

Bisonalities, Again



A quarterly newsletter dedicated to the Alumni of Fort LeBoeuf High School

January 2000

Winter Issue

Volume 1 - Number 2

Welcome to the second issue of a Newsletter dedicated to the Fort LeBoeuf High School Alumni. This newsletter will be issued quarterly, on the Bisonalities, Again, Web site. New issues will be posted to the Web site on October 5, January 5, April 5, and July 15. The Web site may be viewed by going to: <http://www.geocities/candoer1>

The web site is available for both the class of 1956 and the class of 1957 to be able to find addresses and other information about classmates.

If you are in contact with a member of the class of 1957, please, forward a copy of this newsletter to them, and have them forward it to other class members.

The success of this newsletter and its survival will depend on you. I need contributors and word of mouth passed to everyone.

Do you have an interesting article or picture you would like to share with others? Would you like to have your own Web site, snail-mail address, or e-mail address listed on the Web site? If so, send it to me at the following e-mail address:

bisonalities@candoer.org

or

at my snail-mail address:

Robert J. Catlin, Sr.
2670 Dakota Street
Bryans Road, MD 20616-3062
Tel: (301) 283-6549

NO handwritten submissions, please.

Then: Getting out to a new, hip joint

Now: Getting a new hip joint

Editor's Corner

My first bit of news is sad in nature. It is with regret and sadness, I inform you that one of the alumni

of the class of 1956, Carol Hawley, died in September, 1999, after a long courageous fight against cancer.

Nancy and I would like to take this opportunity to wish you and yours a very Happy, Healthy, and Safe New Year!

Issue one, October 1999, of Bisonalities, Again, brought only four e-mail responses and one snail-mail response. I was hoping to hear from more of you. Out of the 50 copies I mailed out, only two were returned to me by the United States Postal Service as "unable to deliver." One was to Dave Belt and the other to Betty Lou Eliason Ames. I was able to locate a valid address for Dave and have since received a card and letter from him. I have not been able to find any information on Betty Lou.

I do not have a valid address for the following alumni from the class of 1956:

Betty Lou Eliason Ames

Marlene R. Meyers

Wayne Falk

Donna Campbell Falk

Genevieve Rowland Sherrad

If any of you have a valid address for these alumni, please furnish it to me at the above snail-mail or e-mail address.

If any of you have copies of the original Bisonalities, from our senior year, I would appreciate it if you would send a copy to me. I want to use information in them for the Nostalgia column in this newsletter.

Due to the lack of interest shown, this is the last issue of the Newsletter that I will mail out, at my expense. The Bisonalities, Again Newsletter will continue to be posted on the Web site, free of charge, but if you wish to receive it by snail-mail, you will have to subscribe. A subscription will cost \$4.00 a year, for all four issues.

If you are interested in receiving Bisonalities, Again, send your check to, Robert J. Catlin, Sr, at the above listed address.

The one-lines you will find throughout this newsletter are entitled "New concerns for the boomer generation."

Then: The President's struggle with Fidel
Now: The President's struggle with fidelity
Letters to the Editor

The following e-mail message was received from Bill Marsh:

In Joe Leech's Letter to the Editor, he mentioned that Hoot Gibson kept the borough streets plowed with the borough's Dodge dump truck and the sidewalks were plowed by a v-plow pulled by a horse. The horse owner and operator of the v-plow was Wade Ishman. He lived in the last house on East Second Street - South side, across from the cemetery. He kept the horse there, in a barn, in back of the house. He also worked for the water department. The pump station was on West Third Street, past Circuit Street, in the Township, almost to Vic Malinowski's farm. He walked that twice a day (every day) to check the pumps. My family and I used to pick him up and give him a ride in either direction, when we could. He did this a good many years, until he retired. He has passed on now.

/s/ Bill Marsh

The following information was received from Herb Walden, in a long letter:

In Joe Leech's Letter to the Editor, he mentioned our music teacher. If you all remember, his nickname was "Cubby." Joe mentioned him as McCummins, I believe Joe meant to say, MacCubbin.

/s/Herb

Then: The Grateful Dead
Now: Dr. Kevorkian

Nostalgia

The following was copied from the May 1956 issue of the Bisonalities.

Senior Personalities

This senior is 5' 10" tall and weighs 145 pounds. He has blue eyes and sandy colored hair. He was born on December 7, 1937, in Aliquippa, PA. He came to Waterford School in the 8th grade from Titusville. He likes ham and dislikes pork chops. His future after graduating is to be a printer. This boy's favorite sport is wrestling. His favorite song is, "The Poor People of Paris." His favorite band leader is Lawrence Welk.

((His identity will be revealed later in this issue.))

Then: Paar
Now: AARP

Humor



Then: Long hair
Now: Longing for hair

Just call me "Billy"
by Herb Walden

I'm afraid nicknames are going out of style. You just don't hear them much anymore, and it's too bad. It's a nice custom.

Now, I'm not referring to shortened versions of given names such as Tom or Sam or even Herb. I'm talking about names entirely different than what is shown on birth certificates or VISA cards - - - names like "Bud" and "Curley" and "Stub".

It seems to me the best nicknames are comprised of one syllable. Two is kind of pushing it. We went to school with a boy whose nickname was "Pineapple", but it was never widely used. Too many syllables, I think.

Some nicknames are for family use and rarely make it off the old homestead. For instance, I had an Uncle "Pete" whose real name was Stanley. But that's alright, my Cousin "Pete's" real name is Albert. Cousin Howard was "Butch" and Cousin Elizabeth was "Jill" and Aunt Rosamond was "Touts". I'm guessing you have a family full of nicknames, too.

Quite often, nicknames leave home with their owners and last a lifetime. Such was the case with my Dad. Dad's given name was Herbert, the same as mine.

(Just a coincidence, I'm sure). But when Dad was born, a neighbor immediately tagged him with the nickname "Bill". It stuck with him for the rest of his life. I doubt if there were over a dozen people who knew his real name.

In the "good old days", "Smiles" delivered ice, "Stub" had a hardware store, "Curley" had a cafe, and "Cap" owned a gas station. "Skip" and "Sonny" were

still in school.

Some nicknames were rather unique. "A" (not an initial) had a store and coal yard, and "Shirt" worked for the telephone company. I don't know what "Cuddie" or "Dodge" or "Pealy" did, but "Hoot" worked for the borough.

If you remember, nicknames ran rampant when we were growing up. There were, "Bunt", "Buck", "Bunk", "Bake", "Bunny", and "Buster". We all knew a Wink", a "Nink", a "Diz", and a "Duz". "Tuffy", "Fritz", "Spanky", "Nanny", "Tippy", and "Sis".

I haven't the slightest idea where most of these names came from. I never asked --- just took them for granted.

There were at least six "Bud's", one of whom was my friend and neighbor when we were kids. His Dad was one of three or four "Red's". There were four or five "Junior's", some who were further nicknamed "Junie".

I always wanted a nickname, because I've disliked my name ever since I got it. I would have complained at the time, but I had to learn to talk first. It was too late by that time. I tried nicknaming myself, but that doesn't work. It has to come from someone else. I could have been a "Junior", but thankfully, no one ever thought of that, because as I mentioned, almost no one knew my Dad's name.

But because of Dad, I almost had a nickname. Ben VanCise was an old fellow who lived a block or so from us. He had known my Dad forever, and he knew me, too, but not by name. So, since I was Bill's boy, old Ben called me "Billy". I liked that. For one thing, it was kind of like my Dad's name, and for another, it fit. I looked like a "Billy". If you'd have passed me on the street when I was around twelve years old, you'd have said, "Hey, I'll bet that kid's name is Billy!" (Actually, it's more likely you would have said, "Kid? What Kid? I didn't see any kid." I wasn't exactly the flamboyant type).

Anyway, the name didn't stick, mostly because no one besides Ben and I ever heard it. He should have called me "Billy" in a large crowd sometime. Maybe then I could have hung onto it.

Nicknames happen to kids, and since I'm not exactly a kid anymore, I guess I'll have to do without one.

However, if you happen to run into me sometime, it would be just fine with me if you call me "Billy". But be advised --- I'll probably call you "Ben".

Then: Acid rock
Now: Acid reflux

Tarmacs I Have Known

by Robert J. Catlin

Forward

After working for the Federal Government for more than 35 years and flying over a half-million miles, I once said to my wife, Nancy, if I ever write my life's story I would title it, Tarmacs I Have Known. This story explains in a way, why I chose that title.

Background

After traveling as a **nonprofessional** Diplomatic Courier for the United States Department of State, off and on for 35 + years, I have seen a lot of tarmacs and experienced a lot of frequent traveler type stories, some funny, some scary.

The Department of State has two types of couriers. **A professional** courier and a **nonprofessional** courier. The **professional** courier is an individual who travels around the world escorting classified dispatches for a living. It is their only job. A **nonprofessional** courier is an individual who has another job with the Department of State and on occasion is asked to take unscheduled courier trips, when there are no **professional** couriers available. I was one of the **nonprofessional** couriers.

For those of you who may not be familiar with the travel habits and duties of a Department of State Diplomatic Courier, I will furnish a brief description of a typical trip.

The courier picks up the pouch(s) at the Department of State. After obtaining an airline ticket, with a confirmed first class seat assignment, they go directly to the airport tarmac. Before putting the pouch(s) in the cargo hold, they make the pilot and stewardess aware that a Diplomatic Courier will be traveling with them that day and that the courier will be the last person to board the plane, but only after the last piece of luggage is put in the cargo hold, classified pouch(s) is aboard, and the cargo door has been sealed.

When the courier arrives at their final destination, the same procedure is followed, in reverse. The courier is the first person off of the plane. They go directly to the tarmac so the cargo door may be opened and the classified pouch(s), and passenger's luggage may be removed.

This procedure is followed at all stops, regardless of how many stops are made before they reach their final destination. The courier reports to the tarmac, the pouch(s) are always removed, any luggage that has to be removed is removed, any new luggage loaded on, and then the pouch(s) is put back in the cargo hold, last, so it can be the first item(s) off the airplane. The courier returns to their seat.

At the final destination, the courier is met by a

vehicle and driver from the U.S. Embassy, who has notified the foreign ministry that a Diplomatic Courier is in country. The courier is then whisked, with their pouch(s), off the tarmac, directly to the Embassy, usually without going through customs. (Skipping customs depends on the country the courier is entering.)

Because of this procedure, it is rare that a courier gets to see any more of an airport than the tarmac.

In some cases, if all you are doing is going from city to city dropping off and picking up pouches, you are met at the tarmac by the Embassy official, the pouches are taken from you, new ones are given to you, you reboard the airplane and continue to the next city. The only thing you may see in a five-city trip is the airplane and the tarmac.

San Salvador, El Salvador - 1984

 On October 9, 1984, I was asked to courier several pouches of classified documents and telecommunications equipment to San Salvador, El Salvador, S.A.. The equipment and documents were needed to support Secretary of State George P. Shultz, while he met with the President of El Salvador, Jose` Napoleon Duarte.

I was chosen as the **nonprofessional** courier for this trip because I had experience as a courier and experience in setting up and operating the telecommunications equipment the Secretary was going to need while on his Diplomatic mission.

The beginning of the trip went very smooth. I obtained my travel orders, tickets, travel money, and pouches (telecommunications equipment) and reported to the tarmac at Washington's National Airport.

We had a very smooth flight from Washington and arrived at Miami International Airport without incident, where I was to have a layover of more than three hours.

The flight from Miami to San Salvador was going to be on Taca Airlines, the official airline of the El Salvadorian government, and the only airline, back then, to have landing rights at the airport in San Salvador.

Taca would not allow me to prearrange a seat assignment, until about an hour before departure time. In addition, they had no first class seating, all seating was economy.

As I walked around the airport (a Customs official was protecting my pouches), I had my pocket picked. I did not realize this had happened, until I went to the Taca counter to get my seat assignment confirmed. I then discovered my tickets, my traveler checks, my Diplomatic passport, and my travel orders were missing from my inside suit pocket.

Airport security was immediately called. Because the Customs official had already loaded my classified pouches onto the Taca flight, security held the airplane on the tarmac until I could get on board.

After a short search, airport security was able to locate my passport and tickets in a trash can near the terminal exit. There was no sign of my traveler checks or travel orders. Finally, police reports all filed, confirming the pouches were on board and the cargo door was sealed, I boarded the airplane for the trip to San Salvador.

As I stepped on board, the stewardess immediately told me the pilot wanted to talk to me. She took me to the pilot, who asked me to do him a favor. He said there was a very important, upset passenger in seat 1B. He asked if I would explain to the passenger why I had held the scheduled take off of the airplane for more than two hours.

Now, unknown to me, the President of El Salvador, Jose` Napoleon Duarte, had been in New York City to give a speech to the United Nations General Assembly. He was traveling back home, via commercial airlines, his airline, on the same flight that I had just held up for two plus hours.

Not knowing at the time who the passenger was, I agreed to talk to the "important, upset passenger" and explain what had happened.

As I left the cockpit and approached seat 1B, five neatly dressed guys, immediately stood up and stopped me. Now, it doesn't take a rocket scientist to realize, the guy I am going to have to explain the delay to is "Very Important".

The stewardess explained to the five-man security detail who I was and what I wanted to do. I then introduced myself to President Duarte, apologized for the delay, and explained what had happened.

President Duarte laughed and remarked, "Hard to believe this could happen here in Miami. Had this happened in my country, it would be a lot more believable." He then asked one of his security guards to sit elsewhere and asked me to join him for the trip to San Salvador.

Later, after I reported to the Embassy and was taken to the meeting place (President Duarte's summer residence) to set up the telecommunications equipment, I again saw the President.

I installed the communications equipment in a room next to the meeting room at the summer residence. My instructions were to stand by the door of the communications room, so Secretary Shultz would know where the communications equipment was located. Although he did not know me by name, he would recognize me by the small American flag, and a small red, white, and blue ribbon, I had pinned to my suit coat pocket.

After the Secretary and the President gave their usual arrival speeches, they proceeded to their meeting. As they walked past me, the Secretary nodded at me, letting me know he saw where the telecommunications equipment and I were located.

President Duarte took about three steps past me, immediately stopped, said to the Secretary, "Excuse me," and turned around and came back toward me. With his hand extended, grinning, he said, in a voice loud enough for the Secretary to hear, "Mr. Catlin, how are you doing? You didn't get robbed here in my airport did you?" When I assured him I had not, he again laughed, turned around and joined the Secretary.

While this short conversation was going on, the Secretary was looking at me with a look of confusion that said, "How and why does President Duarte know my communicator by name and I don't?"

The rest of the trip went without incident. But, you can bet, when I arrived back at the Department of State, three days later, I immediately wrote a full trip report describing all my activities and submitted it to my superiors. By writing this trip report, I was hoping I would not be called to the Secretary's office to explain how President Duarte knew me by name. The report must have worked, because the next time I traveled for/with the Secretary, about two months later, he asked me if I had had my pocket picket lately.

((Our senior personality was, Bill Jones.))