

Augustana Endowment Society
Historical Reflections from April 2024
by Janet Moline

Who remembers January 1964?

2024 is the 60th reunion of the Augustana class of 1964. Perhaps you know someone from that class. Students in 1964 could send their Observer newspaper home by scotch taping it, addressing it and licking on a 4¢ stamp or a 3¢ and 1¢ stamp. What was the Obs as it was called in January 1964?

C. W. Sorensen was the President of Augustana College. Democrat Lyndon Johnson was President of the United States.

The paper had a column called "Socially Speaking" and we read that in December senior Ruth Ann Erickson became Mrs. Bill Hartman in Geneva, IL and Debby Miller '65 was engaged to Joe Robb, a '62 grad now at the seminary. They would both wear the Swedish crowns we talked about in February.

In the column called the "The Arts" we learned that Ingmar Bergman's film "The Seventh Seal" would be shown on campus. This film about the Black Plague, despair and hope was previewed.

The front page of the January 8th paper had a short yet poignant article entitled "Apply for Marine OCC." No applications would be accepted after January 14th for the Officer Candidate Course starting in March. At the end of the ten weeks, the candidates would go on to further training as ground officers or pilots for the Marines. I said a poignant article because in 1964 we knew what this short article meant. A possible tour of Viet Nam for male Augie graduates.

Another headline said "Gas Company Donates Bus Barns to College." The donation by Iowa-Illinois Gas & Electric Co of the former City Lines bus garage meant that Augustana could raze the concrete and brick building and make room for a field house, physical education classrooms and offices, maintenance shops and some special science laboratories. Science and maintenance would have to wait but as we now know Roy J. Carver would provide the gift for a large Field House which would replace the brick gym, then located in the middle of the campus near the Bell Tower. Later part of that property would become the current soft ball field. Oh and a great slope at the rear to look for marine fossils.

The speaker at the Augustana concert-lecture series in January at Centennial Hall was William L. Shirer, a famous correspondent and author of No. 1 best seller, "The Rise and Fall of the Third Reich." He failed to make his Cedar Rapids high school newspaper, and after graduation from Coe College in 1925 took a cattle boat to Europe. Our own John Hauberg had taken a cattle boat to Europe over twenty years earlier. Shirer would be given a job at the copy desk of the Paris edition of the Chicago Tribune. John Hauberg had come back to the Midwest but Shirer stayed two decades. By 1937 he had joined the foreign correspondents' staff of the Columbia Broadcasting System (CBS) at the invitation of its European director, Edward R. Murrow. Shirer was in Germany when Hitler went to war and stayed until the end of 1940. A notable speaker, indeed, free to Augie students with their ID cards.

The editorial in that January issue by Dave Johnson bemoaned the procrastination of the college in getting Campus Church started. He wrote, "We can't for the life of us figure out how the Lutheran church ever spread beyond "Sweden"—if each new congregation, to get established, had to go through the same muck and red tape that's been bogging down the campus church issue for at least the last five years." He ends. "The more the issue is procrastinated, the harder it will be for a campus church to gain foothold among a steadily growing indifferent student body—indifferent because of lack of religious interests—interests which become the duty of Augustana College to stimulate if it wants to continue to call itself a Christian liberal arts college."

Oh, and that January Sen. Barry Goldwater announced his candidacy for the Republican presidential nomination.

And no more January papers. It was semester break....