Students Are Welcome with Fun and Sincerity

From receptions to initiations and orientations, John Brown University has used a variety of activities over the years to welcome incoming students to campus. While “Big Games” night is something of a modern tradition, past generations of JBU freshmen experienced similar competitions. Starting around 1965, new students were welcomed to campus with blue and gold “JB” beanies, which they were required to wear as a symbol of their newly-arrived status.

When school opened, the upperclassmen would challenge the “froshes” to a round of tug-of-war. If the freshmen lost, they would have to wear their beanies for another week. There weren’t any real consequences for a loss by the upperclassman team, because they never lost – when the game began, the veterans would aim jets of water at the unsuspecting freshmen and then drag them, slipping and sliding, across the grass.

JBU students weren’t always so undignified. From the late 1940s through the early 1960s, the start of school was celebrated by a genteel reception, hosted by the faculty and staff. The event was considered a formal affair, and each student would dress in his or her finest.

ECHOES OF THE PAST

Senior Kevin Stuart suffered only minor injuries Tuesday after the tower in which he was videotaping the soccer game collapsed. Stuart was over 20 feet up when the tower fell.

As overtime of the game was about to begin, a leg on the tower buckled, sending the tower and Stuart to the ground. The tower landed between the bleachers and the fence, allowing Stuart to escape any serious injuries.

“An angel guided that thing because it didn’t hit the fence or the stands,” said Arnie Mayer, associate president of broadcasting. Stuart said he blacked out before he hit the ground. He remembers starting to fall and then regaining consciousness with a crowd of people around him.

“When I opened my eyes I didn’t know where I was or what day it was,” Stuart said. “I did remember my name, though.”

Stuart received immediate attention from one of the game’s officials, who is a certified Emergency Medical Technician. A call was made to 911, and an ambulance arrived minutes later. A fire truck also arrived at the scene after someone had reported that a light pole had fallen.

Stuart was taken to Siloam Springs Memorial Hospital for x-rays and a thorough examination. He suffered no broken bones or internal injuries and was released later that night.

“I’m thankful that no one else was hurt. God was definitely watching over me,” Stuart said. “It’s a miracle nothing broke; it’s a miracle where I landed.”

Stuart was videotaping the game for TV Sports Practicum class. He doesn’t feel he quite merits a purple heart for being wounded in action.

“I do deserve an ‘A,’ though,” he said.
Above: Freshman engineers of 1967-68 suffer through a wet early morning “duck walk” as a part of the Engineering Club’s mandatory initiation rites.

Below: New broadcaster Gene Sale examines Debbie Gray’s freshly cleaned teeth. To join the Broadcaster’s Club in the fall of 1968, freshmen dressed in “caps and gowns,” donned facial scribbles, and brushed each other’s teeth, while wearing tubes of Crest® around their necks.

**Insights**

From the works of John Brown, Sr.

When these schools were started, it was my announced purpose to build the first university of vocational education in the nation. It was not my thought that our school now or ever should run into expensive plants, high-powered equipment, and specialized vocational education in the sense of becoming competitors with scores of other universities that make much of engineering and kindred subjects. The thing I forewove and the goal toward which I started this movement was that of some day supplying in a small measure, at least, that which I felt would become a nation-wide desperate need — and that was to train a leadership for departments of vocational specialization, where the demand would be almost endless!

Excerpt from *The American Crisis and the Way Out*

(continued from front)

Her best. Upperclassmen would escort underclassmen of the opposite gender through a receiving line of JBU employees. The event encouraged staff and student interactions and subtly gave students an opportunity to scout subtly for future dates.

With the phasing out of the greeting line in 1960s, however, came a wave of what the 1967 yearbook called “unabashed abasement.” Glib upperclassmen put new students through a variety of induction rites, particularly those who wished to join one of the popular campus clubs. Early morning wake-up calls, sometimes with the help of an air horn, could send a new student off to be anointed with unidentified glop for the music club, or to deliver a marriage proposal from bended knee in the name of the broadcasters. Of all the club initiates, the engineers suffered the most. Depending on the year of his arrival, a typical male engineer might have to shave stripes in his leg hair, wear his clothing inside-out and use his dishes backwards, run the Hundred Stairs early in the morning, or make a paper bag doll and care for it with the help of a toilet paper roll worn on his belt — all for the sake of “belonging.”

Of course, at the root of all these fleeting JBU traditions was the same attitude which persists in the contemporary Orientation program: a genuine desire to welcome and cherish all incoming students, albeit with a little extra mischief.

**Milestones**

12 September 1924: The first four-year, tuition-based “John Brown University” opens in a small Arkansas town known as Sulphur Springs, just four months after its purchase by Dr. Brown Sr. (At the time, the Siloam Springs campus was still a free two-year institution known as John E. Brown College.) Tuition was $450 for all students except Bible majors. When Dr. Brown realized that JBC’s existence was threatened by the Sulphur school, the two campuses were merged, becoming Siloam’s JBU in 1928-29.

September 1940: Ground clearing begins at the new JBU airport, located in Oklahoma along Stateline Road. The growth of the school’s Civil Air Patrol program in the lead-up to World War II put a strain on JBU’s aeronautics resources, making it necessary to add a new hangar and airstrip to the program.