

Conversation leads to walk down memory lane

By Chris DeVries Aug 31, 2018 0

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I was talking to a lifelong friend last week, and we were reminiscing about the “good-old days.” He noted that the kids graduating from high school this spring never saw the ‘90s – they were born in 2000 or later.

Wow!

That was a smack of reality for me. It makes sense, and I should’ve realized it earlier as my oldest daughter graduates in 2020 (I’m going to go out on a limb and guess that their class motto will have the word “vision” in it). But I never looked at it that way before his comment.

As I drive around town I often think of things in terms of both how they are now, and how they used to be. As I’ve said in this column before, I’m prone to nostalgia. Some of our most treasured Christmas decorations are from my youth. And there will be more when I figure out a way to sneak a plastic, lighted Santa from my parents’ house.

So, in thinking about all this, I thought I’d go light in the column this week and ponder a bit about what living in Wahpeton was like when I was a kid.

I grew up in the southeast corner of town, in a neighborhood that was relatively quiet until summer arrived and the crop duster took off from the airport at 6 a.m. I can tell you for certain – teenagers don’t like that.

We used to ride our bikes everywhere, especially downtown where we’d go to Ben Franklin to see what toys they brought in that week. Eventually we’d make our way to Pamida. For those of you I mentioned earlier that were born after the ‘90s, Pamida was a smaller version of Walmart. I remember buying cassette tapes at Pamida and the cashier would have to cut them out of the plastic security holder. Actually, I remember when that building was split in two, with Gibson’s on the west side and Piggly Wiggly on the east.

I was bussed to the school in Mooreton my fifth grade year, and there was no middle school building at the time. I spent my elementary and middle school years at Central (gone but not forgotten).

I can still hear Gary Rogers’ voice on the radio while I listened to Wop and Wildcat football and basketball games. I’m very happy the “S” on Old Main at NDSCS was restored and not taken away. That’s an iconic symbol in Wahpeton.

I’ve talked before about roller skating at The Blue Horizon, now the main building of WCCO. If I had a time-traveling DeLorean and could go back to the ‘80s, that would absolutely be one of my stops.

I remember going to the old Meritcare building on Seventh Street North to see Dr. Bjerke, and then shopping at Bob’s Fairway Foods (ironically, where Meritcare – now Sanford – moved to a few years later).



We bought baseball gloves at Stan Kostka’s, treats at Dutchman’s Bakery, hardware at Coast to Coast, school clothes at Bostwick’s, and furniture from Caspers (“Seven Levels of Fine Furniture”).

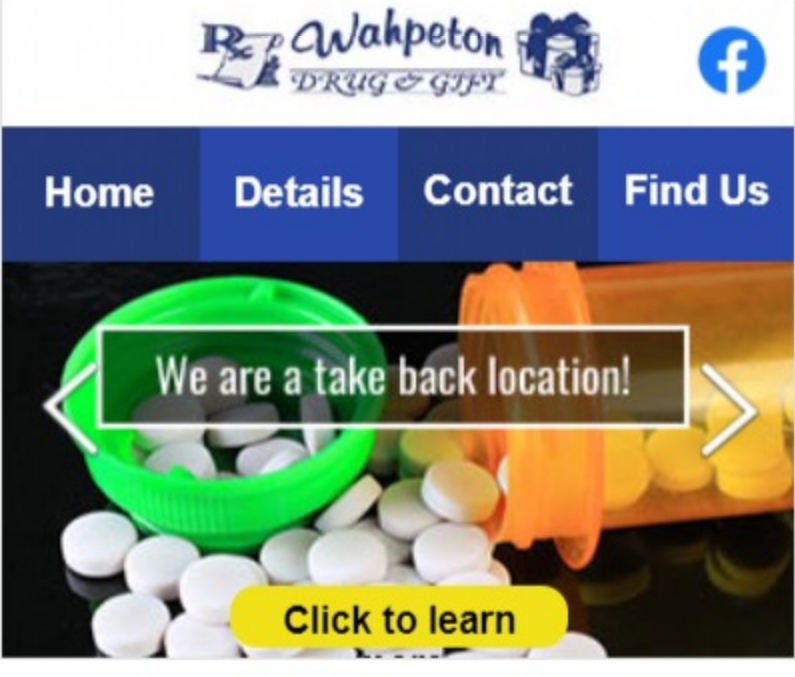
I hope you’ve enjoyed this trip down memory lane. I’m always up for a blast from the past.

And speaking of the past, here’s what’s being planned for the final Sesquicentennial celebration weekend next year.

The weekend after Thanksgiving, Nov. 29-30, will feature: the downtown tree lighting; a city-wide lighting contest; historic tours of Wahpeton; an art show and contest; a Turkey Trot 5K walk/run; a focus on Small Business Saturday; and a closing reception. We’ll give thanks for 150 years and look forward to many, many more. Visit www.wahpeton150.com, or our Facebook page, Wahpeton150, for more information.

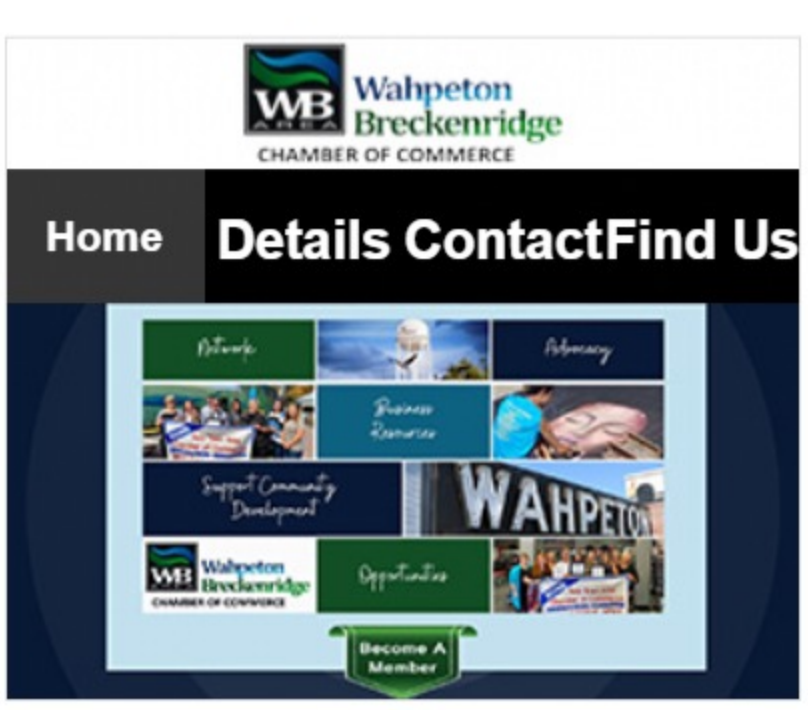
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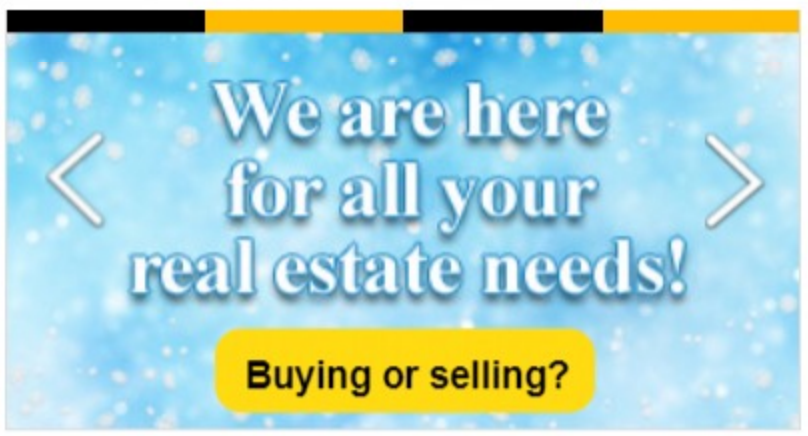
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By Lloyd Omdahl Mar 26, 2022

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