

The Lion Speaks

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Spring 2025

A Homecoming Story

by Jim Regan '80

Homecoming. For decades, literally, there was always a reason. I thought every year about going, but there was always a reason and the thought that there's always next year. I'll go next year. Early on it was that the kids had things going on. Couldn't possibly get away. The constant obstacle was work...couldn't possibly take the time. It does take a bit of commitment, and there was always something. I made a point of checking out the posts and stories every year from those Nassonites who did go and had lived vicariously through the pictures of old friends having a great time. And again, would think...maybe next year.

This past summer, Karen, my amazing wife and partner for 35+ years, interrupted my annual parade of reasons for not making it and simply said, "you need to go, and I'm coming with you" and proceeded to book the trip before I could back out once again. I will be forever thankful she did that for me.

To see what has become of our little utopia is bittersweet in a lot of ways, and I realize now that some of those feelings,

of seeing the campus as it is now and not the vibrant, unique place it was, probably kept me away. I was wrong.

Nasson remains a big part of the Sanford-Springvale community. The Gym, Community Center, and Little theatre, an active and purposeful Alumni Association, and many other aspects of Nasson life continue to live on in the spirit we all embraced. (As an aside, the NCAA is likely the oldest and possibly only active association from a defunct college in the country.)

There's something about being physically present that adds context and dimension to memories and unlocks a vault of past experiences that you haven't thought of for years. Sitting in the gym and hearing the echoes of ball hockey games past. Standing in front of Upper 1, a veritable flood of memories and a satisfaction knowing that the building is being repurposed and will live on as "Camp Nasson in the Pines." Having a drink inside the Hilltop House brought back all the good music. Dancing and dining to Eight to the Bar was great—that band still has it and put on a great show.

But what was most amazing about my first Homecoming was, of course, the people. Too many to name in this space. It's cliché to say, but to a person, even those I haven't seen since 1980, it

was if we were walking across the quad yesterday. The years melted away and the stories abounded; the epic keg parties, the "trips" to Marginal Way, the many nights and associated craziness at the Hill. Bea's Fireside Lounge. Mousam Valley Blue Grass Festivals, D-Days. Ducks and sheep locked in the Dean's office. It's an endless list. However, in many ways, what was even more incredible was hearing about people's life journeys since we parted ways those many years ago. There were so many stories of incredible success and heartbreaking struggle; and of lifelong connections forged in this magical, mystical place we called home for a fleeting moment. Again, too many to relate here, but it was so affirming of the fact that Nasson was and is a very special place, made so by an incredible group of people.

This past January, I was diagnosed with Parkinson's Disease. I say this not to solicit sympathy, but as a reminder. To paraphrase the Dali Llama: *The biggest mistake you can make is to think you have time.* I've led an amazing life so far and fully intend to continue to do so with this new reality. One difference will be that I'll be going to Homecomings as long as I am able, and to all you Nassonites, I hope to see you there, particularly my fellow class of 1980. There's a lot to catch up on. Especially if you've never been, it's time.

IN THIS ISSUE

Homecoming 2024, photos..	2, 7
A Note from our President	3
Nasson Foundation.....	3
Class of 1975 Plans.....	3
HOCO 2025	4
Dr. Michael Phelps	4
Remembering Carl Johnson.....	5
Commencement 2024	5
Award to Connie Witherby.....	5
A Graduation Speech	6



Repurposed buildings of Upper Campus.

Homecoming 2024



*More photos
on page 7*

by Mark Hoffman '77

Nasson College Homecoming 2024 was an amazing success! Over 120 alumni, faculty, and friends participated in multiple events held from Friday, October 4th until Sunday October 6th.

Friday, October 4th began with the afternoon **Golf Scramble** at the Sanford Golf Course. That evening, the annual **Pizza Party** was held in the beautifully restored Nasson Little theatre with over 40 participants. As usual it was well attended and provided a chance to meet everyone and kick off the weekend events. The **Nasson Little Theatre's Bar** was open for business and there was plenty of pizza for everyone. Later the party moved to the coast with a gathering at the **Batson River Fish Camp Brewery in Wells** with excellent appetizers, beer and company.

Saturday's events got underway at 9am in the Nasson Community Center (gym) with **registration, breakfast pastries and coffee**.

Our **Annual Meeting** began at 10am in the Little theatre with over 100 participants. After the Annual Meeting, **Nasson's Commencement** was held (first since 1983!). **Honorary diplomas** were presented to members of the classes of '84, '85, and '86. There was a full Commencement program with student and faculty speakers. 16 Nasson College Bachelor of Liberal Arts diplomas were handed out.

As is customary, the **class photos** were taken in front of Alumni Hall.

An excellent **lunch was served at noon** in the gym by our new excellent caterer "The Kitchen Chicks." During lunch, the Class of 1974 projected a special video presentation.

Following lunch, the bus arrived to take everyone on a **campus tour including Upper Campus**. Alumni got a chance to see the completed renovations at Upper Campus 2! The bus eventually made its way up to Greg Gallup's **cocktail party on the site of the former Hilltop House**. Thanks to the generosity of Billy

Plante, we were able to party inside the Hilltop House with music and a full bar.

Saturday's late afternoon activities included a celebration of the **class of 1974's 50th reunion** (and the classes of '69, '79 and '84 were also celebrating their milestone reunions) in the Nasson Little theatre. Lite snacks and a video presentation were provided.

At 6pm, the star event was held—the **Nasson Homecoming "Dinner and Dancing"** at Jonathan's in Ogunquit featuring **Hilltop House Band "Eight to the Bar."** Dinner choices included lobster, steak, chicken picata or pesto primavera. Everyone had a great time dancing to the band!

Sunday's **SMBC** (Sunday Morning Breakfast Club) got underway with brunch fare and Bloody Mary's on the coast at Duffy's Tavern in Kennebunk. This year's **SMBC guest speaker was Tim Churchard**, a beloved coach and former faculty member who talked about his career and current interests.

.....A Note from our President.....

by Connie Witherby '73

Plans are almost completed for Homecoming 2025, scheduled for Friday October 3rd through Sunday October 5th, 2025. There are articles in this newsletter with all the details. Also in this newsletter is a great wrap up of HOCO 2024 with photographs! We had a blast last year, and this year is looking to be even better. We have again made arrangements with the Lafayette Hotel in Wells, who have set aside rooms for us. So, make sure you mention Nasson Alumni Homecoming if you book with them. We have a new lunch caterer who

will be providing a tasty meal for us. Our dinner location has also changed, and this year we have The James Montgomery Band performing for us! They played at Hilltop House back in the 70s! Visit our website www.nasson.org, for Homecoming updates as plans are finalized.

The class of '75 is planning a reunion that will be a fabulous gathering. Rich Gardner is head of the planning committee and is looking for people! Please let him know if you are planning to attend Homecoming this year. He's on Facebook on our Nasson group page, or contact me at nassonalumni@gmail.com

gmail.com, and I will forward your message to him. We are also hoping to have folks return from the class of 1980 for their 45th reunion, and the class of 1985 for their 40th.

I love autumn in New England. It's my favorite time of year, and it's a nice time to return to Maine. The weather is usually really nice, and the trees are beginning to turn. Our campus has changed since we left, but with the Nasson Community Center in our gym and Little Theatre, the spirit of Nasson still exists. Please come back this fall to see us and reconnect with old friends! You will have a wonderful time!!!

Alumni Association Launches Nasson Foundation for Enhanced Fundraising

The Nasson College Alumni Association is proud to announce the establishment of the Nasson Foundation, an affiliated entity designed to support the Development Committee's fundraising efforts. The creation of the Nasson Foundation aims to strengthen the association's financial capabilities and increase its capacity to fund various initiatives that benefit Nasson College alumni and the wider community.

As an affiliated entity, the Nasson Foundation will operate under the assumed name "Nasson Foundation" and will function as part of the Alumni Association. This new structure will allow the foundation to pursue more

diverse fundraising opportunities, build stronger relationships with donors, and ultimately make a more significant impact on the causes it supports.

"The Nasson Foundation is an exciting new chapter for our association," said James Leach, Chairman of the Development Committee. "This new entity will enable us to expand our reach and support even more initiatives that benefit our alumni and community. We look forward to seeing the positive impact the Nasson Foundation will have in the years to come."

The Nasson Foundation will work closely with the Development

Committee to identify priority projects and initiatives that require funding. Together, they will develop strategies to secure donations, grants, and other sources of financial support to meet these needs.

With the launch of the Nasson Foundation, the Nasson College Alumni Association is well-positioned to make an even greater difference in the lives of its alumni and the broader community. For more information about the Nasson Foundation or to inquire about making a donation, please visit the Nasson College Alumni Association website or contact us at www.nasson.org.

Class of '75 Reunion Planning

by Richard Gardner '75

Preparations are well-underway for the 50th reunion of the Class of '75. A team made up of class agent Rich Gardner, Steve Moore, and Phil McLaughlin, has been meeting regularly with Craig Dutra, representing the Alumni Association. The main focus of the planning revolves around bonding and sharing. We plan to spend much of Saturday afternoon, October 4, occupying the Little theatre, listening

to speakers from the class, and mixing and mingling while catching up on past, present, and plans for the future.

Reunion planners have invited several people to speak, and gotten confirmations from classmates with a wide array of post-Nasson experience. A few examples include ship captain Thatcher Lord; journalist, trauma counselor, and educator Marianne Rahn-Erickson; business and innovation director Steve Moore; town

manager Jon Carter; and chief technical officer Jonathon Rogers. Speakers will be asked to expound briefly on one of two themes; 'Then What Happened,' or 'My Five Most Memorable Nasson Personalities'.

Close friends of people from the Class of '75 will be welcome; however, the reunion will center around those in the class, rather than a wider Nasson community.

HOCO 2025

by Craig Dutra '77

It is not too early to start making your plans to attend HOCO 2025, which will be held this year on October 3rd, 4th and 5th. (This year, Homecoming does NOT fall on Columbus Day weekend).

The fun gets underway on the afternoon of Friday, October 3rd with the **Annual Golf Scramble** which will be held at the Sanford Golf Course under the direction of alumnus, Jose Pereira.

Following the golf scramble, a **Pizza Party** will be held in the Nasson Little Theatre with pizza, soda and water available in the theatre, and beer and wine available for purchase in the adjacent bar.

After the pizza party, everyone is invited to a gathering at the **Batson River Fish Camp Brewery in Wells** for appetizers, beer, and great company.

Events continue on Saturday the 4th at 8:30am in the Heritage Center (located on the lower level of the former Nasson College Library building) for **light breakfast refreshment**. At 9am, **registration** will begin in the gym. The

Annual Meeting immediately follows in the Little Theatre at 10am.

At the end of the Annual Meeting, **Honorary Nasson Diplomas** will be presented to members of the classes of '84, '85, and '86. After this, **class and group photos** will be taken in the gym or outside Alumni Hall depending on the weather.

Lunch gets underway beginning at noon in the gym. Lunch will be served with a new caterer providing a delicious meal.

Following lunch, a **bus tour** of the former campus footprint will once again be held. The bus will stop at the site of the former **Hilltop House with a cocktail party hosted by Greg Gallup**, Class of '76.

The afternoon activities will conclude with **class gatherings in the gym and Little Theatre** with the focus being on the Class of 1975's 50th reunion along with get-togethers for the classes of 1960, 1965, 1970, 1980 and 1985 featured.

The day's events end with **dinner at Village by the Sea in Wells** followed by music provided by the famous **"James Montgomery Band."** The James Montgomery Band played many times at the Hilltop House, and this dinner and dancing evening is considered the major event in our recent Homecoming celebrations.



The James Montgomery Band.

The weekend's programming ends at 11am with the 7th Annual **SMBC brunch to be held at Duffy's Pub in Kennebunk**. This year's guest speaker will be former faculty member and Chairman of the Nasson College History Department, **Dr. Michael Phelps**, who will reflect on his time at Nasson and career following this experience.

SMBC with Dr. Michael Phelps

The 2025 Homecoming will conclude with a special session of SMBC with our guest speaker, former Nasson History Professor, Dr. Michael Phelps.

Born in Indiana, graduating from Rice University and receiving his PHD from UCLA, Phelps taught history for 10 years. He enjoyed teaching the History of Ideas as once influenced by his UCLA mentor, Gerhart Ladner. Last year, he published a book on the subject entitled *It's About Time — Renewal Origins, Mutations and Eros Arrow* (available on Amazon). The book explores the history and structure of ideas relating to Reform, Rebirth, Renaissance, Revolution and the

Millennium or Apocalypse. He hopes to write more.

Dividing his time between Maine and Rome, Italy, he enjoys writing, golf, building design, gardening, gourmet cooking, and playing poker. Prior to his book, Michael created a software company in 1994.

In the late seventies, Dr. Phelps spoke about the effect of the Renaissance on the SMBC. It will be interesting to hear what he will present in this day and age.

We look forward to his discussion on Sunday, October 5th.

THE LION SPEAKS

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Award Presented

At the annual meeting during Homecoming 2024, the Nasson College Alumni Association was pleased to present Connie Witherby with an award in appreciation of 15 years of leadership as president of the association.

Connie's hard work, dedication and friendship will always be remembered and appreciated. We are forever grateful for her leadership of our alumni team!



Carl H. Johnson, Jr.

A Tribute to a Dedicated Nasson College Alumnus

The Nasson College Alumni Association mourns the loss of Carl H. Johnson, Jr., who passed away on February 26, 2025, at the age of 87. Carl was a highly active member of the Alumni Association, serving on the board and contributing significantly to the community.

Carl was born in Stonington, Connecticut, and graduated from Stonington High School in 1955. He attended Nasson College from 1956 to 1960. After retiring from his law enforcement career, Carl relocated to Maine, where he married his second wife, Janice Longfellow, a fellow Nasson College alumna from the class of 1959. Carl's passion for sports, particularly baseball, led him to become known as the "Baseball Guy." He contributed a weekly column on Major League Baseball for the Journal in Biddeford, Maine, and published six books on Red Sox Baseball. His dedication to



the community extended beyond his love for sports, as he served on the Sanford Library Board and the Nasson Alumni Board.

As a member of the Nasson College Alumni Association, Carl was an integral part of the annual Homecoming event, where he would sell raffle tickets and raise funds for the Alumni Association and

Goodall Library. His commitment and enthusiasm for Nasson College will be greatly missed.

The Nasson College Alumni Association extends its deepest condolences to Carl's wife Janice, his family, friends, and the entire Nasson College community. We are grateful for Carl's years of service and dedication to the Alumni Association, and will continue to honor his memory by carrying on his commitment to making a positive impact on the community.

Nasson Commencement 2024

by Mark Hoffman '77

During Homecoming 2024, a special Nasson Commencement was held, honoring Nasson College classes of '84, '85 and '86 students.

The Nasson Commencement began at the end of the Annual Meeting in the Nasson Little Theatre before a crowd of 100 alumni, family and friends.

The commencement speaker was alumnus Richard Schneider, and he gave an inspiring speech. Richard is the author of *College for Sale: The Fall and Rise of a Closed College Campus*, a history of Nasson College (available on Amazon). Rick is also one of the founders of the Nasson Community Center.

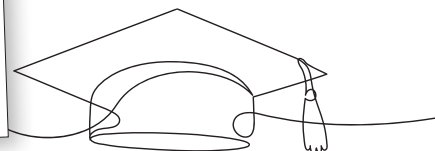
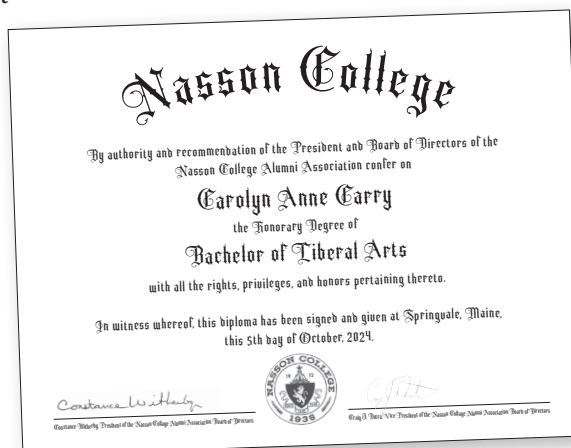
The student speaker was Joline Violette Edwards, class of 1984. In case you missed it, her speech is reprinted on the next page of this newsletter.

The diplomas were presented by NCAA President Connie Witherby,

Vice President Craig Dutra and Development Committee Chairman James Leach.

As each candidate was presented with a Bachelor of Liberal Arts honorary diploma, the alumni crowd enthusiastically applauded. It was certainly a wonderful celebration!

The Charge to the Graduates was given by James Leach '83. James was President of the Class of '83 and the last SMBC President. Charles O'Hara '74 gave the final benediction.



My Graduation Speech from HOCO 2024

by Joline Violette Edwards '84

.....My major was psychology with a minor in biology. Nasson closed at the end of my junior year.

In 1980, I was a shy young lady from Lewiston, Maine, who came to Nasson, of course for my education, but even more importantly, to become un-shy. I needed to go to a college where nobody knew me. And I knew nobody from my high school going to Nasson College. You see, once you're labeled as shy, others tend to ignore you because they figure you have nothing to say. It was here at Nasson that I learned on day one not to hide and to be heard...in a good way. And it was the students at Nasson who accepted me as is and encouraged me to be the confident and stubborn person I really was.

A short story...Dean Mac called on me once to help another student who lived across the hall from me who was having a difficult time emotionally. He asked me and Tom Javor (he had the car) to take her to Goodall Hospital in Sanford late one night. He asked me to come to his office the next day as well. When I went up to his office the next morning, he was chatting with Dr. Schick. He heard me talking to his secretary and yelled "come on in, Joline." I walked in and he handed me \$10 and winked at me, and I walked out. No words were spoken. I still wonder what Dr. Schick thought.

Nasson afforded me such opportunities to be helpful, not shy. To work hard at my studies affording me with opportunities like keys to the psychology lab, a work

study job in the mailroom where I could learn everyone's real first and last names (not just "Zipper" or "Skeeter" or "Flip" or "Bish" or "Hollywood" or that guy in the Zoo Crew), another work study job operating the switchboard so I could even talk to parents looking for their child who was MIA because they never called home, and finally, to apply to go on the study abroad program to Florence, Italy.

During the first semester of my junior year, I did go to Florence with professor George Burk and a group of really great students. It was there that we learned of the financial problems with our school back home in Springvale. We waited to learn if there would be one more semester or not when we returned. It was stressful, but fortunately we had lots of distractions in that beautiful country. And some of us were rather naïve to think that of course there would be another semester. How could there not be? We had friends to get back to. We couldn't just come home from Italy and not see our other friends again! We came home and after the holiday break, we were lucky enough to attend for one more semester. The Class of 1983 would be the last.

Think about this, if you will. During our last semester at Nasson, members of the classes of 1984, 1985, and 1986 had to quickly apply for college again...during finals and ongoing crazy end-of-year and end-of-Nasson-forever festivities. We didn't want to apply again! Some followed the route of applying to the University of New England. I am told that there was some kind of process set up with UNE for

us to easily go there. Some took a shorter, easier route by not even finishing their college education at all.

But me? I was so stubbornly angry about having to leave that I waited until mid-summer before my senior year to even work on applying. At the last minute, after sending my grades, course syllabi, and textbook titles, I applied to and was accepted at UMaine Orono. I just applied at one school because if I couldn't be a graduate of Nasson College, it really didn't matter which college I went to. They took all my courses except for one but not my grades. I was in line to be salutatorian of the Nasson College Class of 1984. Long story very short, I ended up with a bachelor's degree from UMaine Orono. I was a senior who never saw the psychology lab, never learned first and last names, never helped parents locate their kids, and never bonded with other students, kind of like when I was shy. And no honors.

Each member of the Classes of '84, '85 and '86 had their own unique struggles and challenges when Nasson closed. I am happy to say that my stubborn spirit and confidence was acquired right here at Nasson College, and with that skill set, I got a bachelor's degree and I am having a successful and happy life with Doug Edwards. I hope and pray that my classmates have been as lucky. Coming back to Nasson to join my fellow alumni today, and receive my Nasson College diploma is my final healing. In my mind, it's my REAL bachelor's degree. And I thank the Alumni Association for that from the bottom of my heart.

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Rich Schneider gives inspiring speech at commencement.



Joline Violette Edwards receives her diploma from Connie Witherby, Craig Dutra, and James Leach.



2024 Golf Champions: Janet Cotton Fraser, Skip Pfohl, Brad Brunelle, and Rich Berlinsky.



A happy and supportive crowd at graduation.



Alumni from the Class of 1974.



Shopping for Nasson College memorabilia.



2024 Annual Meeting.



Cocktail party at the Hilltop House hosted by Greg Gallup, Class of '76.

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Address correction requested

Nasson Alumni
“Still Making a Difference”

The Unknown Alumni



We have alumni who don't realize they are alumni. According to the bylaws of the Nasson College Alumni Assoc., membership in this association is open to faculty, staff, and any student who completed at least one semester in good standing. Do you know anyone who fits in that category? They are a part of the Nasson family. Please have them contact us at: nassonalumni@gmail.com.

- **For a Copy of Your Academic Transcript**
- Mail your request with the \$3.00 fee per copy to:
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- 23 State House Station, Augusta, ME 04333-0023
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- For more information, go to <https://www.maine.gov/doe/learning/highered/transcripts>

Nasson College Alumni Association Brick Order Form



Your contribution of \$50 for each 4"x8" brick will be used to maintain the brick walkway of the Nasson Commons Flag Plaza. Make a check payable to the Nasson College Alumni Association and include it along with this form. Mail to: Nasson Alumni Brick Order, Nasson Alumni Association, PO Box 416, Springvale, ME 04083. You may also go to www.nasson.org to purchase your brick online. *Brick orders must be received by May 15th each year to be assured of seeing it on the Flag Plaza at Homecoming.*

Name _____ Class Year/Faculty/Friend _____
Address _____ City _____ State _____ Zip _____
Email _____ @ _____ Phone _____

Each 4"x8" brick is \$50 and includes 3 lines of text with up to 20 characters per line including spaces and punctuation.

LINE 1 _____
LINE 2 _____
LINE 3 _____