

Bill Newhouse to serve as rallymaster for Kaukauna Alumni Foundation

By Brian Roebke
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Kaukauna Alumni Foundation Chairperson of the Board Kristine Landreman has selected **Bill Newhouse** from the Class of 1974 as the rallymaster for the 88th annual rally on Saturday, June 15, at Van Abel's of Hollandtown.

Fifty years after graduation, he was surprised to be asked to be the rallymaster.

"It certainly was an honor when I got the call from Kristine," he said. "My first question was how many people turned it down before you got to me."

However, as he thought about it, through and after high school and college, he was always a "rally guy" who liked to get people together, including an ongoing online chat with 15-20 classmates. He gets them together for the Wednesday night music in the summer in Kaukauna. "I just like the reunions so much that I kept trying to create those little mini-reunions both with high school and college friends," he said. Thus, it made sense that he was selected to be the rallymaster when the class is recognized for 50 years out of high school at the rally. "We had a lot of good kids in the class, a lot of classmates that stayed very connected throughout all these years as lifelong friends."

Newhouse made a name for himself as a receiver for quarterback Reed Giordana from the Hollandtown Raiders all the way to UW-Stevens Point, where he studied forestry. "Woody," as his friends call him, spent his working career in the forestry and paper business and in later years, environmental engineering.

A southsider, Newhouse thinks the closeness the class has maintained means they enjoyed their years at Kaukauna High School. He hopes a lot of his classmates can attend the reunion and he guarantees it's going to be a lot of fun. He promises to make his speech in June very interactive.

He's asked classmates for some of their memories to include in his speech. "Mine was primarily school and sports," he said. "I played three sports all four years of high school, so a lot of my memories come from locker rooms and on the court or on the fields with fellow teammates but others might not have that opportunity to play sports so they don't want to hear about all that."

While at Kaukauna, he played football, basketball, and baseball, with football being the sport he was most successful at.

"I had some great classmates with Giordana and Scott Lunda in basketball, football with a whole bunch of the guys, Jerry Schneider, Tom Deering, and Mark Specht," he said. "We had some good times and fortunately three of us went into the hall of fame at the alumni rally, which was kind of a fun night a few years back."

Newhouse and Giordana had several good seasons together at UW-Stevens Point, where they are both in the UWSP Hall of Fame as well as the KHS Athletic Hall of Fame.

Newhouse received second-team AP Small College All-American honors, and was named NAIA All-American honorable mention in 1977.

He graduated with a forestry degree and worked for the forest service in Utah for a year before getting a job as a forester and buyer for the Thilmany mill in Kaukauna.

He moved to Marinette to open an office for the forestry program there. "We managed woodlands and then bought wood from the loggers to supply the mill with pulp wood," he said.

They would work with the loggers to get certain amounts of tree species depending on the type of paper they were making.

“When we were buying wood, there were about 105 semis a day that would deliver to the mill,” Newhouse said. “With 10-12 cords on each semi, and if you think 100 a day, where is that all coming from.”

Most of it came from Northern Wisconsin or Upper Michigan, with some from Minnesota and some on rail cars.

“I don’t think many people in Kaukauna actually realize that there’s 100 semis every day that go through the town carrying logs to the mill,” he said.

Now you know why his buddies called him, “Woody.”

He was then convinced to join Thilmany’s sales force and he and Jeanette moved to Cincinnati from 1986-93. International Paper then purchased the mill and closed all the outside sales offices, so he took a job in Green Bay working for an environmental and civil engineering firm in business development, dealing in renewable energy sources.

While he was in Cincinnati, he got a master’s degree in business, since it looked like his forestry employment had ended and he needed to know more about the business world.

With background in both forestry and business, it helped him get his last job, retiring after 20 years.

He partially retired when he turned 60 and fully retired at age 63 five years ago.

He said he stayed close to many of the coaches after graduating, including Dave Hash, Ron Margelofsky, and Ken Roloff. Some of his classmates’ dads were teachers and coaches as well, so he got to know men like them as a different kind of person, not just a teacher or coach.

Newhouse lives in De Pere with his wife, Jeanette, from the Class of 1976.

They met each other when they were working at Thilmany. Jeanette was the oldest of six Birschbach siblings.

Married for 40 years, they ended up with three “fairly adventurous kids.” Son Andy is 35, daughter Jenna is 33, and son Evan is 29.

His sons both live in Seattle and his daughter lives in Steamboat Springs, Colo.

His brother Dan is the oldest in the family, while his sister Cheri (Nagan), and his brother Ken are younger.

Growing up as children of Carl and Dorothy (Buechler), they went to visit grandma and grandpa Buechler at their bar in Wrightstown that was also well known for its hamburgers.

“I blame them for why I became a partier and a drinker through high school and college,” he said. “We were always going to the tavern when we were 5 years old.”

His dad, who was from Freedom, also worked for Thilmany after graduating from St. Norbert College through the ROTC program and became an officer in the military, going through the Army Reserve program, working his way to a 2-Star General.

Bill and his dad even periodically worked together when they were employed by Thilmany.

Going back to his childhood, he grew up in the Glenview Acres subdivision.

“When we moved there they were all brand new ranch houses and all the kids were growing up at the same time. I’m not exaggerating if I said there had to be 200 kids plus or minus a couple grades from my classes in that neighborhood,” he said.

He remembers a couple Vanderloop families, Muellers, Hashs, Nagans, DeBruins, Krolls, Diffates, and so many more.

They wouldn’t have any problem getting any kind of sports game organized in that neighborhood.

He has great memories of summer sports through the Kaukauna Recreation Department and then the Catholic School League. When he got to high school, he became friends with kids from the different

grade schools in the city. "It was kind of fun to be on the same team instead of being against each other all the time," he said.

Newhouse said he's happy with what he did when he was young it's great to still be healthy so he can enjoy being active in retirement.

"The biggest thing is that you always want to be remembered for something, and I would hope to be remembered by being the guy that always got the group together," he said.

He's done that long before this year's class reunion as he has organized weekends golfing up north, class reunions, and team reunions.

"It's great to have a group of old friends together," he said.

His wife has always had to deal with being married to the social organizer but she put up with it for 5 years before they were married. "All my other friends were married and I thought I better get married because there's nobody else to do anything with anymore," he said jokingly.

He's enjoyed both family and friends over the years and looks forward to seeing a lot of people at this year's rally, whether he's seen them at one of his social events or hasn't seen them in decades.