

**From:** [The Vasbys](#)  
**To:** [i](#)  
**Subject:** Lincoln High Newsletter - 7/15/10  
**Date:** Thursday, July 15, 2010 1:09:03 PM

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## *Lincoln High Newsletter*

**New readers:**

**Kaaren (Berg) Brehmer (65)** - [kaarenknits@solarus.net](mailto:kaarenknits@solarus.net) My husband Tom and I had a lovely visit with Marcia (Rokus) and Grant Mauk in Vancouver on our way home from an Alaskan cruise at the end on June.

**Address changes:**

**Becky (Anderson) Knickerbocker (65)** - [Kndgbecky@yahoo.com](mailto:Kndgbecky@yahoo.com)

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**Regarding the 4th of July Fireworks in the Rapids! Which Judy and I and the grand-daughters missed!!!!!!!**

<http://www.wisconsinrapidstribune.com/article/20100712/WRT06/7120558>

I continually monitored the Rapids Tribune webpage during the very rainy evening for "word" about the fireworks. Didn't help, obviously.

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First, a big Thanks for all your hard work on the newsletter!!!!

As for the best inventions, it's a tossup for me. I can't decide between the computer and microwave popcorn.

**Tom Lehr ('64)** [lehrtom@AOL.com](mailto:lehrtom@AOL.com)

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**From: Larry Johnson (64)** [larjhn@yahoo.com](mailto:larjhn@yahoo.com)

### WOOL IS WINTER-WEAR

My bedroom in our home on Birch Street during the '50s had three south facing windows with little or no shade outside to block the sun.. In summer, the room was warm to say the least, and by late afternoon it was like a sauna. No air conditioning, only a small clattering fan that did nothing more than blow the warm air around.

Like most kids, I loved to play baseball during the summer and I was fortunate enough to play three seasons for the Cubs in the WR Little League ('57, '58 and '59). My love for baseball was tested when it came time to dress for games in my room at about 5:00pm on game days.

The standard Little League uniform consisted of a wool button shirt, wool pants covering to

mid-calf, wool stirrups, wool socks, and a wool cap. I was already hot and sticky from spending the day at "summer school" in LHS gym and Witter Field, so donning the uniform in a hot room was pure torture. The uniforms were not cotton-blended wool, polyester-blended wool or any other kind of blended wool--they were wool-wool. The hot, itchy scratchy kind that feels more like steel wool on bare skin. The kind of wool that should only be worn in the cold Wisconsin winter, not on a hot summer afternoon.

All was forgotten however, when the game started and it was time to play.

Fortunately, sport uniforms have come a long way since the '50s. Now they are polyester with cotton, microfibers, and the like. When my son was in youth baseball, he donned his cool and comfortable blended uniform in the comfort of an air conditioned home. As we drove to his games in our air conditioned car, I often told him of the olden days of wool and baseball on hot summer days. "Son, kids today have it made. When I was your age....."

Larry Johnson  
Bloomington,IL

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## My Favorite Toys

By Bill Hartley [toyguy5538@aol.com](mailto:toyguy5538@aol.com)

Many of us have fond memories of our youth. Lately I've felt motivated to write mine down, for whatever reason. I guess it's good therapy and brain exercise – one pleasant memory leads to another, and another, and so on. Thanks to Kent for giving us an avenue to share those memories.

The other day an unusual event occurred that got me to thinking about some of my favorite toys, and where in Wisconsin Rapids I used to shop for them. The mail came, and the mail lady brought it to the door because there was a package in there. I opened the package to find one of my favorite toys – a wooden elephant with moving legs, ears, and trunk. – that my mom bought for me at the Coast-to-Coast store when they were on the East side next to Brower's Clothing and Schroeder's dime store. Remember them? They were across from Daly's Drug and J.C. Penney. Anyway, back to the elephant. I still remember wanting it so bad when I saw it sitting on the hardwood floor of the old store. Mom must have given in to who-knows-what sort of 5-year-old pressure, and it came home with us. I played with that elephant a lot. Over the years it got a coat of gray paint, the tail met a mysterious demise, and it got a bent nail pounded into its back.



I remember finding that elephant again when we cleaned my mom's Chestnut Street house out after she passed away in 1975. I knew exactly what to do with it then. A lady named Judy that I worked with in Minneapolis collected elephants, and I knew she didn't have one like it in her collection. So I took it to work one day and gave it to her. She loved it. We've stayed in touch over the years, and last week that elephant came home again, with a note how she had cherished "our" elephant all these years and had left him just as he was – faded paint, bent nail, and tail-less. She was downsizing her collection, and thought it should come home again so our grandkids could enjoy him. Little did she know the memories that would spawn!

A big treat for me when I was growing up was going "downtown" and spending five or ten cents of my allowance on a Tootsietoy or two. In case you don't remember, Tootsietoys are small diecast metal cars and trucks that were popular in the 1950s – before Hot Wheels and Matchbox cars came along. The largest retailer of Tootsietoys in the U.S. was Woolworth's, due in large part I'm sure to my Friday night shopping trips. I visited Woolworth's on West Grand (across from Johnson Hills) almost every Friday night. I amassed quite a collection of cars and trucks over

the years, but I played hard with them in the sandboxes and on the sidewalks of the Rapids. Nevertheless, a few managed to survive into my adulthood (assuming that's where I am now). About 15 years ago, I decided to see if there were any more out there in the flea markets and garage sales to go with the few I still had. Today I have over 1,000 in my collection, and have sold at least that many in the process of building the collection. But that's another story.



My dad had a 1951 Chevrolet, a black four-door sedan. It had big bumper guards on the front and the back. I put a Tootsietoy car down into the back of one of those bumper guards one day while playing, and must have forgotten about it. The next day my dad traded that car in for a 1954 Chevy (I think at Warsinske Motors). They in turn sold it to a local taxi cab company who used it as a taxi. One day while walking around downtown I saw that car parked at the curb. I looked behind the bumper guard and retrieved my Tootsietoy. Funny how you remember things like that.

As a 10 to 14-year-old, I loved to build plastic models. I was already becoming a car nut, so I mostly built model cars. Some of you may remember the AMT brand model kits of all the popular cars of the day. The kits were called "3-in-1" kits – they contained enough parts so that you could build the cars in stock, customized, or racing versions. I preferred the custom versions, adding such period accessories as lake pipes, fender skirts, spinner or moon hub caps, hood scoops, spot lights, flames, pin stripes, chrome engine accessories, dual exhausts, dual fender antennas, and on and on. I can still see the likes of a 1960 Pontiac Bonneville, a 1961 Plymouth Valiant, a 1961 Chevrolet Impala bubble-top, and a 1962 Ford Falcon sitting on my shelf.

I also liked to build military models. At one time I had taken an old card table, made mountains out of some kind of flour and water mix, and sprayed the whole thing with Christmas snow. Then I strategically placed soldiers, Jeeps, cannons, trucks, etc. all over it and had my very own winter war scene in my bedroom. The good guys always won the battles in those days.

When I built models, I always planned ahead for when I would get tired of them. I put several firecrackers inside when I built them. As it became time to replace a model, I would set up a board in the back yard, douse the model with lighter fluid, light it, and set it to rolling down the board. If I'd calculated it correctly, as the model neared the "soggy plastic" point, the firecrackers would ignite and blow molten plastic all over the back yard. This was especially cool with the military vehicles. I don't have any of my old models left.

Being a car guy, I also seemed to naturally have an interest in bicycles. The coolest bike of the day was the Schwinn Black Phantom. It had wide chrome fenders, wide white wall tires, chrome rims, a built-in headlight in the front fender, a tank with a built-in horn, knee-action front suspension, a big, comfortable leather seat, "longhorn" handlebars, a carrier on the back with a stop and tail lamp built in, a rear coaster brake and a drum brake in the front wheel, and, in case you lived in a bad neighborhood, a lock on the front fork so you could park the bike and lock it with the front wheel turned. What a classy ride! I owned two of those bikes in my youth. I wore them both out hauling Milwaukee Journals on them. Today one of those bikes in good condition will bring \$1,500 on eBay.

Being very trend-conscious (yeah, right!), I remember I had to have one of those new-fangled English bikes with the skinny tires and three speeds when they came out. I finally talked my parents into one, a Raleigh, I believe. I think we got it from Bring's when they were next to the old East Side fire station. Or maybe from the Western Auto that was on West Grand next to the Branch Library. I'm not sure. Anyway, it had a spring clamp carrier on the front that would hurt a little hand real bad if it got in there. I remember that real well. It also didn't last very long. It wasn't very heavy duty, and I wore it out in short order. I remember hearing a lot of "I told you so's) after that episode.

I bought my Schwinn bikes from Fischer Cycle Co. in a little building that was much bigger on the inside. They were located on East Grand across from the Dairy Queen. Donald Fischer was a real nice guy and he always had time to talk to us kids. We could hang out there at lunch and after school and learn a lot about bicycles. He also sold Harley Davidson motorcycles long before they were cool. It was always fun to go see the new models and watch him fix something. Donald also had a delivery business using his Harley with a utility sidecar to haul his cargo. In my later years I ran around with his youngest son Jim – we were in the Untouchables Car Club and took some vacations together.

Like many young boys, I had an electric train. I remember talking with my Dad trying to decide which train I should have. I was adamant that it would be an American Flyer, not a Lionel, because the AF was much more realistic with its two-rail track. Lionel, as you'll recall, had a three-rail track, unlike any real train I'd ever seen go through the Rapids in the '50s. We wound up buying that American Flyer train at a store whose name I can't remember. Maybe some of you will remember it – if you do, please send it to Kent for inclusion in a future newsletter.

This store in question supplied a lot of toys for me. It was on the East Side diagonally across from Daly Drug on Second Street. I think "Your Record Shop" run by the Rumbles was in that store space in later years. Somebody help me out here....

Anyway, back to the train. It was so cool. It had a headlight, horn, and it smoked. You put a pellet of some kind in it (probably toxic by today's standards) and as it chugged around the track, it puffed smoke out of the smokestack. Pretty exciting for the 1950s! I had the standard load of cars – boxcar, tank car, refrigerated boxcar, coal car, and caboose. My dad also bought me a bonus – a cool track-cleaning car. It had a tank that held the AF-approved cleaning solution and felt wipers that cleaned the track as the train went around. Pretty neat.

Another toy I remember getting from that mystery store is a steam engine. This was a stationary power plant that you put water in it, plugged it in, the water boiled, and the steam caused the piston to move which turned a wheel. You could attach rubber bands to the wheel and operate accessories. I never did get that doggone thing to work.

Two of my favorite models were large, 18" long steel models of an MG and a Jaguar sports cars. They were made by Doepke of Rossmoyne, OH – a company still respected today for their realistic toys of the '50s, even though they are long gone. The cars were pretty realistic in that they had a steel body and a separate chassis with suspension. The tires were soft and hollow and the front wheels turned with the steering wheel. The bumpers screwed on, as did the other accessories like windshield frame, headlights, etc. When we cleaned out my mom's house in 1975, all I found were the two bodies. No chassis, no tires or wheels, no nothing, so I threw the bodies away. A few years ago when I bought complete cars, I paid \$250 for the MG and \$300 for the Jaguar. I now have them prominently displayed on my toy shelves in my office. Tonight the elephant will be with them.

### **July 1, 2010 Update:**

After Kent published this article in the newsletter a few years ago, I received feedback from several of you readers on the question of the store on Second Street where my dad bought me the American Flyer train. Many of you didn't remember a sporting goods store in that location.

Today Shirley and I and our sister-in-law Lisa toured the SWCHC Museum on Third Street. I donated the elephant mentioned above along with the story to the museum toy room, because I feel it belongs as part of the history of Wisconsin Rapids. While touring the second floor general store area, I was captivated by the photos of Wisconsin Rapids' downtown area on the wall. In studying those photos, I became interested in the photo of Second Street looking South in 1953. The photographer was apparently standing nearly in front of the store in question, since the Health Spot Shoe Store sign (the one-story building on the corner of Oak Street across from Daly's Drugs and Brauer's Clothing) is clearly visible in the photo. Just to the North of the Health Spot sign is a large sign that reads "Sport Shop". That's the store! Now I just need to know the name of it.

If you haven't visited the museum (in the old T.B. Scott Library building) lately, you are really missing out. Dave Engel, Lori Brost, and the whole gang have done a fabulous job putting this thing together, and you will be blown away at all of the memories it will generate. Dr. Pomainville's office, the general store with the old photos of the downtown, the school classroom, the tools, and the cranberry exhibits are very well done, and are a must-see for anyone who spent any time in Wisconsin Rapids in the 50s and 60s. The most depressing part of the tour was discovering my high school annual (1963) on display in the museum! Talk about feeling old! At least there's comfort in knowing Uncle Dave is resting comfortably inside that same book!

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**Geno Hafermann (65) [genhafermann@charter.net](mailto:genhafermann@charter.net) writes:**

Some of you may have gotten this information before and some maybe not. My youngest daughter, Holly Brook,

finally completed her latest music CD. It is actually called an EP and is really only half a CD (long story as to why this never got to a full one). Anyhow, there are 7 songs on this CD and it is titled O'Dark Thirty. You cannot yet get this music in any stores, but you can download the tracks on-line as well as order the CD on-line via this link:

<http://hollybrook.bandcamp.com/album/odark-thirty-ep?auto=mp3-320>

The cost is only \$7.95 for download or \$9.25 for CD and download ... plus shipping cost for mailing the CD. You can also listen to the tracks on-line to see if you like them. I think several are really good.

Just passing on the word to those who might be interested. There is no other promotion behind this release (which is another long story ... stay tuned).

Thanks, geno

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### **Famous Factoid...**

The first jockstrap, the "cup", was used in hockey in 1874 and the first hockey helmet was used in 1974. That means it only took 100 years for men to realize that their brain is also important.

*Ladies... quit laughing.*

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### **From the September, 2002 issue of *Discover Magazine*:**

"A hurricane researcher from MIT advised that coating the oceans with a thin layer of oil might stop the evaporation that powers large storms, ie hurricanes."

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**Of all tyrannies, a tyranny sincerely exercised for the good of its victims may be the most oppressive. It would be better to live under robber barons than under omnipotent moral busybodies. The robber baron's cruelty may sometimes sleep, his cupidity may at some point be satiated; but those who torment us for our own good will torment us without end for they do so with the approval of their own conscience.**

**C. S. Lewis**

*English essayist & juvenile novelist (1898 - 1963)*

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### **Airline Announcements:**

United Flight Attendant announced, 'People, people we're not picking out furniture here, find a seat and get in it!

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On landing, the stewardess said, 'Please be sure to take all of your belongings. If you're going to leave anything, please make sure it's something we'd like to have. '

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'There may be 50 ways to leave your lover, but there are only 4 ways out of this airplane'

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An airline pilot wrote that on this particular flight he had hammered his ship into the runway really hard. The airline had a policy which required the first officer to stand at the door while the passengers exited, smile, and give them a 'Thanks for flying our airline.'

He said that, in light of his bad landing, he had a hard time looking the passengers in the eye, thinking that someone would have a smart comment. Finally everyone had gotten off except for a little old lady walking with a cane.

She said, 'Sir, do you mind if I ask you a question?'

'Why, no, Ma'am,' said the pilot. 'What is it?'

The little old lady said, 'Did we land, or were we shot down?'

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As the plane landed and was coming to a stop at Ronald Reagan, a lone voice came over the loudspeaker: 'Whoa, big fella, WHOA!'

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After a particularly rough landing during thunderstorms in Memphis, a flight attendant on a Northwest flight announced, 'Please take care when opening the overhead compartments because sure as hell everything has shifted after a landing like that.'

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Another flight attendant's comment on a less than perfect landing: 'We ask you to please remain seated as Captain Kangaroo bounces us to the terminal.'

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Overheard on an American Airlines flight into Amarillo, Texas on a particularly windy and bumpy day: During the final approach, the Captain was really having to fight it. After an extremely hard

landing, the Flight Attendant said, 'Ladies and Gentlemen, welcome to Amarillo . Please remain in your seats with your seat belts fastened while the Captain taxis what's left of our airplane to the gate!'

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'Your seat cushions can be used for flotation; and, in the event of an emergency water landing, please paddle to shore and take them with our compliments.'

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'As you exit the plane, make sure to gather all of your belongings. Anything left behind will be distributed evenly among the flight attendants. Please do not leave children or spouses.....except for that gentleman over there.'

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Heard on Southwest Airlines just after a very hard landing in Salt Lake City . The flight attendant came on the intercom and said, 'That was quite a bump, and I know what y'all are thinking. I'm here to tell you it wasn't the airline's fault, it wasn't the pilot's fault, it wasn't the flight attendant's fault, it was the asphalt.'

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After a real crusher of a landing in Phoenix, the attendant came on with, 'Ladies and Gentlemen, please remain in your seats until Capt. Crash and the Crew have brought the aircraft to a screeching halt against the gate. And, once the tire smoke has cleared and the warning bells are silenced, we'll open the door and you can pick your way through the wreckage to the terminal.'

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Part of a flight attendant's arrival announcement: 'We'd like to thank you folks for flying with us today. And, the next time you get the insane urge to go blasting through the skies in a pressurized metal tube, we hope you'll think of US Airways.'

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Heard on a Southwest Airline flight - 'Ladies and gentlemen, if you wish to smoke, the smoking section on this airplane is on the wing and if you can light 'em, you can smoke 'em.'

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A plane was taking off from Kennedy Airport . After it reached a comfortable cruising altitude, the captain made an announcement over the intercom, 'Ladies and gentlemen, this is your captain speaking. Welcome to Flight Number 293, nonstop from New York to Los Angeles. The weather ahead is good and, therefore, we should have a smooth and uneventful flight. Now sit back and relax... OH, MY GOD!' Silence followed, and after a few minutes, the captain came back on the intercom and said, 'Ladies and Gentlemen, I am so sorry if I scared you earlier. While I was talking to you, the flight attendant accidentally spilled a cup of hot coffee in my lap. You should see the front of my pants!'

A passenger in Coach yelled, 'That's nothing. You should see the back of mine!'