

## Memories of SKIMMER

From an anonymous classmate- hazy memories.....



Read memories from Marilyn Kanas, Steve Hut, Andy Bamber, Fred Nahas, Mark Grant, Lee Gordon and Skimmer '65: From *The Daily Pennsylvanian*.

### From Marilyn Kanas:

What I remember most is the amazing concert with Diana Ross & the Supremes, Temptations and the Shirelles. Great music of the 60s!



Marilyn Kanas  
at Skimmer Day

### From Steve Hut:

Memories of skimmer . . . Candidly, I was ordinarily so drunk that I have very very few.

One I recall is one that am sure others will recall, namely the Motown-based concert in Franklin Field, with a spectacular collection of bands. I want to say it included The Four Tops, the Shirelles, Martha and the Vandellas, and one other male band, maybe the Temptations, maybe the Drifters, but in either case fabulous.

My only other memory is an example of what I then thought was very clever repartee on my part, but certainly aspects of the aforementioned drunkenness and juvenile humor. There were quite a few police patrolling along the river as we purported to watch the crew race and drank. At one point (think senior year), I threw something (probably a couple of beer cans or bottles) into the Schuylkill. A mounted cop saw this and sauntered over to chew me out. He asked whether I would do this at my own house. I thought for a moment and said, "yes, probably, if a river actually ran right in front of my house." I was fortunate he did not throw me into jail for a few hours.

## **From Andy Bamber:**

Skimmer 1968 -When I was asked to write and tell a story of skimmer weekend at Penn, I thought that I have nothing to tell. But then I thought about it for a minute and realized that I have some really good memories to share about this great time of rebirth that occurs every year in the spring around the world, but is especially thrilling in Philadelphia.

Yes, spring erupts every year in one form or another depending on the geography of where one is. But Penn and skimmer are something altogether different. Fairmont Park and the banks of the Schuylkill are a different rebirth which lives in memory long after the experience.

My personal memory of this experience goes back to my sophomore year at the university. Although my memory might be a little clouded by Ballantine Ale, I do remember the smell of spring as if it were here and being smelled today. Although I have had a few springs since, in various parts of the world, there was nothing that duplicates the feelings of this time in my life.

When you are young your mind is open to others and new relationships. This openness is what skimmer meant to me—although many my friends are gone now—that time was special with them.

Although I didn't wear a skimmer hat back then or since (I am a strong believer in honesty versus hypocrisy, so can't say that I ever wore one), the feeling of skimmer and the excitement that it generated was something you could not avoid. It was around the dorm and in the air. This first skimmer of my sophomore year was probably one of awakening to the powers of being on my own. I remember having a picnic in Fairmont Park with friends and drinking ale out of a bottle to celebrate this rebirth of life and nature.

The next year, our junior year, was punctuated by Smokey Robinson in Franklin Field. Although I never participated in traditional "row bottom" pranks, I do remember the great evening at Franklin Field for this event. It seemed like all the hustle and bustle around a big-name performer was really important and, I'm sure it was to those involved, but looking back on this minute in my life it is only the memory that is really important.

After all, the breath of spring that skimmer symbolizes is the spark of memory. I am sure that each one of us has a different memory of skimmer, but, hopefully, it is a good memory. My memory is full of loving relationships that seemed to blossom during skimmer. There is something transcendental about relationships which is magical and elevating and skimmer represents this to me.

## **From Fred Nahas:**

I'm assuming all four skimmers are open season for memories. It is a bit hard to separate but I do remember the spectacular shows we had in Franklin Field, particularly when Smokey Robinson came to town. I'm not sure which year that was but you would remember. It was surrealistic because the weather was perfect, the music was perfect and it was wall-to-wall students. Of course there were other memories that had a different flavor like the time we had a "formal dinner" at the ATO house with everyone dressed in fancy party attire. It turned into a giant food fight just like what was later documented in Animal House. Literally, at least 30 kids were throwing sloppy food at each other. The girls were freaking out (they were trying to protect their hair and clothes without enough hand width to do either) and the guys were laughing and more than mildly amused (mostly toasted). Then there was a really nice party planned by the fraternity at Silver Lake in New Jersey. There was a restaurant there on the water, but unfortunately it was a rainy day so we couldn't completely enjoy the scenery. The food was very good as I recall. Ironically 20 years later, as it turns out, one of my colleagues who is an infectious disease specialist, Dr. Tom Papastamelos, told me that his family owned and ran Silver Lake when we had our party. He now owns a restaurant in Margate called Sofia's (named after his twin sister who runs the place).

## From Mark Grant:



It was Skimmer of '66 (I think it was that year, but it could have been '67...my memory isn't what it used to be) and I was lucky enough to have my girlfriend Jane, now my wife, able to come and visit with me for the weekend. My fraternity brothers all agreed to meet at a certain location along the river but it was my job to bring a case of beer. But the only ride I could find was on the back of Dan Klein's motorcycle. I still remember how difficult it was to sit on the back of his motorcycle with a case of beer on my shoulder. Somehow we made it to the river and because it was a motorcycle we had no problem parking right near the meeting place. I recall having a wonderful time, and actually watching some of the races, but I have no recollection of how we got back to campus from there. And I recall a great party at the fraternity house much later that night. It was that weekend that I think I feel deeply in love with Jane and we have been happily married for 53 years now.

## From Lee Gordon:

**FRESHMAN YEAR SKIMMER: OUR MAGNIFICENT AND UNIQUE ROCK AND ROLL ENTERTAINER WHO SHATTERED SOCIAL NORMS**

It is Skimmer Weekend and I am entranced by the handsome black man on the stage in the middle of our football haven, Franklin Field. As a freshman, I can't believe my eyes and especially my ears when I hear "Johnny B. Goode" ring out. We are, indeed, "Back to the Future". There he is: Chuck Berry, one cool cat, dazzling our classmates and the entire Penn community. What a sight! What a sound! Charles Edward Anderson Berry is 20 years older than I am, but I feel that age-wise we are in sync. We are hurtled from the somnolent '50's into the rocketing '60's. As we levitate to the rock and roll beat, I notice a blond-haired fraternity boy jump up onto the stage. Chuck, cool as ever, engages that buffoon into his act. The exulting vibe beat continues. I don't want this evening to ever end because this will be the first time that the love of my life, my irresistible beauty, Sandy, gets to feel the rhythm of Penn's campus. Sadly, three years later, Sandy will be with me at my 36th Street apartment the weekend of April 4th when the shocking MLK, Jr. assassination news rings out across the campus and the world.

# Skimmer '65: From the Daily Pennsylvanian

## The Return To Franklin Field By Marc Turtletaub

Skimmer 1965, a rejuvenation of a not-so-old Pennsylvania tradition, promises to be a more orderly and organized weekend than the 1963 version. The roots of Skimmer can be traced back to Callow Day, 1949. Named after the popular Penn crew coach, Rusty Callow, the day was Chosen to support and honor the heavyweight crew. Several students showed up at the river that day donning straw hats-and a tradition was born. The great Callow Day tradition, however, was short-lived. Callow ruined his chances for immortality - or infamy - as you may have it, by retiring from Penn crew in 1951 and taking a coaching position at Annapolis. The 1951 celebration then became, by default, Skimmer Day. For the next eight years Skimmer Day followed a set pattern. The Penn students came en masse, to the river "in Fairmount Park, equipped with straw hats and liquor, and without the slightest intention of honoring the crew. Enter Franklin Field Finally in 1959, after numerous complaints by the Fairmount Park Police, Skimmer was moved into Franklin Field, much to the chagrin of the heavyweight crew. As a result of poor planning only one Skimmer was held during the next three years (in 1961), and it was scheduled on the same day as the Penn Relays. Skimmer Weekend 1963, enthusiastically planned by the Houston Hall Board, was to be centered around the lightweight crew race on Saturday afternoon and a "Concert" that evening in Franklin Field. The lightweight crew race was won by Cornell, but few students were aware of who won the race, or for that matter, few even knew that there was a race going on. Among the many distractions to the 12,000 spectators were six unexpected entries in the Schulykil 1-five students and a Volvo. The latter was taken off the street and rolled into the river by some ambitious students. The excitement at the river, however, turned out to be merely a hint of the evening's activities in Franklin Field. The Limelites, Lloyd Price, and Bobby Comstock headed the entertainment from a bandstand set up at one end of the field. Along the stands many of the student organizations set up booths with kegs of beer. One of the major problems according to one student was that "unless you were sitting directly in front of the bandstand you could not hear the entertainers, since the speakers were not working correctly. In order to get any booze you had to move out of the hearing range and when most people came back from the booths they were either shouting or talking, Since they were unable to hear the bands. When these people sat down they were still shouting and a lot of arguments started with those who were trying to listen to the music." Fights And Fires The real fighting didn't start until 12:30, after most of the 5,000 people were gone. Bonfires were lit all around the field, the bandstand was torn down, and several members of the administration were involved in, fights. Trying to break up a fight, Dean of Men, Robert Longley was attacked, as was Francis M. Betts 111, Director of Houston Hall, who was taken to the hospital for eighteen stitches. Several days later the expected announcement came from Gene D. Gisburne, Vice-President for Student Affairs-there will be no further Skimmer Weekends in light of "the rowdy, inexcusable, and irresponsible acts committed by a number of university students." Last year, the Houston Hall Board, undaunted by the university's proclamation, took a clue from a television advertisement (Serutan is Natures spelled backwards), and initiated Remmiks Weekend. Without a concert in Franklin Field, though, the flavor of the annual weekend was lost. The Real Thing Despite the note of finality in Gisburne's announcement two years ago, Skimmer - the real thing - including a spectacular in Franklin Field, is back this year. Included in the weekend's activities are the Concert with Chuch Berry, The Chiffons, and Marvin Gaye, and the Brandy-wine Singers on Friday night, and a lightweight crew race on Saturday. Skimmer 1965 is being run by a newly formed Skimmer Committee. The Committee is attempting to provide the student body with an enjoyable weekend in the mold of past Skimmers without having a repeat of the 1963 melee in Franklin Field. Members of the administration have warned that another riot in Franklin Field would undoubtedly signal the end of Skimmer. The Committee is taking certain precautions to prevent an outbreak. In 1963 many of the 5,000 people present were from outside the university community. This year students are required to present a matriculation card to buy a ticket to the Concert. Once inside Franklin Field, they will find an improved speaker

system, more police guards, and no liquor booths. With a little student cooperation this should be one of the best weekends in the sixteen year history of Skimmer.



Do you remember?

1968: Joni Mitchell????

1967: Friday night on Franklin Field was a huge success as nearly 3000 students spread their blankets in the muddy turf and watched such famed performers as Smokey Robinson and The Miracles, The Young Rascals, and the Chiffons

1966: From the DP: Skimmer is the last tension-relieving fling before Spring semester finals. Most Penn undergrads, not about to let exams cramp their style, go all out to make this the biggest and best party weekend of the year. Skimmer this year was held under cloudy skies, but, despite the weather, the "old college spirit" was generated in megaton blasts. Friday night on Franklin Field was a huge success as nearly 3000 students spread their blankets in the muddy turf and watched such famed performers as Martha and the Vandellas, The Temptations, the Eisely Brothers, and the Shirelles. Dungarees got dirty and countless cans of brew were lost in the ooze, but no one seemed to mind. Houston Hall Board, sponsors of the gala event, were among the first to comment that they had indeed done a perfect job of planning. Saturday morning after the usual pre-10 A.M. cocktail parties, thronging hordes of students trooped down

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