

August, 1969

By Tom Bodle

As the dog days of August arrived in 1969, Vikings were cherishing their last week of summer vacation prior to a new school year.

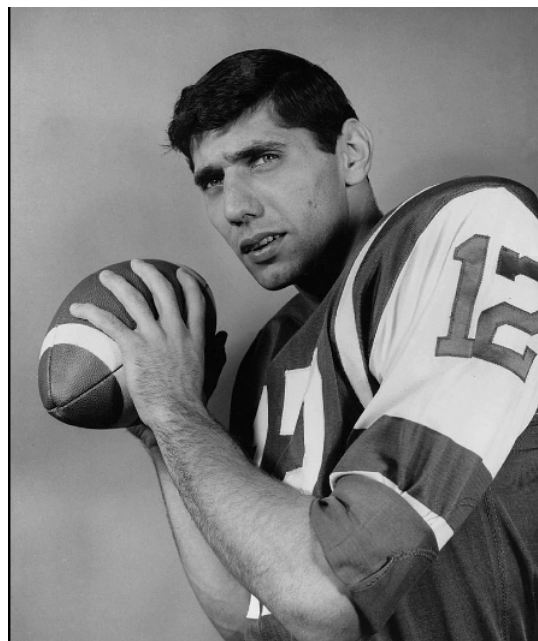
Headlining world news was the escalating violence between Catholics and Protestants in the cities of Northern Ireland. In what has been labelled “the Troubles” three days of clashes in the Battle of Bogside, August 11-14, led to London sending British troops to quell the violence and restore order. A temporary calm only led to continued disruptions which later led to more British troops and many years of antagonism between Catholics and Protestants.

On August 9th, Americans woke up to read about the gruesome murder in Los Angeles of actress Sharon Tate, her unborn child and four friends at the hands of Charles Manson’s cult family. The investigation, trial and sentencing of cult members became sensationalized fodder for media in the many years after the event and into current times.

Charles Manson strangely looking like Bill Gabrenya. Sharon Tate...just looking beautiful. Hurricane Camille was also a major national story in August of 1969. On August 17th, Camille lashed out on the Gulf Coast taking 259 lives in Alabama, Mississippi and Louisiana. It was one of the most impactful storms on record.

In sports, pro football was embarking on its last season as two leagues (the AFL and NFL). The pre-season began with the College All-star team playing the NFL champions at Chicago’s Soldier Field in the traditional pre-season opener.

Joe Namath led the New York Jets into the game after their stunning upset of the Baltimore Colts in the 1969 Super Bowl. The collegians pressed the champs to the limit, finally succumbing 26-24. Ray Floyd defeated Gary Player by one stroke to win the PGA golf championship. Bowie Kuhn was selected to become the major league baseball commissioner.





In a summer of extraordinary musical festivals, a small dairy farm in New York State, owned by Max Yasgur, became the site of the cultural event of the century, Woodstock. Richie Havens led off the nearly four day event at 5 p.m. on Friday August 15th. Over the next 66 hours thirty-four acts played before an ever increasing crowd that surpassed 450,000. The attendees reveled in music and feeling good in spite of periods of rain and inconveniences from lack of restroom facilities and shelters. Jimi Hendrix concluded the event at 11:10 a.m. on August 18th. Included in his set was the iconic electric guitar version of the National Anthem.



By the first part of August, St. Joes had ended its summer school schedule, but other activities abounded. The Lake Shore Musical Theater, under producer Dan Pournaras, presented the musical "Bye-Bye Birdie" on our stage. The entourage included many St. Joe actors and musicians and starred class of '69 members Joe Dougherty and Tim Whelan. The class of '69 also sponsored an end of summer mixer featuring the popular band, Montage. The event raised over \$2000 for Parmadale. Other music was about to be made as Norm Novak took his marching Vikings to band camp.



Mike Pausic was the drum major who would lead over 180 musicians through their "basic training" and into the performance season. Fall sports teams began a year of high expectations. The varsity football team opened their two-a-day practices on August 15th. Through several weeks of working out in the August heat and humidity, the gridders defeated Valley Forge and Cleveland JFK and tied Shaw in pre-season scrimmages in preparation for continuing the varsity undefeated streak beyond the 10-0 '68 season.

The cross country team also had high expectations. Jim Stanley, John Schmidt and Ken Udovic were three major contributors to the '68 state championship and were training hard with their teammates toward a repeat run at the states.



The hallowed halls themselves were not without some major changes. A closed circuit television studio was established with a studio and control room. Classrooms were wired and monitors were placed in many of the classrooms.

Several academic departments created new offices and "learning centers" to establish study areas for students during the unstructured time periods imbedded in the new master schedule. The new schedule was based on a set of "mods" rather than the traditional periods. Classes might be five days of one mod, or several days of double mods. Certain classes used large group and small group scheduling. As we Vikings scrambled to finish our summer reading and squeeze out the last few days of summer fun, new and exciting things were awaiting us at the corner of East 185th and Lake Shore.