

EDITOR'S LETTER



Granddad's BAND

A sense of music,
a sense of place

Brad Whitehouse, editor

Probably the best thing I ever did with my Granddad was to join his band. For a long time he's been playing piano and keyboard in a Dixieland group called the Ecumenical Jazz Band, which mostly plays during Wednesday night services at area churches. About five years ago, I started playing guitar.

Concerts are almost always the same. These are little country churches, the kind that always end things with refreshments in the fellowship hall. If we've played there before, the pastor knows to keep his opening message short or get ribbed when Granddad does his introduction, which always begins in exactly the same way: "Church is out, and it's Saturday night at the Elks!"

A lot of the concert is about the music. Our singer lays on feeling and style, and the horn players are old pros who know each other inside and out. We play "Stardust," "Bill Bailey," "Hey, Good Lookin'," and "Don't Get Around Much Anymore," and from behind my guitar I watch these old songs reach inside elderly men and women, who cannot sit still, who sway in their seats or even dance in the aisles, whose looks of bliss are tinged with a regret that makes you wonder what they left behind.

But the music isn't everything. Part of it is Granddad. He's the guy at the mike, the one with as many jokes as songs, the one who at 85 is still pretty good at winning the crowd over

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Dear Contact,

I was very disappointed to read the Free Write in the last issue of Contact entitled "Rocking the Vote?" In such an important election year, and with so many like-minded organizations spending millions of dollars in resources all aimed towards voter registration, education, and mobilization, I am amazed by Andrew Krukowski's negative disposition towards work which I view as imperative.

Please ignore any and every comment you hear about the laziness and lack of concern of our generation. Quite frankly, it is untrue and it undermines all the positive things we do. I have found that our generation cares, and cares a lot. The thing is that youth don't put voting together with concepts such as financial aid cuts and health care. Financial aid is often cut early because the college generation does not vote, and therefore allows itself to be ignored. The truth is if we change who chooses our elected officials, we change and control the topics at the forefront of elections.

Kimberly Bush '03

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PRESIDENT'S PERSPECTIVE



the College Access DILEMMA

Stanley Caine, president

This past fall, the Lumina Foundation for Education released a gloomy report entitled "Collision Course: Rising college costs threaten America's future and require shared solutions." The report contends that more and more qualified young people are unable to attend college because they cannot afford it. In December, the Commission on Higher Education and Economic Growth, a blue ribbon panel appointed by Michigan Gov. Jennifer Granholm, issued its final report. It described "an educational achievement gap" that is damaging the Michigan economy. Too few Michigan citizens, it argued, possess the post-secondary education or training necessary for the state to compete economically with other states and regions of the country. The commission embraced the governor's 10-year goal of "doubling the number of Michigan residents who obtain college degrees or other valuable credentials."

Together these reports summarize our current dilemma: to a greater degree than ever before, higher education is becoming a necessity not just for individuals, but for communities, states and the nation. At the same time, there are growing concerns that the rising cost of higher education may foreclose that opportunity to many qualified individuals.

During my tenure at Adrian, perhaps no issue has absorbed more of my time and attention than the effort to control expenses in the face of escalating costs for energy, health care, technology and the like. We have been successful in identifying some innovative ways to reduce costs. Through the Michigan Colleges Foundation, for example, we have entered into some collaborative ventures with other Michigan liberal arts institutions designed to save on the purchase of goods and services (supplies, printing, vehicles, health insurance) and to improve the efficiency of our business processes (purchasing, billing, conference planning). The participating institutions are also exploring together ways to enhance academic offerings, without increased cost. (A collaboration with the University of Michigan in the area of information technology is now underway.)

Still, financial aid – institutional funds devoted to scholarships and need-based aid – has increased at a faster annual rate than any other element in our budget. Ironically, one of the reasons for its rapid growth is a waning commitment by the state and federal government to support college attendance. Over the past several years, the Michigan Tuition Grant, earned by over 40,000 Michigan students, including about 600 at Adrian, has been reduced. (Last year we joined with other Michigan independent colleges and universities in a successful effort to defeat the present administration's plan to eliminate the program altogether.) We have also learned of pending changes in the federal Pell Grant program that will reduce the grant size, or terminate the eligibility, of about 1.3 million students including, I am sure, some Adrian students.

There may be more that institutions like Adrian can do to

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LETTER

from the

Alumni Board

Many countries in the world have compulsory military service obligations for young men and women before they can “get on with their lives.” And in recent years, more and more U.S. high schools have been requiring students to serve volunteer stints in their communities before they can graduate.

Something in the individualistic American spirit makes compulsory anything seem like an intrusion or burden. But I have to admit, I wish everyone had to serve a stint on the Alumni Board of Directors.

This is on my mind for a couple reasons. Foremost, we on the board are in the midst of one of our most important duties – considering candidates to fill seats on the board vacated by those at the end of their terms or who have stepped down. In coming months, we are considering candidates to fill nine openings on the board.

Second, board Vice President **Ken Gonser '62** and I spent a day on campus recently visiting administrators and student leaders, and I came away more convinced than ever that the relationship we have with AC after graduation is far more rewarding than the experiences we have in our four years as students.

It struck me as remarkable that, simply because we are interested enough to stay involved, Ken and I are able to play a meaningful role in connecting the current challenges and successes of the College – the dynamic “present” – with vast, potential resources of the “past” – that is, all 10,000 of you alumni.

No matter how long you have been out of school, or how little you've stayed in touch, I can assure you that neither you nor what you can contribute is irrelevant to your alma mater. That point was driven home when Ken and I sat down for an informal lunch with student leaders of LINCS, Leaders In College Service.

Ken asked departing seniors what they will remember as most memorable from their AC experience. Their answer was the same as mine as an '82 grad, and as Ken, from 20 years before me: the personal connections they made with instructors, and how it shaped their educations and their lives.

That shared experience is a bond that unites all alumni, and the easy repartee between the three generations of alums (and soon-to-be alums) underscored that none of us are ever far from what the heart of the College has been for nearly 150 years.

Indeed, you can go home again, and I'd encourage you start the process by considering submitting your name as a candidate for the Alumni Board of Directors. Serving on the alumni board is a good way to dip your toe back into that pool of college affairs.

It's not mandatory (maybe that's something we can work on in the coming year!), but I can tell you that the benefits are truly enriching.

John Hiner '82
President, Adrian College Alumni Board

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keep the cost of college down. It is unlikely, however, that any institution can save enough on its operations or raise enough additional resources to support the leap forward in educational achievement that the governor, and the governor's commission, advocate. Public policy makers who extol the virtues of higher education must encourage greater public investment in providing opportunities for talented students to attend college. We may not need something on the scale of the GI Bill, which, after World War II, supported college attendance for veterans and fueled a dramatic increase in college enrollments. I am certain, however, that a larger commitment of state and federal funds is necessary if we are to reach our full potential as a highly productive society dedicated to equal opportunity for all.

Stanley Caine, President

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with his irreverent comments and his love for his band, his music, and the people who live around here.

My relationship with my grandfather really started when I moved to Morenci, the little farm town south of Adrian where he lives. My parents were high school sweethearts there, and I was born there, in the little country hospital that he helped found in 1961, and where he was one of the town doctors. But until I got a reporter job at the town weekly after college, the only time I really saw him was on holidays. We never really related when I was young.

But in Morenci, we started to warm up to each other. He became almost a second father to me. On my 23rd birthday, he asked me to help put up applesauce from his own apple trees. We sat working in the basement next to rows and rows of canned plums, green beans and beets, and he told me stories about his days as a Navy medic in the South Pacific during World War II. A couple years later some of the apple trees died, and I helped chop through the roots and pull the stumps. I remember how my chest swelled when he told me I was pretty good with an axe. And on one moonlit winter night after dinner at the house, I remember him putting his arms on my shoulders and asking how my marriage was going. He seemed like the only person who not only cared about my new life in Morenci, but actually understood something about it, too. I think there were times when he understood it a lot better than me.

To be honest, the band eventually ran its course for me. I wouldn't trade the experience for the world, but I was glad last spring when the band decided to scale back to only an occasional “reunion concert.” Even though I can plink out the chords well enough for most songs, the music isn't yet inside me like it's inside them. I never wanted Granddad to know that, because I couldn't bear the thought of disappointing him. And because it was one more connection between us. And because I knew that, in a few years when Granddad is gone, one of those old songs will probably come on and I'll get a look on my face that will make people wonder what I left behind.

Brad Whitehouse, editor of Contact