“Keep true to the dreams of thy youth.”
—FRIEDRICH VON SCHILLER
LETTER FROM THE editor

Hi there! Johann Christoph Friedrich von Schiller here. That’s me on the cover. I’m one of the immortals, which—let me say this—there’s good parts and bad parts. I’ll get to that in a minute, but let me first say how pleased I am to accept the position of Honorary Editor of The Voice of ’58, the newsmagazine of the 50th Reunion of your distinguished and fun-loving class. In this issue, besides my little introduction, we’ll have some previews of what promises to be a great reunion in June of 2008, as well as some photos of classmates in both their adult (ca. 2006) and larval (ca. 1956) stages. Future issues will give you information, hints and promises about reunion events, both fun and serious, which was one of my big ideas—that people should not only do good works and love beauty, but should have fun doing it.

A little about myself here, if I may. I was a poet, philosopher, and playwright, which got me a lot of press during my mortal phase. That Beethoven fellow (famous in my day for writing crazy music and rarely changing his underwear) made me immortal by working one of my little poems into his Ninth Symphony, which apparently remains a Big Deal to this day. The upshot was a lot of busts like the one on the cover, in libraries and colleges for about the next century. Gradually, people got tired of looking at me and stuck me in attics and basements. And that’s where the Class of 1958 – May the Ages sing your praises forever! – comes in.

Around the time of Library Moving Day – you remember, you got out of class to move books from Scoville to the New Library, and Larry Gould gave you a picnic – two of your members stumbled across me in Scoville, apparently slated for the dumpster. They took pity and, for the next couple of years, I sat on a dresser in Burton, listening to your chatter, watching you grow up. I particularly liked the West Side open houses, though a drawback to being a bust is that you can look but you can’t touch, if you see what I mean. Never mind.

A bunch of your women hid me in the basement of the Chapel the next year, and since then it’s been a crazy ride, showing up unexpectedly at football games, parades, and reunions. I expect to be in Northfield on June 19, 2008, and I hope to see you there, too! “Stay true to the dreams of your youth.” I said that in 1799, and I’m saying it now.

That’s it for this issue. When you’re immortal, you have to pace yourself. ✹

bald spot

AROUND THE

Carleton’s Bald Spot – that inelegantly named central plaza – has long been the focal point of college life. Indeed, our editor and iconic leader Herr Schiller spent years of incarceration in old Scoville Library on the southwest corner of this plaza, and shorter periods hiding in Skinner Chapel on the south side. During those times other buildings of note framed the Bald Spot – Willis Hall on the west, Williams Hall on the northwest, Music Hall on the northeast, and the most imposing of all, Gridley Hall, a secure fortress for Carleton women, on the east.

Many events and activities, whether planned or spontaneous, occurred on the Bald Spot. In the autumn, on homecoming weekend, it was the site of the homecoming bonfire. This conflagration, fueled by dead branches, logs, old railroad ties, and other combustibles, lit up the night sky and evoked emotions of savage lust among the assembled witnesses. In winter an ice rink occupied most of the central ground, and during Winter Carnival there were at the four corners of the rink magnificent snow sculptures created by each of the four resident classes (for ours as Frosh, see Back Cover of this issue). In spring, ice and snow gave way to dandelions and grass. Students sprawled on the ground here and there, some studying, many not. Impromptu games of touch football were played, as were various configurations of “catch” with baseball or softball. Frisbee had not yet been invented. And in June most years, weather permitting, graduation ceremonies were conducted on the green in an atmosphere of pomp appropriate to the occasion.

Things are different now, some five decades later. Williams and Gridley are gone – finito, kaput. A modern drama and fine arts building stands approximately on Gridley’s site, and a web of roads and walkways occupies the spot where Williams once stood. The stone walls of Scoville and Willis remain, but their functions have changed. Administrators and service offices of various sorts have replaced students, teachers, and classrooms. The Music Hall, refurbished and enlarged, still shelters musicians. Only the chapel retains dimensions and functions from 50 years ago. Perhaps its durability reflects the enduring spirit of Carleton – or maybe it is the thickness of those impressive limestone walls.

What do you remember about Carleton’s central square? Share your thoughts in future issues of The Voice of ’58. And revisit the spot itself with all the rest of us in the spring of ’08. ✹
ABOUT THE REUNION


For the first time at Carleton, the Class of '58 has the good fortune of receiving the go-ahead to arrive on campus as early as Thursday afternoon rather than the customary Friday afternoon. This means that you will have the option of having one extra afternoon and evening to be at Carleton with your classmates. A special event is in the planning process for Thursday evening. Keep tuned for more specific information about this and other programs and activities as they develop. Except for a small registration fee, you will be a guest of the college during the Reunion weekend.

WHAT TO EXPECT?

There never is enough time at reunion weekends to do everything you might want. Just ask anyone who has been to an earlier reunion! You will find that one of your greatest challenges will be to choose among the many stimulating program offerings to attend and which activities to enjoy. They will range from the serious and thought-provoking to the just-for-fun type. You will find that this reunion is more than just an occasion to reminisce about old times. Programs will reflect the fact that we are still forward-thinking, active in our time, still learning, growing and contributing.

You can expect to reconnect with friends, to share memories and find out what paths their lives have taken since graduation. You can even expect to connect in a significant way for the first time with at least one person you didn’t know very well during college days. You can expect to find out what Carleton is like today by meeting and listening to some of the current professors, if you wish. Expect to have time set aside for enjoying good food and libations in the company of our classmates at various planned gatherings with, maybe, some spontaneous music performed casually by one or another of us. Finally, expect to leave the Reunion on Sunday feeling glad that you did not miss out on a very special weekend.

This guessing game reveals unexpected twists in the lives of some of our classmates. Can you guess who they are? *

Mystery Person #1 had a starring role in “Fridges of Madison County.” Armed with a degree in public administration and a strong belief in citizen participation, MP1 was able to create and hold the influential position of Solid Waste Coordinator for Madison County. Through MP1’s efforts the county was able to close two of its landfills. MP1’s activities became part of the local lore, leading to a newspaper pic of MP1 standing beside refrigerators recovered from “unofficial” dumping grounds. The caption? What else? “Fridges of Madison County.”

Not content with that singular source of fame, Mystery Person #1 is a member of a county Planning Board and a county Conservation Commission as well as social justice chairperson for a church. MP1’s real claim to fame, however, is having used the same sourdough starter since 1964.

Mystery Person #2’s degrees in Latin and English may account for a career that has included publishing an article on Whitman, doing freelance writing for a community newspaper, and teaching Latin and English in a Berkeley, CA, junior high. But it is MP2’s activist spirit that accounts for serving for 10 years as chair judge for a university precinct where as many as 1,000 persons might register to vote on election day.

On their 40th anniversary, MP2 and spouse returned to England, where they had met and married soon after MP2’s graduation. They now go back every year where, having taken up ballroom dancing, they kick up their heels at tea dances at the Royal Opera House and elsewhere around London.

Mystery Person #3 has been around. Since graduation, MP3 has visited approximately 40 countries, among them Oman, Iran, Tibet, Russia, Peru, Ethiopia, Tanzania, Zanzibar, and Malawi. MP4 still has an itch to hike the Inca trail, but admits to having never been to the Grand Canyon.

Not to be limited to mere world travels, MP4 decided to apply the traveling bug in another way by teaching ESL to immigrants, refugees and foreign students who were preparing for grad school. When not trotting around the globe, MP4 has cooked for a catering firm and now gives time to the local herb society, which led to MP4’s designing the medicinal section of the herb garden in a large urban botanical garden.

Mystery Person #4 has been around. Since graduation, MP4 has visited approximately 40 countries, among them Oman, Iran, Tibet, Russia, Peru, Ethiopia, Tanzania, Zanzibar, and Malawi. MP4 has cooked for a catering firm and now gives time to the local herb society, which led to MP4’s designing the medicinal section of the herb garden in a large urban botanical garden.

*Identities will be revealed at our 50th reunion! x
The class of ’58 fiftieth reunion is a special event for all classmates. To that end the reunion planning committee wants you to contribute your thoughts and ideas so that it will make the event special for you as well as everyone else. In the next few months you will be receiving surveys and requests for information. Please return these and help structure the event. Three more issues of “The Voice of ’58” will be mailed describing the reunion plans.

We encourage you to contact the planning committee through one of the following methods...

Go to our class of ’58 website:
www.go.carleton.edu/1958

The website will not only contain information about the reunion planning, but will have interesting tidbits about our class, and news about the college campus and activities.

By email at: 1958_reunion_committee@lists.carleton.edu

Write us at:
Class of ’58 Planning Committee
Carleton Alumni Affairs
One North College Street
Carleton College
Northfield, Minnesota 55057