

ARTIFACTS

Class Reunion Edition



Lincoln High School Band of Wisconsin Rapids.

FEATURING IN THIS ISSUE

Cover: 1931 *Consolidated News* cover with uniforms for then-new Lincoln (and the state band contest held here). Inside: Class of '63 by Phil Brown, page 2; Facebook by Lori Brost, p. 3; Reunion Memoirs by Uncle Dave, 5; Nick Brazeau Interview, 6-13; Wisconsin Rapids photos, 14-17; George Zimmerman Interview, 18-20; Cards with the Class by Billy Parker, 21; Butch La Chapelle Interview, 22-25; Bill Thiele by Uncle Dave, 26-27; Zakons, 28; Corpsman Hall, 29; West Side by Joe Jackan, 30-31.

1961, same uniforms as cover?



1963: Those were the days

By **Phil Brown**, *SWCHC President*

Congratulations to the Class of 1963.

It is remarkable that 50 years have passed since you were proud graduates of our two outstanding local high schools, Lincoln and Assumption. To mark this historic occasion, your classmate and our editor, (Uncle) Dave Engel, has dedicated this unique reunion issue to you, the folks of what he calls the “worst generation.” But we don’t take what Uncle Dave says too seriously!

Music has always been an important part of our lives and while you ’63ers were in school, the folk song revival of that time was reaching its peak. In 1962, one of my favorites, Glenn Yarbrough and the Limelitters, recorded a song later made very popular by Mary Hopkin.

*Those were the days my friend.
We thought they’d never end.
We’d sing and dance forever and a day...*



Now it’s half a century later and some of those same classmates, like Nick Brazeau and George Zimmerman, featured in this issue, continue to stop by Uncle’s office in “the old library” (since 1970 our beautiful Museum building), to share a glass of “Goodhue’s Finest” Port and reminisce about how those were the days—when downtown was downtown and the Friendly was friendly.

My wife, Mary, who happens to be Nick’s cousin, knows I am an “incurable romantic”; so maybe it’s no surprise that my imagination gets a little carried away sometimes and I hear the words of the song coming from the room at the top of the Museum stairs:

*Through the door there came familiar laughter
I saw your face and heard you call my name
Oh my friend we’re older but no wiser
For in our hearts the dreams are still the same*

Monday, September 16, 4 p.m.: SWCHC Annual Meeting

All members are encouraged to attend.



Modern media makes historical connections

By Lori Brost, *Museum Administrator*

It started with a simple reference to “something in the shed.” Master gardeners Michaelen Erickson and Bev Koslowski had found ornamental concrete “fleurs-de-lis” they were interested in using. Where did they come from? We could tell they had been in the shed for a long time, but couldn’t find any information about them.

In mid-June, the fleurs-de-lis had been dug out of the shed and set up in the hosta gardens along with four square pieces the gardeners also found. The ornamentation really added something special but their origins were still a mystery. So, I decided to try something new: a social networking website.

There is a Facebook page called “Vanished River Cities—Central Wisconsin” in which our local history is the topic. Photos are posted, questions are asked and answered, and stories are shared.

I added a photo of the items, asking if anyone knew where they came from. I was amazed at how quickly I received an answer. David Farmbrough posted a photo of the old River Block on West Grand Avenue and there they were. The fleurs-de-lis lined the roof. They were most likely donated to the Museum around 1983 when the building was

torn down to make way for the new Consolidated office building.

This is not the first time this page on Facebook has benefited the Museum. I have received numerous yearbook donations after posting a request for years we were missing.

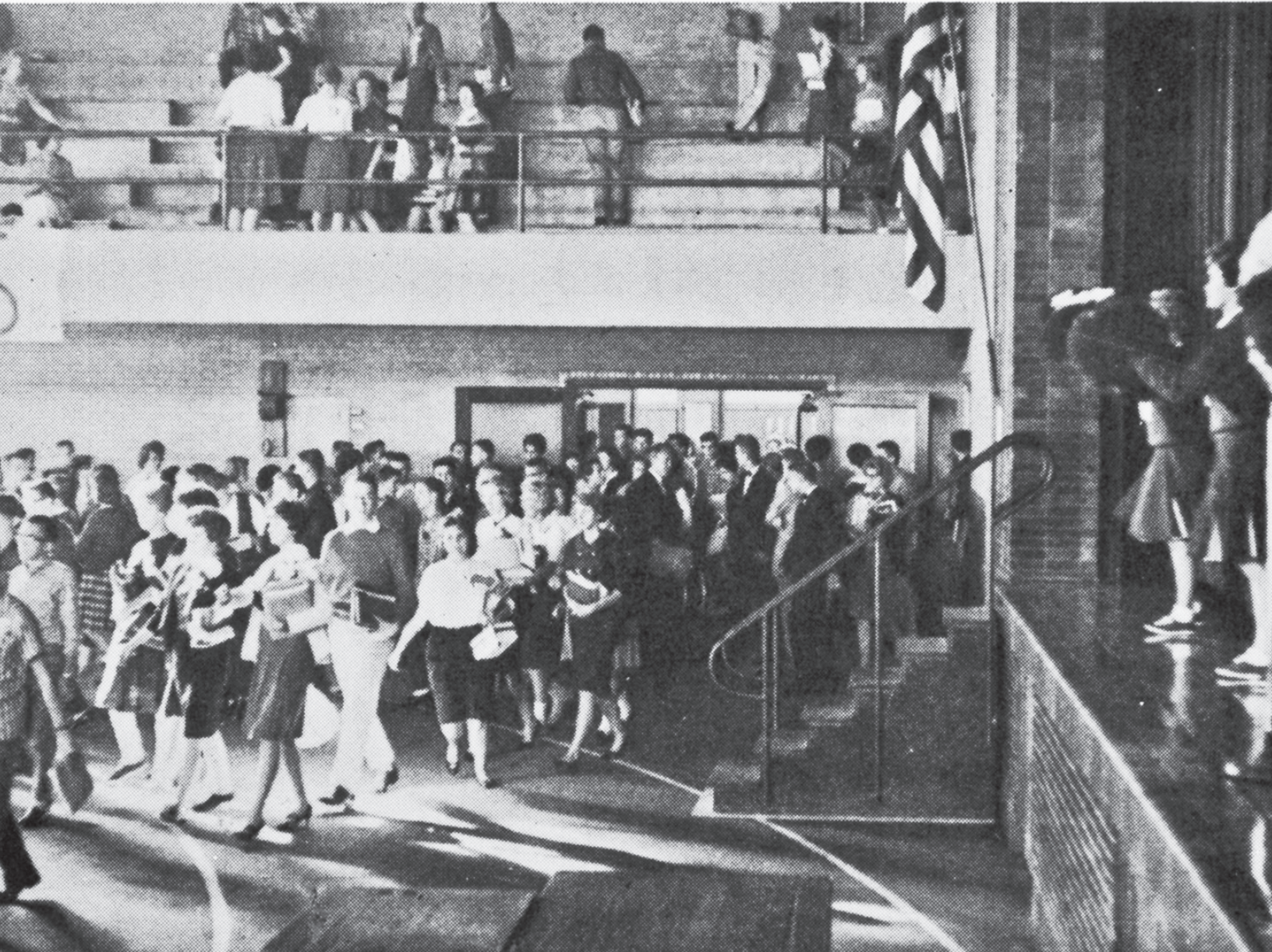
More recently, Darla Allen of the Nekoosa Library received photographs of school children that were not completely labeled. Realizing there was quite a following of former Nekoosa students on “Vanished River Cities,” I posted the photos and within thirty minutes or so, the identification started and took on a life of its own, truly amazing and quite a bit of fun for those involved.

Another example was a wonderful set of pictures of one-room schools, 1960-61, that I am showcasing in our School Room exhibit. A few days after I posted the photo from Arbutus school, I had a visit from friend and author Ed Arendt. “So, I hear you’re holding out on me!”

He reminded me that he had just finished his book on the Arbutus school and said that he had not seen the photo I posted. Within a week, I had all the names on two of them.



1959 LHS snake dance at the River Block from 1960 *Ahdawagam*: ornaments on roof line



The Crowd Gathers

Homecoming Pep Assembly 1962

1963-2013

The Big Five-O

Assumption



Lincoln



Class Reunion

River City Reunion Memoirs

By Dave Engel, *LHS Class of 1963*

As Phil Brown announced in his presidential remarks, the weekend of September 20-21 marks the 50-year reunion of the Lincoln and Assumption Classes of 1963. These archetypes of the Worst Generation have been brought to the attention of local readers numerous times since 1980 in *River City Memoirs*.

In anticipation of the reunion and as a means of including reminiscences specific to Assumption high school, the November 2012 *Artifacts* featured an extensive interview with James Mason, AHS '62.

Artifacts #38, turns to the Lincoln high school class through the words of three classmate "Amigos": Nicholas J. Brazeau, George Zimmerman and Harold La Chapelle. Through their informal but suggestive discourse, we review landmarks and cultural icons shared from the 1920s through the 1960s. If there seems an emphasis on mischief, perhaps that's appropriate for a group that calls themselves "Red Raiders."

The Assumption Royals may have fared better in that regard. Certainly, their most active representatives on the reunion committee, Mary Beth Habel Rokus and Sharon Van Lysal Nalbach, have performed admirably.

Most valuable committee member for Lincoln has been Betsy Brauer, whom I remember first from the Rapids theater in 1958 and from Barbara Santapaolo's freshman Speech class. Additional advice and counsel was provided by Zimmerman, Brazeau and Jennifer Johnson Lemke, whose husband, Carl, provides a discerning perspective and occasional refreshments.

Nalbach reports that the Assumption High School Class of 1963 included 113 graduates, most of whom describe the Catholic milieu as "fun and friendly," believing the small school population allowed class members to be person-

ally involved and democratically communicative. The well-rounded education provided a foundation for the future success of most Assumptionites.

Of the 1963 AHS classmates, 42 still live in the home area (Rapids, Point, Port, Nekoosa, Plover) and 51 live farther away, most outside Wisconsin. Many of those who have moved on continue to support their school, Nalbach said.

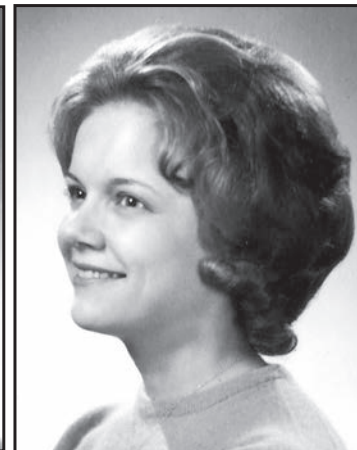
At last count, 18 (or 16 per cent) of the class were deceased.

Lincoln had an estimated 275 graduates, of which 116 of the survivors have stayed or returned home and 121 live elsewhere. Of 38 deceased (14 per cent), some who helped provide memories for the editor's personal *Memoirs* are Jay Somers (winter formal); Allan Peckham (shortest boy); Dick Kupper (his grandmother's Kümmel); and Butch La Chapelle, profiled in this issue.

See the November 2008 *Artifacts* for extensive coverage by Chuck Hinners (LHS '65) of the Assumption and Lincoln classes of '63.



Gotta love 'em Assumption Girls

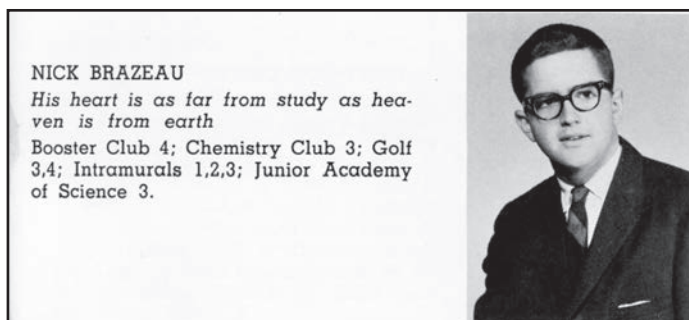


Mary Beth Habel Rokus Sharon Van Lysal Nalbach

Three Amigos #1

Nick: A feeling I would be back

Ahdawagam: I had to think of something to put in there. "His heart is as far from study as heaven is from earth." That could just as easily been blank.



NJB: Doc Backus delivered me. According to my mother, when I came out, Backus slapped me and said, "Goddam it Cay, it's another boy." That was four boys then.

I don't know how well you remember your childhood. I don't remember mine all that well, excepting isolated experiences.

One that I do recall is that my dad made my brother Dave take me, as a little five- or six-year-old kid (he was twelve) up to Earl Young's barber shop on Baker Street next to Consumers Grocery. We went to him for two reasons: Earl Young was a good Republican and a customer of the bank.

We had to walk all the way up from here on Third Street, which can be quite a task in the winter time.

My dad gave Dave enough money to take me down to the Wisconsin Theater where they had the most wonderful matinee that day. It was 18 cartoons. So it was cartoon after cartoon after cartoon. He just paid for one ticket and told them that I'd sit on his lap. Then he used the extra money for candy. So I sat on my brother's lap for 18 cartoons.

In the early to mid-Fifties, there were three theaters in town: Palace, Wisconsin, and Rapids.

The Wisconsin was rather awesome to me. It had that cry room and that wonderful lobby upstairs that separated the bathrooms. I thought it was kind of a big time place. A wide lobby in the main part.

At the Palace, you'd get three features on a Saturday afternoon: Johnny Mack Brown, Tex Ritter, Roy Rogers, Gene Autry.

The Palace had the cheaply made B movies, Westerns or monster movies like *Them*, about the giant ants and *The Creature from the Black Lagoon*. I remember the Palace as being always crowded for these matinees. Kurt Halverson and I would sit on the staircases at the exits to watch the movie.

The Rapids theater I remember more for its owner, Tom Poulos, who liked me because he and my dad were good friends. So he would often let me in free. Wave me in, and Butch La Chapelle too.

We always got along with him well until he caught Butch smoking in the theater. Butch didn't know it was him and he came with his elbow and knocked him back head over heels.

During polio season, when I went to a movie, I remember making it a point to go alone and sit far away from people and hold my breath during the picture.

The soonest I could get away with being downtown without supervision was maybe at eight or nine if I was going to a movie with a friend like Butch, Kurt or Alan Grischke.

Another thing I think of, Dave, is how busy the downtown was on a Friday night. Everything was open till nine o'clock. That was when the farmers came in to do their business.

**Nicholas J. Brazeau
With (Uncle) Dave Engel
27 May 1998**

Those were the days my friend

The first thing was to coordinate everything on the telephone. In grade school, if he would let us in, we would go to the Friendly Fountain. We hadn't, as I recall, experimented with anything but maybe cigarettes. It never agreed with me so I've never smoked. My buddies mostly did.

Our parents would take us to the movie and we would assure them that we would find our way back home. Sometimes they'd let us do that; sometimes they'd make arrangements for a different parent to pick us up.

If we were allowed to come back on our own, we would make up some excuse about stopping in a store or visiting with people, when we were really in the Friendly Fountain, having a ball, playing pinball machines and drinking vanilla phosphates. Friendly Bob, Bob Luzenski, would say to us, "As long as you're not in the establishment, I can say you're not here."

When a parent would call, we'd all make a mad dash for the front door. Even in the winter, we'd stand out and huddle while he was answering the phone, "Hello! Nope, he's not in here." He'd hang up and we'd all come piling back in again.

Woolworth's was great. They had that lunch counter there. A lot of things to look at. You

know how you remember a smell to a certain place? I can remember the smell to this day.

I liked to look for the newest toy six shooter they might have in even though I've never owned a real gun. Cowboys and Indians were a big thing with me, and soldiers.

I remember being in Johnson Hill's with my mother whenever I needed a pair of shoes or galoshes or a shirt or pants. She knew all the clerks on a first-name basis, like Bill Sherwood and Oscar Adler and Clara Boehm. I can remember always being well taken care of down there.

I remember going to Aurelia Kaudy's beauty shop with my mother. That was where Woolco is now. Wal-mart. Kitty-corner in back of the old A&P. It was an old home and they lived there. She had a beauty shop and gift store on the main floor.

Kreutzer brothers. I got a kick out of all that second-hand stuff. I forgot about that place. Down in the area where Herschleb's bakery was.

One great place I used to go with my dad was Shorty the Greek's hat blocking and shoe shine shop. It was a tiny little place right next to the Flatiron Building.

Back then, most men wore hats. You'd go to a baseball game and everybody's in a suit. In the Fifties and Forties.

Shorty was a real short guy with a very high voice and a bald head. He had a Greek accent, of course. He used to import oregano from Greece for my dad. Oregano was apparently hard to get then.

Shorty was no relation or friend of Tom Poulos although they were the only Greeks in the community until Jim Drivas came a little later.

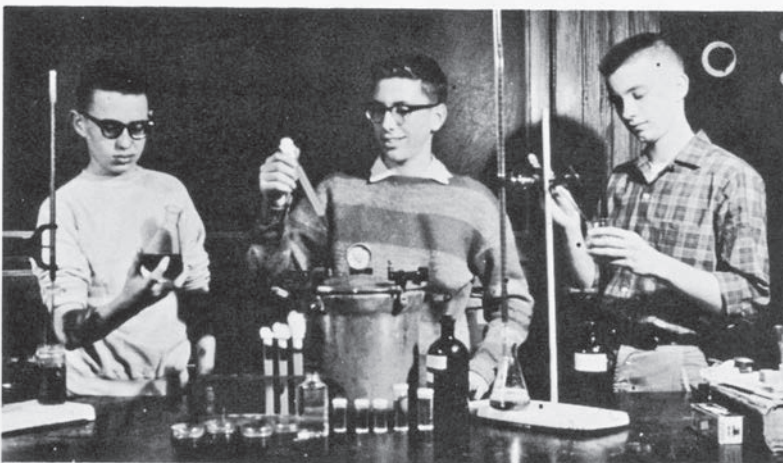
Penney's: I thought I remembered it having wooden floors. They never had anything I was interested in. It was all clothes, not toys.

Never liked Montgomery Ward either. I always felt it had things for activities I didn't want to do, like mow the lawn. I wasn't into tools at all.



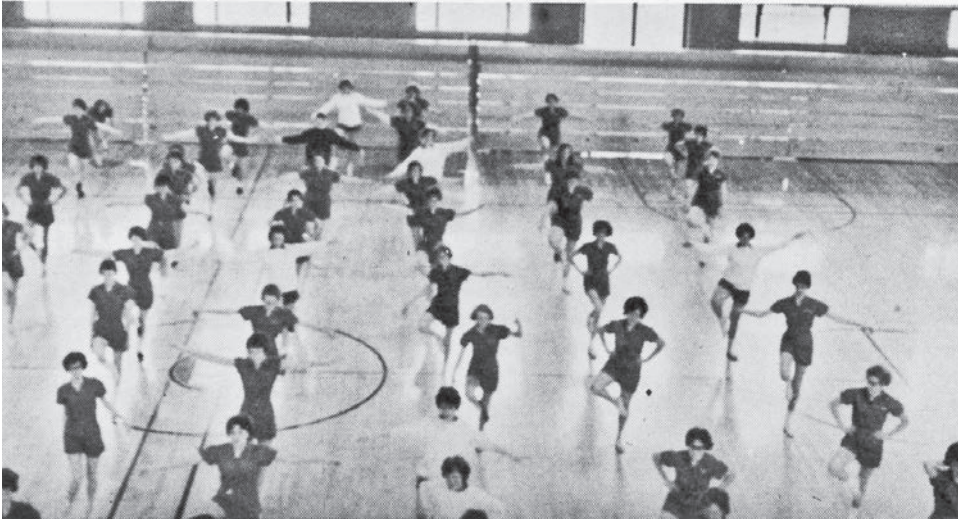
Ahdawagam yearbook 1962

JUNIOR ACADEMY OF SCIENCE PROJECTS



WATER ANALYSIS

Jim Nuhlicek, Leon Schmidt, Richard Mittlesteadt.



The specialty shops I'd go into. Fey Photo, Germann's jewelry. I was in Heilman's quite a bit with my mother.

I liked Schroeder's on the East Side. It had a distinctive smell and a good one. It had a lot of little doodads, much like Manion's later on, Ben Franklin. Never went into that Gamble's.

Matthews toys. I loved that place. Had a gift shop on top and toys below. Kind of a miniature Toys "R" Us.

Daly Drug was quite a spot. Talk about smell. It was big in cosmetics. Paul Gross Jewelry was in there. There was a big liquor store.

Anderson's drug on West Grand. I loved it. It had a fountain in the back that I frequented. Chocolate sodas. The two Anderson brothers in there, working away, Harris and Del.

Vanilla phosphates at the Friendly Fountain.

Wilpolt's was a favorite in high school because the Assumption girls hung out there. I liked some of the Assumption girls so we made it a point to go down there after school. Every booth was filled with kids. Not only was it a great meeting place, but it had great food, great hamburgers and French fries. No comparison with the Friendly Fountain.

The Friendly had sort of a bare bones little patty. We ate them but we weren't too happy about it.

I never got to that section beyond city hall. It was mostly bars.

We went to the Chatter_box further out on West Grand probably one time for every 12 times at the Friendly. There wasn't much reason to go there until I started dating Gail Gouchee. She was my high school sweetheart the entire sophomore year. I'd go over there and sit for hours. Her dad would be about a foot away from us.

How about Your Record Shop? Couldn't get any better than that. Comics, paperbacks, an occasional adult paperback you'd sneak a peak at.

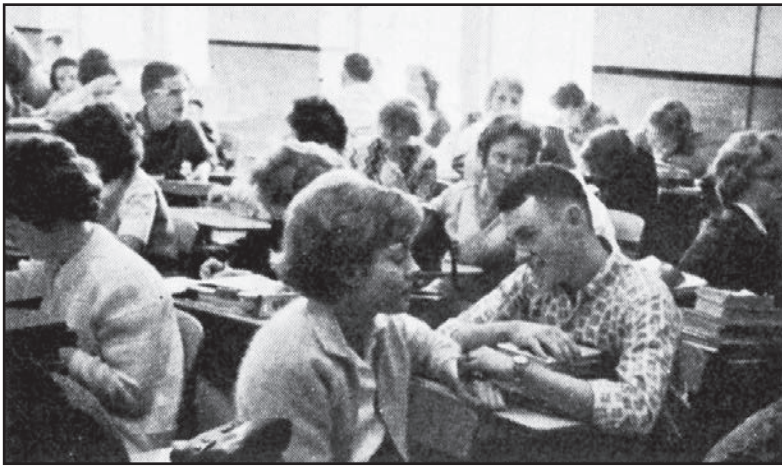
Go in and buy your latest issue of *Little Lulu* or Warner Brothers comics, *Daffy Duck*, *Tweety and Sylvester*, *Tasmanian Devil*, *Peppy Le Pew*. As you got older, you graduated to the *Mad* magazines, that type of thing. *Mad* was forbidden for a while though, so you just looked through it at the counter and left it there.

We were beyond the 78 records. I still have a big box of 45s somewhere with a little record player with the cylinder that you'd put them on.

My real great memories are of our backyard as a child playing baseball on the diamond my parents created back there. With the usual bunch plus more. You'd add Johnny Blanchard, Peter Parsons, Tom Parsons, Jere Rude, my best friend in grade school. Pete Hittner.



We thought they'd never end



Study hall, 1963. Recognized: Gary "Clem" Nelson, Dawn Davis, Michael Bowers. Ahdawagam 1963

Gambling started in 8th grade. At Lincoln, we flipped coins in the locker cubbyholes, when Mr. Junkman wasn't watching.

We played poker in the basements of the various houses. My mother never discouraged any of that, because she thought, if we were here, we were staying out of trouble. We'd play with chips so she didn't have any concept of what we were doing. Lots of times, we would owe it or we would say, "Hey if I give you ten bucks will you let me off the other ten?"

Jay Somers was a victim of the old gum-in-the-hair prank that prevailed freshman year. Where you take the poor guy down, hold him down, come to school the next day with about ten bald spots.

The Conway house is where a Conway house was before, a big old yellow house. Jay Somers used to live there. He just died [2008], you know. The 52-year-old Jay. Diabetes. About three weeks ago [30 Mar 1998]. His parents still live on River Run. We were stamp collectors together. That was a big thing in grade school as well. Still is, I still collect them.

Ron Brazener lived upstairs in the house where [teacher] Edgar Bird and his wife lived. Next to Olive Midthun, right near what's now East Junior High. Ultimately, they built a home on Riverwood Lane. He was from England. His mom worked in the Cadbury's chocolate factory. His dad



Ron Brazener

transferred to Consoweld and was an officer in Consoweld.

The old railroad bridge was a focus for young people in the Fifties. You weren't a man unless you had walked or run across the railroad bridge. It took me a long time to work up the courage to do it.

Others had no problem at all. Especially the Indian we called "Chief" [Larry Boutwell 1944-80]. I think he lived up on Sand Hill. He was very adept at it and we all looked up to him. For him, it was like a sidewalk.

The West Side, before we were in high school, was extremely Polish. A lot of the people still spoke the language in their homes, the grandmas and grandpas. It was strong Catholic, to the point where daughters were not encouraged and sometimes forbade to date non-Catholics.

There was no major crime that I can recall. I may have taken a pen or two from Diebels' grocery. I was never in the River Rats. They were involved in some breaking and entering, some burglary stuff. That was some Assumption guys. They wouldn't let us join if we wanted to.

There was a lesser bunch that specialized in a kind of frivolous shoplifting. By today's standards, pretty small time potatoes.

To give you an example of how it was different then, the stores knew it and told the parents and the parents dealt with it. The police never got involved. Now you'd have five social workers and a juvenile detention person.



LHS Library, 1962, now East Jr. High, where the editor's wife, Kathy Engel, is current librarian.



Sing and dance forever and a day

I didn't go to the Sugar Bowl much. I'd go there to buy chocolates. I personally considered the place kind of rough and I avoided it. Same with the Quick Lunch. Not much at Art's either. Later on, in high school, Butch always wanted to go there late at night to get mustard with a hamburger, so I'd go along.

My favorites were the corner grocery stores. If I had money in my pocket, I'd make a beeline for those places.

Diebels', by Howe School. And more than that, McCamley's, just a block from that, where Kelly's Liquor was for a while. Right now, there's a gas station there at the corner of Grand.

All of them had their little meat market. The candy was all laid out in a great way. One of my favorites had the unfortunate name, "Nigger Babies." And there was pop called "Black Jack." There was Black Jack gum for sure. Clove gum. Fudgesicles were a big thing. Creamsicles.

The one I remember that we would go to from here was Gerum's meat market on Oak and Third. He was a character and my grandmother would always accuse him of having his thumb on the scale.

The other one I remember because it was the only grocery store in Wisconsin Rapids that was open on Sunday. I remember my mother saying, after I was driving, "Why don't you run over to Sweet's and get a Sunday paper. Go over to Sweet's and get a gallon of milk."

Grandpa was born in 1873 and raised on Baker and 11th, right across from Farrishes. French Canadian. Sixteen kids in that family, and all raised Catholic.

About half of them became disaffected early on. Apparently his mother died when he was young and the father didn't care enough or wasn't religious enough to keep their nose to the grindstone so my grandpa used to tell me that he and a couple of his brothers, instead of going to catechism, they'd hide in the bushes outside and laugh at the people that were at catechism.

My mother did think it was important enough to try to get us to Sunday School. I can remember her letting us off at the top of the hill on Birch and Third where the Congregational church is and she would drive off and we would walk down the hill but we'd cut through the alley and go to the Friendly Fountain to play the pinball machines. When it was time for Sunday School to end we'd run up to the top of the hill and be there when she came to pick us up. That was as bad as you got back then.

I was not out on Sand Hill other than on my way to the country club. I can remember as a kid thinking that I might get beat up or something if I went up there. I remember a stereotype of Grove kids as being tougher. You don't mess with them and I didn't. We had our own versions of that.



Gail Gouchee, Deneen Kersten, Jan Wojahn?

Twist at pep assembly 1962, teachers Wagner? Schwartz?



I golfed from about age five. Our parents bought us miniature sets of clubs. Bill Metcalf and I would play every day out there at Bulls Eye in the summer time. Parents would drop us off in the morning and pick us up late in the afternoon. The golf course was our baby sitter.

I dated Barb Panter in 8th grade. Her grandpa used to take us to Bowlmor to bowl and pick us up from there. I was never a very good bowler though and it didn't last for long.

I would go out there with my dad when I was five six seven years old. I remember how much fun that was, to be in that place. You had that bar room area and you'd go out and it would open up into these lanes. Man, I thought that was just great.

Junior and senior years in high school, we went to bars in Plover, twice a week. We had individual charge accounts at Stagger Inn. The guy knew we were sixteen.

There was Coney Island, the Koko club, next door to Stagger Inn and the Beehive down from Coney Island. They all knew.

We'd say we were going to the YMCA Tuesdays and Thursdays. I don't know what we would have done at the Y; we never went. There were orchestrated activities, we were told, on Tuesdays and Thursdays, so it sounded like an ideal excuse. Course we'd have to get home ear-



Marcia Koonz, left; Dawn Siewert, front; back right, ?

lier then. I thought they didn't know what I was doing. Now I think that my dad didn't know and my mother overlooked it.

A couple girls would go with us, as companions. Or on their own.

This was pre-sexual revolution. There was never a thought that you were going to be intimate with any of the girls that went up there with you. Most of the girls that went with us went to drink like we did. They were mostly from Lincoln. Some from Assumption. Mostly from our class. In those days, if you were a year older or a year younger, Jeez.

When we'd get there, all we'd do is play the juke box and play pool. And drink. That was about it. And we'd play these drinking games, Indian and buzz and some others. I'm not so sure we even drank that much.

This guy at Stagger Inn actually had us sign releases, releasing him of liability if he was ever caught serving us, as if minors can sign releases.

The problem is, we were young, and we had to drive back from those places. We would run into a little trouble in that regard from time to time.



Betsy Brauer then, now representing LHS on the 2013 reunion committee

Courtesy Marcia Koonz

LHS faculty Ahdawagam

They didn't arrest you for driving under the influence back then, remember? There were no Breathalyzers. We didn't view it as criminal activity of course, but we were breaking the law for sure.

You were a made person if you went out and drank with the boys. That was funny, acceptable. Most of your parents drank. In my group, almost all the parents did. Cocktail parties were a big thing. There was plenty of booze in every house, although we didn't take much of it.

As a result, we thought it was very acceptable. We weren't punished very much when we were caught, either.

I didn't go to beer parties very much. That's why I was never rounded up when these fourteen, fifteen kids got caught. They had vandalized some poor guy's house. We never liked those big beer parties very much. Butch, Alan, the people I mentioned before. I remember Betsy Brauer being caught at parties that I didn't attend.

I suffered from a terrible nosebleed problem. I broke it twice but had the problem before I broke it. It was a deviated septum.



Amy Hemming? Bill Wagner; La Vaughn Carlson

I had special privileges, partly by design. I had to run the mile in two separate parts. Torresani let me run a half mile one day and a half mile the next. Then it was about fourteen minutes.

One time I broke it, I thought I was going to be the great baseball pitcher of all time. I pitched a fast ball to Johnny Blanchard when I was about eight years old and he hit a line drive right into my nose. Ended up down at the emergency room.

The next time, I was on a double date in 1964 with Stanley Schultz, visiting Butch La Chapelle, our sophomore year in college, watching the Democratic convention. Coming back from Stevens Point, I came across that railroad track back into Plover from Point and this damn railroad engine was coming.

The lights were on but cars in front were piling through and I just kept following the car ahead of me. I looked up all of a sudden, there's a light this big! It took the passenger door off the car. My head bashed into the steering wheel.

Principal of Lincoln High School



A. A. RITCHAY, M.A.

Legendary principal died in school year, 1961

NJB 1998 photo by UD



I broke it another time and finally had it cauterized about thirty times with an electric needle.

Bill Miller, Janice Sisley, Bill Wagner, not only good teachers but good people. Cared about what they were doing. Quite a fine group.

It did my heart good a couple years ago when Charlie Spees was in Sieber's with Hawk Peterson and some of those guys and he turned to me and said, "Nick, you remember those political discussions we had when I taught world history in '62? I just wanted you to know, you were right about Goldwater."

I didn't have Miller. I had Edgar Bird. My mother went up to the high school and tried to get that changed. That was the first time she wasn't successful. My mother would always go up to the school, grade school or high school, if I didn't get the teacher she wanted me to get, she had that changed.

I was conscious of my grandfather being well known. I never had to spell my name for a clerk or anything like that. At that time, my grandfather was still alive.

I knew I had a better situation than some friends like Bill Thiele. Or Butch. His mother died of a cerebral hemorrhage when she was 46 years old. He was a sophomore in high school, Barbara Benbow's homeroom. His dad raised him the rest of high school. My mother kind of took him under her wing as best she could.

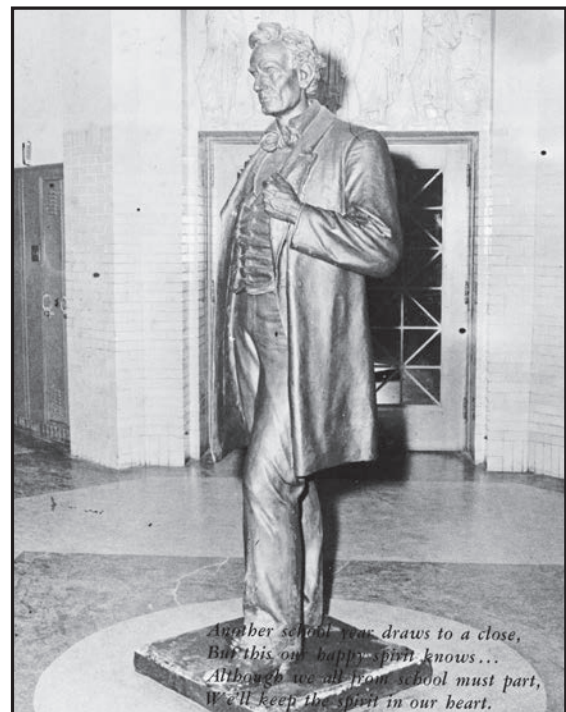
I had a feeling I was going to come back here to Rapids so I wanted to go to Lincoln High

School. I didn't think of going any other place. I liked it then and I like it now.

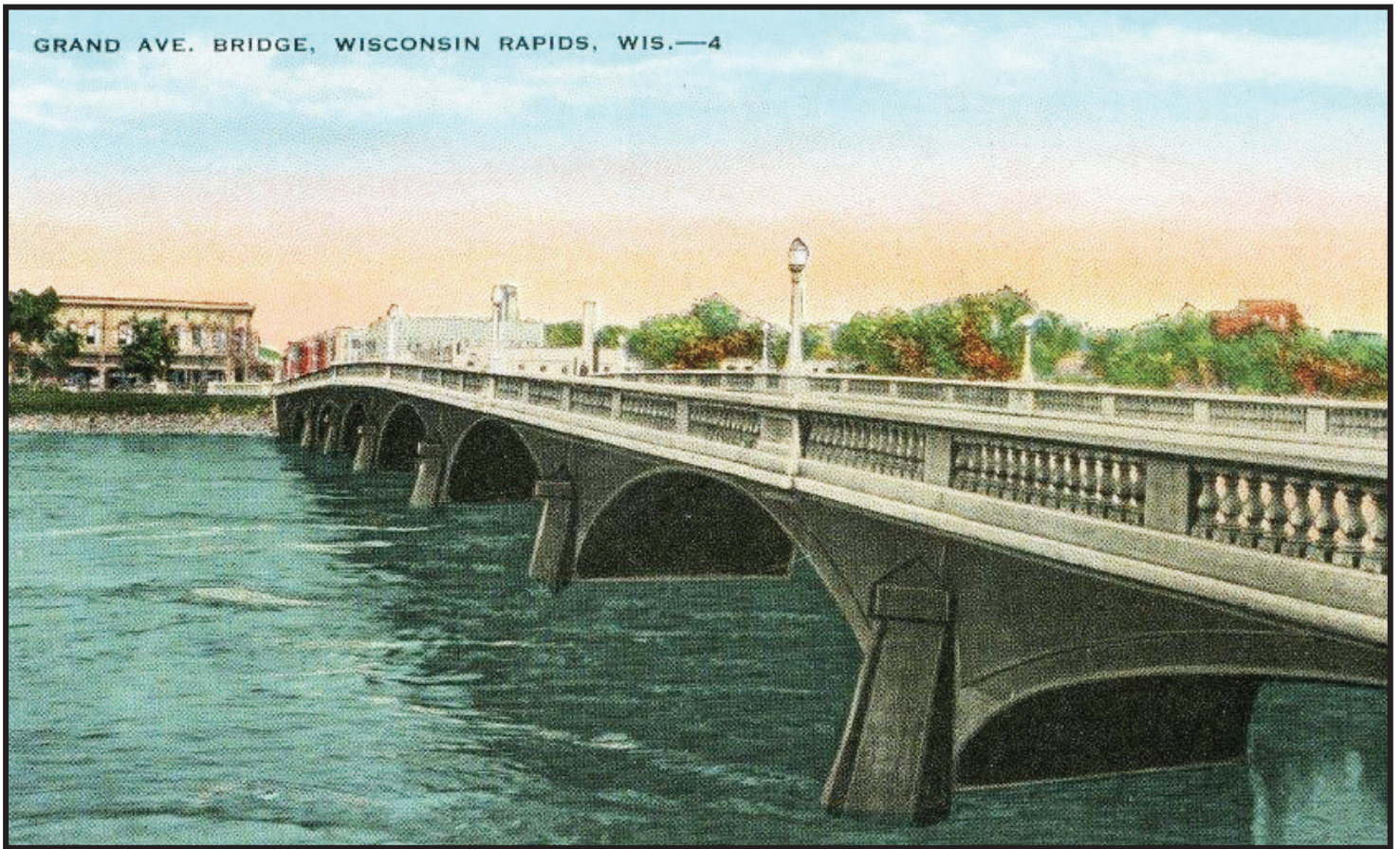
The importance of high school years for me was the development of the friendships, mostly with guys. The social life for me was important apart from any connection to high school activities. No sports. No clubs. The academic part of it didn't seem really challenging. If you could see an easy way to get through it, you just took that route.

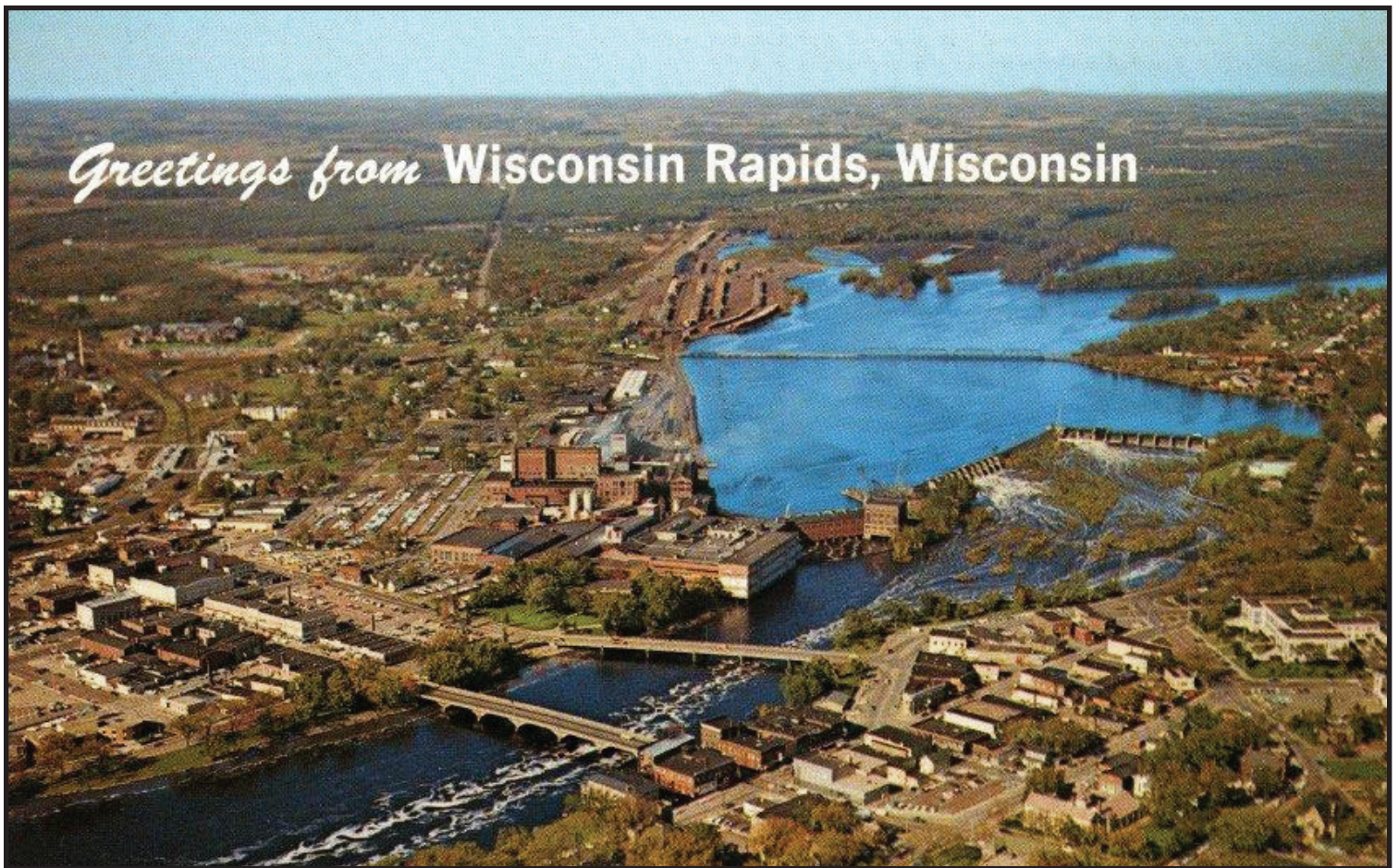
As I think back, I have absolutely no negative thoughts whatsoever. None. That goes for friends, teachers, family. I knew and liked every classmate.

To conclude, Uncle Dave challenged Nick to page through the 1963 Ahdawagam and swear that he indeed felt undiluted affection for each and every classmate. In truth, there was an exception, one reprobate, unnamed forever, so depraved, so revolting, so beyond redemption that Nick couldn't claim he wanted to see him again, even at the 50-year class reunion.



Speaking of reprobates, the *Artifacts* editor, "David de los Angeles" received a suspension from school for being an accomplice to the unauthorized removal by fellow Spanish student "Juan" Farrish of the head shown here.





Taken after 1955 Jackson Street Bridge



From left: Board of Education and classroom building; Lincoln High School (now East Jr.) Lincoln Field House; Vocational School addition and band room; Witter vocational school; Witter Quonset hut; Witter Field; Wood County Teachers College. After 1962.

GREETINGS FROM WISCON



WISCONSIN RAPIDS, WISCONSIN



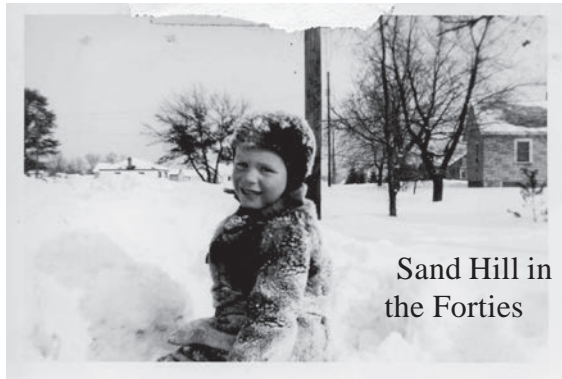
West Grand Avenue c. 1960

*Three Amigos #2***George: Wine, women, and whatever**

George Zimmerman with (Uncle) Dave Engel, June 25, 2008, at the SWCHC Museum.

by Dave Engel

“Wine” and “women” seemed about right, next to his yearbook photo, but I don’t remember George actually singing. When a group from Grove school performed for the younger grades at Two Mile School, he impersonated the swivel-hipped Elvis while carrying a guitar; but the caterwauling of “Nothin’ but a hound dog” came from a 45 rpm record.

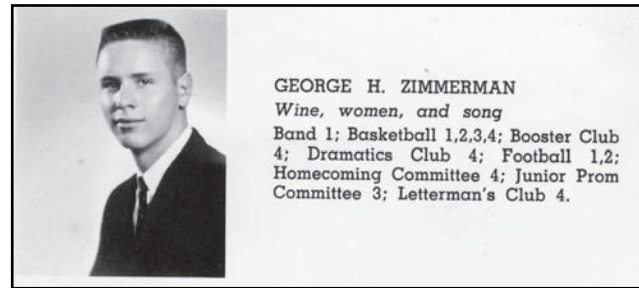


Sand Hill in the Forties

George Zimmerman, born Dec. 4, 1944, became my (Aug. 12, 1945) classmate in 1955 when Two Mile School fifth graders came over to Grove, half way to the right side of the tracks and the city limits. George, already in command of his Sand Hill bailiwick, welcomed the short shy kid that was grade school David by calling him “Inky” and engaging in a wrestling match—58 years ago.

We called him “George” mostly, as if there were only one George. His mother bragged about “Georgie” with an enthusiasm that annoyed my own self-effacing mother. But when Mrs. Zimmerman called him, “George Herman,” her son knew she meant business.

George has always displayed a personality of distinction, loved by women and hated by their



GEORGE H. ZIMMERMAN
Wine, women, and song
Band 1; Basketball 1,2,3,4; Booster Club 4; Dramatics Club 4; Football 1,2; Homecoming Committee 4; Junior Prom Committee 3; Letterman’s Club 4.

boyfriends. A left-handed red head, he was, and is, colorful, controversial, charismatic, impulsive, instinctive and emotional, the opposite of myself.

George was a bad boy and a good boy. Engineer boots and black leather jacket hinted at a grade school Marlon Brando but freckles and fedora kept him within range of James Darren.

His crimes mostly went unpunished but George’s exploits got attention. In Boy Scouts he caught the big fish; in drum and bugle corps, he led renegade late-night expeditions; in school band, he blew trombone with gusto; in basketball, he gunned from downtown; at old Buzz’s he ruled from the end of the bar with a robust, “No Schneider!” At new Buzz’s he continued to preside as long-time bartender with classmate Craig Skibba. At a recent class reunion George saved the day by taming the drunks so yours truly could dispense trivia.

George’s cousin, David, was also a classmate from Grove days—and our Prom king. He was my college roommate and I was best man at his marriage to Becky Schneider of Assumption. Dave’s brother, Robert, is a member of the SWCHC board of directors whose dapper features often grace these pages.



Wood County Centennial 1956 Kiddies Parade, George Zimmerman 11, best old-fashioned boy costume.



George's father, also George, and I worked together at the Consolidated wood room. His mother, Evelyn, an active county leader, was a student in my creative writing class.

"There goes George," my mother used to say with pleasure as he jogged past her Two Mile Avenue home, regular as clockwork. It meant all was well with River City. George had come to represent stability. His marriage to Peggy has outlasted scores of his classmate's.

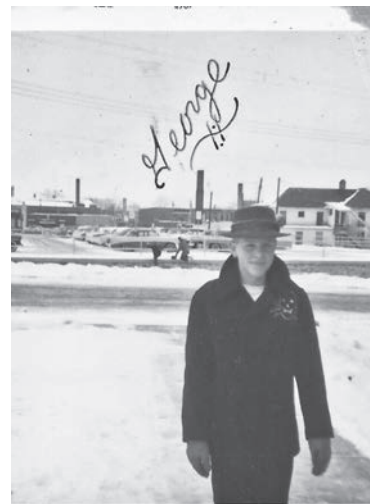
Mom had come to know George from Consolidated, where he assisted with my dad's financial arrangements. I remember the night at the old Brig he proudly told me he got that promotion, meaning he planned, even wanted, to stay in Rapids, maybe for the rest of his life.



George: Originally, we rented a house on Clyde Avenue. My dad had been working at the Gill's Paint Factory up by Preway and he would become ill from the paint fumes so Gill called the mill. After the mill hired my dad, my parents could afford to buy the house on 6th Street. At first, we didn't have an indoor toilet but we had indoor running water.

Larry Kitchkumme lived over there, remember him?

Dave: I knew him as Larry Mackie and Larry Boutwell.



West Side Market Square looking north from Moravian Church? The felt hats were a big fad around 1959, including feathers in the side. Note the Grove Pirates logo on jacket.

G: Well his grandparent's names were Kitchkumme. So that was what I always called him.

One time, we were shooting bow and arrows in the empty lot where we played a lot of ball, right across from the tavern. He says watch this. He shot the arrow and they were target arrows. It went up not too far and it came down and stuck him right in the top of the head.

He didn't get hurt bad. He bled a little bit and he ran home to his Grandma and Grandpa's house right there on the corner. Don't ask me why I remember that; you remember crazy little things.

D: In your early days in grade school what were you to that neighborhood?

G: What was I? A trouble maker.

We used to play a lot of different games. Kick the can, and hide and seek and try to stay out as late as we could.

We used to sneak over to the tavern once in a while and sneak those four packs of cigarettes and little bottles of whiskey and occasionally snitch some from the bar.

There was an adjoining door because they lived on half of it and the tavern was half. The kids would take us in through the house.

There were woods out behind the tavern and we would go out there and smoke cigarettes and drink the booze.





Everyone in the neighborhood had outdoor johns. On Halloween, we used to push over the outhouses.

George said he wasn't a major part of the shoplifting craze in the late 1950s, spurred in part by the advent of chain stores on 8th Street.

Asked about his propensity for bare knuckle bar brawling, he said he may have had a bit of a temper. "We used to call it drinking muscle." He only remembers being knocked out a couple times, once at the Indian Crossing Casino.

But there was the incident at a bar parking lot outside Oshkosh.



GEORGE ZIMMERMAN

G: It was the last day before Christmas break. Dec. 16, 1964. Denny Solie and I and another guy walked out of the bar headed home and this car came from the back of the parking lot, headed toward us. I pushed the other two out of the way and the car hit me on the hip. I put my hands on the hood and the car sucked me in and dragged me 300 feet underneath. It was a '64 Chevy.

I had about 3000 stitches in my body the night it happened and plastic surgery a few times. My

teeth were shoved up into the roof of my mouth and they had to go in and surgically remove them. Years after, what would look like a pimple would be a piece of gravel.

They had a big laugh when I came out of the coma. Everything else was shredded off but I had a pair of shorts on that said "Honey Bunny" on them. A girlfriend gave them to me at Valentine's day the year before and I had them on that night.

The driver was from Almond. He was pissed off at his girlfriend and he was drunk. I didn't know the guy from Adam. It was the first time I saw him other than when I put my hands on the hood and looked in the windshield; the next time I saw him it was in court.

George had been one of the first of the Class of '63 to own a car, recalled as a 1951 Ford with the fashionable dull "primer" paint as if in the process of being customized.

G: My mother made red terry cloth seat covers for it. And then I had a Dago [dropped axle]. I had the springs cut in the front. Then I had a '55 Chevy. Red and white. It was a 265 bored out to a 301, with three twos [barrel carburetors] and a stick [standard transmission]. That was a honey of a car.

D: Have you always known you were more extroverted rather than introverted?

G: Oh yes, very much so. I think because my mother was a dominant figure in the family and I had three older sisters. I was the baby of the family and I got to do things and go places that by the time I came around my parents were a little better off so they could afford more. For some reason, I always enjoyed people, and talking to people.



Long time bartender for Buzz's Bar with former owner Sis Bouton

Poker With the Class of '63

By Col. "Wild Bill" Parker

On most Thursday nights you will find me sitting down at The Bar playing poker from 7 till 10 p.m. Ya, I'm the young guy at the table but I don't have any problem taking money from George Zimmerman and Craig Skibba, both graduates of the Lincoln high school class of 1963. The game is Texas Holdem. We play with quarters as poker chips.

The conversation is friendly unless someone loses badly. Old George and Craig are normally the most talkative ones at the table. They let questions fly like "So Bill why do they call you 'Colonel' in *Artifacts*? You don't expect us to call you 'Colonel' do you?"

I always answer after I take a drink of my Jack and Coke with no ice. It's because I portray Union Col. James Alban and have dressed up a few times at the Museum as Col. Alban and the rank just sort of stuck. It's like being a Kentucky colonel like Col. Sanders only I'm a Wisconsin Colonel, purely an honorary thing. No, George and Craig, I don't expect you to call me Colonel unless you want to.

There is always a sports game on while we play cards and the topics of conversation tend to turn towards that, sometimes happy the Packers are doing well, sometimes not. It hasn't been a good year for Brewers baseball. George likes to talk about his Corvette club while Craig asks me about history. Anyone can ask me a history question. If I don't know the answer I know where to find it.

Finally at the end of the night we play a round of doublers, a dollar bill for chips instead of two quarters and a round of dice with the highest flop taking the pot. We count up our winnings. "Hey look, I'm up again" (better luck next week George and Craig) and go home. All to return the following week to the same old ritual. It's friendly. It's fun and its entertaining, especially after I beat George with a straight and he only has a three of a kind.



2008 at Museum



LOOKING FOR HELP: George Zimmerman, Wisconsin Rapids, didn't know which letter to select in a March 3 Bonus round of the Wisconsin Lottery's "Money Game" television show. Mark Johnson, left, host of the weekly telecast, was also

Photo courtesy of the Wisconsin Lottery
looking for suggestions. Zimmerman won a total of \$8,450 for his 30 minutes work. Renee Keyzer of Wisconsin Rapids will appear on the show Saturday.

*Three Amigos #3***Butch: A Good Guy Full of Fun**

Friendly,? Yeah. I just said hi to everybody I saw. Didn't you read the little caption under my picture?

Harold James "Butch" La Chapelle
1945-2007



HAROLD J. LACHAPELLE

A good guy full of fun; always nice to everyone

Basketball 1,2; Booster Club 4; Chemistry Club 3; Football 1,2; Intramurals 3; Junior Academy of Science 3; Track 1.

Harold La Chapelle was born May 16, 1945, in New London, Wisconsin, to Harvey and Marjorie (Zaug) La Chapelle. His family relocated to Wisconsin Rapids in 1956.

"Butch" graduated from UW-Stevens Point in 1967 and the University of Miami law school in 1970, the year he successfully ran for Wood County District Attorney. In 1974, he lost a bid for State Senate to Democrat Tom Harnish.

UD: As a freshman, Butch was a big man on the Lincoln high school campus, tall and handsome in a French-Canadian way and a promising athlete. As his *Ahdawagam* inscription says, he was habitually friendly. He even invited an undersized neophyte from Sand Hill to join a couple boating excursions from his dock on Riverwood Lane to downtown Rapids.

After a sports injury, Butch devolved into less heroic mode, emerging as the conservative-Republican sermonizer who bedeviled our American History teacher, "Wild Bill" Miller

with critiques of policies from the beginning of the republic. He was one of the few high schoolers who had a strong opinion about politics.

Through the final two years at Lincoln, Butch, aka "Harv" after his father, spent more time smoking and drinking in downtown Plover, a lifestyle that reduced him to huffing desperately around the indoor track as he attempted to finish the required mile run.

Already a husband and father when he left high school, Butch attended UWSP at the same time as I did. We shared numerous conversations at Little Joe's pub, mainly about his choice of topics: history, politics and professors. In the 1970s, after returning from a couple seasons in the sun, I visited the Milladore picnic (with my Class of '63 wife) and found Butch campaigning for District Attorney. Such naked ambition seemed foreign to a class known mostly for its worst generation posture, "apathy about what?"

The afterglow of our 10-year reunion was held at Butch's house near the Ridges and provoked a lot of comments about how "mature" looking he had become. In later years, on many of the limited occasions I found myself in a bar, I encountered Butch, almost always with his wife, Rhonda, by his side.

All that drinking and smoking had destroyed his throat but not Butch's determination to demonstrate that he was still very much alive and with the program. As I learned in our last conversation at his Wisconsin River home, Butch never gave up on love, life, vodka, cheese, friends and his home town, Wisconsin Rapids.

B TEAM



STANDING: L. Schmidt, K. Fisher, H. Kramer, D. Meyer, H. La Chapelle, V. Piper, J. Farrish, R. Brazener, W. Mason, Coach. KNEELING: G. Zimmerman, D. Flick, G. Skibba, W. Metcalf, R. Bean, J. McEvers, K. Zastava.

Before: Fashionable rebel

Courtesy Marcia Koonz



**Butch La Chapelle
with (Uncle)
Dave Engel
26 April 2006**

Harold La Chapelle:
Eileen Scanlon, who
was a good friend of my
mother's, nicknamed
me Butch back in New
London because I
looked like a Butch.

I first heard of Wisconsin Rapids in 1953. Our family had sold the American Plywood Corporation to Georgia Pacific and my dad stayed on with them for two years. Then, he went to work with Loewi and Company as a stock broker.

He had an office in New London, which was the first Loewi office outside of Milwaukee. Victor Loewi wanted him to come to Wisconsin Rapids because he had some good friends here.

His office was located in the Mead hotel from 1953-1960. At that time, there was only one wing to the hotel. When you got beyond the front desk and went through the first door, it was the first two rooms on the right.

He came back and forth from '53-'56. Every once in a while, he'd bring us kids over for Sunday brunch at the hotel.

Probably the first person I knew near my age was Jack Kurtz. He was actually my brother's age, five years younger. Ed Kurtz was managing the hotel and Ed and Laura had living quarters upstairs at the Mead.

We were never told we were even moving over here until one Sunday when Harvey brought us over for brunch and took us down on Riverwood Lane and said, "This is the house you are going to be living in." 1750 Riverwood Lane.

To the left was Jay Somers, the manager of Consoweld. To the right was John Kachel who was in charge of transportation. One more door down to the right was Jerry Brazener who was

the assistant manager of Consoweld. One more door to the left was George Mead. There were only two other houses on the lane. The first house was Parsons, a chemist with Consolidated. Where Larry Nash lives [2006] was another guy who was with Consolidated.

The subdivision was developed by someone from the Mead family. There was a swimming pool at the end of the road. We got to use it as long as we maintained it, paid an annual fee for the water. So we did that, Somers did that, obviously Meads did that.

My grandfather Zaug on my mother's side had a first grade education, worked hard and ended up owning American Plywood. My grandfather on my father's side was a railroad engineer, drove a train for the Green Bay and Western for a year and then for the Milwaukee Road for the rest of his life.

Other than Jack Kurtz, the first one I met was Nick Brazeau. His mother insisted that he invite me out to play baseball. He said, "I don't want to invite that kid up here to play baseball..."



Howe buddies of '63 Class

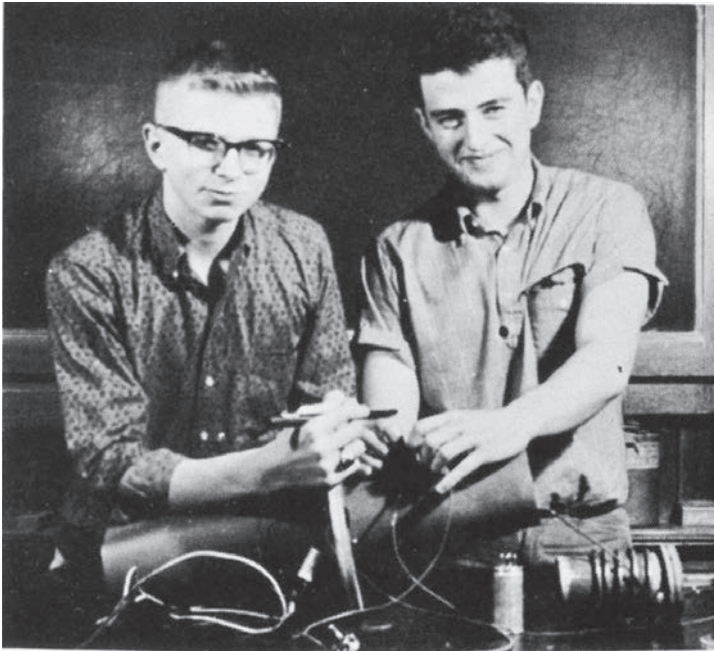
Saturday morning grade school basketball:
I think there were ten schools that participated. Two Lutheran, four Catholic and four public. At the Field House, half-court.

Downtown: We'd go to the Rapids theater, the Wisconsin theater. Where the Rapids theater is now, the old Friendly Fountain was there, Perry's sports shop. Closer to Second Street was Ronnie's service station.

Behind that was an old boardinghouse.



After: Society-friendly "Flat top,"



X-RAY

Alan Grischke, Harold La Chapelle

That's where the parking lot is for the Elks club is now. And then you had the old Congregational church.

You didn't have a driver's license, so basically, your parents took you some place. I can remember my mother taking myself and a bunch of friends out to this barbecue place here on 54, you probably went there. Golden Eagle, right?

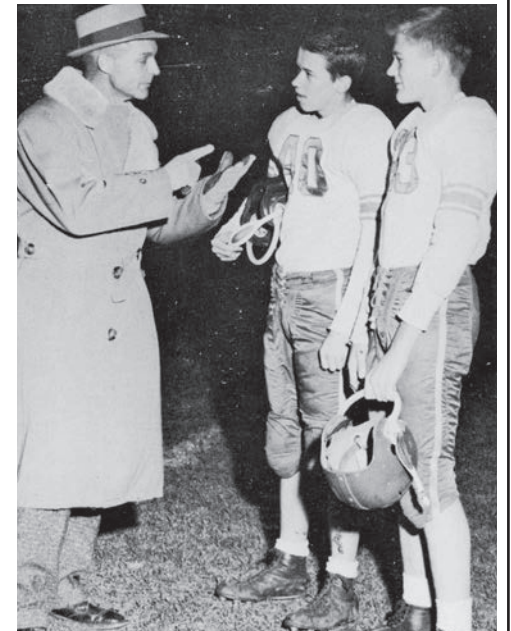
We rode our bikes a lot, out to Lake Wazeecha, Lake Nepco. We could get a pass from Nekoosa. We'd ride our bikes up to Biron, play buckets in the gym up there. There was a little grocery store up there we'd stop in. Lincoln high school had open gym all summer. We'd take advantage of that.

We were undefeated in football our freshman year. Sophomore year we practiced with the varsity.

I was running a play and Al Normington was on defense and he threw a cross body block into me. I was going to hurdle him and I caught my last toe on his back and flipped up in the air and came down and landed on my knee. It was pretty bad for a while. Bernie Knauer, he was the varsity coach, but he kind of oversaw all of the teams, didn't know if I could play or not, so he had me run. If I could run from goal post all the way back to the high school, then I could get to play in the next game.

[Biology teacher] Joanna Kumm, she was funny. We had a college textbook, it was called Fuller & Blunt [?], same textbook the University of Wisconsin had.

But that wasn't her everyday textbook. She had taken it upon herself to buy enough books for the whole class.



Row 3 Mr. Swartz, Ass't. Coach; Bean, R; Zimmerman, G; Klingforth, K; Miller, L; Johnson, R.
 Row 2 Herman, A; Sigmund, L; Solie, D; Spaulding, F; Fisher, K; Cooper, R; Mr. Rheel, Coach.
 ROW 1 Ellens, P; Pruss, J; Winkler, R; Utech, G. Farrish, J; La Chapelle, H; Kramer, H; Rasmussen, A. Not shown in this picture but seen in the Planning Strategy—Don Meyer, Ron Brazener.

At the beginning of each class, she'd have Bill Metcalf pass out the Fuller and Blunt books. At the end, she'd have him collect the books. But what was really funny, was that, after he was given that assignment, the first time we had class after that, he came in and started passing out the books.

She said, "Billy Metcalf, you sit down. I didn't tell you to pass out those books."

He had to get them all back and put them on the shelf and then he sat down. "Okay, now you can pass them out."

So, he would pass them out. The next day, he wasn't going to pass out those books until she told him and she'd say, "What's the matter with you, Metcalf, why aren't you passing out those books?" He couldn't win.

Class of '63: We had a lot of fun. It was a big class, big groups of people that hung around together. We got along good with the students from Assumption, had a lot of friends there.

I think we burned it on both ends. I had a number of jobs, I worked at the Friendly Fountain. I think I worked for Joe, the guy that had the pizza. I also mowed lawns, shoveled snow.

Had a TV antenna painting business. Paint the antennas on the roofs for five bucks. If they were on social security, we'd do it for three. And then we'd paint the towers...

I started at Point in '63 [as a married student] and graduated in '67 with a major in economics and business administration and a minor in political science and history.

My first two years I worked at Consolidated in summer.

I started out in Biron, night shift on the beaters. Made \$1.69 an hour. The second year, I worked in Rapids. The third year, I worked at Bake-Rite Bakery and was the sales manager for Teltron cable TV in Point and Wausau. The fourth year I sold life insurance for Minnesota Mutual.

During his 1970-1974 tenure as District Attorney, Butch was known for his prosecution of drug offenders.

I think the longer I was in the office the more I mellowed.

We had some pretty serious drugs back then. It wasn't just marijuana, either. We had coke, we had meth. I can remember one time there was heroin.

I was the last part-time DA, but it was over forty hours a week. It's just part-time pay.

I was a sole practitioner, from 1975 to about 1983, and then Greg Potter came in with me. And then Greg went into the DA's office. When his brother left, he got appointed DA and then Peter Lloyd came in '91. So for a number of years I practiced law by myself.

DE: At a big party Butch had planned for after he died, there was on display a story I had written following the 10-year Lincoln reunion—and then I wrote one after he died, about how he had lived, true to his spirit, "la dolce vita."


Now this last messy tribute to Butch and some of those he loved, the boys and girls of '63 and their town.

THE DAILY TRIBUNE, Wisconsin Rapids Friday, October 30, 1970 Page 20

Read Tribune Want Ads

Paid Adv.: Authorized and paid for by LaChapelle for District Attorney Comm., Ray Lecy, 3751 7th St. S., Wisconsin Rapids, Chmn.

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HAROLD J. LA CHAPELLE
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- ... is capable and desirous of the duties of the office of District Attorney and has the integrity and energy to fulfill the obligation;
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Because HE IS THE MAN WHO BELIEVES:

- ... that violence has no place in a free society in forceful prosecution of offenders.
- ... that the minority who acts with the Right of Dissent should observe the rights of the majority
- ... that the pushers and sellers of drugs need severe punishment

Rapids, Wisconsin, Saturday, November 25, 1961

Single Copy Ten Cents

Two Are Fatally Injured in Collision on Highway 54

Local Youth, Amherst Man Succumb at Hospital Here

A near head-on collision just west of the intersection of Highway 54 and County Trunk U five miles east of the city late Friday night has resulted in the death of both drivers.

Jack Howard Aldrich, 26, Amherst, died at Riverview Hospital about 12:30 a.m. today, slightly more than an hour after the accident.

The other driver, William Boyd Thiele, 18, 930 1st Ave. S., died at the hospital about 9:30 a.m. today.

The two victims were alone in their cars at the time of the crash. Aldrich's arms and legs were broken, and he had suffered a skull fracture and severe internal injuries.

Thiele's injuries included a compound fracture of the left knee and injuries to the head, chest and right leg.

Cause undetermined

Because neither driver was able to speak, county police have not definitely determined what caused the fatal accident.

However, Sheriff Donald Cayler said that evidence at the scene indicated that Thiele had turned left onto Highway 54 into the path of the eastbound Aldrich as vehicle.

Aldrich, he added, was driving home after completing his shift at Consolidated Water Power & Paper Co.

The deaths were the fourth and fifth resulting from Wood County traffic accidents during 1961.

Police said Aldrich's 1959 convertible and Thiele's 1956 model car were both demolished.

The Thiele youth's body is at the Baker Funeral Home, where arrangements for the funeral service are being made.

He was the son of Robert Thiele, now residing in Georgia, and Mrs. F. J. Beadle, 1210 Elm St., and had been making his home with his grandmother, Mrs. William F. Thiele.

Holiday Toll at 10

The two Wood County deaths, together with others reported by the Associated Press today, brought Wisconsin's Thanksgiving holiday traffic toll to 18.

David Hines, 30, of Ellsworth and Keith Nelson, 19, of Route 1, Ellsworth were killed about 12:30 a.m. today in head-on collision on Highway 10 about three miles west of Ellsworth. Two other youths were injured.



DOUBLE FATALITY—A Wisconsin Rapids youth and an Amherst man became Wood County's fourth and fifth traffic fatalities of the year after their cars crashed nearly head-on just west of the Wood-Perre County line on Highway 54 late Friday night. William Thiele, 18, 930 1st Ave. S., was driver of the auto shown above, and Jack Aldrich, 26, Amherst, was at the wheel of the car pictured below. (Courtesy: Don Meyer)



Larry Wills
E. Don Meyer
Bill Thiele



Reunions at Ft. Lewis Families Find Wa



Photo courtesy Marcia Koonz

East of Eden

By Dave Engel

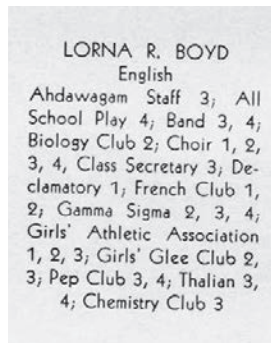
As Billy and Al sat in the front seat with a six pack of beer in the garage of a house off Third Street, I said I didn't drink, so it must have been my sophomore year, 1960-61. Billy, though a classmate, was at least a year older and Al was a junior.

Later, Billy, heated up some frozen French fries and I told him what a paradise he inhabited, a rich kid with the entire house to himself. Although they allowed overnights "in town," my parents set curfews and disapproved of my behavior.

But Billy didn't seem to feel as good as he should. Maybe something to do with his grandfather, William F. Thiele, an accomplished patriarch who had died Aug. 4, 1960.

Old Bill, born 1887 at Hanover, Kansas, was working for General Electric in 1920, when he was hired as Chief Engineer by Consolidated Water Power & Paper Co. If G.W. Mead dreamed up the harnessing of the Wisconsin, Thiele carried the dreams to reality.

Thiele was credited with increasing the "working head of water" at Wisconsin Rapids, Biron and Stevens Point and building the Big Eau Pleine, DuBay, Petenwell and Castle Rock dams and reservoirs. At the time of his death, Thiele headed the Wisconsin River Power Co. He also owned a cranberry marsh northeast of Rapids.



Consolidated president Stanton Mead called Thiele a “wonderful man” and listed among his virtues strength, resourcefulness, reliability, courage, determination, kindness, consideration, sturdiness and friendliness.

Pretty hard to live up to for his surviving sons, Robert W. and Paul F., then of Georgia and daughter Margaret in Florida.

In 1946, Thiele and second son Paul, who also followed his father’s path as an engineer through General Electric, founded Thiele Kaolin of Sandersonville, Ga., which provided “clay” for Consolidated’s coated paper.

But Billy’s father was Robert W. Thiele, a year older than Paul. In 1940, Robert, 26, after three years of college, was living at the Thiele family home and managing the family cranberry marsh.

Billy’s other grandfather was Harold Boyd, a salesman at Heilman’s clothing store since 1930, when Harold, his wife Cynthia, and daughters Lorna and Jeanne Ann arrived from Ottumwa, Iowa.

Billy’s mother: Lorna Boyd, was a 1939 graduate of Lincoln high school, where she was active in music and stage productions and a regular with the Congregational youth choir along with Robert Thiele’s sister, Margaret.

In 1936, Lorna hosted Sunday Evening Club and in 1938 modeled fur-trimmed coats at a Lincoln Field House style show. In 1939, she played Zingara the Gypsy maid in charge of the dancing bear in the comic opera, “The Marriage of Nanette.”

Robert Thiele and Lorna Boyd married at Dubuque, Iowa, in 1940, and lived in Wisconsin Rapids. A November 1948 Tribune noted that Lorna and children Susan and Billy were visiting her parents, who had moved to Carlsbad, N.M. in 1943, the year Billy was born.

In September 1954, Billy’s parents divorced in Rockford, Ill. Custody of two children went to the father, though Billy was closest to grandmother Thiele at 950 1st Ave. S.

In 1956, Lorna, then of Stevens Point, married Flavel Beadle of 810 Elm St. here. He died in 1959, leaving his widow and his stepdaughter Susan. He had not adopted Billy, ostensibly because Billy’s father, Robert, “wanted him to carry on the family name.”

As an older student, Billy was able to drive a car and as a rich kid, was provided with one. An 18-year-old junior, he was also old enough to drink in a beer bar.

Friday night, Nov. 25, 1961, while his friend Marcia waited, William Boyd Thiele pulled his 1956 Chrysler from Highway U onto Highway 54 and collided with a convertible driven by a mill worker heading home to Portage county. Both cars were demolished, both drivers killed.

Nick Brazeau and Butch La Chapelle were together for breakfast on Saturday when they learned they would be pall bearers at the Congregational church

The obituary said Billy was a member of the art club and that his father lived in Georgia. At the Congregational church where his grandfather’s funeral had been so recently, his inconsolable mother, dressed in black, had to be helped down the aisle.

On the night in 1960 I was lamenting about maternal oversight, Billy said something that put the situation into another perspective, words I never forgot.

“You’re lucky,” he said, “At least your parents care about you.”

Teen Angels

In a 1955 movie based on a 1952 John Steinbeck book, James Dean plays Cal Trask, a rich kid who unsuccessfully competes with brother Aron for the love of their father, Adam, reprising the story of Cain and Abel. Shortly after viewing the movie, Dean crashed his Porsche head on into another car, killing both drivers.





From the *Daily Tribune*

Zakons Cut a Platter

April 13, 1961

Area teen-agers who like to rock to the sounds of the “Zakons” can now do so in the comfort of their own homes, without leaving their record players.

Parents will probably greet with mixed emotions the news that the swinging strains of the instrumental quartet can now fill their homes via the phonograph speakers, for the Zakons have cut their first record. Entitled “Trackin’” and “Wasted,” the two rock ’n roll selections are the original creations of the local quartet. They are on the “Cuca” label, and were recorded at Sauk City recently.

The group is currently made up of Jon Mullen, 18, on the saxophone; Gerry Irwin, 20, beating the drums; Bill Joswick, 18, strumming the lead guitar; and Ron Pagel, 18, on the rhythm guitar.

While the Zakons have been in business for

about two years, the present organization has been together for about six months. Their repertoire is limited to rock ’n roll and rhythm and blues numbers, which they rehearse two or three times a week. They perform at clubs and dance halls on weekends.

Claiming to be the first group to bring “live” rock ’n roll here, the quartet plans to market and distribute its own record. The first issue is now being sent to record shops, radio stations, fans and friends.

The Zakons derive their name, incidentally, from a German word “zachens”, which allegedly means “sharp” in that language. It is apparent that the Zakons want to be, like, a real sharp outfit. Man!

DANCE Friday, Feb. 1
Corpsman Music Hall
8 to 12
 Admission 75c—Chaperoned
Music by the ZAKONS
 Special interest carburation display by
 Creepers Rod and Custom Club
 Co-Sponsor—Royal Guard Drums and Bugle Corps
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FINEST PIZZA IN TOWN
Delivered HOT
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 Or . . . Try one of our delicious
 Plate Lunches . . . Chicken,
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FRIDAY SPECIALS are a feature
 ever growing in popularity.
 For Yours, Call
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AKA Vigrans, the Zakons continued to play with a variety of bandsmen, including Larry “Babes” Krekowski 1943-2012, Dave Freiberg 1941-2011, Kim Giese 1944-2013 and Duke Ross.

Rockin' the Corpsman Hall

By *Dave Engel*

A couple decades ago, when I described the Corpsman Hall as an asylum for the wild things of the worst generation, one of my friends of the greatest generation, Ione Cumberland, berated me. As a loyal backer of the Royal Guard drum and bugle corps, she had a vested interest in the Hall's reputation.

Little did I know, I was opening old wounds.

A controversy had raged through the early 1960s about the former Masonic temple secluded on a back street across from Fischer's Dairy in the area of the current Centralia Center. Here could be found teens and young adults of several degrees of badness: juvenile delinquents, perverts, sleazeballs, reprobates, greasers and hoods. There were also simple nice guys and gals and combination plates like myself and my friends who liked the rock 'n' roll.

The rumors were true. I was among those who liked to down a quart of Goodhue's in advance to improve my charisma quotient. Although I avoided fisticuffs, a known zoophiliac had an urge to assault me but instead was thumped by one of my alley gang friends. In another case, a "tough" representing a Nekoosa "gang" had challenged the Rapids contingent and was knocked out by one of our football players.

The *Daily Tribune* published letters for and against the venue, including a protest by "regular attendees of the dances held at the Corpsman Hall" against a new management rule "that girls

must wear skirts after wearing them all week to school."

What about those arriving from out of town, not knowing the rules?

"For example, a girl came to the dance the first night of the new management. She was kicked out for wearing sport clothes, which was all she had with her because she was visiting from Milwaukee so she had to buy a new slip and skirt to gain entrance again."

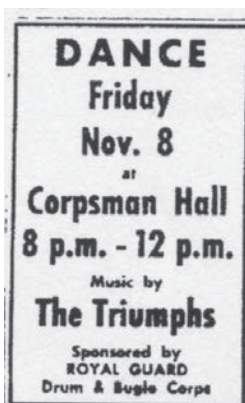
Mrs. Melbourne Cleveland challenged the critics.

"How about joining your youngster next Friday night or Sunday afternoon at the Corpsman Hall and see if the dances our kids do look as silly as the dances we used to do when we were in our teens. I think after you have attended one of these dances you will be proud to say, 'Hats Off' to Mrs. Kingman and her able assistants for the mighty fine job they are doing to provide entertainment for our young people."

The Corpsman Hall was opened by the Zakkons in April 1961. Bands that followed included Mike Sparby and the Starfires, The Rockin' Continentals, Rock-n-Teen Beats, Furys, T-Birds, Dee Robb and the Starliners, Gene Carroll and the Shades, Ray Kannon and the Corals, Del Shannon, and Johnny and the Hurricanes.



Wayne Sparks and Bill Smith
at LHS sophomore party



1963 Tribune

From Paul Miller, LHS 1965: The Triumphs included Mel Cleveland, Don "Pickles" Rehman, Tom Mathews, Bob (?) Fischer, Paul Miller. The band started in 1962 and disbanded in 1964. "About half way through, we bought our 1950 Packard hearse and went from the Triumphs to the Deadbeats. It was a black hearse, with "The Deadbeats" in red and white lettering. I remember playing at a bar in the Dells for about a week in the summer and "House of the Rising Sun" by the Animals was popular. I loved it."



Mel Cleveland
1963 Ahdawagam

A Walk On the West Side

By Joe Jackan

I was born at Riverview Hospital in 1938. My first recollection is living on Eleventh Avenue in one of my grandparents' houses. The house was small and an expanding family soon forced a move to First Avenue near the Moravian Church.

I can remember walking downtown past Krohn and Berard Funeral Home, the Wisconsin Valley Creamery and the Tribune office, to Montgomery Wards on Grand Avenue. A more interesting route was crossing over to Third Avenue and passing the delicious smells of the bakery next to Marling Lumber Company. Another early memory was standing on the bridge celebrating VE Day when someone launched a rotten tomato and it hit my sister in the face. I'm sure it wasn't intentional but that didn't help the pain and embarrassment Sis felt. She is a year and a half older than me and had just started kindergarten at Lowell School. I went with her on her first day and stayed with her. I wound up spending three years in kindergarten. I would tell my friends that I was so dumb it took me three years to graduate from kindergarten.

Our next move was to Grand Avenue across from Edison School, next to Teske's Hudson Garage. I finally graduated to first grade while there.

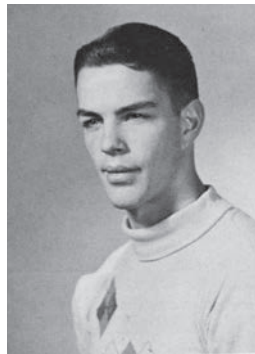
My parents had been looking for a house they could afford. They found one, but it was not in town. We moved to our new house in Portage County just over the county line on Biron Drive. My parents did not like the one-room schoolhouse we would have to attend so my sister and I rode into Rapids every day with my dad. He worked at Harvard Clothes on Twelfth Avenue.

We began to attend St. Lawrence School. Living out of town, I was unable to attend Sunday Mass. The nuns would not accept

excuses and made me pay for it on Monday morning. The lunch program was great, more like home cooking than cafeteria fare thanks to Sadie Pavloski. At noon we could stroll up Tenth Avenue to Mumford's Grocery where we could exchange our nickels for Cho-Chos and Newly Weds. Classes ended at 3 o'clock and we would wait at my uncle's store on Grand Avenue. My dad would pick us up at 5 o'clock when he finished at work.

With two hours to spend, I soon found ways to amuse myself. Downtown attracted me like a magnet. My first stop on the way was the Central Wisconsin garage. Before OSHA, no one cared if a small boy wandered around inside. The

mechanics were friendly and imparted much knowledge. One thing I learned was that GMC meant "general mess of crap." Central Wisconsin used International trucks and Gross Brothers down the street had GMC trucks. The roller bearings in International trucks were far superior to the ball bearings GMC used. This was heady wisdom for a six year old.



Joe, Class of '56

Next on the way downtown was the depot on Grand Avenue. Before I got there I had to walk along the railroad tracks. A fiendish engineer lurked in the cab of the switch engine that patrolled the tracks. As the victim walked by the engine, he would loose a blast of steam guaranteed to frighten you out of your tennies. After threading my way through the Railway express carts on the depot platform, I would emerge on Grand Avenue. Ahead I could see the City Gas tower with its eternal flame. Once I passed Guarantee Hardware and the Dixon Hotel, my next goal was in sight.

Johnson and Hill's department store was filled with wonders to delight a young boy. There was an elevator to ride up and down and a balcony to stand on while watching the clerks send receipts back and forth on the pneumatic tubes. The shoe department had what was certainly one of

the Seven Wonders of the World, a foot x-ray machine. Standing on the platform with your feet in the slot below, you could look at a screen that showed the foot bones inside your shoes. I must have done this a hundred times. It's a wonder my feet never rotted off. The best was yet to come. Once each year, Johnson & Hill would invite Aunt Jemima to make pancakes in the basement store. Aunt Jemima was good to us kids and we could hardly walk after stuffing ourselves with her pancakes. The only other black people we saw were ball players on the White Sox farm team.

From Johnson and Hill's I would head East past Woolworth's to my ultimate destination, the Branch Library where Wally Ritzinger, the librarian at the Branch, would select items for my enjoyment. One book I remember reading was *The Flying Carpet* by Richard Halliburton, an adventurous young author who purchased an airplane and with a pilot friend flew across Europe and continued around the world. My interest in airplanes and mechanical devices drew me to *Popular Mechanics* and *Popular Science*.

Now it was time to head back to my uncle's store to meet my Dad. I crossed Grand Avenue and headed west past the Wisconsin Theater and the Quick Lunch. I checked the big clock at the First National Bank where some day I would get my first auto loan. On past City Hall were Red's Dixie Bar, the Hiawatha Tap, and Blue Line Cab Company that was managed by my classmate Leroy Hamm's father. The Nash and Studebaker dealerships were next.

I finally arrived at the corner of Canal and Grand where Uncle Ray's store was located. Paperboys were rolling papers that the Tribune had dropped off. They were older boys and heckled me unmercifully until one day I bounced a rock off the main perpetrator's head. They couldn't wait to tell my Dad when he picked me up. When I got home, the razor strap came out and I danced to its tune. I was never heckled after that so it was worth it.

On the way home, the radio would feature a Fulton Lewis Jr. diatribe and Dad would cuss

him out. Dad was president of the local clothing workers union and an ardent Democrat. The next night FLJ would be on and it would start all over. After supper we could listen to Fibber McGee and Molly or laugh at a Spike Jones tune on WFHR before going to bed.



This is a photograph of me with my grandfather, Joe Jackan. I was three years old when it was taken. He had a large family and I was the oldest of his grandsons. He died in 1945.

Grandfather owned a grocery store on West Grand Avenue. They lived on the corner of Hooker Street and 11th Avenue. Hooker Street is now Dura Beauty Lane. He owned three other houses on 11th Avenue. We were living in one of them at that time.

My grandparents were Polish and most of our neighbors were also. He was very sociable. Sunday afternoons, the neighbors would gather in his garage and tell tall tales and finish off a pony of beer.

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Artifacts, a local history magazine and newsletter for the South Wood County Historical Corp. welcomes contributions of writings and photographs relevant to the greater Wisconsin Rapids area. For a year's subscription and membership send \$20 to the address above. Questions? Contact Lori Brost, Museum Administrator and assistant editor, 715-423-1580. lori@swch-museum.com

CLASS OF 1963
50th
REUNION

Larry Wills and Dawn Siewert



Courtesy Marcia Koonz

Monday, September 16, 4 p.m.: SWCHC Annual Meeting
All members are encouraged to attend.

