



Westmar Alumni and Friends Association

Volume 8, Issue 3

August, 2006

Reunions: Memories of Westmar Days

Westmar Kansas Reunion

Several reunions have been held over the past few months, beginning with the Westmar Kansas Reunion held on May 25-26 in Topeka, Kansas.

Formerly known as the Kansas Club Reunion, the Westmar Kansas Reunion had 44 people meet for dinner on May 25 at the First U.M. Church.

The next day 35 reunion goers met at Forest Park for talking and a songfest of old-time favorites and Westmar songs.

The next Westmar Kansas Reunion is scheduled to be held on the last Thursday and Friday of May 2008.

Decade of the 1980s and Biology Trip Reunion

July 7 brought graduates from the 1980s and Biology Trip participants to Le Mars for a weekend of memories.

Friday night the Biology participants gathered around the "Little Blue Trailer" for an outdoor meal from the Biology Cookbook.

After the meal, they moved into the Le Mars Convention Center (formerly the Commons) for programs on the various trips that were taken over the years.

A campus tour for the Biology Trip and Decade of the 80s was led by Dr. Wayne Marty on Saturday morning.

A catered banquet was served Saturday evening in the Convention Center.

50-Year Reunion of the Class of 1956

Members of the Class of 1956 began arriving for their reunion weekend on July 21 where they registered and gathered to get reacquainted in the Museum's 'Old Central' Gym.

That evening they ate together at Archie's Waeside, a forbidden place when they were college students.

They also took a campus tour on Saturday led by Dr. Wayne Marty, but the memories were a bit different than those of the Decade of the 1980s.



Reminiscing—Eldon Nolte and his wife, Lois (Mukomela) Nolte recall their Westmar days while looking through old photo albums at the 50-Year Reunion of the Class of 1956. More reunion photos can be found on pages 4 and 5.

After the tour they met back at 'Old Central' Gym for a catered taco bar and more memories.

A banquet was held in 'Old Central' Gym Saturday evening. After the meal, Dick Lunde from California presented a program about what was going on in the world as well as on campus during their college years.

Two films, recently converted to DVD, were shown. One was about campus life from the 1930s and the other 1954-1955.

Decade of the 1990s and Fine Arts Reunion

The weekend of July 14, 2007 will bring together the graduates of the Decade of the 1990s and the Fine Arts Participants. Letters will be sent out later with details.

Mark your calendar now so you don't miss a weekend of memories and fun.

Inside this issue:

Alumni News & Deaths	2
Seeking Oldest Alumni	2
Bricks & Mortar & More	3
Reunion Photos	4
Reunion Photos	5
Membership Form	6
Contact Info	6



Alumni News

News

1954-Darline (Miller) Balm-Demmel has been appointed to serve as the district superintendent of the Mason City District of the Iowa Annual Conference of the United Methodist Church (in retirement).

1962-Ronald Osborne retired on June 25 from ministry as Rector of Trinity Parish in Waterloo.

1965-Lyle Stinton retired from teaching after 41 years. Most recently at Le Mars Community School.

1966-Terry Christensen retired on June 30, 2006 after 11 years in teaching and coaching, one year as Placement Director at Westmar College, and 28 years in the insurance business. He and his wife Janice (Davolt) Christensen live in Ankeny, Iowa.

1967-Dave Chittenden retired after 38 year of teaching high school math and coaching.

1970-Melanie (Haak) Rude is living in a suburb of D.C. and is in her 19th year of teaching high school Social Studies.

1972-Kathy (Howe) Baker was appointed to the board of directors of a non-profit organization.

1985-Amy (Allen) Kelly will be teaching Science at Le Mars Middle School.

1992-Gloria Shillingford lives in the Caribbean, Commonwealth of Dominica. She is the island's secretary general for UNESCO and a senator in parliament.

1993-Chris Radloff is working as an Art Director at a printing press in Sioux City and moonlights as a bass player in various rock and blues bands in the area. He married his wife Dagmar in 2001.

1994-Irwin Oltmanns married Tricia Hittenmiller on July 8, 2006. They reside in West Des Moines and are both employed at West Central Valley High School in Stuart. Irwin teaches English.

1959-Dwight and **Linda Vogel** report that their son, Mark is with the Peace Corps in Kersh, Crimea, Ukraine with his wife Virginia (Jeys). Their daughter Kristin is a librarian at Illinois Wesleyan University.

Deaths

1943-Col. Calvin E. Gillespie, a member of Western Union's first flight class in 1941 and retired U. S. Air Force pilot, died at his home in Orangevale, Calif., on April 17, 2006.

1949-George A. Pavlik died on June 10, 2006 in Le Mars.

1934-Thelma (Hanno) Ladenberger passed away on April 7, 2006 in San Diego, Calif.

1968-Artha (Korver) Bomgaars died in Le Mars on July 17, 2006. She was 96.

1969-Charles Neubrand of Clearwater, Fla., passed away on April 24, 2006.

1971-Dennis Mertes of Kansas City, Mo. died on May 29, 2006.

Dorm Custodian-Mildred Schulz of Le Mars passed away on May 5, 2006.

Maintenance-Francis Donlin of Merrill died on July 5, 2006.

Seeking Oldest Living Alumni

The Alumni Association is trying to find the oldest living alumni. We don't have birth dates on our database for everyone, but we believe **Clarence Westphal** (102) class of 1927 to be the oldest alumni. Clarence "Skip" and his wife Marion live at

Manson, Iowa. During a brief phone conversation with Mrs. Westphal, it was learned that Clarence attends church every Sunday and writes his "True Tales to Live By" column every Monday.

If you know of someone that is older, or

at least as old, please pass along their name and birth date. Our mailing address and e-mail address can be found on the back of this newsletter.

Do you have any Westmar items you would like to donate to the Archives or for room display? We are currently seeking published writings by Westmar graduates to put on display in the Westmar Room.

Contact Westmar by mail or e-mail. Addresses are listed on the back of this newsletter.

Reminder – If you've moved, gotten married or divorced, changed e-mail addresses, changed phone numbers, or had a spouse die, please let us know the correct information so we can record it on our database. Please use the form below or e-mail us at westmar@lemarscomm.net.

Name _____ Spouse's Name _____

Address _____ City _____ State _____

Zip Code _____ Phone Number _____ e-mail address _____



Bricks and Mortar and More

Thoren Hall

By Dr. Wayne Marty and Mary Holub

The new Thoren Hall, the first Western Union College building, was open and ready for classes in the fall of 1901, but this was not the first higher education effort in Le Mars. In 1887, Jacob Wernli organized the Northwestern Normal School in Le Mars primarily for the training of teachers. Student housing and classes were in a downtown Le Mars location. His education effort persisted until 1891 when financial challenges ended the operation. In 1892 the Le Mars Normal School Association was organized by local businessmen to finance the continuation of the college and a new building was erected on the seven acres of land purchased at the south end of Le Mars. Finances continued to be a struggle and on April 10, 1900 at a meeting in the Union Hotel with Bishops Dubs and Stanford the property was purchased by the United Evangelical Church and the church related Western Union College came into being.

H. H. Thoren from Naperville, Illinois was hired as the first president and came to Le Mars in July of 1900 to make arrangements for the beginning of classes in September. But on the night of August 24, lightning struck the building and all of the building, equipment, and the hastily gathered library holdings were destroyed. However, classes opened as scheduled in donated downtown buildings and immediate efforts were made to assemble funds for the construction of a new building. The three story brick Thoren Hall, with a bell in the tower, was dedicated on September 18, 1901 in preparation for classes that opened in the new building the next day.

All the academic activity was contained in this building with Commercial and Printery in the basement; Administration, classrooms and laboratories on first; spacious chapel, library, and Conservatory of Music on second; and two small meeting rooms on third.

Many Alumni will remember the various activities in Thoren as times changed. Remember the three times per week climb to the required chapel with assigned seating and professors walking the aisle to take attendance. But the same chapel space was used for outstanding drama productions — Thornton Wilder's "Our Town" and the Greek play Lysistrata by Aristophanes and



Thoren Hall—from the 1914 Pilot Yearbook.

many more. Cooperation with the Music Department produced magical musicals.

The Home Ec. Department on the first floor sometimes used chickens for nutritional experiments and these were at one time moved by pranksters to some of the music practice rooms. This was not appreciated by the Home Ec. faculty. Many will remember the many hours of practice in those practice rooms. And I suspect there were some kisses exchanged in those rooms also. Art Classes, with paintings in progress, filled one of the rooms for some years.

The basement became the location of the Venetian Blind Factory in the 1940s and 50s, the Physics Department in the 60s, the College Bookstore in the 70s, and after the renovations effort in the 80s it became the Choral and Band rehearsal areas.

And of course the bell and bell tower. I wonder how many climbed up to the bell tower with or without permission to ring the bell or maybe even just to leave their initials on the tower walls. Ringing the bell was discouraged but there were the ingenious ones who ran a string far out in the distance and rang the bell from afar to reduce their chances of being "captured."

Thoren Hall was admitted to the National Register of Historic Places on September 15, 1978.

In 1983 a major effort was made to reno-

vate Thoren for a Performing Arts Center.

The building was gutted and the basement was successfully renovated for the Music Department. However, lack of funds for completion caused delays and the gutted building began to shift and the stately historic building was finally demolished on the Sunday morning of November 11, 1990. But there was no bell in the tower. What happened to the bell? It was an unanswered question for many but good verification by Dick Carey (class of 1952) of Des Moines tells that the bell was cracked and he and Bob Collins were hired by the college to demolish the bell and remove it from the tower. They smashed it with a sledge hammer and lowered the pieces over the edge of the roof. So they were probably the last to "ring the bell" but many memories ring on in the minds of the Alumni.

We invite your additional memories or corrections to this Thoren story and we will add your notes to the Thoren Hall Archive File.

In the November newsletter we will discuss Union Hall. Your memories and comments are welcome for inclusion in the story.



Reunion Photos



Westmar Kansas Reunion—

Front row: Paul Weinert, Wilfred Bowers, Dave Specht, Leora (Mugler) Musser, Gerry Martin, Chuck Semke.
 Second row: Iola (Hegle) Schroeder, Arlene (Hegle) Straub, Joyce (Sago) Appleman, Jean (Smaltz) Hulbert, Arlyss (Roepke) Wendland, Luella (Minter) Martin, Jeanette (Schroeder) Grenz, Ken Grenz, Harriet (Mugler) Semke.
 Third row: Susan (Bray) Cunningham, Virginia (Hayen) Downing, Lorene (Buss) Kehler (in between rows), Frances (King) Wood, Joan (Hilgenfeld) Zoeller, Cate Hayen, Nellie (Sherman-Streib) Hartman, Donna (Hilgenfeld) Trost.
 Fourth row: Marilyn (Hayen) Geis, Paul Hett, Don Appleman, Clarence Haber, Leon Hayen, Cal Hartman. *(Photo contributed.)*



Biology Reunion—Reminiscing was done over a Biology meal eaten around the “Little Blue Trailer.”



Biology Trip Leaders—Wayne and June Marty, Jim and Myrt Divelbiss, and Gene and Mary Ulrich with the map of all the Biology Trips.



Mini Westmar Reunion—

Wanda (Powell) Schneider ‘60, Barb (Colson) Smith ‘62, Sharon Kay (Smith) McCormick ‘60, Ramona (Kolbo) Oehlerking ‘61, Virginia (Huppe) Bitterly ‘60, Gay (Feind) Weber ‘61. *(Photo contributed.)*



80s Reunion Banquet—A catered meal was served Saturday evening.



Class of 1956

Front row: Charmaine (Daugherty) Westphal, Rod Black, Darrell Lake, Eldon Nolte, Carroll Marty and Fidella (Hughes) Marty.

Back row: Dick Lunde, Loren Mullins, Joyce (Thiele) Lake, Arthur Murdoch, and Jim Driscoll. *(Photo by Clayton Hodgson)*

Reunion photos by Mary Holub



Campus Tour—1980s Alumni gather around Thoren Hall Corner Stone Mementos.



Airplane Room—Dr. Arthur Murdoch and Carroll Marty enjoy the Museum's Airplane Room.



Campus Tour—1980s Alumni around the Memorial Park Entrance.



Alumni Mini Reunion—Front row: Hyla (Rash) Boelman '64, Jan (Davolt) Christensen '66, Dianna (Galli) Misegades '64, Judy (Bieberdorf) Ristau '64. Back row: Abbie Dick '66, MaeBelle (Maass) Powell '66, Marlys (Hess) Buddenhagen '64, Darlene (Kleingartner) Lobenstein '66. The ladies toured the Westmar Room and the Museum on July 21.

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WESTMAR ALUMNI & FRIENDS ASSOCIATION
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*Show your Westmar spirit!
Do you know classmates or other
Westmar alums who are not yet
WAFAs members? Ask them to send
information and yearly dues to the
office in Le Mars to be included in
future mailings.*

Contact us!
WAFAs e-mail address
westmar@lemarscomm.net

Be sure to check out our new and improved, ever-changing website at:
<http://www.westmar.org/>. We now offer online shopping, membership, and
reunion registration. Suggestions are always welcome.

Current Members: You will receive a postcard when it is time to renew
your membership. Please pass the form below on to other Westmar Alum
so they can be part of the momentum also.

What's Happening with You? Tell Us!

We are interested in knowing what has recently (or not so re-
cently) happened in your life. Promotions? Marriage? Births
or deaths? Honors or awards? Graduate degree? Semi- or
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Name _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

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Class year _____ Spouse also an alum _____

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News (attach a separate sheet if needed) _____

Return to: WAFAs
335 First Ave. S.W.
Le Mars, Iowa 51031
Or e-mail to: westmar@lemarscomm.net



Westmar Alumni & Friends Association

Name _____

Address _____

City, State, Zip _____

Telephone _____

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Attended Westmar _____ to _____ Class of _____

Membership fee: Single \$15.00 \$ _____

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(\$10.00 each)

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