

100 Years From Now...

The Other Co-Dean Muses Whilst Riding a Time Machine

I was thinking, it was, indeed, a grand celebration this year of our 100th Anniversary. Resplendent with "Live Winni" gear, dancing to the decades in period dress, and mulling the nostalgia in our archives, I think we did a great job of both celebrating and remembering our roots during the week. However, at least during the Dean's Drop In class, where a lot of reminiscing occurred, it certainly felt to me like a lot of our current institutional memory ends around 1960ish.

This got me thinking, that at least for us older folks, going back a 100 years is quite a feat. If you are lucky, you remember grandparents, great-grandparents would be a stretch – and I don't know anyone who knows much about their great-great grandparents. You may know a gem of trivia or two (I'm apparently related to Susan B. Anthony, my wife to President John Tyler) but having a real sense of life, culture, and substance is pretty scant.

This got me thinking, how I don't know the names or actions of the folks who founded NNESRE 100 years ago. And I wondered what they would think if they if they were to have attended our conference this year. I definitely had a sense that the generation of leaders I knew (Dotti Siftar, Tom Weston, Dave Ebert, John Collins, Lu Gundersen, etc.) would be proud of the celebration of life that NNESRE has become. Intergenerational play, the many traditions that have continued, the welcoming ambiance, and peaceful, spiritual settings. But I bet the founders would be puzzled. Who are all these people? Where is the "church school" school? What's with all the parties? And I repeat.... Who are all these people?!

This got me thinking, hopefully, we could get them to stay for a full day and then I think they would get that some – but not all – of the essences of

NNESRE remained and have been adapted to fit the times. We could tell the story as we knew it, they would sigh, spend a moment watching barn dancing, and then hopefully jump on in. By the end of the night, by a campfire, we would mull philosophically how that turned into this – we would toast them and all they began – and hopefully a smile of satisfaction would light their faces.

This got me thinking, that 100 years from now, folks really won't know too much about us. They will have to have a grove of pine trees for all the plaques. I imagine that most of us all will be in that great Dock Road in the sky (hope the mattresses are better) except for Barb Siftar who will be deemed a national treasure and somehow kept alive via technology that is spliced into a sound system running folk dances 24/7 in the barn. Hopefully our great-great-great grandkids will still be coming to Winni and will just be saying "our family has always come here...." – but they probably won't know our name or what we did. If we were to visit, what would we see?

This got me thinking, that the best I can do to take care of the future, is to take good care of the present. To instill into our conference every year – the importance of being together as community – inclusion, fun, play, education, celebration, grieving, support, and taking time to connect and grow spiritually.

So this got me thinking, if you are the GEMS Editor in 2116, and you are poking around looking for material for your 200th Anniversary Issue and you come across this. Please tell everybody we love them, we are proud of them, and we hope that you "Live Winni" in such a way that it richly feeds your soul, as it has fed ours.

Bill Milford

Co-Dean