

Bisonalities, Again



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

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Summer Issue

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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. The newsletter will be distributed quarterly. New issues will be posted for reading on the www.bisonalitiesagain.com Web site on or about, January 1, April 1, July 1, and October 1.

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 an alumnus? 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 and present, of Waterford and Fort LeBoeuf High Schools. If you know any alumni, 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 others, please, feel free to do so.

**The turtle lives 'twixt plated decks
Which practically conceal its sex.**

**I think it clever of the turtle
In such a fix to be so fertile.**

Cat's Corner

One of my favorite times of the year has finally arrived, summer. I can finally get out of the house without bundling up from head to toe. The summer heat does not bother me like the winter cold. I bask in it.

So far this year fishing has been great. Because we did not see warm weather arrive until the middle of May, I was not able to get out in my boat as early as last year, but I have tried to make up for it by hitting the creeks and rivers in the area twice on some days ... early in the morning before it gets

real hot and then after dinner when it starts to cool down.

After including the obituaries in the last issue I have decided to discontinue doing so. Including the obituaries made the issue twice as long as normal. Readers will have to get the obits from the web site.

Next issue will have an article about heart health written by a friend from Scotland. Those readers who like me have reached retirement age, or beyond, will be interested in this helpful article.

The Fort LeBoeuf Class of 1956 will be holding their 55th class reunion at the Mill Village Fire House on Thursday, July 14. We are hoping for a large turnout. Also, Friday evening a good portion of us will be meeting at the Stancliff Fire House for the 7th Annual Alumni night with a gathering for libations at the patio of the Waterford Hotel afterwards. Hope to see you at one of the three events.

This issue includes some of my favorite limericks written by Ogden Nash. Many of my favorites limericks cannot be printed here, unless I give the newsletter an "X" rating

**The cow is of the bovine ilk
One end is moo, the other milk.**

Lake LeBoeuf

Part II of II

By Anita Breitweiser Palmer
FLBHS Class of 1962

I learned at a very early age how to figure the boat rental time and how to make change. There were times I loved to work behind the counter and then there were times, when I was older, that it seemed like that's all I did.

I remember getting up very early on week-ends to help Mom open up. I liked working early on Saturdays, with the early birds singing, and the mist hovering on the lake. It was so serene! We would listen to the Saturday morning radio stories while we worked, like The Green Hornet, The Lone Ranger, and others that I don't remember now. (We had a B&W TV uptown but never at the lake.) The first thing we did was open

up the two big front doors. They lifted up and were very heavy. We would prop them up with an oar and then tie them open with a big double slip knot. We then removed the oar. (What a safety hazard they were, but we never thought about that.) Next we would clean up the mess the squirrels would make over night. It was nothing to cross the bridge early in the morning and see a squirrel scamper across an electric line with a candy bar in his mouth.

Then we would set up the boxes of candy on the shelves and fill the pop cooler. We sold Coke, Mehler's Orange, Cherry, Birch Beer, Root Beer, and 7-up. We also sold bread, milk, and ice cream. A couple years we sold hot dogs and coffee. I guess it wasn't very profitable?

Either there was no board of health inspections at that time, or if there was, they weren't very strict. I don't think the business would have passed inspection in this day and age. Everything was out in the open.

Anyway, next I would clean out any boats that needed cleaning and/or pump the water out with a hand pump, if it had rained the night before. They were always backed into the dock side-by-side. We would be hurrying before the fishermen came, so we would finish one boat then just jump across into the next one.

One time, when Mom was pumping out the boats, she didn't quite make the jump and she disappeared between two boats, pop-up soaked, climbed out and kept on going, as if nothing happened. She took it in stride. She neither thought it was funny nor upsetting, she just had work to do. I, on the other hand, thought it was hilarious.

After the concessions were set up and we opened, I would have to go over to our cottage and make beds and do dishes. I hated doing this because we had an old hand pump in the kitchen and I always had a hard time getting it primed in order to get water. I then had to heat it on a little hot plate which took forever to heat enough to wash and rinse dishes.

There was no bathroom in the cottage so we used a honey pot which had to be

emptied every morning and of course that was my job, also. So, I had to make sure none of my friends were around before running it across the road to the out house. Sooo embarrassing! It all had to be done before I was allowed to go back out again. Sometimes I would get stubborn and not do it, but it was cutting off my nose to spite my face because I would then not be allowed out all day. Sometimes I would sneak out and jump in the lake 'till she missed me. I didn't do that often because it was embarrassing when she came after me.



Sometimes, when it rained real hard we would wake up in the middle of the night, roll over and your hand would drop off the bed and splash in the water --- flood! I loved it when the lake flooded. To me it was very exciting (small town girls excite easy). We would step out the door into knee or hip deep water in the middle of the night so we could gather up all the boat's, canoes, floating picnic tables, and garbage cans. Then we had to move the car or truck, which ever we had at the time, up the road out of the water. (When the brakes on vehicles of that era got wet, they would not work, step on them and it was like you had no brakes at all.)

First the electric had to be turned off at the concession stand and then we would wade over to the stand and get a boat and load it up with all it could carry. This all had

to be done quickly, by flashlight, since it was usually just Mom and I there. It was just us rushing around trying to secure everything as the water was rising faster and faster. What a great time! I loved it!

Then came the big let down. We had to move back uptown until the water went down and it dried out enough for us to go back, clean up the mud, and start over again. Sometimes it would flood in the very early spring or late fall when it was cold. I was the only kid I knew that had her own hip boots. I thought that was pretty cool. After the Union City Dam was built it kept the flooding to a minimum.



There were always lots of kids to hang out with. Lake LeBoeuf was the place to vacation for Pittsburgh folks. I met, and was friends with, many kids over the years from the Pittsburgh area. A few were boyfriends. One I particularly remember was Bob from Mount Oliver, and there was Jake, too. He was so cute. I don't remember their last names any more.

Back then it was much different than it is now. People were more honorable and trustworthy. We were never robbed in all the years we were there. It was very rare that we had any trouble at all with anyone.

I do remember one time, in the middle of the night, I woke up hearing noises. I looked out the cottage window and saw five or six

guys loading our boats on to their trucks. I woke Mom up thinking she would call the police, but no, she put on a robe and went right out there into the middle of this group of guys and told them to put the boats right back where they got them. I was afraid for her, this tiny 4' 11" woman, ordering all those big guys to unload our boats, but lo and behold, they did.

She had always been fearless. She was the one that everyone sent to kill the big spiders or get rid of the hornet's nests. We used the "shack" as the supply house and the ceilings were just open rafters, where the paper wasps would build their nests. If Dad or I went in we usually got stung. I hated having to go in there. Wasps would be buzzing all around inside, but Mom could work in there. The hornets would land on her while she worked. I don't ever remember her getting stung. She always said if you don't bother them they won't bother you. Yeah, sure! Yes, she was a tough old gal.

I remember a time when Mom saw a young guy throw his sister on the ground and kick her. She told him to leave her alone. He was bigger than Mom and he gave her back talk. She grabbed an old Croquet mallet and chased him up through the park with it. She was running hot behind him, she was little but she sure could run, just a swinging that old mallet. I don't remember him coming back for a while.

Over the years she had chased after me once or twice, too. Even with my long legs she could pretty much out run me when she was mad. I remember many times, at the uptown house, if I did something wrong she would get out the fly swatter. She would chase me round and round through the kitchen into the living room into the dinning room and back into the kitchen 'till I gave up, cowered and took my whipping.

Mom had a nickname. Kids called her "Hiawatha", because if anyone swam out too far or would be dunking or pushing someone, or just doing whatever she didn't like, she would get her whistle, jump in one of the canoes and paddle out after them, just a blasting on that whistle. There were

many of those embarrassing times, I just hated it.

Lake LeBoeuf is a natural Muskie lake, and fishermen from miles around came to fish. For years an old legend was told about a Muskie that was as big as a boat called "Old Moss Back." He was so well known that there was an article about him in the June 26, 1964 Life magazine titled "Famous Game Fish No One Can Catch." It was a mean musky with an appetite for costly tackle, so the story goes. One fisherman that was interviewed said it was like hooking on an automobile and trying to reel it in. He said after hooking it he shook for two days.

Every year when it was time for Muskie to spawn, the fish commission would net and "milk" the fish for their eggs. When they hatched and were big enough they would be let go in other lakes and creeks that didn't have Muskie.

One year the commission did a depth sounding of different parts of the lake. For some reason, an area between the park and the island, closer to the island, would not register a bottom? They guessed maybe because the bottom was so soft with mud it would not register. They said for a lake that small it was unusual for it to be as deep as it was.

Starting about the age of 12 or so I would hire out to the fishermen to row 4, 5, or 6 o'clock in the morning while they trolled for Muskie or walleye. We didn't know many of these guys but I never had a problem with any of them, they just wanted to fish. And if they caught a big fish I usually got a nice cash tip that I would use to go to the skating rink Friday or Saturday nights and some times Sunday afternoons. Besides the lake, the rink was a major hangout for the town kids. There was also a drive-in diner next door that I seem to remember people by the name of Brown ran. Almost every kid from town was there most Friday night's. I remember Dottie on the organ and Charley in the office. I'm sure anyone that hung out there at that time remembers the black corduroy rink jackets with a skate and the words Waterford Roller Rink on the back and two slash pockets and your name in white on

the front. But that's another story.

We lived at the lake every summer and moved back up town in the winter. Dad and Mom sold the Happy Hour, boats and camp ground, to Gordon Cromwell in 1972.



My Mother said years later she was sorry I did not have a "normal" childhood. I told her who wanted normal? I loved the lake and I would not have given up my growing up years there for all the tea in China.

Not many swimmers go to the lake anymore and not as many fishermen either. Back in the 50's and 60's, especially on Memorial Day, Labor Day, and the 4th of July, the park would be so packed with people you had to step over them. We had picnic tables and camping lots and cottages reserved week's and sometimes months in advanced. Those days are gone now and how I miss them.

**There was a young belle of old Natchez
Whose garments were always in
patches.**

**When comment arose
On the state of her clothes,
She replied, When Ah itches, Ah
scratches.**

School Bus Adventures

By Dave Rutkowski
FLBHS class of 1967

I recently saw a news story on TV about a Millcreek mother who was upset because the

school bus her daughter was riding on was involved in a minor traffic accident and she was not called by the school. After bemoaning the sad state of affairs these days with over-involved and over-controlling parents, I reflected about the school bus adventures of my youth.

The first memory was the winter morning the bus tipped over. I was in grade school, and the bus carried students from all 12 grades. The bus was cresting Mayhue's hill on Old State Road when a truck coming the other way forced the bus driver to the berm of the road, and we slooowly slid into the ditch. The ditch was deep, so we then slooowly tilted over until the bus was on its side. It happened so gently that nobody was injured, and it was actually kind of fun to wind up standing on the windows! Dick, the driver, and some of the older students calmed down some of the kids who weren't so happy about the revised seating arrangements, and crawled up and out the door. He opened the emergency door, and held it for us as we scrambled out. Since this was before the days of two-way radios on the bus and cell phones, he herded us together and we all walked down the hill to Clarkson's house. Paul and Carol hadn't boarded the bus yet, and Paul was pretty mad about missing the accident. But he let Dick use the phone to call the school. Mrs. Clarkson told us all to come inside, and helped about 20 kids remove their coats, ear flapped hats, and buckle arctic boots.

We had cookies and milk, raided our lunch boxes, and played Cootie, Uncle Wiggly, Mr. Potato Head, and Pick-Up-Sticks while we waited. In too short of a time the wrecker arrived, righted the bus, and we were off to school. That is, after a short delay while we all put on our plaid winter coats, ear flap hats, and boots, and while Mrs. Clarkson hunted down missing mittens, and helped buckle boots. It was a great adventure; with no TV cameras at the school to greet us, no hovering mothers, no panicked teachers. Just envious kids who were not lucky enough to be on the bus, and nothing to eat at lunch but the crumbs left in the lunchbox that didn't find their way to the

Clarkson's floor!

That was the most exciting school bus event until a few years later when Frank, who was then our driver, backed into a tree while turning around in a driveway on Sedgwick Road. I don't remember a lot of damage, but a couple girls screamed when the jolt hit. Frank was a good guy, but backing up was not his forte. We hit that tree two more times before Frank posted an older kid in the back seat to tell him when to stop. No more bumps after that – except on the last day of school when the kid neglected to tell Frank when to stop, and we hit the tree once again, for old times sake. But Frank still gave me ... I mean the kid ... an orange and a Hershey Bar as a parting gift anyway.

Then there was the day that I applied the rumored but seldom invoked rule that you didn't have to go to school if the bus was a half hour late. It was a rule well known to kids, but apparently a mystery to mothers.

I lived on a farm, and my mother helped with the milking in the morning. After packing my lunch and making sure I ate breakfast, she headed out to the barn to help my dad, and I waited for the bus. After about 15 minutes I started implication of the "rule" and went back in the house and watched out the window. After the requisite half hour I thought "neat", and turned on TV. Miss Frances had just rung the bell on Ding-Dong School when the bus pulled up. Ignoring the irony of watching school while ditching school, I calmly turned back to the TV. After all, the rule applied. Apparently not. The driver tooted his horn once ... twice ...and then my mother burst into the house. I pleaded my case as she hastily put on my coat, found my ball cap, grabbed my lunch pail, and drug me out of the door and down the driveway. As I clambered aboard, I can still remember what Dick said. "Busted, huh buddy?"

Dick also was a big part of the best almost fight I ever saw. Earlier in the week one of the older kids (to protect the identity of the guilty, I'll call him Edward William) picked on a smaller kid and started to beat him up. Dick kicked him off the bus for a

month. The drivers were able to police their domain in the old days!

Well, Edward got on the bus at the High School the next day, sitting in the last row. Dick ordered him off the bus, and Edward refused. Then Edward said, "Come and make me, you chicken". I remember clear as day Dick calmly getting up, telling a kid up front to "Go get Dingle", opening up the glove compartment, and putting his eyeglasses inside.

He then gave Edward one more chance to remove himself from the bus and then, upon refusal of that option, proceeded to remove Edward by himself. Dick was out weighted by about 50 pounds, but he still put Edward in an arm lock and mopped the aisle with him before flinging him into the waiting arms of principal Dingle. That ended Edward's bus riding days. Boy, can you imagine the uproar today if that happened? The driver would be fired and the school would probably have to chauffeur the kid to school every day.

I also was involved in an altercation on the bus. Another James Dean wannabe eleventh grader (who we will call Eddie Richard) was always picking on one or another of the little kids. He was pretty stealthy, and seemed to never get caught. One day he was in the seat in front of me, and swiped the ball cap of a little kid ahead of him. The kid was sniffing, and Eddie started flicking his ear. I told him to stop. He turned around and told me to shut up. I'd about had enough and whacked him over the head with my Lone Ranger lunchbox. Put a pretty good dent in it and in the lunchbox, also. Eddie looked at me wide eyed, I looked at him wider eyed, and then I saw Dick looking at us in the big mirror across the front of the bus, with a grin on his face. Emboldened by my instant trust that Dick would keep me from harm I told Eddie to turn around and shut up. And he did. At home, my mother asked how my thermos got broken, and I was only too happy to tell her how a sixth grader put the hammer to an eleventh grader.

My parents were both kind of proud that I stood up for a younger kid, but they weren't as thrilled the day that a girl sitting

behind me on the bus had a bout of projectile vomiting and threw up all over the back of my new coat. They really weren't upset with me, but with my brother when, after getting home, he excitedly told them about it and stupidly admitted to seeing what was imminent, but failing to warn me. Dick saved the day again, however, by hosing down my coat in the bus garage.

When I was in Junior High the elementary students and the older kids were bussed at different times, with the younger ones going home first. The older ones waited in the cafeteria until the "second load" boarded. Well, one day as Willard Rogerson and I waited, we were engrossed in coming up with "Happiness is..." items. Such as "Happiness is a substitute teacher. Misery is finding out she's been warned about you". We apparently missed the announcement for our bus, because it suddenly became apparent that we were the only ones left in the cafeteria. We faced a four mile walk home, but lucky for us my Aunt had a flower shop in Waterford and gave us a ride home. And lucky also that our mothers didn't call the news stations and complain that the school never called to tell them we'd be late!

**I think that I shall never see
A billboard lovely as a tree.
Indeed, unless the billboards fall
I'll never see a tree at all.**

**The Waterford Wanderer – Tom Hart
Six Weeks in Europe on \$130 and a
Dream**

By Sunny Utterbach

This article was received from Phyllis Doolittle Russell, FLBHS class of 1956. It was published on December 2, 1956. Tom Hart was in the Waterford High class of 1955.

People said it couldn't be done.

But nineteen year old Tom Hart of Waterford thought it could.

So on June 17, 1956, he left Montreal with only his return ticket and \$130 in his

pocket.

Tom was Europe bound on the freighter the "Cairndhu" and he was out to prove that it is possible to spend a summer hitchhiking through Europe.

The unusual story of this modern college nomad began last year when he became acquainted with Inger Lundqvist, one of four exchange girl scouts here for two months.

Tom and Inger corresponded, and she taught him basic Swedish via the mails. A native of Eskilstuna, Sweden, she and her family invited the young American over for a visit. Sans hesitation, Tom accepted.

After landing in Leith, Scotland, Tom spent ten days hitchhiking to Eskilstuna. Once there he began a tour of the Swedish Laplands, with Inger and her family.

"The Laplands are filled with thousands of lakes, but little vegetation," said Tom. "The stunted birch trees finally give way to sparse bits of moss which are all that can grow in that climate. It was like another world."

From the Laplands the party toured through Norway by way of the Fjords.

From the Fjords they returned to Sweden by way of Oslo, Norway. Tom spent a week in Stockholm "just watching the people and their customs."

"There are few homes in Sweden; most towns consist of modern apartment houses and ultra modern furniture and clothes. Sweden has the highest standard of living in Europe. In fact, they regard Americans as old fashioned," Tom confided.

"And yet," He added, "America is everywhere in Europe." "I didn't go anywhere without seeing cornflakes, Esso, Gulf Oil, Coco Cola, Campbell's Soups, etc."

Tom took three weeks to return to London where he was due to sail back. He hitchhiked his way through England, Scotland, France, Germany, Norway, Belgium, Denmark, Sweden, Luxembourg, and Holland. For six days he lived on French bread, cheese, and grapes, all of which were plentiful and cheap. He slept in Hostels for 30 cents a night, 15 cents in Germany.

In the hostels he met all kinds and races of people. Many of them were girls, also hitchhiking their way through Europe.

"Female hitchhikers in Europe are very common," stated Tom, as he explained the hospitality of the Europeans.

"With my American flag on my pack it was easy to get a ride, because most everyone is curious about us. Only in southern Germany, parts of England, and in France did I encounter any ill feeling for Americans."

"Many people invited me into their homes and offered me meals and a room in which to sleep. And I kept bumping into people I'd met before in my travels. Europe is crowded with hitchhikers, but even so, the people are kind and hitchhiking is good."

Tom traded his freighter ticket for a University of Chicago student flight ticket and flew home via Iceland and New Foundland.

When Tom arrived in New York City on September 11 (just a day before his college convened) he had 50 cents left.

After a night of hitchhiking he arrived in Waterford with only 10 cents in his pocket. He had not slept for three days, but his exciting three month vacation had come to a providential and well timed end.

With \$130 this young man saw and lived Europe.

And people said it could not be done!

**The pig, if I am not mistaken,
Supplies us sausage, ham, and bacon.
Let others say his heart is big --
I call it stupid of the pig.**

**Have a great summer!
See you next issue!**
