



1955 AUSTIN HIGH REUNION

NEWSLETTER VOLUME 4 ISSUE 2 SPRING 2009

www.austin1955.org — reunion@austin1955.org

April 18, 2009

HAPPY EASTER, PASSOVER & SPRING!! Here's the latest news from and about our classmates. Be sure to send us yours.

ELECTION RESULTS:

The first 2009 meeting of Austin 1955 Reunion Ltd. was held on February 27. According to our by-laws, officer elections must be held each year. The new officers will serve until 2-27-10. They are: Ken Rosko, President; Nancy (Baggio) Pasquerelli, Vice President; Irwin Magad, Treasurer; Kaye (Beecroft) Aurigemma, Secretary.

THANK YOU, THANK YOU, THANK YOU!!

Many thanks to these donors of \$5 or more: Rita (Cimino) Reczak, Victoria (Dobrzynski) Petersen, Clifford Dorn, Joan (Geary) Ambrose, Robert Herbst, Lorraine (Hill) Ray, Richard A. Kain, Evelyn (Karger) Lyons, Goldie Koutsoukos, Charles W. Larsen, Marshall Levin, James T. Lupo, Robert P. Mintz, Joseph V. (Montano) Montana, Myra J. (Polifka) Dickens, Mary Ellen (Rasmussen) Griffith, Thomas W. Ray, and Janet O. (Westergren) Johnson. Please send newsletter support donations, payable to "Austin 1955 Reunion Ltd.", to our newly elected Treasurer, Irwin Magad; 2100 Sanders Road, Suite 200; Northbrook, IL 60062-6141

55TH REUNION IN 2010:

Thanks, also, to the 101 classmates who returned their 55th reunion surveys. If you haven't returned yours yet, please do so A.S.A.P. We will be analyzing the responses in the next few weeks and will report the results in the July newsletter.

HEALTH UPDATES:

Marshall Levin writes 2008 was a rough year for him. In May, he had a quadruple open heart bypass and was in the hospital for 11 days. He spent eight more days there at the end of November with kidney stones. Then, back he went for blood clots in both legs and a lung (Marshall – are you making this up?). But – you cannot keep a good man down, and Marshall is starting to get his body in shape to play another season of baseball (not softball). Attaboy, Marshall!

Ken Rosko reports that his CT scan last week was "Clean & Green" so he can resume normal activities, except no more racquetball, a major disappointment for him. Joyce Rosko is currently on the mend at home, following her second back surgery. Get Well Soon, Joyce!

REMINISCENCES:

Mary Ellen (Rasmussen) Griffith writes from Fort Collins, CO: "You can take the girl out of Chicago, but you can't take Chicago out of the girl! This incident goes back to our downhill skiing days at Vail. We had taken the gondola from the lodge below to what is Mid-Vail, where the lines waiting for the segment formed. That would be one of the many chair lifts. Standing there in our not so cold weather, I didn't notice that I was creeping forward, while the man in front of me kept turning around and giving me dirty glances. I could not imagine what for, until he decided to speak. He said, 'You must be from Chicago.' I replied, 'Well, yes, way back, I lived in Chicago, but how did you draw this conclusion?' He responded, 'It's the way you keep creeping up to stand on the back of my skis. You could show me the courtesy of backing off my skis.' (Skis were still long back then.) My husband burst out laughing. I had lived in Colorado about 18 years, but that part of me had not changed. It brought back memories of my first job in downtown Chicago (1955, of course) and being stuck in the middle of a crowded El platform."

Ken Rosko recalls that he, Vicky (Dobrzynski) Petersen, Genny (Luisi) Schroeder, James Lupo, Myra Polifka Dickens, Kathleen (Willis) Girardi and 17 others attended Cameron Elementary School, which was not in the Austin district. This was the largest group of freshmen from the same “out of district” grade school, and they all had to have “Special Permits” to attend Austin. I, [Kaye (Beecroft) Aurigemma] from Funston Elementary School in the Kelvyn Park district, simply used my cousin’s address to get into Austin. No one ever knew. Tee-hee! ☺

IN MEMORIAM:

Dr. Lawrence Sommers, 83, died January 28, 2009 of complications from leukemia at Glenbrook Hospital in Glenview. He was a great teacher, admired and beloved by many. Here are some excerpts from the Chicago Tribune obituary on February 1, 2009 by Trevor Jensen, Tribune reporter.

Lawrence E. Sommers taught history at every level, from grade school through college, and was the first president of the Northbrook Historical Society. With a master's degree in history from Loyola University, Dr. Sommers taught at a grammar school in Chicago before moving to Austin High School on the West Side in the 1950s.

“History, as taught by Dr. Sommers, was not just a matter of rote memorization but of trying to analyze problems faced in the past”, said our classmate Michael Bakalis. "It was like a detective story. He was one of those teachers who you not only remember, but who really affects your whole life." Mary Ellen (Rasmussen) Griffith agrees, and is grateful to Dr. Sommers for affecting her two lifelong interests: teaching and history.

Dr. Sommers grew up in the North Mayfair neighborhood on the Northwest Side and graduated from Kelvyn Park High School, where he played clarinet in the band. He graduated at 17. Pearl Harbor was attacked two days after his birthday and he immediately wanted to sign up for the fight, to his parent's consternation. But all were happy when he got an offer to enter an Army program that would allow him to start as a student at the University of Michigan. That plan was scrapped as World War II dragged on, and Dr. Sommers was shipped to the Pacific. He was in the Philippines when Japan surrendered.

For 30 years, Dr. Sommers taught at colleges, including Wright Junior College, Rosary College [now Dominican University] in River Forest, Barat College in Lake Forest and Carthage College in Kenosha. In the 1960s, he taught while taking classes and working on a dissertation toward a doctorate in history from Northwestern University. He was awarded his doctorate in history in 1967.

After many years in Melrose Park, Dr. Sommers and his family moved to Northbrook in the early 1970s, where he became involved with the fledgling historical society, first discussed in a resident's basement in October 1973. The next January, he was elected president of the society, which had obtained the Northfield Inn for its home. As society president, he faced a good news-bad news scenario: The organization had been given a historic inn for its headquarters but was required to move the building. Dr. Sommers helped raise the money to move the circa 1894 structure on wheels and haul it to its present site at 1776 Walters Ave. in 1975. "He was a good speaker, good in front of a group," said Don Hintz, one of the society's founding members. Dr. Sommers retired from teaching in 1991. Survivors also include his wife of 53 years, Lucille; a son, Lawrence Jr.; a daughter, Laurel McDonnell; and five grandchildren.

Chuck Meyer reports that he attended Larry Jehlik's funeral on January 28. Chuck, Larry and Angie (Triolo), were in the same division for 4 years. They were at our 50th reunion. Larry pulled the plug on his dialysis after finding out that he also had lung cancer. Larry and Angie moved to Minneapolis from NY/NJ in 1979, three years after Peggy and Chuck did! What a coincidence!! We extend our deepest sympathy to Angie and family.

We are also saddened to report the passing of Ron Durso on March 7, 2008. Deepest sympathy to his family. Sincere sympathy too, to our classmate Mildred (Handy) O'Brien on the passing of her husband, Harry, on April 7.

ODDITIES:

Janet (Westergren) Johnson sent us a bizarre photo dated December 8, of a snow and ice storm in Lancaster, California, where the temperature is normally 60 to 90 degrees F. You can run from Chicago weather, Janet, but you can't hide!

YEAR BOOK WANTED:

Joe (Montano) Montana would like to buy a 1955 Maroon & White. Does anyone have one? If so, contact Joe at 847-678-3334 or 9856 West Eden Avenue, Schiller Park, IL 60176.

HAPPY ANNIVERSARY:

Rich and Betts Kain celebrated their 50th wedding anniversary on February 1. Congratulations to the happy couple!

MUSIC MEMORIES: THE ONE HIT WONDERS OF THE FIFTIES (by Chuck Meyer):

And the winner of last quarter's music quiz is...Raymond Yelich who hit a three-run homer, naming not only the singer and her song, but the name of the original song, as well. Ray replied just 41 minutes ahead of Kathleen (Willis) Girardi, who also knew the answer. The singer was Joan Weber, and "Let Me Go, Devil" was the song's original name when written in 1953 by Jenny Lou Carson. Carson greatly admired the talents of Hank Williams, whose death from alcoholism inspired her to write the song. In 1954, Columbia Record producer Mitch Miller felt the song was too depressing for pop audiences, and suggested changing the name to "Let Me Go, Lover". You can hear Teresa Brewer's recording at <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mpbomBSYnEo>.

But now, let me introduce the ghost of our next guest. "Hi all. My name is so well known, that I can't even give any hints about it - but it was not because of my singing. I made only two recordings, and one of them was entitled 'Birds, Beasts & Flowers: A Programme of Poetry, Prose and Music'. That wasn't my hit! But in 1956, I was in a movie that included two noted singers, and I sang a duet with one of them. Although our recording of this song only rose to #5 on the Hit Parade, I was nominated for an Oscar for singing this song in the movie. (The song later became quite popular at weddings.) I have lots of questions for you (answering all of them wins top honors).

1. Who am I? 2. What was the movie? 3. What was the name of the song? 4. Who was the other half of the duet? 5. Who was the other singer in the movie? 6. When we sang our duet, we were on a sailboat. What was its name? 7. What two things am I most noted for?"

Email your answers, and/or a suggestion for another mystery guest, to our website reunion@austin1955.org), or mail to me (Chuck Meyer) at the address on page 4. Answers (and an audio clip) will be in the next newsletter! Ray Yelich, we gotta tie one arm behind your back for this quiz!

MOVES, TRAVELS & NOTES:

Chuck Larsen reports that he and Maureen travelled twice to South America last year and went cross-country skiing a few times earlier this year.

Greetings from "Down Under" from Mike and Nancy Pasquerelli who left the cold of the Northern Hemisphere to venture to Australia and New Zealand for some warmth in the Southern Hemisphere from January 24 to February 10. They enjoyed seeing the Opera House and China Town in Sydney. They also enjoyed staying with a farm family in Bathurst for one night. The family was most gracious and very friendly. They then boarded a Princess cruise ship and sailed to Melbourne and Tasmania. They enjoyed exploring wildlife parks and seeing Koalas, Wombats, Kangaroos and other exotic animals.

The next stop was New Zealand. It is a beautiful country with rolling hills and lots of greenery and a place they would like to go back and explore further. The only problem was the horribly long flight. Ten hours there and 17 hours back from Auckland! Dunedin is very much like Scotland. They saw many sights in Dunedin, New Zealand, including Larnack Castle and the Taieri Gorge by train. They also went to Christchurch, which is a very Edwardian-looking city. They also learned about the Maori culture in Tauranga, New Zealand. After enjoying many delicious meals and good shows on the ship, they disembarked in Auckland, New Zealand, and flew back to the beautiful USA. This trip was a great way to escape the cold winter of Chicago.

Lois and Dan Wetherall flew from their home in Juneau, Alaska to Munich, Germany in September 2008. After seeing the sights and touring the BMW facility and dining on all the weisswurst and bratwurst they could find, (modern Germany is getting health conscious and therefore many varieties of sausage are verboten), they continued on to Passau on the border with Austria. Here they boarded MV Mozart (the flag ship of the Peter Deilmann Cruise line) and began their tour of the Danube. Linz, the first stop, is where Mozart and Beethoven lived long enough to write the Linz Symphony and Symphony #8, respectively. They passed through seven of eleven locks to get to Durnstein, a pretty little baroque town nestled along the river. Vienna followed, home of the Vienna Boys' Choir, the Lippizaner Horses Spanish Riding School and some of the most beautiful architecture in Europe. Bratislava, capital of Slovakia was next, where they saw a ranch style horse show that rivaled anything Wild Bill Hickock could put on. Then Esztergom, Hungary, which is the resting place of Cardinal Mindszenty who opposed the Communist takeover after the war and was arrested and tortured. Finally, Budapest, the Hungarian capital, with 1.7 million inhabitants, conjures up a string of adjectives: magical, dramatic, enchanting and glamorous. Known as the "Paris of the East" it is breathtaking, from Buda across the river, toward Pest or visa-versa. In Dan's last report he described a Princess Transatlantic cruise. Earlier they experienced a Uniworld River Cruise on the Rhine, which they thoroughly enjoyed. The food was good and the service was *very* good. But, neither can compare to the truly 5-star cuisine and service of a Peter Deilmann cruise. Dan says, "If the opportunity presents itself, take it! And if you have a travel experience that moves you, please share it."

CONTRIBUTING COLUMNISTS STILL WANTED:

Do you have a hobby or special interest or area of expertise you would like to share with others? How about your favorite Austin memories? Here's your chance to reach over 500 people. YOUR alumni newsletter welcomes articles on subjects your classmates might find interesting.

NEWS, PHOTOS AND MEMORIES: Have you visited our website (www.austin1955.org) recently? If not, you're missing a treasure trove of Austin High School memories as well as some current news articles about our alma mater. Our most recent newsletter as well as an archive of all our past newsletters can also be found on the site. In addition, you'll find photographs and news about alumni vacations, and there is a series of 15 Chicago photographs that succinctly cover our lifetime.

TELL US WHAT'S HAPPENING WITH YOU:

Photos and items of general class interest should be directed to webmaster@austin1955.org. If you have any news (special trips, births, deaths, anniversaries, moves, etc.) or memories of your days at Austin to share, email Kaye (Beecroft) Aurigemma or write to her at 10846 Martindale Drive; Westchester, IL 60154-5021.

Austin 1955 Reunion Committee

Nancy Baggio Pasquerelli
Npasq@comcast.net

Kaye Beecroft Aurigemma
kaurige1@att.net

Phil Grossman
phillipgrossman@pgrossman.com

Geri Harris Horak
Gjhorak@aol.com

Harry G. Kappos
hgk1937@comcast.net

Genny Luisi Schroeder
gennyluisi@yahoo.com

Irwin A. Magad
Imagad@cjbs.com

Shel Marcus
Shelmarcus@yahoo.com

Joan McConville Leander
TennisGal102@sbcglobal.net

Chuck Meyer
C124@attglobal.net

Jim Padar
webmaster@austin1955.org

Mike Pasquerelli
mjp1937@comcast.net

Joyce Holm Rosko
cubnutt@gmail.com

Ken Rosko
jkr@voyager.net

John Spinello
thewarehouse@msn.com

CONTACT INFORMATION CHANGE: If your contact information has changed, please let us know.

NAME (1st, maiden, last): _____

STREET ADDRESS: _____

CITY, STATE, ZIP: _____

EMAIL ADDRESS: _____

OTHER CHANGE: _____

PHONE NUMBER (required): _____

Please email changes to reunion@austin1955.org or mail this form to:

Chuck Meyer, Austin Class of 1955; 5257 107th Av N; Minneapolis, MN 55443-5902