

An IVHS Alumni blast from the past

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IVN Contributing Writer

This year’s Illinois Valley High School Alumni Weekend from June 30 to July 2 brought with it several special events and surprises. IVHS graduating classes from years ending in 3 and 8 flooded local businesses with smiles and hugs, allowing themselves the opportunity to catch up with old friends and reminisce about simpler times. Most notably, the class of 1973 celebrated their 50-year reunion, and the classes of 2007 and 2008 opened their middle school time capsule.

On June 30, the

outdoor seating area of Taylor’s Country Store was packed with members of the class of 1973, who had hung a banner in the area to commemorate the historic events that had occurred during their senior year. Classmates traveled from all areas, some from as far away as Florida, in order to reconnect.

Those in attendance got to enjoy a barbecue on the porch, with a specially designed menu courtesy of Taylor’s. Fifty years may have gone by since the group graduated, but when they gathered together it became abundantly clear that the class of ’73 still has plenty of youthful energy left in them.

The class of 2008 held their 15- year reunion on Saturday, July 1, at the Wild River Pizza Deli. While many people had stayed in contact with one another through social media to some extent, the energy in the room was high as everybody mingled and caught up with one another. Though there was a substantial turnout, the room was missing quite a few people who had been unable to join the fun due to travel limitations or other life circumstances. There was also a table set up by the door with photographs of classmates who had passed away and could only be there in spirit, a sobering

reminder of how fragile life can truly be.

This reunion included a special surprise- the opening of the time capsule that had been buried before Lorna Byrne Middle School was rebuilt in 2003. With the help of now-retired science teacher Tim Talty, the classes of 2007 and 2008 had written letters to their future selves and left a variety of items for them to rediscover as adults.

Donning his white lab coat for old time’s sake, Talty, who taught at Lorna Byrne for 20 years, told the eager crowd “I can’t believe this is happening! This is

amazing!” before diligently coming up with a system so that everybody could receive their items in the least chaotic fashion. He began to take bags of items out of the large, black box, calling individual names to streamline the process and gleefully handing his former students their belongings. Many of those in attendance could not remember what they had placed into the capsule all those years ago, but a variety of things- ranging from photographs and old newspapers to Pokemon cards and melted candy- were unearthed and examined. Letters were read, most of them privately, with some laughter

ringing through the room and some tears being shed as many revisited a part of themselves that they had not seen for twenty years- their own youthful innocence. Talty’s former students were even able to gather around and watch a VHS tape full of old memories and interviews with their past selves.

Whether their childhood dreams had been realized into adulthood, or if they’d crafted new hopes and dreams along the way, the 2007 and 2008 alumni gave themselves the unique opportunity to travel back in time, even if it was only for a brief moment.



Class of 1973



Class of 2008

(Photos above from Lindsay Martinho for the Illinois Valley News)

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