in TIME. Some of us with the best recoveries are having significant problems with PPS. The maintenance of past life

energies are rapidly waning, requiring difficult life style changes. This is not simple aging, this is another surprise attack, just not quite as sudden, but equally unfair. "Oh, Peggy Sue, Peggy Sue, how my heart yearns for you."

Or would we really like a second chance back in time? Maybe the mystery of life involves the dilemma of who is chosen for a certain experience and who is not; who is endowed with special gifts and who is not; who thrives in their existence and who does not. Without the eternal passage of TIME and evolving CONTRAST, we might be devoid of meaning. As a generalization in assigning some meaning to our group, possibly we were chosen for a certain unique experience, were endowed with the gifts to deal with this experience, and now have the striving, dogged determination of the past with the philosophic acceptance of the present. We have existed in TIME and now we are experiencing the CONTRAST, and hopefully we feel some exhilaration in the joy and miracle of our individual and mutual experience in this life.

Peggy Sue, wake up from your dream and celebrate today and the hope of tomorrow.