



1955 AUSTIN HIGH REUNION

NEWSLETTER VOLUME 8 ISSUE 3 JULY 2013

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

HAPPY BIRTHDAY, AMERICA!! HAPPY SUMMER TO ALL!!

THANK YOU, THANK YOU, THANK YOU!!

We are grateful to the following classmates for their very generous donations to defray the cost of printing and publishing this newsletter. Many thanks to: Carol Ann (Anselmo) Wolf, Raymond Charlette, Lois (Leff) Streiker, Edward Handzel, Lois (Horwitz) Silverman, Norman Kazluski, Peter Markos, Lolita (Quiny) Fraser, Robert Schulman, Toby (Speck) Gordon, and Murray Simpson.

Please make donation checks payable to "Austin 1955 Reunion Ltd.", and mail them to our Treasurer, **Irwin Magad**; 2100 Sanders Road, Suite 200; Northbrook, IL 60062-6141. **Thank you, ladies, for writing your maiden name in parentheses on your checks.** It saves your editor lots of time. We appreciate your support!

A GOOD TIME WAS HAD BY ALL!

52 classmates and friends, including former Austin Senior Choir director Mr. Kenneth Iversen, enjoyed good camaraderie, a delicious lunch, and side-splitting laughs at Drury Lane's production of the comedy *Boeing, Boeing* on June 19. Comments from attendees included "The food, service, and play were excellent." "Let's do it again!" Kathleen (Jan Gromoshak) Lucansky came up from Daytona Beach to enjoy the afternoon with us. See **Mike Pasquerelli's** photos of the event on our website www.austin1955.org. Click on "Latest Pictures."

IN MEMORIAM:

Classmate **Lenore (Catalano) Gilio**, passed away on January 11, 2013. She was preceded in death by her beloved husband Anthony, and is survived by her children Jerry (Elizabeth), Laura (Ed) Kozak, and Daniel (Amber) and grandchildren Meghan, Nicole, Blythe, and Glynis. Our heartfelt sympathy goes to the Catalano and Gilio families. Melissa (Leff) Ryan informed us that her father, **Howard M. Leff**, died on January 16, 2013. His obituary is excerpted here. "He was funny, friendly, and intelligent. His good looks and style often drew remarks. Before college, he was drafted as a southpaw pitcher by the Boston Red Sox organization, but an injury thwarted his major league aspirations. He enjoyed fine art, theatre, wine, good food, and travel. Survivors include his children, Brian and Melissa, three grandchildren, three siblings, and their families. In your hearts and in your homes, please raise a glass and toast the memory of a life well lived." Thank you, Melissa, for sharing this tribute to a very special man. We were sorry to learn from Theresa Dahlstrom that her mother, **Arlene (Kennedy) Brown** passed away on February 20, 2013. We extend our sincere condolences to the Brown and Kennedy families for their loss.

HARVEY FIRESTONE COMMITMENT TO COMMUNITY AWARD:

The **Pasquerellis**, the **Roskos**, and your editor had the pleasure of attending the 2013 B'nai B'rith Award Presentation and Reception on May 7, at the Ritz-Carlton Chicago, to see our own **Shel Marcus** receive this prestigious award. Shel is president of Original Concepts, Inc. of Skokie, IL, a firm he founded in 1972 as an association management organization serving various medical and dental associations throughout the United States. In addition to his many B'nai B'rith offices and volunteer activities, he is active in his synagogue, has served on the local elementary and high school boards, and served as President of the Morton Grove Chamber of Commerce. He ran for office as state representative and was elected State Central Committeeman of the 9th legislative district in the State of Illinois. He was producer and host of his own local cable television show, "Dateline Morton Grove." He is presently serving as Village trustee of Morton Grove. Congratulations, Shel! We are really proud of you. But, tell us – what do you do in your "spare" time?

HAPPY BIRTHDAY, MR. ZIP: [Excerpted from the June 2013 *AARP Bulletin*.]

Fifty years ago, the Post Office Department had a nightmare on its hands – an overwhelming increase in business mail. In 1963, the agency rolled out the **Zoning Improvement Plan**, a five-digit code meant to help sort mail for delivery to specific locations. Accompanying the roll-out, a cartoon-like image of a friendly postal worker named Mr. ZIP, with a letter in his hand, helped deliver the message: Remember your ZIP!

STROLLING DOWN CHICAGO AVENUE WITH CHUCK MEYER:

Here are the first of several articles that will bring us back to the Chicago Avenue of the post-war decade and earlier. Read on and enjoy!

The two mile stretch of Chicago Avenue from Austin Blvd to Kenton Ave (RR tracks) was everyone's everyday shopping street. These were the stores of daily living. It's where we bought our bread, meat, fish, groceries, candy, hardware, newspapers, and cigars. And we used the cleaners, barbers, shoe repairs, movie theaters, dentists, taverns, and occasionally visited the only government presence on the stretch – the Police Station. There were a few small chain stores - Woolworth's, Walgreen's, Jewel, A&P, and National. But most store names were eponymous – Arfsten's Bakery, Mazzuca Butcher, Libby's Confectionary, Donchin Hardware, Mele Radio Repair, Heilman's Bakery, LaRocca Drugs, Licht Paint. A number of the stores were mom-n-pop operations with the family helping in the store, and living upstairs. Every day had at least one reason to visit Chicago Ave.

Stores on North Avenue or Madison Street were larger and involved purchases that were larger, and less frequent. But this two-mile stretch of Chicago Avenue contained only one car dealer, one bank, one hotel, one furniture store, and not a single pizza joint.

There were more than just stores. At the railroad tracks at Kenton, we found the swamps where every spring, there was good tadpole catching. Mom really liked those mayonnaise jars that came home with tadpoles and other water critters. Their contents were usually used to test the toilet.

The whole time I was in high school, I had a morning paper route (The *Austinite*, every Wednesday morning, from about 5:00 to 7:00am) that included parts of both Chicago and Cicero Avenues. This gave me a different view (and scent) of Chicago Avenue. The people I'd pass were also working – delivering not only newspapers, but milk, juice, and fresh produce to homes and to stores. And of course, many people were on their way to their jobs. There was always time for a “hello”, but no time for conversations. The bakeries were going full tilt at this time, and the streets were full of their delicious aromas.

This was the Chicago Avenue of the “post-war” years (1945-1955). Now here is the first in a series of strolls down *old* Chicago Avenue to recall some of the sights and smells of that time.

“The Bad and the Beautiful”, some architectural highlights:

The corner of Chicago and Laramie had architectural examples of the best and the worst.

On the northwest corner is a beautiful art deco bank building that was built around 1909 by the Laramie State Bank. It had a major remodeling in 1928 when it became Columbia Bank, and then folded in the bank collapses of 1929-1933. My family story has my mother going there to make a deposit, but she was a few minutes after closing time. She knocked on the door and they let her in to make her deposit. The bank never opened again. “Why did I knock on that door??”

In 1946 Citizens National Bank was organized. Inside, the front half of the building had bankers sitting on either side at desks behind a 3-foot wall. The back half contained the tellers sitting behind barred windows. Every surface in the building was marble. And it was the bank where I had my first checking account. On Jan 29, 1991 the FDIC seized the insolvent Citizens National Bank & Trust Co. of Chicago and immediately sold it to First Bank of Oak Park (FBOP). All accounts were transferred to FBOP and the facility reopened as a branch of its new owner. In 2006, FBOP merged with a number of other banks to form Park National Bank. That folded in 2009 and was sold by the FDIC to USBank. Now, the building at 5200 Chicago is known as “Citizens National Plaza”, but it's no longer a bank (doesn't even have an ATM) – the first and second floors contain small shops, the third floor has four or five apartments. Click to see photos from: [1920](#), [2004\(ChicagoAv\)](#), and [2004\(LaramieAv\)](#).

Meanwhile, on the opposite, southeast corner, someone decided to build a three-story building in the 1920's. The 15-foot ceilings would suggest it was to be a retail store. The superstructure was erected and the pillars were wrapped in marble. But before any walls or stairs were put up, the roaring twenties stopped roaring, the financial world crumbled, and construction was halted. Thirty years later, that ugly skeleton was still there – occasional home to a series of short-lived used-car dealers, and vagrants who put up a ladder to the second floor. Urban legend has it that someone removed the ladder once, trapping some undesirables on the second floor for a day or two. The skeleton of the building has finally been replaced – by a McDonalds!

More next time on “Arfsten's Bakery”

1952 PHOTOS WANTED:

Walter Johnson writes: I am looking for any photos of the 1952 Austin High School Football team that Abe Woodson played on. It is my understanding that the 1952 team played in the Prep Bowl at Soldier Field in front of 110,000 people. [Ed. Note – the attendance was actually 22,664]. Would you have any pictures of that game? You may reach Walter at wjohnson@turningpointeaf.org or (630)570-7948.

AUSTIN TIMES, JUNE 14, 1957: [More news from this 56-year-old newspaper:]

From The Editor's Mailbag: "Dear Editor: In every Memorial Day assembly, while taps are being played, a flag with a gold star, a blue star, and numbers under each one is lowered. What do these things signify? Kitty Badger, Div. 305.

Editor's Note: The blue star stands for those men who served in both World War I and World War II, while the number gives the actual count of those who served. The gold star is in honor of those men who died in the two wars, and the number is the actual count."

From the Honor Club paragraph: "NEWLY ELECTED officers of the Honor Club are President, Elaine Rosko, Div 260; vice president, Peter Apostal, Div. 273; and secretary, Judy Martin, Div. 151. Others are: treasurer, Penny Donahue, Div. 162; and sergeants-at-arms, John Deaville, Div. 205, Sue Shapiro, Div. 157, and Joanne Weiss, Div. 151." [Yes – Elaine is Ken's kid sister.] Thanks again to Anna (Montiforte) Mancini for this grand old treasure.

HOW MUCH POSTAGE DO I NEED?

Trying to figure out how many stamps you'll need on a letter? Make your own postal scale using a pencil, a ruler, and some quarters. Lay the pencil on a flat surface and place a 12-inch ruler across the pencil, centering it on the 6-inch mark. Then, stack five quarters on the 3-inch mark and center the letter on the 9-inch mark. If the letter outweighs the quarters, you need to add more postage. (The secret: five quarters weigh exactly one ounce – the same as the maximum weight of a first-class letter mailed with a single "forever" stamp.) Currently, first class postage for a one-ounce (or less) letter is \$.46. Add \$.20 for each additional ounce up to 13 ounces. See <http://postcalc.usps.com/> for heavier or special items.

HOW MANY DAYS OLD ARE YOU?

This will give you a jolt! It even gives you the day of the week on which you were born!!

[Click here: How many days old are you?](#)

THOUGHTS TO PONDER:

"Old is when you are cautioned to slow down by your doctor instead of by the police."

"It's scary when you start making the same noises as your coffee maker."

"Only Robinson Crusoe had everything done by Friday." "He who laughs last thinks slowest."

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.

CONTACT INFORMATION CHANGE: Please email changes to reunion@austin1955.org
OR, mail to: *Chuck Meyer, Austin Class of 1955; 3800 85th Avenue N #203; Brooklyn Park, MN 55443-2974*

NAME (1st, maiden, last): _____

STREET ADDRESS: _____

CITY, STATE, ZIP: _____

EMAIL ADDRESS: _____

OTHER CHANGE: _____

PHONE NUMBER (required): _____

SO – WHAT SHALL WE DO NEXT?

We would appreciate your help in planning future alumni events. Please take a few moments to answer the questions below. Return your answers to any reunion committee member via email or to Ken Rosko via fax at 847-623-5885 or snail mail to: Ken Rosko, c/o JKR Financial Consultants, Ltd., 3233 W. Grand Ave., Suite 103, Waukegan, IL 60085. Thanks in advance for your help.

1. What kind of events would you like the Austin 1955 Reunion Committee to organize for the rest of 2013? What month? Day of week? Afternoon? Evening?

2. Do you have any suggestions for events in 2014? Play? Picnic? Race Track? Lunch? Cruise? Land Tour?

3. What kind of 60th year Reunion would you like to have in 2015? 1 Day? 2 Days? Weekend? Luncheon? Dinner/Dance? Entertainment? _____

4. Your Name _____ Email _____ Phone _____

Thanks again for your help!

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