



the anti princess

By Amy H. Carter

Susan Johnston didn't grow up believing in fairy tales. She never dreamed of being the damsel in distress saved by a handsome Prince Charming or seven vertically challenged miners. No, Johnston knew from an early age that she was perfectly capable of saving herself, thank you very much.

"I'm old and I grew up with "Charlie's Angels" and "The Bionic Woman." They may have been feminist driven, but it was more like these women were feminine but they could rescue themselves and so they were running in their Candies (high-heeled shoes) and their short-shorts. They were finding a way out so I just didn't have that princess mind set," she says.

After serving 17 brides as an honor attendant – six of them as the head honcho, the maid of honor – Johnston found herself thinking up more creative answers to the same question: "What about you?"

Yes, women have come a long way, baby, but not so far that we don't still bump into the belief that a woman is incomplete without a man, and that life begins with marriage.

Had she shared those beliefs, Johnston, now 42, would not have seen all that she has of the world. For 18 years Johnston worked as a flight attendant for Delta Air Lines, forgoing the trappings of a settled adulthood for the gypsy's life.

"I think that travel is the greatest education. I had the attitude in my 20s that I can always buy a couch later in life, but now I can go to Hong Kong. I want to inspire girls to think less about material things and more about the education of seeing things. There's such an education in travel."

That's how she came to write "Princess Bubble," a fairy tale for the empowered set, with fellow traveler

Kimberly Webb. Webb is herself a successful single woman who holds a Master's degree in Romance Languages and used that degree to talk the pair through Portugal, Spain and Italy. A good thing, too. Johnston says she struggles to be heard right here at home.

"People didn't even understand me in the North with my accent," she laughs.

Bubble is a nickname Johnston, who lives in Atlanta and often visits her mother on St. Simons Island, earned in college. It fits this bubbly blonde woman who laughs often and heartily, a character trait that quickly tells on her. Johnston is happy with her life, and happy with herself.

She's no longer bothered by those who rudely wonder at the fact an attractive, well-educated woman like herself is still single. Her latest answer to that:

"Well, I've gone on national TV twice and said I'm single and still nobody's asked me out. If you have another suggestion I'd love to hear it."

That one leaves them speechless.



Susan Johnston, left, and Kimberly Webb, authors of "Princess Bubble."