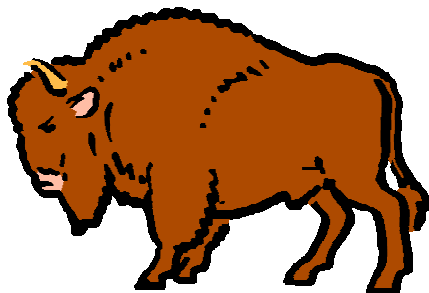


Bisonalities, Again



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

April 2004 Spring Issue Volume 5 - Number 3

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Welcome to the Spring issue of the Newsletter dedicated to the alumni (students, teachers, and administrators) of Waterford High School and Fort LeBoeuf High School. This newsletter will be distributed quarterly. New issues will be posted for viewing on the Web site on, or about, January 5, April 5, July 5, and October 5.

The Bisonalities, Again 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 former classmates? If you do, send it to me at the following e-mail address: catlinb.candoer@verizon.net

or at my snail-mail address:

- Robert J. Catlin, Sr.
2670 Dakota Street
1 Bryans Road, MD 20616-3062
2 Tel: (301) 283-6549
2 or
2 Fax (301) 375-9250
2 Please, **NO** handwritten submissions.
2 The Bisonalities, Again newsletter is available to any
3 and all alumni, teachers, and administrators of
3 Waterford High School or FLBHS on the Web site,
3 free. If you know an alumnus, teacher, or administrator
5 who would be interested, tell them about the Web site.
5 None of the material in this newsletter has a copyright,
5 unless otherwise noted. If you wish to make copies of
5 this newsletter and distribute it to other Alumni or
5 friends, please feel free to do so.
6 *****

Death - Charles L. Giddings

It is with sadness I inform you of the death of a member of the class of 1947, Charles Giddings.

Charles L. "Chuck" Giddings, 75, of Millcreek Township, died Tuesday, Dec. 30, 2003, at Millcreek Manor.

He was born June 26, 1928 in Union City, son of the late William W. and Harriet May Giddings.

He was a member of the Waterford High School class of 1947.

He worked for the Kahkwa Club in Fairview Township. He also worked for Frito-Lay and Troy Laundry.

Assigned duty aboard the USS Harry F. Bauerhe served in the U.S. Navy. He was a member of a Navy Choir that performed for Queen Elizabeth II.

A member of the Lakewood Methodist Church,

e preformed with its choir since 1953. He was a charter member of the Presque Isle Chorale and also preformed with the Commodore Perry Barbershop Chorus for 13 years.

He pitched in softball leagues and also enjoyed bowling, golf, and horseshoes.

He was preceded in death by a sister, Carol van Cise, and a half brother, Bob Whipple.

Survivors include his wife of 49 years, Marion Louise Byers Giddings; two daughters, ,Lori Miller and husband Bill of Aurora, Ohio, and Karen A Evans, and her husband, Ken of Erie; a son, Keith B. Giddings of Atlanta; a sister, Carolyn Black of Thomasville, N.C.; three granddaughters and several nieces and nephews.

Death of Gary P. Lydic

It is with sadness I inform you of the death of a member of the class of 1972, Gary P. Lydic.

Gary P. Lydic, 49, 9111 Footemill Rd., Friday, January 9, 2004. Husband of 16 years of Carrie Cheesebrough Lydic. Father of Tyler Lydic, at home and Misty Lydic, Erie. Grandfather of Johnathan Mann, Erie. Son of H. Louise Lydic, Erie and late C. Paul Lydic. Brother of Steven Lydic, Erie, Robert Lydic and wife Shannon, Westminster, MD Shirley Bakker, Kearns, Utah, Nancy Lydic, Erie, Vickie Sorenson, Waterford and late Douglas Lydic. Son in law of Donald and Jerry Fisher Cheesebrough, Erie.

Death of Harriette Myrtle May Hager

It is with regret and deep sadness that I inform you of the death of a very classy lady, **Harriette Hager**, mother of **Connie Hager Wilmire** (class of 1958).

Harriette Myrtle May Hager, 87, of Waterford, died Friday, January 9, 2004 at Pleasant Ridge Manor. She was born in Phillippsville on December 18, 1916, daughter of the late Luther May and Sarah Crook May Bonnell. Wife of the late Theodore Hager who died in 1987. Mother of Mrs. Merle (Connie) Wilmire of Waterford. Also survived by a brother, Ed May of Arbuckle; 3 granddaughters, Dawn Helms, Linda Aldred and Terri Keiser and 7 great grandchildren.

Death of Dale W. Jones

It is with regret that I inform you of the death of a graduate of the class of 1967, **Dale W. Jones**.

Dale W. Jones, age 54 years, of Millcreek Twp., passed away at his residence on Thursday, February 5th, 2004. He was born on January 24, 1950, in Titusville, Pa. Son of the late Nicholas and Dorothy Jones. He was a graduate of Ft. LeBoeuf High School class of 1967. He served in the U. S. Army for 10 years. He served in Vietnam and also in the Army Reserves for 10 additional years. He owned and operated Jones Zees Tavern for 10 years, and last worked as a care giver for the Gertrude Barber Center. He was a Pittsburgh Steeler Fan.

He was preceded in death by two sisters: Joan Fish and Donna Martin. Survivors Include: His wife of 29 years, Bonita "Bonnie" Munger Jones. Four Daughters: Ashley and Natalee Jones, Erie; Estelle Giardini, Olean, NY; Jennifer Baldwin, Allegheny, NY. One Son: Christopher Jones, Rochester, NY, 6 Grandchildren, three Brothers: William Jones, wife Pat and Ron Jones wife Joan, both of Erie, Thomas Jones, wife Jeanette, Brighton, MI. Two Sisters: Jean Mosher, husband, Donald, Union City, PA. His twin, Gayle Davis husband, Dewey, Waterford, PA. Several nieces and nephews.

Death of John David Patchen

It is with deep regret I inform you of the death of **John David Patchen**, Class of 1966. John died at the age of 55 in Elfrida, Arizona. ((Thanks to Patsy Reichart Dzeskewicz for furnishing the above information.))

Death of Richard P. Hessinger

It is with sadness I inform you of the death of **Richard P. Hessinger**, a 1965 graduate of Fort LeBoeuf High School.

Richard P. Hessinger, age 56, 2330 Dorn Road, Waterford, died Tuesday, March 16, 2004, at Hamot Medical Center. Born in Erie on June 19, 1947, he was a son of Emil F. Hessinger, of Clinton Corners, NY, and the late Marion Carlson Hessinger, and was the stepson of Midge Hessinger. He was a teacher in the Millcreek Township School Dist. for 30 years, and most recently taught math at McDowell High School and Intermediate School . He was past president of the Summit Township Rec League, where he coached baseball, EYSA soccer, and also coached MYAA football. He was past president of the Fort LeBoeuf Football Boosters. He was a Summit Township supervisor for eighteen years, and served on the

planning commission for Summit Township and Erie County. He was past president of the Pennsylvania State Association of Township Supervisors, and was a certified traffic technician. He served on the board of Perry Highway Hose Company. He was a member of Elks Lodge #67, and the Sunflower Club. Besides his father and stepmother, survivors include: His wife: Cheryl Major Hessinger 2 sons: Randy Hessinger and Richard S. Hessinger, both of Waterford 2 daughters: Tammy Sebring, husband Timothy, El Dorado Hills, CA Alicia Hessinger, Waterford 2 grandchildren: Courtney and Brock Sebring 3 brothers: Fred Hessinger, wife Donna, Waterford Carl Hessinger, wife Marianne, Gibsonia, PA Bob Hessinger, wife Cindy, Erie 1 sister: Karen Zalewski, husband Bob, Erie several nieces and nephews.

Cat's Corner

The one-lines in this issue were received from Lillian Turley Barnes (1956).

I requested permission, by e-mail, from the Erie Times to use a second of Loraine's articles about life in Waterford and southern Erie County. I was informed this time that they would charge me \$150 per article, per reprint. After receiving their e-mail response, I telephoned them and talked to the editor. I was hoping to get across to her that this is a non-profit newsletter and that I could not afford to pay a fee for republication. She could not understand what I was trying to tell her and insisted if I wanted to reprint the article in my "Newspaper," I would have to pay their set fee. After a long discussion, she stated that if I got Loraine's permission and changed the wording around so it was not the same as the article printed in the Times, they would not do anything about my use of the article. I wrote to Loraine and received her permission, so her articles about events and people in Waterford and the surrounding areas will continue to appear, with wording changes, on the Bisonalities, Again Web site (www.geocities.com/candoer1).

I have had some response to my request for articles to publish here in the newsletter. I have received an article from Sandra Clark (Class of 1972). That article appears in this issue. Thank you Sandra for your contribution. It is very much appreciated!

I have also received an article from David

Rutkowski. David's article also appears in this issue. Thank you David for your contribution. It is also very much appreciated!

A member of the class of 1956 asks for your prayers. Pat Weaver Walden Taha has been fighting diabetes for many years. Recently she was told, by her doctor, that she had End Stage Renal Failure. She is presently taking dialysis.

If you wish to contact Pat, her address is:

Patricia A. Taha
99 Hampton Road
Imperial, PA 15126
Tel: (412) 787-1820

A balanced meal is a cookie in each hand.

Small town America

by Bob Catlin

I have been told that as we get older, the second thing to go will be our memory. I have forgotten what the first thing was, and I forget who told me that.

My memory of growing up in Waterford is not the greatest. I really cannot use the excuse of advancing age for this lack of memory. Well, I can, but it would not be truthful. I don't remember my memory ever being good. Even in high school it was not great. That was reflected in the fact that I never received what one would call great grades. Now, let me clarify that, I never received what one would call **good** grades.

Since graduation from high school, and leaving Waterford in 1956, I have lived in everything from a large city, Paris, to a small town, Bryans Road, plus a couple places big and small in between. But, a small town has always been my preference, when I had the choice.

So a few years after taking a job with the Department of State in Washington, D.C. as a Cryptographer, Nancy and I decided to buy a house in the small community of Bryans Road in Southern Maryland.

Bryans Road is even smaller than Waterford. The population is less than 1,000 people. Having lived here 34 years, I have reason to believe the population count may even include cows, horses, dogs, and cats. I hated the hustle and bustle of the large metropolitan area. It was alright to work there,

but not to live and raise a family.

Bryans Road is easy to describe. We don't have sidewalks. The main street, running north and south, is not called a street, it is Maryland Route 210, also known as Indian Head Highway. Route 210 starts 17 mile north at the Maryland/Washington, D.C. border and ends four miles south of here, at the entrance to the Indian Head Naval Ordinance Station.

In 1938 the U.S. Government bought the right of way from the Washington, D.C. border to the military base at Indian Head to build a two-lane highway to transport explosive materials to the ordnance station in Indian Head. The old road was one that existed since the early 1700's and wound all over the place. The present day 21 mile drive was a total of 32 miles using the old road. After several trucks loaded with explosives had wrecks and blew up, the decision was made to buy the right of way and build a road for the trucks to have private access to the ordnance station. In 1952, the road was given to Maryland so it could be used by the public.

Bryans Road has a traffic light at the center of town. Going west, the cross road is Marshall Hall Road. Going east, the cross road is Livingston Road.

We have three gas stations, three bars, and three liquor stores. Our town motto: You can get gassed up any way you want.

Those nine businesses aren't the only ones here. There is a post office, a Safeway grocery store, a CVS Pharmacy, a McDonalds, a Burger King, a private owned hardware/lumber store, a barber shop, a dentist, an automotive parts place, a Dollar General, two pizza parlors, and one or two other small mom and pop stores. Oh, I forgot! We have a small trailer park, also.

Like a lot of small towns in the Washington metropolitan area, Bryans Road is a bedroom community. That is, we live and raise our families here, but for the most part work outside the area.

Most people, because they are transient, live here until they retire and then move back "home" or somewhere south. Bryans Road is not a hometown to them, it is a stopping off place on their way to where they are headed; back home, retirement, or their next assignment.

Living in the Washington metropolitan area is probably no different from a lot of larger cities. Washington, D.C. itself is a city of 565 thousand people. When you include the immediate suburbs, the population increases to well over three million. On an

average year, an estimated 150 thousand people move in or out of the area. This is a direct result of the number of Government employees and military personnel who work in the area.

Nancy and I live in a small housing development just outside of Bryans Road, off Marshall Hall Road. It is a mile from our house to the traffic light in the center of town.

Of the 125 homes in our housing development, less than 50 are still owned by the original owners. I doubt that any of the 50 owners were born and raised in this area. Like Nancy and I, they moved here because they found employment in the Washington metropolitan area.

The house next door, on my left, has had five different owners in the 34 years I have lived here. The people now living in the house are military and they too have stated they will be gone in two-three years. This is typical of a bedroom community.

Even with my bad memory, I do remember one of the things I liked about a small town. Everyone knew everyone else and everyone said "Hi," when you passed them on the street.

That could be good, and it could be bad.

The good part, when you had an illness or a death in your family, just about everyone in town was there to help you get through it.

You also knew everyone in your high school class and all the other classes, also.

My wife graduated from Strong Vincent High School in Erie. She had more people in her home room than we did in our Senior class, therefore, she didn't know everyone in her class, let alone in her school.

The bad part, everyone seemed to know your business, whether you wanted them to or not.

As a teenager growing up in Waterford, it was a little rough because of this. When I drove Dad's car on a date, or just a night out with the guys, Dad had a report within days, if not hours, of every where I went and what my driving habits were.

During my senior year in high school, I dated Pat Haskins (Now Bliley). Pat's mother, Lillian, owned Haskins' Grocery on Main Street in Waterford.

Every time I took Pat out on a date, if Lillian was not awake when I brought Pat back home, she quickly learned exactly what time we returned.

How? Across the street, and down a few houses lived an elderly lady who never slept. At least it appeared that way, because when I returned from a

date with Pat, whether it was 10:00 p.m. or 1:00 a.m., this lady could be seen peeking through her living room curtains watching our every move. Either Pat or I would wave at her and the curtains would close, immediately.

The next morning, this lady would be waiting at the grocery store for Lillian to open up, and immediately bring the conversation around to Pat and I and what time we got in.

Years later, Lillian told me, within seconds of her opening the store, she knew exactly what time Pat and I returned. She laughed about it and said, if she was concerned about what time we returned, she would have waited up for us.

Small town America, you have to love it.

Going to church doesn't make you a Christian any more than standing in a garage makes you a car.

Humor



Snow

by Sandra Clark
Class of 1972

We got our first heavy snow this season, with the snow belt getting about 1½ feet that resulted in a lot of accidents in the area. Younger people at work were complaining about how bad it was but I can remember when we had a lot more snow for a lot longer period. In the early 60's, when we lived on Stone Quarry Road, I remember the snow being taller than the school buses. Mother was always yelling at us because we'd start climbing the snow banks while waiting for the bus. All our books would be lying on the

road and we would be on top the snow looking down. This would occur even into the 70's, although by then I no longer had the desire to climb to the top of the snow bank.

I remember in either 1974 or 1975 having the big snow banks as I made my way to and from work. After the city went through and plowed out the roads, they would remind me of walls. You couldn't get off or onto the sidewalks except at the corners.

When I got married in 1977 my husband was one of the truckers who hauled snow away as they removed it from business roofs as well as the streets and parking lots. They no longer have to do that.

I also remember one really big storm around Christmas time in either 1978 or 1979 where we had so much snow in one afternoon that 12th Street was down to one lane going east. My husband and I lived in North East at that time and we made it to the beginning of our road but then got the car stuck in the snow (along with at least 6-8 others). We walked the rest of the way to our driveway and the next day all the neighbors came out to dig everyone out.

We still get quite a bit of snow, especially in January and February, but not like it used to be. The middle of January usually brings in sub zero weather from Canada (the Alberta Clipper) with at least one big snowstorm around my birthday.

Growing up I remember missing school due to the amount of snow we would get. Now you just add extra time to your drive and try to be as careful as possible while driving. Even then, it seems people just don't slow down enough to be safe after these storms

Waterford Elementary Playground

By David Rutkowski
(Class of 1967)

When I was attending Waterford Elementary, I always felt sorry for the town kids, because I got to ride the school bus and they didn't. Sure, they were able to walk home for lunch and I had to eat out of my Roy Rogers lunch box, but a steaming bowl of Campbell's chicken noodle soup couldn't compare to the boloney sandwiches and cookies my mother packed for me. Plus, on the rainy and snowy days as they trudged over the wet sidewalks, I was warm and cozy in the gym. After scarfing down the sandwich and cookies, and chugging the bottle of milk I had obtained for a nickel, I was able to grab the plastic bowling pins and balls, and bowl a few games with

Johnny Feasler.

Or, if the weather was nice, the rest of lunch hour was spent on the great playground apparatus that filled the entire field behind the school. We had "regular" swings, which were ok, but not as much fun as the kind that had the metal frame with piston arms that hung down and enabled you to swing by pulling the arms toward you as hard as you could. The draw back to these was the stiff pipe that connected the swing to the crossbar. There was no way you could swing entirely around the bar, even though we tried every day. But, playground rumor held that "some kid" had been able to swing clear around the bar on the regular swings, and trying to match that feat was the sole redeeming factor of standing in line for that swing set.

Then there were the sliding boards. You had your basic short slides for the little kids, and the huge monsters for the big kids. Big kid being third grade and up. (Remember the chant "First grade babies, second grade snots. Third grade angels, fourth grade pots. Fifth grade peaches, sixth grade plums. All the rest are dirty bums." I never knew how a fourth grader could be a pot, and what it actually meant, but it rhymed. Now that I think about the words, it would have made more sense to say "Third grade angels, fourth grade not", and maybe that's what it actually was, but I always said "pots", so there.) Anywaaaay, that huge slide must have been fifty feet tall, or at least ten. But what fun to fly down that baby! Especially while wearing corduroy pants. You'd really book it then. And at the bottom was the huge hole that was formed from the abrasive action of countless U.S. Keds upon the hallowed soil where George Washington played as a child while living at Fort LeBoeuf and planting cherry trees. Well, at least that's what Billy Beeman always said, and he usually got good grades in history.

Usually.

An added attraction to the hole was the rock that was invariably there. Sure, Janitor Bob pried it out every so often, but it was always able to sneak back in. And the water that appeared after the rain was an added bonus. Man, you could soak up a lot of water with those corduroy britches!

But, you know, the swings and the slides were really small potatoes compared to the real playground apparatus: the monkey bars, teeter-totters, and the holy grail of playgrounddom, the merry-go-round.

The monkey bars came in three styles. Simplest were the straight bars, placed at different heights. You could hang from any you could reach, and swing back

and fourth, and even do chin-ups. Well, you could do the chin-ups if you grabbed onto a low bar, and jumped. Then those little spaghetti arms seemed powerful as you fooled yourself into believing that you could do chin-ups like your Bison football heroes, Wally Mahle, Ted Salchak, and Jim Grumblatt.

Next step up on the fun meter was the ladder bar, which was basically a metal ladder welder horizontally to four uprights. The idea was to hang from the bar and then make your way down the length of the ladder by swinging from rung to rung. That was quite an achievement when you were finally able to make it all the way without touching the ground. It was especially hard when the sixth graders would climb on top of the ladder and make their way across by carefully balance walking on the rungs.....and your fingers.

But the funniest of all was the monkey bar set that looked like a beaver hut. We would have thought it looked like a huge soccer ball cut in half if we had known what a soccer ball was. To us back in the early 60's soccer was what you did to your sister when she knocked down the calvary horses in your Marx Frontier Fort set. You could crawl all over the bars, and hang from your knees, and wedge your ankles in the joint where the bars met and hang that way, and spit upside down, and let the blood rush to your head until you got light headed, and all sorts of fun. That's probably why the things are outlawed now, but I never heard of a kid getting killed on the monkey bars. Oh, sure, they were good for a couple broken arms a year, and every now and then a broken leg, but without the status of a cast, how could some of those kids expect to move up in the social standing of grade school?

The teeter-totter was another fun experience. Some of the kids called it a see-saw, but I think they moved in from Union City or something. The teeter-totter was actually an educational tool, but we didn't know it. It wasn't much fun if you didn't play with someone that weighted the same as you did. If you weighed more than your pal, you would teeter and he would totter, but neither got to actually teeter-totter. But, if you were the heavy one, it was always fun to slide off your end and watch the spine-compressing action of a teeter quickly becoming a totter. Of course, if your buddy weighed more than you did, and wanted to teeter-totter, you quickly learned to inform him that they were handing out free Fudgesicles in the cafeteria. See, educational. Of course, when he came back empty handed, seething, and looking for you with drool still running out of the corner of his

mouth, you just told him you meant they were selling U.S. Savings Bonds stamps and he must have heard you wrong. Like I said, educational.

Yeah, the teeter-totter and monkey bars were fun, but the absolute best, greatest hit, number one playground maimer ...ummm...I mean toy, was the merry-go-round. That was one neat invention. The basic merry-go-round was kind of "just all right". They featured a spinning platform that rotated around a stationary post, with a wheel on top of the post that you turned, and used physics to spin the platform around in a circle. Only you didn't know it was physics, because you didn't have to take physics until 10th grade, and even then you missed the reference, because if it didn't involve stretching out slinkys in the hallway, you pretty much day-dreamed through the whole year. Anyway, that type of merry-go-round was fun, but the best was the MERRY-GO-ROUND. Capitalized. This bad boy featured bars at the edges of the spinning disk platform, so you could run along side while holding the bar, and obtain speeds great enough to send any riders flying off the merry-go-round and onto the rocky surface of the turf. Man, that was some fun. When you were able to get some fast kids as pushers, you could really spin that sucker. In fact, if the runners jumped up and hung on tight, they could actually fly around with their head toward the middle and their feet whipping along as centripetal forces attempted to separate their elbow and shoulder joints. Couldn't be beat for playground fun. Except if it was playground just after lunch, and on goulash day, but that was a small price to pay for a few moments of weightlessness.

Yep, that huge playground was one of the great things about Waterford Elementary School. I survived it, and went on to high school, and college, and then got married and moved 200 miles away. Whenever we visited family back in Waterford, we had to make a stop at the playground so my kids could swing, and slide, and spin. Sometimes it was like this: "Hi Gram! Hi Gramps! We're going to the playground!" When fortune brought us back to Waterford to live, my youngest was thrilled. He would be attending Waterford Elementary Playground...err...School. Alas, the renovation and expansion of the school had just started, and the expansion was eliminating much of the playground.

Instead of the swings, and the huge slides, and monkey bars and merry-go-round, there were plastic "playscapes". These new creations, that cost more to construct than a small house, just don't compare. The colorful plastic (can't use wood because you might get

splinters. Can't use metal because you could bonk your head) tunnels, and two-foot high slides just cannot be as much fun. These new child-proof playgrounds even have "activity" sections with huge tic-tac-toe games, and fake steering wheels, and "educational components". And they have to have shredded rubber around the whole structure, and padded landing areas for the slides, as if the poor kids could get up any speed on the four foot long plastic slide anyway. What ever happened to good old natural grass and dirt and rocks? Toughened us up for the real world is all that it did. But, such is life in the ultra-safe, code orange, air bag, child proof world we live in.

Oh, the new school is tremendous. It looks beautiful; both modern and "old-school" at the same time. The classrooms are comfortable, and technologically equipped. But that new playground with all of its computer drafted play structures just doesn't compare to the noggin-crackin', knee scrapin', freeze-your-tongue-to-the-metal-bar playground of my youth.

Be Kind! Be Safe!