

As some of you know, along with my market reporting for the Iowa Agri-Business Radio Network, I drive a school bus on a part time basis for the Cannon Falls school district. I guess it's in my DNA as my dad drove many years for the West Concord school district. Recently we took two buses loaded with 85 first graders plus some teachers and parents who drew the short straw. We went to Como Park in St Paul for a short visit but with plenty of time for a nice outdoor picnic in the park and some playground activity. That activity was requested by the teachers and parents to wear the kids down for the bus ride home. It seemed to work as the kids were much quieter going home compared to the ride to the park. And in the mirror, I think I caught a parent and/or teacher or two catching a short nap.

While at the park, I was reminiscing with the other driver, Dave King, about the field trips I took as a youngster at West Concord grade school. As best as I can remember, we couldn't wait to be in 5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> grade as they got to go to the Cities. In the lower grades we went to Rochester and maybe we did a picnic at Mineral Springs Park in Owatonna one year. I remember one of the trips to Rochester. I saw a fireman slide down the pole for the first time. After that day, I tried to convince my dad to put one of those poles in the barn so that I could get out of the haymow much faster. That of course never happened.



Finally we got to the end of the 5<sup>th</sup> grade school year and we got our first fieldtrip to the Cities. We saw the Sibley House, home of Henry Hastings Sibley, Minnesota's first Governor. I think we saw the home of Alexander Ramsey as well. Ramsey was the first Minnesota Territorial Governor. And we went to Minnehaha Park and saw the falls. The 6<sup>th</sup> grade fieldtrip was very exciting as we had the opportunity to go to St Paul and see the State Capitol building. We saw among other things the golden horses up close and personal. The 'Quadriga' as it's called was installed at the state capitol in 1906 so they weren't even 50 years old when I first saw them.

Once we got to junior high and high school the field trips ended with the exception of the end of the year all school picnic at Nerstrand State Park. Our final field trip was at the end of our senior year when our class went to Washington D.C. and Gettysburg Pennsylvania. I believe some earlier senior trips stopped in New York City along with Washington. I'm not sure the entire history of WC senior trips like when they first happened and when the tradition ended. For me, it was a real highlight of high school and it certainly beat seeing the golden horses. It's always fun to get together at reunions to talk about all those school memories and hear different versions of the same story.

Below you'll see a picture of the WCHS Class of 1971 as taken near the nation's capital. You'll note that the two bus drivers are on both ends of the back row. A camera was used that started on the left side and worked its way to the right. They thought they could get to the other end before the camera caught them but as you can see, Karl Flormoe was caught looking down as they were just getting there when the camera took that last shot. Oh so close.



L to R. Front row: Chris Sathrum, Mary Kay Roberts, Linda Gochnauer, Ann Buckingham, Shelly Cain, Barb Johnston, Debbie Kvam, Janny Meyer, Debbie Schiesser, Denise Putrah, Kay Olson, Judy Quimby, Terri Agerter, Susan Benda, Laurie Iverson, Bonnie Evarts, Cindy Henry. 2nd row: Julie Lambert, Patti Hughes, Ginger Finne, Sue Jansen, Vicki Urch, Karen Hubner, Sherrell Benson, Helen Gillard, Mr Roger Lipelt, Mr Wes Fausch, Mrs. Fausch, Miss Clinette Wolf, Linda Lermon, Marilyn Dengler, Gail Hughes, Cheryl Finsteun, Crystal Paulson, Karen Wencil, Joanne Meyer, Brenda Bishop. 3rd row: 1st bus driver, 2nd bus driver, David Agerter, Steve Hanson, Richard Eichens, Don Norton, Jim Monical, Bruce Hansen, Steve Hutton, Louie Loosbrock, Steve Frederick, Dan Miller, Matt Fellows, Mark Gillard, Emery Kleven, George Vrieze, Joel Sackett, Dennis Quimby, Doug Rhodes, Bob Kolb, Steve Ray, Merlin Moreland, Karl Flormoe, 2nd bus driver, 1st bus driver.

Speaking of reunions, the West Concord All School Reunion was June 24, 2018 at the Four Seasons Arena in Owatonna. According to the history I've read on this event, this was the 10<sup>th</sup> All School Reunion. This tradition started in 1969 by Wendell Whiting. That reunion was for classes from 1901 through 1930. Other members of that 1969 committee included Orpha Mosher Halla, Marie Speckeen Uptagrafft, Paul Urch, Haven Stucky and Ed Pechacek. Over the years, the reunion has expanded the number of classes but always beginning with 1901. The 2018 reunion included all graduating classes of West Concord which means from 1901 through 1990. As far as I can tell from the historians who have kept track of alumni, the oldest class with living members is now 1937 with Reverend Stanley Cain, Richard Hubmer and Dorothy Woodcock Fischer. None of those 3 attended the reunion but from the class of 1939, Robert Rundquist and Maggie Hutton were in attendance.

I was asked to be on the reunion committee for this reunion and it was an honor plus being a lot of fun. John Pechacek, the chair of the committee, has been on the last 3 reunion committees. His dad Ed was on the very first committee in 1969 and served on 6 reunion committees.

Another committee member, Harl Burzlaff, served on his 6<sup>th</sup> reunion committee. All the history of the reunion committees over the years is in the school alumni directory book which is still available at the WCHS museum. Also, if you are not in our Facebook Group, go to Facebook and find West Concord Minnesota All School Reunion. Dan Lulf, who has taken over the duties of the directory from Harl, puts a lot of information on this Facebook page.

The best definition of a school reunion I've heard is that a reunion is a place where we all come together to see who's falling apart.

Save the date for the next All School Reunion: June 25, 2023

Follow us on Facebook@ WestConcordAllSchoolReunion



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