



# 1955 AUSTIN HIGH REUNION

NEWSLETTER VOLUME 9 ISSUE 3 SUMMER 2014

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**HAPPY SUMMER!! – HAPPY BIRTHDAY, AMERICA!!**

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

Belated thanks to these classmates whose donations we inadvertently omitted from the last newsletter: Carol Ann (Anselmo) Wolf, James Connelly, Richard Holman, Marshall Levin, Curran McConville, Patricia Pecoraro, and Fred Scheaffer. We are also grateful to Carol (Beth) Ritter, Patricia (Callaghan) D'Amato, Everyn (Karger) Lyons, Norman Kazluski, Bernard Oppenheim, James Plastina, Leroy Pollina, **Ken Rosko**, and Louis Weber for their recent generous gifts. Many thanks to all! **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 on your checks.** It saves your editor lots of time.

## **LES MISERABLES RECAP:**

All the glowing critic reviews of *Les Miserables* didn't lie. 43 classmates enjoyed a delicious lunch, good company, and a really fine show. This production of *Les Mis* was outstanding! The fellow who played Jean Valjean was the stand-in and had an incredible voice. It's hard to imagine the regular lead being any better. The baritone, who played Javert, could hold his own at the Lyric any time. Actually, all the voices were excellent, as was the acting. The staging and visuals (except for the wiring of Javert) were quite good, too. Read more about the show in the Hedy Weiss column in the Chicago Sun-Times. <http://bit.ly/1ioh6nA>.

## **IN MEMORIAM:**

We are sorry to report the passing of **Barbara (Jacques) Mack** in April 2014. Barbara worked for the Claretian Missionaries – St. Jude League for 30 years, retiring as Chief Financial Officer. She leaves her husband E. Terry, children Maureen (John) Lawler, Debbie (Patrick) Damian, Terry, and Karen Taylor, 13 grandchildren, and three great-grandchildren. We extend our sympathy to the Mack and Jacques families.

Our hearts go out to classmate **Bonnie (Mills) Andries** who recently reported the double loss of both her husband Tony, and her childhood friend and classmate **Rita (Aniszewski) Simonaitis** on Father's Day, June 16, 2013. Our sincere sympathy goes to the Mills, Andries, Aniszewski, and Simonaitis families.

## **WEDDINGS & ANNIVERSARIES:**

Belated 54<sup>th</sup> anniversary greetings to Virginia and **Ron Erhardt**, who were married on June 7, 1960. Their fairy tale love story was published in the *Arizona Republic* on February 9, this year. Our thanks to Mary Ann ('57) and **Jim Vail**, who sent us the article, and to **Joan (McConville) Leander**, who also told us about it. Here is the link to the article. <http://bit.ly/1qdVbQ6> "Hand in Hand for a Lifetime." Congratulations, Ron and Virginia!

Likewise, a belated Happy 55<sup>th</sup> Anniversary on June 6 to Mr. and Mrs. **Raymond Hoffman**, a couple who were married a year and a day earlier than the Erhardts. Long may you love!

Wedding bells will ring again for **Ken Rosko**. Ken writes, "These past 7 days have been the most exciting, positive happening days I have ever had! Sue Soderberg and I have known one another for over 31 years! She has been a business client for the last 17 of those years. When she left our area 10 years ago to be with her two daughters in the Houston area, Sue would still "stay-in-touch" with us on her return visits to see her Chicago family. Sue almost always would come a bit earlier or stay a bit longer than needed so she could schedule a business meeting with us! Well, her last business with us was May 15! To cut to the chase, there will be another MRS. KEN ROSKO!" Susan and Ken will be married on Saturday, July 19<sup>th</sup>, 2014. Best Wishes to Ken and Sue for much happiness.

**SAVE THE DATES!!** Mark your calendars for our 60<sup>th</sup> (yes, 60<sup>th</sup>!) reunion the weekend of September 25-27, 2015. With your help, location and activities will be firmed up as we approach the dates. Please stay healthy and plan to join in the fun. **GO YOU AUSTIN!!**

## **OVER THE POND WITH SHEL MARCUS:**

I wanted to share with my fellow classmates, a wonderful trip Harlene and I experienced in April. I wish you all would have the same wonderful experience. This was a special year for Harlene, but then again isn't every year and day a blessing? Harlene was celebrating a special birthday and we enjoy cruising, so we searched for a trip we'd both enjoy for this momentous occasion. Well, as a member of the Princess Cruises Captain club, I received various emails about special cruising packages and one caught my eye: a 14 day trans-Atlantic cruise leaving from Fort Lauderdale, crossing the ocean to Bermuda, Portugal, Spain, France, and London. This was a repositioning trip, where the company transfers their ship from the Caribbean cruise season to the European cruise season during the summer and fall and then returns to the Caribbean for the winter season. Since they have to send this 3,000 passenger ship and staff across the ocean anyway, why not market the trip at a special rate to fill the cabins, which they do and they did. Everything on the ship, including activities, dining, entertainment, and port excursions are the same as on a regular cruise, but at a special rate. When I saw France, and London and Portugal, all countries we haven't been to, and since Harlene has always talked about visiting Paris, I said, "why not?" So, for her birthday, which was in March, we left in April. Hey, when the price is right, you adjust! This 14-day cruise turned into 21 days, the longest trip we've ever been on. You see, we decided to visit our relatives in Florida before the cruise and spend a few days in London after.

The cruise over the Atlantic was fabulous! For those who have never cruised before, I can only tell you it was as calm as sitting at home watching television. There might have been one day when the water was a little choppy, but overall, the giant ships with their stabilizers make the trip amazing. In fact, many times we had to look out the window to see if we were moving. Overall, the ship was terrific. It was our hotel. People asked us, "What do you do when you're on the ocean for five days?" Let me tell you, just like at a resort, you can do as much, or as little as you want. From eating, to sunbathing, from reading a book on your balcony, to attending art auctions, dance classes, trivia contests, exercise classes, seeing first run movies in their theatre, to bridge games, other card games, to first class live entertainment in their theatre or live acts in their lounges or taking a nap, you name it, it's there. Oh yes, you can leave a few dollars in their casino which has all the games, including slots, blackjack, craps, etc., and lest we forget the bingo lovers, that's there too. All in all, the cruise itself was wonderful, from the formal nights to the buffets. By the way, I didn't bring a tux. While many people do dress up, a sport jacket and tie was good enough for me and worked well for many people. The ports we visited were wonderful: from Bermuda, where Harlene bought a beautiful glass vase at a glass blowing factory on the island, to Lisbon, Portugal, where we visited various interesting sites, to Bilbao, Spain where we visited the famous Guggenheim Museum and had lunch on tapas (samples of food items) in a quaint old quarter of the city, to Paris, where it rained the only day of our trip, and where we lunched in the Eiffel Tower, and visited the Louvre Museum and saw the Mona Lisa and the Venus DeMilo and other interesting art and sculptures, and finally London where we spent a few days to see the beautiful city, dine in an old fashioned pub, see Buckingham Palace and the Changing of the Guard, visit the Tower of London, see the Queen's jewels, "No Harlene, you already received your birthday gift," and cruise the Thames River and ride their new Ferris wheel call the "Eye".

The last day in London we had to visit Harrod's, the Marshall Field's of London, buy souvenirs for the family and end by seeing a fabulous musical production of the movie "Bodyguard," with the music and songs Whitney Houston made famous. Prior to the play, we had dinner at the famous Savoy Hotel, which was outstanding. We flew back home to Chicago, non-stop on British Air, and it was great. We left London around 11:50 AM and arrived at O'Hare at 2:15 in the afternoon, and really didn't feel the jet lag we've heard so much about from our friends. All in all, it was a marvelous trip, but the frosting on the cake was when we got to Immigration and the security guard said, "Welcome home." After all the traveling around the world that Harlene and I have had the opportunity to do, it's wonderful to come back to our home, the great USA!

## **YEARBOOK REMINDER:**

Please advise your family that the Class of 1955 Reunion Committee will act as a clearing house for unwanted annuals. We will store them, advertise them in this newsletter, and send them to people who want them for just the cost of postage. Newsletter donations are, of course, always welcome.

## **BREAKING NEWS:**

The National Institute of Health has just released the results of a research study completed under a grant to Johns Hopkins. The study has found that women who carry a little extra weight live longer than the men who mention it.

## **CAMERON SCHOOL GETS NEW LIBRARY:**

A beautiful new library opened last week in Humboldt Park for the 800 students of Daniel R. Cameron Elementary School. A very grateful Cameron community celebrated the opening. Puffy pillows await children for story time; new chairs sit at brand new tables, and shelves of books line the long, light-filled room. Target Corporation and The Heart of America Foundation and volunteers unveiled the new library. In attendance were Major League baseball legend, Ernie Banks, and Barbara Byrd-Bennett, CEO of Chicago Public Schools (CPS), who praised the room as “absolutely amazing” and told children that libraries were her favorite place as a girl. Quotes from children’s literature adorn the freshly painted walls. “Let the wild rumpus start!” reads one from Maurice Sendak’s “Where the Wild Things Are.”

Cameron lucked into the largess of Target, which chose the school as one of 10 nationwide that received a \$200,000 library makeover grant this spring, and the eighth CPS school since the grant began in 2007. Such big spending on books, furniture and iPads never would have been possible without the grant, said Principal Stephen Harden, who has been building a culture of literacy for his students and their families. He used money CPS gave him two years ago to fill its longer school day to hire a full-time librarian, and he made sure to hold onto her last year, despite a budget dip.

“This should be a basic expectation for school kids. It does come down to priorities,” Harden said. “But we have not had enough funding to really invest in the library, and we never could have invested to this degree. We just have too many other needs.” Cameron needs technology and extra help for children who need to catch up when they enter school below grade level, he said. The Humboldt Park school at 1234 N. Monticello has more than 98 per cent low-income students, and a quarter of them are English-language learners.

“I want every kid at Cameron to know what they like to read, and to be just really engrossed in books full time,” Harden said. He and librarian Rhea Escudero made sure some of the 2,000 donated new books included lots of graphic novels, science, sports, nonfiction, and books that appeal to boys, to round out the school’s collection. Escudero found “the saddest furniture I’ve ever seen,” when she landed at Cameron, with ripped-up chairs and tables with shaky legs she had to tighten. Books were in boxes or scattered throughout this building.

“This is just a whirlwind,” she said in her bright new workspace. “The kids really deserve a library like other schools, like suburban schools.” [Chicago Sun-Times, May 4, 2014. Email: [lfitzpatrick@suntimes.com](mailto:lfitzpatrick@suntimes.com)]

## **MORE STROLLING DOWN CHICAGO AVENUE WITH CHUCK MEYER:**

As promised, here is a continuation of the stroll we started in the July 2013 newsletter. Unless Chuck pulls some more rabbits out of his hat, this will be the last installment of *Chicago Avenue*. Enjoy!

But Some People LIVED on Chicago Avenue - Chicago Avenue was a commercial/light commercial street for its entire length, from Lake Michigan to Oak Park. Except, the south side of Chicago Avenue, between Lavergne and Leclaire, contained ten to fifteen single- and two-family homes. These were frame houses, so they were built before the two 1889 annexations that included up to Laramie Avenue. (Chicago did not allow any frame residences to be built after the Great Fire of 1871, but older frame homes were grandfathered in.)

Many of the stores had a second floor, and even a third floor, containing apartments. My paper route had a number of customers in these apartments. The first floor entry was not even locked, so I could go in and walk down the hallway, dropping papers on doorsteps at 6 am. Some of the smaller buildings were built as a single store with a single apartment above. The upstairs owner usually had a business on the first floor, but sometimes, he would rent out the first floor and conduct his business on the second floor – a doctor or lawyer, for example.

And finally, there was the only hotel. On the north side of Chicago, just west of Cicero, was the Ritz(?) Hotel. What a pompous name for a dark, creepy-looking place that had a guard/desk clerk who received my papers. I imagined that the cast of “Frankenstein” lived here. But – it was one of my customers. Whenever I mentioned this hotel to my parents, there was some whispering and rolling eyes between them – obviously, something scandalous.

Another residence that always intrigued me was right across the street from the Austin Police Station. At first glance, it appeared to be a standard commercial building with apartments on the second floor. But in the center, was a 20-foot gap that opened into a small plaza, with apartments that opened onto it. I never had the guts to go in there.

## THOUGHTS TO PONDER:

- "You know you're getting old when all the names in your black book have M.D. after them."
- "A sad lesson of advancing years is you can't make old friends."
- "If we are not meant to have midnight snacks, why is there a light in the fridge?"
- "Kindness is the language the blind can see and the deaf can hear."
- "We all smile in the same language."

## 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.

## ANY MORE IDEAS FOR 2015?

Please take a few moments to answer the questions below. Return your answers to Ken Rosko via email or fax at 847-623-5885 or snail mail to: Ken Rosko, c/o JKR Financial Consultants, Ltd., 1790 Nations Drive, Suite 216, Gurnee, IL 60031. Thanks in advance for your ideas.

- A. We are planning a March 2015 luncheon and play (*West Side Story*). Is there any other event (prior to our 60<sup>th</sup> reunion) you would you like the Reunion Committee to organize for 2015? Picnic? Race Track? Dinner? Lake Cruise? Land Tour?

What month? \_\_\_\_\_ Day(s) of week? \_\_\_\_\_ Afternoon? \_\_\_\_ Evening? \_\_\_\_\_

- B. What activities would you like for our 60<sup>th</sup> reunion in September: Lunch? Dinner? Dance? Casino?

Your Name \_\_\_\_\_ Email \_\_\_\_\_ Phone \_\_\_\_\_

**CONTACT INFORMATION CHANGE:** Please email changes to [reunion@austin1955.org](mailto:reunion@austin1955.org)  
OR, mail to: **Chuck Meyer, Austin Class of 1955; 3800 85<sup>th</sup> Avenue N #103; Brooklyn Park, MN 55443-2972**

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

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