

Wishing good luck to the graduating seniors

Congratulations to the class of 2023. You’ve made it. You’re the big dogs, the big men and women on campus. Cruising the hallowed halls of alma mater like you own the place. For another week, maybe. Then reality sets in. The comfort that the familiarity of years of going through the same routines in basically the same buildings, surrounded by the same faces, that most of you feel is gone, replaced by questions. Big ones. College or work? Community College or straight to a four-year institution? (If you choose the first option, I know a guy!) Scary, right?

But have no fears, kids. Good ole’ uncle HLS is here to tell you that you’re going to be just fine, and here’s why. First of all, you’ve already proven your resilience and adaptability, right? Remember those fun days of your freshman year? You’ve survived the first semester of high school, so you’re thinking it’s all downhill from here, right? Wrong-o, plebe. After winter vacation, you’re cruising toward spring break, , with an eye on summer vacation and suddenly the cosmos says, “Hold my Starbucks and watch this!” A global pandemic? Really. You went from thinking about getting your learner’s

Hook, Line and Sinker

By Tony Hooker



permit to wondering if the human species would survive in about a day and a half. From ball practice and indoor track meets to staying at home, wondering what the next steps were going to look like as administrators and staffs at all educational institutions, the real MVP’s, worked feverishly

on solutions. You adapted and you overcame it. The struggle hasn’t been without its costs, however. According to a recent article on NPR.com, 4 in 10 high school aged students report feeling sad on a regular basis. For girls and those from our LGBTQA+

communities, the numbers are even higher. It’s been reported that nearly 20% of all female students had formed a suicide plan, and that’s unacceptable. The pandemic affected everything, and it’s costs are continuing to be tabulated. The absolute paradox here is that you Gen Z’ers are widely regarded as caring more deeply about others than any previous generation. If you’re going to make your mark on the world, you have to be living in it. If you’re doing so, continue to be kind and have each other’s back. If you’ve not been living that way, maybe now’s the time to start. As a general rule, Gen Z’ers

are self-driven and don’t see a need for hierarchies when collaborations accomplish the tasks at hand. They value side hustles and nontraditional methods of earning money rather than punching a time clock and that will continue to affect how companies do business. It’s up to the establishment to adapt a bit as these youngins join the work force. So go on, Class of 2023. Go out there and make your mark. Whether you choose to enter the workforce, attend college or go through a training program, or if your entrepreneurial spirit drives you, you’ve got the talent to succeed. Good luck.

‘Take Me Out To The Ballgame’

I finally did it. I left the house. In fact, I left the city, county, and state! John and I went with my son Marcus and his wife Bethany to St. Louis for a couple of days on a short mini-vacation this past week. Even though I’ve been a die-hard Cubs fan all my life, I convert to Cardinalism when the Cubbies are not their rival, to keep the peace in the family, as John is a lifetime Cardinals fan. He doesn’t necessarily do the same for me, but he DOES keep his Cubs jokes to a minimum, and away from my tender ears. And that way I don’t burn his food, and everybody stays happy. So to get to my point, we went to a Cardinals vs Brewers baseball game. This was only the second time I have ever been to a major league baseball game. Yes, I’m sheltered, deprived, and a lot of other things. I also don’t usually enjoy being in large crowds, so have declined invitations in the past. But I did have a good time, and it was exciting to be at the ballgame, live and in person. To hear the announcer over the speaker call each play was

cool, and to experience the extra ambiance of the organ driving the crowd along to cheers and commands was an unexpected bonus. The lights, sights, smells, sounds, filled my senses. I was surprised how much I was enjoying being there. We had good seats in right field, but some fly-balls flew over the net and into the crowd a few times, making me wish I had worn a hardhat. Definitely had to stay vigilant watching where the balls were hit. I also had fun watching the people in the stands. It was like a Dr. Seuss’ book came to life: one fish, two fish, red fish, blue fish, all sorts of fish. All sizes, breeds, colors, conditions, from Sneetches to Snootches, filed in and found their seats. Tall hats, short hats, no hats, no hair, long hair, beards of all lengths, all ages from newborn to grannies and grampas, all there in one place. American baseball, uniting us all on a block in a city in middle America. There was something strangely beautiful about that. What you don’t see at home, watching the game from your

sofa, is the happenings on the outskirts of the playing field and around the stadium. Fred Bird, the Cardinals mascot did antics, dancing and cheering, children and other VIP visitors were interviewed on the big screen. Cameras scanned the stadium for interesting fans, putting their faces up on the big screen, to their surprise and excitement. Everyone wanted their 5 seconds of fame it seemed! Fans danced, kissed, waved babies or signs in the air, ate food, or whatever they needed to do, to be put on the big screen. I’m glad it didn’t flash over to our group. The camera adds 10 pounds, they say. John had been to several home games to see the Cardinals, yet unfortunately, he felt he was cursed, because every home game he attended, his team lost. But that night, the curse was broken, and the Cardinals won 3-0 against the Brewers! He was a happy camper. On our way out of the parking garage, an unhappy camper whose car got tapped in the rear by another car, got out of

Holding It All Together

By Amy McCollom



their car and had an altercation with the driver that hit her car. The woman and man threw punches and slapped each other while shouting until a passenger got out of the first car and broke up the fight, then all parties got back in their cars and drove off. Comments: 1. I was perplexed as to why people would want to bring tiny babies to a big venue such as a MLB game. It was very noisy, to the point that it was hard for me to hear John talking to me, and he was sitting right beside me. Babies sleep a LOT, and a huge stadium is no place to sleep. Besides there are dangers, flying baseballs, running kids and people, drunk people, germs, strangers, etc. There is no way

I would have taken my precious tiny baby to a venue like that. 2. I couldn’t believe that people just left their trash all over their areas. Cups, hotdog wrappers, cans, everything! The number of people who left their trash amazed me. I’ve noticed this at restaurants lately too. Clean up after yourselves!! It’s common decency! 3. I saw so many young kids running around without parents, it was scary. In a small town, I still worry. But a huge stadium with 36,000 people, there is no way I would let my child have the run of the place. Yet kids under 12 were running (and I do mean RUNNING) up and down the steps, and through the aisles, all night long.

4. It was way louder than I expected. I have tinnitus (ringing in the ears) so loud noises bother me. It’s already hard for me to hear, so adding any extra noise ust makes everything else distorted and hard to understand. Maybe next time I will bring some ear-plugs. I wonder what the decibel count was? 5. As expected, food, drinks, and souvenirs were ridiculously expensive. I wish it was made more clear on their website how and what food and drinks can be brought in from home. 6. Be ready for the unexpected. Fights, drunk people, homeless people, after the game everyone rushes out into the street together. You never know what might happen, so be careful and stay safe. Overall, I DID have a good time and would like to go again. I would make some changes for my next visit, but I learned a lot to improve our future visits to St. Louis Busch Stadium. I think everybody should go at least once, or twice, to a real live MLB game.

Memorial Day and the loss of women’s clothing stores

Charleston has lost another women’s clothing store; Maurice’s closed at the first of the year. I have lived here since 1997 and we have always had problems with supporting local retail stores but as of now we only have Wal-Mart and one other Junior clothing store, Trueblood Collective, which is close to EIU Campus. When I moved here the Square was had a lot of places to shop but they were struggling as I discovered when entering the Charleston retail work force. I had moved from Decatur which had plenty of places to shop and I had changed from working at a seven story department store to working at Alexanders, which was the largest store in Charleston. That was quite a difference but the Square also had Dress Well, Adlers, Jack’s on campus, the Smart Alex Shop on campus and a couple smaller women’s stores. In 1970, Kline’s opened a Junior shop on the Square and then we opened our store, Pickwick, in 1974. At that timt things looked pretty good for Charleston retail until the Mattoon Mall opened and the main store was a Terre Haute based store. the Meis Company. Charleston retail always had to compete with Terre Haute and Champaign stores but one would have thought that the influx of thousands of students would have been enough to support our stores, but Charleston and EIU had the nick mane of the “suitcase school and town” which meant our citizens shopped out of town and the

Memories and Musings

By Cheri Sims



students bought before they came to Charleston. Over the last 50 years I have served on countless committees which dealt with trying to find ways to keep shoppers local; some of the ideas implemented worked some did not and now we are in a “back to the future” scenario where shopping is gone catalogue style on line. Have we progressed? Memorial Day weekend in retail in Charleston and surrounding communities was always fun. This was the first big sidewalk sale of the year and most of the places I worked would use this weekend to introduce the new summer clothing lines and especially swim suits and beach wear. These terms probably sound foreign to our younger readers because “seasonal” specialty showings and style shows are no longer practiced. We enjoyed working these special times and the year Klines opened all my employees wore swim suits to work for the entire Memorial Day weekend. We were the talk of the town and some of the comments were negative. All the employees were high school and EIU students and they really put on a great style show. Dress Well always had

a style show in the spring too and one year we hosted it at the Holiday Inn hotel and I had the privilege of co-emceeing with Jack Ensign, whose family owned the Dress Well shop. This is when I met my long time friend, Judy, who modeled in the show and we later became coffee buddies. Memorial Day weekend for 2023 is Friday, May 26-Monday, May 29th which would have also been my 56th wedding anniversary; there are no fun style shows to attend but I think I will drive around to some of smaller towns to my favorite grocery stores. Make sure to check out the Enjoy Illinois web site at: <https://www.enjoyillinois.com/>, to find out all the Memorial Day events in our area. Fly your flag and try to attend one of the events honoring our U.S military personnel who have served our nation. Decoration Day, as this Federal holiday was originally named, is also the beginning of picnic season for many families and I can recall my grandparents having big family gatherings when I was a child. They were especially patriotic as they celebrated just a few years after WW2 and my grandpa never failed to flay his well worn flag his entire

life. Our day always began the day with the family visiting the cemetery and decorating the graves with peonies and iris, both of which Granny had planted during the war. Grandpa was a Judge and a barber and during the war he would accept payment for services in more than just money and one year one of his barbering customers gave him a huge box of peony and iris plants to pay for his haircut and Grandpa gave them to Granny which is how she started her spring flower business. Then we would all go the the park and by noon the entire family of about fifty adults and fifteen kids would enjoy a grand picnic of fried chicken, deviled eggs, potato salad and all kinds of delicious pies. Oh gosh, I wish I was a kid again!

Memorial Day weekend in 1967 was my wedding weekend. Hubby had just finished his Junior year at EIU and was to start his summer job in Decatur on Tuesday, May 30, because Memorial Day was celebrated on Monday the 29. We had to move our original wedding date of June 4 back a week because his band was booked so we decided to have the wedding on Saturday. May 27, and that would give us two whole days for a honeymoon in Chicago. The day dawned very warm and by the time of the wedding the temperature was 103 in the shade. We were married at hubby’s parent’s house and they had no air conditioning. During the wait for all the guests to arrive my mother-in-law decided to open the living

room window and somehow the drapery rod broke and the drapes fell on the guests. That was not the only disaster; the wedding was to be at 1 p.m. and the minister was late. I called his home and his wife said he must have forgotten because he was on the golf course. He arrived within the hour and by 3 p.m. we were at the Ambassador Hotel for the reception and thankfully it was air conditioned. We then drove in my 1963 VW, also without air conditioning, to Chicago. The funny thing about the whole weekend was that Hubby and I did not notice the temperature like the rest of the family. Have a safe and fun filled Memorial Day weekend!

Open House at Astronomical Society

This Saturday brings us another open house at the CU Astronomical Society Observatory, located just south of the Monticello Road on 700E. If the skies are clear, join us for some free looks at the Moon and planets. I purchased one of those cell phone mounts where you can put your phone in the mount and we can try to take photos of the Moon. Might as well return home with a souvenir, eh? Of course, some of today’s larger phones won’t fit into the mount! For more information, see cuas.org and if the weather is iffy, you can call 217-351-2567. On Monday, Mercury is

In the night sky

By David Leake



separated farthest from the Sun in the morning sky but, to be honest, it’s not a good luck for Mercury. It still rises to hear sunrise. If you want to give it a shot anyway, Jupiter rises nearly due east at 4:15pm. Mercury rises a half

hour later to the lower left of Jupiter. **David Leake is retired Planetarium Director of Staerkel Planetarium at Parkland College and co-founder of the Champaign-Urbana Astronomical Society, Inc.**