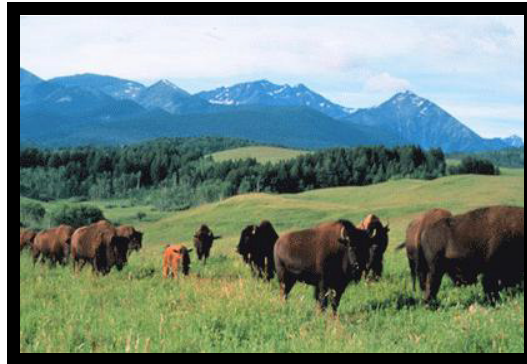


Bisonalities, Again



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

January 2002 Winter Issue Volume 3 - Number 2

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

None of the material in this newsletter has a copyright. If you wish to make copies of this newsletter and distribute it to other Alumni or friends, please feel free to do so.

Cat's Corner

You were probably wondering why the Fall issue (October 2001 - Volume 3 Number 1) was so small.

I will try to explain that by taking you back to September 11, 2001.

The day started out as most do for me. I got up that morning at 5:30 a.m., as I do weekdays since I took myself out of retirement and went back to work full time.

I left my house to go to work about 6:15 a.m.

I work as the Human Resources Supervisor and Director of Maryland Operations for an Information Technology company in Arlington, Virginia, approximately 32 miles from my house.

The company has people working in six different locations around the Washington, D.C. Metropolitan area.

Approximately once a month I travel from location to location to talk with personnel to see if they need anything or just to say "Hi!"

That eventful morning I was going to visit the 12 people who worked at our site in Springfield, VA.

I spent an hour or so visiting with the personnel when someone came running into the office I was in and reported that an airplane had smacked into one of the twin towers of the World Trade Center in New York City.

I immediately left the building for my car to head

Welcome to the Winter 2001/2002 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 me at the following e-mail address:

bisonalities@candoer.org

or at my snail-mail address.

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Bryans Road, MD 20616-3062
Tel: (301) 283-6549

Please, **NO** handwritten submissions.

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

to my office. As I started the 23-mile drive from the office in Springfield to my home office in Arlington, I turned on a local all news radio station, WTOP. I heard them announce that a second airplane had smacked into the other WTC tower and that they were now classifying this as a terrorist attack on America.

The road I have to take to get to my office, takes me directly past the southwest side of the Pentagon.

Traffic was extremely heavy, as it has a tendency to be most mornings around Washington, D.C. As I dropped off of Interstate 395 onto Virginia route 27, and came out from under an overpass, I had a full view of the southwest side of the Pentagon. As I looked at that sight, like I have a 1,000 times before, I saw an airplane make a quick turn and head for the building.

As I watched in horror, it hit the building. A large fire ball erupted upon impact.

I was less than a 1/5 mile away at that time. Traffic immediately stopped, and I spent the next several hours setting in the resulting traffic jam as emergency personnel rushed to the scene.

Since that eventful day, I have had some difficulty concentrating on things that I need to do, like publish this newsletter, sleep, etc.

It has been more than three months since I witnessed that act of terrorism and I still keep seeing that airplane make that turn, but I am finally getting back to a normal routine.

That image will never leave my mind, but I am learning to live with it.

This edition should be back to its normal size.

I still **need** articles to publish. Please, help me to keep this newsletter going and furnish articles of your days in Waterford, or even your days since.

I have a **correction** from the last issue (Volume 3 - Number 1). Phyllis Cowley Belcher reported that Harold August had died, not his wife. I reported it as his wife.

On October 7, I received word from Robert Hammer that Brenda Murphy Johnson, class of 1979, had passed away on September 7, 2001, after losing a courageous battle to lung cancer. She had just turned 40 on August 20, 2001.

Condolences to Brenda's family and friends from all the Bisonalities, Again, members and families.

On October 17, I received information about the class of 1966 from Patsy Reichart Dzeskewicz. Auntiepatsyjean furnished her class officers, colors, motto, flower and her e-mail and home address. Thanks Patsy!

On October 18, Patsy Reichart Dzeskewicz (1966)

sent me information about their 35th reunion and a picture of those who attended.

You will find both on the Bisonalities, Again, Web site.

On October 30, Jerry Matthews (1952), furnished his e-mail address:

ggmatt@peoplepc.com

Dave Belt (1956) informed me he is having computer problems and asked that his e-mail address be removed from the list. This action has been taken.

On November 11, Howard Markham (1955) furnished his e-mail address:

hmarkham@earthlink.net

On November 14, Bill Falk (1955) furnished a new e-mail address: wilfal@msn.com

On November 17, Nancy Dorman Swanson (1955) furnished her e-mail address:

nancyswansons@yahoo.com

On November 22, Marjorie Sharpe Gibson (1955) furnished her e-mail address: mbgibson@att.net

On December 16, Janet Newton Sucoln (1955) furnished her e-mail address: sucoln@aol.com

Letter to the Editor

This letter, from Barry Burdick, is in reference to an article on the Bisonalities, Again Web site, written by Lewis Dove. For those of you who do not have access to the Web site, I have a series of articles telling the history of Waterford from the days of the Indians to the present. Several chapters are missing, but I am working on that. One of those chapters is, "Legends of the Area." Several of the chapters were furnished by Lewis Dove, who retired from Fort Le Boeuf High School and still lives in the Waterford area.

Robert,

Mr. Dove's introduction to "Legends of the Area" brought back many fond memories. To begin with, I spent 30 years in the military and 20 of those 30 years I was a night manager/bouncer in NCO clubs;

Harvey (Harvey Wright), another old man, and I were running Bud Mitchell's small sawmill, located below the main mill. The old man was the sawyer and Harvey and I took the boards off the saw and stacked them. (Note: Harvey had a slight speech impediment and wore a hearing aid that caused him to talk with a buzz.) He liked to go to the Waterford Hotel every day for lunch and drink a pint of whiskey, he would then come back and work the rest of the afternoon.

One afternoon the old man and I were trying to roll a really big log up the skid way onto the saw carriage when the end of the log tipped off the end of

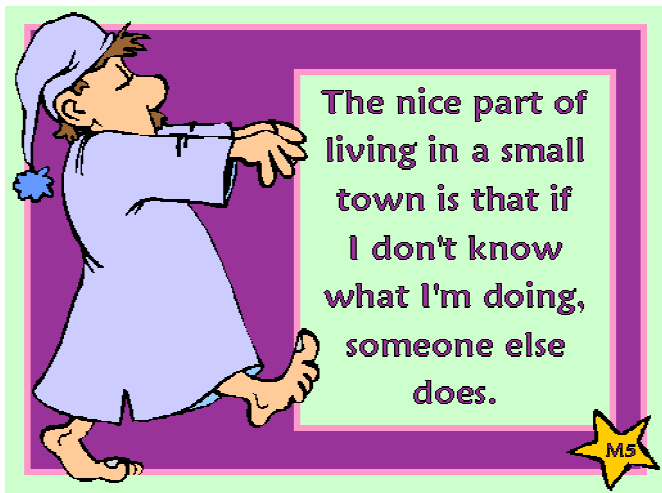
the skid way. Harvey grabbed a cant hook and came to help us put it back on. After struggling for several minutes, to no avail, Harvey said “Dod Dammit” and jumped off the end of the skid way, reached under the end of the log, lifted it up and swung it onto the skid way, by himself.

The old man and I just stood there in awe and disbelief.

Note: Approximately a year later, the old man was moved up to the main mill to run the debarking machine. He was killed one day when his shirt sleeve got caught and it drug him through the debarking machine.

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Humor



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Remembering a gentle giant

by Paul Reichart

In 1952, my parents had had enough of city life. They bought a small farm — sort of a farmette — on a dirt road in Waterford Township, and plunked us down in a new world full of country folk with strange-sounding names.

I was not quite six, my sisters younger, and like all small children we had an unquenchable thirst for milk. Inevitably, our parents began buying milk from one of our new dairy-farmer neighbors who lived two doors away — about a half-mile up the road — 50 cents a gallon; we supplied the jugs.

The farmer's name was Willie Czesnowski, not an unusual name for that area. Willie's wife, Mary, was a Danylko. Not far away were the Kulas, the Dachtyls, the Dlugolenskis and the Dzeskewicz. There were others, but I'd have to look them up to get the spelling right.

So, in the midst of this far-flung rural community

of distinctly eastern European stock there materialized one day the Reicharts — sort of middle-European name. They were Catholics; we were Protestants; they were farmers, we were transplanted city-dwellers; they were all cousins in one sense or another, we were totally unrelated (or at least until my sister tied us onto a branch of the family tree 17 years later by marrying a Dzeskewicz).

They were neighborly. We felt welcome.

Willie Czesnowski was a big, burly man with a sun-reddened face — except for the upper half of his forehead, which was covered by his cap and remained forever white. He had a large nose and laughing eyes, the kind of twinkle you see when people are waiting for the punch-line of a good joke they've already heard. The overall effect was elfin — just the kind of guy you'd expect to play Santa Claus.

I have this fond, recurrent memory of riding with my mother up to Willie's to pick up milk on a soft summer evening. At twilight they would stand outside the milk house talking about the day's events, while the cows returned to pasture and the setting sun slowly streaked the sky with red. Used to the traffic or Erie's Liberty Street and the odor of bus fumes, I soaked it all in with wonder.

Ducking warm milk

Sometimes the six-year-old me would go inside the barn to watch Willie milk the cows, which he did by hand. More than once I remember ducking a stream of warm milk that he playfully aimed in my direction. For a small child, the barn was a mysterious place populated by docile monsters. The sweet smell of fresh hay sticks with you for a lifetime.

Years later, as his produce operation expanded, Willie got out of the dairy business. When I was 14 or 15 I went to work for him — as did about half the kids on the west side of Waterford — and I learned some valuable lessons about how exhilarating and satisfying hard work can be.

For 85 cents an hour, we started each summer at “Variety Ranch” pulling plants — cabbage and cauliflower — in the frost-resistant “beds” Waterford farmers leased near the lake between Fairview and Girard. The plants were then transplanted back home. A lot of Willie's farm was devoted to those two crops. Most of the rest went into potatoes, although he also grew a variety (hence the name) of other vegetables.

After transplanting the cabbage and cauliflower, we hauled hay — which was quite a challenge for a spindly teenager. I found that a long day of throwing hay bales around makes your food taste better and your sleep more peaceful.

Willie worked hardest

By August we were cutting the cabbage and cauliflower to be shipped off each night in Willie’s tractor-trailer to markets in Pittsburgh. That continued throughout the fall. At the end of the season, sometimes in spitting snow, we harvested the large variety of cabbage that is used to make sauerkraut.

But as hard as we worked, Willie worked harder. It wasn’t his nature to be idle. In the worst of weather he drove snowplow for the township. When he had the time, he hunted. And he trapped — he must have trapped for 70 years.

His prosperous farm, of course, reflected his ambition and his work ethic. And yet he never grew self-important; he could always laugh at himself, even when he was being ribbed by a bunch of fuzzy-cheeked kids who delighted in calling him “Boss man.”

The last summer I worked for Willie was the summer before my 19th birthday — 1965. Willie, who was born on St. Valentine’s Day in 1915, was 50. I distinctly remember his saying, as he heaved crates of cabbage into his semi trailer, that he was planning to cut back, plant less, ease out of the business.

But he never did.

At 65, when others were beginning to enjoy retirement, Willie was still farming. He was still farming at 70, still farming at 75, and still at 80. It was almost like some things in life are timeless and that Willie, like the hills and fields along that old dirt road, would last forever.

Chocolate hearts

But things do change. In the summer of 1965 they paved the road, and on Thursday, November 30, Willie died.

He had developed a heart condition and feared becoming an invalid. He said he wanted to die in the woods, not in some old folks home.

So that’s what he did. While checking his traps, he apparently just sat down under a tree and quietly left this world. Just like that, just the way he wanted. They found his body the next morning.

During his eulogy the following Monday, Father John Kirk remembered Willie Czesnowski as a generous, kindhearted man who had a positive influence on everyone he met. He remarked that on his birthday, Willie would give gifts to those he loved — hearts of chocolate — with no thought of receiving anything in return. He also noted that Willie was a whirlwind on the polka floor — of course, most of the women in the church already knew that.

He called Willie a “gentle giant.”

Amen to that, father.

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Paul Reichart, graduated from Fort Le Boeuf High

School and Edinboro State College — now Edinboro University — is managing editor of The Bradford Era.

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Boys and Dirt

by Herb Walden

When you were a kid, did you like dirt? I mean did you have an affinity for soil? Earth? Mud? Stuff like that?

If your answer is “yes,” chances are you’re a boy! Boys and dirt have always gone together like ham and eggs, pork and beans, beef and stroganoff, and so on and so on. Boys and dirt are synonymous, analogous, infamous, and notorious.

This is not to say there aren’t exceptions. There certainly are. In fact, I once knew a boy who did not like mud! He wanted neither to wade in it nor jump in it. He would never consider throwing it at someone, much less have it thrown at him. I took several pictures of him and got his autograph before he took off to return to his home-galaxy.

Some little girls like dirt, too. I am thinking now of mud pies and such. But they soon outgrow it. We boys never do.

We spend our early years just plain playing in dirt. Walking, crawling, rolling around in it --- the mode doesn’t much matter as long as we’re able to get a few bushels of the stuff to adhere to our clothes and persons. A boy who, after a day of play, cannot plug up a bathtub drain just isn’t doing his job!

By the time we reach age 10 or so, we still like to get dirty, but the type and source of dirt changed. We’re into bicycles now, and that means grease! Heavy, thick, black grease!

Back in the old days, cleaning and lubricating the coaster brake was a satisfying, greasy job. And if we decided to do likewise to the chain, well, we could get greasy clear to our elbows without even trying.

Still later comes the automobile. Those of us fortunate enough to begin our driving careers with an old Junker, that had nothing going for them except character, really had it made. Something under the hood usually needed fixing, sometimes on a daily basis. Dirty grease and oil is always in abundance in and around an old engine, and transferring it from the engine to us was fairly simple.

By the time we boys grow up, (and there is doubt among some that this ever really happens), we have to look for new ways to get dirty. Hunting and fishing are among the best excuses I know. Anyone who can do either and remain unsoiled should try harder!

I think fishing affords more opportunities to get

dirty than hunting, unless you usually wrestle a deer to the ground with your bare hands. Creek and pond fishing offer a plethora of sources of dirt including, but not limited to, mud, clay, algae, assorted slime and pond scum, and if you're really lucky, fish guts and worm stuff!

As we enter our "golden years," many of us return to the basics. Having experienced and exhausted most exotic dirt sources, we go back to "Mother Earth." Unlike our early childhood when we needed no excuse for crawling and rolling around in the soil, we now feel obligated to have a reason. And we do. It is called "gardening!"

Certainly one can work in a garden without getting very dirty, but where's the fun in that? There was a time when I pulled weeds while bending over. I soon discovered that not only is that really hard, there is practically no chance of getting dirty. So now I get down on hands and knees. Sometimes I sit down. Right in the dirt! You would be surprised at how quickly and thoroughly dirty I can get that way! Especially after a rain!

Way back when I was a teenager, a little boy about five years old lived across the street from us. His parents lived there, too. During one week that summer, we had two or three days of steady rain, and a huge puddle about six inches deep formed along the road where the boy's parents parked their car.

I was sitting on our steps, enjoying the summer sun after the rainy days, when I saw the little boy come out to play. The puddle attracted him like a magnet, and he rode his tricycle in and out of it several times. Then he waded around in it.

For a few minutes, I thought I was going to have to go over and teach him about jumping up and down in it. In fact, I was already removing shoes and socks when he discovered the technique on his own.

Pretty soon, he tired of jumping and started doing something similar to push-ups. He was clad only in white shorts when he started but after a couple push-ups, he and the shorts were a rich, chocolate brown.

He finished off by sitting down in the puddle, (which was more mud than water by now), and then laying back nearly submerging himself.

I applauded him! Here was a little boy who had gotten more thoroughly dirty in less time than I ever had! It usually took me the better part of an afternoon. His accomplishment had taken less than 20 minutes!

I thought the show was over when this walking Hershey Bar started for the house. But when he suddenly took notice of his parents' car parked at the edge of the puddle, it was time for Act II.

Obviously inspired, he returned to the puddle and scooped up two handfuls of mud. He slithered up

to the car and purposefully applied the mud to the front fender. A natural master of finger-painting, he kept smearing mud on the car (which had been blue), until he had done a professional job of "two-toning." I assume it would have been "one-tone" had he been taller and able to reach the windows and beyond.

Now came ACT III, the Grand Finale! The boy had "painted" about two-thirds of the car when his mother came out to see what was going on. She looked at him in such a way that I thought maybe she wasn't sure that was really her son. Or even a human, for that matter. Then she saw the car! I could almost feel her shock!

To her great credit, she neither screamed nor yelled. I couldn't even hear her scolding the little boy, although I tried desperately. (Actually, I was laughing too hard to hear much of anything).

She simply took him by his mud-caked hand and led him to the house, taking steps easily exceeding a yard in length. I did notice that the boy's little muddy feet never touched the ground even once for the whole distance!

In the decades that have passed, I often wondered what became of this little connoisseur of dirt. He was the epitome of dirt collectors. And at such a tender age. One can only imagine and envy the countless times and methods this boy got dirty in the years to follow.

I don't know what ever happened to him. A lot of time has passed. He must be getting along in years. Let's see, it's been ----- geez! I'll bet he has a garden!

Herb Walden graduated from Fort Le Boeuf in 1956. He presently lives in Albion, after retiring as a Teacher in the Albion school system.

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BE SAFE!