



# Westmar University Alumni and Friends Association

Volume 11, Issue 3

August, 2009

## Two Successful Summer Reunions



Above: Some of the former Westmar football players gathered during the Friday evening Rock-N-Roll Party at the Le Mars pool for a picture.

Front row: Terry Christensen (1966), Lowell Ensey (1967), Milt Martin (coach), Chuck Pfaffle (1963).  
Back row: Dave Chittenden (1967), Lyle Buddenhagen (1965), Phil Langstraat (1965), Conrad Adam (1967), Phalen Schuler (1966), and Wendell McKenzie (1964).

Right: Sylvia (Feiock) Frahm (1959) and Marge (Cleveland) Kehrberg (1958) reminisce over scrapbooks at the 50-Year reunion of the Class of 1959. Everyone from 1957 through 1961 was invited to the weekend of hugs, handshakes, and catching up.

See more reunion photos on pages 4 and 5

### Westmar Alumni and Friends Association Board of Directors

Paul Coffin '75 (president)  
Leon Scott '66-'97 faculty  
Rosemary Radloff '93 & staff  
Milt Martin '53 & fac. '63-'97  
Jeff Neary '81  
Denise Kolker '75  
Gregory Mc Innis '92

The last board meetings for 2009 will be held on Oct. 20 at 7 p.m. in the Plymouth County Historical Museum's Welcome Room. All members are encouraged to participate in whatever way they can.

Alumni Research has conducted over 3,500 interviews with alumni. If they haven't contacted you, please call 1-800-299-1230 to be included in the new alumni directory scheduled to be published in March 2010. We don't want to leave anybody out.

### Inside this issue:

Bricks & Mortar & More	2
Alumni News & Deaths	3
July Reunion Photos	4
August Reunion Photos	5
Contact Information	6





# Bricks and Mortar and More

## Rex Frolkey – An unusual married student during the 1920s

A Deviation from the “Bricks and Mortar” with an emphasis on “More” by Dr. Wayne G. Marty

In the May Newsletter I opened my column about “Married Student Housing” with the words, “Apparently married students were rare in the early years of Western Union College...” The following notes some of the history that makes Rex Frolkey a truly unusual student for the 1920s.

Age of Rex      WU YB = Western Union Yearbook

April 21, 1889 –Rex Frolkey born to Frank and Ida Frolkey in Eddyville, NE

24 June 25, 1913 - Rex marries Eva L. Lohr - A Civil ceremony by a judge.

26 **1916 WU YB** - Rex is listed as a sophomore in the Western Union Academy

27 1916-1917 - Rex left school to serve in the Army during WW I

28 **1918 WU YB** - Rex is described as “another of our loyal Juniors. He is full of wit and humor and reminds a person somewhat of Abraham Lincoln in his appearance. He expects to make the ministry his life work. He hails from the sand-hills of Nebraska.”

Oct. 25, 1920 - Eva (First wife) dies at age 28

33 **1922 WU YB** - Rex is listed as a Senior in the Western Union Academy with recognized participation in Football, Basketball, a Cleric (pre-theological student) and presenter at a YMCA meeting with the topic, “A soldier’s appreciation of Christ.”

34 April 2, 1923 - Rex marries Clara Erickson (Age 40) of Le Mars, a daughter of John and Mary Erickson. Her father John and his brother Hans were immigrants from Sweden, who homesteaded west of Le Mars, became successful prominent farmers in Plymouth County, and provided the \$200 to build the first church at Crathorn (a town that did not survive) where Rex met Clara. This church later became the Plymouth Presbyterian church of today. Rex was listed as the “Supply pastor at the Presbyterian church at Crathorn...”

35 **1924 WU YB** - Under his picture as a Freshman at Western Union College are the words, “Rex has a motto ‘Slow but Steady wins the race.’ Rex is the only freshman who speaks from experience considering matrimony and his favorite song is ‘Home Sweet Home.’ His hobby is argumentation.”

36 **1925 WU YB** - Under his picture as a Sophomore is found “A good debater is one who takes the feathers from the wings of his imagination and puts them in the tail of his reason” His weakness is listed as Arguing. Rex is also pictured in the picture of “The Clerics” and is standing between fellow students Harry Kalas and G. O. Thompson who became President and Dean of Westmar College in the 1960s. Under the picture are the words “Year by year these men go out to face the real issues of life and then must find or devise the methods to cope with the problems.”

36 1925 - Rex and Clara adopted Nathan (Age 2) and Veatrice (Age 4) following the court directed removal from the alcoholic and abusive home of Rueben and Alice Lane.

37 **1926 WU YB** - Rex is pictured as a Junior and is also pictured as a KWUC radio announcer, tennis player and mem-



**Rex Frolkey at the microphone in the studio of KWUC located on the upper floor of Dubs Memorial Hall.**

ber of the Excelsior Literary Society.

38 **1927 WU YB** - As a senior Rex was the Student Council President and active in athletics, Science Club, Literary organizations, the KWUC radio station, and religious activities. His picture is in this yearbook eight times.

40 Sept. 30, 1929 - Rex dies by suicide with a pistol.

Rex apparently attended Western Union during seven academic years (three in the Academy and 4 in the College) over a period of 11 years (1916 – 1927) and was married during all but one of those years. In addition to his married life, and his active Western Union student life, he also served as Manager of the KSCJ radio station in Sioux City. His adopted son, Nathan, (Western Union graduate of 1945 and now age 86), remembers playing around the acoustical curtains in the KSCJ studio as a child and presumes that it may have been the Sioux City activity that created the circumstances that led to the “Double Life” for Rex.

While he was a respected pastor at the Crathorn church with the normal duties of Sunday services, marriages, funerals, and other pastoral expectations, Rex also, at some point, began to participate in another life in Sioux City that involved gambling, a love nest, and bank robberies. His wife, Clara, with some considerable wealth, made it possible for Rex to have a quality car. This vehicle made it possible for Rex to return quickly from a successful Bank Robbery and join the vigilantes as he went out “looking for himself.”

On Sept. 30, 1929 a new Graham-Paige car with an Illinois license plate placed over the Iowa plate was observed on the streets of Sioux Center. A curious bystander walked to the car and noted that it was registered to Rex Frolkey. So Rex was a certain suspect when the robbery was announced and observers had watched Rex leave the bank and drive away. Plymouth County authorities were alerted and they went directly to the Rex Frolkey home. There was total denial when Rex was accused at his home and all warrants for arrest were not in order so the officials left. When the Sioux County law officers arrived a short time later, Rex had left and headed west. He drove to a nearby farm, handed a roll of bills (\$423) to the farm resident declaring,

(Continued on page 3)



# Alumni News

## News

**1941 York-Mary Lou Warner** worked for 38 years as admission councilor and office manager at Otterbein Lebanon Retirement Community and was also the archivist/curator for the last 25 years.

**1955-Alvin H. Smith** graduated from Evangelical Theological Seminary in 1958 and has been pastor at several churches since then. He is currently at Friedens United Church of Christ in Nebraska.

**1958-Gary Stees** graduated from Wesley Theological Seminary in 1963 and has served as United Methodist pastor from 1963 to 1995; has been a Civil Air Patrol chaplain for 30 years; has been married for 51 years; and is currently driving a tour bus in the U.S. and Canada.

**1965-Gordon Klomps** received the 2008 George Haun award for coaching

from the Minnesota State High School Coaches Association

**1967-1975 faculty-Rosalind Mohnsen** was honored for 25 years as Music Director/Organist at Immaculate Conception Church in Malden, Mass. She continues to concertize on the organ, giving seven concerts last year.

**1970-Douglas Hallett** will appear in the October issue of *Cincinnati Magazine* as 2009 Five-Star: Best in Client Satisfaction, Wealth Manager.

**1990-Ron Spier** and wife **Nan (Larson) Spier** (1991) are parents of two children and live in Gretna, Neb. Ron works for Motion Industries and Nan works for Gretna Public Schools,

## Deaths

**1956 and faculty-Lloyd H. Molzen** passed away on Jan. 15, 2009 in Le Mars.

**1957-1975 faculty-Paul Knudtson** died on June 4, 2009 in Cedar Rapids, Iowa.

**1960-Norm Lang**, longtime Le Mars educator died July 25, 2009.

**1971-Patrick Holton, Sr.** of Le Mars died July 25, 2009.

**1972-Jane Marie Souhrada**, of LeRoy, Minn., passed away on August 10, 2009 as the result of a farm accident.

**1973-Charles Clark** of Le Mars died May 22, 2009 in Beatrice, Neb.

**1975-Fred Eiesland** died Aug. 7, 2009 in Le Mars, Iowa.

**1982-Steven Hilgenberg** died in Sioux Falls, S.D. on Feb. 23, 2007.

Please watch your local newspapers for news involving fellow Westmar alumni (including obituaries) and email or send it to us for publication.

## Alumni Office Has Phone

Thanks to the increase in memberships, the alumni office now has a telephone.

We can be reached during office hours, Tuesday through Friday, 1:00 to 4:30 p.m. at 712-546-8759. We also have an answering machine for times when we aren't in the office.

# 712-546-8759

**Rex Frolkey—**

(Continued from page 2)

"They are after me. I have done something dreadful." Rex then proceeded to the farm barn and shot himself.

There were hints and occasional suspicions of Rex's Sioux City Life but most were easily dispelled by his pious behavior while a student at Western Union and as a pastor following his graduation. Some of the 1929 news stories indicate that his wife Clara was totally unaware of the gambling life of Rex. However son Nathan, now age 87, who I visited with in Missouri on August 5, 2009, says that his mother, Clara, took her children to California when he was age 4 (1927) and was considering a divorce because of gambling debts that she had been covering for Rex. However they returned to Le Mars after only six months.

Clara raised her family in Le Mars, residing in the house just west of Union Hall. This house was sold to Westmar College in the 1970s and was renovated to become the location of the Art

## Westmar Car Restoration Work

We have learned that the 1941 "Real wood" International station wagon used by the college in the 1940s and 50s is now being fully restored in Colorado. Does anyone have memories to share about the use of this vehicle?



Department. Both adopted children attended Western Union College. Nathan graduated in 1945 and went on to a very successful teaching and school administration career that included years in Hospers, Le Mars, and Sutherland, Iowa plus many years in Arkansas and Missouri. He leads an active life, continues to reside in southern Missouri and is currently playing his euphonium regularly with a group of "old men" who perform at various events as "The Fossils." In the 1970s Nathan and his sister (now deceased) located their birth mother and there have been some major Lane family reunions to reestablish blood relative connections.

After adoption from an alcoholic home at age 2 and loss of his bank robber father to suicide at age 6, Nathan still says, "I could not have had a more wonderful life." I guess life can often be what we make it.

## WC Chorale Wins Ribbon

Frank Summerside entered the picture of the Chorale standing in front of the Iranian pavilion at Montreal's Expo 67 in the antique division of this summer's Plymouth County Fair. He gave a brief explanation on the entry card of the application process to the Dept. of State, the phone call to Thoren's only phone, at the time, outside Betty Lou Ratliff's studio and the caller's statement, "Westmar's Chorale has been chosen to represent the U.S. in Montreal, a choir who sings in the best St. Olaf tradition." The entry received a grand prize ribbon. LeRoy Waldo, a member of the group, was one of the fair goers who visited the exhibit.



# Decade of 1960s and Football Reunion

July 10-12, 2009



Wendell McKenzie (1964), James Gebhart (1958), Joseph Samojedny (1969), Tony Pitkin (1962), and Donald Huggins (1966), were all recipients of the Stanley Short Award during their days at Westmar College.



Remembering fond memories and telling stories was the main theme of the reunion.



Talking over old times.



The campus tour, lead by Wayne Marty, attracted many.



Even after the tables where taken down and the chairs put away, the visiting went on.



Ruth (Farley) Nelson '67, Sue (Handorf) Koster '67, Lois (Moeller) Campbell '67, Virginia (Dickey) James '67, and Dixie (Dahl) Kooiker '67 enjoy the pool during the Rock 'n' Roll Party. (*Photo contributed*)



# 50-Year Reunion—Class of 1959

August 14-16, 2009



Lois (Harrison Foster) Denham, the oldest member of the graduating class of 1959 celebrates her 88th birthday with her daughter, Virginia (Foster) McGregor (1969) on August 15 at the reunion.



Guest of Honor, Betty Lou Larson, at the piano.



During a campus tour, guided by Dr. Wayne Marty, the "Class of 1959" on the upper left side of the Westmar Memorial Park sign was pointed out.



Jack was a naughty boy who sold the cow for a handful of beans in "Jack and the Real Flip Bean Stock," the Freshman year talent skit put on by members of the Class of 1959.

**Reunion photos by Mary Holub**

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WESTMAR UNIVERSITY ALUMNI & FRIENDS  
ASSOCIATION  
335 FIRST AVENUE S.W.  
LE MARS, IOWA 51031



**Alumni Office Staff**

Janice (Dunbar) Kooiker '67: Executive Director  
Mary Holub: Communications Director and  
Newsletter Editor

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

**Contact us!**  
**WAFA@WestmarCollege.org**  
**http://www.WestmarCollege.org/**  
**712-546-8759**

**What's Happening with You? Tell Us!**

We are interested in knowing what has recently (or not so recently) happened in your life. Promotions? Marriage? Births or deaths? Honors or awards? Graduate degree? Semi- or full retirement? Pass on the information so we can print it and spread the good news!

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_

Phone \_\_\_\_\_ E-mail \_\_\_\_\_

Class year \_\_\_\_\_ Spouse also an alum \_\_\_\_\_

Other relatives also alums \_\_\_\_\_

News (attach a separate sheet if needed )  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Return to: WAFA

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Be sure to check out our ever-changing website at:  
<http://www.WestmarCollege.org/>. We 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.

**Westmar University Alumni & Friends Assoc.**

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

City, State, Zip \_\_\_\_\_

Telephone \_\_\_\_\_

E-mail address, if available \_\_\_\_\_

Can we e-mail your newsletter?  Yes  No

Attended Westmar \_\_\_\_\_ to \_\_\_\_\_ Class of \_\_\_\_\_

**Membership fee:**      **Single \$15.00** \$ \_\_\_\_\_

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General donation to help sustain your  
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