

15 MINUTES

The many loves of Dobie Pasco

BY EVAN WILLIAMS

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Leonard Pasco worked as disability examiner for Social Security for years and is now retired in Port Charlotte. He got his nickname "Dobie" from a late 1950s and early '60s' sitcom, "The Many Loves of Dobie Gillis." Soft spoken with articulate blue eyes, Mr. Pasco in his life has also had many loves, although he was never married. Years ago, when the sitcom was running, Mr. Pasco was in the Air Force. He was in a convertible with six girls, he remembers, when some of his military buddies saw him and renamed him.

Now he usually goes by "Dobie" Pasco.

It's the name he used whenever he published poetry, which for the most part happened in the 1960s and early 1970s in small literary publications such as "Zeitgeist," "Cloud Marauder" and the better-known "Poetry Magazine." He started writing poetry again about six months ago.

In the interim, he was a disability examiner, a profession for which he earned a master's degree at the University of Tennessee, Knoxville, in special education and rehabilitation. He also worked as a juvenile probation officer and employment counselor. Mr. Pasco moved to Florida in the early 1980s from Traverse City, Mich., following his brother.

Already he has a folder filled with the yellow and white leaves of note-

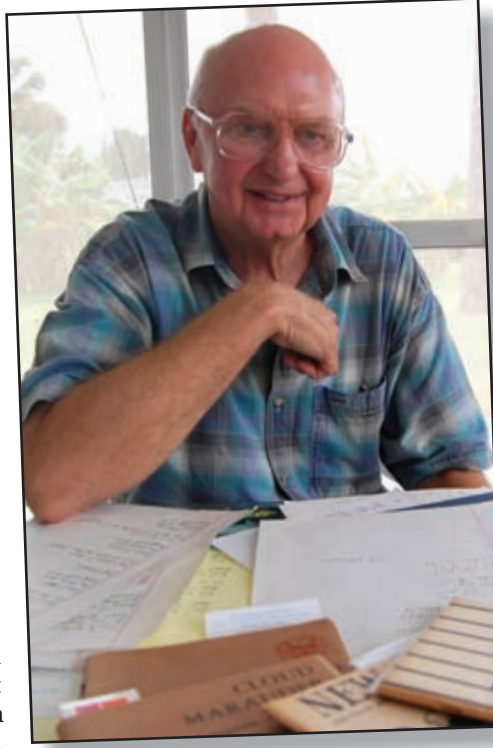
book paper with his poems on them. Many are love poems of one form or another. They are written neatly by hand and dated at the bottom. With 30 or 40 "keepers," he's thinking of putting together a book of his work called "Love poems, laments, and pathetic wines."

In high school in Sharpsville, Pa., where he grew up, Mr. Pasco was predictably more interested in girls (and cars) than studying. He started a social club called "The Outcasts," and even had a memorial "Outcasts" license plate made, which he still owns. Members of the club would look for broken-down cars and stop to help them. Mr. Pasco had long hair back then, slicked into a ducktail with some kind of hair cream. A classmate he liked, the daughter of a doctor he remembers, called him a "greaser."

He never planned on college and joined the Air Force for four years. At Empire Air Force Station in northern Michigan, he worked on radar repair. But there wasn't much to do in the summer, so he enrolled at a nearby community college.

"I was going mostly to meet girls," he admitted.

He met a girl with auburn hair and light brown eyes on the steps of one of the buildings there. One of the things about him that charmed her, she later told him, was the way he flicked his cigarette ashes. She got him interested in art history, which he later majored in at Michi-



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Leonard "Dobie" Pasco

The prettiest girl
Working in a Chinese place
I eat there every day
Hating rice

Another woman he met in college, an elementary school teacher he regrets not marrying. "So foolish," he said.

More recently, he met a girl who won a beauty pageant at a festival in Sarasota, but said he was too old for her. "I kind of fell for her, of course," Mr. Pasco said. "She was just lovely."

She inspired at least one of his poems. Mr. Pasco doesn't always write about love. Sometimes he writes about, for example, basketball — a sport he still enjoys playing on occasion. He stopped writing for so many years, he said, because poetry seemed inconsequential against the backdrop of American culture.

"I know one of the reasons I stopped writing," he said. "Psychedelia, loud music, computers — I didn't think poetry fit or could make any difference in the world."

After he retired, that began to change, and his poetry started to once again reflect his loves, whether romantic or mundane.

"I didn't think much of it but then yesterday I realized that I retired about three years ago, but I was never happy and thought I should be doing something," he said. "And that's why I kind of halfway kept looking for work and you know, I still am. But lately I'm really realizing that I've been kind of been working full time as a writer." ■



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is a former manager and Wall Street Department Head since 1978. During his career, he has been the keynote speaker at over 1,000 financial planning workshops across the USA. Today he focuses his experience and expertise on assisting investors in the SWFL communities from Naples to Ft. Myers. Mr. Generales is a Sr. V.P. of Investments with Southern Trust Financial.



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