

Co-Chair Corner

by **Becky Valigorsky Bricen**

Adapted from the speech she gave at our dinner shared with the Class of 1970

If anything good would come of Covid, it was the chance for the classes of 1970 and 1971 to meet again. In the typical five year reunion cycle, we may have never met up with faces and friends from “the other class”. But here we meet at tables of eight to celebrate a long awaited milestone.

As the Class of '71, we sometimes felt like the second sibling following the older brother. The Class of '70 seemed to have been blessed with talent and creativity. If you pair those qualities with hard work and camaraderie, you have a challenge that is hard to meet. You may recall. It could have something as simple as a tug of war. Then it was the football floats followed by the holiday decorations. Perhaps the most anticipated contestAll Class Night. Did we beat them one year? Even if we did not win, it was a great time of talent and laughter.



The competition continued off campus. It even went on after graduation. Little did we know that there would be a Nobel Prize coming up. With that, the Class of '71 did not win, and decided to throw in the towel. Class of '70,YOU have it! Through the years, the Class of '70 has been most gracious. You may recall that sometimes in “their” reunion year, they extended an invitation to the class above them and to the class below them to “come and celebrate” with them. How fortuitous the practice. It was well-received when they suggested a joint dinner for tonight.

And so tonight, I follow Candy Wamsley Decspikes. In the day, Candy was the most energetic class leader/organizer and continues to be that person. As co-eds, Pam and I were much less involved. In 2016, we came back for our 45th. It was a fun time to reconnect with classmates, and we felt so welcomed to campus that we considered signing up for the President's Commission. Pam was reluctant, but I did not want to do it alone.

That was our chance to return to campus in the fall....there is something magical about coming onto campus in the fall...makes you feel young again...well at least for a few moments. So we attended the President's Commission for 2016, 2017, 2018. Finally, in September 2019, we met up with Candy and some of her committee. We had not seen them in 49 years!

Pam and I would like to acknowledge and give thanks to those on our committee, including our three chairs:

Carol Ellis Paullin – During her college years, Carol was involved in academic, athletic, and student government activities. As an alumnus, Carol's dedication and involvement with Juniata is stellar. From 2013 to 2020, Carol served as Secretary for The Board of Trustees. She was the perfect person for our Legacy Committee.

Jane Walter Loucks-- Jane comes from a family of Juniata grads. She and brother Hoyt ('68) shared some years on campus. They proudly followed their Aunt and Uncle who had graduated in the thirties as well as their Mother who was in the class of '43. Jane's daughter, Abby, was a member of the class of 2000. Her husband, John, is an honorary Juniata grad. Back in the day, Jane actually served on the social committee. How perfect for her to lead our reunion social committee. It was a true test of one's versatility as plans were ongoing.

Adding in last was **Charlotte Houchin Kresge**. With the same vibrancy that she had in college on the basketball court and the volleyball team, Charlotte jumped into the role with both feet. Then she held our feet to the fire with her deadlines. She will continue to keep us in communication, even after this reunion.

Let me also give recognition to some classmates:

Richard Dearborn-----Richard has been most faithful about attending reunions. If records had been kept, I believe Richard would be at the top of the list for “Most reunions attended “. He had been at the 45th and was planning on being here for the 50th, but because of Covid, he thought it best to not attend.

Shelbie Zwick---Shelby was also in attendance at the 45th, with **Diane Beck Deroche**. They had planned to meet up again, but Diane relates that Shelbie’s Amtrak trip from AZ was jeopardized by a rail wash out in Texas. What a disappointment for Diane and Shelby.

Charlie Foukes----We welcome Charlie as this 50th is actually Charlie’s first reunion. After a semester and a half, Charlie withdrew from Juniata, with hopes of returning. We know that once a member of our class, always a member of our class. The same goes for **Sue Bryson Allardice** who has kept in touch with Juniata friends through the years and Sue is with us tonight.

Urtha Lenharr--- Urtha added in to the committee and signed on to be a presenter last fall with his Iditarod program. With disappointment, that did not happen, but Urtha added in to our attendee list. How surprising to see him and Dan Heuglin on the bus this morning which was bound for the Cliffs. It was so wonderful that Pam and I decided to board the bus rather than walk. It seems like we threw Tom Diehl under the bus as Tom had promised to lead the Cliff walk.

Speaking of **Tom Diehl**, we salute him and his wife **Peggy (Moyer)**. They are just one of the married couples of the classes of ‘70 and ‘71. Their romance blossomed into commitment and longevity. Similarly, we celebrate **The Overs, Peggy (Slaughter) and John**; the **Gickings, Harry and Sue (Moyer)**; the **Biels, Rich and Sally (Palmer)**.

Those romances may have begun during Freshman year. Let us reminisce a bit on Freshman year. We gals had a 9:30 curfew on week nights. In spring, it was extended to 10:00. Someone must have spoken up for us with concerns that since the library was open to midnight, and it was not fair that girls could not work late at the library. Eventually, gals got to stay out if they had to study. But girls will be girls and the curfew was bent by **Jane Walter, Kathy Barnett, Sue Bryson, Suzy Moyer and Debby Bideman**. Their answer to written reprimands from Mrs. Neeley was a handwritten letter in their defense. Check the memorabilia table for the particulars.

Some night that first fall, we had the storming of the arch. I am not sure if we knew when, what or why that occurred, but we got involved. Pam ended up with shoe polish in her ear. I ended up with a ripped sweatshirt. But certainly the event led to more meetups with upperclassmen.

It may have been that same fall that Ty Grace Atkison showed up on campus. Imagine our small campus with a well-known spokesperson for women. There was a tug of war and maybe some bra burning. We are proud that JC had women’s rights in mind.

If you really want to date yourself, tell your kids that you remember the first Earth Day. It was 1970. Classes were canceled and replaced by inspiring speakers for what was termed “Colloquy”. You may remember Dick Gregory, activist and dietary guru. He spoke in this very ballroom where we gather to dine.

Let us not forget dining in Oneida. Attired in jackets with ties and skirts or dresses, we met up with friends along the long hallway to await dinner at six. We enjoyed friendship and lively conversation with homestyle servings at tables of eight. Let us revel in being here tonight. Tables of eight; great friends.....ready for conversation and laughter. Let the celebration begin!