

The Uncertain Glory of an April Day : our Dedication Ceremony collides with a national student strike.

[Shakespeare, *Two Gentlemen of Verona*]

In November, 1971, the Trustees invited me to one of their meetings. From my credentials, they knew that I had some experience in producing artistic events and organizing academic conferences. They now asked me to chair an institutional task force to plan the official Dedication ceremony for Evergreen, which would feature an address by Governor Dan Evans and the inauguration of President Charles McCann. Because of the circumstances which led to the opening of Evergreen off campus on October 4, 1971, there had been no time and energy available for an official dedication. [See "A Bad Idea, Two Good Ideas, and a Grand Opening" in my *Tales of the Young Evergreen*.] So the Trustees and the President's Council had determined to schedule, probably for April, a proper opening ceremony.

To the assignment, presented as a request rather than an order, I responded that I should be glad to serve if the Trustees would agree to meet three conditions. (1) The ceremony should go beyond speeches constituting official business to include musical and theatrical performances, as well as displays of what our various programs had been accomplishing. (2) The students, staff members, and guests from the Greater Olympia area and around the State should partake of food together, even if as just symbolic sharing. (3) The Trustees should provide a budget for such a community effort – in effect, the first open house offered by the College to those who were supporting it. The Trustees agreed to the conditions.

The next meeting to work on the event took place shortly afterwards. I reported on it in a memorandum of January 13, 1972, addressed to all coordinators of academic programs and faculty sponsors of contracts, titled "An opening ceremony for Evergreen." "Several months ago a small group of us – including Charles McCann, Herb Hadley, Trueman Schmidt, Merv Cadwallader and Donald Chan -- met to think about the need for some sort of ceremony to celebrate the opening of Evergreen. We came up with a number of ideas and finally arrived at consensus about the following general points." As in other early meetings, there were suggestions and ideas which we were able to follow through and to realize in the April ceremony, but others which turned out to be too elaborate, too expensive, or otherwise impracticable. I shall list those from this first meeting which bore fruit:

"(1) Evergreen must hold a formal ceremony for the official dedication of the college, to include recognition of Charles J McCann as its first President.

(2) The ceremony should be held on a Friday in the spring of 1972, perhaps in April. (April 21 now seems the most probable date.)

(3) The ceremony must contain a set of rituals appropriate to Evergreen; it must satisfy those

on campus, the local community, and our formal acquaintances beyond the Olympia region; it should seize upon those elements in traditional academic ceremonies which are capable of imaginative development; it should be relatively inexpensive – all costs to be defensible in the eyes of our various constituencies.

(4) It will be especially appropriate to invite Governor Evans to offer a brief address.

(5) Planning might start with the conception of the event as a Renaissance Fair.

(6) The responsibility for devising elements of the ceremony should be delegated to groups already in being

(10) The ceremony might progress in this order: . . . (d) dedicatory remarks to be spoken from the main landing of the large staircase (perhaps by Mrs. Tourtellotte introducing . . . Governor Evans, Governor Evans making an address, and President McCann closing this portion; . . . (f) dispersal to an informal meal to be served from booths set up on the mall and along the sheltered exterior of the Library, perhaps accompanied by performances of madrigals, dances, etc., In keeping with the occasion

"To involve as many members of the Evergreen community as possible in the planning for this occasion, I ask each program and contracted studies grouping to identify one student representative to serve on a planning task force – to think about the contribution each group might make to the event. I shall also ask faculty and staff members to serve on the planning task force by reason of their interests."

Even before the first scheduled meeting of the task force, our enterprise received a large contribution toward the goal of having food to share. One of the two Trustees most involved with the planning -- either Trueman Schmidt or Herb Hadley -- learned that the Department of Fisheries had confiscated over 300 pounds of illegally caught salmon, which we could use as the main course for a luncheon following the opening ceremony. The Trustees and other local supporters approached the elders of the Squaxin Island Tribe, on whose ancestral lands the College was being built, requesting that members of the tribe might participate and assist us on our Dedication Day. Working with our Facilities staff to make a fire pit, our Squaxin friends would barbecue the salmon.

On February 24, I sent another memo to coordinators, titled "Meeting on an 'Opening Ceremony'," asking each of them to send the student representing the program to the first meeting of the Disappearing Task Force. "As a result of this first meeting we should be able to get some idea of (1) the kind of opening ceremony which might be appropriate for Evergreen, (2) the extent to which students will wish to participate in such a ceremony, and (3) the contributions of the efforts and ideas which the various programs might be able to make

This meeting will be held on Thursday, March 2, at 1:30 p.m. in the Board Room next to the President's office."

This meeting was attended by five student representatives of coordinated studies programs, two of group contracts, President McCann, three Trustees (Janet Tourtellotte, Trueman Schmidt, Herb Hadley), Dick Nichols (Director of information Services), Don Chan (music), and Ainara Wilder (theater arts). From the beginning the most active program in the planning and at the event was "Man and Art: the Renaissance and Now." Don, who had organized and directed the Chamber Singers and the Jazz Ensemble, was one of the original three-faculty team; and Ainara's theater group contract had grown out of the program. The facts that we were meeting in the Board Room and that the President and three Trustees were present gave the rest of us a sense of how important our work would be to the College.

We discussed the main points of the planning which had occurred so far. A ceremony would be held on Friday, April 21 to celebrate the official opening of the college and the inauguration of President Charles McCann in the larger context of a Renaissance Fair, including performances, exhibits, and a luncheon to be shared by all. We designated the faculty and staff members who would have the responsibility for organizing and coordinating the main activities. Bill Kenworthy, Director of Food Services, would be invited to join our task force and work with volunteers from several programs to prepare and to serve the luncheon; Don Parry, Director of Plant Operations, would be invited to join us to coordinate physical arrangements with his custodians and volunteers from academic programs; Charles Davies of Media Services would be joining us to arrange for the sound system. "Budgetary needs must be identified for: invitations and programs (Nichols); food (Hadley-Kenworthy-Teske); music (Chan); theatrical activities (Wilder); setting-up, cleaning-up, loudspeaker system, temporary stage, booths (Don Parry-Teske-student program representatives); costumes for performers, hosts, and hostesses (Chan-Teske-Wilder); program and activity-group displays (to be handled by programs and activity groups internally)."

The next meeting was scheduled for March 9, with assignments leading to that meeting: "(a) Student program representatives to spread the word to their programs; sample opinions; bring back new ideas; arrange for collaboration within their programs. (b) Those coordinating the plans for various activities to estimate their budgetary needs. (c) Charles Teske to invite student representatives from academic programs and activity groups not represented at the March 2 meeting; write and distribute minutes; begin planning with the other staff members who will be involved in organizing the ceremony."

Forty-four years later, I have some general recollections about the workings of the task force. The collaboration among the faculty members, the staff members, and the Trustees involved was excellent from the start. It took a bit of nagging to have all the programs designate and

then support their representatives on the task force; but once the students became committed to the common enterprise, their enthusiasm and energy were gratifying to behold. At times in our meetings, as we were discussing specific details of the activities, I was reminded of some films in the 1940's in which the theme was "Let's put on a show." Typically, there would be a need to raise money, and the actors playing teenagers would start pouring out suggestions: "We could use my uncle's barn," "And I could do my song-and-dance routine, and you could do your baton-twirling," "Yes, and Jimmy could do his magic tricks," "And Spot would be the animal act," and so on. Of course, when the show would go on as the finale of the film, it would take place on a soundstage, the teenagers would have turned into a *corps de ballet*, and the whole thing would be accompanied by the studio symphony orchestra. We were not that ambitious, but you get the idea.

People followed through on their assignments, did their rehearsing, designed and sent out invitations, signed up for the food- and campus-preparation crews, and otherwise volunteered to make this fairly complicated undertaking happen. Throughout the run of the task force, my secretary, Charlotte Smith, kept track of the details, assisted me in monitoring developments, and – in those days before personal computers, email, and social media – kept the communications flowing efficiently.

At our next meeting, on March 9, eleven student-representatives and three more staff members were present. "New members raised questions. Then the whole group affirmed that we are not planning an exclusive 'administration trip' but an occasion for the gathering of the whole Evergreen community and guests from around the State to celebrate the opening of the College. There was also considerable discussion of our need to communicate with guests representing the Olympia area and the state – by being ourselves, helping them to learn about the College, and helping them to enjoy their visit with us."

The group agreed upon a tentative schedule for April 21, to begin at 11:00 a.m. and run through the official festivities and luncheon until 2:00 p.m., after which our guests would be encouraged to visit the academic program displays and the exhibits in the Lecture Halls Building. "Recognizing that some funds would be necessary to make the occasion possible but that we should depend mainly on the energy and the ingenuity of Evergreen people, the group discussed a minimal budget for the occasion." This budget came out to \$2250, with a possible extension to \$2450.

[The Board of Trustees, toward the close of its regular meeting on March 9, voted approval of this budget. One item in particular stands out from the page of minutes, though I cannot after this length of time remember how it got there: "\$350 – theatrical activities – platform, costume rental and cleaning, **rent-a-horse**." I can assume only that the horse would have made a triumphal appearance at the opening of the ceremony or perhaps figured in the Shakespearean

scenes contemplated. As things turned out, we did have a quadruped, less flamboyant but more serviceable.]

Between the March 9 meeting and our next gathering, after Spring Break, on March 30, the planning had progressed to the point where I could include with the minutes a list of Tentative Assignments, which ran to fourteen items, each one identifying the names of the teams of staff members, faculty members, Trustees, and students who would carry them out. "Nichols and Teske to work with coordinators and other program faculty to spread the word about what could be a pleasant occasion and an array of satisfying projects. Anyone with a good idea not yet contemplated should see Nichols or Teske." [Some people never learn.]

Minutes of the meetings of March 30, April 6, and April 13 are not now available. But from a combination of memories and the documents which are extant, I can present a fairly accurate general description of what went on. By the March 30 meeting, the membership of the DTF had grown to include representatives of all academic programs and several more staff members representing Food Services, Media Services, Facilities, and Campus Security. As academic programs became more involved, the student leaders of crews within the programs joined us. The assignments hitherto listed as "tentative" now became firm and more specific. We began each meeting with reports on progress and then entertained further suggestions about how to enrich the event.

Much of the rest of the work of the task force was devoted to matters of campus-wide hospitality and the logistics of preparing for the various aspects of the ceremonies and the communal luncheon. As representatives from other programs volunteered to help with the luncheon, Bill Kenworthy of Food Services took over the coordination of these ambitious activities. One program would bake the bread for the luncheon. Another would prepare potato salad. Still another would be responsible for making lots and lots of punch. The Food Service would procure the ingredients and the plates, cups, and plastic utensils. Programs not directly responsible for preparing the meal would help with serving it cafeteria-style as a large buffet; other programs would assist Don Parry's custodial staff with setting up chairs and otherwise getting the campus ready, and cleaning up afterwards. Following the luncheon, each program would hold open house in its own area and offer home-baked cookies, fruit, coffee, and more punch to the guests who would come by to learn about the program and its accomplishments. Hosts and hostesses would be identified, and Renaissance costumes provided where necessary. We were planning for an attendance of 1200-1300 Greeners and guests.

Our only other building beside the Library, housing our five Lecture Halls, would also be pressed into service. The rotunda would serve as exhibition space for visual-art projects. Several of the lecture halls would have student films and program slide-shows running continuously in the afternoon. Beyond our two buildings, the Evergreen Environment group contract would offer

guided walks on the woodland paths down to the campus shoreline on Eld Inlet.

As we worked toward a precise schedule for the various activities between 11 a.m. and 2 p.m., we were forced to address a large concern: contingency planning for a period of sunshine, in which most of the activities would take place out-of-doors, and for a period of scattered showers and sun-breaks, in which the activities would take place indoors. By Thursday afternoon of April 20, after following the weather reports, I would have to decide between Plan A – continuous sunshine: folding chairs for the audience on the Plaza, portable stage for the presentations and risers for the singers to be set up outside, loudspeakers, electrical extensions for Evergreen Media personnel and network TV and radio crews – and Plan B – showers/sun: chairs, microphones, and loudspeakers to be set up in the main lobby; chairs in the downstairs lobby; closed-circuit video monitors in the downstairs lobby and seminar rooms. By the close of our last meeting, on April 13, we had produced a schedule for both contingencies, indicating when and where each activity was to take place.

A copy of the College **newsletter** of April 15 written by Dick Nichols, who had followed all our proceedings and carried out assignments in public relations, sums up what the Disappearing Task Force had accomplished in preparing for the Big Day. Much of the communal work remained to be done, but the planning was finished, and I was ready to declare that the DTF, with many thanks for the members' efforts -- past and to come -- should now disband. And then a hand went up among the overflow attendees sitting on the floor. It was a young woman whom I had not seen at any of the earlier meetings. She said, "Before you finish, I have an idea." [Oh, great – just great – all we need at this moment is yet another idea proposed to the group from scratch.] But she deserved a hearing, and so I asked her to present the idea.

She said: "I have some connections with people who are running a big Daffodil Festival this weekend. For \$50, I can get us a lot of fresh-cut daffodils for Friday next week. And I know where we can get a donkey who can pull his cart loaded with the daffodils to the Library entrance. My girlfriend and I can wear Renaissance dresses and hand out the daffodils to our guests as they arrive." [Sigh of relief – bless you, young woman.] I said: "Since we have decided not to rent a horse, of course you can have \$50, and our gratitude. We shall now disappear."

[As I learned later, the services of the donkey, whose name was Sam, were provided by Las and Stella Warner, strong early friends of the College, who had taken in some of our first-year students when the dormitories had not been completed.]

newsletter: April 15, 1972 Volume 4, Number 6

"DEDICATION/INAUGURATION"

"Public ceremonies officially dedicating Evergreen and inaugurating its first president, Charles J. McCann, will be held April 21, starting at 11 o'clock in the morning. Washington Governor Daniel J. Evans will be the featured speaker during the brief formal segment of the event, which is scheduled to be produced as a Renaissance Fair, with special costumes for performers, presenters, hosts and hostesses. Contingency plans have been drafted by a special task force spear-heading the dedication-inauguration so that the approximately three-hour affair may be held either indoors or outdoors, depending on the weather. The basic plan calls for an outdoor gathering in the mall area in front of the Daniel J. Evans Library Building, but if it rains the program will be moved inside.

"The day's activities will begin with a general gathering on the mall and performances by student dramatic and musical groups. The dramatic presentation, directed by faculty member Ainara Wilder, will be titled 'Shakespeare's Search for an Ideal Leader.' The program will feature six vignettes from Shakespeare's history plays: Richard II, Henry IV (Part One), Henry IV (Part Two), and Henry V. Fifteen students will perform in narrating and dramatic capacities, assisted by a large group of student support personnel. Musical performances during the opening hour of the dedication/inauguration event will feature the 40-member Evergreen Chamber Singers and the 20-member Evergreen Jazz Ensemble, both directed by faculty member Don Chan. The Chamber Singers – a student and faculty organization – will present musical selections appropriate to the Renaissance motif. The Jazz Ensemble – which includes Evergreen students and faculty, townspeople, and students from Olympia High School and Grays Harbor College – will play a number of selections ranging from contemporary jazz to rock.

"Dedication of the college and inauguration of Charles McCann, who was Dean of the Faculty at Central Washington State College before becoming Evergreen's president in 1968, will begin at 12:00 noon. The brief formal ceremony will feature remarks by Mrs. Neal Tourtellotte of Seattle, chair of the Evergreen Board of Trustees; Governor Evans; and President McCann. Mrs. Tourtellotte will serve as mistress of ceremonies.

"Following the taking of a group portrait, a complimentary luncheon – prepared by the college food services contractor and Evergreen students – will be served from 12:45 to 2:00 P.M. either in the mall area or indoors, depending on the weather. Strolling players, singers, and dancers will perform during the luncheon. Official festivities will be closed at 2:00 p.m., followed by visits to academic program areas for viewing of student project displays; art exhibits; campus tours; the showing of student-made films in the Lecture Hall Building; and informal conversation. Students, staff, faculty and townspeople will serve as hosts and hostesses for the dedication/inauguration program. Campus parking will be free of charge that day.

"Academic Dean Charles B. Teske serves as chairman of the Dedication/Inauguration Task

Force, which also includes a large number of students, faculty, staff, and members of the Board of Trustees. 'This event is planned as an occasion for the gathering of the entire Evergreen community and guests from around the State to celebrate the opening of the College,' Teske said. 'We hope the turnout is large and that everyone who attends has a thoroughly enjoyable time by learning more about Evergreen and getting acquainted with its people and processes. This will mark the first time that the entire Evergreen community has been assembled since the College opened last fall. We urge all Evergreen students, staff, and faculty not only to attend the program but to become actively involved in the planning process and become active participants on April 21'."

On Sunday evening, April 16, President Richard Nixon appeared on national television to announce that, in retaliation against fresh Viet Cong incursions in South Vietnam, he had ordered the resumption of the bombing of Hanoi and the new bombing of Haiphong. The high-altitude attacks by B-52 bombers flying from Guam had already begun. On Monday, April 17, the National Student Association asked for a Day of Moratorium – a nationwide strike of colleges and universities against the escalation of the War – on Friday, April 21, our day of Dedication/Inauguration.

This move involved us in a crisis of conscience, as well as a crisis of public relations and political standing with members of the larger community around us, many of whom were suspicious about if not downright hostile to our innovative College. Most of the students, members of the faculty, and academic administrators were opposed to the Vietnam War. The faculty and administration were largely sympathetic, as were the majority of our students, to the Moratorium declared by the National Student Association. But as a publicly supported institution, Evergreen could not take a political stance by officially participating in the strike. Because the preparations for our Day were so complex and so advanced, including the invitations sent around the State, a postponement was out of the question. We could either proceed with the event or cancel it. The President and Trustees decided to proceed.

A large number of our students had formed a group to protest the escalation of the War and to discuss what to do about holding the Dedication/Inauguration ceremony on the Day of Moratorium. Some of the leaders of this protest group were also heavily involved with the Evergreen ceremony and fair. As this group met late into the nights, Larry Stenberg, Director of Counseling Services, attended the meetings and acted as liaison between the student group and the administration. It was not so much a matter of "mediation" or "negotiation" or "compromise" as it was of having a responsible community trying to figure out how to hold the ceremony as planned and yet to recognize the gravity of the crisis which was leading to the strike. By Thursday almost all of the students in the group had accepted what the administrators had in mind. This included the voluntary wearing of black armbands by the

faculty members and administrators who would be appearing in their academic insignia and the presentation, before the official opening, of a statement by President McCann dealing with the paradox of holding a long-awaited joyful celebration at a time of sorrow for so many of the citizens of our country.

There were rumors that a small group of students, most of them Vietnam veterans, were intent on disrupting the ceremony with an act of "guerrilla theater." But we were still going ahead with the preparations as planned. On Thursday, having followed the weather predictions, which called for scattered showers on Thursday night and early Friday morning, I sent out the word that we would be following Plan B. Also on Thursday I was visited by Chad Lewis, one of the leaders of the moderate majority student-protest group. He had written a petition addressed to President Nixon calling for the cessation of the bombing of civilians in the cities of North Vietnam. He wished to read it at some point in the Friday ceremony and to encourage audience-members to sign it, and we agreed that he should come to me "backstage" toward the close of President McCann's address following the inauguration.

By mid-morning on Friday, the showers had ceased and sun-breaks had started. Sam and his cart and the daffodil-maidens were in place on the campus Plaza. The camera crews of the three network stations of Seattle were setting up their equipment next to that of the Evergreen technicians and the broadcasters' table for radio station KITN. The Shakespearean actors and the members of the Chamber Singers, clad in their costumes, were milling around and getting ready for their performances. The actors would work from the broad landing of the lobby stairs. The singers, in lieu of risers, would be arrayed on the lower steps. The guests, guided by our costumed hosts and hostesses, were starting to take their seats.

I was standing with President McCann and the Trustees on the lobby balcony when Rod Marrom, Chief of Campus Security, came up to inform President McCann that a group of students, carrying tire irons and a crowbar, had clustered around the flagpoles of the Plaza from which the U. S. and Washington State flags were flying. The students were asking for the key to open the lock-boxes of the flagpoles so that they could get at the lanyards to lower the flags to half-staff in the spirit of the Day of Moratorium. If they would not be given the key, they intended to use their tools to break into the lockboxes and lower the flags, despite the likelihood that they would then be arrested. President McCann took about a minute to reflect on the news and said, "Give them the key."

At 11 a.m. President McCann and I walked around the balcony and down the upper staircase to the landing, where a lectern and microphone stood. By this time the main lobby was filled, with standing room in the corridors leading to the lobby. I heard afterwards that the lower lobby was filled, as were the seminar rooms which had closed-circuit video monitors. Because Charles McCann and I both had doctorates in English Language and Literature from the same university,

we were dressed exactly alike in our Yale-blue gowns, on the sleeves of which our broad black armbands were quite conspicuous. I addressed the audience to say that, before the official opening of the ceremony, President McCann would read a statement.

The texts of Governor Evans' and President McCann's speeches later in the day are available through the website of the Evergreen Archives. I do not believe that we have the text of McCann's brief opening statement. I recall only that it was powerful, dealing with the conflicting emotions and the irony of our historical position on this day of all days. He called for the honoring of these emotions, for civility, and for the offering of hospitality by the members of the Evergreen community and the enjoyment of this hospitality by our guests. No applause; just rapt listening.

I went to the microphone, checked that our two trumpeters were stationed opposite each other on the balcony, announced that the ceremony of Dedication and Inauguration was officially open, and gestured to the players to begin their fanfare. [The trumpeters were students of Olympia High School and were dressed in black velvet doublets and black tights as Elizabethan heralds. One of them was Dan Lundberg, who went on to professional training in music performance and education. As musical director at Capital High School and coordinator of musical education for the Olympia School System, as well as for his achievement as a performer and a conductor, he has been a major contributor to the cultural life of the Greater Olympia Area. When, in the late 1980's, I played trumpet under his baton in the pit orchestras for two musicals at the Washington Center for the Performing Arts, I reminded him of the one occasion on which I was giving him the downbeat.]

Dick Nichols wrote for publication on April 15 about what was supposed to happen on April 21. For publication on May 1, he wrote about what did happen -- or what he observed and chose to say about it. I shall interrupt him twice to provide additional information. Otherwise, his perceptive, heartfelt, and eloquent account can stand for what most of us would like to remember.

newsletter: May 1, 1972

Volume 4, Number 7

"A SPECIAL DAY

"The sweep of history, unpredictable spring weather, and an unflagging spirit of community converged at Evergreen April 21 to make the College's long-planned Dedication/Inauguration activities an emotion-packed and memorable experience for students, faculty, staff, and off-campus guests who jammed the Daniel J. Evans Library Building for the event. The date for the fete was set several months ago in hopes that the program, produced in a Renaissance (or Naissance) Fair motif, could be held outdoors under friendly, sunny and warm weather conditions. No such luck. The temperature was crisp as it has been all spring. The skies opened

up with bursts of rain and even a little snow, accompanied by chilling, gusty winds. So, the program was moved indoors under Contingency Plan B adopted by the Dedication/Inauguration Task Force headed by Academic Dean Charles Teske. To say the Library Building, never intended to be an auditorium or ballroom, was packed is to put it mildly. 'Live' space was finally at such a premium that many persons who attended were forced to watch the proceedings on closed-circuit television in various seminar rooms. In fact, the third floor balcony looked like an electronic equipment display area, with college and commercial television cameras whirring away, tape recorders spinning, sound and special lighting systems festooning the area, and KITN Radio (after early technical problems with phone lines) broadcasting the event in the Olympia area.

"When the event was planned, no one could have known that the Vietnam War would once again trigger the kind of social turmoil long associated with that Southeast Asia conflict, much less that April 21 was to be set as a day of moratorium by the National Student Association. But it happened, and on Evergreen's special day the signs of discontent were to be seen, not only on campus but in dozens of locations across the land. Protests against the United States' stepped-up air thrusts into North Vietnam were mild but evident at Evergreen. Black armbands were worn by many persons, including President Charles McCann, who, in a brief statement before the formal program began, explained that, for him, it was 'simply a way (as our bumper stickers) for a private citizen to express his feelings about an issue.' He explained that his wearing of the armband was 'intensely personal,' mentioned that 'The Evergreen State College does not sanction it,' and cautioned that no one 'should pull the institutional mantle over his personal concerns by using this institutional occasion, by assuming institutional sanction.' He also said he hoped that 'no one of Evergreen's guests, or no one from Evergreen, for that matter, should be involuntarily subjected to anything but what he was invited for.'

"As the ceremony opened, a troupe of student actors presented six vignettes from Shakespeare's history plays under the direction of faculty member Ainara Wilder. At the end of the presentation, titled 'Shakespeare's Search for an Ideal Leader,' student Ned Swift, attired in the warrior's costume of King Henry V, delivered a strong and unrehearsed anti-war statement, then left the stage with apologies for what he called his 'disruption.' Next on the program were the colorfully attired Evergreen Chamber Singers, under the skillful guidance of faculty member Don Chan. The 40-member group presented songs appropriate to the Renaissance theme, then finished with a swinging rendition of the student-composed 'Geoduck Blues,' which received a warm ovation from the standing-room-only crowd.

"Then came the formal Dedication/Inauguration ceremony, with Board of Trustees chairman Mrs. Neal Tourtellotte of Seattle presiding."

[Here I interrupt Dick Nichols' narrative to describe what was going on "backstage:"

Merv Cadwallader told me later that when the Shakespearean scenes had ended he, black-gowned and arm-banded, was standing at the mouth of the hallway leading from the clock-tower entrance to the lobby. He heard talking behind him and turned to see a cluster of uniformed demonstrators, who were debating whether it was the right time to rush the temporarily empty stage and do their act of "guerrilla theater." But then the impressively costumed Chamber Singers filed in and took their places on the lower section of the stairs. The demonstrators changed their minds and withdrew. (For a photograph of the Chamber Singers in their Renaissance gear, directed by Don Chan, enter "Student Voices of '71" in the Search box on the Evergreen home page and scroll to page 27.)

From my position on the third-floor balcony, just to the side of the right-hand stairs, I caught a glimpse of the demonstrators and their withdrawal. Toward the close of the Chamber Singers' set, Governor Evans, President McCann, and the Trustees walked around the balcony and prepared to go down to the landing/stage. I was very much concerned about the likelihood that the demonstrators would attempt to disrupt the proceedings while the network cameras were running. From prior experience, before coming to Evergreen, I had observed the affinity which network news editors had for the display of anti-War demonstrations. If our demonstrators had appeared on the landing at any point during the speeches and inauguration, that footage would have appeared on the evening news shows of the Seattle network stations. If the disruption had occurred during Governor Evans' address, Evergreen might have also appeared on 6 o'clock national news programs. We did not, in our precarious position, need publicity of this sort.

As the Trustees came by me, I said to Mrs. Tourtellotte, "Janet, please try to move things along as quickly as you can; and I'll try to hold off the demonstrators as long as I can." She later told me that my words had amounted to one of the most frightening requests which she had ever heard.

The platform party took their places, and Janet Tourtellotte introduced Governor Evans. I heard only the beginning of his speech, because I also heard that behind me a group of people had come up to the third-floor lounge just a few steps from the balcony of the lobby. I went back to meet them. I cannot give an exact description or enumeration because of the pressure of the moment, but I believe that there were seven men and three women dressed in Army fatigue uniforms. Some of them were carrying wooden replicas of machine pistols – large toys, which were capable if their ratchets were cranked, of producing loud rat-a-tat imitation gunfire. Others carried what looked like a heap of clothing and a stout rope. I tried my best to reason with them about why they should not try at this point to go down to the landing.

I told them that most of the people in attendance were already sympathetic to their cause. Those who were not would be alienated by any hostile disruption of this important moment in the early history of Evergreen. So many of their classmates had been putting in a large effort to

provide a pleasant occasion for our guests. A show of force – of "guerrilla theater" – would be just what the many opponents of Evergreen could wish for in their drive to shut us down or to turn us into another run-of-the-mill college. "Think about the larger impact of what you're trying to do." And so on.

The demonstrators did engage in the argument; but as I was running out of reasons and of energy and they were becoming impatient, I feared that I could not hold them back any longer. Then Regon Unsoeld appeared. He had been one of the leaders of the large protest group who had agreed to let our day of Dedication and Inauguration go forward. I do not know how Regon realized what was going on, but he saved the situation, so far as the televised public reputation of the College would be concerned. He used many of the same reasons which I had attempted to get across, but he did things much more effectively and emphasized the need for solidarity among classmates and honoring of all of the work which had been put in.

In the midst of this discussion, Chad Lewis appeared with his petition. He wanted to be sure that he could be heard, and not just as an anticlimax to theatrics. We all turned from bickering to devising a sequence of what should occur when the official ceremony would have run its course. As the Trustees and Governor and newly inaugurated President finally came up the stairs and passed us, we followed the sequence which we had agreed on.

I went down to the lectern on the landing and made some *pro forma* announcements, inviting everyone to partake of our buffet luncheon and describing how it would be served, describing the exhibits which would be shown in the Lecture Halls Building, and encouraging our guests to visit the program areas to learn about what had been accomplished in the first seven months of our existence as a college. During my remarks, the television cameras were turned off, and the crews began to pack up. I then introduced Chad Lewis, encouraged the audience to pay attention to what he had to say, and declared the Ceremony concluded. I went down the stairs, through the aisle between the ranks of seats, and observed the rest of the proceedings from the opposite side of the lobby. Chad read his petition, encouraged the members of the audience to sign it, and introduced the demonstrators: "Some of our classmates have an important statement to make."

The demonstrators came down onto the landing. (For a photograph of them taking the stage, go again to "Student Voices of '71" and scroll to page 16.) The whole act of "guerrilla theater" took no more than ten minutes. Three of the demonstrators arranged what turned out to be a Guy-Fawkes-like avatar of Nixon – rag-stuffed trousers and white shirt, on which was fixed a placard bearing his name, topped by a full-head rubber Halloween mask of his features. While they were hanging him in effigy, the others engaged in a kind of macabre ballet of hand-to-hand combat. Then all of them formed a line across their stage and faced the audience. One shouted, "What did the Army teach us?" They all responded, "To kill – to kill – to kill." And they

cranked the ratchets of their wooden guns aimed at the audience.

At the moment when they finished, Don Chan's Jazz Ensemble, beneath the portico on the edge of the Plaza, struck up the opening number. Audience members arose and went out to form luncheon lines before the food-and-drink booths at the far left corner of the Library Building. We now go back to Dick Nichols' **newsletter** account.]

"After brief opening remarks, Mrs. Tourtellotte turned to the day's guest speaker, Governor Daniel J. Evans. The Governor, noting the double-pronged significance of the day, expressed his personal support for the educational course being charted by Evergreen, commented on the socially divisive nature of the Vietnam War, and shared with the audience his hopes for the kind of world that today's students can help make possible by the year 2000. 'You'll be my age by then – heaven forbid,' he quipped.

"President McCann then stepped to the lectern for his own official inauguration by Mrs. Tourtellotte as the large audience applauded long and loudly. Turning to his brief inaugural remarks, McCann said, 'All of you who have contributed something to the beginning of Evergreen are due some share in the first return – the sense of adventure that comes from facing risks worth taking, which must be taken if a profession, a country, mankind, are not to regress. All responsible for the existence of Evergreen today, therefore, are leaders in the clearest sense of the word: being in the lead.' Near the end of the address, McCann said, 'At the end of our first year, Evergreen is being taken seriously and watched carefully by those concerned with undergraduate study in most of the English-speaking world. I pledge in my term as president to help insure what we have well begun: to maintain the utmost flexibility in matching individual students' programs of study with individual faculty expertness; to maintain our integrity, by doing only what the talent here at the moment can do honestly in the best traditions of teaching and scholarship; to work with the businesses and professions, helping students forge their career links directly instead of through implied curricular mediation; to continue working toward a tradition here at Evergreen of firm, unsentimental expectations in the professional performances of staff and faculty. All this so that Evergreen students will, as they already richly promise, be productive members of constantly changing groups – be capable, confident acquirers and communicators of what is known, the practitioners of those sciences that will grace our country, and be adept in that responsible, clear discourse on which our commonwealth's well-being depends.'

"After the formal ceremony ended, just as the serving of lunch was about to begin, student Chad Lewis strode to the lectern and briefly announced that a petition protesting the Vietnam War had been started at Evergreen and would be placed in the Library lobby for additional signatures he also said funds were being collected to purchase a round-trip airline ticket in hopes that Dr. McCann – not as Evergreen President but as a private citizen – would carry the

petition to Washington, D. C. For delivery to President Nixon. After Lewis concluded, a small group of students – dressed in military fashion – walked onto the stage and presented a brief hand-to-hand combat drill as an anti-war protest.

"The rest of the day's activities were informal, beginning with a two-hour luncheon service of barbecued salmon, salad and bread prepared by student bakers. Food Services Manager Bill Kenworthy, clad as Friar Tuck, and a dozen gaily costumed student helpers prepared and served lunch to the seemingly endless stream of Evergreeners and their guests. All the while, strolling performers provided entertainment; and the 20-member Evergreen Jazz Ensemble, directed by the talented Chan, presented a roaring, foot-stomping concert in the second floor lobby area. The rest of the day was devoted to friendly conversation, an open house, the opening of the Washington Printmakers Collection in the College art gallery, campus tours, and the presentation of the slideshow in the Lecture Halls Building by the Anti--War Group. Even the sun came out of hiding during the afternoon, seemingly blessing an event termed by everyone on hand as one of Evergreen's finest hours."

[Here I must interrupt Dick Nichols again to describe a bit of what I observed outside and to add some comments about the aftermath of our official Opening Day.

I went down to my first-floor office to take off my hood and gown. When I came back up to the second floor and out through the lobby, Don Chan's band was playing up a storm. Some couples were happily and vigorously engaged in swing-dancing on the Plaza. Costumed mimes, jugglers, and other entertainers were performing for people in the long lines, three or four abreast, stretching back from the food-and-drink booths. But I was surprised and thankful to see something else: the uniformed demonstrators, having put away their wooden guns, were loading plates with food at the backs of the booths and carrying them to the people at the rear of the lines. They were also talking briefly but earnestly to the people whom they were serving – explaining why they had found it necessary to do their piece of "guerrilla theater."

While I was watching all this, Jolene Unsoeld came by. She was the mother of Regon, who had helped so much, and the wife of Willi, Everest climber and member of the Evergreen Planning Faculty. She was to become in later years a two-term member of the Washington State House of Representatives and then a three-term member of the U.S. House of Representatives. She said, "It was good that things worked out so that the demonstrators could present their piece. They're very serious in their opposition to the War. If they hadn't had the chance to express their deep concern, they would have felt frustrated and guilty."

So it seemed at the moment that those of us involved with planning and producing the day of Dedication/Inauguration, and yet wishing to recognize the meaning of the Day of Moratorium, had achieved our goals. Some days later an Olympia acquaintance who had not attended the

ceremony told me that one of the broadcasters, after the event, had said, "There was an anti--War demonstration at the end, but we were left with the question whether it was put on against the ceremony or was part of the ceremony." The answer, of course, is "Yes."

It was impossible to calculate exactly how many people had been in attendance. The estimate from the observers in the various media ran to a seated and standing audience of 500 in the main lobby. The first-floor lobby beneath it, with video monitors, could hold at least another 350. And the electronically connected seminar rooms and lounges of the Library could hold several hundred more. The only firm number was provided by Bill Kenworthy: 2400 picnic plates had been used, including attendees who had eaten their salmon and their potato salad and bread from separate plates, those who had gone back for seconds, and the plates commandeered by the programs for their array of finger-food desserts. A lot of people had enjoyed a fairly substantial meal together.

In the aftermath, the College community still had a steep price to pay in public relations. The press clippings in our Archives for the next two months, especially of letters, op-eds, and editorials, present much controversy – the attacks outnumbering the appreciations and defenses. As might have been expected, the most virulent criticism came from people who had not attended the event and had little or no understanding of the principles and programs of the College. The attacks which I have read fall into three categories. Presented in ascending order, these are: outrage at Nixon's being hanged in effigy, the wearing of black armbands in mourning for all those killed in Vietnam, and the lowering of the U.S. flag. President McCann was named in many of these as responsible for what the writers, often vehemently, opposed. The College was a waste of the taxpayers' money, an experiment out of control, and a breeding ground for sedition. Our behavior verged on treason.

In addition to the initial reports carried in the local press, the expressions of sentiment against the War brought our proceedings to the attention of the wire services – AP and UPI. By April 23, two days after the event, the editors of *THE CHINA NEWS/ TAIWAN, FORMOSA* printed a brief UPI story under the headline, "Nixon Hanged in Effigy," emphasizing Governor Evans' remarks in opposition to the War and concluding with the observation that Evergreen "is unusual in that students themselves determine policy and all courses are given on a pass-fail basis." On May 2 and May 3 two letters to the editor appeared in the *Spokane Daily Chronicle* in response to an article titled "Evergreen College Is Unusual." The writers said nothing about the College itself and focused only upon the hanging of Nixon in effigy – one talking about disrespect, the other adding the charge of "immaturity ... shown by those people involved in the act." But those concerned about the symbolic hanging could not really attribute it directly to Charles McCann and his minions.

The case was quite different in regard to the wearing of a black armband on the sleeve of our

President's gown – symbolism displayed also by those of us administrators and faculty members who were wearing our academic insignia. One Associated Press report focused upon that element of the ceremony after mentioning the mingling of "antiwar speeches and Renaissance pageantry." With varying amounts of vitriol in their criticisms, the writers of letters to the editors of regional newspapers considered as treasonous the wearing of armbands extending sympathy beyond our fallen troops and the dead of South Vietnam to the North Vietnamese citizens killed in bombing raids. One writer said of President McCann that his "black armband and silly remarks about our troubles in Asia pretty well disclose the kind of show he will administer in his innovative adventure – and bad news for the taxpayer." He then went on to attack higher education in general: "The colleges and universities teach sedition, immorality, and substitute license for right and freedom. The average citizen has given the control of education to the professional educators. This has proved to be a grave error. Education is much too important to leave in their hands because they have a vested interest. Innovations, as at Evergreen, unhappily, are one of the many sad results."

The most numerous and potentially most serious attacks concerned the flying of the flag at half-staff. The sensitivity of the Olympia community was all the stronger because the flag had been donated to Evergreen by the local post of the Veterans of Foreign Wars as a gesture of welcome to the College. Many of the members of the Olympia Post, as well as their counterparts in the American Legion and Amvets -- including those few who attended our Dedication/Inauguration and those who read about it in the Daily Olympian – persisted in their support of the American initiative in Vietnam. They felt betrayed by the College when they saw or learned that the flag was at half-mast in recognition of the Day of Moratorium. They and the habitual detractors of our "unusual" institution let their feelings be known. Specifically, as reported in an AP story of May 25, and carried in regional papers, the Committee for Patriotic Action of the VFW post wrote to President McCann a letter which occasioned the headline "Olympia VFW warns college about flag" and the opening sentence "The civic group that gave a flag to the Evergreen State College says it'll reclaim Old Glory if it is ever used again to protest the war."

After further letters to the Olympian backed this position, an eloquent letter appeared in our defense, worthy of full quotation. Bernice Livingston (Youtz) wrote: "I can remain silent no longer on the matter of the flag at Evergreen State College. As a loyal American whose ancestors or relatives have served in the American Revolution, the War of 1812, the Civil War, the Spanish American War, and World Wars I and II, I am shocked by the local Veterans' groups and individuals who have refused to join the students at Evergreen in showing respect for those with died in Vietnam, including 50,000 of their fellow veterans

"Evergreen students chose to fly the flag at half-mast on the day of the college dedication, and

none of us has the right to question their motives or their patriotism. Had they chosen to celebrate that day with no recognition of the fact that our country is deeply at war, they could be accused of gross apathy and insensitivity.

"Those who criticize the students seem to be saying, 'We insist that you young people fight this war, but we condemn you from mourning the dead, military and civilian, which it has created.'

"As a deeply concerned American, I respectfully suggest that these gentlemen rethink both their patriotism and their humanity."

The most ostensibly authoritative and threatening attack, further supported by VFW members, came from a retired colonel of the U.S. Marine Corps. He shared with the editor of the Daily Olympian a letter which he had sent to President McCann. Referring to the black armband, the colonel said, "I don't really care what you wear or don't wear officially or otherwise. However, I do object to your using your office in a tax-supported facility to undermine our government. Additionally I do want to register strong objections to what appears to me to be flagrant violation of Federal statutes by you officially, and, as follows, the State of Washington, in the manner in which the National Colors were displayed." He went on to cite the statutes to which he was referring and concluded, "I would appreciate your advising me as to the legal authority under which you either directed or permitted the half-masting of the Colors on the day in question." His message contained the threat of, at least, official reprimand and, at most, litigation. Another reader agreed and wrote, "I believe the colonel has the right to inquire if Dr. McCann has violated the law."

The Olympian column titled "In Our Readers' Opinion . . ." on June 22 contained a detailed response from Jolene Unsoeld, who had done her homework. She wrote: "One of the reasons that we can all be proud to be citizens of the United States is that every citizen has the right to form an opinion of his own and express it. This free exchange of ideas is what gives our country its glory and strength. We must be extremely careful, however, to separate that with which we disagree from that which is illegal." She then went on to name those who had suggested that the flying of the flag at half-staff on April 21 constituted a flagrant violation of Federal statutes.

She quoted from the Revised Code of Washington on "Display of U.S. flag" and the U.S. Code Annotated, Title 36, "Patriotic Societies and Observances: Proclamation 3044; Display of Flag at Half-Staff" to establish that President McCann, by the powers delegated to him by the Board Of Trustees, did indeed have "adequate authority to decide that it was appropriate on moratorium day for the U.S. flag on the Evergreen State College campus to be lowered in honor of all the men, women, and children killed during this longest of U.S. wars." From her study of all the documents given to President McCann by the colonel, she also ascertained that a "note" which seemed to support litigation "does not appear in any primary legal source and therefore is not

statutory. It occurs only in the Flag Manual, Marine Corps, 1971, and applies, therefore, only to Marine Corps property and personnel."

This op-ed did much to stop the flow of letters condemning our recognition of the Day of Moratorium. But some of the hostility persisted and was added to the list of things which some Greater Olympians did not like about Evergreen. Many of the members of the veterans' organizations never forgave us for flying "their flag" at half-staff. Decades later some of my town acquaintances made a point of recalling that I had stood by McCann at the ceremony, both of us wearing black armbands.

What we Greeners gained from the experience of April 21 was more important to the growth of the College and to our morale in the next years than what we lost through the negative criticism we endured. The external misunderstanding, prejudice, and distrust about what we were trying to achieve influenced the attitudes of some legislators and resulted in raids on our institutional budget. But our ornery, friendly community remained intact. The pressures on us were as potentially divisive as issues on other campuses in the late 1960's and early 1970's which had resulted in animosity to the extent of riots, violence, destruction of property, and arrests. We had survived a crisis, not of our own making. And we were all the stronger for it.

Dick Nichols' report concludes:]

"It was a day of mixed gaiety, dignity, and solemnity; and it was made possible by an Evergreen spirit that transcended the difficulties of history, weather, logistics, and a trim budget. It was a do-it-yourself project in every sense of the word – everything from the printing of invitations and programs to the luncheon. In between, hundreds of Evergreeners spent countless hours preparing displays; practicing dramatic and musical performances; sprucing up the campus; providing a superb sound system; placing special lighting; making arrangements for on- and off-campus film, television, and press coverage; arranging seating for an overflow crowd; and serving as hosts and hostesses for the day. Also providing a big assist were women in the Evergreen College Community Organization, who helped with hospitality arrangements for numerous guests, including legislators, college presidents and other educators, state and local elected officials, townspeople, and other friends from across the state. And who can forget the donkey with the flower cart and the two girls presenting daffodils to those who arrived for the ceremony? Or their message, 'Give Peace A Chance'?

"It was that kind of a day. The special feeling it created won't be forgotten during the lifetime of anyone present. It was that kind of a day."

-- Charles B. Teske, 2016

