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Lost and Found

DC3 Staff Recover Class Ring 50 Years Later

[This wonderful article was sent to the Sentinel for publication by Lance Ziesch, Director of Marketing and Public Relations at Dodge City Community College]

More than 50 years after a Dodge City Community College (DC3) student lost his class ring during a campus snowball fight, staff recovered the ring on Aug. 7 during some excavation work on the college quad.

DC3 Grounds Supervisor Daemian Serna and General Maintenance Worker Craig Mellecker were wrapping up a job replacing valves on the underground irrigation system near the Administration Building when Serna noticed something shiny in the soil as they began filling in the dirt.

"I thought it was a gold hose clamp, which we don't have. So, my interest was pretty piqued," he said, quickly realizing

that the golden item was a ring. "So, I cleaned it off, and it says Kinsley High School. It has a little coyote on it and 1973. Then, I clean it a little more, and I see two initials, one on each side, J and B. Craig right away looks over, and he goes, 'Oh, somebody's going to want that.'"

After finishing their work, Serna and Mellecker returned to the maintenance shop, and Mellecker called Kinsley High School.

"Within an hour, he had a name and a story, and he got in contact with Jim right away," Serna said. "So, it's pretty neat. Usually, I just find old soda cans or trash in the dirt. Not an old high school ring from 50 years ago!"

The ring belonged to Jim Burkhart, who played football for the Conqs in the 1973 and 1974 seasons. Sometime

during the fall of 1973, Burkhart was involved in a playful snowball fight with his future wife, Marilyn (Crockett) Burkhart, when he lost his class ring.

"I was feeling a little ornery... and I threw a snowball at her with my left hand," he said, explaining that he wore his ring on his left hand because of a childhood injury on his right. "She doesn't remember if I hit her. I probably did. I had pretty good aim."

Whether or not the snowball reached its intended target, Jim soon realized it had carried his class ring with it as it sailed through the air.

"We went back, looked a couple of times, and never did find the ring," he said. "And we would always kid about it. But yeah, we lost it that day."

As fate would have it, Burkhart said he and Marilyn had talked about the missing ring yet again when they visited Dodge City just a week before it was discovered.

"You know, the ironic thing about the whole thing is, over the years, how many times we were



Pictured above, left to right, are Daemian Serna, DC3 Grounds Supervisor; Jim Burkhart; Marilyn Burkhart; and Craig Mellecker, DC3 General Maintenance.

[Photo by Lance Ziesch]

in Dodge, and Marilyn would always bring up how we needed to go by the school and see if the ring was in the lost and found," he said.

Burkhart said he and his wife were on their way to Tulsa, Okla., on Aug. 7 when they got "the call" they had been waiting about 53 years to receive.

"She said, 'Did you lose a class ring on the JuCo campus?' I said, 'Yeah, in 1973. I sure did.' She said, 'Well, they found it!'"

Serna said finding a ring that had been lost for 50 years—and then meeting the people it belonged to on Aug. 17—was "kind of surreal."

"When we took him down to the quad, he

went exactly where he remembered, and it was practically right there where we found it," Serna said. "So, it's really cool. It's really movie-esque. It's something you hear about in movies or on the news, not something you actually run into in real life."

Although they were classmates at Kinsley High School, the Bur-

kharts didn't begin dating until the summer after their senior year, just before enrolling at DC3, where Jim pursued a general studies degree and played football, while Marilyn worked toward a secretarial certificate.

Following two seasons of football, Burkhart

(Continued on page 12)

THINGS TO REMEMBER

Editor's Note

If you have news that you would like to be featured in an issue of the Sentinel, please call the office at 620-659-2080 (leave a message) or reach me by email at edcsentinel@hotmail.com.

If you need to bring something to the office but I am not there, you may leave it in the dropbox outside the office door. The location of the office is at 221 E 6th St, Kinsley. Thank you!

Word of God

We know and rely on the love God has for us. God is love. Whoever lives in love lives in God, and God in him.

~ 1 John 4:16



Lost nearly 53 years ago during a campus snowball fight, Jim Burkhart's 1973 class ring was recovered by campus maintenance staff on Aug. 7. [Photo by Lance Ziesch]

USD 347 NEWS - PAGE 4
USD 502 NEWS - PAGE 5
SPEARVILLE NEWS - PAGE 6
FUNNIES & CROSSWORD - PAGE 8
CHURCH DIRECTORY - PAGE 9
OBITUARIES - PAGE 11
KINSLEY MEETING - PAGE 13
OFFERLE MEETING - PAGE 14
KORC MEETING - PAGE 14
FROM THE ARCHIVES - PAGE 15
LEGAL'S - PAGE 15
CLASSIFIEDS - PAGE 16

