



January

THE RIVALRY



2009

Produced by: Student Alumni Council

Edited by: Elsa Lantz

BEAT LUTHER WEEK SCHEDULE

January 12:

- 7:00 p.m.- Women's JV Basketball - Levick Arena

January 14:

- All day- Wear Beat Luther Shirt or Orange:

Stickers and Pizza Ranch coupons

will be handed out by STALC members

- 6:00 p.m.- Women's Basketball - Levick Arena

- 8:00 p.m.- Men's Basketball - Levick Arena:

Free pizza will be handed out at halftime

in the student section. Provided by STALC

January 17:

- 7:00 p.m.- Wrestling - Luther College

Neither rain, sleet, snow

Adam Harringa, 2007

77.75 miles. That's the distance from the Hebron parking lot to the Regents Center parking lot on the Luther campus. It is also the distance the Wartburg cross country team ran on Saturday for the annual "Luther Run."

In support of the of the basketball teams, the "Luther Run" traditionally takes place the day of the Wartburg-Luther basketball game in Decorah. And inclement weather won't keep the team from completing their journey. With the high temperature only reading 19 degrees and snow covering the countryside on Saturday, the runners had to brave the elements on their journey north.

"It wasn't great weather, but we're used to running in these conditions," cross country captain Danny Corken said. "We have track practice outside everyday."

The "Luther Run" has been traced back as far as 1969, and has taken place every year since at least 1978 according to an article written in the trumpet in 1983. The tradition was originated by members of the Clinton One South dormitory, but soon after was taken over by the cross country team.

With runners covering between one and 14 miles at a time, there is always at least one person running with a basketball in hand, as other runners pile into cars and drive ahead to wait for the exchange at the next stop. Since 1983, the runners have carried the same Voit basketball with the inscription "Beat Luther's Ass," using it as a baton and proudly holding it up for passing traffic.

"A lot of people going to the game honk and wave as they go by," Corken said. "One guy even stopped to get a picture taken with the ball." One runner each year also has the distinction of running 19.75 miles, in honor of legendary track All-American Dan Huston, who was murdered in 1994. Huston's senior year he set the record of 19.75 miles. This year Jordan Wildermuth completed the feat.

"Jodan did well but the real heroes were the guys knocking down the J's like Tim McKenna and Jake Homer," Corken said, referring to the 3-point contest against the Luther cross county team during halftime of the men's game in which Corken also competed. Wartburg reclaimed the trophy after losing the previous year.

With foul weather a non-factor. Wartburg cross country runners will continue to keep their "Luther Run" tradition alive for years to come, while supporting the men's and women's basketball teams.

Wartburg vs. Luther

Sarah Speltz, 1998

It's a tradition that's been around since the 50s. It takes creativity, ingenuity and a whole lot of Wartburg spirit.

The Wartburg rivalry with Luther College has long been intense, and so have the pranks.

Jan Striepe, director of alumni and parent relations and graduate of the class of 1959, was a student at Wartburg when the pranking tradition began with the mystery of the missing Knight armor.

Striepe said at that time the Knight armor was kept in a special little cubicle in the P.E. Complex, which was "rather inaccessible," watching over the basketball court near the press box. "All the sudden one day it was gone," she said.

Shortly after was the Wartburg vs. Luther basketball game at Luther in Decorah. The gym was packed, and many Wartburg students were there; "I was there," said Striepe.

During half time, the Luther pep band played a song called, "Five Foot Two, Eyes of Blue," But the Luther students had changed the words to "Five foot nine, does it shine, has anybody seen our Knight?" Striepe said, as she sang the tune. And then, the stolen Knight appeared. A couple of Luther students had sneaked into the P.E. Center and snatched the Knight.

To retaliate, Wartburg students painted Luther's statue of Martin Luther yellow.

"I think that was the start of the intense rivalry," said Striepe.

In years following, the pranks continued- though sometimes in a somewhat destructive way. John Kurtt, Wartburg College athletics director and coach from 1961 until 1993, remembers one prank when he said students may have gone overboard trying to top each other.

"They (Luther students) put a big 'LC' in the middle of our (football) field," Kurtt said.

Wartburg students responded by burning a huge 'W' in the Luther football field. Kurtt said they used a chemical called atrazene, so Luther had to dig down three feet to get rid of the Knight's symbol.

But apparently Luther hadn't dug deep enough because Kurtt said the big 'W' on the Norse field

showed up for three years after the prank occurred.

"The vandalism is one of those that we tried to put a stop to," said Kurtt.

Dr. William Hamm, current president of Waldorf College and a 1966 Wartburg graduate, was a student when Wartburg and Luther instituted "the battle of the britches" tradition to continue the rivalry.

"Actually, I'm somewhat embarrassed to admit that the 'battle of the britches' was my idea. I'm embarrassed because my good friend Duane Shroeder later

told me he thought it was the worst idea he'd ever heard," said Hamm.

The idea was that the student body president of whichever college lost the Wartburg vs. Luther football game had to remove his pants in front of the crowd and hand them over to the winning school's president.

"The intent was to try to improve the positive aspects of the rivalry and reduce the level of inappropriate behaviors," Hamm said. "David Hutson, '65, was the first president to lose his pants." Hamm was Wartburg's student body president his senior year, and the game was at Luther.

"I planned carefully for an appropriate undergarment," he said. "We had a huge crowd, and we took a horse and someone in the suit of armor as a mascot for the day. We had a great time despite the freezing temperatures, and the fact I lost a good pair of trousers!"

Striepe said she remembers the tradition, especially the year when both presidents were women sometime in the mid 70s. It had the potential to be a very sticky situation for President Cindy Kasper, '78, but Striepe said, "it was very tastefully done."

Striepe said she wore a denim skirt, which she gracefully removed and twirled above her head before handing them over.

Dr. Paul Torkelson, class of '76 said another Wartburg tradition in the mid '70s was the "Mafia," a group of students who dressed in gangster outfits and carried violin cases to the basketball games.

The group walked into the gym for the first half of the games and sat right in the middle of the bleachers.

Dr. Fred Waldstein, class of '74, was a basketball player on the Wartburg team during this time when the Wartburg/Luther rivalry was extremely intense.

"It was very exciting," Waldstein said. "It was intensity that created a festive atmosphere around the college."

The bleachers were always packed for every game; even at way games at Luther, there were almost more Wartburg fans that Luther fans, he said.

"The crowd enthusiasm can give you that extra momentum that makes a difference between winning and losing," said Waldstein of his experience.

"It does definitely give you a lift ... makes you play better and harder."

Striepe said she remembers the gym being packed for the Wartburg vs. Luther games.

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Bill Hamm, Student Body President, removes his pants while Luther's laughing SBP looks on. 1965 Trumpet



Student's showing school pride. Yearbook 1991

The Antics of KWAR

OPERATION: Groundhog Day 2000

From: John Borleske
To: Luther College
Subj.: Groundhog Day

Greetings! And Happy Groundhog Day!

I am John Borleske, station manager of Wartburg College's radio station KWAR-FM.

I wanted to take a moment to thank every one at Luther for making today's stay an enjoyable, safe, and fun one.

This morning, half-a-dozen "transfer students" walked into classes at Luther College. They were not registered for classes, were not on any of the professors' rosters, and did not have student IDs. The prank, planned and carried out by KWAR staff, was dubbed "Operation: Groundhog." We attended 9 a.m. classes around campus, went to opening convocation, ate in the cafeteria, and attended 12:30 p.m. classes. The day was a joy for us and for the listeners back here at Wartburg College.

To the professors who hosted these mysterious transfer students: Thank you for your hospitality; unfortunately we won't be back to class anymore at Luther. We missed Wartburg too much.

Again, thanks for the day and we hope there are no hard feelings! We're the ONE for College Pranks...89.1 FM KWAR.

John Borleske
KWAR station manager

OPERATION: Everyone Loves a Parade Linda Moeller, 2001

In the latest chapter of the Wartburg-Luther rivalry, members of KWAR-FM radio station not only infiltrated the Luther's Oct. 17 Homecoming parade, but they did a live broadcast of the entire escapade.

The station, which airs on the 89.1 frequency and calls itself "The manager Jay Boeding '99 of West Union said it was the second consecutive year KWAR has pulled off a clandestine operation at Luther.



KWAR members marching in Luther's Parade.
2001 yearbook

Last year, posing as a church youth group from La Crosse, Wis., staff members got a campus tour, a free lunch, and free tickets to the Wartburg-Luther football game. During the tour, they surreptitiously left KWAR bumper stickers throughout the campus.

After learning of the hoax, Luther officials billed the Wisconsin church for the students' expenses, and Boeding happily picked up the tab.

This year, the Wartburg-Luther football game coincided with Homecoming for the Norse. Admittedly influenced by the college movie classic, Animal House, KWAR staffers decided to enter a float in the Luther parade. Passing themselves off as the Organization of Nature Enthusiasts (ONE) from Lanesboro, Minn., they got permission to participate in the parade and even notified the mayor of Lanesboro, who agreed to verify their status in case someone from Luther called his office.

On a drizzly fall Saturday, the KWAR entourage took a minivan and a cellular phone

to Decorah, where they had arranged for a trailer to be waiting. They decorated the trailer, donned Luther clothes, put Luther signs on the van, took their place in the parade, and began a live broadcast, via cell phone, to the folks back in Waverly.

When the float reached the parade observation stand, where Luther radio station KWLC was broadcasting, the students "cut the cake," ala Animal House. They ripped off their Luther clothes to reveal Wartburg orange and black, they hauled out Wartburg signs, and they tore the Luther signs off the van. Boeding said about 40 Wartburg students who were at the parade and reportedly even some alumni eventually fell in step behind the float and joined the KWAR staff in yelling Wartburg slogans and distributing orange and black candy kisses to the pro-Norse crowd.

Although some observers registered disapproval and the float got its share of boos, the incident provoked no trouble. "The Luther students were good sports about it," said Boeding. "They congratulated us and were laughing about it."

For those who missed the live broadcast, KWAR aired a replay several times in the week following the parade.



Wartburg student's in Luther's Parade.
2001 yearbook

Knights Rise Above Norse in Fall Caper

Linda Moeller 1998

Wartburg-Luther highjinks reached new heights last fall when junior David Max and sophomore Jeffrey Huber flew a light plane to Decorah for an aerial leaflet assault on the Luther College campus.

"I hope it's something that will be remembered for awhile." Says Max, noting that the air drop was reported in every major newspaper in Iowa and even got national mention on the ESPN network.

The mission grew out of a longstanding rivalry between the Wartburg and Luther cross country teams. Max says the rallying point this time was a Luther stocking cap the Knights pirated away from the Norse two years ago. After Luther runners stole the cap back at a cross country meet last fall, the Knights opted for retaliation.

The mission fell to Max, a team member who had completed requirements for his pilot's license earlier in the month. He rented a plane from the Waverly Airport and took off on Oct. 24 with Huber, a teammate from Keota, Iowa, along as bombardier. They were

armed with 3,000 handbills warning, "The time has come/ You need to fear/ A holy war is drawing near/ We will be avenged," and requesting the return of the cap.

A report in the Des Moines Register said Max and Huber missed the Luther campus and dropped most of the leaflets in the Decorah swimming pool. However, three cross country team members who drove to Decorah to witness the air strike disagreed, noting in a subsequent letter to the editor that "approximately 80 percent of the pamphlets landed on the

Luther campus and 20 percent drifted with the light wind to the city swimming pool and private residences."

"Plus the swimming pool is so close to the campus that it should count as a direct hit," Max adds.

The pilot says he had weighed the consequences of the prank before the trip, and he made sure he didn't violate any Federal Aviation Administration regulations on the flight.

"We wanted to keep it safe, harmless, and offensive but not vulgar or profane," he said. "The Wartburg-Luther rivalry is about having fun."



David Max (Left) and Jeffery Huber (Right)
Wartburg Archives

The Decorah police chief apparently missed that point and quickly contacted his counterparts in Waverly, who greeted the duo when they landed at the airport. Max and Huber were charged with littering and pled guilty at a November court hearing in Decorah. The Luther flyover cost them each \$90 in fines and court costs, plus an admonishment from the magistrate that "the next time you decide to fly the friendly skies, don't do it around here."

Wartburg students quickly rallied to the cause and came up with about \$140 in donations toward what has become another legendary chapter in Knight-Norse folklore.

"You have to have something to tell your grandkids." Concludes Max, whose own grandfather, Dr. Herbert Max, taught in the Wartburg Education Department for 23 years and still lives in Waverly. George Max '64. Dave's father, was a four-year cross country runner at Wartburg and is now a chemistry professor at Lenoir-Rhyne College, an ELCA school in Hickory, N.C. Dave's sisters, Laura '93, and Sara '96, were members of nationally ranked Wartburg women's cross country teams and are now graduate students at the University of Iowa. "They even have friends at Iowa who graduated from Luther," concedes their brother.

Wartburg vs Luther

(continued from page 1)

The doors had to be locked at 6 p.m. because there was no more seating available. “There was constant noise,” she said.

Kurtt said when he was athletic director, there was reserved seating for the Wartburg/Luther games, and tickets for the Friday night games were sold out by Tuesday,

“The games now are nothing like the Wartburg/Luther games used to be,” Striepe said.

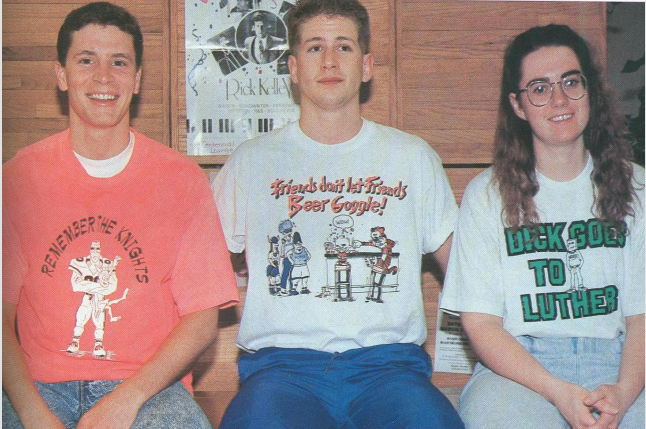
“One time one of the Luther students came down in front of the crowd and proceeded to drop his pants and moon everyone, said Kurtt. The student spent the night in jail for his antics.

Since the start of the rivalry, the competition has varied in intensity, but pranks have always been part of the tradition.

Kurtt described one event when some Wartburg students caught some Luther students trying to cause trouble on campus, so they shaved the Luther students’ heads and branded them each with a big ‘W’ using black Walnuts.

Wartburg students were also once caught trying to plant an explosive in the Luther football field, according to Kurtt.

“I hope the shenanigans that occurred then will not surface again,” said Kurtt. “It wasn’t healthy for either school.”



Three students sporting anti-Luther t-shirts. Yearbook 1991

“It always gets kind of out of hand,” said Striepe.

Torkelson said Wartburg students painted Luther’s Martin Luther statue orange more than once.

Pranks have been much more creative in recent years, he said.

“The best prank of all occurred when I was an admissions counselor at Wartburg,” said Hamm.

“I received a phone call one day from a student from the Twin Cities. He asked if a friend and he could come for a campus visit the following Friday ... The men’s basketball game ... would be that evening, and it was between Wartburg and our archrival, Luther. He asked if they could attend, and I told them the tickets were already sold out, but that I was sure we could accommodate a couple of prospective students.

“The students arrived on Friday, took a tour of the campus, had dinner in the cafeteria, saw the game and stayed in Clinton Hall,” said Hamm.

Hamm said Monday he received a phone call from Dr. James Fritschel, then director of the Wartburg Choir, asking what a Wartburg student was doing hosting two Luther students that Friday.

“We’d been had ... and big time. These guys knew this was the only way they could get tickets to the game, and they got them without charge,” said Hamm.

Hamm said Larry England, the Wartburg student who hosted the Luther pranksters, responded by publishing an “underground newsletter” containing Wartburg propaganda and distributing it throughout the Luther campus.

“No one ever knew the source,” said Hamm.

Recent pranks on Luther seem to have some sort of resemblance to this past Luther prank’ one involving Wartburg propaganda and the other involving Wartburg students disguising their identity to gain access to the Luther campus.

In 1996, David Max, ‘98, and Jeff Huber, ‘99, executed the great “air drop.”

And last year, the staff and friends of Wartburg’s radio station, KWAR, played a prank on Luther the day of the Wartburg/Luther football game at Luther, Operation: Groundhog Day.

“It was the first [prank] KWAR has ever done and it won’t be the last,” Boeding said. “We are trying to increase the rivalry again because it’s fun.”

What will happen next year? Will Luther retaliate?

It remains to be seen, but somehow since the rivalry began, there have always been pranks and intense competition. Its just part of the Wartburg tradition.

The Wartburg Five tell their story

Norm Singleton 1977

Now it can be told.

Few persons around here have heard the whole story of the Wartburg Five. The reason for this is that the tale of how five stalwart young gentlemen got reamed for a simple display of school spirit has never been officially released.

Well I know. I was one of the Five. The privilege cost me \$53.50 and I was happy to pay it.

I’d like to know who to send the bill to. I could hit up the countless alums who have perpetuated the tradition of burning a “W” on Luther’s football field. Or I could bill Bob Siefkes for organizing the John Wayne Fan Club here. But maybe I should just absorb the cost and get on with the telling.

It goes back to Monday, Oct. 17, 1977, when the aforementioned Siefkes commissioned me to be a part of the commando raid on Luther’s field, called Operation “L,” to be held two nights later. Being a commando squad leader with the rank of captain in the JWFC, I naturally accepted the mission.

Colonel Siefkes then recruited lieutenants Dave Wilken, Kirt Ferden and Randy Iverson.

At the briefing session at 2400 hours the following night, Siefkes handed out mission assignments. Iverson, being familiar with the lay of the land around the Luther campus was appointed as scout and driver. Wilken drew the high sentry post. Ferden, Siefkes and myself were the demolition team, with the duty of transporting and laying the gas on t he field, which in turn was to be set off by a detonator of Siefkes’ construction. This device, made up of Pabst Blue Ribbon can containing two ounces of gunpowder, a Ray-o-vac battery and an alarm clock of Goodwill origin would emit a flash to ignite the gas.

At least, that’s what I was told.

At 2300 hours on Wednesday, Oct. 19 we departed wearing commando outfits, i.e. dark clothing, dark hats and charcoal on our faces, and still bearing the vestiges of tearful farewells from numerous female well-wishers. There was some talk of consequences should the authorities catch us. “The worst that could happen would be to spend a night in the Decorah jail,” Wilken said.

Right.

Iverson drove us to the edge of the fog-enshrouded Luther campus, where the five of us debarked to cautiously traverse the mile to the field, twice hitting cover to avoid by passers.

Wilekn, armed with a flared gun to warn us of intruders, was left to guard the road covered by the fringe of fir trees skirting the tennis courts near the field. The other four of us crept along this same cover until we were within 100 yards of midfield. Then, Campus Security drove up.

“Don’t p-p-panic, men,” Siefkes said. The security guard, 15 feet away and oblivious of our presence, got out, communed with Mother Nature and drove away. We went into action.

Iverson and Ferden sprinted to the field with the gas can. When they hit midfield, Siefkes and I followed with the dtonator and fireworks, arriving as the last drops were being poured on the “W.” We laid the charges and departed. Elapsed time: about a minute and a half.

Then we ran. And laughed. It had been so easy.

As it turned out, too easy. We retreated a safe distance and waited for the flash.

It never came.

So we went back again and just in time discerned through the fog and dark the form of a security guard. We took off for Waverly like an ape with striped bottom, still wondering if the damn thing ever went off.

The next day we found out.

We found out that we had become an overnight sensation. “Bomb Found on Luther Field” headlines convinced us that not had our bomb not gone off, but that everybody and his dog had heard of it. It seemed that the security guard found our detonator, which we viewed as a pretty harmless implement, somewhat akin to a fuse.

He didn’t see it that way.

In fact, he called the Decorah police, The Iowa Bureau of Criminal Investigation and an official from the State Fire Marshall’s office. I assume he was dialing the National Guard when the cooler heads showed up. We immediately agreed to lay low until the whole thing blew over.

The next day, Iverson went in to talk with Dr. Hawley, director of student affairs. “I had to guys,” he told us. “Security identified my car when Luther called them. They

ran out and felt the hood and it was still warm. But I didn’t give Hawley any of your names.”

Ferden, Wilken and Siefkes turned themselves in next, all returning with identical reports. The two schools had agreed to take no action against us, though social probation was a possibility. Dr. Hawley had been very nice about it, and they were glad they went in.

For a week, it was the Wartburg Four. But when the official from the Fire Marshall’s office showed up for a little chat with us, I was “encouraged” to attend the meeting. It was a fun chat.

The guy was quite civil and we did our best to be cooperative, secure in the knowledge that this very cooperation insured there would be no action against us. We cheerfully gave our names and home addresses, described the whole scenario, explained the workings of the detonator, or bomb as he kept calling it.

The official talked to us for maybe an hour, then concluded with this thought. “Well, boys, if it was up to me, I would leave it right here on account of your helpfulness. But I have to talk with the people above me.” We left in high spirits rejoicing in the mysterious ways of justice.

Two days later we got served with our court summons.

We were informed that our offense could net us two to five years in the state pen, with perhaps a side trip to the Federal job in Fort Leavenworth for the charge of Constructing and Transporting an Incendiary Explosive Device. But thanks to the benevolence of the legal system in Winneshiek County, we would get off with a stiff fine – maybe. It was up to the magistrate.

In the following days, we developed a fondness for an old Merle Haggard tune called “Mama Tried” which contains the following line:

“I turned twenty-one in prison

“Doing life without parole.”

It seemed to fit.

But as happens at Wartburg when the need is great, aid was proffered. Sam Michaelson informed us that a student defense fund was at our disposal. Coach Oppermann recommended a good lawyer. Clinton, Hebron, Centennial, Vollmer and Tom Poe donated kegs for a benefit kegger which netted over \$150 and provided a multitude of persons with a jolly time.

We thought it might be our last drink in the free world. When the complainants heard we might fight the charge, they threatened to up the charges to the felony level and send us up the river. We were glum, even when Joe of the Knighthawk donated half a shot of Jack Daniels to our defense fund and promised to cake with a fifth inside should we end up in the jug, so to speak. Our laughter was pretty weak.

The affair dragged on past Thanksgiving, when, in the conference room of the attorney’s office, we were given the following choices: fight the charge and risk taking the hit or accept the misdemeanor charge of Illegal Use of Fireworks. Vie hands went up for the second choice. We were damned tired of the whole affair, weak prison jokes and Merle Haggard was getting old, too. So we coughed up the amount of \$53.50 per head and slunk back to our dwellings, not so much happy or bitter, but pretty well confused.

Well, I’ve had a couple of months to sort out the affair now, and I’ve come to the conclusion that future arsonists who choose to invade the Norsky territory should use a match, not a “bomb,” if they should choose to do so at all. At any rate, one should get a clock that works.

And I’ve also concluded that I did get something out of the deal and I’m almost sure that I came out nearly even. Because on my wall hangs the most expensive piece of paper I own. There are only four in the world like it. It says: “Citation of Merit 1st Class for risking your life in Operation ‘L.’ JWFC.”

It’s almost worth it.