Dead Homecoming Traditions

Zach Johnson
Iowa State University

Follow this and additional works at: http://lib.dr.iastate.edu/ethos

Recommended Citation
Available at: http://lib.dr.iastate.edu/ethos/vol2009/iss1/6

This Article is brought to you for free and open access by the Student Publications at Iowa State University Digital Repository. It has been accepted for inclusion in Ethos by an authorized editor of Iowa State University Digital Repository. For more information, please contact digirep@iastate.edu.
Iowa State University has been celebrating Homecoming for almost a century, during which it's seen riots, crowned queens and given birth to a mascot. People kissed under the Campanile, cheered the football team on to victory and created lawn displays to show school pride. While some of these traditions will still occur during 2008’s Homecoming, others are nothing more than distant memories.

By Zach Johnson
Dubbed “The Cyclones” by The Chicago Tribune in 1895 after ISU’s football team upset the favored Northwestern Wildcats, the team went without a mascot until 1954. Chey Adams, president of Collegiate Manufacturing Company, got in touch with ISU’s sports information director Harry Burrell and suggested Collegiate Manufacturing create ISU’s first-ever mascot. The challenge of creating a mascot that resembled a cyclone was too difficult and Adams pressured the school to change its nickname, but Burrell was reluctant to change tradition. Instead, the Pep Council held a contest within the student body to hear their ideas for a new mascot. An homage to the school colors of cardinal and gold, a cardinal was chosen.

Collegiate Manufacturing was commissioned to design and build the mascot costume with help from the Pep Council and the ISU cheerleading squad. The eight-foot tall bird cost $200 and was introduced during Homecoming on Oct. 16, 1954. A national “Name-The-Bird” contest was held to give the unnamed mascot a true identity. Wilma Beckham Ohlsen of Ames was the first of 17 people to submit the name “Cy,” (as a prize she won a personalized “I” blanket.)

What many current students at Iowa State don’t know, however, is that Cy wasn’t ISU’s only mascot. In 1966, Cy married Susie Snapper Hawk—the two have not been seen together since—and 12 years later, a “Baby Cy” contest was held. During halftime at the Homecoming football game, the four winners of the baby mascot competition joined Cy on the field. One of the mini Cy’s, a shaggy bird named Clone, appeared with Cy at various sporting events throughout the next several years. He, too, later disappeared into obscurity.

Decades later, in 2007, Cy was thrust back into the spotlight as he was voted the Most Dominant Mascot on Earth by Cyclone fans across the world. He received 53 percent of the 7,741,864 votes cast in the finals. Even though Homecoming wasn’t for another few months, Cyclone power came through yet again.
"Students dragged Homecoming lawn displays into the street and set them on fire, tipped over sheds and attempted to block the road."

Dethroning the Queen

By 1958, female students were beginning to be seen more equal to their male counterparts. Instead of coming to college to get an education only to find a husband and rarely use their degrees outside the home, women were starting to enter the workforce in larger numbers. But even as the times changed, the student population’s views about women were slower to evolve.

Editorial writer Thomas Emmerson wrote an article in The Iowa State Daily entitled "Campus Queen Contestants Need a Thorough Evaluation," after hearing about women running campaigns for queen and even going so far as to stuff ballot boxes. While in the minority, he wrote that he wanted to see the Homecoming Queen contest (and other queen contests) discontinued and urged the Cardinal Guild to evaluate how the contests were run.

He wrote, "We think queens are an unnecessary aspect of college life. With this in mind The Daily will adopt a new policy starting this fall. We will...print pictures of only the Homecoming queen, VEISHEA queen and Bomb's beauties. We hope the day will come when queen contests become so numerous that 'everyone's a monarch' and the whole business disintegrates."

It wasn't until 1970 that Emmerson's wishes came true. Joyce Stout, a sophomore from Chariton, Iowa, was the last ever VEISHEA Queen at ISU. It wasn't until 1998, however, that Homecoming saw its final Homecoming Queen because of its...
realized "popularity contest" status. Though a somewhat similar "Cardinal Court" was established in 2006 to recognize students who are involved in the ISU community, no one has been officially crowned queen in the last decade.

**Fight for Your "Riot" to Party**

While the 2004 VEISHEA riots are probably the first crowd upheavals that stick out in most students' minds, the three day long Homecoming riots in October 1953 made just as big of a splash in the national spotlight.

During the '53 Homecoming football game, ISU upset the University of Missouri and students decided they wanted to extend the weekend to celebrate. A victorious student body marched over to President James Hilton's front lawn and demanded just as big of a splash in the national spotlight. "No School Monday." Police were summoned from Iowa Falls, Eldora, Boone, Marshalltown and Des Moines to assist local police with the situation. Students dragged Homecoming lawn displays into the street and set them on fire, tipped over sheds and attempted to block the road. In an effort to control the crowd, police resorted to using clubs and tear gas to calm the crowd down.

The riot was far from over, however. On Monday night more than 2,000 students (including 700 women who received special permission to protest from their dormitory den mothers), returned to President Hilton's lawn to request that classes be canceled the next day. Hilton, deciding it was better to let them dismiss their own request, told them that if their football team won its next game he would make a recommendation to the administration that they cancel classes for a day in celebration. The students argument? "We may not win another game."

The riots were picked up by popular news sources such as Life and The Los Angeles Times and inspired numerous editorials from members of The Iowa State Daily.

**Kiss Me, Baby**

Every Iowa State student (and the lucky few who happen to be on campus during Homecoming and VEISHEA) knows how much fun campaniling can be. The original 10 bells have had another 40 added among them, making romance ring loud and clear throughout campus. They say you're not a true Iowa Stater until you're kissed under the campanile at the stroke of midnight, but for Cassie Ogg (nee Biek) and husband David, Homecoming represents the start of their lives together. Thought they'd met during their freshman year, it wasn't until they both found themselves single in their junior years that sparks began to fly.

"After one of the first dates, we went to watch our houses [Kappa Kappa Gamma and Sigma Pi] at Yell Like Hell practice," Cassie said. "We officially started dating a few weeks before Homecoming, and one of my favorite early memories of us dating was campaniling at midnight."

Both Cassie and David were co-chairs for their Greek houses' Yell Like Hell pairings, and they still love cheering on the Cyclones even though they now live in Minnesota. "We pretty much owe finding each other to Iowa State, so we go back to Ames any chance we get," Cassie said. "Homecoming really reminds us of how we got started."

**Start of Something New**

This year's Homecoming co-chairs, junior Abby Mollenhauer and senior Kaitlyn Wiener, are looking to ramp up this year's traditions. "We're having a midnight pancake feed on Friday night from 10 to midnight," Wiener said. "It kind of stemmed off what VEISHEA did and realizing that it was really popular. A lot of people came out for that and we want more people on central campus for fireworks and mass campaniling."

That same night, Mollenhauer said she hopes to see more people attending ExCYtement in the Streets and the pep rally. "We're having the Gyro man and SuperDog at ExCYtement in the Streets because we know that's popular among ISU students," Mollenhauer said.

Both co-chairs would like to see a parade become part of the Homecoming tradition again, but as of now there isn't enough student support to build floats. Even lawn displays, which were once a huge event for both Greek houses and residence halls, are losing participants each year. "Frielty used to have a huge lawn display, which would look really cool on its big yard," Wiener said. "It's hard to coordinate between the spring semester and the fall semester when there's all new people coming in, especially freshman, not knowing what it is and what the traditions are."

---

**HOMECOMING TRADITIONS**

**We'd Like to See:**

By Tyler Kingkade

How trashed students and fans can get in parking lots near the rear of vehicles

The Cyclone Country assembles within roughly one square mile to stuff their stomachs with as much food as they can, washing it down with Jell-O shots, beer, Hawkeye vodka and more beer.

1st Annual Alumni Tour of Renovated State Gym

Finally in 2038, Alumni will be invited to tour the new facilities and marvel at the sauna, new locker rooms and machines that by then will have been replaced by Wii Fits.

[ 16 ]
The Traditions Continue

Once Homecoming 2008 is over, planning for next year's celebrations will begin almost immediately. New traditions will be formed while others are destined to become dusty records in the Parks Memorial Library. In the end, though, only one thing matters—keeping the tradition of showing school spirit alive.

Dining centers offer specials for the week

The most popular specials feature a decent-tasting pasta, in which the UDCC will switch out its government-rationed canned sauce for jars of Prego.

Tradition of skipping all the traditions

As with any school activity, many students will participate in not participating with anything. Others pride themselves in being anti-social, while some are simply saving themselves for VEISHEA.