

## February 1-7, 1970

By Tom Bodle

On a hillside in Punxsutawney, Pennsylvania, February 2, 1970, the first Monday of February, a caravan of members of a group known as “the Groundhog Club”, climbed up to the winter den of Phil. Since 1887, Phil and his groundhog ancestors had resided in this area known as “Gobbler’s Knob.” On this mid winter’s day, people throughout the region relied on Phil’s “prodigious prognostication” for the remainder of the winter. As club members, wearing top hats and tails approached the lair, a traditional scepter was used to knock on Phil’s door. Upon awakening from his hibernation, Phil exited his home, but did not see his shadow, thus proclaiming “an early spring” for 1970!

On the shores of Lake Erie, just 150 miles to the northwest of Punxsutawney, the weather was not so spring-like. Students, arriving this first day of the week at St. Joseph High School, were greeted by temperatures plummeting from the low 40’s into the 20’s as snow began to fly and accumulate about an inch.

Nationally, this was another big week in sports. Louisiana State’s premier guard, Pete Maravich had record setting days on the basketball court. In an era before the three point arc, “Pistol Pete” set an NCAA record, being the first to break the 3000 point mark in history. That same week, he also netted 69 points, unfortunately in a Tigers’ loss. Figure skating also highlighted the early days of February. Janet Lynn and Tim Woods captured the U.S. Figure Skating Championships.

In entertainment this week, the 27th Golden Globe Awards ceremony was held. John Wayne and Genevieve Bujold took best actor trophies, while “Anne of a Thousand Days” captured the best film. Premiering at movie theaters this week was “Patton”. George C. Scott starred in the title role, which would become a blockbuster hit, a classic and earn 8 Academy Awards, including “Best Picture.” Sadly this week, a Saturday night staple, “The Hollywood Palace” would be broadcasted for the final time.





This first week of February held great anticipation for professional basketball fans in northern Ohio. Rabid hoops fans were void of a professional team since the early 1960's when George Steinbrenner had owned the Cleveland Pipers in the short lived American Basketball League. The National Basketball Association was about to add four teams to their existing fourteen. Local entrepreneur Nick Mileti gathered an ownership group under his lead. Successfully making an offer, Cleveland would join Buffalo, Portland and Houston as new franchises in the NBA. This new organization would have the next seven months to secure a name, a home court, an administrative staff, a coaching staff and draft members for a team to be ready for its inaugural season starting in October.

A new number one single rocked the local radio stations again, in a seemingly carousel of new music. "Venus" by "Shocking Blue" nudged the Jackson Five from the top spot.



With but four months until graduation, many items were still on our senior class agenda. In a senior class meeting of homeroom representatives this week, class president Bob Biscup led a discussion on pertinent items. Class secretary Ralph ("Rock") Troha followed up the meeting with a class newsletter. A topic which was of occurring issue was the Senior Lounge. The Lounge was established through an effort spearheaded as campaign promises of our senior class officers. The school administration and Student Council cooperated in the creation of the lounge. With the new academic schedule, which provided unstructured time, the lounge could be used for relaxation as a senior privilege. A jukebox, pinball machine and soda machine were installed for entertainment. Unfortunately, rowdy behavior, lack of care for the furniture and garbage often strewn about caused the lounge to be closed three times. Class moderator Br. Dave Franklin offered one more opportunity to make the lounge a reality for our class. "Rock's" newsletter explained that senior Rich Greene and those seniors who frequented the lounge would be asked to form a committee to police the lounge. Rules were posted and the lounge was open once again.

The Senior Prom committee also presented the status of the events which would highlight prom weekend. "The Al Sarafini" orchestra had been contracted for Friday June 12th, but the hall was still in negotiation. Also plans for activities on Saturday and Sunday which would involve an after prom, picnic and Cedar Point were still in the works. Tri-chairmen Don Dailey, Vince Continenza and Nick Cianciola were laying the groundwork for prom time.

Leaving a legacy at St. Joseph High School was the goal of every graduating class. Senior projects had become a tradition of the classes before us. Our class officers wished our legacy to be that all class members could attend the senior prom at minimal cost. It is with this in mind that the Christmas tree sale and the Hoolihan and Big Chuck basketball game were used as fundraisers. Over \$1200 had been



raised by this first week of February and several other fundraisers were on the horizon. The administration explained to the class officers, that traditionally the “senior project” was to be used for an “impactful gift” to the school, something that was tangible for the benefit of the entire community. Past gifts were about \$500. “Rock’s” newsletter gave a detailed account as to what type of gifts could be given. Senior members offered to canvass academic departments for ideas and come together with the officers to decide on an impactful gift from our class.



Another major topic on the meeting’s agenda was that of spirit at basketball games. As the season was reaching its end and the state tournament was around the corner, the student council decided to add male cheerleaders to compliment our six female member squad. With high hopes for the hoopsters, a unified effort by our cheering section was needed. Three senior and three junior members were to be chosen. Phil Herrick would announce to the school the procedures for gaining a spot. Criteria for practice and cheers were based on that of the female program. The new mixed squad would lead the cheering section at the final home games and into the play-offs.

Two weeks were left in the regular winter sports season. The St. Edward Eagles, our biggest athletic rival, would be visiting the “Purple Palace” for a basketball contest on February 6th. In a December match-up in the “Eagle’s nest”, St. Joe’s battled to come away with a five point win. Much more was on the line this time. The Vikings needed a victory to secure a tie with Padua for the Crown Conference championship. The school prepared for the game with an in-school rally. The hype was needed, as St. Ed’s once again battled the full 32 minutes, trying to deprive our hoopers of first place. In the end, with Jim Hill’s 19 points leading the way, St. Joe’s came away victorious 70-65 and secured a tie for the Crown Conference title.

The wrestlers also were winding down their regular season. With two weeks left, University School was taken down 34-8 and Padua 31-9. Heavyweight Jeff Myers continued his unbeaten ways and the team improved to 7-2-2.

A week after Punxsutawney Phil’s prediction, northern Ohio was still in the midst of winter. Cloudy, snow on the ground and temperatures around freezing. Apparently, Phil’s prediction of an “early spring” was just a myth.