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WORLD WAR II VETERANS AT HUNTER COLLEGE

by Wilma Casella

When I arrived for classes at the beginning of my junior year at Hunter, the hallways and elevators were abuzz with rumors: Did you hear? Did you see the news? Did you read the news on the faculty bulletin board? Beginning this term, Hunter is to become a co-ed school to accommodate the large numbers of returning World War II veterans.

Everyone was upset, especially the professors who, in their classes, discussed this terrible change for the all-female college. Their concerns were that many of these veterans had served in the jungle for years and therefore were not aware of how to behave with “the young ladies of Hunter.” The culture of the college would also change for the worse. These discussions made us fearful of the returning veterans.

Hunter College was established in 1875 by Thomas Hunter as a two-year

teachers college for young women, the children of the growing immigrant population. Hunter had two daughters who were attending a private school for “young ladies” to learn the feminine arts of sewing, crocheting, knitting, art history, music and painting. He wanted a true education for them to prepare them to teach in the growing system of public education.

Later, Hunter and his board added two more years to make Hunter a four-year college. At that point, Hunter became part of New York City’s college system with City College a bastion for male students and Hunter for female students. Brooklyn and Queens Colleges, also part of the system, were co-educational. Students were primarily the children of poor and working-class immigrants. Tuition was free. During my years at Hunter (1945-1949), registration was \$5 a semester, \$8 for science majors. Textbooks were loaned free and returned to the Book Room at the end of each semester.

With the entrance of the first veterans, tensions arose, and many professors and students were uncomfortable. The cafeteria showed this tension with “an invisible wall” down the middle of the room. All the veterans sat on one side, laughing and talking; the female students were on the other side, talking quietly or playing bridge. Within six months, “the invisible wall” came crashing down, and the veterans and female students started to mix comfortably. Within a year, we began to hear of engagements and marriages!

Despite this social change, the culture still had bumps, with one glaring and silly rule: professors were still chaperoning all dances taking place at Hunter! In 1948, I was chair of the social science club. My members and I were asked to assist the professors in chaperoning and keeping veterans out of certain areas. The chief enforcer, a professor of science, approached me and told me that there were men in the kitchen, an area off limits to them. I was told to go and ask them to leave! As I walked toward the kitchen, I thought how stupid these archaic rules were and wondered what I would say to the veterans.

Walking into the kitchen, I noticed four men standing by a table with a filled punch bowl. I looked at the four men and chose the one with the gentle-looking eyes. I approached him

and asked if he would carry the punch bowl to the table in the dance hall. He smiled and said yes, and we began our walk down the hall.

Walking toward us were two professors. I was a student of one of them and the veteran was a student of the other one. Both said, in unison, “You finally met one another. We were looking for both of you to introduce you to each other.” They saw the puzzled looks on our faces as they said: “Bernard Casella meet Wilma Casella—are you related?”

And this is how I met my future husband. We quickly disposed of the punch bowl, found a quiet corner to talk about our families, confirmed that we were not related, and soon began dating.

I graduated one year later, Bernie in June 1950. We married two weeks after his graduation and left for a three-month honeymoon in Italy visiting grandparents, aunts, uncles, cousins and traveling throughout the country.

We returned to Italy yearly and began visiting other European countries. We had a wonderful, happy marriage which lasted sixty-three and a half years.

A RARE MUSEUM FIND by Leslie Wendel

I was with a blind date when I met my husband at a party in October 1956. A recent college graduate, I was living in an apartment in Philadelphia and working at N.W. Ayer Advertising. He was a second-year MBA student at The Wharton School at Penn.

It was an election year, and I was wearing an “I like Ike” button. My date had gone to the men’s room when this total stranger walked up to me with his hand out.

“How do you do? My name is Dwight D. Eisenhower, and I’m so glad to see you’re planning to vote for me,” he said as we shook hands.

Well, I thought that was an original pick-up line, and he was a very attractive man, so I started talking to him.

He quickly steered us to a far corner of the room, where we were hidden behind a large display case. (The party was at the University of Pennsylvania Museum—in the Chinese Rotunda with the huge, world’s *third-largest* crystal ball in a glass case in the middle of the room.)

I remember thinking, “My date may not find me here for a while.” And, he didn’t. The attractive stranger and I

enjoyed a lively conversation for perhaps 45 minutes.

Back in my apartment later that night, I said to my roommate, “I met the most marvelous man tonight. I can’t remember his last name, but I’m going to marry him.”

He called the next morning, and I invited him over for breakfast. I served him lamb chops for breakfast, unaware that lamb chops were one of his favorite foods. After breakfast, he invited me to the Rodin Museum, unaware that Rodin was one of my favorite artists.

We were married seven months later and continued to enjoy lively conversations, lamb chops and museums for the next 53 years.

And, as a nod to the room where we met, we made a point of visiting the world’s *second- or third-largest* or *second- or third-tallest* objects on our travels, foreign and domestic.

I don’t remember the name of the little town in Indiana with the world’s *second-tallest* smoke stack, but it was a particular favorite of ours—much better, we always thought, whenever we drove through the town, than only having the world’s *third-tallest* smoke stack.

MEANT TO BE

by Sue Tinsman

In 1933, when I was 10 years old, we lived near Doylestown, PA, in the little town of Holicong. One day, the Doylestown Nature Club announced an afternoon trip on a mule-drawn barge on the canal next to the Delaware River, from New Hope to Lumberville. A group of us, all students from Buckingham Friends School, signed up for the trip.

When the barge got to Lumberville, two young boys heard the conch shell signal from the barge and came down to open the gates of the lock in the canal.

Those two boys were Bill Tinsman and his brother, Dan. The Tinsmans' house faced the river near the boat landing, and when Bill's mother knew anyone on the barge, she used to invite them up to her lawn to enjoy her home-made cookies.

That day, all of us on board were invited for cookies. I don't particularly remember seeing Bill when we were invited to the house, but he must have remembered me because, a couple of days later, I got a phone call from him. He asked me to a family dance at nearby Phillips Mill. The dance was on a holiday weekend, Saturday, July 3.

Of course, since I was only 10 years old, my mother said, "absolutely not."

But, I assured her the Tinsmans were a well-known, nice family. I said Bill's brother, Dan, was going to be at the dance, and eventually, I talked her into letting me go.

That was our first date. Bill was 14, four years older than I was, and a student at Doylestown High School.

One of the dances we did was "the shoe dance." The girls would throw one of their shoes in the middle of the room, and the boys would each pick up a shoe and then dance with its owner.

We also went to dancing classes at Phillips Mill. Bill said the only reason he went was that I was going.

Later, when Bill got his driver's license, he and his friends used to come to Buckingham School to have lunch with me.

Then, in 1936, my family moved to California. We were in California four years, and, during that time, Bill and I wrote to each other almost every week, even though Bill had a serious relationship with a girl when he was at Rutgers. And, while we were in California, I didn't exactly sit at home all the time.

We moved back to Bucks County in

1940, and Bill and I were married on July 3, 1943—10 years to the day after that first date.

We had a wonderful, wonderful marriage for 67 years. So, I guess it was meant to be.

MAX

by Yoma Ullman

When I graduated from my English university, one of relatively few girls to do so at that time, I looked for a job. I was told I might get one with the Coal Board, where I would research areas about to be mined. I had other ideas and interviewed for a job with Shell Oil in London. Shell was unusual in that it was said to promote regardless of gender. I would start as a file clerk and rise to who knew what? My father had been an administrator in an oil company, so I inherited an interest in that field.

Then my professor, known as my Moral Tutor, suggested me to a friend of hers, Max, who was looking for a research assistant. He was a noted professor of international relations and had positions at Nuffield College, a relatively new college, and All Souls, an ancient college that barely allowed women on the premises.

I no longer remember my reasoning process, if I had one, but I took the job with Max. I don't remember an interview. I only remember the shame

of being female as I went through the gates of All Souls to his office.

Not long after I started work, Max invited me to lunch at a well-known pub in Oxford, the Turf. I didn't have the wit to realize that Max was after more than my brain. I didn't think anyone that old would be interested. Besides which, my father had brought me up to respect professors, and three years of being taught by mostly women hadn't disabused me.

In England at that time, it was rude to approach people when they were eating together, but the tall, handsome American who arrived halfway through our lunch had yet to learn that, even after several years of study in England as a Rhodes Scholar. He joined our party of two without excuses. In after years, Max refused to believe that this man, Dick, and I had never met before. It is true that during lunch, Dick and I agreed to go to the Brussels World's Fair together, so his assumption had some basis.

Dick was, in fact, Max's star graduate student at the time and dependent on Max for being piloted through writing a PhD dissertation. Max, to his great credit, never stood in Dick's way as Dick removed me from his orbit.

Dick got his PhD, I married him, and Max attended the wedding—with his wife.

FOR BETTER, FOR WORSE

by Marcie White

I came back from my honeymoon with two broken arms; my husband had one broken arm. Here's what happened.

Derek and I were married February 13, 1965, in my home church in Mt. Lebanon, PA. We had just started our jobs in September and had very little money for a fancy honeymoon. I was a fifth-grade teacher, and Derek was in a management training program at a bank.

We flew to Florida, rented a bright red Mustang convertible, drove around north central Florida, and ended the week in Atlanta. Several hours before we were to catch our plane to come home, we visited Derek's fraternity brother, Tom, who had been an usher in our wedding. We turned in our car because Tom had agreed to drive us to the airport.

During their college days, Derek and Tom had shared ownership in a couple of motorcycles, and Tom had one in Atlanta. He offered to lend it to us (I had never been on a motorcycle), and off we went.

At the end of our 45-minute ride, about to turn into Tom's driveway before heading to the airport, we came around a curve. That's when we

skidded on some gravel (or maybe I leaned too far?), and we both went flying across the road.

The first oncoming car was driven by a doctor, who first made sure we were both conscious (we weren't wearing helmets). He said we had to go to the local emergency room. Tom drove us there and stayed with us.

Fortunately, an orthopedic doctor who specialized in hands and wrists was on call. The verdict: two broken arms for me and one for Derek. The end result was that Derek's left arm was in a cast and both my arms were in casts. I also had a knee that was so badly bruised I could hardly stand up. Derek had to call his brand new father-in-law from the emergency room to tell him our return would be delayed a couple of days.

When we finally got home, Derek was able to go to work right away, but his new mother-in-law had to drive him both ways. (We both had stick shift cars!) Mom then had to come back to our apartment, help me dress, then take me over to her house for the day.

I was out of work for three weeks and went back to teaching with one cast on for another three weeks. Needless to say there was a lot of kidding from everyone—from my students to my colleagues!

What a way to start a marriage of

almost 51 years. We had the “worse” before the “better.”

P.S. The motorcycle had \$10 worth of damage and was in working order immediately. I have never been on a motorcycle since.

MY ADOPTED TREE

by Rhoda Rice

When I first met her, she stood tall, slender and dignified, stretching upward beyond my second floor balcony. She was rare and special, as there were no other trees like her in my courtyard.

She greeted me each morning as I opened my curtains to welcome the new day. Her presence in front of my window was comforting and friendly. I felt that we were uniquely connected.

She became home to families of squirrels that nested in her highest branches. I had a love/hate relationship with the squirrels: they entertained me with their scurrying antics, at the same time chewing on my flowers.

Yet, my tree welcomed them home each day, providing shelter and protection from those of us who did not appreciate them. But something happened to my tree. She was slowly dying.

Bit by bit, she slipped away. The summer heat was the final assault, as she suffered from the long drought and never seemed to recover. Over the summer, one large branch after another kept losing its vigor, luster and leaves and needed pruning. I came to terms with the fact she was coming to the end of her life. Finally, she was taken down. I miss her!

SAILING TO TRENTON

by John Silver

Budding leaves
barely waving
their solitary journey to the sun.
We crept through darkened caverns,
looking for light.
The crusty soil below us,
resting in the noonday sun,
bubbled from tie to tie,
emitting its ancient coal-tar seams
on the trunks and the leaves and
the weeds by my side.

*And the Lady in the long
Bloomingdale's dress
wisped her way from car to car,
like Meryl Streep from afar.*

Nourished by Nature,
I saw the towns and the trestles
their gossamer gowns waving
in the sun
like Halloween ghosts, all dressed up
for a singular play in the day,

greeting my journey with a knowing smile.

*And the Lady in the long
dressing room gown
sailed through the car,
backwards and frontwards,
unaware of the rails below.*

How have we come here, I
wondered aloud,
roofless in a world of color and class
and luxuriant streams?
How have we helped the leaves
to turn
or the children to learn who they are?

Lurching to New Brunswick,
generations of thoughts and hopes
“Of what is past, passing, or to come”
spilled to the platform,
like carpenter ants returning.

*And the Lady in the long
diaphanous gown
floated like Venus
on the spew of the sea.*

Here will I sing my sailing song,
hard to the rails and the secret ties
and the suffering worms below.
Here will I echo
my Soul of Souls
what iron and concrete
and worms all knew
from the hot pot
of their common birth
that touching hands can never die
nor caring hearts decay.

BUSTER THE HORSE by Kay Silberfeld

After I stopped being an art restorer, I had a short second career as a horseback riding instructor, teaching children from special education classes in Washington, DC, public schools.

They came to the Horse Center in Rock Creek Park once a week for six weeks. Each session included riding lessons and “ground-school.” The latter could involve learning how to groom a horse or could— for these were inner-city kids—just mean letting them run loose in the woods.

Darnel came several years in a row with his class from a school for the blind. On his first day back after a year’s break, he immediately asked about Buster, the horse he’d ridden the year before. I assured him that Buster was waiting for him in the riding ring, but first we were going to tour the stables.

Impatiently, he kept asking “When are we going to see Buster?” The only time he was at all mollified was when he had a chance to inspect Buster’s empty stall, feeling his way around its walls.

Finally, I told him that now we were going to the riding ring. He pulled me along in growing excitement as we entered the ring and went over to Buster.

Putting his arms around Buster's neck, Darnel said: "Hello, Buster. I'm back!"

THE THRILL OF A LIFETIME

by Henry Martin

When I was a young man hoping to become a professional cartoonist, my first studio was in the second bedroom of our small apartment in Princeton, NJ. I worked there until the advent of our first child, Ann. When she arrived, I was lucky to find a small one-room building for rent just a block from the university in downtown Princeton. It had recently been a tailor's shop. When the tailor died, his family put it up for rent, and I ended up working there happily for 40 years. When I eventually moved my office back home, the children were grown and gone and had established homes of their own.

The little shop had been perfect for my needs. It was located two miles from my home, so in warm weather I could ride my bike to work. In cold weather, I drove my Volkswagen to easy parking just across the street from the shop.

Usually, I didn't go to the office on weekends, saving those days to enjoy my family or work in the garden. However, one weekend when I was in the office finishing a special

assignment, the phone rang and, resisting the urge to answer with something silly, I said simply, "Good morning, Henry Martin speaking." After a pause, a voice said, "Good morning, Mr. Martin. This is Charles Scribner of Charles Scribner's Sons." He was calling to say he'd be delighted to publish the collection of business cartoons I had recently submitted to them.

Wow! What a happy surprise! To think the head of Scribner's Sons *himself* was calling to give me the happy news. In fact, it was the thrill of a lifetime. After a short chat, he suggested that the next time I was in the city I could meet him for lunch to discuss details of publishing the book. We set a date, and I met him a week later in his office atop the Scribner Book Store on Fifth Avenue.

We chatted about the project for a few minutes before we set out on foot for his club, several blocks away on the west side of Park Avenue. We had a pleasant lunch and chat before returning to his office, where he introduced me to a young woman who was to become the editor of the book. She and Mr. Scribner agreed that there were enough cartoons to fill two books: one with cartoons on business and the other with cartoons on domestic life. The first book was to be called *Good News/Bad News*, the title coming from my daily syndicated newspaper panel, and the

second to be called *Yak! Yak! Yak!*
Blah! Blah! Blah!, the caption from
one of the cartoons.

When *Good News/Bad News* came
out, Scribner's set me up in their
store at a table stacked high with
copies of the book for me to
autograph. To top this off, they
devoted one entire window of the
store to a display of the book. What
a send-off! This was over the top for
a young cartoonist from the hills of
Kentucky.

During the book-signing, I met Celia
Somers, the head salesperson at
Scribner's, who led my wife Edie and
me to meet someone who just
happened to be in the store. That
someone turned out to be Peg
Bracken, the author of *The I Hate to
Cook Book*.

Edie, Peg, and I became fast friends.
Peg lived in Portland, OR, but
frequently came to New York on
business and soon made our home in
Princeton her New York base.

One year, Edie's class at Mt. Holyoke
offered a trip to Vienna, and we asked
Peg if she would care to join us. She
said she would be delighted, and the
three of us met in New York for the
flight to Vienna. It was a fabulous
tour, and Peg was a happy addition to
the group, keeping us all laughing.

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