Greetings from the prairies of Moorhead, where Sonny Gulsvig, when asked when he moved to Moorhead way back when, if he was at the end of the world. He said, “No, but I can stand on my front step, look West and see it from here!”

Thankfully we know that especially after graduation, attending Concordia events, on and off campus for fifty years (yes, I’m counting since the fall of 1968, as pointed out by Ken “Litz” Litzenberger) that the growth and changes on campus are amazing. He had not been back in many, many years. Haven’t seen his cousin, Al Lutz, in some time, either. I have received a number of comments about the additions to the campus, including the ginormous scoreboard and upgrades at the Jake, the science building addition, Offutt School of Business, the Car Pool under the north bleachers at the stadium, the Language Villages, and the fact that many have said, “My heavens these trees are bigger than when I was on campus!” The trees are one thing many alums comment on, as we even remember the late Arden Toso, who drove the old gray Ford wide front tractor with the sweeper brush on the front, polishing the sidewalks between the trees during the winter months. Those trees back then were a little on the small side, and about our heights. And don’t forget the growth of the trees that the Class of ’72 had planted outside the baseball field fence line celebrating our 25th reunion. Change. It’s a good thing. (How many Lutherans does it take to change a lightbulb? “Change?”)

Most of the Cobbers in our class have the “R” word in their vocabulary – “Retirement!” Comments range from, “What took you so long?” to “The best night of the week is Sunday night!” to “Dale, heaven will be a lateral move!” Some, like Charley Johnson of television, radio, and Student Productions fame, is the head of the Fargo-Moorhead Visitors and Convention Bureau, is still working because he’s great at what he does, he enjoys it, and they pay him as much as a professional football player in Finland. Some of you others have said that you have found many ways to pay for your trip to Greece, or in my case, Norway. Sugar beets have to get to the American Crystal plant in north Moorhead somehow, so the aroma of sweet money can be sniffed all over town during the fall and into the winter, just like when we were on campus. I will also confess that I did drive the truck with the risers, shells, robes, lights, programs, etc. on the Concordia Choir Tour to the West Coast this past March. Yes, I did see some alumni from many generations. In Spokane, WA, the choir dedicated a song and brought an alum up to the front of the Episcopal Cathedral. She was a 1939 graduate of Concordia, graduating after the completion of Paul J. Christiansen’s second year on campus. Gladys was sharp as a tack mentally, was in a wheelchair, but doing outstanding for being one hundred and two years old, riding the shuttle from her retirement community to the concert. A great lady! Music was a big part of her life!

The Norwegians all chip in their fair share for the arts, music, education, healthcare, green living, public transportation, day care, and much more. It was impressive to see audiences from all walks of life and from all generations at the Concordia Choir concerts. I was also impressed on a recent trip to Norway on people of all ages being physical, whether walking, hiking, biking, running, and spending the time to go from point “A” to point “B” using their body in some way. I had also never seen so many electric vehicles as I did in Norway. And the absence of money, physical use of bills and coins, was virtually non-existent. A plastic card/chip/smart phone economy was very, very obvious, even to purchase a bus ride, subway, or the zip line at the Holmenkollen Olympic Ski Jump outside Oslo. Yes, I did it! It was a rush. I said it was part of my training for the Septuagenarian Games! Regardless, we can still learn much from Scandinavia, supporters of the arts!
Most of us have taken a “leap of faith” in some form or another, and it has been a great experience to continue to connect with members of our class, as well as generations on both sides of the spectrum. Almost all of the stories revolve around the connections with members of each class or classes on both sides of our graduation years. Gene Bjerken has said more than once, when these Cobbers get together to fish, or spend even more time golfing, that he is thankful for the connection, the fun and the fellowship of fellow Cobbers.

The main point about our class is still the fact, whether it’s classmates or not, life is all about relationships. If a teacher doesn’t have a connection with the student, not much in the way of learning is going to happen. Being connected is great, even to other institutions of higher learning, even church people, and especially family. A good thing – connections!
On October 13th, back in 2012, we were presented a replica check of the amount of contributions that the Class of ’72 had donated to Concordia. Geez, that was on our 40th Reunion! The number was $831,860.16! I want to thank whomever gave the sixteen cents, as it was much appreciated, of course. The numbers I got for this letter shows that our Class of ’72 has broken the big one, at $1,158,885.47 lifetime credit and we’re not done yet!!! I’m guessing that the person(s) giving the sixteen cents did up their giving and that is great as well. Considering we have a potential of 427 donors, we did reach 22.48% of class participation with only 96 donors giving $102,574.04. A big thank you to all who participated!

When you consider the fact that Concordia concluded the RISE Campaign on April 30, eight months earlier than expected, it says a lot for the alumni and friends of the college who believe in Concordia and the results that they have had with that Cobber connection. The goal of reaching $150 million was surpassed with the great support of alumni and friends of Concordia, you included, raising over $157.3 million! If you did not participate yet, you still can, of course. (Begging for bucks here! But you knew that.)

You can find information in a recent mailing to alumni in the Alumni Events and Programs brochure that is in the mail! You can also register for Alumni golf dates, check out the corn feeds and even get the information about Homecoming! (Cobbers take on Gustavus!) Tours of the musical organizations can also be found, as well as dates for the Christmas Concerts in Moorhead and Minneapolis. Yes, I was asked to drive the truck on the choir tour next year, which will be Dr. Clausen’s final year as director of the Concordia Choir. You may recall that he began in the fall of 1986, and there will be a Concordia Choir Reunion as well on Saturday, October 12. Some of you love to travel and there is information about global travel in 2020 to such places as Southeast Asia, Lutherland and the Passion Play in Oberammergau; you can even plan to volunteer on a trip to Tanzania and Haiti. More alumni possibilities are popping up all the time. Watch your News and Notes as well! Look for the links and also the Social Media connections as well.
Class of ’72 News and Notes

Larry Larson – was inducted into the Chippewa County Historical Society’s Hall of Fame at the Chippewa County Historical Society Annual Banquet in Montevideo on March 27, 2019. He is a contributing life member of the Historical Society, who has served on the Board of Directors, and has held the office of Secretary, President, and Endowment Board member. Larry was thanked for all the years that he has dedicated to this organization and for helping keep the Chippewa County History alive! And Jon Pederson reminds us that he is one of those Milan, Minnesota, boys who graduated in 1968! Congratulations, Larry!

Laura (Dahl) Dvorak – “My husband, Bill, and I sold our business in 2016 and I am now working part time with Faculty Commons, a ministry of Cru, at UW Madison.”

Lynn Robin (Sandberg) Scearcy - passed away Saturday, May 18, 2019 after a heartbreakingly brief bout with cancer & other complications. She was surrounded by her family and a multitude of friends throughout her last month in the hospital and hospice and passed peacefully surrounded by love. Lynn is survived by her husband of 47.5 years (plus many of courtship before that), Jim Scearcy; her children Ted (Lindsay) Scearcy, Robin (Jake) Fischer, & Erin Larson, her beloved grandchildren: Eli, Rosie, Olivia, and Llewyn, her brother Steve (Shari), niece VeRonica, her grand-pups Norman and Harvey, and her precious cat, Olive. She is preceded in death by her parents (Robin and Rudie Sandberg), her sister (Jill Sandberg) and her son-in-law (Brian Larson), & many dear pets. She is loved by many others alive and in spirit as well; you are all simply too numerous to list, and for that, we recognize our good fortune.

Norman Claire Venderpan – age 70, passed away on Tuesday, April 30, 2019, at his home in East Grand Forks under the care of Altru Hospice. Norm was a teacher and principal, teaching in Argyle and Climax, and was principal in Climax and Larimore, ND, before moving to East Grand Forks, MN. He was an active volunteer, especially with the Jaycees, the church, the Heritage Village and the Boy Scouts, where he was a mentor of many Eagle Scouts. Norm was preceded in death by a daughter Kaija, his parents, Leslie and Norma. He is survived by his wife, Marta ’74; son Matthew (McKynsay) of Grand Forks, ND; daughter Sonja (Trevor) Brandt ’04 of Grand Forks and grandchildren Callan and Julia Brandt, and Clara and Craig Vanderpan. He is also survived by his three brothers and three sisters.

“And so today…”

The humor of the Norwegians is like being on campus, or now we can say off. Wherever two or three Cobbers are gathered, regardless of generation, there is some kind of connection, usually humor. After all, I confess my Norsk accent is pretty right on the mark, and having done the DNA testing kit, I find that I’m about as Scandinavian as the next person-Finnish, Swedish, Danish and Norwegian!

The humbleness of us Cobbers is in our mortality, knowing that we, too, will have to write, call, text, or in some way communicate that a relative, neighbor, friend or classmate has passed. That’s one of the tough ones a person has to do in order to keep strong.

I did read a couple of names on the “Lost Cobber List” that I get from the home office and there was Gene Bjerken. I know where he lives, where he has coffee in town, and yet Concordia thinks he’s lost. Go figure. General Patton said to the Colonel, after the Colonel told the general that he found the tanks that said they were lost and off their maps, but knew where they were now, as reported by the Sargent in Army Intelligence from Dilworth, MN. The Sargent was with one of the tank squadron during the Battle of the Bulge (heading to Berlin no doubt), with the Third Army. The Sargent waited patiently while the Colonel chewed him out and said that the general was going to hear about this! He radioed the General for a response. Patton said to the Colonel, “You tell those sons $)(^E_#_ *% to stay lost!” And you know the rest of the story. Bjerken is staying lost!
All the best for a great summer, all of you Cobbers! Keep doing what you love, like Victoria Larson is doing, which is great theatre work in Missoula, MT, with the Missoula Children’s Theatre; Litzenberger did stop in Moorhead and Moose Lake and reconnected with us Yanks; and I was fortunate to have heard a fanfare for the King of Norway, written about four days before the concert by the orchestra director of a sister college, played as he came into the Oslo Opera Haus, complete with the red carpet unrolled from the front door to his limo. Rather stately and unpretentious.

Remember to keep working on your Septuagenarian Merit Badges for the games, coming to a body of yours very soon! Remember to keep in touch! And remember Concordia, they still need all of us!

Keep Smiling!

Dale Lammi