



WABASH COLLEGE

Class Agents Letter

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Dear '52ers,

OUR TIMES

Not every day do I receive a book recommendation as a suggested item for this Class Letter. This one came last month and is well worth passing along:

'Bill. An item for your Class letter. Those of us who grew up in the 1930s might enjoy, as I did, a book entitled, *The Greatest Generation Grows Up: American Childhood in the 1930s*, by Dr. Kriste Lindenmeyer, Chair/Department of History, UMBC, Baltimore, Maryland USA....It provides interesting context for what our world was like when we may have been too young to realize what happened during the Depression and into WW2. It's very well done and very interesting. – Brad Johnston'

So I drove over to the local Borders, where a copy was in stock (I could also have ordered one at Barnes & Noble). I read a few pages and bought it. I find it fascinating to read a stranger's narrative of our generation's first decade.

For another read, albeit more extended, consider the 1997 Pulitzer Prize-winning *No Ordinary Time* by Doris Kearns Goodwin. What makes her book so special is its focus on views from and inside the White House during the New Deal through WW2, much of which went unreported by the press at the time. So both books invite review of our past from a new perspective – which is a reason why each generation must rewrite its own history.

Of course, Eleanor Roosevelt's 1940 Convention remark notwithstanding (about those not being "ordinary times," which the book adopts as its title), times never are considered as "ordinary" by those living at the time, are they?

WABASH ECONOMICS – VOICES FROM OUT OF THE PAST

During our years at Wabash, the Economics Department was run by two men, **Dr. John D. Van Sickle** and **Benjamin A. Rogge**, both classical economists. News about both came to my attention last month from two disparate sources.

First is this interesting article written by Fred Warbinton, Wabash '53, for his March, 2006 Class Agents' Letter:

I came across some information recently regarding one of the Wabash professors from our era. While working for the Rockefeller Foundation in Europe in the 30's, **John V. Van Sickle** interviewed many young European scholars and Economists. He later helped some of these people get out of Germany and Austria. Later, when John V. was retired and living in Colorado, several came to thank him for helping them get to our country. John was acquainted with Austrian Economist Friedrich Hayek, who wrote ***Road to Serfdom*** [co-winner of the Nobel Prize for Economics, 1974] and taught at the University of Chicago. Hayek later visited John V. in Colorado where John lived after retiring [from his post as full professor and head of the Economics Department at Wabash College, which of course encompassed our four years 1948-52].

John V. used to also tell of being on a train in Germany in the 30's when Hitler was trying to gain power. Hitler happened to be on the same train making 'whistle-stop' speeches at small German town. John was appalled at the lunacy of Hitler's claims and the response of the crowds. Not much later, John managed to rerun to the U.S.

I telephoned Dr. Fred at his winter home in Fort Myers, FL, for permission to reprint the above (granted). I asked his source for this information? Answer: he graduated from C'ville H.S., class of '49, with John Van Sickle's son Jerry as a classmate. (Jerry is an architect who designed John Van Sickle's retirement home in Colorado.) The two have stayed in contact. So Fred's sources are both from long ago as well as more recent contacts with Jerry Van Sickle.

Benjamin A. Rogge was the number two man on the Wabash Economic faculty during our years of matriculation. He arrived on the Wabash campus at the beginning of our sophomore year in the fall of 1949. Later he earned his PhD, served as Dean of the College 1955-64, and was made an honorary alumnus of Wabash in 1973.

Last month Rogge was remembered and highly praised by classical economist Thomas Sowell in the *Wall Street Journal* issue of Saturday-Sunday, March 25-28, 2006 at page A-8. In the course of a lengthy interview of Sowell, here is how and why he credits Ben Rogge:

The idea to apply economic concepts to racial issues came, says Mr. Sowell, from the late **Benjamin Rogge**, who taught economics at Wabash College in Indiana. 'I was at Cornell, and Ben Rogge came on campus to give a talk called 'The Welfare State Against the Negro.' I happened to be out of town, so when I got back I wrote him a letter that said I heard you have this talk and that you're going to write a book on the same theme. I said it's really amazing that no one's thought of this before because there's so much material out there. At this point [in the late 60's] I had no thought that I would ever touch it myself.'

The two became friends over the years and 'it occurred to Ben that he was never going to write that book. And so Ben Rogge took his manuscript and simply handed it to me and said do with it whatever you can. I was flabbergasted. I don't think I ever used anything directly from his manuscript. But the fundamental idea you could apply economics to racial issues – that was the inspiration.'

During our years on campus, the Van Sickle-Rogge duo were classical economist selections by our conservative president Frank Hugh Sparks. Over the ensuing years, the VanSickle-Rogge-VanHayek view of economics has had its ups and downs, dependent in part upon the changing political scene. So it's good to see these credits now accorded to Ben Rogge. About 20 in our Wabash class of '52 majored in Economics, so I thought this article would be of interest. Comments anyone? (By the way, Thomas Sowell turns 76 this year, as do many of us. He has published about 30 books, the most recent being entitled, appropriately I think, *On Classical Economics*.)

THE WABASH COLLEGE ANNUAL FUND

As of March, more than 2,850 alumni and widows have made gifts for more than \$1,889,000 to the Wabash Annual Fund so far during the 2005-2006 fiscal year, which ends this coming June 30. Many of our class have already given, and all who do so will be thanked in a Class Agent's Letter listing of donors which follows June 30.

But that's not why we should make sure our gift is sent in by June 30, just to get our names on a list. The special reason to act now is because during the 2005-2006 fiscal year ending this June 30, Lilly Endowment Inc. will match alumni gifts to the Annual Fund on a \$1.25 for \$1.00 basis up to \$2 million, for a total match of \$2.5 million! So whatever you give has the potential of being increased 125% by Lilly.

Gifts to the Annual Fund help to complete the Wabash experience for 850 current students including:

- Scholarships and financial aid
- Academic programming including immersion learning trips
- Technology upgrades
- Upkeep of campus facilities

On another page of this Letter should appear some photos of a February 24 gathering of some of our class for lunch at a place called the Crow's Nest in Venice, Florida. Consider this: each one of the five of us who appear in those pictures benefited while at Wabash in some way, big or small, by gifts from those who preceded us at the college. This is so even for those who paid full tuition, as President Sparks used to remind us, because gifts and endowment income helps the college to balance its books so that every student benefits accordingly.

FLORIDA – 2006

Page 6 (hopefully) is a collage of our unofficial Venice, Florida class gathering of February 24, which included lunch followed by an afternoon gab-fest on the patio at **Harry & Nancy Harvey's** home. The Harveys hope it is the last such gathering at that location because they are in the process of selling their Venice home and expanding their Winona Lake, Indiana home where they plan to relocate for year-around living.

Mike & Joyce Austin of Indianapolis were just touring Florida, passing through Venice at the time, and stopped by for the day. **Dick & Jan Daniels** were with Dick's sister Marilyn in Vero Beach, and drove over to stay with the Harveys, celebrating a "break" in Dick's continuing chemotherapy. "It's a long way to go from Oklahoma for lunch with some Wabash men," he observed.

Don & Rose Mary Ruff of Dunedin, Florida, also attended. After Don's retirement from a career in retail sales, the couple spent seven (7) months traveling throughout Europe. (Come to think of it, that's just where classmate **Paul Arnold** and his wife are right now: spending a couple of months in an apartment they've rented in Paris.)

Sending their regrets in not being able to attend this year were **Tom & Joan Henderson** (relocated to assisted living quarters in Palm Harbor, FL), and **Jack McVey** living in Oldsmar, FL (near Tampa), whose plans to attend were thwarted by a family visit. Finally, for the first time **Bill & Liz Reinke** were present this year of what has become (apparently) an annual Florida affair.

OKLAHOMA!

During the course of our day together in Florida, **Dick Daniels** told us something I thought should be shared. To make sure I got it right, at my request last week he wrote the following e-mail.

“The story I told you was about going to Sulphur, Oklahoma high school (small, rural, southern Okla, 80 grads that year) in 2004 to present a Lilly scholarship to Wabash to its remarkable top grad. (He is now a sophomore [at Wabash], and as a freshman he won the Baldwin Oratorical – as a FRESHMAN!)

“The Lilly is worth over \$125,000. – 4 years of full tuition, room, board, books, fees, foreign study – the WORKS. At the HS awards assembly, there were a number of scholarships awarded to nearly junior colleges, and few to the biggies: OU, OSU, etc. What I told you was that our Lilly guy's scholarship was almost worth the total of all the other awards that night.

“I need to be clear that no Wabash alum had anything to do with recruiting him. We didn't know a thing about him till he had won. He heard about Wabash when he was a page at the US Congress; the college counselor for that group recommended he check out Wabash and he did. In spades.



Lunch 2/24/06 Crow's Nest, Venice, FL, followed by more conversation at the home of Harry & Nancy Harvey.

Guy with pipe is Dick Daniels



Bill Reinke, Don Ruff, Dick Daniels Harry & Nancy Harvey, Jan Daniels, Mike & Joyce Austin, Rose Mary Ruff, and Liz Reinke



“The latest part of this story is that a Tulsa area student whom we DID work at recruiting just won a Lilly – that’s 2 for Okla. In 3 years. We are thrilled, as only 6 guys a year get a Lilly. Hope you enjoy the story as much as I do telling it.”

A QUARTET THAT WON’T QUIT

For a reprise of the Beta house barbershop singing group of **Ted Steeg, George Littell, Jr., Tom Moser, and Tom Klingaman**, see the “Golden Oldies” right-hand column at page 7 of the Winter 2006 issue of *Wabash – The Journal of Wabash College*, which you should have received a couple of weeks ago. More “Class Notes” appear at page 53 of the same publication.

Cordially,

Bill

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