



# 1955 AUSTIN HIGH REUNION

NEWSLETTER VOLUME 6 ISSUE 2 APRIL 2011

[www.austin1955.org](http://www.austin1955.org) -- [reunion@austin1955.org](mailto:reunion@austin1955.org)

**HAPPY PASSOVER,**

**HAPPY EASTER,**

**HAPPY SPRING!!**

## **THANK YOU, THANK YOU, THANK YOU!!**

We ask that everyone contribute at least \$5 per year to help defray the cost of publishing and mailing the quarterly newsletter, and maintaining our database and website. We are very grateful to these donors of \$5 or more:

**Barbara (Anderson) Pieper, Carol Ann (Anselmo) Wolf, Carolyn Atchison, Jo Ann (Bordone) Stegmaier, Donald and Rita (Cimino) Reczek, Diana and Clifford Dorn, Neal Guenther, Marilyn and Robert Haslam, Catherine and Richard Holman, Lois and Marshall Levin, Dolores (Lindquist) Defazio, Theresa (Pecord) Graham, Nancy and Robert Skow, Florence and William Wire.**

**Please make checks payable to "Austin 1955 Reunion Ltd."**, and send them to our Treasurer, **Irwin Magad**; 2100 Sanders Road, Suite 200; Northbrook, IL 60062-6141. **Ladies, please write your maiden name in parentheses on your check.** It will save your editor lots of time. Many thanks. We appreciate your support!

## **REACH OUT AND TOUCH SOMEONE:**

Your reunion committee has decided that since the alumni numbers of the classes of the 1950's have been dwindling, we should reach out to the classes of 1954 and 1956, and invite them to participate in our future social events. The Class of 1956 already has a link on our website, and we hope to add a link to the Class of 1954. **Jim Padar** will be the contact person for the Classes of 1954 and 1956. We will keep the other classes informed of our planned events and invite them to join us.

## **PRE-60<sup>TH</sup> REUNION GATHERINGS:**

At our March meeting, your reunion committee explored the possibility of one or two social events each year prior to our 60<sup>th</sup> reunion. (Yes, we WILL be around for the 60<sup>th</sup>!) These would be casual gatherings, such as an outing to Arlington Race Track, lunch or dinner and a show at Drury Lane Oakbrook, a tour of Wrigley Field, a cruise around Lake Michigan, and similar events, where we can enjoy each other's company in a fairly casual atmosphere at a reasonable cost. **PLEASE TELL US WHAT YOU THINK ABOUT THIS IDEA. WE NEED YOUR FEEDBACK AND SUGGESTIONS FOR FUTURE EVENTS.**

## **WEDDING BELLS:**

Classmate and Reunion Committee Chairman **Ken Rosko** is delighted to announce his upcoming marriage, on May 28, to Cheryl Ruth Yost. Some of you may have met Cherie at our 55<sup>th</sup> reunion last September where she was a great help to the committee, and danced the night away with Ken. Please join us in wishing the happy couple a long and happy life together. Congratulations and our Very Best Wishes, Cherie and Ken!!

## **IN MEMORIAM:**

We are sad to report the passing on February 3<sup>rd</sup> of classmate **Frank Donatello**. We extend our deepest sympathy to his widow Ann and the Donatello family. Also, we extend our sympathy to the family of **Constance (Kezios) Kasson**, who passed away on January 14, 2011.

## **1955 MAROON & WHITE MYSTERY RESOLVED:**

We are pleased to report that **John Spinello's** 1955 yearbook has found its way back to him. Someone found it amid his parents' belongings when they moved, and sold it to Classmates.com. Classmates.com was happy to return it to its rightful owner. All's well that ends well!

**SHEL MARCUS RE-ELECTED:** We are delighted to report that Shel was honored to be elected for a second term as Village Trustee of Morton Grove. Congratulations, Shel! We are proud of you.

### **COACH LEDDY HAS MOVED:**

We heard recently from Mr. Leddy's son Rich that his dad had moved to The Heritage in downtown Des Plaines. The coach is doing well and would welcome notes, calls, or visits. The phone number is 847-699-3058. The address is Mr. George Leddy, 800 South River Road, Des Plaines, IL 60016.

### **AUSTIN SCHOOLS ARE MERGED, THEN UNMERGED:**

We received a "heads up" recently from **Mike McGuire** about the status of the three schools that currently occupy the former Austin High School building. The article he forwarded was very confusing, at least to your editor. See it yourself. <http://www.chicagonewscoop.org/austin-schools-are-merged-then-unmerged/>

We asked for clarification from our classmate **Mike Bakalis**, whose organization operates one of the schools in the building. Here is his response to our query.

"Here's the story. My organization, American Quality Schools, has a contract to operate one of the three small schools in the Austin High building. Our contract is due to expire this July. For a variety of complex reasons, we did not feel we were given certain things the Chicago Board of Education had promised us regarding schools in the Austin community. Right now the Chicago school bureaucracy is a total mess, and no one seems to be in charge or know what they are doing. I hope the Mayor-elect picks a competent person to head the system and attack the problems, which are many. My organization chose to not renew our contract, and so the building will still have all three schools, all run by the Chicago Board of Education. My organization will still operate seven other schools in Chicago as well as six in Indiana, two in Missouri, and one in Milwaukee."

### **GENE & JUDE'S IS TOP DOG:**

Many of you can remember Gene & Jude's Red Hot Stand at 2720 River Road in River Grove. The stand has a pretty decent product. It's a Vienna Beef natural casing hotdog, loaded with condiments, but absolutely no ketchup, and topped with great fresh cut fries. Until 1978, there were no napkins. Gene wanted to keep costs down. The no frills great quality and consistency and a lot of tradition is what keeps people coming back. The lines — 50 to 60 people deep — at the River Grove hot dog spot surely attest to that. "Frankly" speaking, it's the best.

In 2011, in a competition of 64 hot dog stands across the country, Gene & Jude's was chosen by the magazine "Every Day with Rachel Ray" and the food blog [Serious Eats](#) as the best hot dog in America. The stand has won more fans since the results were announced, said Dan Ciancio, general manager. "A lot of customers are coming in," he said. "A bunch of people came in today, for the first time, because they saw us on TV and came to check it out." "But we're set up to handle lines. We're already set up for very high volumes."

It all began when, in 1946, city workers Gene Mormino and Jude DeSantis were at a Cubs game at Wrigley Field when Gene decided if he added French fries to his hot dog it would give it a gratifying dose of saltiness and crunchiness. Based on that idea, the two partners started a hot dog stand at Polk & Western Streets in Chicago. Their restaurant quickly gained popularity, but three years later, Gene lost the entire stand in a card game in 1949. By 1950, Jude had forgiven him and they scraped up enough money to buy a stand at their current location in River Grove. Since 2004, it has been owned and run by Joe Mormino, Gene's son. In 2006, Gene & Jude's was inducted into the Vienna Beef Hot Dog Hall of Fame. <http://www.viennabeef.com/culture/fame/item.asp?m=33&PG=3>  
For other interesting tidbits about the history of the stand, and how the food is prepared (everything fresh), click on this link: <http://hostedmedia.reimanager.com/rmag/everydayLiving/travel/MM7.pdf>

### **OLD FRIENDS RE-UNITED:**

**Carol Ann (Anselmo) Wolf** saw **Santina (Rubino) Warren's** name in the newsletter and asked how to get in touch with her. We provided both ladies with contact information, and they have renewed their old friendship. 'Glad to be of help, ladies!

### **JIM PADAR'S BLOG:**

Now that **Jim Padar** is fully retired, he is giving more time to one of his serious pastimes, short story writing. He has started a blog of short stories, many of which will tell of his experiences as a homicide detective in Chicago. Give it a gander at: <http://jimpadar.wordpress.com/>

### **ELEMENTARY SCHOOL PHOTOS STILL WANTED:**

Do any of you have your 1951 class photo? If you do, please send it to our webmaster, **Jim Padar** via email to [webmaster@austin1955.org](mailto:webmaster@austin1955.org) or via snail mail to 5426 West Lunt Avenue, Chicago, IL 60646.

### **THE CAMERON ITCH:**

Two kids at a Humboldt Park elementary school started scratching their itchy arms — and within minutes 29 classmates were doing the same thing. But the mysterious outbreak of rashes and itching that sent police and fire fighters rushing to Daniel Cameron Elementary School on Wednesday morning, was harmless and likely driven by hysteria and psychosomatic symptoms, officials say. Chicago Public School officials Thursday were investigating whether student “mischief” might have caused an itching outbreak at Cameron School that sent 31 kids to local hospitals, where many were stripped naked and scrubbed down by workers wearing hazardous-material suits and respirator masks.

“Mommy, that was the worst thing that ever happened to me,” one fifth-grader told her mother after the haz-mat scrub down. Hospital officials said they followed national standards for decontamination because the children showed symptoms of “some kind of chemical exposure.”

At Mount Sinai Hospital on Wednesday, 15 5th- and 6th-graders were kept from their parents, covered with plastic ponchos and asked to strip, then placed in an outdoor “decontamination corridor” and sponge-bathed by haz-mat-clad hospital staff. “They looked like astronauts,” said Lisa Andino, chair of the Cameron Local School Council. Two children had complained of itching on their arms Wednesday after a pep rally in the auditorium of Cameron, at 1234 N. Monticello. By Thursday, speculation abounded. One theory involved itching powder, a school official said. Officials said so many tests at the school came up negative that CPS was investigating whether the outbreak was due to “mischievous activity.”

“I don’t think it was a prank,” said one parent who asked to remain anonymous. “I think it was something on the chairs because most kids got it on their arms. Some cheerleaders wearing skirts got it on the back of their legs.” Chicago Sun-Times, March 10, 2011.

### **THE LAST HURRAH FOR THE PURPLE HOTEL:**

The Purple Hotel, located at the corner of Lincoln and Touhy Avenues, has a place in local lore. The hotel was built in 1960 by the Hyatt Corp. and was originally called the Lincolnwood Hyatt House. Some of our class reunions were held there. Well-known Chicago pianist Myles Greene, who now performs at Tuscany's in Oak Brook, was the first performer to open in the hotel 40 years ago.

In 1983, convicted mobster- insurance executive Allen Dorfman was gunned down in the hotel parking lot. The murder has never been solved. The hotel changed hands numerous times after the infamous crime, first becoming a Radisson, and then a Ramada. Since 2004, it has been independent, simply calling itself by the name locals have used for years: the "Purple Hotel." The name came about because of the building's distinctive purple facade, somewhat radical for earth-toned suburbia. In 2006, the Village sued the owners of the Purple Hotel because of health and safety code violations such as mold in guest rooms.

In January 2007, it was announced the hotel was to be closed, with future plans unknown. In May 2007, Chicago-based Sertus Capital Partners, LLC entered into a conditional contract to purchase the 8-acre hotel property, with plans to demolish it and build residential and retail space. However, Sertus called off its proposed purchase of the property from the current owner Donald Bae in August 2007. The plans were scrapped due to the high cost the owners asked for the property and problems with an extended lease of one of the tenants on the property.

In 2010, the Village again brought court action to either remedy more than three dozen building code violations, or demolish the building. Finally, in March of 2011, Lincolnwood won the right to demolish the Purple Hotel because of its "dangerous and unsafe" condition after an almost year-long legal battle. Lincolnwood Cook County Circuit Judge Kathleen Pantle confirmed a consent decree declaring the building at 4500 W. Touhy Ave. a safety hazard and granting the village permission to tear down the building at the property owner's expense. The decree also awards the village fines, penalties and attorney’s fees. As of Feb. 3, Lincolnwood incurred \$77,246 in attorney fees and \$1,396 in inspection fees, it stated.

Village President Gerald C. Turry noted that the court's action is a significant victory for the village. "Our patience and persistence with the legal process has paid off. We know this building has a rich history, with wonderful memories for many people. Regrettably, it has been allowed to deteriorate into a blighted condition. We had no choice but to seek its removal," Turry said. "We are hopeful that our actions will have a positive impact on the property owner's efforts to cause the redevelopment of the property," he added.

The property owner has until Aug. 1 to demolish the building. If he does not, the court order allows the village to clear the site and bill the owner.

**TIGER TRIVIA:**

Size of Body: 4 ½ to 9 feet long. Tails can be 2 to 3 feet long.

Weight: A male Amur tiger can weigh up to 675 pounds, and a female Amur tiger can weigh up to 368 pounds.

Population: As few as 3,200 are left in the world.

Range: Tigers in the wild are found in just 7 percent of their original range, stretching from India to southeastern China and from the Russian Far East to Sumatra, Indonesia.

Fun Fact: There are no tigers with identical markings. The markings will even differ from one side of a tiger to the other. To learn more, go to [www.worldwildlife.org/tigers](http://www.worldwildlife.org/tigers). Make a donation to save the tigers.

**CLOSING MESSAGE #1:** Being 'over the hill' is much better than being under it!

**CLOSING MESSAGE #2:** Birthdays are good for you. The more you have, the longer you live.

**TELL US WHAT'S HAPPENING WITH YOU:**

Photos and items of general class interest should be directed to [webmaster@austin1955.org](mailto: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.

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**CONTACT INFORMATION CHANGE:** Please email changes to [reunion@austin1955.org](mailto:reunion@austin1955.org)

NAME (1st, maiden, last): \_\_\_\_\_

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CITY, STATE, ZIP: \_\_\_\_\_

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OTHER CHANGE: \_\_\_\_\_

PHONE NUMBER (required): \_\_\_\_\_

OR, mail this form to: *Chuck Meyer, Austin Class of 1955; 5257 107<sup>th</sup> Av N; Minneapolis, MN 55443-5902*

COMMENTS: \_\_\_\_\_