

THE STOCKADE SPY



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STOCKADE SPY HONORS A FAVORITE CITIZEN

In June of 1876 several tribes of plains Indians met the U.S. Cavalry at the Little Big Horn, in a battle subsequently made famous by the name of Custer's Last Stand. The Indian wars and the settling of the west seem to have happened a long time ago to most of us.

But a few months before Custer's Last Stand, on September 8, 1875 to be exact, one of our neighbors was born. Mr. William Van Dyke will celebrate his 99th birthday this September, having survived Indian wars, World wars, football scrimmages, a few depressions, and countless changes in the way of life.

Recently Mr. Van Dyke was gracious enough to discuss his 99 years with this reporter. Although many of us pause to say hello to Mr. Van Dyke as he walks his pug dog, it is rare that any of us go beyond the politenesses and the tip-of-the-hat. What is one to say, after all?

Well, it turns out that Mr. Van Dyke is one of the oldest living collegiate football players. He graduated from Rutgers in 1895, where in his senior year he was student-coach. Mr. Van Dyke recalls that in those days football was a club sport, run by the students for their own enjoyment. By modern standards collegiate football in the 1890's was extremely rugged: "We had pretty long hair in those days — about the only padding we had," according to Mr. Van Dyke. Compared to today's game, it was less sophisticated "but a lot more fun." In view of recent complaints about over-emphasis on sports in colleges, perhaps Mr. Van Dyke has a point.

After having discussed football — Mr. Van Dyke predates George Halas by thirty years — the subject turned to Mr. Van Dyke's business career.

When he graduated from Rutgers, Mr. Van Dyke completed advanced-degree work at Columbia and returned to Rutgers as a faculty member for a short time. In 1898 he began work with the Luxfer Prism Company. His job was to design systems of lighting buildings by using prismatic glass. By bending natural light through prisms, interior rooms were illuminated. Mr. Van Dyke engineered several lighting systems for large buildings, but as he puts it, "I was just a boy, getting my feet under me."

After spending five years in North Carolina in a manufacturing concern, Mr. Van Dyke joined a small family firm in Schenectady called General Electric. And it was a small firm then: "You felt like a member of the family... I was just an office boy at the time, and the biggest man in the company knew us all by name... treated us just like family."



In 1906 Mr. Van Dyke went to South America with the firm of Grayson Company, General Electric's sales agent. He spent twenty years in South America, first in Chile and then in Brazil, and in 1918 he became President of General Electric—South America.

Among his fondest memories is the incident which occurred in Lima, Peru, in 1906. He and friends were in an old cathedral, viewing the remains of the conquistadore Pizarro. His friend took a picture of the remains, and the sudden flash of the camera startled the guide, a priest at the cathedral. A few years later, when he again visited the cathedral, Mr. Van Dyke learned that the remains had been moved to another place, to keep it safe from the "devils."

Another anecdote consists of the time he was trying to sell automobiles in Chile in 1908. There was no market for cars then, and he couldn't get any money for them. So he traded his automobiles for cases of wine; reasoning that the automobiles were useless and would depreciate over time, whereas if he couldn't sell the wine he could always drink it.



Mr. Van Dyke's other recollections of South America are numerous: The smugglers in southern Chile ("nice lads"), the gold speculators, the Brazilian presidents who conducted their business in rumpled suits; and the Chilean authorities who required visitors to appear on a moment's notice in formal dress for appointments, and the beauty of Rio and Copacabana before they were developed.

The topic of age always is present when one talks with Mr. Van Dyke. You don't know whether to try to avoid mentioning his age, or whether you should talk only about his age. Either way, it can be awkward. Fortunately he is philosophic about the whole thing, and is very forthright. For example, this reporter brought up the dreaded topic of Watergate, and the response was that the only good tape recorder is the brain: "I get sudden memories of my youth so clear it makes me stop awhile." However, he perceives that he can remember his youth and other earlier events better than more recent events.

But the truly remarkable thing about Mr. Van Dyke is the sense of presence and dignity about him. He is never hurried or worried — "Time doesn't mean much to me", and his neighborhood walks show the rest of us how it can be done.

John Keith Bishop



The Stockade Association
 Editor, The Stockade Spy
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LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

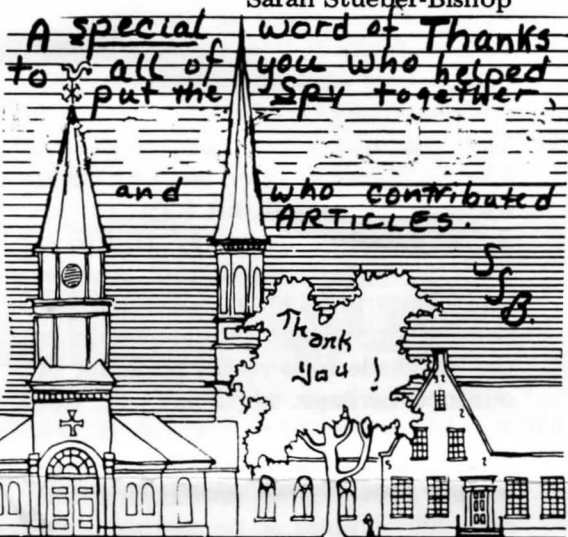
Editor's Farewell Note:

I, too, note with dismay how the circle of injustice goes 'round while only a few get all the "attention" and "privileges." The problem goes far beyond our school and our neighborhood, as you note. The world is large. At least in this nation, everyone's voice is supposed to count in our democracy. But sadly enough, it doesn't. And the world really isn't all that large for those at the top of the pyramid of power and comfort. Sometimes our world seems to get smaller as we "grow" in power (e.g., mine, since I find few helpers for the SPY; they stay out of my world!) This letter points to a need for more active citizen involvement at all levels of power today, beginning in schools.

I hope this letter will widen the world perspectives of all who read it, for it points to a problem many of us honestly didn't know existed in our neighborhood. I must hasten to point out (in all fairness) that the administration of Riverside School will not have another SPY issue this academic year in which to officially reply, since my term as editor ends, as usual, with this issue.

I wish finally, to refer to a previous "President's" column which referred to the eighty-five BILLION dollar military budget for this next year, and suggest that even a small portion of those billions be allocated to enriching education for all; for as the famous Vietnamese motto says: it is in taking care of the children that we take care of the future.

Sarah Stueber-Bishop



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Don't support 'technology in search of a use'

Dear Editor:

We as parents of children at Riverside School would like to react personally to information published in TIDINGS in the April, 1974 issue of THE STOCKADE SPY. Eighteen neighborhood children were listed as having been accepted in the enrichment program at Riverside School. We are not familiar with the politics of how these children were selected, but we find it curious that names such as BeVier, Wienk, Duggan, Lane, Lane, Lapp, etc., are included. These and most of the other names are names of the select few who manage to be chosen for most of the enrichment or other advantages that should be open to all children. We find it particularly incredible that two children from the same family should be selected. The best explanation we have to give to our children for their not being selected (they are equally qualified) is that their parents and their parents' influence are not sufficient to carry enough "pull" in the subsystem that is Riverside School.

This explanation, we hope, will at least prepare them for the real world of business, politics, and institutional life where influence, power, and money of the few speak louder and stronger than the need of the many. All of us can use our hurt and anger at this, yet another injustice, as a learning experience in the formation of our own personal values, which are and will always be in conflict with the larger, insensitive, dominant system.

Respectfully yours,
 Three STOCKADE PARENTS
 of children who attend
 Riverside School

TIDINGS

Mr. and Mrs. E. Spurgas of 25 North Street celebrated their 25th Wedding Anniversary with a family party given by their 3 children, Sharon, David, and Paul on April 28.

Also David Spurgas has returned April 26 from Easter vacation in North Carolina.

Dr. and Mrs. Erich Feibes just returned from a lovely trip, of one month's duration, to Bowling Green, Kentucky. It was a beautiful time of year to be in Kentucky. They visited their older son and some of their grandchildren there.

Volunteer to work on the SPY! Your neighborhood needs your participation!

Ernie Cohen reports that his son Bill (Navy Lt. Cmdr. Wm. D. Cohen) and wife are in Norfolk, and "very happy". He says, "Bill is heading the Adj. Gen. Court Martials" and is thus, for the time being, very busy. He sent a clipping showing that Bill received the American Bar Association's award for finishing first among 34 Naval and four Marine officers in their course for lawyers.

Ernie has just returned from several months away at LaJolle, California, and spent several weeks in Palm Springs and with his daughter Jane in San Diego. Welcome back, Ernie!

LETTER:

To The Editor:

I continue to be sorry that the Stockade Association finds it impossible to consider a community program for PIGEON control.

Last summer when my house was repainted, I had every likely pigeon haven thickly coated with a reputable pigeon deterrent to no avail. This spring they are roosting on my house as noisily and messily as ever. Surely I am not alone in my concern.

Sincerely,
 Josephine Braden
 113 Union Street

ANNUAL STOCKADE PICNIC

MAY 25, 1974

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THE PRESIDENT

Stockade Association of
Schenectady, New York Inc.

Annual Report — 1973-74

This year's activities saw the Association performing for the first full year as a Corporation.

1. Our first action was to revise the constitution and put the offices on a two year alternating basis to assure a continuity of offership. Tonight's election will see one half of the officers and directors elected for a two year term leaving the other half to continue for another year.
2. The first activity of the new year was the annual Memorial Day Picnic at Riverside Park. A social activity which continues to be an entertainment success and helps to bind the ties of friendship among the Stockade residents.
3. The *SPY* began its usual publication year in September and brought the news and Association activities to a thousand doorsteps every month.
4. We carried on the day-to-day responsibilities of maintenance and repair at the Indian Circle and trash cleanups at the corner of Ferry and Front and others.
5. The Parks Committee achieved improvements and continuing developments of the Riverside Park recreation and planting areas.
6. The Association conducted hearing meetings with the NYS DOT to review the impact of the new Western Gateway Bridge on the environment of the Stockade Area.
7. The Association Flood Control Program lobbied for and achieved a program of Flood Insurance, initiated a program of Emergency Flood Help and successfully withstood the Government's scheme to construct a flood wall along the Mohawk River Bank while proposing investigations of alternate solutions to flooding.
8. A new dues structure was initiated by the Association Board which eliminated the initiation fee and set the annual dues at \$5.00 per family unit. This plan has met with great success and our dues collection has reached a new level.
9. The 14th Annual Walkabout held each year on the last Saturday of September was an enormous success both from the enjoyment and education of the participants and the large financial success which is the primary source of Association income.
10. The Historic Zoning Committee carried on its high level of involvement for the third year in its efforts to co-operate with the City government in developing a stronger Historic Zoning Ordinance to better protect our Historic District — the first in the State of New York.
11. A visual pollution survey was conducted and is presently being evaluated for action by the Board.
12. The Stockade Heritage Fund, a revolving fund program to aid in the preservation and rehabilitation of Stockade buildings was established with a \$1,500 kickoff deposit from the Association Treasury and a subsequent gift of \$200 from the Friends of the Stockade. We are very appreciative of the Friends who act as a helping arm to all our activities and aims. The Fund is being set up as a tax free receiving agency to collect gifts from all who support the aims of Historic Preservation in our Stockade Area.
13. The Tree Planting program which has already brought 250 trees to the streets of the Stockade is presently under way for this Spring. Orders for tree plantings are being taken for street trees and flowering garden trees. We hope you'll get your order in right away.
14. A closer action of co-operation was established with the Historic District Commission and the Association to work toward the elimination of demolition by neglect. A program of education and assistance is being worked out by the two organizations to aid building owners to maintain their properties and ward off decay.
15. The Association continued in its efforts to prevent the expansion of the Schenectady County Airport which would result in new and increased flight patterns over our residential area at low altitudes and increased noise levels.
16. The purchase of a portion of the Glen-Sanders collection was supported by a generous gift of \$500 to the Schenectady County Historical Society by the Association. We feel that this invaluable collection of antique furnishings should remain in the Stockade as a visible reminder of our local heritage.
17. A planned summer activity is the Evening at the Ballet at S.P.A.C. This should prove to be an exciting and entertaining evening. So sign up when the time comes around.
18. Of course the first event of the new year will be the Memorial Day Picnic — Saturday, May 25th at Riverside Park — see you all there!

J. D. Schmitt

it's time we got together



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