

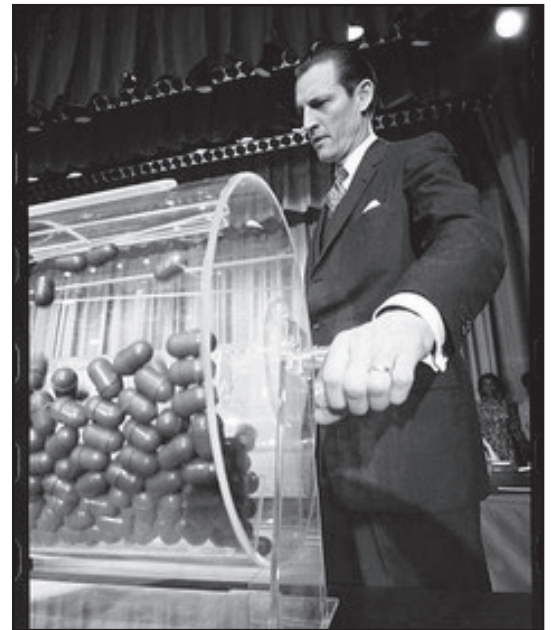
Nov. 22-30, 1969

By Tom Bodle

National attention still focused on Vietnam during the final week of November, 1969. Lt. William Calley was formally charged with the massacre of over 100 Vietnamese civilians at My Lai and his court martial was looming. Congress also had enacted a change in the military draft. A lottery based upon the birthdate of those of draft age was to be established and implemented immediately. President Nixon signed the bill on November 26th and the first lottery would take place December 1st. As men coming of draft age during this time, the lottery impacted our plans for our post high school education and careers.

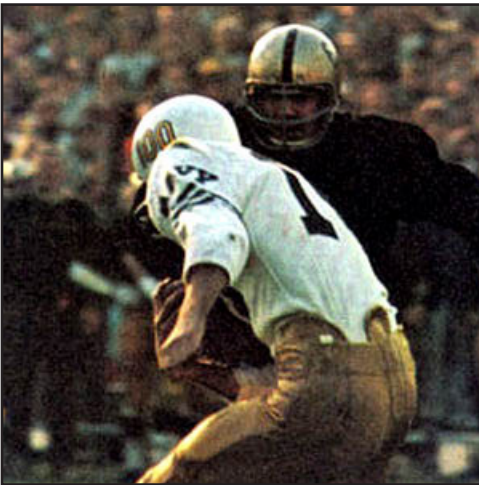
The Beatles returned to the top of the musical charts this week with their song "Come Together." An ironic title in an era of divisiveness, John Lennon had originally written the lyrics as a campaign song for Timothy Leary's California governor candidacy.

In spite of all of the national political discord, this was Thanksgiving week and the nation set to celebrate its most revered holiday. The savory smells of roasted turkey, mashed potatoes, yams, stuffing and pumpkin pie permeated the homes of millions of Americans. In 1969, the cost of such a feast was \$8.15 per average size family. Most retailers were closed, as were businesses, allowing Americans to sleep in, relax and enjoy family and friends. During the morning, parades were broadcasted on national television with Detroit and Philadelphia being showcased. It was New York's Macy's Department store that displayed the granddaddy of holiday parades with its three hours of bands, floats and massive balloons which ended at Herald Square and 34th street. Santa Claus arrived just in time for football lovers to change the channel and watch the Detroit Lions host their traditional Thanksgiving football game. 1969's game was memorable, not for the score, as the Minnesota Vikings proved why they were the best team in the NFL with a 27-0 shut out of the Lions, but for the winter storm that hit Detroit making field conditions impossible.





After parades, football and a sumptuous meal, movie theaters offered a variety of options, the most popular at Thanksgiving was the western drama “The Undefeated”, starring John Wayne and Rock Hudson. Those who wished to stay home, watched the Dallas Cowboys tie the San Francisco 49ers 24-24 in NFL action.



In 1969, the last week of November was the climax of the college football season. The week was bookended with two storied rivalry games. On November 22nd, Ohio State led by legendary coach Woody Hayes and stars such as Rex Kern and Jack Tatum travelled to “that school up north” to match up against Michigan. The Buckeyes were defending national champs, on a twenty-two game win streak, rated number 1 in the nation and were highly favored against the number 12 Wolverines, coached by first year head coach Bo Shembechler. Buoyed by a seventeen point second quarter and a tenacious defense that held OSU to 12 points, Michigan shocked the football world with a 24-12 victory. This would be the first of the fabled Bo-Woody “100 yard wars.”

The closing bookend game was the 70th annual match-up of Army versus Navy. The Golden Knights prevailed in a not so interesting 27-0 shutout of the Midshipman. Within this week college awards were given. Oklahoma’s running back Steve Owens was awarded the Heisman Trophy at its annual presentation on Thanksgiving eve.



St. Joseph students welcomed Thanksgiving week, for after a long and eventful fall, there would only be three days of school and a welcomed respite from studies. Viking basketball would give the St. Joe sports addicts several opportunities to continue their spirit. On Thanksgiving eve, the hoopsters visited nearby Wickliffe High School. In a “relay” challenge which began in 1967, the senior class took on a team of underclassmen, anchored mostly by juniors, in a dribble relay from St. Joe to Wickliffe High. Traversing the seven mile route, the seniors took 50 minutes to cover the distance. The underclass bounced in 5 minutes later, giving the seniors the mythical trophy. The basketball team then proceeded to bounce the Blue Devils, 82-46. Saturday, the team travelled east on I-90 to Erie to encounter Memorial Tech. It took awhile for the Vikings to adjust their travel legs against the Centaurs, but they righted their game to top Tech 77-62. Entering December, the hoopsters were not disappointing their fans, sporting a 3-0 record and averaging an entertaining 82 points per game.



The marching band represented St. Joe’s pride and holiday spirit as a conclusion to Thanksgiving celebrations. On Saturday November 29th, in front of thousands of holiday shoppers, the band strutted their stuff in the WIXY 1260-May Company Christmas parade down Euclid Avenue. The Thanksgiving break was complete and the Christmas season was about to begin.