

# Bisonalities, Again



A quarterly Newsletter dedicated to the Alumni of Waterford and Fort Le Boeuf High Schools

April 2001 Spring Issue Volume 2 - Number 3

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Waterford or FLBSHS on the Web site, free. If you know an alumni, teacher, or administrator who would be interested, please ask them to contact me.

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## Cat's Corner

The Bisonalities, Again Web site continues to grow. Since the last issue, I have added the class of 1947 and 1952. If you haven't visited it lately, drop by and take a look. I am going to try to up-date the One-liners at least once a month. If you haven't visited this page, please do so. The page has twenty original cartoons make up by a friend I met on the Web. She goes by the handle, "Mustang5."

And, here I go again. I need articles and short stories. Here is your chance to be come published. Don't be afraid of what your story may look like, you are among friends. My wife taught English, if you feel it needs editing, she will be glad to do so. As you can tell by the articles already published, very few of us would be considered professional writers, well, maybe Herb would be. After all, he has been published several times in the Erie Times.

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## Alumni Airway

On January 7, Tim Curley (class of 1964), furnished an e-mail address for Michael Beuchert.

On January 8, Buck Davis (Class of 1959) informed me that his mother, Bette Davis, had returned to Florida for the Winter and that in April, he would retire from GE, after 40 years. Congratulations, Buck. On

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Welcome to the Spring 2001 edition of the Newsletter dedicated to the alumni (students, teachers, and administrators) of Waterford and Fort Le Boeuf Senior High Schools. This newsletter will be issued quarterly. New issues will be posted for viewing on the Web site on, or about, October 5, January 5, April 5, and July 5.

The Web site may be viewed by going to:  
<http://www.geocities.com/candoer1>

The success of this newsletter will depend on you. I need contributors. Do you have an interesting article, a nostalgia item, a real life story, or a picture you would like to share with other alumni? Do you have a snail-mail or an e-mail address of one of your classmates? Send it to the me at the following e-mail address:

[bisonalities@candoer.org](mailto:bisonalities@candoer.org)

or at my snail-mail address.

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Please, **NO** handwritten submissions.

The Bisonalities, Again Newsletter is available to any and all alumni, teachers, and administrators of

behalf of all the Alumni, I would like to wish you a healthy, long, safe, enjoyable retirement.

In addition, Buck asked me to add John Leech's e-mail address to the class of 1959.

**O**n January 10, I added the class of 1947. Pass this on to your friends. There are many addresses of friends, past and present.

**O**n February 14, thanks to Donna Spiller Pillitteri, the class of 1952 has been added to the Web Page.

**T**he Web site is growing and leaps and bounds. I have added several years to the list. At least weekly, I receive someone else who wants to be added to the web site. As you can see by the e-mail addresses, it is growing fast.

**T**hanks to David Rutkowski, the class of 1967 has been added to the web site.

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**Class Personality**

**T**his girl has blonde naturally curly hair and blue eyes. She is 5' 5" and very attractive. She lives in Mill Village. She plans to go to Wyoming after graduation to live with her sister. She likes Home Ec very much. Her favorite past time is eating and listening to Tennessee Ernie sing 16 Tons. Have you guessed who she is?

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**Tell me a story**

by Herb Walden

**I**'ll bet there are hundreds of school stories lurking among you folks who are reading this --- stories just waiting to be told. So, why don't you tell us? Stories and recollections don't need to be long. Maybe a paragraph or two will tell the tale. Of course, a couple of pages is okay, too.

"But I can't write," you say.

"Nuts!" I say. "Sure you can! I do it all the time, and I ain't had no special training."

However, I have discovered something about writing: The best reading is writing that isn't written like writing; it's written like talking! So all you have to do is talk to us.

If you're not sure if a comma should be there or not, well, who cares? Chances are the rest of us aren't either. Besides, your "essay" will not be graded --- just read and enjoyed!

Personally, I'd like to read about some of the country schools, and I'm sure a lot of others would, too. Some of you must have some sports stories. How about your favorite class or teacher? Anything funny ever happen in band or in a class play or other activity? Ever have an embarrassing moment in school?

Actually, we're not limited to school stories. Maybe you have an anecdote about one of us (keeping

in mind, or course, such things as defamation of character, libel, and associated lawsuits). Or maybe you have some fond recollections of Waterford or Mill Village or the townships. How about some of characters around town? Anyone remember Claude Perkins or Pheletis Bankson?

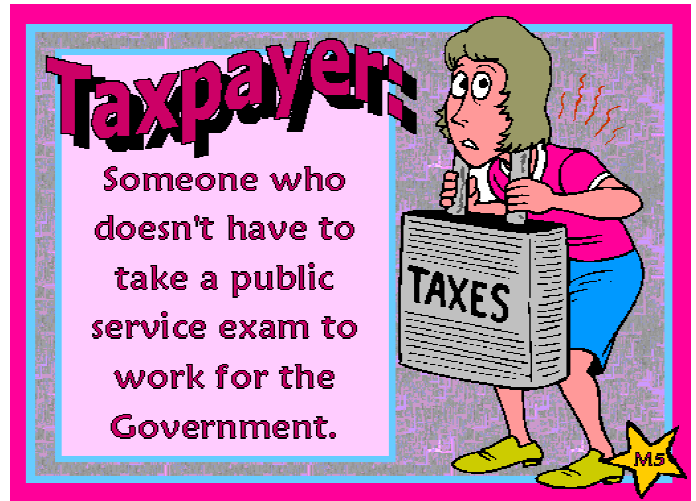
Have I got you thinking? I hope so. We're all anxious to hear your stories.

I spent 33 years teaching high school. Old habits are hard to break. So, here's an assignment for you. Please complete the following: "I remember when ....."

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**Humor**

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**Waterford's Fires**

by Herb Walden

**H**istorically, March has not been a good month for Waterford. Two devastating fires nearly destroyed the town back in the 1800's. On March 5, 1865, (just about six weeks before President Lincoln's assassination, to put it in perspective), fire erupted in one of the stores on the west side of High Street. It consumed almost all the buildings between 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> Streets. The cause of the fire has been lost in the depths of antiquity.

Of course, the buildings that were lost were replaced with wooden-frame buildings, the same as their predecessors.

Almost 30 years later in the wee hours of the morning of March 3, 1895, fire broke out again in the same area.

I'm sure quite a few of us remember Frank Phelps and his grocery store, which became Doolittle's when we were kids. Well, Frank Phelps' father, F. L. Phelps, purchased a meat market in January, 1895. It was located approximately where Holman's clothing store was. There is where the fire originated. In

preparing a coal stove for the night, someone carelessly discarded some hot ashes. Within a few hours, the ashes ignited the building.

I know a little more about this fire because my grandmother, who was nearly 11 years old at the time, lived upstairs with her sister and parents --- upstairs over the meat market!

When Grandma and her family were awakened, they only had time to get out. There was no chance to save anything except a child's rocking chair which Grandma grabbed in panic on the way out! I still have the little rocker.

The fire spread in both directions and jumped 2<sup>nd</sup> Alley. In a few hours, all of the buildings between 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> Streets were burned to the ground!

The fire was fought largely by bucket-brigade. I remember of Grandma telling about a boy grabbing a bucket of water and throwing it on the fire. Except that it wasn't water; it was coal-oil!

Beginning at 1<sup>st</sup> Street, the businesses lost were:

- Ensworth Hardware
- Benson's Bank
- Cook's Shoe Store
- Phelps' Meat Market (Where the fire started.)
- Nickles & McClure Feed Store
- Hull's Grocery  
(2<sup>nd</sup> Alley)
- Drugstore
- Judson Millinery
- Phillips' Barber Shop (Where my great grand father worked.)

- Johnson Jewelry
- Benson Meat Market
- Whitney Grocery
- Ward's Millinery
- Patten's Grocery

That is a total of 14 stores that were reduced to ashes, and the dollar-loss was placed at \$50,000! Miraculously, there was no loss of life nor serious injury.

On March 11, the town council passed an ordinance prohibiting wooden buildings in the business district.

The first store rebuilt opened in April, and what seems to me most amazing, the rest of the buildings were up and running by mid-November! They are the stores we see in Waterford today.

*References:*

- Florence (Cole) Walker*
- History of Erie County (1884)*
- Waterford Leader (January 1896)*

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**Our Class Personality was: Janet Powers**  
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