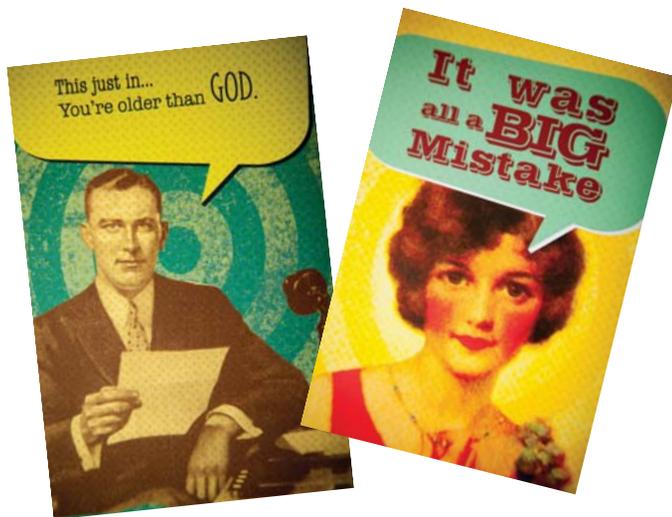


Blast from the Past

Seek Publishing's products revisit the best and quirkiest moments from years gone by.

By Blake Tommey Photo by Miller Mobley



DETAILS

Seek Publishing
seekpublishing.com

CEO: Jeff Logan

What is it? Remember when *All About Eve* won Best Picture, \$12 flare-leg Lady Wranglers were in style or Michael Jackson's "Man in the Mirror" made its

radio debut? Seek Publishing does. And for the past 20 years, they have published nostalgic booklets containing the advertisements, headlines, pop culture facts and other memories that have marked each year since 1900.

"Everybody gets to the point where they begin to look back," says CEO Jeff Logan, who is now hung up on the 1980s. "We cover it all, from baby boomers to very sweet nostalgia to hip and trendy, because everybody likes to remember what was happening during significant years of their life."

Seek's primary product, the KardLet, covers individual years and features 24 pages of memorabilia per volume. Were you born in 1960? Your KardLet recalls that a gallon of gas cost 25 cents, John F. Kennedy was elected president by a narrow margin and "Itsy Bitsy Teenie Weenie Yellow Polka Dot Bikini" topped the music charts.

History: In the '70s, Seek Publishing founder and nostalgia junkie Paul Bates began collecting soda cans in order to spend more time with his son Tom, an avid beer can collector. Frequenting flea markets in the '80s to buy and trade cans, Bates stumbled upon an idea in a Memphis market one day as he watched countless patrons pay a dollar to learn what events had occurred on their birthday.

After gathering facts, headlines and old magazine advertisements, Bates captured the nostalgia that people desired in "Pages of Time," the original KardLet. In 2008, after a few years as a partner in the business,

Logan's family bought Seek Publishing and moved it from Tennessee to Birmingham, where they currently publish old and new KardLet lines from a collection of nearly 100,000 old publications.

What makes it unique: While Seek products are a national sensation in coast-to-coast retail outlets such as Cracker Barrel and Hallmark, bulk sales for parties, reunions and anniversaries are growing rapidly. Clients ranging from Lockheed Martin to Florida International University are clamoring for KardLets to share at their events, Vice President Joellyn Beckham says.

"People really gravitate toward the cost-of-living information and the ads," Beckham explains. "When everybody starts singing 'My Bologna Has a First Name,' you realize that we all have more in common than we probably think, even though the years separate us."

A day in the life: From their location in the historic Becco building on Second Avenue South, Seek is constantly seeking new retail outlets and ensuring current retailers have full product to sell, Logan says.

In addition, Beckham and the Seek creative team spend their days getting lost in magazines, singing ad jingles and dancing the Watusi as they put fresh spins on old memorabilia for product lines.

Staff size: 30, plus independent sales representatives.

What's ahead: Seek is now merging trendy lingo with archived images from the 1920s and 30s in an irreverent line of greeting cards called "IMproper Greetings," which Canadian Gift & Tableware Association named one of the top 10 best new products in the country. "Thank goodness for Canada," Logan says. ●

