

Bisonalities, Again



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

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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 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:

Robert Catlin

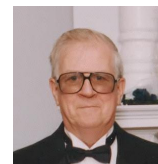
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Please, **NO** handwritten submissions

This newsletter is available free on the Web to any and all alumnus, 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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Cat's Corner

Winter has finally gone from this part of the world. I guess you already know from my comments in other issues, "I hate winter."

We had a rough winter. We averaged 2.5 degrees below our normal temperature and ended up with 74 inches of. We beat our yearly average with the first storm we had in December. We then had three more big storms after that one. During two storms in January, within five days of each other, we received 41 inches of snow. The first of

the two January storms laid down 29 inches of a very wet heavy snow. There were areas around us here in Southern Maryland that were without electricity for over a week. In addition, there was a four day period that all the schools and the State and Federal government offices closed down. Most roads were impassable for that four day period. You can imagine what 41 inches of snow can do to an area that if it receives more than an inch of snow the highways become gridlocked.

But, the great thing about living in the south is that winter does not last long. By the middle of March we had several days with the temperatures in the middle to high 70's. By the 20th of the month I had my boat all ready to hit the creeks and rivers and in fact, had been out twice fishing for bass and yellow perch by the first of April.



Flies

By Bernard Cowley
WHS Class of 1950

One fall evening several years ago, as I was preparing to settle down for the evening, I remembered that I had forgotten to close the windows in my car. I went out to close them and when I was closing them, I noticed that thousands of flies had entered the car while it sat in the warm sun, and they had become semi-dormant on the ceiling of the car as the evening turned cold.

Fall, in Pennsylvania, is the time of the year that the days warm up to about seventy degrees, and the nights cool

down to about freezing, and flies seem to hibernate when they get cold. They are so sluggish that you can scoop them up by the handful, if you had a mind to, that is. I never tried to, but I'm sure that you could. When it warmed up during the day they came to and just flew away to do what ever it is that flies do.

Perhaps the fact that I parked beside the barn had something to do with their presence in my car. After several minutes of futile effort to remove them, I decided that the flies would have to stay until morning when I warmed the car up to go to work.

The next morning I started the car up, and proceeded down the road to work. I remembered that I had promised a co-worker a ride to work, as his car was in the shop. I was contemplating which route I would take to get to his house when the heater started to revive the thousands of flies, and they were all over the place. I had forgotten all about them.

Rolling down a window, I drove with one hand, and frantically I waved and fanned the air with the other. It was useless! The cold air from the outside just seemed to make them more uncontrollable. I can't even begin to describe what it was like in that car. There were so many fly that they could not even fly without banging into something. They were everywhere.

I don't remember how I managed, but a short time later I pulled into the driveway of my co-worker. I decided on a nonchalant matter of fact attitude as he got in the car and shut the door. Immediately buzzing, sluggish flies surrounded him, flying into his face and hair. There just wasn't enough room in that car for flies and people too. With a straight face, I backed out of the driveway and started down the street.

"What in the world is with all these flies?" (Or words to that effect) He retorted, in utter disbelief. With as straight a face as I could conjure up, I replied. "I noticed that there weren't many flies in the city this year, so I thought I'd bring in a load."

When I got to work I parked my car in the parking lot; rolled the windows down about three or four inches, and went inside. When I returned to my car, after work, the flies had all flown away. There was not a single fly left in my car.

I had successfully transported thousands of country flies in to the city, and turned them loose. I wonder if country flies are different than city flies? I wonder if the flies that I brought in ever found a barn to go to? I wonder if country flies get along with city flies? Where do you suppose they went that night when it got cold? Do you ever wonder about things like that? No, of course you don't! I never did either before I wrote this story.

I guess that will remain one of life's mysteries. Believe it or not this story is true; at least most of it is anyway. This is my story and I'm sticking to it!



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 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 of Kepler's Laws of Planetary Motion. It certainly can't be old age!

Now, once again summer is almost 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, Pennsylvania.

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 that 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.

**Have a great summer!
Will see you in the fall!**