

Class of 1979 History

When the Class of 1979 (all 500 of us) arrived on campus in the fall of 1975, we moved into our dormitory rooms stepping around the mud piles that had once been the site of the infamous (some said "rat infested") Hartman Hall. The future Steinman Center was just in the early stages of site work. To satisfy our late night munchies we had rows of snack machines and what appeared to be the prototype microwave in the basement of Diagnothian Hall, which also housed the bookstore and post office. Daytime socializing was limited to the dormitory lounges until the opening of the College Center, as we will forever call it. It wasn't named after the Steinman brothers until November 1977 and we never really used that name. We dined at Saga in the Ben Franklin residences enjoying a steady diet of pressed hamburger patties, cheese blintzes and 'Shrimpos" (which contained only the essence of shrimp). The food improved remarkably in the spring of 1978 after the removal of the manager, Harvey Boss. Rumors abounded that he had been selling the meat out the back door of the kitchen but they were never substantiated. Of course there was always House of Pie to satisfy our need for pizza and stromboli. If you were lucky enough to have your parents visit and take you to dinner there were P.J. Matthews, Haydn Zugs, The Loft, Accomac, Jethros, The Stockyard Inn and The Lemon Tree.

Night time socializing was another matter. The fraternities were the social network of the College, enjoying a resurgence after the release of "Animal House". Women, freshmen and IFC members were admitted to all parties and there seemed to be parties every weekend. They were out in the open with little interference from College or local police unless things spilled out into the yard or the music didn't fade by 1 am. For those who shunned the fraternity scene but still enjoyed a beer, there were Hildy's and the Towne Tavern right in the neighborhood. Carding was apparently a thing of the future - if you had money for a beer, you could have a beer. For the first time, women were able to join a Greek organization with the establishment of an F&M chapter of Sigma Sigma Sigma during our time there.

While we partied hard, we studied harder. We holed up in the stacks and pulled all nighters. We typed our papers on typewriters. Thank God for correction tape! The only computer on campus consisted of a row of data banks behind a glass wall in the basement of the science building. We punched programs onto paper tapes which were run through the computer. Generally you received a report a week later telling you that you made an error and the program didn't work. When you finally managed to get a report that your program had successfully computed the equation " $2+2=4$ ", you jumped for joy.

Music over the four years we were there varied from Bruce Springsteen (Born to Run) to the Bee Gees and the explosion of disco. Sorry, but it's true. Many of us must admit to seeing the Commodores at the Village Night Club in 1978. We all have memories flood our minds to this day when we hear:

- Fleetwood Mac (Rumors)
- Pure Prairie League (Bustin Out)
- Grateful Dead (Blues for Allah)

- Boz Scaggs (Silk Degrees)
- Hall and Oates (Abandoned Luncheonette)
- Peter Frampton (Frampton Comes Alive)
- Boston
- Loggins and Messina
- The Outlaws

Mayser Gym hosted Orleans and the Charlie Daniels Band, which was rescheduled after originally being booked during another memorable event – “radiation vacation” in March 1979. The long term impact of the Three Mile Island accident is still felt today as our continued reluctance to build nuclear power plants has left us increasingly dependent on hydro-carbon fuels. In other national news Karen Ann Quinlan’s parents won the right to disconnect her life support only to have her continue to survive on a feeding tube. Louise Brown was the first baby born via in-vitro fertilization in August 1978. “Star Wars” burst onto movie screens nationally and Franklin Schaffner premiered his movie “The Boys from Brazil” on campus. The campus was also visited by former President Gerald Ford who gave three lectures to Government students and conducted a faculty seminar.

The basketball team ended their regular season with a 21 and 4 record. From there they went on to win the MAC Championship, the Region and District Championships and placed third in the NCAA Division three finals. Donny Marsh became the all-time scoring leader with 1695 points and Bob Manaskie set the record for most assists in a game with 22, in a season with 414 and in a career with 949.

Our final semester was crowned by “The Last Hurrah” at Circle Creek Campground on April 29th. According to the Oriflamme there were 60 kegs of beer at the event and we were entertained by four bands including “Accidental Harmony”, a Grateful Dead tribute band consisting of our own classmates.

Who would have thought that 30 years would go by so quickly and so many of us would now be watching our own children graduate from college? Some of us are even grandparents! But no matter how much has transpired in our lives, at heart we are the same young adults who walked up the steps to receive our diplomas thinking that we had finally completed the most difficult task of our lives. If we only knew!