Wabash.

Class Agents Letter

Class of 1953

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Class of "53 Newsletter
April 2024

Dear 53s:

First off, apologies for the unforgivable lapse in communication. Frank Mullen, the world's best class agent, is likely looking down and shaking his head in disbelief. But let's take it from here. As we approach the 71st anniversary of our glorious exit from the Bash, our ranks are thinning. If I can still count accurately (that's not assured) there are ten of us hardy souls still left to "sing thy praises". Bob Hay is way out west in Tucson, AZ; Pat Anderson is in Lisle, IL, Tom Florsheim in Milwaukee, WI; George Littell in Winchester MA; Ray Meurer in Norwalk CT; Fred Gallagher in Fairfax VA and Roger Drummond down south in Ocala FL. Karl Dickerson and I have stayed closer to where we started; I am in Carmel IN, just outside Indianapolis and Karl is in C'ville itself. If we could talk someone into moving into the Pacific Northwest, we would about have this country surrounded.

Also still with us is our Honorary Member, Jean Williams, widow of our beloved biology professor Dr. Eliot "Bugsy" Williams. Jean resides in an assisted living facility in Crawfordsville at an incredible 105 years of age! Not long ago this remarkable lady was still traveling all over the world. She is a precious connection to our four years here at Wabash and an inspiration to us all.

Classmates

I have had fairly recent contact with some of the above:

Bob Hay spent most of his career as a cardiologist in Idaho but sneaked in trips to Russia to counsel on health care reform. He finished his professional days as medical director of an insurance company. He and Christine migrated to Tucson several years ago. Currently, he tells me that he reads a lot, takes internet courses, and rides a hard-to-screw-up recumbent trike because his kids thought he was falling too much on a for real bike. He has one grandkid in London, one in Zagreb and a third in Kiev. Yikes! I have two in Chicago, and I thought that was pretty venturesome.

Roger Drummond reports that he is doing well, exercises daily and eats well. He doesn't say whether he is still finding ways to demonstrate that great tenor voice of his or whether he still enjoys gambling, a long-time fun experience. You are free to ignore his unreasonable example of daily exercise. I am.

I can't get **Tom Florsheim's** email to work, but we had some good exchanges during the plague. At that time, he and Nancy, like most of us, were isolated and he was furthering his long-time interest in photography, reading a lot, and hoping his folks could start making shoes again and that people would start buying them again. Apparently, they have. Tom is still listed as Emeritus Chairman of the Weyco Group and his sons Tom and John are CEO and COO respectively.

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Dave Saunders describes himself as "disgustingly healthy", with no meds (Holy Cow!), and still driving at night. (Did you think, while we were at Wabash, that ability to drive at night would be something to brag about? Neither did I, but I have promised my kids I won't do it anymore.) Dave and I decided, if you will promise not to tell, that old age had afflicted us both with pot bellies and the dreaded Noassatall disease, resulting in difficulty with keeping trousers at the accustomed level. (Another thing neither of us spent much time thinking about when we were in college.) He continues to do some watercolor painting, reads, and gets out to have some social life with old friends. With the help of kids who live nearby, he lives alone, cooks, and housekeeps in a home he and Charlotte built 45 years ago. Sadly, Charlotte passed away in 2021.

Haven't heard from **Ray Meurer** recently, but at last count several years ago he was still serving as Harbor Superintendent in Rowayton Connecticut, and they were cruising the New England coast in a 36-foot powerboat and spending the late winter on Marco Island, Florida. The Meurers had, at that time, three kids and five grandkids, and like me, were lucky to have them all living nearby.

Had some good phone conversations with **George Littell**. He is doing well over there in Massachusetts, long retired from his travel agency business. Unfortunately, his wife Lois passed away a year ago, ending their unique Massachusetts to North Carolina marriage. Theirs was a later-in-life marriage and both coveted their respective homes and states – so they travelled. George still finds time to get back to the family's old stomping grounds in the Leelanau area of Michigan periodically. Turns out we both, along with several other Wabash graduates, have some history with Walloon Lake, further north in Michigan, near Petoskey. We hope to get together this summer.

I, (I'm **Jack Engledow**, if you haven't noticed), am in pretty good health for a one-eyed, metal-kneed ninety-two-year-old guy who, unlike Dave Saunders, takes about a zillion pills every day. I read a lot, write Letters from Grandpa (fifty-some so far), eat lunch with assorted buddies now and then, and participate in lots of family chaos. I have three kids, seven grandkids and seven (and counting) great grandkids. Most live hereabouts and we enjoy each other's company, so we get together frequently for birthdays, holidays, and any other excuse we can think of. They take good care of me. Most of us get away for three weeks each summer at Walloon Lake, mentioned under Littell just above. We have done this for over fifty years. I have no line duties, but now and then they let me participate in some of the fun stuff at the Engledow Group, the ninety-two-year-old family landscaping/horticulture business. Grandsons Eric (Wabash '05) and Craig (Wabash '08) have responsible positions there. Sadly, I lost Nancy about five years ago and my oldest son Jim a year and a half ago.

<u>The College</u>

I was able to visit the College and attend a couple of football games the last two years and I can attest that it remains a mighty fine place. Standing on the mall and seeing that beautiful little chapel as its nexus still brings a lump to the throat. Center hall, with its beloved squeaky stairs and lofty bell tower is still there, but Waugh has been replaced with a more today-suited Hays Hall and the Lilly Library, long ago replacement of our clunky old Yandes, has itself just been through a recent significant remodeling. As yet another testament to the ancientness of our days, the school has announced that the Frank Sparks Student Center, whose construction began our senior year, will be razed, and replaced with a new Center, better designed for today's students and today's activities. (Dang, this can't be. As president of the Senior Council, I was honored to turn over the ceremonial first shovel for the building and that was only……Oh!).

I have always thought that Wabash looks exactly like what a college should look like. That hasn't changed.

Then one walks back to the athletic complex. That <u>has</u> changed!

The almost square cinder track and wooden bleachers of our day were supplanted years ago with more suitable facilities, but more recent additions put those to shame. Imagine a Little Giant Stadium with not only a beautiful artificial turf playing surface circled by the state of the art eight lane Huntsman track but add in an attractive brick structure with a Hall of Fame entryway, decorated with photos of all-time great Wabash athletes and topped with a penthouse for affluent alums, with suites, windows to the field, catered food, and reserved seats. And all that with enough restrooms – that really work. Wow!

That's just the start! The Goodrich baseball field, the Fischer soccer and lacrosse field, the Collett tennis complex, the Knowling fieldhouse, the Shelbourne wrestling center, the Class of 1950 Natatorium, and everything else in the Allen Athletic Center are, like the football-track stadium, absolutely world class. Basketball still takes place in the same space we remember but wouldn't recognize. It's now Chadwick Court – all new looking and more attractive, with better scoreboards et al. (Don't know if the damned bass drum still resonates throughout every game.) It's hard to imagine that any other of our rival colleges and universities could have equal or better facilities. And, as you can see, all this has been inspired and/or financed by the fabulous Wabash alumni of which we are a part.

Wabash athletes use the facilities well. The football Little Giants are the fifth winningest team in NCAA Division III, with a record of 180-40 since 2001, having won the North Coast Athletic Conference championship nine times and having made the Division III playoffs eight times. (For some mysterious reason, the Monon Bell has been missing from the campus for two years, but we have been assured that the search is on and is likely to be successfully concluded next fall.) The track and field team has won 19 indoor and outdoor North Atlantic Coast championships since 2011 and the basketball crew just last month lost a heartbreaker in this year's NAC championship game. Many of the other sports teams have been similarly successful. We did well athletically back in our day, and the beat goes on – in much more appropriate and classier surroundings.

I don't need to tell you about the real business of the College – turning out generations of young men who think critically act responsively, lead effectively, and live humanely. There is plenty of evidence in our alumni publications and elsewhere that this process continues apace, turning out generations of grads who are successful and make a difference. Wabash seems to have a knack for finding inspiring teachers who are worthy successors to our Trippet and Rogge and Haenisch and Brigance. The prestigious Princeton Review last year rated Wabash professors number one in the country for accessibility and number two in high marks. The College was also highly rated in several other areas. Lots has changed since our day, but Wabash remains at the forefront in offering a pure and effective liberal arts educational experience.

In Conclusion

Let me hear from you! We alums are now few in numbers, but there are still a lot of widows of classmates still out there who may have interesting Wabash experiences of their own or tall tales to tell about their husbands that we all might enjoy. If so, send me an email, letter, or phone call. I'd love it.

In closing, let's offer up a prayer and a word of thanks for those classmates who are no longer with us. We shared a pleasant and eventful four years together, then scattered to live varied and meaningful lives. It was a very long time ago, but that precious Wabash Experience still bonds us together. Thanks, Guys!

My very best,

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