26 August 2019
Champaign Exchanger
Volume 94, No. 9

Editor - Tom Williams, Sr.
National Best Club Bulletin Awards
1980-81, 1981-82, 1986-87

2 September 2019 - Happy Labor Day
GiveAKidAFlagToWave

HAPPY
LABOR DAY
Date & Time: 2 September, 2019 at 9:30 AM
Location: 500 South Broadway Avenue
1 Block South of Lincoln Square
Co-Chairs: John Hummel & Tom Williams
Parade Starting Time: 10:00 AM

Sept. 2009 - First Labor Day Parade - Front row L to R: Brandon Bowersox, Van Bowersox (Urbana), Co-Chair John Hummel (Urbana), and Nancy Williams (Champaign). Back row L to R: Beth Chato (Urbana), the Holhubners, grandson, granddaughter & Fred (Urbana) Cheryl Stewart (Champaign), Co-Chair Frank Scantlebury (Champaign), Judy Hummel (Urbana), Roscoe Randall and Phil Hoggatt of Urbana. Not in the photo is photographer Tom Williams, Sr.

When we complete the 2019 Labor Day Parade we will have handed out flags to the Kids at 10 Labor Day Parades and 34 Fourth of July Parades. We’ve had one of each rained out too. Our first Labor Day Parade was in 2009 and our first Fourth of July Parade in 1985.
September 2019 Holidays & Special Days

The month of September has several month-long observances. Here are the main ones: National Classical Music Month, Hispanic Heritage Month, Fall Hat Month, International Square Dancing Month, National Blueberry Popsicle Month, National Courtesy Month, National Piano Month, Chicken Month, Baby Safety Month, Little League Month, Honey Month, Self Improvement Month, and Better Breakfast Month.

Daily Observances

1 - Emma M. Nutt Day
   National Cherry Popover Day
2 - World War II V-J Day
   International Bacon Day
   Labor Day Holiday
3 - Skyscraper Day
4 - Newspaper Carrier Day
5 - Be Late For Something Day
   Cheese Pizza Day
6 - Fight Procrastination Day
   Read a Book Day
7 - National Salami Day
   Neither Rain Nor Snow Day
8 - International Literacy Day
   National Date Nut Bread Day
   National Pet Memorial Day
   Pardon Day
   Grandparent's Day
9 - Teddy Bear Day
10 - Sewing Machine Day
    Swap Ideas Day
11 - 911 Remembrance Day
    Make Your Bed Day
    No News Is Good News Day
12 - Chocolate Milk Shake Day
    National Video Games Day
13 - Blame Someone Else Day
14 - Cream-Filled Donut Day
15 - Felt Hat Day
    Make a Hat Day
    Wife Appreciation Day
    Women's Friendship Day
16 - Mayflower Day
    National Play Doh Day
    Mexican Independence Day
    American Legion Day
    Working Parents Day
    Collect Rocks Day
    Step Family Day
17 - Citizenship Day
    Constitution Day
    National Apple Dumpling Day
18 - National Cheeseburger Day
19 - Butterscotch Pudding Day
    Talk Like A Pirate Day
20 - Pepperoni Pizza Day
21 - National Punch Day
    International Peace Day
    Miniature Golf Day
    World Gratitude Day
    POW / MIA Recognition Day
    Oktoberfest in Germany
22 - Business Women's Day
    Elephant Appreciation Day
    Hobbit Day
23 - Checkers Day
    Autumn Equinox
    Dog In Politics Day
    National Hunting & Fishing Day
24 - National Cherries Jubilee Day
25 - National Comic Book Day
26 - Johnny Appleseed Day
27 - Crush a Can Day
    Native American Day
28 - Ask a Stupid Question Day
    National Good Neighbor Day
    Native American Day
    International Rabbit Day
    National Hunting & Fishing Day
29 - Confucius Day
    Rosh Hashanah
    Fortune Cookie Day
30 - National Mud Pack Day
9 September 2019
Program To Be Announced

Now that this week is available we’re working on a good guest speaker. While I’m at it, Nancy and I welcome ideas for speakers that you think would be interesting and you would like to have to speak to our club. I try to stay away from politics but if you can get our Governor, or State Treasure or Secretary of State, I’ll gladly take any of them.

11 September 2019
Al-Qaeda Attacks U.S. on 9-11-2001

On a clear, sunny late summer day in September 2001, Al Qaeda terrorists aboard 3 hijacked passenger planes carried out coordinated suicide attacks against the World Trade Center in New York City and the Pentagon in Washington, D.C., killing everyone on board the planes and nearly 3,000 people on the ground. A fourth plane crashed into a Pennsylvania field, killing all on board, after passengers and crew attempted to wrest control from the hijackers.

16-23 September 2019
No Meeting These 2 Mondays

There won’t be a meeting on these two September weeks due to several of our members being on vacation. We’ll resume the last Monday in September with our annual Club Picnic at Dottie & Walt’s house (see below). If you need something to celebrate the 16th is Collect Rocks Day, Mayflower Day, Mexican Independence Day, Play Doh Day, and American Legion Day. The 23rd is the Autumn Equinox & Checkers Day.

30 September 2019
Annual Champaign Exchange Club Picnic
Hosts - Dottie & Walt Mikucki

A tentative date has now been set for our Annual Club Picnic so mark your calendar today to avert conflicts. This is one of our most popular meetings each year as our members gather at Dottie & Walt’s and break bread not only with our members but some of our club’s best friends – the Hummels & Smiths from Urbana, VanKeurens and Troy Jayroe from Mattoon, and Jan Bahr and Ernie Hoffman from Champaign. The last two are not members of our club but they are such good friends of our club that they seem like members and it would not be the same without them.
14 October 2019

Columbus Day - No Meeting Today

In keeping with established tradition we’ll not have a meeting this week due to Columbus Day. Enjoy the time with your family and friends and return on the 21st raring to go. Now that I think about it I will bet old Chris Columbus would say you should go ahead and take the day off. Take a hike through McCormick’s Creek, Starved Rock, Turkey Run, or take a boat ride somewhere. Most of all get out of the house and enjoy the changing fall colors with family and friends while the colors last.

19 October 2019 (Saturday)

National Day of Service at Scott Park

Like the last half dozen years we'll clean up Scott Park for our National Day of Service project. Tillie Adkins is the chairlady this year and she'll ask members to sign up to help an early October meeting. For several years we cleaned Johnston Park in far Western Champaign named after our Club’s Charter Secretary Seely Johnston. A few years ago we decided to change and clean up Scott Park on the edge of the University of Illinois campus because it was in need of a good cleaning more than Johnston Park.

3 November 2019 (Sunday)

Daylight Savings Time Ends

Daylight Saving Time, which your editor loves, gives us the opportunity to enjoy sunny summer evenings by moving our clocks an hour forward each spring. Ben Franklin conceived the idea. (If you ask me, we should remain on Daylight Saving year around.) Most of the United States begins Daylight Saving on the 2nd Sunday in March & reverts to Standard Time at 2:00 AM on the first Sunday in November (Boo). In the United States each time zone switches simultaneously. There’s one other solution but it’s not a good one. You could move 35 miles east across the Indiana State Line and you’d gain about 55 minutes daylight on a Winters evening so you don’t return home after work in the dark.

11 November 2019 (Monday)

Veterans Day Holiday

Veterans Day is an official United States federal holiday that is observed annually on November 11, honoring people who served in the United States Armed Forces, known as veterans. It coincides with other holidays including Armistice Day and Remembrance Day, which are celebrated in other parts of the world and also marks the anniversary of the end of WWI. Armistice Day was changed to Veterans Day in 1954. Let’s fly our flags this day in memory of those who served! God bless our Vets.
28 November 2019
Thanksgiving Day Holiday

My advice to you for Thanksgiving Day is to try not to eat too much turkey, dressing, mashed potatoes and gravy so you’ll have room left for a large slice of pumpkin pie with lots of whipped cream heaped on top. All I can say is, I love Thanksgiving. I can hardly wait for my favorite meal.

30 November 2019 (Saturday)
Salvation Army Bell Ringing

Each year we ring the bells on the Saturday immediately following Thanksgiving Day and this year it is as late in the month as it can get. We haven’t secured a time & place we’ll ring the bells but we hope we can do it again at the west entrance at the Schnucks Supermarket on North Mattis Avenue on a Saturday following Thanksgiving just like we have in recent years. We will need two members for each of the four 1-hour shifts. Committee Chair Dottie Mikucki will have more information in early November and will pass around a sign up list.

2 December 2019
No Club Meeting Today

Due to the Christmas Party being held this Wednesday our club will not have its usual noon meeting this Monday. That will give you a chance to get in some early Christmas shopping instead of attending our luncheon. If you need some good ideas I’ll be glad to give you a list of items your editor could use.

4 December 2019 (Wednesday)
Annual Champaign Exchange Club
Inter-Club Christmas Party
11:30 AM – 1:30 PM
Champaign Country Club

Thanks to Anne Johnston’s help I’m pleased to announce that I have just confirmed the date and location of our Annual Exchange Club Christmas (Holiday) Party and we will be hosting it at the Champaign Country Club. Your editor will be finalizing the meal choices and making arrangements for the entertainment with the Country Club Banquet Director in early October when the menu and prices are set by the Club. Mark the date on your calendar today because we don’t want you to miss this special occasion. Also, we will be collecting donation checks to the Eastern Illinois Foodbank to help them pay for meals for needy people in our area.
Today's Meeting

We didn’t see much of the sun today as the high temperature was only 79 and we had scattered showers. Your editor happened to get caught in a pretty good shower coming out of the Christie Clinic after getting my 2 allergy shots. The parking lot had 4 inches of fast moving water which wasn’t good.

We had just one guest today besides our speaker and that was one of my very favorite people, Josephine DuBois, the mother of Tillie. My first goal is to live as long as Josephine and my second is to be as healthy and sharp as she is.

GiveAKidAFlagToWave Chairman Tom Williams reminded our members to try to be at the starting point of the Parade by 9:30 AM this Saturday and pray for a nice day – no rain and not too hot. This will be the 10th time (one other time was rained out) the Champaign & Urbana Exchangites have passed out flags on Labor Day.

Football Guessing Contest Committee Chair Tom Williams passed out the guessing sheets for the first 2 weekends of college football games. Since we’ll not have a luncheon next Monday we had to make our picks for 2 weeks. We’re off to a good start with 7 of the 8 members in attendance turned in their picks today. That’s a good start. Now, if the Fighting Illini could figure out how to start off the season by winning their first 3 games it would do wonders for the depressed Illini fans.

Today's Program

Our speaker today was Renae Kirkton who is Director of Development at the Don Moyer Boys & Girls Club. Renae’s responsibilities include the coordination of fundraising and development activities for the Club and for the Don Moyer Boys & Girls Club Foundation.

Renae has several years of experience working for organizations that serve youths and is passionate about helping Kids in our community. She is a graduate of Illinois State University, where she earned her bachelor’s degree in communications with a focus in organizational leadership. Prior to her hiring she worked for the Crisis Nursery of Champaign County.

Renae made a very nice presentation today highlighted about telling us about one young teenager’s very difficult upbringing & how the Boys & Girls Club has become his second home and how he’s grown and matured into a very nice young man.

She also told us their Club recently opened a branch in Rantoul at which offered most of the same programs they offer in Champaign. Renae also told us about the new branch being built on Market cross from Human Kinetics. It’ll be a multi-purpose structure that will also offer most of the, if not all, the programs they currently offer at their over-crowded facility on East Park Street in Eastern Champaign.

The Don Moyer Boys & Girls Club hosts children from kindergarten age up through seniors in high school. The Club hosts an average of 140 children each day and provides a wonderful safe and learning space for them after school and all day during the summer when schools are out.

Our Boys & Girls Club is a wonderful organization doing wonderful work and Renae is a terrific young lady for a Cub Fan and Rotarian.
Richard Adkins  – For my guest Josephine DuBois and “Go Cubs”.  (Editor’s Note – Richard drew a smiley face but I don’t think it’s appropriate.)

Tillie Adkins  – For having my mother Josephine DuBois as my guest and in honor of our speaker from the Boys & Girls Club.

Norma Dieker  – For our speaker and the Don Moyer Club.

Renae Kirkton  – Because I appreciate being here with you today and go Cubs.  (Editor’s Note – Renae didn’t fill out a News Note so I won’t say anything about the cubs other than her husband to be in October is a Cardinals fan.  Good Luck.)

Wally Lehman  – $3.00 for Exchanger expenses and $1.00 for ??

Dottie Mikucki  – For our guest speaker.

Nancy Williams  – Because I love the Cardinals turn of success! And, in honor of our speaker and the wonderful club she represents.

Tom Williams  – In honor of our guest speaker and all the wonderful work the Boys & Girls Club do for the kids of Champaign-Urbana and for the Cardinals sweeping the 4-game series with the Colorado Rockies, something that never happens.

Thomas Williams  – Because the Cardinals are 2-1/2 games up on the Cubs. Go Cardinals!!

Champaign Exchange Club President Nancy Williams presents a certificate of appreciation to Renae Kirkton, Director of Development at the Don Moyer Boys & Girls Club.
The Champaign Exchange Club

Week 0 Results

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Week’s #1 – August 29-31

| Akron @ Illinois        | Florida Atlantic @ Ohio State |
| So. Dakota St. @ Minnesota | Northwestern @ Stanford |
| Wisconsin @ South Florida | Miami Ohio @ Iowa |
| Indiana @ Ball State     | Middle Tenn. St. @ Michigan |
| South Alabama @ Nebraska | Idaho @ Penn State |

Week #2 – September 7

| Illinois @ Connecticut  | West. Michigan @ Michigan St. |
| Rutgers @ Iowa           | Minnesota @ Fresno State |
| Cincinnati @ Ohio State  | Buffalo @ Penn State |
| Vanderbilt @ Purdue      | Syracuse @ Maryland |
| Nebraska @ Colorado      | Army @ Michigan |

Fighting Illini Scores

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Opponent</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>8/31</td>
<td>Akron @ Illinois</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9/7</td>
<td>Illinois @ Connecticut</td>
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<tr>
<td>9/14</td>
<td>Eastern Michigan @ Illinois</td>
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<tr>
<td>9/21</td>
<td>Nebraska @ Illinois</td>
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<tr>
<td>9/28</td>
<td>Bye Week</td>
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<td>10/5</td>
<td>Illinois @ Minnesota</td>
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<td>10/12</td>
<td>Michigan @ Illinois</td>
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<td>10/19</td>
<td>Wisconsin @ Illinois</td>
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<td>10/26</td>
<td>Illinois @ Purdue</td>
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<td>11/2</td>
<td>Rutgers @ Illinois</td>
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<td>11/9</td>
<td>Illinois @ Michigan State</td>
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<td>11/16</td>
<td>Bye Week</td>
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<td>11/23</td>
<td>Illinois @ Iowa</td>
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<td>11/30</td>
<td>Northwestern @ Illinois</td>
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</table>
Recent Football Contest Winners

Speaking of winners, below is the list of winners of our most recent Football Guessing Contests. When I joined our club in 1973 we were having the contest at that time too. Of course we had at least 50 members participating each week and they didn’t give out the “fantastic” prizes we award to our winners these days.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>First Place</th>
<th>Second Place</th>
<th>Third Place</th>
<th>Perfect 10s</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2010</td>
<td>Tom Williams</td>
<td>Wally Lehman</td>
<td>Frank Scantlebury</td>
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<tr>
<td>2011</td>
<td>Tom Williams</td>
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<td>2012</td>
<td>Tom Williams</td>
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<td>2013</td>
<td>Wally Lehman</td>
<td>Tom Williams</td>
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<tr>
<td>2014</td>
<td>Norma Dieker</td>
<td>Tom Williams</td>
<td>Wally Lehman tie</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Nancy Williams</td>
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<tr>
<td>2015</td>
<td>(No Contest held this year because your editor was blind that football season.)</td>
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<tr>
<td>2016</td>
<td>Tom Williams</td>
<td>Norma Dieker tie</td>
<td>Thomas Williams</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Nancy Williams</td>
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<td>2017</td>
<td>Tom Williams</td>
<td>Wally Lehman</td>
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<td>2018</td>
<td>Nancy Williams</td>
<td>Tom Williams</td>
<td>Thomas Williams</td>
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Recent Football Guessing Contest Winners

2010 - Tom Williams, Sr. 2015 - Contest Not Held
2011 - Tom Williams, Sr. 2016 - Tom Williams, Sr.
2012 - Tom Williams, Sr. 2017 - Tom Williams, Sr.
2013 - Wally Lehman 2018 - Nancy Williams
2014 - Norma Dieker 2019 - I Could Be You
How Many of the These 41 Defunct Restaurant Chains Do You Remember?

Do you opine for the “good old days” when you were younger and enjoyed visiting your favorite restaurant? Have you ever had a particular craving you couldn’t satisfy because that favorite restaurant has long been out of business? Maybe you’re dying for the herb-roasted prime rib from Steak & Ale? Or maybe some classic fried chicken from Minnie Pearl’s? Or maybe you’ve got a sweet tooth that can only be satisfied with one of HoJo’s 28 flavors of ice cream?

Restaurant chains are a huge part of American culture, but not every restaurant chain is successful. While some withstand the test of time, others reach great heights only to fail miserably. These defunct restaurant chains once thrived, but are now history.

1. All-American Burger – The All-American Burger was made popular when one location was featured in the 1980’s cult classic Fast Times at Ridgemont High. While the chain was popular in Southern California, it never reached the regional level. The last location on the west coast closed its doors in 2010. If you really need your All-American Burger fix, you can trek over to Massapequa, Long Island where the only remaining location lives. The restaurant still uses the same name and logo & burger recipes from the 1960’s!

2. A&W Drive In Restaurants – Beloved for its hot dogs, ice cold draft root beer, and burgers, the A&W franchise was founded in Lodi, CA, in 1919. That makes the chain older than Wendy’s or McDonald’s! A series of ownership changes and store closings over the years left devotees worried that the restaurant would go out of business. However, 2017 marked the first year in almost a decade that A&W opened more locations than it closed. Fans love A&W’s Cruise Nights, which are weekly events for car owners to show off their prized possessions while enjoying 1950s-era music. (Editor’s Note – I remember going to the old A&W as well as the old McDonald’s at 5-points in Urbana. They disappeared last century.

3. Beefsteak Charlie’s – Beefsteak Charlie’s had over 60 locations throughout New York in the 1980’s. The original Beefsteak Charlie’s restaurant was opened by Charles W. Chesser in 1910 in New York City, but after a series of ownership changes, it was eventually expanded into a chain by the 1970’s. At its peak, people headed to Beefsteak Charlie’s for their all-you-can-eat salad bar and the unlimited libations on offer. Their commercials featured Beefsteak Charlie and his nephew Beefsteak Chuck. The chain held on into the early 2000’s but as of the present day, the chain is officially defunct.

4. Bennigan’s – Bennigan’s was a popular Irish pub-themed restaurant. Founded in 1976 by Norman Brinker, Bennigan’s was best known for being one of the first mid-range casual dining establishments. Bennigan’s continued to grow throughout the United States & even abroad, opening locations in 14 countries. Unfortunately, the chain’s executive failed to modernize Bennigan’s, and its outdated concept led to a slump in sales. Bennigan’s lagged behind the likes of Chili’s and T.G.I. Friday’s and, in 2006, closed the majority of its locations. (Editor’s Note – Your editor is not a fan of Bennigan’s nor Chilie’s nor T.G.I. Friday’s for that matter. I can’t eat at any of them because all their meals are highly seasoned and I can’t eat them.)

5. Charlie Brown’s Steakhouse – The first Charlie Brown’s Steakhouse opened in 1966 in Warren, New Jersey. The steakhouse became known for its signature dish of prime rib and house salad piled high with egg, shrimp, and Catalina dressing. Soon, Charlie Brown’s gained enough momentum to expand throughout the state and into New York & Pennsylvania. Charlie Brown’s Steakhouse met a similar fate to other steakhouses like Steak & Ale. They simply couldn’t keep up with the competition. After being sold to Castle Harlan and then acquired by Trimaran Capital Partners, the restaurant filed for bankruptcy in 2010. The shakeup saw the closing of 47 restaurants. In a final attempt to save the chain, a private-equity company in New York bought the remaining 20 locations for $9.5 million in 2011. Today, Charlie Brown’s Steakhouse operates as Charlie Brown’s Fresh Grill.
6. Bob’s Big Boy – Bob Wian founded Bob’s Big Boy in 1936, originally dubbing it Bob’s Pantry. Wian got a job at a Los Angeles fast food joint and worked his way up from overnight dishwasher to fry cook to manager. He was interested in learning how restaurants worked and how they could be improved. Three years later, he purchased a 10-stool hamburger stand which would become Bob’s Big Boy. The chain’s double-decker burgers were a huge hit, and the iconic mascot was a sight for sore eyes for travelers on American highways. Bob’s Big Boy saw success through the 1980’s, and at its height had more than 130 locations. Over the next decade, however, sales declined, and the locations slowly dwindled. While Bob’s Big Boy isn’t totally defunct, there are only five locations left today.

7. Bonanza Steakhouse & Ponderosa Steakhouse— If you were a fan of this restaurant chain, don’t worry — there are still 88 Ponderosa Steakhouse and Bonanza Steakhouses in operation today. But throughout the 1970’s and 1980’s, the steakhouses thrived with more than 600 locations. The buffet-steakhouse chain opened in 1965 in Plano, Texas. Diners loved the classic American fare which included steak, seafood, and chicken entrees with a buffet of sides. Throughout the 1980’s and 1990’s, the chain was sold numerous times, and eventually, its parent company, Metromedia Steakhouses, filed for bankruptcy in 2008. It reemerged the next year as Homestyle Dining LLC. (Editor’s Note – I’ve dined at both over the years but we no longer have one around here.)

8. Burger Chef – The first Burger Chef opened in Indianapolis, Indiana in 1954. The American fast-food chain saw immediate success and quickly expanded throughout the United States. At one point in the early 1970’s, there were 1,050 locations! Customers couldn’t get enough of the chain’s signature items like the Big Shef and Super Shef hamburgers. Unfortunately, bad business practices contributed to the chain’s downfall, and Burger Chef sold to Hardee’s in 1981.

9. Carrols – Carrols restaurants were another fast-food chain that was popular during the 1960’s. It was very popular in New York after Herb Slotnick bought the franchise rights for Carrols in the state. Carrols didn’t last for long, however. By 1975, many of the franchises were converted into Burger Kings. The brand also owned chains such as Pollo Tropical and Taco Cabana. Carrols restaurants is truly another chain that you are unlikely to see again. The brand is discontinued in America, but there is a Finnish brand of unaffiliated Carrols restaurants throughout Europe.

10. Casa Bonita – Casa Bonita originated in Oklahoma City as a Mexican-themed “eatertainment” restaurant. That’s right, at Casa Bonita, you could be thoroughly entertained while you eat. However, what kept people coming to Casa Bonita was their all-you-can-eat beef & chicken plates, and who could forget those delicious sopapillas? Throughout the 1970’s to the 1990’s, it was actually a nice place to eat. But Casa Bonita wasn’t as successful as it set out to be and as of today, there is only one location standing. You can check this place out in Lakewood, Colorado, where Casa Bonita is officially a historical landmark.

11. Chi-Chi’s – In 1975 Marno McDermott & NFL star Max McGee launched the first Chi-Chi’s in Richfield, Minnesota. The chain introduced rudimentary Mexican fare to many American towns, which caused its popularity to soar. But as Mexican restaurants across the U.S. saw a surge in popularity, Chi-Chi’s began to fail. The franchise managed to stay afloat into the early 2000s. In 2003, a Hepatitis A breakout in the chain’s food supply resulted in the death of 3 customers. As of 2004, the majority of Chi-Chi’s were closed in the United States and Canada. The last remaining restaurant stayed open in Utah until 2011.

12. Childs – Childs restaurants were some of the most popular eateries during the 1920’s & 1930’s, with over 125 locations throughout America. It was also the most lucrative restaurant company in the business at the time, serving over 50 million meals a year & making $37 million. Childs restaurants were pioneers in innovative restaurant design, service, sanitation, and labor relations, which meant it was a decent place to work as well. By the 1940’s, however, the company filed for bankruptcy & despite the fact that it had stayed alive through the 1950’s, there were pretty no more Childs the following decade.

13. Claudia Sanders, “The Colonel’s Lady” – Claudia Sanders, “The Colonels Lady,” was Colonel Sanders’s wife in the 1960’s. By 1964, Colonel Sanders had made his fried chicken recipe famous and with more than 600 restaurants, sold the chain to a group of investors. In 1968, Sanders and his wife decided to reopen their
The original location in Shelbyville, Kentucky as “Claudia Sanders, The Colonel’s Lady,” where they served KFC-style chicken for which they were sued. They reached an agreement to serve the chicken but changed the name to Claudia Sanders Dinner House with a full-service dinner menu.

14. D’lites – D’lites was clearly ahead of its time. The Georgia-based fast-food chain was known for its emphasis on nutritious meals, offering reduced-calorie dishes. One of their most popular items was a lean beef hamburger made with low-calorie cheese and high-fiber buns. Dough Sheely and Jeffrey Miller founded the chain in 1978 and by 1985, there were more than 100 locations. The following year, the chain filed for bankruptcy and by 1987, 99% of the stores were sold and rebranded as Hardee’s. The closure came as a result of more popular chains starting to offer healthy options.

15. Dog n Suds – At one time there were more Dog n Suds franchise locations in the United States & Canada then there were McDonald’s. It was the largest & fastest growing fast food chain in North America. Founded in Champaign, IL in 1953 by 2 former Champaign High School music teachers – Don Hamacher and Jim Griggs who were University of Illinois teachers – Dog n Suds grew rapidly to over 1,000 locations. (Editor’s Note – Your editor’s connection was my older brother Bob had them as teachers at CHS. When I started working summers at Collegiate Cap & Gown (CC&G) while attending University the other 9 months of the year, I discovered CC&G was the supplier of uniforms for the Dog n Suds chain. Later, after going completely out of business, Dog n Suds tried to make a comeback. It currently has 16 locations in 8 states including 4 in Illinois – Grayslake, Iglesia, Richmond, and Robinson. It made a brief comeback in Champaign but finally faded away.)

As a teenager I spend most summer evenings at the Dog n Suds on North Prospect Avenue in Champaign drinking a quart of their famous Root Beer at their drive-in. Years later, while dating the beautiful young lady that would become my wife in 1964, I discovered that Nancy had worked at the Dog n Suds on South Mattis Avenue while in high school. It sure is a small world.

When the founders, Hamacher & Griggs sold out the chain was in the hands of a Canadian company that had their own brand of Root Beer so they started selling it for the Dog n Suds brand of root beer and the public didn’t like it. It was inevitable that the company would begin to fail and it did.
16. Druther’s – Remember Druther’s? How about Burger Queen? Druther’s originally opened as Burger Queen in 1963 until changing its name in 1981. While the name suggested they only served hamburgers, the chain also offered fried chicken & a self-serve salad bar. The chain grew in popularity & at its peak operated 171 locations through seven states. In 1990, Druther’s International Inc. became Dairy Queen and soon converted most of its locations to DQ.

17. Gino’s Hamburgers – The fast-food chain Gino’s Hamburgers opened its doors in 1957. Gino Marchetti and Alan Ameche of the Baltimore Colts opened the first location with their close friend Louis Fischer. Gino's Hamburgers saw success over the next decade and decided to expand in the early 1970’s. The company attempted to take the expansion to the Midwest, but these locations only operated for a short time. After a few less-than-successful years, Gino’s Hamburgers was acquired by Marriott Corporation in 1982. Marriott decided to discontinue the brand, and soon enough, Gino’s Hamburgers became Roy Rogers. The last location closed in 1986, however, in 2010, the chain was revived as Gino’s Burgers & Chicken. Today there are 2 locations of the revived chain open, but you’ll have to trek to Maryland to get your fix.

18. Henry’s Hamburgers – Henry’s Hamburgers opened its doors in 1954 in Chicago. Originally the Besler’s Ice Cream Company, the small shop decided to expand into the fast-food drive-in industry. Henry’s Hamburgers grew to 35 locations by 1956 and did well in the Chicago area. Fast forward to the early 1960’s, and Henry’s Hamburgers experienced serious growth. With 200 locations, customers couldn’t get enough of the chain’s 99-cent cheeseburgers with a side of fries and a milkshake. By the mid-1970’s however, Henry’s Hamburgers began closing at an alarming rate. While the reason why is still unclear, it is suspected that changes in ownership and mergers played a role. Today, there’s one Henry’s Hamburgers location in Michigan.

19. Horn & Hardart – Horn & Hardart was popular in the early 20th century for being one of the few places where food was convenient as serving yourself. This was because Horn & Hardart opened as some of the first food service automats on the East Coast. What drew people to Horn & Hardart in the first place was their introduction of New Orleans-style coffee, which was just coffee mixed with chicory. The automated service at Horn & Hardart was popular throughout the 1920’s and subsequent decades but didn’t last into the 1960’s, when fast-food chains became more convenient.

20. Howard Johnson’s – During the 1970s, you were just as likely to see a Howard Johnson’s on the highway as you were a McDonald’s. Founded by Howard Deering Johnson, the popular dining establishment grew to more than 1,000 locations. HoJo was so popular at one point in the 1960’s that a new restaurant opened every 9 days! The large menu consisted of fried clams, butter-grilled “frankfords,” and 28 ice cream flavors. What set Howard Johnson’s apart was how seriously Johnson took food quality. He spent around 48% of his gross revenue on food (compare this to today’s gold standard, Chipotle, who spends 35%). It was truly a place where a middle-class family could stop in for a satisfying yet affordable meal. Unfortunately, the restaurant’s reputation faltered in the 1970’s. The quality of food went by the wayside, and the brand became known for its bland food. (Editor’s Note – When Nancy & I started traveling with our 3 young boys in the 1970’s we always tried to stay at a Holiday Inn Holidome and eat at a Howard Johnston’s Restaurant. Also, I like “bland” food best.)

21. Isaly’s – Isaly’s was a popular place to go for a sweet treat or a quick bite if you lived in the Midwest through-out the 1960’s. Aside from their scrumptious chipped chopped ham which made them famous, Islay’s is also credited with inventing the Klondike Bar and its popular slogan, “What would you do for a Klondike Bar?” Islay’s started out when William Islay decided to start selling his own dairy products & offer lunch counter service. By the 1920’s Islay’s restaurants were popping up as far as Pennsylvania, growing from its humble beginnings in Ohio. By the 1960’s Islay’s restaurants started fading away.

22 Kenny Rogers’ Roasters – In 1990, country singer Kenny Rogers partnered with former KFC CEO John Y. Brown to launch the chicken chain, Kenny Rogers’ Roasters. The restaurant chain served rotisserie-roasted chicken with traditional sides like mac ‘n’ cheese, mashed potatoes, baked beans & cole slaw. While the food was popular (an entire Seinfeld episode was dedicated to the eatery), Kenny Rogers’ Roasters was never able to make it alongside the big dogs in fast food. Rogers & Brown sold their business to Nathan’s in
1998, who then sold it to their Asian franchiser. Today, there are no Kenny Rogers’ Roasters in the United States, but the chain continues to flourish in Asia.

23. Lum’s – Clifford and Stuart Pearman opened the first Lum’s in Florida in 1971, purchasing the hot dog stand for a mere $10,000. The brother’s chain offered “beer-steamed” hot dogs, which were an immediate hit. The chain grew slowly at first, with 4 locations open in 1961. But in the late 1960’s, Lum’s aggressively expanded — at one point, more than 400 locations were open! In 1971, Lum’s was sold to John Y. Brown, the then-chairman of Kentucky Fried Chicken. A few years later, 273 of the locations were purchased by Wienerwald Holdings. The holding company overextended itself and filed for bankruptcy not long after, leading to the ultimate demise of Lum’s. The number of location dwindled, and in 2017, the last Lum’s closed its doors.

24. Minnie Pearl’s Chicken – In the late 1960’s, businessman John Jay Hooker and gospel singer Mahalia Jackson teamed up with country singer Minnie Pearl to open Minnie Pearl’s Chicken. Soon, they became a cautionary tale for restaurant franchise owners. Minnie Pearl’s Chicken opened with the intention to compete with Kentucky Fried Chicken, and for a while, they did. The chain was successful when they began and quickly grew from one location to more than 500. Unfortunately, the venture collapsed thanks to allegations of accounting irregularities and stock price manipulation coupled with lackluster food.

25. Mr. Steak – Mr. Steak was a popular steakhouse during the 1970’s & at its peak had nearly 300 locations in operation throughout the United States. Unfortunately, the chain’s food quality wasn’t up to par with the competition and Mr. Steak’s steak was underwhelming compared to competing chains like Sizzle and Stuart Anderson’s Black Angus. Mr. Steak filed for bankruptcy in 1987. In a last-ditch effort to save the company, a few of the locations were converted to a new chain called Finley’s. Today, there’s 5 Finley’s still open throughout Michigan, but all of the Mr. Steak locations have been phased out.

26. Naugles – Naugles was a Mexican fast-food chain that opened in Riverside, California in 1970. Founded by Del Taco partner Dick Naugle, the chain’s motto was “Prepare food fresh. Serve customer fast. Keep place clean!” Naugle owned the small chain which had 3 locations for 7 years until selling it to Harold Butler. The chain quickly expanded by a system of non-exclusive franchises. Unfortunately for Butler, this was deemed unlawful by a federal court. Still, Butler was able to expand Naugles to 225 locations before he sold the chain. Naugles merged with Del Taco in 1988, and the locations were phased out. Today, there are just 4 Naugles that are still open, but the Naugles Taco Sandwich can still be found on Del Taco’s menu!

27. Official All Star Café – Official All Star Café was a restaurant chain with a sports theme, similar to ESPN Zone. The chain was developed by Planet Hollywood, who got athletes such as Wayne Gretzky, Joe Montana, Shaquille O’Neal, Ken Griffey Jr., and Andre Agassi to invest in the chain. The chain was popular throughout the 1990’s, particularly the locations in New York City, Las Vegas, and Cancun. However, by 1999 Planet Hollywood filed its first bankruptcy. The following year it was bought by Disney who failed to make it alive. The very last restaurant at Disney’s Wide World of Sports closed in 2007.

28. Pioneer Chicken – Pioneer Chicken used to be the spot for some of the best fast-food fried chicken in Southern California. Where else could California you find gizzards and livers on the menu? Of course, Pioneer Chicken was known for its bright orange deep fried chicken. The chain was founded in Los Angeles and named after the Pioneer market, a chain of supermarkets that is also now defunct. At its height during the 1980’s, there were over 200 locations and there were even stores open in Hawaii. By the late 1980’s, the company went bankrupt and sold the chain. As of 2017, there were only 2 Pioneer Chickens left in Los Angeles County.

29. Pup ‘N’ Taco – If you remember Pup ‘N’ Taco, then you must have been around Southern California during the 1970’s. The first Pup ‘N’ Taco opened in Pasadena, CA in 1965 and specialized in tacos, tostadas, pastrami sandwiches, fries, and hot dogs. Of course, the best way to wash it all down was with a Pup ‘N’ Taco slush! By 1973, there were 63 Pup ‘N’ Taco locations. Come 1984, however, Taco Bell bought 99 Pup ‘N’ Taco stores for their prime locations. The sale effectively ended the existence of the Pup ‘N’ Taco chain.
30. Rax Roast Beef – Rax Roast Beef is an Ohio-based fast-food chain that at one point in time could stand up to its largest competitor, Arby’s. They were very popular throughout the 1980’s and their addition of a salad bar locked people in for a short time. But afterward, things got a little too complicated. Many locations started implementing pizza, baked potatoes, “Chinese-style” food, and even a taco bar. By the time they started redesigning their stores to be the “champagne of fast food,” Rax lost many customers. By 1988 they decided to scale back to focus on sandwiches but by then it was too late.

31. Red Barn – Red Barn restaurants were where you could find the Big Barney or the Barnbuster, which was their equivalent of the Big Mac and a Quarterpounder respectively. However, the Big Barn predates the Big Mac and Red Barn restaurants were the first fast-food chain to have self-serve salad bars. Throughout the 1980’s, Red Barn restaurants were everywhere. There were over 300 locations in 19 states, as well as Canada & Australia. But many went out of business by the late 1980’s as many owners failed to renew their leases. As a result, many stores were converted for other uses. (Editor’s Note – When I think about this former restaurant chain it reminds me of our Round Barn Restaurant, which was Red too. It was where the Champaign Exchange met for 20 years before it closed. I have many wonderful memories from that era.)

32. Sambo’s – The first Sambo’s opened in 1957 by Sam Battistone and Newell F. Bohnet. From the get-go, the restaurant chain made headlines for all the wrong reasons. The name, which the owners claimed was simply a combination of their names, rather than a derogatory term for African Americans, didn’t sit right with the public. Sambo’s was also filled with questionable decor including the racist caricature Li’l Black Sambo. Still, Sambo’s grew & at its height had around 1,117 locations in 47 states. On top of the negativity associated with the brand, a handful of bad corporate-level decisions led to the chain’s demise. Sambo’s filed for bankruptcy and began closing stores in the early 1980’s.

33. Sandy’s – Sandy’s was the Hardee’s of the mid-west before Hardee’s was even a thing. That’s because Sandy’s is an ancestor of the Hardee’s fast-food chain. Sandy’s rose to popularity selling burgers, fries, and milkshakes for just cents an. By the end of the 1960’s, Sandy’s merged with Hardee’s because it was strapped for cash. Before its merger, people wanted to expand Sandy’s, but its original owners refused, much like what happened to McDonald’s. By the early 1970’s, many Sandy’s restaurants agreed to convert into Hardee’s restaurants. (Editor’s Note – When I see Sandy Southworth I’ll have to ask her if Sandy’s was named after her or vice versa.)

34. Schrafft’s – Schrafft’s restaurants opened up in New York City and were operated by the same people who owned the Schrafft’s food & candy business based in Boston. Schrafft’s restaurants opened up in the nicer parts of town and, as a result, attracted a lot of female customers who were out shopping in the area. They felt safe there as it was one of the first restaurants to allow unattended women to dine. Schrafft’s restaurants somehow managed to survive the Great Depression, but still, they didn’t survive the 1960’s. The company was sold and as a result, Schrafft’s restaurants were never the same.

35. Steak & Ale – The first Steak & Ale opened in Dallas, Texas in 1966 and introduced an entirely new concept of dining to the American marketplace. The eatery offered affordable steak and a salad bar, which was an immediate success since the market was yet to be saturated. Unfortunately for Steak and Ale, other restaurants copied their model and did it better. Soon, Steak & Ale were left behind, and the final location closed in 2010. This might not be the last we hear from Steak & Ale though. Following its closure, the parent company of Bennigans purchased the Steak & Ale name. The new owners are hoping to set the standard for affordable steakhouses.

36. Valle’s Steak House – Valle’s Steak House was an East Coast chain of restaurants that operated from 1933 to 2000. Known for its menu of steak and lobster, the small family-run business expanded aggressively during the 1970s. Unfortunately, Valle’s encountered numerous factors that led to its demise. In 1977, Donald Valle passed away, leaving the Valle family with an estate tax bill they couldn’t pay. This, coupled with declining sales, led Richard & Judith Valle to sell their shares in the business. Before his death, Donald Valle had tried to emphasize food over liquor, even though alcohol is more profitable thanks to higher mark-ups. In the end, it was this obsolete business model that sealed the steakhouse’s fate.
37. VIP’s – VIP’s was a casual dining establishment equivalent to Denny’s. Based in Oregon, the VIP’s restaurant chain was rampant throughout the Pacific Northwest, particularly on freeways. They were open 24 hours and found in Oregon, Washington, Nevada, and Northern California. Popular throughout the 1970’s, many VIP’s were bought by other companies. In 1982, for example, 35 VIP’s restaurants were sold to Denny’s Inc. for $12 million. The sale was shocking, but VIP’s owners claimed the “offer was too good to pass up” and promised that VIP’s employees would keep their jobs by being absorbed by Denny’s.

38. White Tower – The first White Castle location opened its door in 1921. The burger joint saw immediate success which brought on a slew of imitators. One of those imitators was White Tower. White Tower was opened by John E. Saxe and his son, Thomas. The duo shamelessly copied White’s Castles menu, style, and advertising. They even went as far to copy the architecture of the burger chain. Despite being a blatant knockoff, White Tower saw success and went on to open 230 locations at its peak. It turns out White Castle doesn’t think imitation is the sincerest form of flattery. They brought legal claims against White Tower, forcing them to make significant changes to their business, which ultimately led to their demise.

39. Weenie Beenie – If you’ve seen a Weenie Beenie in your lifetime then you probably frequented the Virginia area a lot during the 1950’s. Weenie Beenie restaurants were famous for their half-smokes, hot dogs, and pulled pork sandwiches. The chain was founded by Carl & Bill Staton in Arlington, Virginia. Bill Staton was a huge billiards player who used the money he made from billiards to fund his restaurants. At its peak, there were a total of 6 Weenie Beenie restaurants in the world, but today only one still stands. (Editor’s Note – Does this sound like a place you would want to eat?)

40. Weton’s – When you were told to “look for the orange circles,” you must have lived in the New York area throughout the 1960’s and 1970’s. Of course, what was meant by that was that you should head on over to Weton’s to buy their 10-cent fries and their 15-cent burgers. We bet we weren’t the only ones buying them by the bagful! But nothing hit the spot better than a Weton’s Big W! Unfortunately, Weton’s couldn’t stand up to major competitors McDonald’s and Burger King. In 1975, Weton’s merged with Nathan’s Famous fast-food and has been discontinued ever since.

41. Wimpy – Wimpy was a fast food chain that got so popular, multiple locations opened around the world. The very first one opened up in Bloomington, Indiana in 1934. The brand was established by Edward Gold, who got the restaurant’s name from J. Wellington Wimpy of the Popeye comics. By the 1940’s there were at least 26 locations in the Chicago area. Eventually, they expanded to the United Kingdom and South Africa, where they still exist today. There are no more Wimpy restaurants in the United States because no one purchased the rights to the name after Edward Gold’s death in the 1970’s. (Editor’s Note – How about this place? I’d much rather eat at Macho’s than at Wimpy’s, wouldn’t you?)
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