January

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 that 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 it sang the tune. And then, the sixteen- foot nine, does it shine, has anybody seen our Knight?” Striepe said, as it sang the tune. And then, the sixteen-foot nine, does it shine, has anybody seen our Knight?” Striepe said, as it sang the tune. And then, the sixteen-foot nine, does it shine, has anybody seen our Knight?” Striepe said, as it sang the tune. And then, the sixteen-foot nine, does it shine, has anybody seen our Knight?” Striepe said, as it sang the tune. And then, the sixteen-foot nine, does it shine, has anybody seen our Knight?” Striepe said, as it sang the tune. And then, the sixteen-foot nine, does it shine, has anybody seen our Knight?” Striepe said, as it sang the tune. And then, the sixteen-foot nine, does it shine, has anybody seen our Knight?” Striepe said, as it sang the tune. And then, the sixteen-foot nine, does it shine, has anybody seen our Knight?” Striepe said, as it sang the tune. And then, Striepe said, as it sang the tune. And then, Striepe said, as it sang the tune. And then, Striepe said, as it sang the tune. And then, Striepe said, as it sang the tune. And then, Striepe said, as it sang the tune. And then, Striepe said, as it sang the tune. And then, Striepe said, as it sang the tune. And then, Striepe said, as it sang the tune. And then, Striepe said, as it sang the tune. And then, Striepe said, as it sang the tune. And then, Striepe said, as it sang the tune. And then, Striepe said, as it sang the tune. And then, Striepe said, as it sang the tune. And then, Striepe said, as it sang the tune. And then, Striepe said, as it sang the tune. And then, Striepe said, as it sang the tune. And then, Striepe said, as it sang the tune. And then,

“Actually, I’m somewhat embarrassed to admit that the battle of the britches was my idea. I’m embarrassed because my good friend Daane 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 move 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, ’61, 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 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 Toekelson, class of ‘76 said another Wartburg tradition in the mid ’70s was the “Malta,” 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 for 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.

(continued on pg. 3)
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 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 this 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."
The Warburg Five tell their story

Norm Singleton 1977

It was a beautiful summer’s day, golden and warm, and I was sitting in the front seat of my trusty Toyota Corolla, driving down the scenic back roads of Winneshiek County. The sun was shining brightly, casting long shadows on the side of the road, and the air was thick with the scent of wildflowers and freshly mowed lawns. I was on my way to the Wartburg student attorney’s office, where I was scheduled to meet with my attorney, Coach Oppermann, to discuss the case.

As I pulled into the parking lot, I noticed a group of Wartburg students standing in front of the office, talking and laughing. I recognized one of them as my friend, Mike, who had been arrested for illegally parking in the attorney’s parking lot. I approached him and gave him a wave, but he ignored me and continued to talk with the others.

I entered the office and was greeted by Coach, who was wearing his usual black suit and tie. He looked at me with a serious expression and said, “Well, how are you doing today?”

“I’m doing okay, Coach. Thanks for meeting with me. I know you’re busy.”

“I am busy, Mike, but I’m here for you. What’s going on?”

“I was arrested for illegally parking in the attorney’s parking lot. I know it might seem like a small thing, but it’s a big deal for me.”

Coach nodded and said, “I understand, Mike. And I want to make sure you understand the consequences of your actions. You’re facing the possibility of a fine, and that’s serious.”

“I know, Coach. I’m just worried about how this will affect my future.”

“I understand your concerns, Mike. But you need to understand that you made a mistake, and you have to accept the consequences of your actions. You need to take responsibility for what you did.”

“I know, Coach. I just wish I could go back in time and do things differently.”

“Sometimes we can’t change the past, Mike. But we can learn from it and make better choices in the future.”

“I appreciate your help, Coach. I’ll do my best to learn from this.”

“Good, Mike. I’ll see you back here tomorrow.”

I left the office with a sense of relief, knowing that Coach was there to help me. I drove back to Wartburg, feeling grateful for the opportunity to turn my life around and make better choices in the future.

And so, that’s the story of my life as a student attorney at Wartburg College. I hope it helps inspire others to take responsibility for their actions and make better choices in the future. I’ll always be grateful for the chance to turn my life around and make better choices in the future.