

## May 3-May 9, 1970

By Tom Bodle

The events of May Day, 1970 ratcheted up tensions on college campuses throughout the United States during the first weekend of May. It was Kent State that became the epicenter of activism. On May 1st, hundreds of students gathered on the Kent State Commons to celebrate May Day and to protest the American incursion into Cambodia. The protests evolved into turmoil as the day turned into evening. Students and activists moved onto the city of Kent's main streets. As local police tried to contain the crowds, a more and more confrontational scene occurred. Kent police were overwhelmed and the mayor called for assistance from other area law enforcement agencies. Eventually a state of emergency was declared by the mayor and Ohio Governor James Rhodes was asked for assistance. On Saturday, May 2nd more protestors arrived and the confrontation escalated. Demonstrators set fire to the ROTC building on campus and harassed firefighters responding to the alarms. Governor Rhodes had already directed the Ohio National Guard, which had been mobilized in northeast Ohio due to a truckers' strike, to bring control to Kent. On Sunday, May 3rd, an eerie calm laid over Kent. Students returned to classes Monday May 4th and protestors promised to gather at the Commons once again, at 11 a.m. With over 3,000 expected to attend, university officials prohibited any assembly. The demonstrations went on in defiance of the prohibition. The National Guard's 1,000 troops were asked to clear the Commons. Demonstrators violently resisted the movement of the Guard. In the chaos of noise, tear gas and tossed rocks the unthinkable happened. Shots were fired. As the moment subsided, four students had died and nine others seriously injured. Kent's campus was closed down immediately and would not open for six weeks. The event became a seminal moment in American history. The weeks that followed were troubled weeks throughout the country.



The volatility of the happenings at Kent State hit home for all northeast Ohioans. Concerns on local college campuses heightened. John Carroll, Case Western Reserve and Cleveland State were forced to modify their academic schedules and looked to protect their own ROTC buildings. As seniors at St. Joe's, anxiety arose for the many



who chose Kent or even any college. We were worried about what was to come of our college enrollment. We were worried about what was happening to our country. Many of us had friends or family at Kent. Also Kent was a popular destination for social events and concerts. May 4th had an immediate impact on us. May 4th had a lasting impact on us, as to the nation's divisiveness that marked our formative years.

Life at St. Joe's did go on this first week of May. A school year was yet to be completed. Somber discussions were held within classrooms and hallways. On Thursday, May 7th, the school celebrated the Feast of the Ascension. Prayers for peace, understanding and reconciliation were offered on this holy day.



The last official Student Council function, the overseeing of the election of officers for 1970-71, was performed this week. A committee of seniors set up guidelines for the campaigns of the four offices in student government. The election was held May 8th with the senior committee counting the votes. Phil Herrick would later pass the presidential gavel to Jim Schultz ending the reign of the class of '70.

Ohio high school sports were entering their spring tournaments this first week of May. The Viking diamond men had defeated Cleveland JFK and were set to play Holy Name. The tennis team had ended their regular season with a five match winning string. Participating in the district tournament, the netters had tough match-ups and would only succeed in two matches. In contrast, the golf team excelled in their sectionals. Scoring a team total 343, the linksters outshot twenty-four teams to win the championship and move on to the districts. The track team also excelled, running and leaping to the district title. Twelve Vikings advanced to regional competition. Henry Penko set a meet record in the high jump with a 6'2" leap. Jim Stanley outpaced the field to win the two mile run. Seniors Ken Udovic, John Klima, Greg Lieb, John Schmidt, Ward Hill, and Chuck Moore all contributed to the Viking scoring.



The sobering events of this first week of May would find respite in the world of sports. In a classic NBA finals series, the New York Knickerbockers defeated the Los Angeles Lakers four games to three. League MVP, Willis Reed tore a muscle in his thigh in the Knicks game five victory. Reed was to sit out game six. The Lakers easily won. Reed valiantly took the court in game seven. Setting the tone, he scored his only two baskets at the start of the game. He controlled L.A. center Wilt Chamberlain at the outset, limiting him to two baskets in the first half. In doing so the Knicks were able to build a 61-37 lead by the intermission. Reed was able to watch as his teammates took control of the remainder of the game for a 113-99 win. The game was a collection of basketball superstars. The Lakers had Chamberlain as well as Jerry West and Elgin Baylor. But it was New York's balance of point guard Walt Frazier, Dave DeBusschere, Bill Bradley, Dick Barnett and the grit of Reed that earned them the NBA championship.