

By my sophomore year, 1933, I shared the confidence of my classmates that Freshman Glee would be another winner for my class. The year before had been an easy win with Clara Wright's (Dean) "fight song". I probably made other bets in '33, therefore, none of which I can recall. This one I will never forget. You see my sophomore year was a distant third place loser because that year a freshman, Helen Benner, wrote the winning song for her class, then went on to win until she was a four time winner by the time she graduated.

My bet that year was with Eugene Smith, a senior. His class won second place. The loser, me, pursuant to the terms agreed upon, was to place an alarm clock in the chapel lectern, set to ring while President Carl G. Doney, was making his regular chapel talk. I carefully placed the fully wound clock, properly set, alarm turned on for quarter to twelve, the whole process overseen by Gene. He wouldn't trust me to do it alone, of course.

Chapel time came. Everyone seated. Opening hymn sung. And to my dismay a visiting speaker was introduced: Dr. Mark A. Dawber, professor from my Dad's alma mater, Boston University School of Theology, a fellow Englishman, who had been instrumental in obtaining my Dad's scholarship, a frequent visitor with his family in our home when we lived in Massachusetts. He had a well-earned reputation as a raconteur and entertaining speaker. I threw a panicky look at Gene, who sat across the aisle. He raised an eyebrow and shrugged. Then he leered, enjoying himself immensely. I squirmed and perspired, slinking lower and lower in my seat, eyes glued to my watch dial, carrying on several imaginary conversations calculated to win an acquittal in case I was caught. Time may go fast when you're having fun, but it's molasses in January when you're on the hot seat. Dr. Dawber came to his concluding words -- and the clock remained silent! I lingered among the others waiting to speak to Dr. Dawber, who greeted me warmly, and whom I greeted with intense relief. When everyone had gone, I rooted the lectern to find the clock. It was still there. I pulled it out and checked the alarm button. It was turned off. How could that be? Gene stood there, grinning and watching me. Then he confessed. He had turned it off. He had chanced to learn that a visitor was the chapel speaker, hurried into chapel and silenced the clock. When I asked the obvious question: "Why didn't you tell me? He gave the obvious answer: "I just wanted to sit and watch you sweat!"



29 May 1991

Mr. Ralph S. Barber
1999 Jansen Way #64
Woodburn, OR 97071

Dear Mr. Barber,

Thank you for your delightful letter detailing your glee bet with Eugene Smith. You can be sure I was quite tense while reading it - waiting for the alarm to begin. Little did Gene know that other people would "sweat" with anticipation!

Thank you for sharing your tale. I hope we will get many, many more. The class of '42 is interested in gathering glee memorabilia, your story will make a marvelous addition to the collection.

I was glad to read your recollection of Helen Benner. What remarkable talent she had. We hope to do her winning fight song during the half time show planned for homecoming weekend. (September 27-29) I hope you can attend the game and other festivities planned.

Again thank you for your letter. Glee holds fond memories for most of us.

Sincerely,

Marlie Thomas Rowell
Sisquicentennial Coordinator

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OFFICE OF UNIVERSITY RELATIONS

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THUMBNAIL HISTORY OF WILLAMETTE'S

"FRESHMAN GLEE "

Compiled:

March 3, 1936
Salem, Oregon

By:

Paul G. Sturges
Publicity Director

From Records of Lestle J. Sparks

WHAT IS IT?

Freshman Glee is a musical event held each year at Willamette university in which the freshman class challenges the other three college classes to a "glee." Each class is to render a college song, the words and music of which must have been composed by members of the class giving it.

The freshman class is host to its rivals, and makes all the arrangements of the annual musical contest. Because it includes the entire student body, Freshman Glee is the source for more spontaneous response from students than any other event of the school year.

Such apparently "queer" things as entire classes arising at four a.m. to practice their songs and marching formations are everyday occurrences in the two weeks that precede Freshman Glee. Just such a spirit rules the entire university, and so keen is the rivalry between classes that wagers frequently wind up with such results as:

Students shaving in chapel; sitting on the dome of Waller Hall for three hours in the middle of the day; carrying a baby bottle and nipple to classes; a javelin thrower dressed in a bathing suit posed on the sun dial in front of Eaton hall; a woman wearing a dress made of newspapers to school (and it is said to be a true story that it rained this day); men wearing shoes backwards; sitting in trees chattering like squirrels, and wearing a barrel to school.

These are all true examples of the results of Freshman Glee. Once in a chapel program the week after a Glee, a visitor remarked that "even Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these."

Rules governing Freshman Glee are simple.

They require, first of all, that the words and music to each song

be original. Only once in the history of Glee was this rule broken by the entry of a song that was admittedly professional.

Rules also require that each class be allowed to render its selection undisturbed and that judging be on three points, words, music and rendition of the song. The latter point includes the formation in which the class marches on the stage and holds while its song is sung in unison.

Prizes are simple. The winner receives the coveted banner which signifies a Glee victory. The losing class of the four, by tradition must go swimming in the mill stream that borders the campus.

The Theme of each year's Glee is changed. Loyalty, victory, fight, march, and serenade are the themes followed.

BRIEF HISTORY

Freshman Glee was originated by the class of 1912 in its Freshman year at Willamette, which at first called its novel and new musical carnival "College Glee". Little did the ingenious musical members of that class dream that their innovation to a university that was already replet with melodious features and events would be carried on throughout the years as a tradition.

Freshman Glee rates as the out-standing event of Willamette's school year, surpassing even the beautiful ceremony of May Day. One of the finest things concerning the Glee, and one of the things that brings it so close to alumni, is the fact that the original rules concerning judging of classes remain exactly as they were drawn up.

Just as it was at its birth, Freshman Glee is an event limited solely to Willamette's campus. Not another college in the country has similar musical competition, as far as it is ~~now~~, and surely no other school boasts of one so replete with traditions.

In 1916, for the first time in recorded history, credit for the idea of Freshman Glee was given to "Jimmie" Oakes and "Brick" Harrison, members of the Class of 1912. ~~Since that time no other mention of individual honor has been discovered.~~

Only ^{two} ~~one~~ class^{es} - the class of '36 has won "Glee" all four years & the class of '54

Each successive year has found the Glee increasing in size, beauty, and reknown. From the historic chapel in old Waller Hall, the class of 1919 moved their Glee to the First Methodist church in 1916, because of the increased number entering.

A year later, in '17, what was hailed as the "largest and Best" glee of all so far held, was moved to the Salem armory, even the church proving to small for the traditional event. Several years later the Willamette gymnasium was completed, and the spacious home of Bearcat athletics has played host to the Glee ever since.

S Still another example of the growth of Glee is seen in the comparison of the initial programs and those of recent years. Among the original rules laid down for the gala musical fete was one which required "That no less than eight members of each class must compete in Freshman Glee." Now classes ~~number more than 100 participants.~~ ^{have to be limited to what the platform can hold.}

The original songs of Freshman Glee live long in the history of the university which claims the honor of being the oldest west of the Rockies. "Willamette's the School for Mine", one of the first of all Glee winners, was popular for more than ten years.

Perhaps the oldest of all Glee songs still being sung at the university is the 1918 Glee winner written by Helen Galtra and May Mickey, "Willamette Spring Song." "Dream On", the 1923 winner, is one of the prettiest of all Willamette melodies.

"Victory for W.U.", the '31 winner, is known as the traditional university victory song, and is sung after every athletic triumph. Many others are carried on in the musical depths of the university.

The modern trend has failed to leave its blemish on Freshman Glee, and a year seldom goes by that does not add some new tradition to the event. Since its start it has been the custom of each class to hold a ~~party after the Glee.~~ ^{100 Serenade} Likewise for the winning class to be awarded a pennant significant of the honor.

In 1916 the senior class, for the first time in the history of the Glee, appeared for the competition in their caps and gowns. Now, the appearance for the competition in their caps and gowns is the signal for the formal beginning of another Freshman Glee.

In 1933 the Silver Glee, commemorating the 25th Freshman Glee, was held, marking a new high in colorful Glee presentation.

Professor James T. Matthews, during his life time as a member of the Willamette faculty, presented the winning banner to every

winning class in the Glee with the exception of two -- the first and the
1917 one --- until his death in 1941. Since then Prof.
Norman Clark.

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Such apparently "queer" things as entire classes arising at four a.m. to practice their songs and marching formations are everyday occurrences in the two weeks that precede Freshman Glee. Just such a spirit rules the entire University, and so keen is the rivalry between classes that wagers frequently wind up with such results as: Students shaving in chapel; sitting on the dome of Waller Hall for three hours in the middle of the day; carrying a baby bottle and nipple to classes; a javelin thrower dressed in a bathing suit posed on the sun dial in front of Eaton Hall; a woman wearing a dress made of newspapers to school (and it is said to be a true story that it rained that day); men wearing shoes backwards; sitting in trees chattering like squirrels and wearing a barrel for clothing.

These are all true examples of the results of Freshman Glee. Once in a chapel program the week after a Glee, a visitor remarked that "even Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like on these." A few years ago the University received letters from a few hot tempered legislators who were very "put out" at the incident that happened at one of their conventions. It seems that at a very solemn moment, a creature clad in white robes and holding a lantern in his hand, rose from the crowd of spectators announcing that he was "Diogenes" looking for an honest man, but knew he could find none there.

The rules governing Freshmen Glee are simple. They require, first of all, that the words and music to each song be original. Only once in the history of Glee was this rule broken by the entry of a song that was admittedly professional.

Rules also require that each class be allowed to render its selection undisturbed and that judging be on three points; words, music, and rendition of the song. The latter point includes the formation in which the class marches on the stage and holds while its song is sung in unison.

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46

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In 1916, for the first time in recorded history, credit for the idea of Freshman Glee was given to "Jimmie" Oaks and "Brick" Harrison, members of the Class of 1912. Since that time the only other individual honor is given to Helen Benner, class of 1936, who wrote the music and words for her class each of the four years she was here. And more surprising is that her class of 1936 is the ^{first of only two classes} ~~only class~~ in the history of Freshman Glee that has won the banner four consecutive times. *The class of 1954 also did*

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Bill Merriam of Salem has been appointed by the student council to head the Freshman Glee committee, this year. The date for the presentation has tentatively been set for February 26, 1949.