



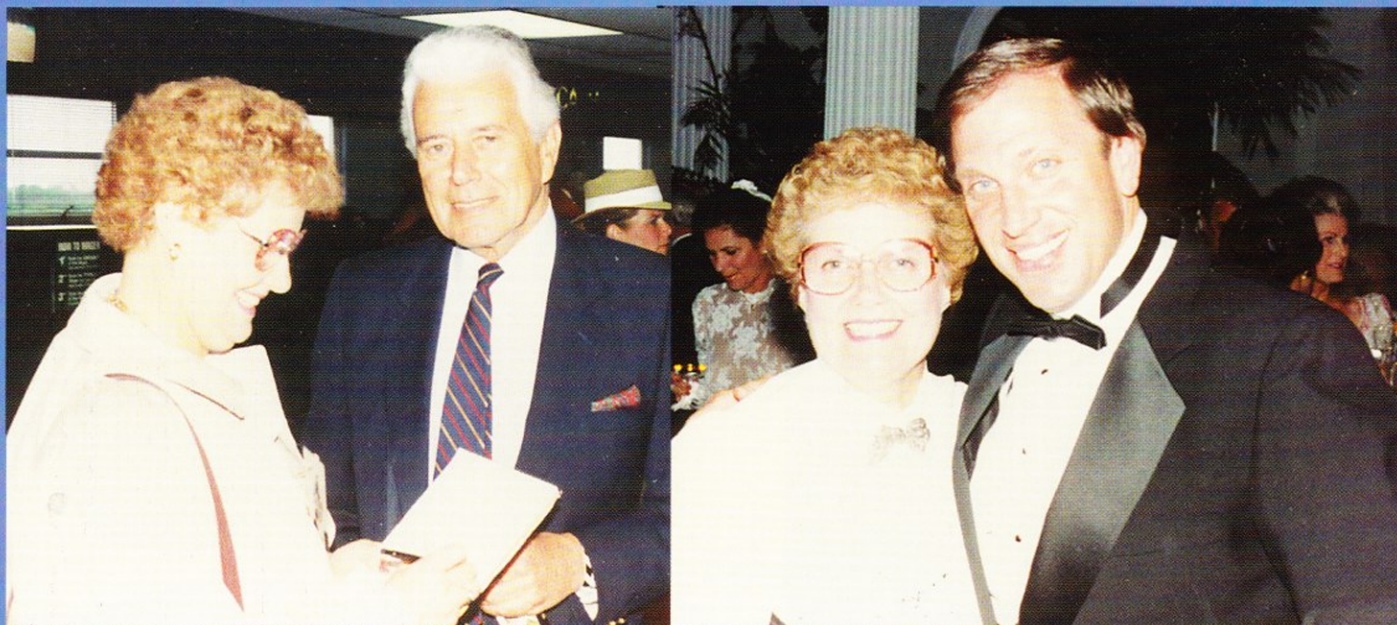
*On the inside track
with Saratoga's
rich & famous*



J EANNETTE J ORDAN



By Ann Hauprich



Everyone knows society columnist Jeannette Jordan is on the inside track with the rich and famous who frequent The Spa City each summer. And, from an outsider's perspective, it would appear she "tells all" to readers of *The Saratogian*.

In fact, the opposite is true; the secret of the seasoned writer's success lies in her ability to keep a secret.

"Over the years, I've built a trust with celebrities; they know I can keep a confidence," says Jeannette, whose discretion has earned her many "scoops" over the past 17 years.

When socialite Marylou Whitney and John Hendrickson tied the knot in Alaska several years ago, for example, the first reporter they shared the good news with was Jeannette Jordan. Upon their return to their Cady Hill Estate on Geyser Road, she was also the only journalist to be honored with an invitation to attend and photograph the ceremony conducted by the Rev. Thomas Parke inside their private chapel on the grounds.

Another time, Jeannette and Augustus ("Augie") -- her husband of nearly half a century -- were enjoying a celebration at The Wishing Well Restaurant on the eve of the Kentucky Derby when they were treated to a surprise beyond their wildest dreams.

"John pulled me onto the dance floor and Marylou did the same thing with Augie," recalls Jeannette. "We were asked if we'd like to meet them at the Saratoga County Airport the next morning to fly in Marylou's private jet to the Kentucky Derby. If that wasn't a big enough thrill, we were joined by Walter Cronkite and his lovely wife Betsy and spent the day being introduced to stars like Prince Andrew, Jack Nicholson, Sylvester Stallone and Bo Derek.



Though the jet landed safely back in Saratoga later that evening, it took Jeannette a few more days to get her feet back on the ground!

Among the others with whom Jeannette has had the pleasure of rubbing elbows over the years are actors David Hyde Pierce and John Forsythe, comedienne Joan Rivers, talk show host Merv Griffin, actress Eva Gabor, multimillionaire Donald Trump, singer Tony Bennett, popular husband-wife celebrities Gary Collins and Mary Ann Mobley and the late dancer Ginger Rogers.



Clockwise from top left, columnist Jeannette Jordan with actor John Forsythe; ESPN racing commentator Chris Lincoln; socialite Marylou Whitney, Prince Albert; country-western singer Waylon Jennings; radio personality Joe Condon; NY Mets pitcher Turk Wendell; Dogwood Stable President "Cot" Campbell; Polka band leader Jimmy Sturr, jockey Richard Migliore and wife Carmine; Augie Jordan and sex therapist Dr. Ruth; and legendary actress Maureen Stapleton. With JJ on page 3 are singer Tony Bennett; actor David Hyde Pierce and Walter Cronkite with wife Betsy, Augie, Marylou and her private jet crew.

Given the phenomenal popularity of her column and the fact that she has won awards for her feature writing, one would never guess that Jeannette is a self-taught journalist.

"I really wanted to become a nurse, but put those plans on the back burner after Augie and I got married and started having children in the 1950s," recalls Jeannette. Although times were sometimes tough financially, the notion of Jeannette being anything other than a June Cleaver kind of mom never crossed the couple's minds.

"We'd always been one of those old-fashioned households where the mother was home to greet the children with milk and cookies at the end of the school day, so the idea of me working full-time was out of the question when the kids were small. It wasn't always easy back then. In fact with four kids being put through private schools and then college, we really had to struggle along the way. Believe me, there was many a night we ate hot dogs, and, for many years Augie worked two jobs so I could stay home with the children. At times, I'd wonder if it was worth all the sacrifice."

A turning point in Jeannette's life came in 1973 when their youngest was a freshman in high school. Jeannette agreed to fill in at *The Saratogian* as a part-time proofreader.

As fate would have it, the proofreader Jeannette was temporarily replacing decided not to return to work, and before she knew it, Jeannette had been offered a full-time position. She accepted it -- on the condition that she would be home in time to get supper on the table!

Around 1984, Jeannette -- who had been writing some features and a society column for the paper -- was promoted to Features Editor. Over the next few years, the paper became her home away from home as she put in long hours writing, editing and laying out pages. Along the way she took some advanced writing courses and won a national award for a human interest story.

Although she loved her full-time position, the daily grind ultimately took its toll. "It was a fun job, but demanding in the sense that you were always racing to meet a deadline."

Hence, when Augie started talking about taking an early retirement from General Electric that would include relaxing winters basking in the Florida sunshine, Jeannette was quick to join him. "We were married for 28 years before we were able to take our first real vacation together," reflects Jeannette. "In some ways I guess we're making up for lost time!"

In fact, beams Jeannette, who was only 58 when she opted to retire from her full-time editing job at the end of 1990, the current arrangement is definitely as good as it gets!



The "scoop" on columnist Jeannette Jordan

CONTINUED FROM PREVIOUS PAGE

"I had been working (long hours), sometimes six days a week during the busy horse racing season, and I just felt I needed a break. I've since worked out an arrangement whereby I work only part-time from May till December. I set my own hours and choose where I write. As long as the work gets done, they don't care where I do it."

The rest of the year, Jeannette takes it easy (sort of) in and around the condominium she and Augie purchased in Florida. "Basically, I'm not the type to sit still. I'm always eager to travel, to meet new people and to make new friends. I wouldn't be happy if I woke up one morning and had nothing to do. I want to enjoy life to the fullest while I'm still able."

No chance of that happening during the six week racing season. In addition to her

weekly society column, Jeannette manages to pull together special sections of the newspaper which include a couple of summer magazines, a fall magazine and the paper's annual Holly Edition.

"During the racing season, it's party, party, party. Sometimes two and three big events in one day starting with brunches or lunches and moving on to cocktail parties and black tie galas. There's a reason they say Saratoga is the Summer Place to Be . . . and I'll tell you, it can get pretty difficult to stop in between parties and write!"

To better meet her deadlines, Jeannette uses a home computer and sometimes changes on the run.

"Many of the celebrations are annual events, so I shop for bargains ahead of time while I'm in Florida . . . and I also happen to be very good at recycling," laughs Jeannette.

When not buzzing about Saratoga Springs

in pursuit of stories, Jeannette can be found volunteering her time and talents at the local hospital. She has donated at least 100 hours to the hospital auxiliary each year since her semi-retirement. Jordan also volunteers with a charitable women's organization dedicated to helping needy families.

By the time the Christmas season rolls around, she and Augie have the car packed to capacity and are well on their way to their winter retirement home down south.

En route to Florida in December and back to New York in late April, they stop to visit daughter Carol Will in Virginia and son Paul in Georgia.

These stops enable them to spend time with their five grandchildren. They also take time to visit their daughter Donna Malkowich and her children in Syracuse. Son Daniel of California is more likely to pop in on his parents each fall.

Those who worry Jeannette might completely retire some day can put their fears to rest.

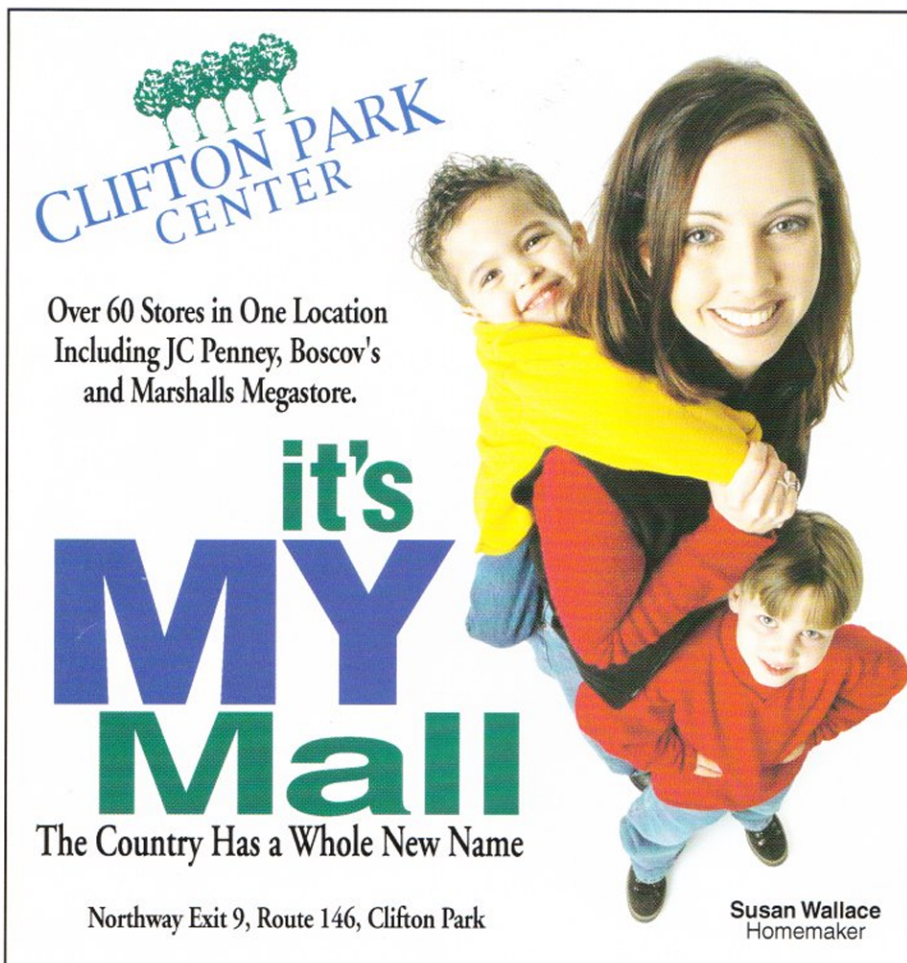
"In fact," she grins, "my managing editor Barbara Lombardo, teases me that the paper will get someone to push my wheelchair to and from assignments if I ever get so decrepit that I can't get there on my own."

Lombardo is quick to verify the quote, adding that the secret to her star columnist's success is that "Jeannette is a real person who loves writing about other real people -- some famous, some ordinary citizens who have never had their name or picture in a newspaper before. People trust her because she respects their confidences. She is incredibly trustworthy."

A greater compliment could not be sent her way.

"I learned the hard way to check and double check my facts," muses Jeannette, who once called all over Saratoga Springs to locate the hotel where the wife of General Douglas MacArthur was staying so she could apologize for switching some names in a cutline.

"I was just sick over the mistake, but Mrs. MacArthur and the other woman in the photo couldn't have been more gracious. Even though they laughed and said it was okay, the experience taught me a valuable lesson about checking all my facts."



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“Jeannette knows all my secrets . . . and she keeps them,” says Marylou

The seeds of friendship between columnist Jeannette Jordan and socialite Marylou Whitney may have been sown in Saratoga Springs, but they blossomed under the Florida sunshine.

"Jeannette and I have a lot of fun up here during the racing season, but the best times are the ones the four of us have together when we're in Florida," Marylou told *Saratoga County Living* during a recent interview. (Rounding out the foursome are Marylou's husband, John, and Jeannette's better half, Augie.) "Augie and Jeannette are two of our closest friends and they are always welcome to use our boxes at Gulf Stream Park when we're not there," insists Marylou.

The two women have weathered some of the highest and lowest points in Marylou's life: the saddest times stemming from the illness and death of her beloved late husband, Cornelius Vanderbilt Whitney; the most joyous ones following her marriage to John Hendrickson.

"Jeannette knows all my secrets . . . and she keeps them," smiles Marylou. "If I ask that something not be repeated or printed, I know that Jeannette will respect the confidence." What do they talk about together? Everything from galas to gardening from racing to recipes and community causes and family ties.

The relationship between Jeannette and John is equally easygoing. "He's a wonderful, down-to-earth person with a delightful sense of humor," notes Jeannette. "In fact, he can be a bit of a tease. Just the other day, the newsroom was abuzz over an envelope that arrived from him addressed to me as: Jeannette "Scoop" Jordan.

"I knew Jeannette when she first started out at *The Saratogian* and was learning the ropes," says Maureen Lewi, a partner in Ed Lewi Associates, the PR firm that handles such high profile accounts as NYRA and The Great Escape & Splashwater Kingdom. "I really admired her determination to learn whose who and what's what. Jeannette had no prior experience as a journalist and proved herself to be a quick study."

Another thing a lot of people may not know, according to Maureen, is that Jeannette is a self-taught photographer.

"When she goes out on an assignment, she packs a camera. It's rare these days to find a newspaper staff member who can bring back an interesting, accurate story and quality photos to accompany it."

Add to that the fact that Jeannette is "sincere" and "trustworthy" and her success secret is pretty much out of the bag!

Ed Lewi, Maureen's husband and business partner, admires Jeannette's sense of humor as well as her integrity, perseverance and determination to meet gruelling deadlines during the frantic racing season.

-- Ann Hauprich

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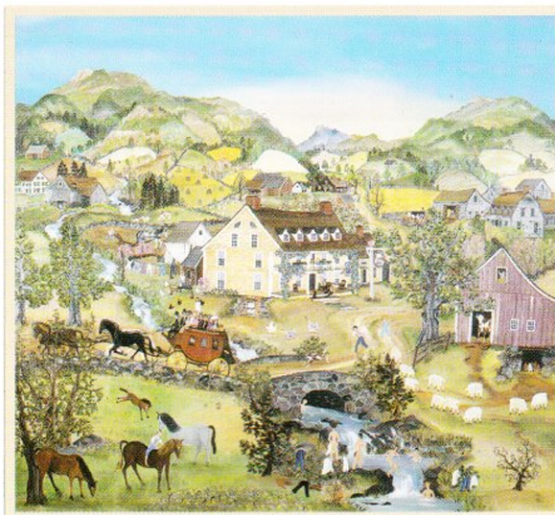
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