

March 22-April 4, 1970

By Tom Bodle

After three quarters of a very active school year had been completed, it was time for a break, spring break. Unfortunately, “Mother Nature” forgot to provide spring. Palm Sunday, March 22nd, dawned with temperatures in the low 30’s and snow on the ground. Holy Week followed with below normal temperatures. Easter was celebrated primarily indoors as the high for the day was only 31 degrees. At least northern Ohio was spared from the snowstorm that walloped the Hudson Valley of New York. The legendary “Easter Snow of 1970” piled four inches to a foot of snow, snarling traffic, cancelling activities and closing schools.

As Vikings spent their break picking up extra hours at work, attending Holy Week services at their parishes and some being able to escape to the Florida sun, several events made world headlines. On March 28th, a massive earthquake rocked Turkey. Over 1000 people perished. Tensions flared in Belfast, Northern Ireland. A parade by the “Orange Order” on March 31st was protested by Catholics. The confrontation brought in British troops. Extreme measures of blockades, tear gas and arrests were used by the military. Several days passed with turmoil in the streets of Belfast before calm was restored.

Several aerospace milestones occurred during this time. Explorer 1, an early U.S. satellite, returned to Earth after twelve years in orbit. Launching for the first time was the Concorde supersonic airliner. Its maiden voyage this week was the first for a passenger aircraft. The Concorde would traverse the Atlantic at speeds close to 700 mph.

This period of time also presented notable entertainment items. Billboard magazine’s “Song of the Year” was presented to Conway Twitty for his “Hello Darlin.” The Beatles’ drummer, Ringo Starr, released his first solo album, “Sentimental Journey.” The documentary film “Woodstock” was released to movie theaters, becoming an instant draw. Over 35 million would view this





cinematic recount of the 1969 “Woodstock Music Festival” over the coming year. On Broadway, the musical “Applause” debuted. It would soon be highly acclaimed and have a 900 performance run.



Major sporting events were also happening during this March-April transition. The National Basketball Association concluded its regular season on March 22nd. Eight teams would qualify for the play-offs. The New York Knicks were the gems of the league, sporting a 60-22 record and topping the East Division. The West was taken by the Atlanta Hawks, but looming behind them was the L.A. Lakers, anchored by Wilt Chamberlain. The U.S.S.R. won the World Hockey championship. It was their eighth title in a row. The “Firestone World of Champions” professional golf tournament was conquered by Don Johnson on April 4th. With opening day for major league baseball around the corner, the Seattle Pilots declared bankruptcy. Bud Selig of Milwaukee bought up the bargain basement franchise and moved it to Milwaukee, effective April 1st.



On a campus quieted by spring vacation, athletes were occupying the gym, track and practice fields north of the school. Indoor competition had concluded. Behind the curtain teams, which seldom received headlines, had held up the Viking banner in Bowling and in Rifle competition. Frank Brentar and Jim Callaghan were senior leaders on a bowling team anchored by underclassmen. Our keglers were competitive, but fell short in the Greater Cleveland Interscholastic Bowling League. The Rifle team was determined to defend its state championship from 1969. A rifle range established in the school’s garage was the training ground for Viking marksmen. In state competition, our sharpshooters scored 1435 of 1600 total points, an excellent score. However, the score was 15 points less than the champion. St. Joe finished just short of their goal, fourth place in state competition.

Track is the one sport which truly transitions from indoor to outdoor. Although the indoor season provided no victories, coach John Gasparak’s squad had proven talent in field and distance events. These would provide a foundation for a very strong outdoor team. The first weekend of April provided the first major outdoor competition. Travelling to Cincinnati for the Cavalier Relays, St. Joe placed 9th of the 55 teams in competition. Chuck Moore, Greg Lieb, Ward Hill and Vince Continenza were singled out for their contributions.



Spring break also featured the opening of baseball season. The 1969 squad had reached the Class AA final four and dreams of a repeat were in the heads of returning diamond men. Over 100 students tried out for the 20 spots. Mr. Terry Thomas had set up a 28 game schedule, including 12 in the Crown Conference. Seniors Doug Mervar, Fred Ribelli, Mike Zontini, Bob Sakenes, Marty Murphy, Rich Ivancic, Ken Polke and Rich Punggerchar would be counted on as the Vikings embarked March 27th on their 1970 schedule.

The last sport to initiate their season was Mr. John Tigue's tennis team. The team would lack experience and expected to suffer through growing pains. St. Ed's hosted the opening match on April 1st. Senior Pete Fries held service with a victory, but he was the only winner in a 4-1 loss to the Eagles.

March 31st, the campus was once again bustling as fourth quarter classes resumed. After a pause to refresh, studies and spring time activities would create once again plenty for Vikings as the school year was heading into its final months. And for seniors, it was the time of anticipation. The light at the end of the tunnel (graduation) was clearly in sight.



Our Class of 70, 50th reunion this Fall is also in sight!

If you want to plan ahead and buy your tickets for a fun filled weekend, you can start now!

Please note spouses, partners and significant others are invited to all events!

Thursday Sept 24th evening: Club Molisani Wickliffe Ohio (Chuck Giomuso's club) 5:30 pm and includes - Bocce, Cookout style food included plus a Cash Bar - \$10 per person - spouses, partners and significant others included too!

Golf will be Thursday, Sept 24th during the day: Contact Tom Holmes at holmest2@frontier.com, cell (513) 255-1357 to make your reservation. Green Fees will be handled at the course.

Friday Sept 25th: VASJ 6 pm - 10 pm, Food, beer & wine included - \$35 per person - spouses, partners and significant others included too!

Saturday Sept 26th: 4:30pm, Mass in VASJ chapel; 6pm-10pm - La-Salle Theater, East 185th St (newly renovated as an event venue); Food, beer & wine and soft drinks included - \$50 per person - spouses, partners and significant others included!

Sunday Afternoon starting at noon-Sept 27th: East Shore Park Beach Party, 17213 Dorchester Dr. in Cleveland, OH (just across from warmly remembered Skip Froelich's house) - Food included \$10 per person. Bring your own drinks - spouses, partners, and significant others included!

The above events all require reservations via the Class of 1970 50th Reunion Payit2 website through a secure ticketing system.

Buy Tickets here! - <https://www.payit2.com/collect-page/107656>
