

"Notes by the Bull Moose": The Gossip Column That Took Over The Chronicle From 1935-1936

Jules Billings

Faculty Advisor: Dr. Ann Keating

Eugene Jeffers: The Man Behind the Words

Eugene "Bull Moose" Jeffers, born in 1913 in Glen Ellyn, IL, started his first year at NCC in 1932. It was not until his September 17, 1935, however, that Jeffers began writing the "Notes by the Bull Moose" column that eventually gives him his nickname. During his time at NCC, Jeffers joined The Writer's Club, Men's Varsity Debate, The Soreda Club, The Commerce Club, Forensic League, Pi Kappa Delta, and the Spectrum Staff.

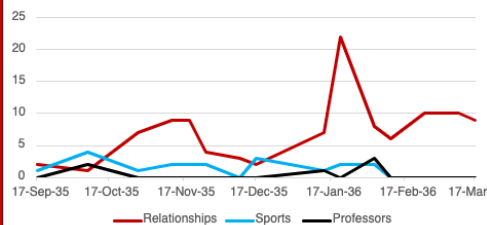


Eugene "Bull Moose" Jeffers pictured in the 1934 Spectrum.



The Spectrum Staff pictured in the 1936 Spectrum. Jeffers is the fourth from the left in the back row.

The Content of the "Bull Moose" Column During Its Print



Introduction

During the 1930s, North Central College was undergoing high levels of growth in all areas. The late 20s saw a name change for the college—from Northwestern College to North Central—the creation of high-level sports facilities, and the addition of new majors and courses. The college newspaper, The Chronicle, however, had been around for a little over six decades at this point. As one of the few college constants, the content of the newspaper kept growing and adjusting as the student body did. During periods of general unrest, the use of comedy to process stressful situations becomes a necessity. It should be of no surprise, then, that during this time, a student-written column, "Notes by the Bull Moose," first popped up in the college Chronicle. Written by Eugene "Bull Moose" Jeffers, this column dealt in student scandals, daily gripes, and personal callouts.

The Content of the Column: What was on the Students' Minds?

As illustrated by the graph, the "Bull Moose" column focused heavily on student relationships. Since Jeffers remained concerned about sticking purely to the facts, he'd often write about which students were seen together and where. He was also unafraid to call them out by name. Certain relationships made the column frequently, and questions were posed about whether the students would stay together. This portion most likely caused the most student upset and ultimately led to his resignation. Apart from relationships, school sports were also mentioned, as well as larger competitions, such as the Baseball World Series and the Olympics. Although there was some mention of school and professors, the column mainly focused on student love lives, parties, and stray bits of gossip about travel and study habits.

Timeline:

- **September 17, 1935:** The first "Notes by the Bull Moose" column appears in The Chronicle.
- **November 12, 1935:** The "Bull Moose's" identity is outed in The Chronicle. The News comes in a section labeled "His Majesty the one and only Bull Moose."
- **March 24, 1936:** The Last "Bull Moose" column runs. Jeffers steps down as a result of a student petition to end the column.
- **April 7, 1936:** "Notes by the Klondike" appears to take the Bull Moose's place as The Chronicle's gossip column.

The End of an Era

The "Bull Moose" tendered his resignation in the Spring of 1936. Citing a "recent petition" signed by "no less than nine influential groups" on campus that complained of "disproportionate emphasis" on certain content (which Jeffers did not disclose), Jeffers emphasized his pursuit of the truth, but ultimately apologized for injuring The Chronicle. The next print included a letter from the Editor-in-Chief, John Gilbert, who praised Jeffers for his column, berated the petition, and said the student body would be sad to see "Notes by the Bull Moose" go.

Bibliography:

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Jeffers, Eugene, "Notes by the Bull Moose," *The Chronicle*, March 24, 1936.
The 1934 Spectrum, (Naperville: North Central College, 1934), 47.
The 1936 Spectrum, (Naperville: North Central College, 1936), 70.