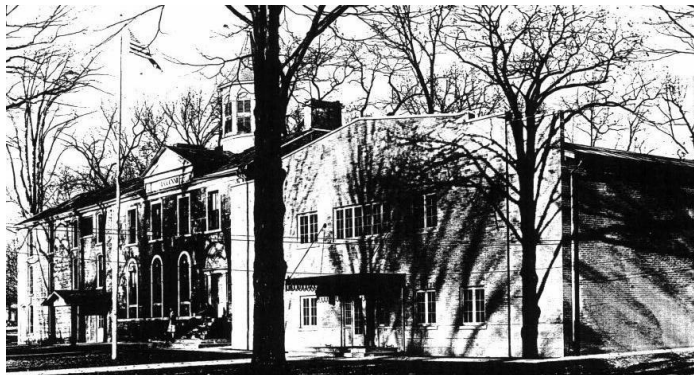


Bisonalities, Again



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

April 2008

Spring Issue

Volume 9 – Number 3

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Welcome to the latest issue of the **Newsletter** dedicated to the alumni (students, teachers, and administrators) of Waterford and Fort LeBoeuf High Schools. This newsletter will be distributed quarterly. New issues will be posted for viewing on the Web 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: www.bisonalitiesagain.com

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: candoercat@gmail.com

or to my snail-mail address:

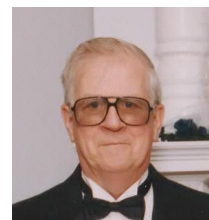
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Please, **NO** handwritten submissions.

This newsletter is available free on the Web to any and all alumni, teachers, and administrators, past or present, of Waterford and Fort LeBoeuf High Schools. If you know an alumnus, teacher, or administrator who would be interested, tell them about the Web site.

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A penny saved is a government oversight.



Cat's Corner

We had a good winter here in Southern Maryland. It started off in January

averaging nine degrees above our normal average of 42 degrees. We even had four days where the temperatures were above 70, with one day of 78 degrees.

February turned a little cooler. We averaged only four degrees above our normal average temperature.

March came along and we kept close to our average temperatures but are now in an early draught. We are already four inches below our normal rain fall for the year.

On January 27, Nancy and I left for Florida and a Disney cruise to the Bahamas with our daughter, son-in-law, and twin granddaughters. This was our first cruise. The cruise was five days long. We wanted to make sure we could handle riding in a large ship before we decide to take any longer cruises. We first spent five days at Disney World and then took the Disney cruise out of Cape Canaveral.

We returned on the same day that the shuttle was scheduled to return to space, so we stayed in the area and watched the launch. Nancy and I have made more than 20 trips to Florida and this is the first time we have been able to watch a launch. It was quite a sight.

I warned you in the last issue if I did not receive more stories from you all that you would have to read another story about my life at the Department of State. Well, this issue includes another story of my travels for the secretary of state.

The one-liners found between stories are as series of "Gentle Thoughts."

The older you get, the tougher it is to lose weight, because by then your body and your fat have gotten to be really

good friends.



Those Snowy Waterford Winters

By Herb Walden, Class of 1956

For the past 40+ years or so, I have made a rather intensive study of weather, climate, and the seasons.

Much of this study has been by book, and even more by observation. I even taught meteorology in high school for several years. I have finally reached a conclusion: Summer is much nicer than winter!

What astounds me is that upon looking through the photo albums, I see there was a time when I apparently enjoyed winter. That time began in the early 1940s in our old hometown of Waterford.

These were the days before "wind-chill factors" and "lake effect snow." Oh, they existed, but not by those names. It wasn't necessary. We knew that when the wind was blowing, you should probably bundle up a little more or stay inside. And snow -- well, as you all know, Waterford was squarely in the middle of the snow-belt (another term we hadn't heard of then).

We Waterfordians know all about snow, and it doesn't much matter whether it's caused by the lake or a Canadian air mass or an angry snow god. Snow is snow, and we always got a lot of it!

All of us in the four-year-old range knew that snow was great stuff to play in, and the more the better! Of course,

there were some drawbacks, and getting all bundled up was one of them.

Dual purpose

It seems I was usually wearing corduroys that time of year, and trying to stuff them into flannel-lined snow pants was a real hassle. The outer layer of snow pants was wool, not exactly fuzzy, but sort of hairy. It collected snow like no other substance known to man. I think it actually attracted snow. At least it looks like it did in some of the old photos.

Boots were the over-the-shoe kind, and hats were thickly lined helmets that strapped under the chin. A heavy coat with big buttons, one or two pairs of woolen mittens, and a scarf completed the outfit.

Tied semi-tightly over mouth and nose, the scarf served a dual purpose: 1) nose/mouth/chin warmer; and 2) handkerchief.

Now I was ready for the great outdoors, the first hurdle being getting down the steps. Stuffed into all that clothing, walking was pretty much a rolling, side-to-side gait. The three steps down off the porch were tough to negotiate.

Once on the ground, everything was all right unless I encountered a snowdrift of a few inches or so. The danger here was that I might fall down and if I landed on my back, it was all over. It was much like being a turtle, except that a turtle has a lot more mobility.

Hot bumper!

Sooner or later -- usually sooner -- I'd be ready to go back inside because I had to -- well, you know what I had to do. Getting into the house could be a problem, too. For one thing, there were the steps again; and for another; I couldn't get my arms up high enough to

reach the doorknob. So, I'd just stand there until someone came looking for me, hoping it wouldn't be too long.

It was always nice to get back inside the warm house after those 10-minute arctic adventures.

There were still many houses without furnaces in those days, and our house was one of them. We had big kerosene heaters in the kitchen and dining room -- "Sunray" and "Duotherm" respectively. These stoves were about two feet square and five feet high. In the coldest part of winter, I think Dad filled their fuel tanks once each day.

In the living room, we had a hard-coal heater. This was a huge, cast iron stove with lots of shiny nickel trim. It sat on a metal-covered asbestos stove board, and we had a sheet of asbestos on the wall behind it. (This was before asbestos was found to be dangerous.)

The stove had isinglass (mica) windows in the front and on both sides so you could see the orange glow of the burning coal.

This particular heater was a "magazine" type, which meant you dumped the coal from the coal scuttle into the top of the stove instead of through the front doors.

No heating unit ever put out hotter heat than that old stove. What a great place to be on a cold winter night, and an even greater place on a cold winter morning. I used to grab my clothes and head for the living room to get dressed for school.

One morning I got careless and inadvertently stuck a bare toe on the nickel "bumper" around the mid-section of the stove. HOT! Hot enough to raise a blister and generate a few tears. I did, however, get to stay home from school that day, so it wasn't a total loss.

When I was in second grade, the winter that began in the tail-end of 1944 and spilled over into 1945 was a super-deluxe winter. I don't remember any specific snow amounts, but I do know we had all the snow anyone could ever want.

A new furnace

Schools were closed for awhile, and we were all "walkers." We had to go to class on a couple of Saturday mornings to make up some of the time missed.

Our neighbor's roof was so loaded with snow that she hired a man to shovel it off. It was nearly waist-deep, according to old pictures.

Snow removal on the municipal level back then was as good as or better than it is today. The streets were plowed with the one and only borough truck by the one and only borough employee. He used to plow all night to keep the streets open, and he did a great job.

The sidewalks were also kept clear. The borough had a horse that pulled a big, wooden, V-shaped plow. They did all the sidewalks in town, walking behind the horse and plow every time it snowed.

In 1949, my parents bought a house up on Cherry Street, and that house had a furnace! There was heat in every room! Imagine that!

The furnace burned soft coal and was fired by a stoker, "Iron Fireman" by name. The stoker was an automatic coal feeder controlled by the thermostat upstairs. When the thermostat called for heat, a shaft -- which looked like a huge screw -- began turning at the bottom of the stoker's hopper. It forced coal into the furnace along with an air supply for draft.

Hard like coral

My job was to keep the hopper full of coal. Two or three scuttles of coal were required each day, but sometimes I'd

really load it up so that I could skip a day.

This furnace didn't produce ashes; it made rock like clinkers, sharp and hard like coral. Each night, the clinkers had to be dug out of the furnace with long clinker tongs and deposited in five-gallon metal buckets. Once a week or so, we'd haul the clinkers out of the basement and dump them in the driveway.

It also became my job to drive the car back and forth to mash down the clinkers. Not bad duty for a 12-year-old. That driveway ended up with a better base than the highway.

Back outdoors, my neighbor Bud and I did a lot of sledding on a small hill behind our houses. I spent some time following animal trails in the little woods at the top of the hill. We built snowmen and made snow angels. I found that if you lie on your stomach when making a snow angel, it will not only have wings, it will have a face, too.

Sometimes I would content myself by snow-balling the garage. The idea was to spell a word or draw a face with the splattered snowballs. It was fun, and the garage couldn't throw back.

Once I went with Bud to check his trap line. It was snowing hard, those big snowflakes the size of silver dollars. There was no wind, and the snowflakes drifted down lazily, but thick enough so that we could see only a few yards ahead. It was the kind of snow everyone wants for Christmas Eve.

I had never been one to stray very far from home. So that, combined with the blinding snow meant that I was completely lost within 10 minutes of leaving the house.

It was great fun, and it seemed to me like we were in the Northwest Territories, or maybe somewhere between Dawson and Selkirk. Twelve-

year-old imaginations are great, aren't they! If Yukon King had been along, I'd have felt just like Sergeant Preston. And if you don't know to whom I'm referring, well, you're just way too young!

You know, all this reminiscing has made me think that maybe winter isn't so bad after all.

Maybe I should go outdoors and build a snowman or wade through a big drift or throw snowballs at something.

Of course it is awfully cold out there.

I might slip and fall or catch a cold or get the flu. It would probably take an hour to get all bundled up.

I don't think I even have a scarf. And my arthritis always acts up when it's cold.

No, I was right in the first place. Summer is much nicer than winter!

Did you ever notice: The Roman Numerals for forty (40) are "XL."



Clean underpants needed

By Bob Catlin, Class of 1956

I was sitting at my desk in the Networks Division of the Office of Communications at the Department of State in the fall of 1986 working on a new contract to purchase a high speed communications circuit between the American Embassy in London and the Department of State when my boss called me into his office. He asked me if I would like to make a seven day trip to Manzanillo [mahnzah NEE yoe], Mexico.

((The resort town of Manzanillo was placed on the map back in the 70's when Bo Derek and Dudley Moore starred in the famous movie "10". The movie was filmed at one of the beach areas and a villa in Manzanillo.))

I knew that the Department of State did not have an Embassy or Consulate in Manzanillo, so I asked what was happening there. He informed me that low-level discussions were going to be held between the U.S. Government and the Mexican Government and the Mexicans had chosen this beautiful, small resort town as the place for the meeting.

After talking with my boss, and agreeing to take the trip, I reported to the secretary of state's office to meet with his staff to find out when, where I was to depart from, and what type of communications equipment would be needed.

The trip was scheduled for three days later. We would leave on a Sunday and return the following Saturday. We were going to take a small military passenger jet out of Andrews Air Force Base and as part of the team I would be flying with the negotiators. ((*Normally, I flew to the location a day or two early so I could have the equipment set up and operational when the team arrived.*)) The communications package was to be a portable satellite transmitter/receiver package with encryption/decryption capability that I had used on several trips for the secretary of state. It consisted of a small crate -- to hold the satellite transmitter/receiver, a golf club sized bag -- to hold the antenna and cables, and a small brief case -- to hold the encryption/decryption equipment.

Sunday morning I reported to Andrews AFB, with the communications package, and met up with the

negotiating team of six individuals. We took off about 9:00 a.m. and made one quick stop in New Orleans, where we went through customs, and then on to a small private landing strip just outside Manzanillo.

We did not have to go through customs in Manzanillo. They already knew we were coming and why. We would have by-passed customs anyway because we all had "Diplomatic Passports."

At the airport, we were met by a small bus and taken to a large villa on the Bay of Manzanillo, to the south of the village of Manzanillo.

The villa, I was told, was owned by the Mexican Government. It was rather large. It had eight bedrooms, a large dining area, a large living room, a very large kitchen (with cook and servants), and over the large kitchen was a patio with tables enough for 12 people. In the back of the villa was a large swimming pool and patio. The back of the villa was about 175 feet from Manzanillo Bay and a beautiful, sandy beach.

Security was tight for the meeting. Walking around the perimeter of the villa were armed Mexican soldiers. They walked the area day and night.

We arrived at the villa late in the afternoon. Immediately after getting settled, the chief negotiator asked me to set up the satellite communications package in one of the bedrooms on the first floor, next to his bedroom, so he could report back to the secretary of state that we had arrived.

I got out the radio transmitter/receiver and power converter and hooked it up to the villa power. I then got out my charts to see which satellite I would be using and the frequencies

available. I programmed the radio for the frequencies and attached the antenna cable and threw it out the bedroom window onto the patio surrounding the swimming pool.

The satellite I had been assigned required the antenna be pointed almost due south, which meant the antenna had to be set up in the back of the villa on the swimming pool patio area.

The antenna for this particular satellite transmitter/receive was about four foot long, stood about four foot tall and came in two pieces, one of which was a tripod and the other was a barrel like device that had arms that folded out and made up the surface of the satellite dish. It came in a golf club size bag.

As I took the bag out onto the patio, I noticed that one of the Mexican soldiers had stopped walking the perimeter and was standing there watching me set up the antenna.

I took the tripod and the barrel like antenna out of the bag. As I was taking the equipment out of the bag I had my back turned to the Mexican soldier. I sat the tripod on the patio and then started to assemble the barrel antenna on the tripod when I heard the Mexican soldier throw a round into the chamber of his rifle. If you have ever handled a bolt-action rifle you immediately recognize this very distinct sound. I immediately put the barrel antenna back into the bag and walked back into the villa.

The chief negotiator was sitting in one of the chairs in the living room talking with the other negotiators and noticed I was as white as a sheet. He asked me what was wrong. I told him that one of the Mexican soldiers had just thrown a round into the chamber of his rifle when I started to assemble the antenna and would he please go outside

and explain to this soldier what I was doing.

When he quit laughing, he went out and talked the soldier into taking the round out of the chamber and explained to him what was being done. He returned to the living room and told me all was clear. He said the soldier told him he thought I was sitting up a machine gun.

I returned to the patio (after changing by underpants) and completed the assembly of the antenna and then tested the radio to see if I was able to make contact with the Department of State.

For the next five days my only duties were to make a daily radio check with the Department of State to insure the radio was working properly and make sure it would be ready for the negotiating team to talk with their staff and/or the secretary of state back in Washington each day.

Oh! I forgot! I also ate three great meals a day and spent a good part of the day at the swimming pool or down on the beach, relaxing and listening to the waves crash on the beach while the negotiating team was meeting in another villa about 300 yards from the villa we were staying in. ((Some of us have to sacrifice so much in our jobs <grin>..))

My bedroom was in the back of the house, near the beach, so I slept with my window open so I could hear the waves washing against the shore.

Before we departed I asked the chief negotiator if they were coming back down soon. If they were, I volunteered to stay with the equipment until their next trip. He laughed and said the next round was to be held in Washington.

The rest of the trip was uneventful.

On Wednesday afternoon, they only held a half day of negotiations, so we took the bus into the resort town of Manzanillo and toured the tourist area of the town.

We got up Saturday morning, I tore down the equipment, packed it up, and we took the bus to the airport and returned to Andrews AFB.

As usually I never knew what the negotiations were all about and if they were successful or not. After all, I like most U.S. citizens did not have the need to know.

Some people try to turn back their odometers. Not me, I want people to know "why" I look this way. I've traveled a long way and some of the roads weren't paved.

Nostalgia

The below was received from Sandra Clark, class of 1972.

Comments made in the year 1955!

"I'll tell you one thing, if things keep going the way they are, it's going to be impossible to buy a week's groceries for \$20.00."

"Have you seen the new cars coming out next year? It won't be long before \$2, 000.00 will only buy a used one."

"If cigarettes keep going up in price, I'm going to quit. A quarter a pack is ridiculous. "

"Did you hear the post office is thinking about charging a dime just to mail a letter? "

"If they raise the minimum wage to \$1.00, nobody will be able to hire outside help at the store."

"When I first started driving, who would have thought gas would someday cost 29 cents a gallon. Guess we'd be better off leaving the car in the garage."

"Kids today are impossible. Those duck tail hair cuts make it impossible to stay groomed. Next thing you know, boys will be wearing their hair as long as the girls."

"I'm afraid to send my kids to the movies any more. Ever since they let Clark Gable get by with saying DAMN in GONE WITH THE WIND, it seems every new movie has either HELL or DAMN in it."

"I read the other day where some scientist thinks it's possible to put a man on the moon by the end of the century."

"They even have some fellows they call astronauts preparing for it down in Texas."

"Did you see where some baseball player just signed a contract for \$75,000 a year just to play ball? It wouldn't surprise me if someday they'll be making more than the President."

"I never thought I'd see the day all our kitchen appliances would be electric. They are even making electric typewriters now."

"It's too bad things are so tough nowadays. I see where a few married women are having to work to make ends

meet."

"It won't be long before young couples are going to have to hire someone to watch their kids so they can both work."

"Marriage doesn't mean a thing any more, those Hollywood stars seem to be getting divorced at the drop of a hat."

"I'm afraid the Volkswagen car is going to open the door to a whole lot of foreign business."

"Thank goodness I won't live to see the day when the Government takes half our income in taxes. I sometimes wonder if we are electing the best people to congress."

"The drive-in restaurant is convenient in nice weather, but I seriously doubt they will ever catch on."

"There is no sense going to Lincoln or Omaha any more for a weekend, it costs nearly \$15.00 a night to stay in a hotel."

"No one can afford to be sick anymore, at \$35.00 a day in the hospital it's too rich for my blood."

"If they think I'll pay 50 cents for a hair cut, forget it."

Enjoy and be safe!

See you next quarter!
