



1955 AUSTIN HIGH REUNION

NEWSLETTER VOLUME 10 ISSUE 4 AUTUMN 2015



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



HAPPY HALLOWEEN!!

WHAT A BLAST!!

Our 60th reunion weekend began on Friday, September 25, with a casual reception for 46, where we played “get re-acquainted games, followed by a delicious Italian buffet dinner. **Ken Rosko** presented our friend and benefactor, **Lou Weber**, with a beautiful crystal sculpture of the Chicago skyline, in appreciation for his many contributions to the success of our reunions. **Harry Kappos** won an *Operation* game that was autographed on Saturday by its inventor, classmate **John Spinello**. Harry filled in all the squares of his Names bingo card. Ina Beth (**Robert**) **Mintz** won a Large Print Puzzle Book for identifying all the Chicago landmarks from a list of pretty vague hints.

On Saturday evening, September 26, 107 classmates, spouses, and friends were welcomed by Reunion Committee Chairman **Ken Rosko**, who introduced our Master Of Ceremonies, **Shel Marcus**. Shel introduced the presidents of the January and June classes: **Phil Grossman** and **Jim Dayton**. Jim came all the way from Cleveland, Ohio, to be with us. Phil came from Deerfield, Illinois. Our special guest of the evening was Mr. Kenneth Iversen, former Austin Choir director and WWII veteran. Ken played the piano for our old folks’ rendition of *Go, You Austin*. We then enjoyed a wonderful dinner, after which we enjoyed entertainment by Chuck Schaden, a [Chicago](#)-area broadcaster and historian who hosted the [program](#), *Those Were the Days* on local radio from 1970 to 2009. Chuck tailored his presentation to our high school years, and it was wonderful. This prompted many good memories.

Everyone who attended the reunion received a wonderful bag of “goodies,” containing a colorful 50th Reunion Program book, a special booklet revisiting the 1954 Austin High Baseball City Championship season, a beautiful 4-color coffee table book featuring “Cars of the 1950s”, a special commemorative flashlight pen, and a beautifully-designed disc package of classic radio shows of 1952 thru 1955. Also in the bag were a foam cold can holder, discount coupons provided by Fashion Factory Outlets, and a deck of casino cards and complimentary cash allowance card provided by the Rivers Casino.

Dan and Lois Wetheral won a prize for coming from the farthest distance (Juneau, Alaska) and John and Wanda Smith won for having 20 grand-children. Wow! Door prizes for the evening went to Mr. Iversen, who won a bottle of wine, and Lois (**Marshall**) **Levin**, who won a weekend at the Marriott. Excellent red and white wines for both evenings were donated by **Irwin Magad’s** son Joel, and **Shel Marcus’** son Michael. Thanks, guys!

The evening wound up with some of us who were still awake gathering in the Rosko suite to share memories of our years at Austin. Sunday morning found about 20 tired, but happy, attendees enjoying a leisurely breakfast and reminiscing about the weekend. A good time was had by all.

NOTE: Reunion photos, compliments of **Mike Pasquerelli**, will appear on our website later in the year.

A PERSONAL NOTE FROM SHEL MARCUS: I will attend the B'nai B'rith International's (BBI) Policy Forum and election of officers in November in Washington, D.C. I'm being honored and installed as a Senior Vice President. I will be one of three in the United States and one of six in the world of this prestigious organization. BBI, founded in 1843, is considered the global voice of the Jewish community, with offices in over 50 countries, and is the most widely known Jewish humanitarian, human rights, and advocacy organization. BBI works for Jewish unity and security, and fights anti-Semitism, anti-Israel bias, and intolerance around the world.

DAYLIGHT SAVING TIME:

Whoever said, “Time waits for no man” never had to reset all the clocks after a power outage. [The Lockhorns] Reminder from your editor: Remember to set your clock back an hour on November 1.

THANK YOU, THANK YOU, THANK YOU!! We are grateful to all who made contributions in support of this newsletter and the 60th reunion celebration. We couldn't have done it without the generous support of all of you. **Please make future donation checks payable to "Austin 1955 Reunion Ltd."**, and mail them to our Treasurer, ***Irwin Magad***: 3714 Monticeto Circle, Mundelein, IL 60060. **Ladies, your maiden name on your checks helps.**

WE WILL GO ON!! Your reunion committee, minus ***Genny (Luisi) Schroeder***, who was having surgery that very day, and ***Jim Padar***, who is doing cardiac rehabilitation for the next few weeks, gathered on October 23rd to review the 60th reunion events, plan the next newsletter, and decide whether or not it was time to close up shop. Based on all the positive feedback we received, we agreed unanimously that we will continue as a group on a year to year basis, to facilitate communication among members of the Austin Class of 1955, and plan outings and events that our classmates will enjoy. We welcome suggestions from the class for future activities.

Good friends are like quilts - they age with you, yet never lose their warmth."

IN MEMORIAM:

We were saddened to learn recently of the passing on February 9, 2015, of **Vincent Bogden** in Fitchburg, WI. His beautiful obituary describes a very special person, a man of many talents and interests, who touched many lives in a positive way. Vince is survived by his wife, Barbara (Sundt) Bogden; children: Lisa (Bogden) Regenold, Marc Bogden, Gwyn (Bogden) Friedl, and Kristin (Bogden) DeLorme; eight grandchildren; and nine great-grandchildren. Our hearts go out to Barbara and the family. See more at:

http://www.gazettextra.com/20150212/vincent_bogden_madison_wi_1937_2015#sthash.oRFCUnhE.dpuf

We also received this note from Ellen Varvitsiotes McAdam: "I'm just dropping you a line to tell you my dad **Peter Varvitsiotes** passed away 4/17/15. He was a happy man as anyone who knew him would tell you. He suffered many ills for the past 10 plus years. Finally he was able to be with my mom again. My mom, **Jane (Peggy) Leakakos Varvitsiotes**, passed on 4/24/1997. We loved and miss them both terribly. May their memories be eternal." Peter is survived by daughter Ellen (John) McAdam, grand-daughter Caitlyn McAdam, son George Varvitsiotes, grandson Peter II (J'me), and great-grand-daughter Jillian. We extend our deepest sympathy to the Varvitsiotes family.

Jack's Restaurant, Skokie's 'cornucopia of real Americana,' closed after 50 years:

Father and son Jack and George Koretos have been operating the restaurant together for years, but recently announced plans to close the diner at the end of August. The news comes at the disappointment of Jack's longtime customers, who have come to know the place as an institution in a modern world where diners are now mostly a nostalgic piece of the past. With a long row of barstools lining a shiny counter and friendly longtime employees serving up fresh drip-coffee and classic American meals, Jack's on Touhy holds a special place in the hearts of its regular customers. [Pioneer Press] Another bit of Americana bites the dust.

A Case of Mistaken Identity:

As the story goes, Christopher Columbus mistook a group of three manatees for mermaids on his first journey to the Americas. "They are not so beautiful as they are said to be," he wrote in his journal, "for their faces had some masculine traits." [National Parks Magazine – Spring 2015]

GOOD-BYE TO THE SMITH BROTHERS:

Smith Bros., the iconic Chicago-based cough drop brand that relaunched under new owners two years ago, has ceased production and is dissolving its assets after a failed comeback bid. The bearded faces of the Smith brothers still gazed stoically from a sign above the entrance to the shuttered factory at 3501 W. 48th Place in the Brighton Park neighborhood this week, overseeing a desolate industrial complex that will soon be on the block to the highest bidder. Everything is set to be auctioned off by year's end, including the trademarked likenesses of the Smith brothers themselves, as the New York-based owner, private equity firm York Capital Management, looks to recoup some of its losses. About 250 employees worked at the 160,000-square-foot brick factory at the end of last year. Only a skeleton crew of 15 remains as operations wind down. [Chicago Tribune 10-7-15]

DID YOU KNOW? Fruitcake was often included as an integral part to a successful afterlife for Ancient Egyptians. One quarter of all the candy sold annually in the U.S. is purchased for Halloween.

LINDA & IRWIN MAGAD IN SPAIN: Our trip began on April 30th, with a flight from Chicago to New York JFK, where we connected with our flight to Barcelona, Spain. We left on time and were about an hour into our flight when the Captain announced that there was a problem with one of the engines on this two engine plane (just what you want to hear). The de-icing device in that engine was not working properly, so he was returning to New York. When we arrived at JFK, we were told that we would be put on another plane after they fed us at the food court in the airport. We notified our family by text messaging and went on with our traveling.

Upon arrival in Barcelona on May 1, we were greeted at the airport by our prearranged driver. He took us to our hotel, where we met up with our 24 year old grandson. Jeremy had been working in Madrid for nine months and had come to join us in Barcelona for four days. Our driver told us that there were demonstrations going on right by our hotel, and that he could get us within a couple of blocks, but we would have to walk the rest of the way with our luggage (three bags full). He would guide us. When we got within three blocks of the hotel, he parked and we walked through the demonstration, which was orderly (lots of police were there), and arrived safely at our hotel. Jeremy greeted us in the lobby. He looked wonderful.

Our next adventure occurred after we went to our room, changed clothes, took a walking tour of the city, and had lunch. We were told by our driver and by the hotel staff to watch out for pickpockets. Well, we walked and ate and returned to the hotel, where Linda discovered that her wallet was missing. Jeremy called the restaurant where we had dined, and they had found the wallet on the floor where we were sitting. How it got there, we don't know, but when we got it back, everything was intact. Money, credit cards, everything. Lucky for us!

May 3rd was a full day of touring in Barcelona. We awoke at 6:00 a.m., had a buffet breakfast in the hotel, and caught a taxi to Park Güell. This is a public park system composed of gardens and architectonic elements located on Carmel Hill in Barcelona. This is an area where Count [Eusebi Güell](#) and renowned architect [Antoni Gaudí](#) were going to build an upper class housing project at the beginning of the 20th century. Güell backed out of the deal and Gaudi built only two homes, one of which he lived in. The park is beautiful, and many structures designed by Gaudi still remain. The park was built between 1900 and 1914 and was officially opened in 1926. In 1984, [UNESCO](#) declared the park a [World Heritage Site](#) under "[Works of Antoni Gaudí](#)".^[1]

We left the park and went to Basilica de la Sagrada Familia. This church is still under construction and has spires over 60 meters tall and they are looking to go as high as 110 meters. The inside and outside are a breathtaking style of construction we had never seen before. Check it out in Google. Inside the Church we all felt a sense of holiness. Just beautiful!

Two days later, we flew to Seville and Jeremy left to return to Madrid, where he was teaching English as a second language. Having Jeremy with us made getting around and ordering food very easy; he speaks Spanish like a native. In Seville, we were without our trusty guide and interpreter, but we managed. Our prearranged driver (who spoke English) picked us up at the airport and took us to our hotel, which was walking distance from the Plaza de Espana. We had the day to ourselves, so we walked through this historic area, where we spotted a Flamenco dancer accompanied by a young man playing the guitar. She was very good and was wearing a beautiful dress appropriate to her dancing. They had the guitar case opened for anyone who wished to drop in a few Euros. We did. We then went to a restaurant to have some Tapas and Vino. This was in an area known as Calle Mateos Gago, which has a long line of bars and restaurants just for this type of food. While in Spain, we dined in several restaurants, and the food here is really special.

The next day, we went on a day tour from Seville to Alhambra. What an historic area this was! Calat Alhambra is a palace and fortress complex located in Granada, Andalusia, Spain, built in 889 and renovated and rebuilt in the mid-13th century by the Moorish emir Mohammed be Al-Ahmar of the Emirate of Granada. It was converted into a royal palace in 1333 by Yusuf I, Sultan of Granada. The beauty and detail of everything we saw there was incredible.

If you've never been there, be sure to put this on your bucket list. And, you'd better do it soon, because there is a great deal of walking and not all on level ground. We stayed in Seville for four days and then went by high speed train to Madrid, the capital of Spain. We traveled the 329.5 miles from Seville to Madrid at speeds up to 200 MPH or more. Arriving in Madrid, we re-joined our grandson and spent another four days in Madrid, a city of elegant boulevards, manicured parks, Prado Museum by Goya, and the Royal Palace. One of the highlights in Madrid was one evening when Jeremy took us to one of his favorite dessert places that sold Spanish style Churros. They come with a large cup of bittersweet hot chocolate. You dip the Churros into the hot chocolate and enjoy. Yummy!

On Friday night, Jeremy took us via taxi to a synagogue he had been attending. Linda and I were not happy to see the security around and inside, with armed police and secret police. The building did not even look like a synagogue; it looked like a plain one-story office building. We were very lucky, because that night was sponsored by the family of a 13 year old boy who was to become a Bar Mitzvah the next day. The young man ran the entire service with the help of an acting Rabbi. Nice! We will not soon forget our wonderful experiences in Spain.

THOUGHTS TO PONDER:

"Years may wrinkle the skin, but giving up enthusiasm wrinkles the soul." - Unknown

"Borrow money from pessimists – they don't expect it back." - Unknown

"Happiness is good health and a bad memory." – Ingrid Bergman

"Who says nothing is impossible? Some people do it every day!" - Unknown

"Almost everything will work again if you unplug it for a few minutes, including you." - Unknown

"Start by doing what's necessary; then do what's possible; and suddenly you are doing the impossible." - St. Francis of Assisi~

"Just as iron rusts from disuse, so does inaction spoil the intellect." ~Leonardo da Vinci~

"If you are going through hell, keep going." ~Winston Churchill~

As You Slide Down the Banister of Life Toward 2016, Remember:

The difference between the Pope and your boss: the Pope only expects you to kiss his ring.

My mind works like lightning, one brilliant Flash and it is gone.

The only time the world beats a path to your door is when you're in the bathroom.

A husband is someone who, after taking the trash out, gives the impression that he just cleaned the whole house.

My next house will have no kitchen - just vending machines and a large trash can.

Definition of a teenager: God's punishment ... for enjoying sex.

Be who you are and say what you feel ... because those that matter don't mind ... and those that mind don't matter!

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 #103; Brooklyn Park, MN 55443-2972*

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