

TIMELINE #17 COLLEGE HIGH JINKS

FUN IN THE ARB

During my first school year (1953 - 1954), a group of 8 or 10 Lloyd House residents decided to let off some college steam. One evening, we underage students managed to purchase a small keg of beer and adjourned to "The Arb." The entrance to Nichols Arboretum is located near the major girls dormitories and presents wide open areas that are accessible at all hours. It was a favorite place for students to go to "make out" in an era of no student cars and dormitory living.

Our Lloyd House group spent several hours in "The Arb" drinking beer (except for Bill Parks and myself, who drank soft drinks) and ate snack foods. We had fun, laughed and played games. One such game involved a small, downed tree which one of us grasped firmly at each end, ran down the hill, and used it to "mow down" our companions.

As we left, there was a police car aiming right at "The Arb" entrance. When the policeman saw our obvious group of rowdies, he turned on his headlights, directly into our faces. We scattered and ran in all directions. All but one of us, Dan Weinstein, returned safely to Lloyd House.

Dan told us later that he was running in the dark through the married student housing and didn't see the clothesline that he was bearing down on. The clothesline rope was exactly at mouth level. Dan ran into it so hard that he flipped upside down and may have pulled one of the rotted wooden poles out of the ground.

In retrospect, this episode sounds amusing but it was far from funny for Dan at the time. The inside of his mouth was cut severely and he had great difficulty eating and even talking for a long time. He never went to see a doctor about his injury. Except for those of us in the know, he didn't explain how he had sustained such a serious injury.

INTRAMURAL TOUCH FOOTBALL CHAMPIONS

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

1. Residence hall intramural athletics were fiercely competitive and nowhere more so than in Touch Football (the major sport).
2. The 1953 championship game between Lloyd House and Gomberg House was decided in Gomberg's favor by a disputed referee's decision. This event sparked the infamous Butyric Acid Escapade, described in Timeline (#16B), against Gomberg House. It probably wouldn't have happened except for this decision.
3. Next school year (1954), Lloyd turned the tables on Gomberg and won the the touch football championship.

EXCERPTS FROM "LLOYD TAB - LLOYD" (our house newspaper), NOVEMBER 15, 1954

The Leaders and the Best --- Team Champs

1. The game was hard-fought but a spirited Lloyd House team won the residence hall football championship. (Score; Lloyd 7- 0; Victim: Gomberg.)
2. The victors marched off the field triumphantly, carrying their quarterback [Watson] on their shoulders. A salute to Jack Watson, who steered the team to victory despite a sprained ankle.
3. Guts! Teamwork! Will to Win!
4. Spectators at the championship game may not be aware that they were witnessing a good deal more plain sportsmanship than any statistics can show.
5. We saw Jack Watson [starting quarterback and star player] literally hobbling around on a cane the day before the game. But he played nonetheless. That's guts!
6. Above all, every man played his individual darndest so that the TEAM could win. That's teamwork.
7. The Lloyd team earned and deserves that trophy.
8. Gomberg was a tough opponent. It has developed house spirit to a high degree. Probably because Gomberg has that reputation, it made our players all the more anxious to win. And they did want to win that game!

The following photograph shows the Lloyd House 1954 - 1955 Intramural Touch Football Champions. The photo was taken at the entrance to West Quadrangle. Lloyd House is directly to the left. Tom Boyer is at the left end of the second row. Larry Green is holding the football in the front row. Our star player, Jack Watson, is holding the trophy.



Intramural Touch Football Champions. Lloyd House, University of Michigan, 1954-1955.

1954 MICHIGRAS PARADE FLOAT

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

1. The Michigras Parade was held in conjunction with the April Fools Michigras Carnival bi-annually on the U of M campus. Michigras was a play on the Mardi Gras celebration held in New Orleans.
2. For a photograph of the **1954 Michigras Parade**, click on link:

http://www.aadl.org/gallery/aastreet/s/site12/michigras_300.png.html

3. The Lloyd House/Stockwell Hall 1954 Michigras Parade Float, is referenced in Timeline (#16B) Butyric Acid Escapade, Punishment. That story describes the construction of the "Alice in Wonderland" float.

SUBSEQUENT EVENTS

1. Our float was mounted on a rented farmer's wagon and was pulled in the Michigras Parade by Lloyd House's Dan Weinstein and his car.
 2. On the day following the parade, the float was disassembled at Stockwell Hall and the remains disposed of in their dumpster. The rented wagon had to be returned to a farm 10 or 15 miles from Ann Arbor.
 3. A total of 17 exuberant students (13 male and 4 female) returned the wagon. 14 rode on the wagon while 3 rode in Dan's car. The ride was cause for fun, laughter, and flirting.
 4. It was only after the wagon was unhitched that we 17 brilliant U of M students realized that we had only **1** vehicle to get us back home.
 5. Much like an earlier collegiate era prank of stuffing students into a telephone booth, we stuffed everybody into Dan's car. 6 people (1 girl) were packed into the front (a bench seat at the time), 7 people (2 girls) in the back, and 4 people (including 1 girl and myself) in the trunk. The trunk was, by far, the best place in the car.
 6. It proved to be an uncomfortable, yet rewarding, return trip. I was amazed that a tire didn't blow out or that something didn't break on the car. Actually, it turned out to be impossible.
 7. Halfway home, we stopped and dropped off 8 people on the side of the road (still leaving 9 people in the car, but nobody in the trunk).
 8. Dan drove the first group back to their dorms and returned to retrieve the others who hadn't moved from their location on the side of the road.
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1956 MICHIGRAS PARADE FLOAT

For a photograph of the **1956 Michigras Parade**, click on link:

<http://www.flickr.com/photos/21301000@N03/3818764307/>

EXCERPTS FROM "LLOYD TAB - LLOYD" (our house newspaper), MAY 8, 1956

Michigras

1. Every other April the whole student body turns out en masse for 2 nights of Carnival fun and gaiety at Michigras. Preceding the big nightly shows is a gala afternoon parade of floats -- fashioned as the carnival, by student house groups and organizations. This year Lloyd House combined its efforts with those of Couzens Hall to try its luck at winning the prize for the best and most successful float.
2. Out of about 100 men in Lloyd House, only about 10 could be induced to lend a helping hand. Our float "Rub-A-Dub-Dub," was a piece of engineering marvel. A faulty cable which parted half way through the parade, caused "Rub-A-Dub-Dub" to list to the port side but this was successfully checked.
3. To those students who worked so hard on the float, we owe a real round of applause.

EXCERPTS FROM MY LETTER TO MY PARENTS, MARCH 4, 1956

Do you remember two years ago when our house had to build a float ["Alice in Wonderland"] for the Michigras Carnival? Well, we have to do the same thing this year. Since I had a little experience on the last float, I'm kind of like an unofficial chairman for this one. We are building it with the help of a girl's dorm, Couzens Hall. Had to go up there Monday [2/27/56] night for an hour or so to talk about the design of "Rub-a-Dub-Dub."

THE GAIL HIRSCH STORY

During the 1955 U of M football season, I sat with my usual group from Lloyd House in the same seats at every home game (6 per season) at Michigan Stadium. At about game #3, I started noticing that the same group of female students always sat in the row in front of us. I also noticed that the girl who sat directly in front of me was extremely attractive, and she seemed to get even more attractive as the season progressed. I really wanted to meet her but I was too shy to break the ice and start a conversation. Additionally, I knew that my good Lloyd House "friends" would ridicule me endlessly, particularly if she rejected me. The Ohio State game (always the last game of the season) was played and I still couldn't summon the courage to talk to her. However, I did manage to overhear the girls talking to each other. I gleaned that the one who attracted me was named Gail (no last name) and that her hometown was Teaneck, New Jersey.

After 2 months I thought I would try to find Gail's listing in the Student Directory (containing all 25,000 student names). Knowing only her first name and hometown, I started my search at the beginning of the "A" names. Soon, my roommate Jim Black started at the back of the directory with the final "Z" names. Shortly, our friend Larry Horacek wandered into our room. After my explanation, he started at the center of the directory,

beginning with the "H" names. Almost immediately, he announced that he had found her:
Gail R. Hirsch, Education Sophomore, Alice Lloyd Dormitory, Hometown: Teaneck, NJ, and phone number.

Now armed with her full name and phone number, I was presented another dilemma. How could I identify myself as the person who sat behind her at the football games and eavesdropped on her conversations? After a great deal of consternation, I worked up enough courage and called her. She was very understanding and put me at ease at once. I asked her if she would like to go with me to the upcoming U of M hockey game. When she agreed, I was elated!

At this time, my good friend Dan Weinstein had dropped out of college but was still living in Ann Arbor. His fiancée Jonolyn was living in a separate apartment. On 2/24/56 I borrowed Dan's car, even though driving a car on campus was against U of M regulations. I picked up Gail Hirsch at her dorm, drove to the hockey coliseum, parked in the adjacent lot, and we watched the hockey game together. After the game, we discovered that it had become so icy and slippery that the car couldn't move in either direction. I was illegally driving and knew that the campus police wouldn't be far from a hockey game. Luckily, several able-bodied students saw the problem and pushed us out of our icy parking spot.

We drove to Jonolyn's apartment, met her and Dan, and enjoyed a take-out pizza together. Gail had to return to her dorm no later than 12:30am in accordance with university rules. We had a great time together and really enjoyed each other's company. This is reflected in 2 quotes from my 2/26/56 letter to my parents: *"I plan to see her again pretty quick,"* and *"Gail is probably the nicest girl I ever met."*

NOTE:

1. On 2/27/56, 3 days later (see "1956 Michigras Parade Float" above), I started working many hours on the construction of our float.
2. On 3/31/56, 7 days later, Spring Break started. On our way to Florida, I rolled Larry Green's Volkswagen over in Georgia. [See Timeline (#16), Accident in Georgia].

AS A RESULT, GAIL AND I NEVER HAD ANOTHER DATE!

EPILOGUE

As I was writing this anecdote on February 28, 2012 (almost exactly 56 years to the day of our one and only date), I attempted a Google search for Gail Hirsch. Not only did I find her, I found several photographs of her. Of course, she is not the great beauty I remember. She is married, has a new last name (Rosenthal) and has two children. She is still working and is currently the Supervisor of Holocaust (yes, THAT Holocaust) Resources at the Richard Stockton College of New Jersey (120 miles from Teaneck, New Jersey).
