

## Steve Tourigny's Journal from the 30<sup>th</sup> WPI Reunion

I am stuck in Boston's Logan airport late Monday afternoon after the '78 WPI 30<sup>th</sup> reunion. Sure beat my expectations by a long shot. I hadn't laughed so much in 3 days in many, many years: I swear my jaw still aches. Sowyrda, Vestri, Gryniuk, Kelly, Neece, Grogan, Trask, Tracy, Walton, Wyman, etc... Just a few weeks ago those names brought up some pretty old memories; some in fact, 30+ years old. Now I am recounting a weekend that seems to have more in common with time travel...one more hour delay... I decide to write notes from the reunion on the back of my boarding passes, receipts, any scrap I can find, so I don't succumb to the ravages of post 50 year old "mad cow disease" as SAFA referred to it. I have got to remember this stuff so I can paste it all together later, good material for the 35<sup>th</sup> as well...another interruption...I get a call from Bill Berry (an ice hockey friend) from Vancouver, BC; he needs a goalie for the Snoopy Senior Ice Hockey Tournament in five weeks. I have not skated in over a year! "Ok, I have you covered, I'll help you find a keeper one way or an other, I'll call you back next week, send me the schedule". Twenty pounds to lose, 20 trips to the gym, 20 hours of skating and pick-up hockey to be ready for 3 games (July 13<sup>th</sup>, 15<sup>th</sup> & 17<sup>th</sup>) in 30 days, yeah right. I hang up and get back to the reunion notes...

**Patty Tracy & Bill Walton** get my vote for the couple that has changed the least, both in appearance and manner over the years. Not to mention that you seem to get along like a couple that met a month or two ago, never mind 30+ years. Watching the two of you at the various venues...it appeared that you were always in the same 20-foot "bubble", interacting with everyone else, but always within eye contact or hearing distance of each other. Be it by great skill, luck or a little of both, congratulations for weathering the years so well as a couple! It is quite rare. Patty was a hoot at Uno's bar Saturday night, flirting with all the guys (even the "Gam's"). Most amusing were her tales of who thought what of whom, the secret crushes and loves of our undergraduate days. Bill, when you get home, please pour her a couple of drinks and get this documented for the 35<sup>th</sup>! If we had only known this back then...

Speaking of the "Gam's", it was great to see **John Landers & Dave Wilson** who were right up there with the Walton's in the "changed the least" category. It was also good to see that two of the FIJI guys were NOT best dressed for a change. Given the hot, humid weather you were actually better dressed than most of us. **Mike Neece**, who I worked with years ago at Source Engineering, was a pleasant surprise to see and we exchanged what it is like to have an artist for an offspring. Check out Mike's son Dustin's work at <http://www.dustinneece.com> and you will think you are looking at the work of some Old World Master and not a young contemporary artist. Incredible talent! Regards also to **Tony Raymond** though I did not get to say much more than a quick hello at the banquet.

**Marcus Cioffi** finally caught up to me on Saturday and we had a chance to toast and drink that single malt scotch he spoke about before the reunion. Mark is a member of the Morgan 3rd freshman floor which was well represented at the reunion.

**Kevin Northbridge** rounds out the "changed the least" group and entertained Bill Walton & I with what it is like to raise two teenage daughters including pranks, escaping through the bedroom window & semi-innocent antics with the local police. Ehh...Ahh...I have been there with two daughters of my own. Good luck, you/we need it!

## THE “BAD” TABLE

Ever since grade school there always seems to have been a “bad” table at every cafeteria, function or athletic event. The term is one I picked-up years ago from **Dean Arvidson** (by the way, I saw Dean on Sunday afternoon and he sends his regards to all and regrets for being out of town on business). The individuals at the bad table could often change, but that one group was usually responsible for more chaos, laughter and trouble than the rest of the gathering. A less than classic example of the 80/20 rule... This year’s nomination for the bad table was a group I had the pleasure of sharing nightcaps with each evening. Vestri, Gryniuk, the Sowyrda’s, Kelly & Tourigny joined by the Pelletier’s and Baublis on Saturday...the individuals...

I spent more time with **John Vestri** this weekend than I did the entire four years at WPI. Somehow our paths didn’t cross as much as others, but that only proves the bond between WPI Alumni regardless of age, sex, graduation year or circumstances. Vestris-Vettes (John’s company) (see <http://vestrisvettes.com>) looks superb and I added a ’59 to my post IPO wish list. Oh yeah, good luck raising the “2<sup>nd</sup> family” and the 5 year old – you have got real guts! Overall, I wished I had known John back in the 70’s even though he & Steve Pace did openly like disco (I was into Beatles, Progressive Rock, YES, ELP, Moody Blues, etc...). Now for John’s dark side...**Bill Trask** kept asking me not to listen as the two of you spoke in secret “Skull” tongues and plotted to steal away later to perform some kind of sacrificial ritual in “The Tomb”. Consensus of the bad table when you left on Saturday was that it more likely involved a special elixir and the “self sacrifice” of more liver cells if & when Trask calls you to duty...

**Dennis Kelly** wrote in the 1978 Peddler, under the heading “Future: Astronaut”. This actually makes more sense now than it did then. I now realized that it was a synonym for “space-shot”. In fairness to Dennis, he simply views most of the world from a different perspective (usually measured in light years). When an alumni awards speaker noted that “Michael Jordan was cut from his sophomore high school basketball team”, (implying to never to give up), Dennis commented, “Wow, that must have been a really good team”. You get my point. Dennis also has the knack of saying what we are all thinking but can’t find the guts (or balls) to spit it out. As a result, you will likely wet yourself after about 30 minutes with Kelly. If there are normally painfully quiet moments at social events where you can’t think of what to say next, you need this guy around. In many ways, he raises the bar; no in fact Dennis removes the bar and used it in some unintended way. Dennis thanks for driving those long 8 hours on Friday evening to spend the weekend with us! You removed all the pressure and worry of remembering names, matching wits & quips, etc... You are a ’78 legend!

What can you say about a woman who fits in seamlessly with “the guys”, is regularly referred to by a last name moniker “Gryniuk” and is as attractive and as fun to be with as 30 years ago? **Cyndy Gryniuk-Hofer** (also in the “changed the least” category) was the only female on the bad table nightcap sessions and bore the brunt of some of Kelly’s funniest and most bizarre lines. While Kelly deftly delivered the comments, innuendos & punch lines (I won’t repeat them here so you can have your kids read this), all us guys with our still ~20 year old libidos and 51+ year old bodies were thinking exactly the same thing: “Does Cyndy do her own nails and where did she get those shoes?!” Sure makes me wish I had worked a few less hours and spent more time socializing on campus in the 70’s... Cyndy, it was great seeing you again and be sure to stay in touch. I can assure you that despite the occasional sophomoric behavior, most of us male engineers are gentlemen at heart. In fact, I personally witnessed **Steve Superson** give you a hand in the elevator...

**Gary & Susan Sowyrda** came up from Texas and Susan had the good sense of retiring early and avoiding the after effects of 2:00 am nightcap sessions. Few of you know that Gary was my Big Brother at KAP though we are the same age and graduation year. This was due to my slow social development and poor judgment for pledging a fraternity as a Junior (along with **Dennis Kelly**, see Astronaut above). As the Little Brother to Such A Fine Athlete I am specially honored to write this section. My favorite moment of SAFA this weekend is when he finally broke down and borrowed Susan’s reading glasses in public, beaded strap and all. Nice picture by Vestri and we must add it to Sandra’s slide show. He looked like Mother Sowyrda in drag. I had a couple of Alumni’s approach me and comment that Gary had really mellowed out over the years. I sent them back and had them ask him who he thought Obama’s running mate should be. That corrected their initial perception in seconds. Gary, it was great to see the two of you again – keep pumping the oil & gas and drive our prices down – I am a supply-sider Objectivist and support your efforts to make oil, gas and profits (see Atlas Shrugged below). Susan, as far as living with Gary goes, I have seconded Kelly’s nomination for your Sainthood and you will be canonized at the 35<sup>th</sup> reunion, hang in there.

**Dan Baublis** and I disagree on almost everything and yet a strong friendship persists after 34+ years. A lot of it has to do with alcohol and that one of us usually has possession of the bottle and the other one needs it. It’s not that we always disagree we just like to argue. Politics, business, investments, sports, weather, kids, marriages (actually we agree more on that one). As an “Objectivist”, I found myself making the same pitch to both my Right leaning (SAFA) and Left leaning (Dan) friends. Dan it was great having you on the bad table on Saturday. Next time I’ll have you and SAFA debate the pros and cons of Left vs. Right Collectivism. Read Atlas Shrugged and you will realize that you are both wrong! Then you can direct your wrath at me and go back to politics as usual. It’s a lot like HVAC: if half the people think its too cold and the other half too warm its probably perfect. Please thank Mary for Sunday’s excellent dinner and give Madie & Oliver a hug for me. Stay in touch as you always do.

**Sandra Wyman & Ambrose Berry** surprised me with not only their knowledge of, but their passion for Ayn Rand and her philosophy (Objectivism) and published works (The Fountainhead, Atlas Shrugged, etc...). I have been a strong proponent of Rand's Objectivist philosophy for years and regularly give out copies of her books to young graduates, friends and family. Also, I had a lot of fun assisting Sandy in the multimedia stuff leading up to the reunion and will likely help her add some of this drivel to any post 30<sup>th</sup> PowerPoint shows as well. It is key to have at least two contributors as we blamed each other publicly for the politically incorrect stuff. Sandy please give Ambrose my e-mail and have him stay in touch on any interesting Objectivist stuff, etc...

**Louis & Paula Pelletier** came down for the KAP open house and the banquet on Saturday evening. Great seeing you guys and wish we had more time together. Nicholas (their son, WPI class of '09) is doing a great job restarting the fraternity house after a 4+ year mandated shutdown. I predict his model for the New Greek System will be expanded to include many KAP chapters and ultimately other fraternities as well. It is rare to see such a fine, young man with his act together and so confident and passionate about his work. Good work, you raised a keeper! I'd be proud to have my daughters date any of these outstanding young men. As for the KAP of the late 70's...let's just say it took us a few more years to mature...

Finally, a couple more Alumni that I got to know for the first time this weekend, **Rich Bourgault & Winsor Naugler III**. Rich it was great meeting you and seeing your Dad (**Roy Bourgault**). I spent about 15 minutes with him reliving my comp board that he sat on over 30 years ago. I believe Rich was one of the furthest traveled Alumni having originated his trip in Germany. Thanks for your many years of service in the US Army. I got a kick out of hearing you and Winsor chat in German. Winsor, one of the alumni noted that you had very long hair and rode a unicycle around in the 70's! Is this true? That would be a great picture to forward to Sandra as well.

Wow, this went on a lot longer than I originally planned. All in all a great reunion and a busy ~4 days of travel and socializing with friends and family members back east. Gary & Susan Sowyrda were discussing aching joints, getting older and the benefits of stretching several times a day to stay loose & limber. After this weekend, I easily relate this analogously to "stretching" to take the time and make the effort to do the things we love the most. I called back Bill Berry from Canada and committed to the Snoopy Tournament while I was stuck once again in Chicago. Who knows how I'll pull it off? Time-is-a-wasting! Take the time to do something nice for someone you love. Also, take a chance if in doubt and by all means do it NOW. Go with your gut, what is the worst vs. the best that could possibly happen? Let's do it all again in 5 years, but until then let me know if you are anywhere near the West Coast and we can arrange to get together for a nice glass of wine and a few more laughs.

Best Regards & In the Bonds (for the KAP's),

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