

What cracked you up in college?

When we asked, you answered. Alumni sent us their best yarns recounting collegiate capers, pranks and priceless moments. Enjoy, but take warning: The following stories, seen in the rearview mirror of memory, may appear funnier, rosier, more coincidental or in other ways better than when they actually happened.



Story edited by Dale Smith
Illustrations by Deborah Zemke

Betting on baseball

It was early spring 1947. My friend Carl and I were watching Coach John "Hi" Simmons conduct baseball practice in Brewer Fieldhouse, where a batting cage had been set up. We were casually discussing the possibility of trying out when Carl said, "Well, I don't see anyone down there any better than I am." Another student sitting nearby overheard him and offered a challenge, "If you're so damn good, why don't you go down there and prove it."

Carl turned to him and said, "I've got \$5 that says that if I go down there, I'll have Coach Simmons talking to me within 30 seconds." The bystander said, "You're on," and both handed me \$5 to hold.

Carl left the stands, scooped up a bat, entered the already occupied batting cage and began taking practice swings. Simmons ran up and yelled, "Hey you, what do you think you're doing?" Carl left the cage and returned to the stands. I gave him the \$10, and we headed for the Shack.

James Estes, BA '50
Gladstone, Mo.

How not to cross a stream on a horse

Back in 1932, the ROTC artillery unit was horse-drawn (we used the polo ponies), and the commanding officer was a regular Army man. One day he decided to take us on a field exercise and teach us how to ride “as officers and gentlemen.” He lined us up along Hinkson Creek and said he would demonstrate how to walk across a stream. With that, he walked his horse into the creek and promptly disappeared beneath the water’s surface. Only his hat floated on



the top. It seemed he didn’t know that a sand and gravel company had been dredging at his favorite crossing, which was now about 10 feet deep. Not knowing whether to laugh or applaud his demonstration, we sat transfixed on our horses. This was the same officer who, during his demonstration of how to jump a horse, got stuck midway on one of the hedges.

Ray Cummings, BA '35, BS Ed, MA '36
Ballwin, Mo.

Get on with the game already

Having entered the College of Engineering at age 25 and worked my way through school with a wife and two children to support, I assure you there were few light moments during my college career — not until graduation day in June 1962.

On that day, the graduating class was seated in the west stands of Memorial Stadium, with family and friends seated on both sides and to the rear of the graduates. A large platform for faculty and dignitaries had been erected on the track between the football field and the stands, facing west.

Our commencement speaker that day was Eugene J. McNeely, BS Eng '22, LLD '62, president of AT&T. As he paused in his delivery to allow a particularly salient point to sink in, the voice of a young child penetrated the silence, echoing throughout the stadium. The young voice asked, “When is he going to shut up so they can start the football game?”

The entire stadium rocked with laughter, and McNeely found it difficult to go on.

I recognized that voice immediately. It belonged to my 5-year-old son, Mark. He cracked 'em up!

Paul Hollrah, BS CiE, '62
Sand Springs, Okla.

Quandary at the quarry

One hot and humid day in the summer of 1948, a gang of us decided to go swimming at the quarry. I wore a two-piece strapless bathing suit, and my top was held by one button. I dove into the water, and when I emerged, I saw my top floating a few yards from me. I was so embarrassed, and my date was kind enough to throw in his shirt. However, the shirt, when wet,

was practically transparent. A number of students were on hand taking pictures, and for weeks I walked around campus with my eyes down.

Ines Barbera Sainz, A&S '49
Vero Beach, Fla.

Vent saves rent

One evening in 1961, my wife and I had just gotten in bed at the rooming house where we worked. I was a graduate student in the College of Agriculture, and we managed the 13-boy rooming house in exchange for rent of \$50 a month. My wife, Jo, cleaned after the boys. That night we heard the voices of girls through the furnace vents. In those days, there were strict rules at the University: No girls allowed in boys' rooms. We could have lost our job and low rent if we didn't enforce that mandate. We hollered down the vent to get the girls out, and that was the end of it. As a married student, this was as exciting as it got.

Bill Sellers, BS Ag '58, MS '62
Salado, Texas

No nukes for this guy

One day as I was finishing my master's degree in physics, I drove my car to school. But after classes, I spaced out and walked home. Noting that the car was gone, I ran into the apartment to confront my wife. I loudly demanded to know what she had done with my car. Traded it for a brisket, she joked.

Then she whispered, "You probably shouldn't work on anything nuclear."

Bill Mullins, MS '60
Carrollton, Texas

Frozen delicacies

One very cold evening a bunch of us dorm friends from Farwell House were returning on foot from a visit to a friend's apartment near Greektown. As we walked, we got to laughing at how the cold seemed to have frozen our noses and everything in them. We all

laughed hysterically, which helped pass the time and took our minds off of how cold we were.

We had an even better laugh the next day when someone opened the paper and we saw the Calvin and Hobbes cartoon with Calvin walking in the snow and bitter cold. He stops, looks forward, wiggles his nose. His only words came in the last frame: "I just hate it when my boogers freeze."

Kimberly Boothe Guilford, BS Ed '88, M Ed '98
Macon, Mo.

Cigars and anarchy

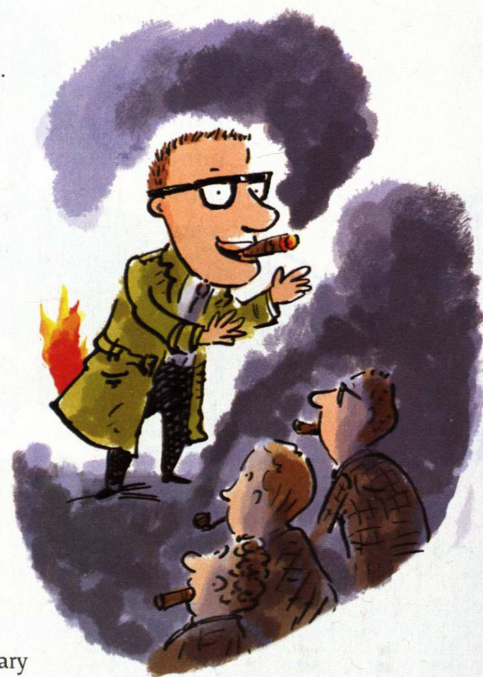
It was a simpler time at Mizzou in the early 1960s.

Camelot seemed just beyond the horizon. During 1962 and 1963, the Alliance Party emerged as an attempt to meld the various independent houses and off-campus students into a political force. One rainy evening before the election of student government officers, a meeting was held to lay out the party strategy. We crowded into the legendary "smoke-filled room," except

this was a dormitory room that barely held us all. Still, security was enforced, and a member of the committee had to identify and vouch for each person. Most of us were casually dressed and smoking. Committee members were in sport coats and ties and had a predilection for pipes or cigars. Raincoats and umbrellas cluttered the room along with election posters and pamphlets. A student named Dick was obviously in charge as he called for attention and nonchalantly sat on the edge of a desk. He held a large cigar in one hand. His arms hung at his sides, but the heels of his hands, pressed hard against the desk, revealed his tension.

"Listen up! Calm down! Shut up!" Dick began. "We don't have much time and ..." Dick stopped talking when I shot my hand up and said, "Pardon me, Dick, but ..." Dick cut me off and went on, "I was saying we don't have much time. When I'm finished, I'll take questions and comments."

Duly chastised, I sat quietly but anxiously through Dick's talk about how to hang and distribute posters and answer questions. Dick looked at me from time to time, but he finished his whole



sermon before he said, "OK. We'll throw it open for questions. I believe you have something to say." He looked directly at me.

"Your raincoat's on fire," I said.

Dick followed my gaze to the end of his cigar slowly burning a hole in his raincoat, jumped off the desk, yelled, "Son of a bitch," and began to beat the fire out. The meeting ended in some disarray.

As I recall, the Alliance Party didn't do as well as was expected, but I don't think the two things are related.

Larry Ladd, BS Ed '67, M Ed '68
Jacksonville, Ill.

Pinkney's bruised pinkies

Economics Professor Pinkney Walker was a real favorite of students, and this story gives insight why. It seems he came to teach one morning with his hand in a bandage. Of course, the students asked what had happened. He is reported to have said, "When I was leaving the party, someone stepped on me."

Albert Mitchell, PhD '66
Keezletown, Va.

Balm for the backside

This is a tale of two Bobs: Bob D. and Bob H. Both were in my Alpha Gamma Rho fraternity. Bob H. was a practical joker. One semester, Bob D. had a class at 8:30 a.m., and as soon as the class ended, he always rushed back to use the restroom. Bob H. noted this regularity, and about once or twice a month, he would apply "itching ointment" to the toilet seat and catch Bob D. as his victim. On those particular days, Bob D's exclamations — "&?@#&" — made it a hilarious event for Bob H. and others within hearing distance.

Nelson Trickey, BS Ag '49, MS '55
Columbia

You're out of uniform, soldier

One day on our way to ROTC, my roommate and I were running late. We had just left Defoe Hall and were about to Brewer Fieldhouse when my roommate asked me to hold his hat as he adjusted his tie. He had just given me the hat when a bird dropped a load — I mean big load — right on top of his brand-new crew cut. How I made it on time I will never know. My roommate had to go wash up, though. Yeah, he was late.

David Snider, BS CIE '59
Nixa, Mo.

These books are made for droppin'

The day the government passed the lottery for the draft, my friend drew No. 1. He threw his books out the window from the fourth floor of Mark Twain Hall. They landed on his own car.

Tom Mendenhall, BA '71
Columbia III

