

## Class of 1988 History

By Brian Lewbart '88

Saturday, September 1<sup>st</sup>, 1984. Happy Days and Fantasy Island had just gone off the air. The Space Shuttle Discovery was on its maiden voyage. Tina Turner's "What's Love Got To Do With It" hit number one. The Dow was hovering near 1200, and gas was \$1.21.

And, there we were...560 newly minted Fummers from 30 U.S. states and 12 foreign countries, sitting in Mayser Center overwhelmed and confused as President Powell welcomed us with the message that 50% of us would end up in the bottom half of the class.

Eventually, May 15<sup>th</sup>, 1988 would roll around, and we'd be sitting on Hartman Green listening as our commencement speaker, journalist Charlayne Hunter-Gault, congratulated us and gave us her pearls of wisdom. She would be joined on stage by Williamson Medal winner Elizabeth Eide, and Class President Bryan Greenberg.

In between, what a four years it would be....

No sooner had we started our college career, we participated in a silent protest against the lack of social life on campus. It would be the first of many such events that would mark our time at F&M.

Ben's Underground opened (not that we went), as did the Ice Rink in the old Posey Iron Works (the site of today's Alumni Sports and Fitness Center), and the Co-op. Future years saw us move into other new housing, including the Arts and French houses, the West James Street Apartments, the Frederick Street Lofts, a converted Franklin-Meyran Hall, and in our senior year, the Tri-Sigma House.

First year tuition and room was \$11,050, and on campus, we earned \$3.35 an hour.

We welcomed David Stameshkin to campus, and the inaugural performance of his now long-running "Fum Follies" production. The following year would see Alice Drum join as Dean of Freshmen. We're glad to see Dean Dave still around, and we congratulate Dean Drum on her recent retirement from the College – for a second time.

Air conditioning was installed in the residence halls (only Thomas had it before), and on the heels of the College's first AIDS awareness efforts, so too were condom machines. We also saw the administration come out with its first official policy on sexual harassment, and expel two students for making bomb threats. Thanks to the Writing Center, we debated non-sexist language and the proper use of he/she.

Matrix, formerly the gay student support group, was granted official club status – but not without controversy, as some students would label the group "offensive" in the pages of *The College Reporter*, showing that homophobia was alive and well on campus.

The Macintosh computer was introduced to campus our second semester. And for \$1,795 you could get a Mac with a whopping 128K of memory, an external hard drive, and a printer. This, of course, rendered as obsolete the typewriters we had brought with us back in September.

The Philadelphia 76ers continued to hold training camp in Mayser, with rookie Charles Barkley joining the team our freshman year – and hanging out with us in Schnader.

We were also entertained by The Bangles, Kix, The Hooters, Squeeze, Ella Fitzgerald, Wynton Marsalis, Bobby McFerrin, Arlo Guthrie, Joe Piscopo, Yakov Smirnov, and political satirist Mark Russell.

We celebrated the College's Bicentennial in 1987 with much fanfare.

And, we heard from a range of speakers, including Dith Pran of "The Killing Fields" fame, Ralph Nader, Howard Cosell, naturalist Sir David Attenborough, Senator Daniel Patrick Moynihan, authors E. L. Doctorow and David Halberstam, Pulitzer prize-winning political columnist Jack Anderson, the broadcast duo of MacNeil and Lehrer, and alum Ivan Kane '79, who starred in Oliver Stone's film, Platoon.

We put on our own thespian hats in the Green Room; the experimental Other Room theatre; and in Hensel Hall, thanks to the entirely student-run F&M Players. The Poor Richards, Broadway Montage, and many other musical groups also graced the stage.

We helped make Diplomat sports history, winning 1987 National championships in Women's Cross Country and Women's Squash, and cheering on classmates and future Hall of Famers Anne Williams, Terry Scott, Maria Gaydos, and Shannon Martin. Many of our teams took home conference titles, proving that we could excel in the classroom and on the playing field.

We ended every year with The Last Hurrah, and spent Senior Week in Myrtle Beach. We stayed out of the library long enough to enjoy Fall and Spring Arts weekends, and imbibed at Hildy's and frat parties, where we went Around the World, played quarters, and drank Kamikazies and Blue Whales.

When we tired of Hallmark and the Common Ground, we ate at Garfield's, Isaac's, and LDC, or got delivery from Dominos, Two Cousins, and Famous Pizza. With our parents we snagged a "nice" meal at the Log Cabin, Haydn Zug's, Market Fare, or the Hoar House.

We watched the completion of the Stahr Hall renovation...only to see it renamed Stager Hall. And we were exposed to art with the installation of two new campus sculptures, including "Ben in a Box" outside Keiper, and "Chesapeake" – the steel and stone sculpture outside Distler that one Professor nicknamed Opus' Nose in an ode to Bloom County.

We challenged the administration as it announced plans to SLuRP us – through a Strategic Long Range Plan that called for decreasing the size of the student body.

Eventually, Chi Omega became the third sorority and the Panhellenic Council was formed.

We observed the first federal Martin Luther King, Jr. Day, the first Kwanzaa celebration on campus, and Apartheid Awareness Week.

Early on, many of us voted in our first election and watched Reagan win re-election over Mondale. In other news, we endured Black Monday on Wall Street and Iran-Contra, sat glued to our television sets for Baby Jessica, heard Reagan challenge Gorbachev to “tear down this wall,” and, in a span of three months in early 1986, witnessed the Chernobyl and space shuttle Challenger disasters.

During our years at F&M, we said goodbye to the likes of Cary Grant, James Cagney, Rock Hudson, Jackie Gleason, Rita Hayworth, and Andy Warhol. Post-graduation, we mourned the loss of our own classmates Ken Gramas and on 9/11, Jeffrey Chairnoff.

On a lighter note, the Titanic was discovered, while Geraldo Rivera found nothing in Al Capone’s vault. We saw the debut of Calvin & Hobbes and Elmo, while Nintendo and the first version of Microsoft Windows were released. Less successfully, so was New Coke.

Van Halen, Culture Club, Prince, Duran Duran, Cindy Lauper, Madonna, Wham!, Bruce Springsteen, Huey Lewis, Robert Palmer, U2, Tina Turner, the Beastie Boys, Bon Jovi, and Bryan Adams among others, topped the charts. And on a trip to Park City (the mall, that is) you could buy the albums for \$6.99 – in record or cassette format, of course. Musicians also took the stage for famine relief, with “Do They Know It’s Christmas” and “We Are the World”, followed in July 1985 by the unprecedented Live Aid concerts.

When we weren’t atriating, we found time to watch the premieres of The Cosby Show, Miami Vice, Moonlighting, L.A. Law, The Oprah Winfrey Show, The Simpsons, and The Wonder Years; and the last episodes of Three’s Company, The Jeffersons, The Dukes of Hazzard, Diff’rent Strokes, The Love Boat, Hill Street Blues, Magnum, P.I., and The Facts of Life. We also saw Jeopardy return to TV, this time with host Alex Trebek, and the launch of the Fox television network. And who can forget the Family Ties episode where F&M was mentioned. Seems Alex P. Keaton had his eyes on someone who was engaged to a Franklin & Marshall senior psychology major.

To mark the end of President Powell’s tenure, we wore “Jimbo P’s Farewell Tour...Screw ‘em and Run” t-shirts. We welcomed President-Elect Dick Kneedler, but not before the Trustees voted to withdraw Greek support, leading the way for Greek de-recognition.

The vote was followed by several campus rallies to protest the decision...who can forget Ken Mehlman, our classmate and past president of Phi Kappa Tau, who expressed the views of many with his symbolic gesture of burning a check made out to the College. Fortunately, things have changed...President Fry re-recognized the Greeks, and Ken is now a Trustee.

In time for graduation, we helped re-establish a Student Congress for the first time since 1968 – an effort that gave us greater student representation in the affairs of the College but that took three long years to come to fruition.

Without a doubt, the time the class of 1988 spent at Camp Fum was marked by controversy, challenges, and battles with the administration, and to be sure, F&M was a different place when we left than when we entered. But, we had fun, made lifelong friends (and in some cases found a spouse), affected real change, and got a fantastic education that prepared us well to enter the real world.