

We Still Laugh About It

CONFESSIONS OF COLLEGIATE CAPERS

Five months ago, we asked for your funniest tales from your student days for this special Storytelling issue. Since then, our office mail delivery has been highly entertaining, with accounts of poignant freshman innocence, romantic angst, carefully orchestrated pranks, housekeeping disasters and social blunders.

Sincere thanks to all who wrote. We received 151 epistles ranging in length from a few lines to 17 single-spaced pages, and covering a span of six decades and three generations. But no matter the circumstances—whether you came to Mizzou in wartime or peacetime, in times of poverty or plenty—your sense of humor prevailed. We read each story and selected our favorites to publish here. Because of the tremendous response, we saved some for future issues, and others appear on our web site at www.mizzou.com.

COMPILED BY CAROL HUNTER

ILLUSTRATIONS BY DEBORAH ZEMKE

CATALOGS ARE EVEN CHEAPER

It was mid-Depression 1935, when my roommate was shown by the owner of the house where we rented a room how to fold toilet paper so that he wouldn't use so much of the paper per sitting.

JOHN E. LANDFRIED, BS CHE '38
ROCKWALL, TEXAS

UNEASY RIDERS

Notices could be found on a campus bulletin board offering rides, at a low price, by car owners. Before Thanksgiving, Ruthie and I, who both lived in Read Hall, the women's dorm, decided to pay surprise visits to our homes in St. Louis. I cannot remember when we found out that the bargain ride (\$10 or \$15?) was to be in a roadster with a rumble seat. Green as we were, that would not have influenced us. As soon as the car got up to highway speed, about 45 mph, the surprise was on us! Our driver had provided a small, thin blanket. We sat as low as possible and curled up like two insects. We had to hold on to the sides, bumping and swerving our way into the wild blue yonder. The flapping blanket never was tucked in. Cold blasts of air were sharper as we drove eastward. That nonstop trip was the longest experienced till then, and now. I can still feel the blanket-whipping wind. Eventually we were delivered to our respective homes. I returned to Columbia by Greyhound

bus. Gradually, I learned to make informed choices in life outside of the classroom. I loved every bit of it, on and off campus.

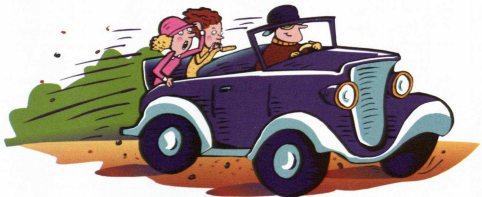
ANNA TREPTS TIBBE, AB '38
ST. LOUIS

I LANDED IN FRONT OF THE

A PENNY EARNED

One of the ways I worked my way through J-School was selling subscriptions to *The New York Times*. Business was slack one month, and I received a check for 6 cents. Needless to say, that incident was written up in a school publication. Now, I'm a retired journalist and author of *When Giants Ruled*, my first book, published in 1999 when I was 82.

HY TURNER, MA '40
CLEARWATER, FLA.



BIG MUDDY, NEW BUDDY

In my senior year, I had just gotten my other pair of pants out of the cleaners and I was heading for class on White Campus. The day before, we had a light snow, and the streets were a mess. Around the corner came a big Buick that sprayed me from top to bottom with all that dirty slush. The driver was a city slicker from St. Louis, who, in my view, had no business in the College of Agriculture in the first place. My clean pants were a mess. Jump ahead about four years. On Guam, I was driving my Jeep during a heavy downpour at night on a back road of muddy red clay. Suddenly, I passed a person trudging along the side of the road. Yes, I had sprayed him from top to bottom with that awful red clay mud. I backed up and apologized, and asked the poor fellow to get in out of the rain. He looked very familiar, and I asked, "Did you attend the University of Missouri?"

"Yes, I did," he replied.

"Did you, by chance, drive a Buick?"

PICTURE WINDOWS AND WAS KNOCKED UNCONSCIOUS.

"As a matter of fact, I did," he responded.

Then I said, "Let me tell you something, mister."

We had a big laugh over such a rare coincidence.

JOHN WHITE, BS AG '40
SAN DIEGO

GAME HUNTERS

I don't know how it's done now, but back in 1941-42 the referee signaled the end of the first half at MU basketball games by standing at midcourt and firing a loud bang in the air with a starter's pistol. Another engineering student and I thought this a waste of ammunition and were determined to do something about it. So, with a frozen duck, a shopping bag filled with duck feathers and plenty of string threaded through the overhead steel girders, we lifted the package to center court prior to the game and waited in the top row. Everything went as planned. The halftime came. The referee lifted his pistol and fired. A tug on the string dumped a dead duck and a multitude of feathers on center court, and the crowd cheered in proper appreciation of an engineering feat well done.

DONALD L. BRUTON, BS ME '44, JD '49
LAS CRUCES, N.M.

SNEAKY SALAMI

In 1943, most of us were hungry half the time. My mother, concerned I wasn't eating, was sending me a large salami weekly, which my roommates at 511 Hitt St. would devour in no time. So, I tied a string on the end of the salami and hung it out the side window and would stealthily pull it in for occasional sandwiches. It worked!

LEON A. GOLFIN, BS CHE '44
ST. LOUIS

FRAGRANT DELIVERY

Bob Partridge, BS Ag '38, DS '85, and I were hired by the ag college to clean out the horse barn. We loaded the manure spreader and started out to spread it on a field. We had to go through town along sorority row, and the machine kicked in gear; we spread manure for two blocks along that street. This was in 1933.

C. W. AUFRANC, BS AG '46
DEARBORN, MO.

WE BOTH PROMISED NOT TO TURN THE DIAL TO THE HOT WAX POSITION.

INDECENT INQUIRY

After an introduction to an attractive coed in the library, I was interested to know whether she was planning to enroll in a course during the intersession. Much to my embarrassment, I said, "Are you going to attend the intercourse session?"
LORIN W. ROBERTS, AB '48, MA '50, PHD '52
MOSCOW, IDAHO



OUTSTANDING CREDIT

After World War II, I returned to MU and enrolled in journalism school. After becoming editor of the school magazine and elected to Sigma Delta, the dean kicked me out because I hadn't taken his prerequisite course. I went to New York, launched my career and three years later was asked to come back and speak at Journalism Week.

MORT WALKER, AB '48, CREATOR OF *BEETLE BAILEY*
STAMFORD, CONN.

LOVESICK

At the beginning of my first term at Mizzou, there was a flu epidemic. It was so rampant that they had to use buildings around the Quadrangle for hospitals. On one side of the hall were the girls, and across the hall the boys. It didn't take long to feel better, and the coeds were throwing notes across the hall, setting up future dates. We drove Dr. Trimble crazy!

INES BARBERA SAINZ, ARTS '49
VERO BEACH, FLA.

SECRET RECIPE

In my junior year at MU, I was in the College of Home Economics and had to spend one-half of one semester in Home Management House, where you learned to run a house. One time my partner in cooking class and I were preparing a meal where we each invited a guest. My partner invited her boyfriend, and I invited my brother. I remember we prepared the meal for 66 cents—we had to keep our meals to less than \$1 a day. We had chocolate pudding, and one of us accidentally used salt for sugar. It was awful, but we made our guests eat it as we didn't want the teacher to find out. Surprisingly the guys ate it and didn't complain. Money was short, and a meal was a meal.

ELIZABETH SLAUGHTER LEATHERMAN, BS HE '50
BARTLESVILLE, OKLA.

LIVING OFF THE FAT OF THE LAND

I enrolled in September 1946. I had no money, only the promise of the GI Bill. I was able to borrow for books and housing at the barracks near the stadium. Still, I had no money for food, laundry and other essentials. I went to work at the Student Union kitchen, which solved the food problem since I could load up every day, including all the ice cream I wanted. For miscella-

SURPRISINGLY THE GUYS ATE IT AND DIDN'T COMPLAIN.

neous cash I collected grease from the hamburger grill. It amounted to 40 pounds a week and could be sold for 10 cents a pound at the local grocery. That was enough for me to squeeze by. This lasted from September 1946 until the paperwork cleared in February 1947. At that time, I received an income from the GI Bill and married my bride. We're still married 53 years later, and she's prettier now than when we married.

WARREN TALBOT, BS ME '50
VISTA, CALIF.

I ONCE TOOK SACRIFICED LAB RABBITS HOME TO BUTCHER AND FREEZE FOR



ON A SOUR NOTE

In the spring of 1948, my brother Bob and I were in a barbershop quartet with Hugh "Bub" Welch and Wayne Steigman. Our group, The Four Roses, was invited to sing on a music program originating from the Stephens College radio station. Also appearing on the show was a chorus of Stephens College girls, accompanied by an organ. The program was to be recorded and played publicly the next night. As we waited in the studio, the production manager indicated the organist would sound the note to start our song, but we emphasized that the organ would be distracting, since barbershop singers use a pitch pipe.

After the Stephens group performed, the announcer said in his melodious voice, "And now, under the auspices of Bob Gall, we are pleased to present The Four Roses Barbershop Quartet." With that, the organist hit a note as Bub blew the note on the pitch pipe. With the sound of the organ reverberating through the studio, I began to sing but was off key—terribly so! We started again, with the same result. The Stephens girls began to giggle, and then the dumb organist hit another note. Bob irritably growled, "Sound the damn pitch pipe!" With Bub sounding the pitch pipe in one ear and Wayne humming notes in the other, I was momentarily tone-deaf and so mortified I could hardly utter a sound. Finally, the studio manager suggested starting a new recording record (tapes were not yet in use).

With a clean record on the turntable and the laughter from the Stephens girls having died down and the organist finally mute, we started anew and sang one of our best performances. We told all of our friends to be sure to listen to the show. The next evening, we sat in Wayne's car to listen with pride to our performance. As the announcer completed his introduction, there was brief silence, followed by a single note from an organ, the faint sound of a pitch pipe, a few bars of the worse-off-key singing imaginable, titters

FAMILY SUSTENANCE.

of laughter, a growling voice of "Sound the damn pitch pipe," and simultaneous humming and pitch pipe noises. Then there was a click and silence, indicating the radio station had realized its mistake, but too late.

Two years later I was a charter member of the first Society for the Preservation and Encouragement of Barbershop Quartet Singing in America Chapter in Columbia, and my brother was ultimately that organization's international president. But that spring night at the Columbia radio station will never be forgotten.

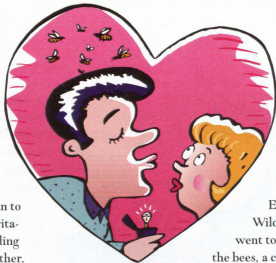
BILL GALL, BS BA '51
DALLAS

PEOPLE LOOKED AT ME STRANGELY AND EVEN LAUGHED.

ROMANTIC ACT

Eight of us lived in one of the World War II barracks above Rollins Field in the 1949-50 school year. One of the eight, as I recall, had the hots for a woman in a play on campus, *The Winslow Boy*, and he decided to try out for the play to get to know her. He was a hit in the play and spent the next 50 years of his life entertaining theater and movie fans. His name: George C. Scott.

JACK DRAKE, BS BA '55
PHOENIX, ARIZ.



CUPID'S ARROW STINGS

When we were engaged, I dressed up to go to St. Louis to pick up Elsie's ring. I put on Wildroot cream and then went to the apary to feed the bees, a class assignment.

Once there, the bees swarmed my head for the Wildroot cream. It was indeed an unforgettable experience, and we still laugh about it.

EDWIN I. ARMITAGE, BS AG '56
CINCINNATI

PREGNANT PAUSE

My sweetheart and I married in our sophomore year and attended Mizzou together. During our senior year, I discovered that I was pregnant. I had hoped to keep my pregnancy a secret. But when I sneezed in class and a button popped off my skirt and hit the blackboard near the instructor's head, I knew it was time for maternity wear.

LINDA ALLBRITTEN, AB '63
ALBUQUERQUE, N.M.

COLD CROONERS

While playing in Marching Mizzou in the 1966 season in the last game of the year, the KU game was so cold all the brass valves froze and we sang the entire halftime show! Now that was cold!

RICHARD E. MONTGOMERY, BS Ed '67
INDEPENDENCE, MO.

EXPERIMENTING IN THE KITCHEN

As a second-year medical student who was in a persistent state of poverty, I once took sacrificed lab rabbits home to butcher and freeze for family sustenance, for which I was dubbed an "Eagle Scout" in our senior year yearbook. There were about 20 large rabbits, whose butchering took me into the wee a.m. hours!

RONALD E. KEENEY, MD '68
RALEIGH, N.C.



MAJOR MESS

I was drum major of Marching Mizzou in '68 (Gator Bowl season) and '69 (Orange Bowl). The '69 K-State game was in Columbia and was very cold. After our halftime show, the band lined up for hot chocolate in the end zone, and I was the last in line, with my back to the field momentarily. K-State passed deep in the end zone, and I was suddenly tackled by the Mizzou defender, sending me crashing into the hot chocolate urn and covering my white drum major's uniform with hot chocolate, to the delight of the crowd. The game was a thriller, but I spent the rest of the second half at the Med Center receiving two stitches in my head. (My football injury that my dad bragged about.)

BOB DAVIDSON, BS BA '70
JACKSON, MISS.

COULDN'T THEY AFFORD CLOTHES BACK THEN?

UNDIGNIFIED DIGNITARY

In fall '71, I attended my first Mizzou basketball game at Brewer Fieldhouse. Arriving early, I sat in the center of the wooden bleachers just under the mezzanine, not knowing these were alumni seats. At game time, a guard told me to move. With the alumni section now packed, I decided to crawl over the railing to the mezzanine seats. Tripping on the railing, I fell on a well-dressed man. His folding chair collapsed, and we both fell to the floor with me on top. Suddenly two state troopers grabbed me and carried me off, but not before I saw the poor man was Gov. Warren E. Hearnes. Yep, I was the only Mizzou student to wrestle a governor to the ground. Typical freshman klutz. Luckily, there were no arrests.

REID BRONSON, BS BA '75
PLANO, TEXAS

FOWL FRIENDS

In my first month at Missouri, I boarded at the home of the first female J-School graduate, Mary Paxton Keeley, who has since died. She met me at the door carrying a candy-cane striped cane topped with a Donald Duck head, and spent the first hour showing me her duck collection. Then she said, "I hate ducks. A Japanese student gave me my first one, and now I can't get people to give me anything else."

P.D. WEDDINGTON, MA '77
WALNUT CREEK, CALIF.

I SNEEZED IN CLASS

PALTRY PASTRIES

My future wife, JoAnn, and I began to date in 1972.

She and three of her best friends lived in Schurz Hall. We, including their boyfriends, often did many things together, but money was not readily available. Once, around midnight, we decided to walk in the snow from the dorm to the Columbia Donut Co. on Broadway. This was a relatively new experience, as the female dorms (no coed dorms during this time!) had just been forced to do away with curfew hours. After an enchanting, romantic stroll, we arrived at our destination. Our friends ordered hot chocolate and fresh, hot doughnuts, and then it was our turn. Between JoAnn and me, we had only 5 cents. This was enough for five doughnut holes. The young fellow across the counter made a sarcastic remark about the big spender. After five doughnut holes, the last shared between us, we strolled back to the dorm, content and in love.

TURF MARTIN, ARTS '78
VIENNA, AUSTRIA

CARCASS WASH

In the fall of 1982, following a rather rainy Engineering Society picnic, my friend Jill Mauchenheimer Schlumberger, BS HE '86, and I desired a more exciting activity and proceeded out in the rain to the baseball diamond. Here we spent the next half-hour or so running around the muddy diamond and sliding into the bases. By the time we finished, we were covered from head to toe in mud. Now the dilemma was: how to get cleaned up? Towels on the car seats enabled our transportation, and the drive back to campus took us by a hand-spray car wash. Before we began dropping quarters into the slot, we both promised not to turn the dial to the hot wax position.

LEE MATTHEWS, BS ME '83
TROY, MICH.

KEEP THE CHANGE

In the spring of 1981, there had been a number of news reports of a national penny shortage. At the time, there was a snack bar run by fellow students in the Bingham Group. One evening, I posted signs over all of Hatch and Schurz halls stating residents must pay for purchases that evening in pennies due to the shortage. The snack bar workers refused to serve me for weeks as they had to spend hours after the 11:30 p.m. closing counting thousands of pennies.

DAVID A. JOHNSTON, BS BA '81, JD '84
COLUMBIA

AND A BUTTON POPPED OFF MY SKIRT AND HIT THE BLACKBOARD. . .

SNOW ANGELS

One cold, snowy day when classes were canceled, my fraternity brothers and I were helping push cars up the slick street in front of our house, which also happened to be right in front of the cafeteria picture windows (Laws/Lathrop/Jones) where 3,000 girls ate lunch every day. I was hit by a sliding car, bounced over the hood, landed in front of the picture windows and knocked unconscious. More than 200 girls came out to see if I was OK, and when I came to and saw this I shouted, "My God! I've died and gone to heaven."

TIMOTHY KOVACICH, BS ME '81
ST. LOUIS

OVEREXPOSED

As an incoming freshman in 1978, I wanted to make sure I had my share of Mizzou clothing to wear everywhere. I noticed some great white shorts at the former Missouri Bookstore with rows of black-and-gold "MIZZOU" and paw prints printed on the shorts repeatedly. I purchased them and started wearing them with T-shirts on warm days. I wondered why some people looked at me strangely and even laughed at me. Finally, a male friend approached me and asked if I knew what kind of shorts I was wearing. I hadn't realized, until I took a closer look, that I had bought men's boxer shorts!

MARGARET ANGELOS BOORAS, BJ '82
LAKE CHARLES, LA.

THE NAKED TRUTH

During a visit from my parents we toured the Museum of Art and Archaeology. There was a couple there with three small boys. The parents told their sons all about the plaster cast statues—whom they represented, etc. One of the boys listened intently, and while looking up at the nude statue of Apollo, asked as only a 4-year-old can: "Couldn't they afford clothes back then?"

SPRING MCGRAW BRADLEY, AB '95
NEOSHO, MO. ✪

TELL US YOUR STORY

Every life has a story. Tell us yours.

Since graduating, have you overcome

an obstacle to reach a dream? Are

you in the midst of a challenging

situation that has changed your life?

Have you experienced an epiphany

that led you to transform your

priorities? Write to us:

Life Stories

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