

David Engel

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Lincoln High Newsletter

This week's topic:

Things that changed your life forever.

Phone calls, coincidences, illness, world events, chance meetings, whatever.

and responses:

John Hestermann - jhesterman@uwalumni.com

When I was going to the University in Madison, I would always catch a ride back to the Rapids with friends except on one occasion. When I missed my ride, I walked over to the Greyhound bus terminal and took the bus to Stevens Point. When I got on the bus, I spotted a good looking young girl so I naturally sat next to her. During our conversation, I found out that her name was Barb Judnick; she was also from the Rapids and had attended Assumption High, graduating a couple of years behind me. Before we got to Point, I had asked her to a fraternity party for the next weekend. We went to the party the following weekend and and many more after that. We were married two years later and ultimately had three children, 10 grandchildren and two great-grandchildren. We will celebrate our 48th wedding anniversary in October.....all this because of a missed ride and a decision to take the Greyhound bus.....changed my life forever!

Kent Vasby (58) kvasby@smallbytes.net

I was the Asst Mgr at the Montgomery Ward store in Wisconsin Rapids back in 69/70. A customer, Bob Hanneman, came in with a riding mower complaint. I went out to his home to investigate the problem.

He had a daughter!

We were married 6 months later.

Marcie [Basler] Ortscheid '65 - marcie.ortscheid@ki.com

I think it's age.....things that use to make me crazy I now just say ok and let it go. After I lost 3 friends in 2 weeks I know that life is just too short and if I don't want to do something I just don't do it, and I really care if someone has a problem with that or not...

Roger Fritz - fritzcat11@yahoo.com

I've been a very lucky son of a gun.

- * Mom remarrying "Pops" when I was 4 years old. (My Dad died when I was two)
 - * College adviser getting me into Ag-Engineering which ended up as a Civil Engineering degree.
 - * Picking the right woman to marry. Forty six years and counting.
 - * Being offered a job I really enjoyed and being able to do it for forty two years with the same company (Bechtel)
 - * Finding a great place to retire. Great climate, on a lake with woods to play in and surrounded by historical places. (SW Virginia)
 - * Good health...so far
- As the Muslims say "God is Great" (Allah Akbar)
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Barbara Thalacker - bthalacker@comcast.net

Coincidence:

1992, I went to Germany on vacation and looked up the only Thalacker cousin/relatives (Roland & Marlys) my folks knew there.

Twelve years later, on January 2004 I was with a friend who talked me into a trip up to Chico, CA (2 hours from Sacramento where I live) to visit a friend. While we were there we went to visit his Mom, Margarete. It turned out that she was from Germany and grew up playing with Roland as a child 50 years earlier. What are the chances? We all are now good friends.

Chris Gorski - cwgorski@yahoo.com

Had just got out of the Service, it was January of 1970. Had gone back to school at UW LaCrosse, rented a house with 3 other friends and was trying to get used to a much calmer life style. It was on a Friday night late in January when one of my room mates wanted me to go with him to a party that some girls he knew were having. I wasn't the most social person still just wanting to be by myself and go easy getting used to civilian life. I tried to convince him to just go down to a local bar with me and we could have a few drinks and shoot some pool. He said that he promised these girls that he would come to their party and if I went with him so that he could just show up, have a drink and stay for a half hour or so, we then could leave and go down town to the bar I mentioned and shoot some pool. I reluctantly agreed and we left for the party.

When I walked in, Rick, my friend, introduced me as a recently returned Viet Nam Vet Green Beret. No one at the party had met a Viet Nam Vet much less a Green Beret. They started to pummel me with questions about my experiences which was the last topic I was willing to talk about.

Then this girl who was sitting with friends on the couch, got up, came over to me, grabbed my hand and said, "you look like you could use some fresh air" and pulled me towards the front door. We went outside and she asked me the usual questions such as what my home town was, what brought me to school at LaCrosse, did I have any brothers and sisters and so on. No questions about the past 3 years of my life.

I ended up marrying that girl, we just celebrated our 43rd anniversary on May 27th. I've told my grandchildren this story to show them how one simple decision can have a dramatic impact on your life. I've told each one of them, "If I hadn't gone to that party, you wouldn't be here nor would your mom (my daughter) be here.

By the way, Rick and I never made it downtown that night to shoot pool.

Jim Natwick - jjnatwick@gmail.com

ILLNESS---- Dec. 12th, 1970. --I had been drafted out of Law School by Mrs Hornigold to report July 14th, 1970. I spent the summer at Ft. Campbell, Ky and then Ft. Polk, La for advanced combat training, with infantry orders to R.V.N.

My plane was supposed to depart Oakland army base on Dec. 27th, so they gave us Xmas leave for a couple of weeks. I went to Wausau, where my wife of 18 months was staying with her parents. It was a cold, bright winter day that morning when I discovered that my left eye really hurt when I looked outside. During the course of the day it only got worse. I was able to get in to see a doctor who told me I had Palsy!! yikes what is that? Bell's palsy it turned out to be.

To make a long, funny , and interesting story short, I ended up being sent to Washington, D.C. for the duration of my duty; making E-5 in 18 months w/ 2 army commendation medals.

P.s. Was anyone else actually drafted?

Candy Caylor - klorkatz@att.net

Toni Weller Olsen and I got together after 51 years. We had not seen each other since HS graduation. We talked nonstop for six hours! It was great to catch up.

