

# Do You Smoke?

*by* Jerry Ratch

Do you remember buying me a pair of knee-high boots? They laced up the front, I think. Really cool boots. Strange, the stuff you remember.

To be truthful, I can't remember exactly what information Sharon and I exchanged about you. I know we didn't get too personal - we were friends, but some things we just kept to ourselves. (So, yes, you can take a breath now... it's ok.) I know we shared enough information to irritate you, though, because one time after I mentioned something you said to Sharon, you got kind of p.o.'d and said something about how "this crap has to stop" or something similar to those words.

What I do remember is her mother though. She was one weird lady. One time I was at Sharon's house when her mother came home. I was sitting on the couch and as she walked by, she stopped right in front of me and asked "do you smoke?" In those days, you didn't advertise to parents that you smoked, so I just kind of froze. She said, "I'm not going to yell at you. I ran out of cigarettes and just want to borrow one" (the look on her face added the words "you moron.") I could never really put my finger on it, but I always had the feeling she was not your typical mother-type. At least not like mine. Anyhow, that was the only time I ever gave cigarettes to anyone's mother.

To answer your question, I graduated in 1966. I must have remembered your graduation year wrong because I lied to my parents about how old you were and eventually the lie became the reality. They never would have let me go out with you if they knew how old you really were. They weren't happy about your age even though I shaved a couple years off it.

