



1955 AUSTIN HIGH REUNION

NEWSLETTER VOLUME 6 ISSUE 3 JULY 2011

www.austin1955.org -- reunion@austin1955.org

HAPPY BIRTHDAY, AMERICA!!

(Better late, than never.)

STORMY WEATHER:

We hope you and yours survived the recent wind and rains without harm to persons or property. Your editor is pleased to report that a gas stove-top, a Watchdog battery backup for the sump pump, flashlights, candles, portable radios and batteries, as well as a good daughter who brought her 80 pounds of ice and a couple of extra coolers, allowed her to survive the storms. We had to do a bit of unanticipated cooking, but no food was lost. It's times like these that remind us how lucky we are to have family and good neighbors, too. If you have any interesting storm survival stories, please send them along, and we'll publish them in the next newsletter.

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:

John and **Beverly (Amoroso) Money**, Merle Lynch and **Donald Axelrod**, Warren and **Dorothy (Benson) Newman**, Sandra and **Harold Brown**, **Frances (Calamia) Hammerstone**, **Francis Donohoe**, Maryann and **John Falkowski**, William and **Patricia (Giuffre) Peterson**, **Jocelyn (Haywood) Pritchard**, Ruth and **James Herrero**, Donald and **Lois (Horwitz) Silverman**, Marie and Kenneth Iversen, **Evelyn (Karger) Lyons**, Ensi and **Louis Kaufman**, Jean and **Norman Kazluski**, **Adrienne (Lieberman) Reimer**, **James Lupo**, Gail and **George Lyons**, **Sheldon Marcus**, Ina Beth and **Robert Mintz**, Nick and **Beverly (Morreale) Dalesandro**, **Clara (Muratori) Rio**, Theresa and **James Plastina**, **Dolores Sarocco**, **Murray Simpson**, Earl and **Mary Ann (Stentz) Kaiser**, Gregory and **Angie (Triolo) Jehlik**, **Louis Weber**, **Janet (Westergren) Johnson**, and Jeanne and **Richard Wolnik**.

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!

A DAY AT THE RACES:

Your reunion committee has arranged for a "Day at the Races" at Arlington Park on Thursday, September 15. See the enclosed reservation form (or click on this link <http://austin1955.org/Arlington2011.pdf>) to print the form. This will be a delightful day in a beautiful place where we can mingle, eat, talk, and bet on (or just enjoy) the races.

IN MEMORIAM:

We were saddened to learn of the passing of **Genevieve (Koziol) Graas** on February 19, 2011. She leaves four children, three grandchildren, and two brothers. Should you wish to send condolences to her daughter, Mary Gilday, the address is 26613 West Grass Lake, Antioch, IL 60002. Rest in peace, Genevieve.

Joan (Anthony) Helminiak, twin sister of **Jean (Anthony) Stueben**, passed away on May 1. Besides her sister, Joan leaves her husband Richard, five children, seven grandchildren, and her brother Richard. We extend our sincere sympathy to the Anthony family. **Dorothy (Benson) Newman** (Class of January 1955) informed us of the passing on July 3rd of her dear friend **Sigrid (Jensen) Benson**, Treasurer of the January Class of 1955. Dorothy and Sigrid met in their sophomore year in Biology class at Austin, and have been friends ever since. We extend our deepest sympathy to Sigrid's good friend Dorothy, and to the entire Benson family.

VETERANS' DISCOUNTS AT LOWE'S & HOME DEPOT:

Receive a 10% discount on all purchases at Lowe's and Home Depot, just by showing your VA card (or other proof of military service). The discount applies to all items, in all stores, at all hours.

GOLDSTAR DISCOUNTS TO SHOWS AND OTHER EVENTS:

Take a look. <http://www.goldstar.com/events/browse/60603> Sign up here. <https://www.goldstar.com/signup>

RIVER CRUISE NEWS:

Barb (Jarm) and Tom Baker write, “The newlywed Roskos, and the long term married Bakers, Larsens, and Pasquerellis, and the slightly shorter term, Schulmans, returned recently from a two-week river cruise from Vienna, along the Danube, the Main, and the Rhine rivers to Amsterdam. It was beautiful, exciting, busy, and tiring. Being unable to sleep aboard airplanes, and closing the bar a couple of times, didn't help. Even though space aboard ship was quite limited, we old timers had a marvelous time. Pictures are not ready yet, but many were taken.”

COACH LEDDY CORRECTION:

Last quarter, we published new contact information for Mr. Leddy, but we got the phone number wrong. We apologize for the error. The coach is living at The Heritage in downtown Des Plaines. You may write to Mr. George Leddy, The Heritage, 800 South River Road, Des Plaines, IL 60016. His phone number is 847-699-3058. His son, Richard, says he can have visitors any time and is free to come and go. Richard's email address is leddy@comcast.net. Richard's phone number is 847-635-7811.

SEND A STAR TO A VET:

The Ladies Auxiliary members from Winthrop Harbor VFW Post 7448 create American Flag star gifts for vets and enlisted men and women. They are seeking used American flags with woven or embroidered stars. If you have a flag to donate, please call Mary Lou Giddens at (847) 336-4858. So far, Post 7448 ladies auxiliary members Joann Siegfried, Sharon Marsh, Karen Wagner and Mary Lou Giddens, residents of Waukegan, Beach Park and Zion, say they have handed out as many as 1,000 stars harvested from retired American flags. What they give is not just a star, but a 3-inch by 1½-inch handmade gift. It includes the well-lived star which is affixed to a patriotic ribbon, with a special poem on the back honoring servicemen and servicewomen.

“My favorite colors are red, white and blue,” said Marsh, a former Navy nurse and full commander who took care of injured sailors during the Vietnam War. As she and the others painstakingly cut out stars from tattered American flags recently, they recalled the gifts they gave to those who have given so much. “I was in Gurnee Mills with my daughter, and as a group of young Marines walked our way, my daughter said, ‘Mom, do you have any stars in your purse?’ I did,” said Wagner. “I told the Marines ‘You may think I’m crazy for doing this, but I just want you to know how much we appreciate what you do for this country. And I gave them each a star. I was in tears, and soon they were in tears, too!’”

Mary Lou Giddens recalls sending a star to a Vietnam veteran she and her late husband met while camping in Montana. “He is a Blackfoot Indian who lives on a reservation. He was so touched that I sent it to him, he wrote back that he was going to keep it with him always in his wallet,” said Giddens. Siegfried said she and the others have handed out hundreds of stars to recent graduates of basic training from the Naval Station Great Lakes, sent more to enlisted men and women overseas, and have handed them out by the bunch at the North Chicago V.A. Hospital. “Whenever we see someone in uniform or a vet wearing a WWII cap, or something that shows they were in the service, we pull out a star and give it to them.”

The materials for the handmade creations are purchased at local craft stores. Siegfried said the women use their own money to buy the items, and none of it comes from the VFW. “We started last fall and we’ll continue,” said Marsh. “We’re going to do this for a long time to come. As long as we’ve got stars, we’re good to go.” Should you wish to donate a flag or acquire a star, write to VFW Post 7448 Ladies Auxiliary, Attn: Barbara Miller, President, 1112 Sheridan Road, Winthrop Harbor, IL 60096. If you have questions, call 847-872-7676.

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 or via snail mail to 5426 West Lunt Avenue, Chicago, IL 60646.

SPINELLO IN THE NEWS AGAIN:

Chicago's own Toy Story comes to life April 26 through Sept. 18 with Elmhurst Historical Museum's "Toys 'N the Hood." This exhibit details how Chicago became the epicenter for toy invention by focusing on toys created and/or produced in the Chicago area. The brain child of curator Lance Tawzer, in collaboration with Tim Walsh, author of Timeless Toys and the Playmakers Who Created Them, "Toys" focuses on the classics that came out of Chicago's burgeoning toy invention industry during the 1950s and '60s, such as Lincoln Logs (created by Frank Lloyd Wright's son John), Radio Flyer wagons and trikes, Tinker Toys, Rock 'Em-Sock 'Em Robots, Beanie Babies and Tickle Me Elmo (created by Bruce Lund of Lund and Co. Inventions in River Forest).

About the opening of the event on April 26, John's wife, Madeline says, "The event was absolutely wonderful. John signed 25 games and countless postcards that had John's name on them provided by the museum. The weather was perfect. About 600 people attended, other inventors were there, games and toys were given away. Lots of fun!

According to the book The Playmakers, by Tim Walsh, John was a sophomore industrial design student at the University of Illinois in 1962 when he was given a class assignment to create a toy or game. "I did my prototype of my magic box and everybody liked it," said Spinello, who earned the highest grade in the class for his project. Spinello designed a 10 by 10-inch electric box that had a 12-volt lantern battery that triggered a 6-volt bell with a metal probe. The box had a series of holes into which players tried to insert the probe without touching the sides. If they did, an alarm sounded. His godfather, Sam Cottone, was a model maker at Marvin Glass & Associates, one of Chicago's emerging toy workshops, so Spinello took his project to owner Marvin Glass. Glass' immediate reaction was disdain, but Spinello convinced him to give the toy a try. "When he shorted it out, the thing arced, the bell rang and he jumped out of his seat and he threw his hands up in the air and said, 'I love it,'" Spinello said.

The rest is history. Glass offered — and Spinello accepted — \$500 for rights to the game (with Spinello's name on the patent) and a job upon graduation. Spinello graduated from college and got married in 1965. Returning from his honeymoon and expecting to have a job, he said he was disappointed that Glass reneged on the job offer. John ended up working as an industrial designer at other places for 10 years until Glass died. When college friend Jeff Breslow, a managing partner at Marvin Glass, invited Spinello to join the creative team, Spinello jumped at the chance. "It was like I died and went to heaven. It was absolutely a wonderful position," he said. "The creativity in the building was fantastic."

The game's original theme developed at Marvin Glass and Associates was Death Valley and the goal was to place a metal probe into a trail of spaces as players proceeded along a board decorated to look like a desert. The game was sold to Milton Bradley, which changed the theme to an operating table and created the concept of having to use tweezers to remove objects from the openings. The board featured a character named "Cavity Sam" who had a red light bulb nose and was afflicted by a dozen ailments. Water on the knee and Charlie Horse are a couple of the maladies troubling the patient depicted on the playing board of the game Operation. Being tickled to death isn't one of those ailments, but it's how inventor **John Spinello** says he feels about having created the game that has become an icon for generations of children. Eventually, the game went to Hasbro Games, which continues to produce it.

John recalls wearing an Operation T-shirt one day, when a woman approached him and let him know of the game's impact on her son. "She said, 'Because of your game, my son became a doctor,'" Spinello recalled.

Today, Spinello owns and operates a Chicago warehouse and trucking firm with his son. His original prototype is now on display at the Elmhurst Historical Museum, along with a life-size, playable version of Operation. Other exhibit highlights include toy artifacts; hands-on toy stations; Toy Land, Walsh's documentary about bringing a toy to market; and Toy Invention TV, an oversized 1960s television with a vintage remote control. The interactive display walks visitors through how to turn an idea into a toy.

The museum is located at 120 East Park Avenue, Elmhurst, and offers special events geared toward families. From 1 to 3 p.m. Tuesdays from June 21 thru Aug. 16, kids can drop in for toy-themed craft workshops (\$2). Hours are 1-5 PM, Tuesday thru Sundays. Admission is FREE. For details, call 630-833-1457 or visit www.elmhursthistry.or or <http://triblocal.com/elmhurst/2011/06/24/operation-inventor-proud-of-iconic-game/> or

<http://www.suntimes.com/lifestyles/4924590-417/elmhurst-historical-museum-exhibit-tells-chicagos-toys-story.html>

REMEMBER WHITE CASTLE?

White Castle is marking its 90th anniversary this year. Here are some fun facts: White Castle, the first hamburger fast food chain, opened on March 10, 1921 in Wichita, Kansas. It was founded by short-order cook Walter Anderson, and former reporter, Edgar W. “Billy” Ingram, who thought “white” signified purity and “castle” signified strength and permanence. Ingram, who often visited Chicago as a reporter, modeled his restaurant’s architecture on Chicago’s Old Water Tower. Sliders cost 5 cents in 1921. White Castle came to Chicago in 1929. There are now 415 White Castles in Illinois, Indiana, Kentucky, Michigan, Minnesota, Missouri, New Jersey, New York, Ohio, Tennessee, and Wisconsin. Only a few are west of the Mississippi. The burgers have five holes, because it helps the patties cook faster and more evenly, while eliminating the need to turn them over. The design was proposed on an anonymous employee suggestion sheet in 1947 by White Castle operator Earl Howell of Cincinnati. The chain enjoyed a double-digit increase in sales after the film “Harold and Kumar Go to White Castle” came out in 2004. If all the burgers sold by White Castle since 1921 were laid side by side, they would reach to the moon and back, with plenty left over. Using three griddles, most White Castles have a production capacity of 2,000 burgers per hour. WOW! (AND, we seniors get a 15% discount!)

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.

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CONTACT INFORMATION CHANGE: Please email changes to reunion@austin1955.org

NAME (1st, maiden, last): _____

STREET ADDRESS: _____

CITY, STATE, ZIP: _____

EMAIL ADDRESS: _____

OTHER CHANGE: _____

PHONE NUMBER (required): _____

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

COMMENTS: _____