



LU Class of 1974, Reunion Dinner Revisited

In the aftermath of our 50th Reunion, by popular demand, by at least several, your Class of '74 Reunion Committee has prepared the following summary of the events of our Class Dinner Saturday night. Those who were there can smile and remember—and those who were missing hopefully can enjoy this account of the event.

The evening began with **Jan Daniels Quinlan** asking the 90 or so classmates present to stand if they remembered their computer date from 1970 and remain standing if they were in the room that night. This event brought some laughs and memories, marred only because, inexplicably, **Kitsie Roth Holcomb** didn't remember that **Joe Bruce** had been her computer date (it's only been 54 years, Kitsie, how soon do you forget!).

We played a 10-minute video from 1973 that LU Admissions Officers showed at high schools when they recruited students for Lawrence. The video featured many shots of ancient campus life, and several of our class were featured wandering about campus with a deceptive sense of purpose. Best of all, three from our class, **Don Brunquell**, **Jane McGroarty Schneider** and **Robert Currie**, gave their reflections on what they were studying and experiencing at Lawrence and what they wanted to accomplish with their lives. And, for the record, we think they succeeded. It's worth watching.

[Click here to watch.](#)

After the video, we asked our classmates: if you were a high school student in 1973 and saw that video, would you go to that college? A substantial majority said they would. Next came the existential question: did you actually attend the school in the video? A somewhat less robust number, but still a majority (we think) agreed that they had.

For the main event, we asked everyone at the tables to talk to make a list of things that we experienced 50 years ago that students today will never experience. **Joe Bruce** channeled his inner Phil Donohue and went from table to table with a microphone as a spokesperson reported on what they remembered.

This took all of us on a bit of a time travel trip and we've listed some of the many, many things that we experienced in college that are extinct today. Here it is (you can mentally add to it if anything is missing):

- *Smoking in the classrooms by students and teachers (Professor Goldgar had up to four cigarettes going at the same time and would take a puff periodically as he paced around the room)*
- *Smoking in the dorms, Viking Room, cafeterias, bars and everywhere else*
- *Placing cigarettes on their filters on your desk until they burnt out rather than using an ashtray*
- *Cigarette machines in the dorms and everywhere else*
- *50 cent packs of cigarettes*
- *1 or maybe 2 telephones mounted on the wall in each dorm hallway with no phones in student rooms*
- *Pay phones one per dorm some in phone booths*

- *Having to call home "collect" so your parents would pay the phone bill*
- *Having your phone home ring a specified number of times and then hanging up so your parents would call you at the dorm rather than pay for a collect call*
- *Getting buzzed in your room by the dorm switchboard when you have a phone call and then answering it on the hallway phone.*
- *Unisex dorms*
- *Curfews for women*
- *Lock restrictions on women's dorms*
- *Petitioning the administration to eliminate women's curfews*
- *Petitioning for co-ed visitation in women's dorms*
- *Yelling "man on the floor" in women's dorms*
- *Having a "two-feet-on-the-floor" rule in dorm lounges*
- *Getting a call on the intercom from the receptionist to let you know you had a visitor*
- *Sneaking a lover into your room*
- *Putting a white towel on your door handle when you wanted privacy*
- *Having a "house mother" live in your dorm*
- *Leaving messages for friends on small pieces of paper, folded and placed in a slit on a block of wood used as a message tray, at the reception desk in the dorm*
- *Having to memorize phone numbers*
- *Large, mainframe computers*
- *Students had to reserve a time to use a computer*
- *Using punch cards for computer programming*
- *Using legal pads or spiral notebooks for note-taking*
- *Using 8x8 calculators*
- *Using a slide rule*
- *Sliding down Union Hill on cafeteria trays*
- *40 cent hamburgers*
- *Freshmen drinking beer legally in the Viking Room and other "beer bars"*
- *Legal drinking age at 18 for all liquor beginning in 1972*
- *10 cent beer in the Viking Room*
- *Using a card catalog under the Dewey decimal system to find books at the library*
- *Reserving a study carrel at the library*
- *Using manual typewriters, with carbon paper for copies and white-out or corrector tape for typos*
- *Paying another student to type a paper for you*
- *Mimeograph machines for making print copies*
- *One television per dorm in the TV lounge*
- *Having a crowd of students watching a single event on the single television (e.g. NBA playoffs, Watergate hearings, the Billie Jean King/Bobby Riggs tennis match)*
- *Big, bulky stereo systems with huge speakers for vinyl albums*
- *Fold-up stereo systems*
- *Reel to reel tape players*
- *Tab soda in vending machines*
- *Live, over the air radio broadcasts from the campus radio station*
- *Unrestricted Nembutal in the Psych Lab*

- *Having to yell "flushing" in Sage bathrooms so anyone taking a shower could get out of the way to avoid scalding*
- *Draft counseling services*
- *Elm trees down either side of an undivided College Avenue*
- *Meal service at Colman dining hall where students bussed tables for you and carried off the dirty dishes on big oval trays*
- *Meals at Downer and Colman dining halls with only one choice of a traditional American meal for breakfast, lunch or dinner (e.g. today's meal is meatloaf, mashed potatoes and green beans)*
- *A teletype machine with a feed from Associated Press or United Press International in the Student Union with the latest news of the day*
- *Having the Off-campus program in Eningen, Germany*
- *Macrame plant hangers*
- *Serving the college president beer illicitly from a keg at the Appleton Foxes minor league baseball game*
- *Evening swims at Alexander Gymnasium and then watching the sunrise from the roof*
- *A brick-and-mortar bookstore (Conkey's) near campus*
- *Sending typewritten Lawrentian articles and headlines to the publisher to be printed, then cutting and pasting them in layout form and delivering them back to the publisher at 5 a.m. on Friday for printing so the Lawrentian could be distributed on Friday afternoon.*
- *Hitchhiking*
- *Gang showers*
- *Being able to guess and get clues from the phone answerers during Trivia*
- *Having "shadow" Trivia teams (like the original Armadillo!) to tie up phone lines for the Trivia contest.*
- *Taking a passenger train from Chicago to Appleton, filled with Lawrence students heading back following vacations*
- *Using paper maps to get directions when driving to and from home and Appleton*
- *Gasoline costing 29.9 cents per gallon*
- *Doc Landis and the Infirmary*
- *Writing term papers on legal pads in longhand; editing them by putting new sentences in margins; changing the order of sentences and paragraphs by using arrows and other notations*

Rick Chandler then gave a few remarks about what his daughter, Claire, a 2021 LU grad, experienced that we never did. Here are his remarks:

Technology

Students today have the Internet, smartphones, laptops, texting, social media and many, many other things we didn't have. The technology tool specifically used by students is an online assignment platform (called Moodie) to track class sessions, readings, assignments, meetings with professors and grades.

Food and Drink

There's a wide variety of food for every meal at the Warch Center. There are many coffee shops on College Avenue and elsewhere. There's a wide variety of restaurants with different ethnic cuisine in town.

Experiences

There is now CORE group, for freshman year mentoring and community building. All freshmen were part of small groups with two upperclassmen as leaders which met weekly to discuss how to approach studying and other aspects of life at Lawrence. These were optional meetings with the students in your first-term Freshman Studies class. One of the things that freshmen did in these groups was to write letters to themselves as seniors discussing their hopes and goals and their expected majors and other academic expectations.

Senior Dinner, at the end of senior year, in the evening at the Warch Center, somewhat formal, with nice

attire, attended by most seniors. Professors attend, and students sit with their academic departments with their professors and advisors. Students get the freshman letters that they had written in their CORE groups to their senior selves.

Senior Night, an informal event at the end of senior year, held after Happy Hour in the Viking Room (or the VR, as the kids today refer to it). During Senior Night, "Senior Superlatives" are presented in somewhat random categories, including: Most likely to succeed; Most likely to be on a TV dating game show; Cutest couple.

At the end of Senior Night, about midnight, seniors go on a group streak, running from the Viking Room (now known as the VR) to Hiatt Hall, around Ormsby and back to the VR:

- About 80% of seniors participate, many doing a "total streak" with no clothing or shoes, and some doing a partially-clothed streak.
- The streakers are led by drummers from the Con (generally underclassmen who are strongly encouraged to volunteer).
- Underclassmen come out to watch and cheer.
- The "Senior Streak" has been going on for 25 to 30 years.

Happy Hour

When I was talking with our daughter about current Lawrence experiences, she asked me, "Dad, did they have Happy Hour when you were on campus?" and I replied, "Claire, I have a story about Happy Hour."

Happy Hour started in 1974, and here's the little-known background story of its founding. One late afternoon during spring term of our senior year, I was having a beer in the Viking Room with **Paul Nelson** and **Lisa Reese**. Professor Yatzeck was there, having a drink with students. Paul and Lisa and I said that it would be good to encourage more professors to come to the VR and mingle with students, and we decided to create and promote Happy Hour. We talked with **Don Hietpas**, manager of the Viking Room, and he magnanimously agreed to offer 5 cent beers in the afternoon for Happy Hour. We mimeographed flyers and posted them around campus, announcing nickel beers in the VR on a designated afternoon, and encouraging professors and students to attend. Lo and behold, it worked! A huge crowd of professors and students showed up for the first Happy Hour, and Happy Hour is still going strong, 50 years later.

The Pandemic

The Covid Pandemic affected the last five graduating classes from the Class of 2020 through the Class of 2024. Those five classes had some experiences (or lack of experiences) that the Class of 1974 didn't and hopefully classes after them won't, such as:

- No graduation ceremony on the Main Hall Green for several years. (When Claire graduated, the ceremony was held in the Banta Bowl with socially-distanced seating.)
- No in-person classes for several terms (all classes were on Zoom).
- No meals in the dining hall with classmates (students picked up their meals at the Warch Center and took them back to their dorms to eat).
- A pause for most other in-person activities for several terms. Everybody in those five classes was affected by the Pandemic changes, either at the end of college, at the start of college, or in between.

Rick's Conclusion

Clearly many external things have changed over the past 50 years. Having said that, my observation based on knowing Claire and her friends is that the basic nature of Lawrence students hasn't changed. They are still thoughtful, inquisitive, interested in many topics, serious about their studies and their work, and also glad to have fun and enjoy many different activities with their friends.

As we got a glimpse at LU life in the 2020s, we can't help but think, as committed early 70s counter-culturalists, that some of the current Senior Night activities seem like they came out of the 1950s (and streaking just wasn't something in vogue back in our day, was it?). We're not quite sure if that gives us hope for the next generation or not.

Finally, **Dee Walter**, who mentored the daughter of a good friend of hers, who graduated this June and whose college experience was shaped by Covid, reported on how Covid affected the Class of 2024's life at Lawrence. Here's what Dee wrote:

Covid reigned mighty over any kind of freshman fun. Students could not leave their dorm rooms. Meals were delivered and eaten in their rooms with only their roommates. She did not have a roommate. At this point she knew no one. The huge array of food choices was scaled way back and delivered in closed containers, put outside dorm room doors. There was no need to think about going into town to grab a bite because many of the nicer restaurants were closed or restricted there too. From the establishments where delivery was an option, the delivery person had to be masked and gloved. Classes were online, on zoom. Online zoom classes were challenging for an art major. International students were sent back home.

Life was basically put on hold. Every day I would head over to the Lawrence campus and she and I would go for a walk. I was not allowed in any of the buildings for the first two years. Walking on campus was surreal. Everyone was masked even outside and no one looked up. Most were walking around and hand-texting their phones. I thought about how it was back when we crossed campus always welcoming the opportunity to catch someone's eye and have a conversation. Quite a few students went home because they could take online classes at home as easily as they could in their dorm rooms. Students had to go the health facility to be tested often. Students were double-masking and were required to wear N95s. If a student got Covid they had to move to a different dorm room on a floor that was cordoned off. At the end of her first year, I asked her how many students she knew. The answer was, sadly...maybe about four or five!

Junior year was a little better but Covid was still around. She had some in-person classes and was able to interact much more. Senior year was almost back to normal. She lived in Colman Hall in a place called the Loft. In order to live there you had to be part of a cooking/baking club. The kitchen was filled with a huge array of cooking utensils, baking staples and food everywhere. This group became very close.

Graduation was a very meaningful event for this class. It had not been held on the green for several years. The tears shed at graduation were for many reasons. She told me that she had finally found so many unique and wonderful people but had so very little time to spend with them. The most amazing double rainbow appeared over Main Hall the night before graduation. Certainly, this rainbow was an omen to the class of 2024 having persevered through and survived the pandemic.

We think it's fair to say that those who attended the reunion not only reconnected with old friends but also made new ones, with whom we had existed side by side for four years yet somehow never got to know, and whom now we wished we had become friends with 50 years ago instead of just a few days earlier.

We also think that we realized, if we hadn't known before, that Lawrence was the right place for us then, and still is.

***With fond memories, from 1970 until today,
Your Lawrence Class of 1974 50th Reunion Committee***