

# Bisonalities, Again



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

July 2005

Summer Issue

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Please, NO handwritten submissions.

This newsletter is available **free** on the Web site to any and all alumni, teachers, and administrators, past or present, of Waterford High School or FLBHS. If you know an alumnus, teacher, or administrator who would be interested, tell them about the Web site. None of the material in this newsletter has a copyright, unless otherwise noted. If you wish to print the newsletter and make copies to distribute to other alumni and/or friends, please feel free to do so.

**Editor: Bob Catlin - Class of 1956**

**Why is it that at class reunions you feel younger than everyone else looks?**



## Death of Ruth Russell

Ruth Russell, age 92, of 12093 Circuit Street, Waterford, died Friday, March 25, 2005 at her home in Sarasota, Fla. Born on

Welcome to the summer 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 1, April 1, July 1, and October 1.

The **Bisonalities, Again** Web site may be viewed by going to the following URL: <http://www.geocities.com/candoer1>

The success of this newsletter depends 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 others? 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](mailto:catlinb.candoer@verizon.net)

or

to my snail-mail address:

January 30, 1913 in Waterford, she was the daughter of the late Tell and Donna Gleeten Fish. Mrs. Russell founded Russell's Furniture of Waterford in 1954, and continued to operate it with her husband for many years. She was a member of the Asbury United Methodist Church of Waterford, the Fort LeBoeuf Historical Society and the Order of the Eastern Star. She was preceded in death by her husband, Chester Grant Russell, whom she married in 1934 and who died in 1984, two brothers, Floyd and Wilber Fish, and her son-in-law, William Cairns. Her surviving family members include her son, Chester V. Russell and his wife, Phyllis, of Waterford, her daughter, Linda Cairns, also of Waterford and six grandchildren and two great-grandchildren. A private service was held for the family and the burial took place at Waterford Cemetery. Memorials may be made to either the Asbury United Methodist Church of the Fort LeBoeuf Historical Society.

Condolences may be sent to:

Mr. Chester Russell  
12055 Circuit Street  
Waterford, PA 16441



### Death of Michael Simon

**Michael Simon**, 41, of Albion died on Sunday, March 27, 2005 from injuries suffered in a car accident. He was born in New York, NY on Sept. 1, 1963 the son of Frank Simon of Florida and Joyce Marsh Simon Pialet of Erie. He was a graduate of Edinboro University of Pennsylvania. For the past 18 years he was employed with the Erie School District as a Health and Physical Education teacher at Wayne Middle School. He also was the girls basketball coach in the

Northwestern School District. He previously coached at Seneca, Erie Tech and Fort LeBoeuf. He was an avid Cleveland Indian, Indianapolis Colts, and NASCAR fan. He also enjoyed spending time with his dogs Bailey and Yankee, hunting and fishing. Besides his parents he is survived by his wife, Julie Gross; a son Matthew E. Simon; two step children, Sharon Harris and Daniel Harris, both of Mill Village; a grandson Tristin Harris; and a brother, Jay Simon; his step mother, Diane Simon and his step father, Gus Pialet. Interment was in Albion Cemetery.

Condolences may be sent to:

Mrs. Joyce Pialet  
319 West Front Street  
Erie, PA 16507

**If you don't have a sense of humor, you probably don't have any sense at all.**



### Cat's Corner

Well, finally, summer has arrived in all its glory and splendor.

I love the transition from winter to spring and then on into summer, the sound and sight of the many birds returning from their winter homes, the grass and trees turning green, and the flowers blooming. Winter is such a sad, miserable time of year, at least for me. If I had my druthers, I would love to live in a place that the temperature is 78 degrees, year round, and it only rained every Tuesday (between Midnight and 6:00 a.m.). Yeah! I'm delusional! I know there ain't no such place, so Southern Maryland is it for me.

You have probably noticed some changes in the last few issues of the **Bisonalities, Again.** Please, bear with me. For years I have been

using WordPerfect as my word processing program. For several years, while working at the Department of State and the National Communications System, I taught WordPerfect. I know all its ins and outs. But in March, I bought a new printer, a HP DeskJet 990cxi. With the purchase of this new printer I developed a compatibility problem with my old version of WordPerfect. It doesn't like the new printer and refuses to use it. So, I have been forced to switch to Microsoft Word to compose this newsletter.

I went to the HP and Corel (makers of WordPerfect) web sites hoping to find a new printer driver for my old version of WordPerfect and discovered they do not make one for my new printer.

As the old saying goes, "you cannot teach an OLD dog new tricks." Although, even when I was a YOUNG dog I wasn't good at learning new tricks. What a learning curve! After 25 plus years of one program, switching to a new one and learning all its bells and whistles it is going to take some time.

So, have patience with me. Hopefully I will get used to it, sooner or later. The alternative is to spend \$300 for a new version of WordPerfect that will work with the new printer. Not sure I want to do that. After all, \$300 is the price of 7 games of golf (with cart) and 30 dozen night crawlers. I think the WordPerfect will be a thing of the past. After all, I do have my priorities.

On May 18, 2005, the 50th anniversary of Fort LeBoeuf was celebrated with a ceremony and a tour of the building.

I am sorry to say that only about 100 people attended, including the people who planned it. For some reason, known only to the planners, they chose not to advertise it, except by word of mouth. And I believe the mouth that was to spread the word was gagged.

Without having actual figures, I would venture to guess that well over 10,000 students have graduated from LeBoeuf. Yet the attendance was exceptionally small.

The class of 1956, the first to graduate, made up the majority of the old-timers attending.

I drove up from Bryans Road that day to attend. If it had not been for the fact so many of my classmates showed up, I would have been very disappointed. I got to see several of my classmates that I had not seen since we graduated.

In addition to a short ceremony, we were allowed to either take a formal tour of the high school, or wander through the halls on our own.

For those of you who may not have been back to the school to see the expansion that has taken place over the years, you would be pleasantly surprised. Without knowing how the infrastructure is holding up, the school appears to be in outstanding shape, including the old section that we had attended.

For the past several years, we can thank Merle Wilmire (Class of 1957) and his crew for their outstanding efforts toward maintaining the Fort LeBoeuf School District schools.

Lura Shields Silvaggi remembered which rooms were the class of 1956 classrooms, so we got a chance to go down and visit those rooms, also.

It was a fun tour.

Next year, my class, the class of 1956 will be attending our 50th Reunion during Heritage Days. For those of you who did not attend the Anniversary celebration, we are hoping to arrange a tour of the building at that time.

The one-lines used in this issue were furnished by Elizabeth Faulhaber Demmery-Potter (Class of 1955).

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**Seat belts are not as confining as wheelchairs.**

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### Letters to the Editor

The following e-mail was received from

Sandi Clark, class of 1972.

As I sat here reading your story regarding the weather (**Bisonalities, Again, Spring 2005 Issue**) it reminded me of one Easter. I can't remember how old I was but I was in Junior High. There are eight of us in the Clark Family. As I remember all but my older brother went to Church that morning. We had all gotten new clothes, and for the girls it was a summery, very light dress (something we didn't wear too often in winter weather considering we could have four foot of snow on the ground at any given time then). When we went to Church the sun was shining and it was nice and warm so we didn't wear jackets or coats. During the sermon the sun was shining through the windows and nothing was amiss. However, as we walked out of the church we found that the weather had changed and we now were out in snow and bitter cold wind. Those summer dresses were not very warm. Needless to say, it didn't take us long to get in the car (without arguing) and head home so we could change into warmer clothes.

Of course, I still remember some of the winters when we lived on Stone Quarry Road and the snow banks along the road were higher than the buses. We liked climbing on them when the bus was late and looking down on the top of the bus as he pulled up in front of the driveway. A striking difference from today.

**After a certain age, if you don't wake up aching in every joint, you are probably dead.**



## Summer thoughts turn back to childhood

By Herb Walden

I was a summertime kid.

I loved summer most of all. I still do. But summer days were a lot longer then

than they are now, and summer itself went on and on.

By the time it was over, I was almost ready for school to start. Almost. Now it seems the summer season is gone before you know it. I'm sure it has something to do with the theory of relativity or Kepler's Laws of Planetary Motion. It certainly can't be old age!

Now, once again summer is upon us, and as usual, my thoughts are turning back to my childhood summers. My fondest memories are not of big events, but rather those little day-to-day things in my old hometown of Waterford.

I spent the first 10 years of my life in a neighborhood with no other kids nearby. And being an only child meant that I had to depend on myself for entertainment.

There are advantages to that situation. Not only did I develop an imagination, but I also learned independence and self-reliance. And, most importantly, I didn't have to share my toys! When I was very little, I used to spend hours playing in my sandbox in our backyard on East 2nd Street. It was fun to haul sand in my toy dump trucks and cultivate sandy fields with my toy farm machinery.

Then, we got a cat.

While roaming around the backyard one day, the cat made an amazing discovery. She found what she determined to be the biggest litter box in the tri-state area. She must have been ecstatic! Soon after, I lost interest in that sandbox.

When Dad's car was home, I spent a lot of time pretend-driving in the driveway. It was safe. The driveway was fairly level and Dad always made sure the key was not in the ignition. The car I liked best was the old Model-A Ford that was used for a delivery car at the Red and White Store where Dad worked. It was known as the "store car" (pronounced as one word: "Storkar").

I'd fold the back of the front seat down and sit on it so I could see through the windshield. Of course, I couldn't reach the pedals, but that didn't matter. All I really needed was the steering wheel. I "drove" for

miles and miles in the old Storkar.

Cars of that vintage were also good to climb on if they hadn't been sitting in the sun too long. The front fenders made good slides. However, the door hinges did present somewhat of a hazard to the knees and head.

Another neat thing was my swing in our yellow transparent apple tree. I'd swing sitting down, standing up, sideways, corner-ways - you name it. On hot days, it was a way to generate a little breeze. Sometimes I'd wind myself up and then spin like crazy to see how dizzy I would get. I never got sick, but I did have trouble getting back to the house!

This was during World War II, so most often my swing was a fighter airplane, a Curtiss P-40 to be exact. My middle name is Curtis, so that plane, despite the extra "S", had a particular appeal.

### **Kindred spirit**

I always loved little toy cars and trucks and spent hours and hours playing with them. In 1948, we moved from 2nd Street to a great place way up on Cherry Street. Here I found a kindred spirit. Bud was just my age and lived next door with only a narrow strip of cornfield separating our houses. Bud liked cars and trucks, too, and we played most of the summer making roads and towns and hills and valleys in what would eventually become our side lawn.

Bud was a pretty good pretender, too. We used to play a lot in the little woods at 6th and Chestnut Streets. Most of the time, we were explorers. At the edge of the woods were the remains of an old gravel pit. We would tie ropes to trees and scale the walls of the pit. Looking at it today, it appears one could easily take a single step from bottom to top. Ever notice how small real estate becomes as we grow older? Down at the corner of 7th and Cherry streets, a tiny creek ran through a tile under the road. There were always a few minnows in the deeper places, but much more interesting were the crayfish (or crabs, as we called them). Bud and I caught many crayfish there on summer

days. We didn't do anything with them -- just let them go. The "catching" was the thing! If you have not spent an afternoon squatting in ankle-deep water trying to catch crayfish that seem smarter and faster than you are, well, you've missed some fun.

Bud and I had bikes that we rode whenever and wherever we could. One of our favorite things to do was half-ride, half-push our bikes through the cornfield to the top of the hill. Then, we would turn and ride pell-mell down the hill between the rows of corn. The cornstalk leaves would slap the living daylights out of us. Why we weren't cut to ribbons by those stiff, sharp-edged leaves I'll never know. I don't even remember bleeding, very much.

Most summer afternoons required some refreshment to make it through the heat of the day. Across the street from Bud's house and mine was an open field. Crossing that field on a well-worn path brought us to Cook's Gulf Station on High Street. Mr. Cook's candy, pop, and ice cream cases were well-stocked. At least they were until we got there!

Our choices were usually Popsicles or Eskimo Pies, although Popsicles often proved to be terribly unreliable.

Walking back home we found that an open field with a hot July sun beating down was a rather harsh environment for Popsicles. That is not their natural habitat. We tried to eat our Popsicles at the same rate as they melted, or faster. But we weren't always successful. Everything would be all right up to the last bite, and very often that last bite would suddenly melt enough to fall off the stick, and with no warning. Sometimes it could be salvaged if there wasn't too much grass or dirt on it.

Eskimo Pies were a lot more dependable because they gave some warning of impending disaster. When the chocolate coating cracked and started sliding off the ice cream onto my fingers, I knew I had to hurry, forehead pain or not! I never lost the last bite of an Eskimo Pie!

### **Days and nights**

Unlike many kids, I always liked to mow the

lawn. When I was around 12, Dad bought a power mower. It was a big reel type that weighed almost as much as I did. It dragged me around the lawn for a good many summers, occasionally nipping off a small tree or something in the flower bed before I could stop it.

Reel-type mowers discharge cut grass from the rear. In other words, onto your feet, which, if bare, turn green in no time. Some folks had grass catchers on their mowers. I didn't. My grass catcher was on me. In those days, most of us kids wore dungarees with pants' legs long enough to roll up into two-inch cuffs. The cuffs were the grass catchers. The amount of grass dungaree cuffs can hold would feed a cow for a week.

Summer nights were great experiences, too. When we lived on 2nd Street, and if there was nothing good on the radio, we would often sit on the front porch in the evening. Some nights we could hear the organ music from the roller skating rink nearly a mile away. Up on Cherry Street, I usually went out in the backyard in the evening after or during a rain to pick up night crawlers. That in itself was fun, but better yet, it meant that Dad and I would probably go fishing the next day.

But I think the most enjoyable nighttime activity was catching lightning bugs. Running around through the cool, dewy grass trying to anticipate where the next blink would be was great fun. The captured insects would be placed into a jar that would sit on my nightstand to keep me company after I was in bed. Trouble was I always went to sleep instantly and never got to enjoy them.

Last summer, I tried catching lightning bugs. I found they fly a lot faster than they used to.

Many years have passed since those summers of long days and soft nights. But you know, some of those things I've written about still sound like fun.

I wouldn't mind swooping around in a swing, if I had a swing. And I might even like to ride a bike through a cornfield, if I had a bike . . . and a cornfield.

There's a little stream down the road a ways. And if some summer day you're driving by and you see an old geezer hunkered down in the shallow water like a 10-year-old making frantic grabs at scurrying crayfish; honk your horn and wave. I'll be sure to wave back.

**The trouble with bucket seats is that not everybody has the same size bucket.**

### Phyllis



**Memories of Bagdad School**

By Phyllis Cowley Belcher

What a pleasure to read Elizabeth Faulhaber Demmery-Potter's memories of Bagdad School! ([Bisonalities, Again, Spring 2005 Issue](#)) The Cowley kids were also alumni of Bagdad. Like Elizabeth, we did not get our start at Bagdad, having gone to Montclair School in Millcreek, before we migrated to Waterford and country living. There were four of us Cowley's at that time . . . Bernard, myself, Charles and Bill. Our sister, Donna came along after Bagdad closed. Bernard, being one of the older kids, he had to be at least 11 or 12, went to school before everyone else and chopped the wood for the pot bellied stove and got the fire going for the teacher, Eleanor Lane. At one time there were only 11 students for eight grades, but that grew when the Faulhaber's and Catlin's moved into our area.

The Terrill's, Ray and Mabel (brother and sister) had foster children, the Sipples, Mary, Rita and Al; the Marvel's, John, Ann and Tom; and Tom Callahan. Tom Callahan was 16 years old and two heads taller than Miss Lane, but that did not stop her from

trying to make him toe the line. I remember the time he climbed the tree in the front yard and refused to come down. It seems he swore at her, but when he finally came down; she had him on the ground and was washing his mouth out with soap.

I remember being in class and watching the Hungarian family that lived on the corner of Bagdad and Swailes (we called it Elder's Hill at that time) cutting cabbage in the field next to the school. One lady took time out to deliver her baby and then came back into the field to finish her job.

Elder's Hill was a tough hill to climb for our young legs. Bill and Faye Marsh were the only first graders we had and they were sent home early each day, hand-in-hand to walk up that long hill. One day, on our way to school, we were met by Gordon Marsh's bull that had gotten loose. You never saw so many legs run back to the Marsh house so fast. Gordon loaded us all in his truck and took us to school and then dealt with the errant bull. We also had another route to the school, though the woods and fields. When there was a blizzard, Dad and Ray Terrill came with ropes and tied us together and escorted us back home through the woods so we wouldn't get lost in the snow.

The Geraldine that Elizabeth mentioned was a DeWolf. She had a sister, Jacqueline. I believe they were related to the Elder family and lived with them.

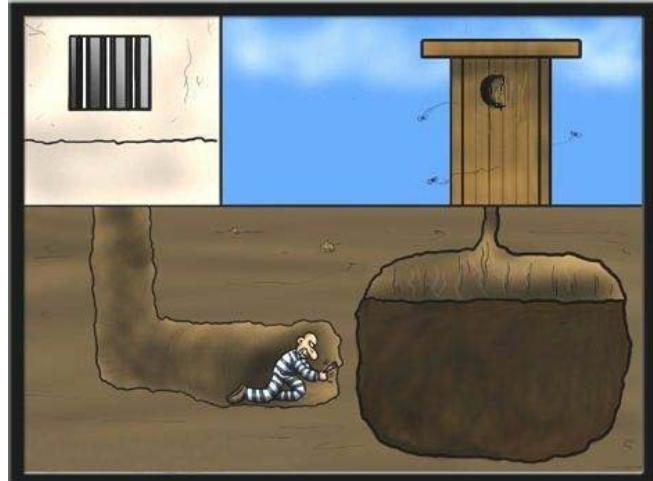
Bernard and I were invited to a party at the Lane house one winter. Our only means of transportation was a horse and sleigh. Bernard was new to handling horses. When he turned into the Lane driveway the sleigh tipped over and I landed in a snow bank. Fortunately, Aaron Lane, Eleanor's father, was home and helped us out with our dilemma. He then put the horse up in his barn while we went to the party.

I could go on and on with my memories. I am glad that Elizabeth jarred them for me. One room school houses give us memories that only very few are privileged to have.

**I've reached the age where the happy hour is a nap.**

## Humor

You think your having a bad day.....



## Memories

Received from Joe Leech, Class of 1956

A little house with three bedrooms and one car on the street,  
 A mower that you had to push to make the grass look neat.  
 In the kitchen on the wall we only had one phone,  
 And no need for recording things, someone was always home.  
 We only had a living room where we would congregate,  
 Unless it was at mealtime in the kitchen where we ate.  
 We had no need for family rooms or extra rooms to dine,  
 When meeting as a family those two rooms would work out fine.  
 We only had one TV set, and channels maybe two,  
 But always there was one of them with something worth the view.  
 For snacks we had potato chips that tasted like a chip,  
 And if you wanted flavor there was Lipton's onion dip.  
 Store-bought snacks were rare because my mother liked to cook,  
 And nothing can compare to snacks in Betty Crocker's book.

Weekends were for family trips or staying home to play,  
We all did things together -- even go to church to pray.  
When we did our weekend trips depending on the weather,  
No one stayed at home because we liked to be together.  
Sometimes we would separate to do things on our own,  
But we knew where the others were without our own cell phone.  
Then there were the movies with your favorite movie star,  
And nothing can compare to watching movies in your car.  
Then there were the picnics at the peak of summer season,  
Pack a lunch and find some trees and never need a reason.  
Get a baseball game together with all the friends you know,  
Have real action playing ball -- and no game video.  
Remember when the doctor used to be the family friend,  
And didn't need insurance or a lawyer to defend?  
The way that he took care of you or what he had to do,  
Because he took an oath and strived to do the best for you.  
Remember going to the store and shopping casually,  
And when you went to pay for it you used your own money?  
Nothing that you had to swipe or punch in some amount,  
Remember when the cashier person had to really count?  
The milkman used to go from door to door,  
And it was just a few cents more than going to the store.  
There was a time when mailed letters came right to your door,  
Without a lot of junk mail ads sent out by every store.  
The mailman knew each house by name and knew where it was sent;  
There were not loads of mail addressed to "present occupant."

There was a time when just one glance was all that it would take,  
And you would know the kind of car, the model and the make.  
They didn't look like turtles trying to squeeze out every mile;  
They were streamlined, white walls, fins, and really had some style.  
One time the music that you played whenever you would jive,  
Was from a vinyl, big-holed record called a forty-five.  
The record player had a post to keep them all in line,  
And then the records would drop down and play one at a time.  
Oh sure, we had our problems then, just like we do today,  
And always we were striving, trying for a better way.  
Oh, the simple life we lived still seems like so much fun,  
How can you explain a game, just kick the can and run?  
And why would boys put baseball cards between bicycle spokes,  
And for a nickel red machines had little bottled Cokes?  
This life seemed so much easier and slower in some ways,  
I love the new technology but I sure miss those days.  
So time moves on and so do we, and nothing stays the same,  
But I sure love to reminisce and walk down memory lane.

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## Be Safe!

By the time you read this issue, I will be visiting Waterford for a two-week period to attend Heritage Days and visit with friends and relatives. Hope to see you there!

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