

# Bisonalities, Again



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

October 2001 Fall Issue Volume 3 - Number 1

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

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## Cat's Corner

**O**n July 04, I received word from Phyllis Cowley Belcher ('51) that she had just learned that Harold August's wife Martha had passed away on January 9, 2000.

Although a little late, our condolences to Harold and his family.

**O**n August 8, I received a request from Vance and Karen Burdick to correct the spelling for Dixie Huffman Schaefer's last name on the web site. That action was taken. Sorry for the fat finger typing Dixie.

**O**n August 14<sup>th</sup> I was notified of the death on August 9, 2001, of a member of the class of 1964, Evelyn Slowdownik Askey-Zaleski.

**O**n September 1, Phyllis Cowley Belcher notified me of her new e-mail address. It may be found on the last page of this and future issues.

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## Letters to the Editor

**T**he following letter was received from Bette Davis.

### 1961 Class Reunion

by Bette Davis

**T**he Fort Le Boeuf class of '61 held their 40<sup>th</sup> Class Reunion at the Erie Yacht Club, July 21, 2001.

Mr. Cyterski and I were invited as "guests of the evening."

**W**elcome to the Fall 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.

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

**T**he 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 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.

**T**he Bisonalities, Again Newsletter is available to any and all alumni, teachers, and administrators of

The Committee did an outstanding job in preparation for this evening. The tables looked so pretty with their blue and white decor; the Memoriam that was set up to honor the deceased classmates was pretty and artistic; and everyone looked as pretty and happy. I felt honored to be there. I think I knew most of them but we had name tags and some of them, especially the "boys" have changed so much, with their white hair and beards.

I was asked to talk a little bit so I got out my yearbook so I could recall my Home Ec. girls who had received honors that year. Faye Popovick was chosen as the Livestock Queen in September; Anna Grun won the Betty Crocker Award; Shirley Bang was the Cherry Pie Queen; and Marilyn Chase was named the Home Economics Student of the Year.

I know you all remember I was the Cheerleader Advisor and Karen Smith was the Student Advisor for that group.

Mr. Cyterski entertained us by recalling some events with students in his class room and then we had pictures taken.

It was wonderful seeing some of the "kids" I hadn't seen for a while. I feel so honored when I am invited to a class reunion.

Wally Mahle was a member of the Committee, he came and picked me up.

Thanks class! Thanks a million!

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The following was received from Phyllis Cowley Belcher:

### Class of 1951 Reunion

The 50th Class Reunion of the Class of 1951 was held on August 4, 2001, at the Eagle Hotel in Waterford. On hand to celebrate were 20 graduates and their spouses. The Class of 1951 had 41 graduates and feel quite pleased to have such a good showing. Six of the original class are now deceased.

Committee members Phyllis Cowley Belcher, Marilyn Scott Evans, and Geri Wheeler Jarmolowicz presented their honored guest, Home Ec teacher Mrs. Bette Davis with a certificate and a bouquet of yellow roses. Mrs. Davis has attended every one of their class reunions. She also had the honor of presenting "Loyal Alumni" certificates to the class members.

Plans are already in the works for 2006 to celebrate the 55 year reunion.

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### Bluebirds, paste and colored chalk

by Herb Walden ' 56

Once upon a time, I was a bluebird!

Now before you think some of my wires have come loose, let me explain. I wasn't really a bluebird, but I played one in first grade. I've never told anyone about this, but I've reached an age where nothing much embarrasses me anymore.

Besides, I'll bet a lot of you folks were in some kind of little nature play, too. So before you snicker too much about my acting career, just think back to your own first grade years. Some of you were flowers, weren't you?

I don't remember what the play was about. I'm pretty sure I didn't have any lines. About all I recall is that four or five of us bluebirds flapped around the room a little bit with our blue crepe paper wings pinned to our shirt sleeves.

If you're wondering where this off-Broadway production took place, it was at the Waterford Boro School way back in the 40s.

First and second grades were in one room and were the charge of Mrs. Elayne Brooks. Teaching two grades must have been a bit rough for the teacher, but it was a definite advantage for us kids. As first graders, we got a preview of second grade, and as second graders, we got to review first grade. Third and fourth grades were in the room next door, and fifth and sixth grades were in a room upstairs. Essentially, we went through grade school twice! Those of you lucky enough to attend a one-room school had ever more chance for preview and review. No wonder we're so smart! And we did it all without computers!

Mrs. Brooks was an excellent teacher, as were all my teachers all the way through 12<sup>th</sup> grade. We walked to school, and in the fall, we always picked up some of the brightly colored leaves to give to Mrs. Brooks. She was always thrilled and was very appreciative. Gee! I wonder what she did with them.

Our school population was small back then. There were about ten of us in first grade and not many more in second grade. Because of our numbers, we got a lot of personal attention from the teachers. And we got to participate in the many activities that went on in addition to the "3 Rs", such as the bluebird play.

At one time, we had a mock grocery store in the back of the room. We all took turns at being storekeepers and customers. It was fun, but I was a little disappointed. My Dad worked in a real grocery store, and ours just wasn't quite the same. The main thing that we didn't have a cash register. Having always been fascinated by things bristling with levers and buttons, a cash register was always a focal point in any store for me.

I remember planting beans in paper cups in the spring. The beans all sprouted, and we took them home when school was out for the summer. Mine died immediately. Maybe even on the way home. It was alright. I never cared much for beans anyway.

The best part of the project was coloring and decorating the paper cup. I liked anything that had to do with crayons and paste, although I had virtually no artistic talent.

Periodically, Miss Pulling would come to our classroom to teach art. I learned a lot of neat little things from Miss Pulling, not the least of which was how to fold paper to cut out a snowflake. I still remember how to do that. I don't, but I could if I wanted to!

We also did many art projects when Miss Pulling wasn't there. We celebrated every holiday and season with crayons, construction paper, paste, and those blunt-nosed scissors that were never meant to cut anything, except maybe 18-gauge bell wire. In addition, we did art projects on Mondays and Wednesdays. And Fridays and Tuesdays. Also Thursdays.

The red crayons and black crayons seemed to get used up before any of the others, but in our first grade class, there as an exception: Nicky Waltz. He insisted on coloring the sky purple, and because his pictures always contained a considerable amount of sky, the purple crayons didn't last long either. Just remembering Nicky and his purple crayons had been a bond among us "Boro Schoolers - Class of 55" for over fifty years. Thanks, Nicky.

Our teacher would give us our paste supply by dipping gobs of paste out of a big jar with a ruler and smearing them on little squares of paper. Sometimes we got to help serve the paste. Now there was something to tell Mom when we got home!

The past had a delicious wintergreen odor, and you and I both remember some kids who couldn't resist eating it. Evidently it was non-toxic.

A few of the paste eaters, there appetites not quite satisfied, would crew on a crayon or two. I never tried either, so I don't know which is more nutritious.

Coloring with crayons seemed to be a gender-based technique, or at least the outcome was. The girls always colored neatly, lightly, and inside the lines. We boys, on the other hand, laid the colors on thick enough to chip off it the paper was folded. The lines of the drawings seemed to be too restrictive for some.

The best art projects were those that were cut out of construction paper and pasted together. Pasting was like coloring. The girls always used little dabs of paste in the corners. Not us boys! No sir! We worked on the theory that if a little bit is good, a whole lot is better. We should have been issued putty knives or past application. Our paste-ups were actually heavy when we were finished. They were build to last! And last them did. I still have some of mine.

Then there was the clean-up after the project was completed. Approximately 75% of the paste ended up on the desktop. It usually took two or three

hands full of soap and several yards of paper towel to make the desk useable again.

Incidentally, having recently completed 30-plus years of teaching, I'm happy to report that school soap still smells the same. And school paper towels are still made of some sort of non-absorbent stuff that has a texture between cardboard and sandpaper. At least there are some thing that never change!

When we were in second grade, we made hand-prints. Mrs. Brooks made plaster-of-Paris "pancakes", and we pressed our hands into them. When they were hard and dry, we painted them with water colors. And, yes, I still have mine.

Mrs. Brooks was big on stars and colored chalk. Nothing beats getting a gold star on a homework paper or a test. Maybe I'd have done better in college if gold starts had been at stake.

Our old school had slate blackboards, and old-fashioned colored chalk worked well on them. We got colored chalk stars for sitting up straight and other behavioral things.

When I started teaching, I was anxious to use colored chalk. In fact, it was one of the major reasons I chose a teaching career. But to my everlasting disappointment, my room had a shiny green chalkboard. And I found the new dustless colored chalk is hard and not vividly colored. It was somewhat like writing on Formica with a rock.

It is difficult to say exactly what we learned from all these little activities, but I'll tell you one reason I think they were important. Whenever I reminisce about grade school, these are the things I think of. And they always bring a smile. What could be of more value than a pleasant memory?

Those were good times, and I wish I could go back and do it ll over again. But those days are gone forever. Chances are I'll never get to play a bluebird again.

But if anyone has an opening for an old buzzard, just give me a call.

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**BE SAFE!**