I felt so ridiculous with that gigantic blue bow on top of my head.
It was picture day at my elementary school, and my mother had dressed me that morning. Needless to say, I wasn't really excited about her outfit selection.
I had on an itchy, wool white sweater with a pastel blue trim. The look was completed with some tan slacks and the largest, neon blue bow this side of the Mississippi.
And Momma didn't put the bow toward the back of my head. She didn't even try to blend it in within my brown locks.
No, she put it smack-dab on top of my head. It gave me an additional six inches in height.
I wasn't the only one made to suffer that day. When I walked into my classroom, all my friends were subjected to Sunday-best attire.
Chris had a button-up shirt that was too tight for his husky frame. The top button had about three extension things, and his clip-on tie was digging into his skin. When he talked to you, he had to turn his body completely around because he couldn't move his neck.
Stephanie's mother made her bring an actual bouquet of flowers that she was to hold up to her face when it came time to snap her photo. She had a long brown dress with a miniature bouquet, complete with ribbons.
Paul's daddy put a giant Woodmen of the World pin on his breast pocket because he said he dropped jelly on it during the morning car ride.
Ricky had a multi-color sweater vest that he kept informing the teacher he had to swap with his older brother in the third grade. Apparently, they were both going to utilize the sweater.
And then there was me. The only kid with a giant, blue ribbon on top of my head. The bow craze hadn't hit yet, so I was alone...with my giant bow.
"Move your head," Chris whispered to me as the teacher put our vocabulary words on the board. "I can't see nothing because of that silly bow."
"Hush up," I snapped back. "You can't even turn your head cause your button will pop off."
I gloated to myself as Chris eased back into his seat. I had won that battle. I noticed he kept adjusting his tie after I said that remark.
For some unknown reason, the school photographer wasn't going to arrive until right before lunch. The younger kids, including my class, were to go first so that we wouldn't get any food on our clothes before the picture.

That worked well for Tom. You can only put so many Woodmen of the World pins on a six-year-old kid.
But the bright idea really came when we were allowed to have morning recess. Looking back, I never understood why they let a class full of first graders head off into a recess filled with dirt, grass and other mess right before pictures.
But they did.
I forgot all about picture day. I hit the swings, slide and monkey bars all within 60 seconds. A great game of hide and seek was held with the girls. No one found me underneath the giant pirate ship.
I was clotheslined during a rough game of Red Rover.
And I managed to break the school record of jumping out of my swing and landing almost to the slide.
By the time my class returned to their classroom, we looked like returning soliders from a battle. The teacher's assistant thought we had already taken our pictures and let us run wild.
When Mrs. Coleman saw us, she immediately went into panic mode. Grabbing wet washcloths and a hairbrush, she went to work, trying to save picture day.
That top button on Chris' shirt finally popped. But Mrs. Coleman fixed it with a safety pin and covered it up with the clip-on tie.
"But it's digging into my skin," he moaned.
"Let him go first before he passes out," Mrs. Coleman ordered to the photographer.
Stephanie's bouquet needed a little "fluffing."
Tom got an additional pin for his shirt. A silver cross covered up a dirt stain.
Ricky's multi-colored sweater looked more like a brown blob from all the dust. He was taken outside and shaken like a rag doll until hints of red, blue and green began to shine through the muck.
And my bow had moved from the top of my head to the side. My white sweater had a giant grass stain from the Red Rover game.
Grabbing an extra sweater from the "spare clothes" closet, Mrs. Coleman yanked a pretty pink sweater over my head. She took the blue bow out and replaced it with a light pink ribbon, and she brushed my hair out.
To be honest, I felt better in my replacement outfit.
When Momma picked me up from school that day, she had a confused look on her face.
"I didn't send you to school in that," she said.
Mrs. Coleman explained to her what had happened and apologized for the teacher assistant letting us go crazy on the playground. She assured Momma that the picture was perfect.
A few weeks later, Momma got the picture package. She was actually very happy with the picture. The pink sweater looked good against the background, and my hair looked fine with the pink ribbon.
"Pretty in pink," she even said.
I am just glad she didn't notice the piece of grass sticking out from behind my ear.