

## What's in a Name?

guest submission to alumni magazine by Frank Samandari

'Nobody welcomes change but a wet baby.' So read the placard that sat on my step-father's office desk until his retirement. Some people seem hard-wired to resist change. Perhaps it's in our DNA. Perhaps it's just the comfort and ease of doing things the same way they've always been done.

Though often viewed in a negative light, transformation and adaptation are inevitable realities of life. As the cliché advises: 'The only constant is change.' It could even be argued that an existence devoid of any variety at all would be downright dull.

## Herald of the Past

Browsing a recent issue of the *Twin Tower Topics*, becoming further educated to the exciting evolution on the horizon, my thoughts drifted to a college tradition that holds a special place in my heart to this day.

Though currently living in an area of the country where the appearance of snow would be headline news, the advent of winter still brings back treasured memories of that first Northeast Kingdom snowfall.

In the cold quiet, an unspoken signal drew scores of students outside, where we'd instinctively collect the fresh flakes and fashion them into frigid spheres. First one snowball could be seen flying through the air, then dozens. Before long, this familiar yet somehow still impromptu scene played out at locations across campus.

In fact, upon realizing the expressive impact of this bonding event, I fondly remember one crisp late Fall afternoon when Professor James P. Doyle — a true mentor whom I often remember — even dismissed class early, lovingly advising us to "go get 'em."

## Power of the Present

Now, the friendly 'battlefield' has grown even larger. We're presented with an opportunity to become further united in our respect for and devotion to Northeastern Vermont higher education.

Recalling the many evenings I spent in the Alexander Twilight Theatre — as thespian, choral singer, and event spectator — I'm once again struck by the immortal words of Shakespeare in his epic play *Romeo and Juliet*:

"That which we call a rose by any other word would smell as sweet."



*Congressional page boys snow battle at the Capitol, 1923. Image: the Library of Congress.*

I hope the Bard would not think it crude to reinterpret his sentiment by offering the notion that a beloved school by any other name remains as strong and significant as ever.

## **Dawn of the Future**

Titles, logos, business strategies, and more will always progress and develop as time marches on. What doesn't change is the central mission and vision that attracts our involvement in the first place.

The collective college experience is less about minute details, and more a sense of pride, of community, camaraderie, and forging lasting and meaningful connections with students, staff, faculty, community members, and alumni who have become like family. It's being part of something larger than ourselves — a shared experience that forever unites us. The timeless memories that result become portals into the most pure moments we'll ever experience.

So, I submit that no matter the name, no matter the brand, no matter the struggles and triumphs ahead, the bold and iconic spirit of Lyndon State College will remain indefinitely embedded in our hearts and minds as that literal and figurative beacon on the hill — the living institution that's made such an enduring impression on so many through the years, and has positively changed the course of countless lives. ■

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