

# Gather 'Round, Kids—It's Game Night!

THINK OF THE HOURS spent competing, giggling, strategizing and sometimes squabbling over card games, board games and other forms of entertainment at a time when family life came at a slower pace.

My recent hunt for the old checkerboard uncovered a stash of our family treasures. There's a deck of Touring cards that Aunt Mildred had; Skunk and Thirteen, two games that I played with my cousins; Anagrams, which Aunt Frances and Uncle Jack used to spill out on their dining room table; bingo, my cousin Virginia's favorite; and many more.

We had hours of fun (and maybe some arguing as well) playing Whirling Words, Keyword Crossword and Skip-A-Cross. Pit, Flinch and Rummy Royal must have been standards in the 1940s and '50s, since we have a couple of versions of each of those, not to mention the old standard checkers.

I recall the rules for these games less accurately than the people I played them with and the tables we huddled over, but I may be 'game' to give them another whirl."

That's good advice for all of us in this Game of Life in an era when the computer and TV sometimes have a Monopoly on our time. Just make sure you designate a referee to settle disputes, just like Mom and Dad used to do, or there could be a heap of Trouble.

—Trudi Bellin, *Reminisce* Staff

## **Giddyap!**

MY BROTHER DALE and I loved to play covered wagon while we were growing up, in the late 1940s.

We used our trusty red wagon and the rocking horses of my two brothers, with rope lines properly attached so Dale could drive.

For the covered part of our wagon, we used a large basket that was made of white oak strips by a Canadian gentleman who had moved to our town.

I sat inside, prim and proper as a lady should. We traveled for countless hours in that one spot during 1948.

—Velma Ruth A., Ashdown, Arkansas

## **Simple Idea Stuck Him**

HOW DID I have fun? I took acorns from underneath the oak trees, punched holes with a nail and used wooden matchsticks for legs to make animals.

There were a lot of matchsticks when I was growing up, in the 1930s.

—George D., Taylor, Michigan

## **Another Striking Idea**

GROWING UP, in the 1950s, in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, most of us kids had a bathtub fleet of assorted boats bought when a new ball was not needed. There were sailboats, battleships, speedboats and many others, all for a dime each.

One special boat required saving three weeks of allowance—a metal motorboat for 25¢.

You filled a tiny reservoir with water, lit a birthday-cake-size candle and put it under the reservoir. The heat boiled the water and the steam bubbled out the little tubes in the back, pushing the boat around the dishpan or washtub where you sailed. The matches required parental supervision.

—Bob Karafin, Millsboro, Delaware

### **Custom Spin on a Victrola**

MY FAVORITE TOY was a wonder to behold, the creation of my Uncle Charlie, who took an old windup Victrola turntable and used it to build a carousel.

Aunt Carrie sewed a wonderful red top with dangling golden fringe and Uncle Charlie glued tiny horses on the turntable, which he had painted yellow to match the fringe.

Best of all, he made tiny seats on fine chains and fastened them to each spoke inside the red top. When the turntable moved fast, the little seats flew straight out in the air.

The cloth has become faded, the spokes are a little rusty and a few of the horses have disappeared, but the newest generation of children in this family still gasps with delight when the little seats soar so satisfyingly into space.

—Susan K., Phoenixville, Pennsylvania