

RHS 50th Class Reunion

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By Jim Speirs

a flood of memories to reappear. Thoughts, events and personalities which had been lost or suppressed for decades came to the surface; hidden fantasies floated from the recesses of long ago dreams swirling like mists from a fairy tale. For me and perhaps for me alone, given the way I think, it was almost like I could levitate and become an invisible spectator, hovering above the crowd and nodding in silent agreement as my classmates became one after a fifty year hiatus.

I was jealous of some of my friends. Some had the ability to remain emotionally unattached; for them it was simply a gathering of a bunch of aging classmates, brought together for one last hurrah. Some of us had zero to discuss, as we had never been close in school, therefore a meeting only had meaning because of the setting and if we'd passed on the street, there would be no recognition. Still, there were so many of us, it felt like I was a pachinko ball bouncing from cushion to cushion, seldom having time to say more than a few words, then moving on.

Not surprisingly, some encounters took on special meaning, or had a unique quality to it. A few of us shared some things exclusive to us. We could (and did) smile a secret grin, a silent acknowledgment that signaled we both were thinking the same thought without speaking a word. It was fun; for the posturing that surrounded the dance of emotion and reflection was not concealed, yet the collective memory im-

possible to hide. And, at this point and at this time, what was the need? What was to hide? Our facial expressions said it all - yes, I remember, and so do you! "Hey", I said to one girl (no names here, as I've always been pretty good at keeping secrets,) "do you remember that drive-in we went to...?" "Yes", the blushing woman said, I can't believe we actually did that! I couldn't resist the opening, and said, "Well, I've got an old 66' Plymouth and there's still one remaining drive-in in Newberg, are you up for a replay?" A laugh and a hug let us both know two things: one, I was kidding and next, it was fun to carry those secrets of youth and time at RHS in our memory bank.

As the night progressed, we actually gathered in groups that were distinguished by grade schools we'd attended. My school, Chief Joseph had the fewest people of any grade school. Because of the boundaries of the day, half that school went to Jefferson and the others to Roosevelt. Pictures were taken and classmates dug further into their memory chest to dig up remnants of a time and place fragmented by decades of forgotten events and long gone friends. Time pushed on and as grade school buddies tried in vain to reconstruct a mosaic of lost pieces of their youth, the clocked ticked away.

The smoky sky had turned black with night and after a meal and a quiz designed to jog the memories of those in attendance, the numbers began to thin out. At first, it was not too noticeable, but inevi-

tably the question of "where's this guy or girl" came to pass. They had left and for me it wasn't just their leaving that made me return to my thought process. It wasn't enough to say "she left", but it was (for me) the knowledge that we weren't simply leaving the reunion; we were leaving many of us for the last time. People shook hands, promises of social media connections were made, some hugs and tears were part of the departure. I thought of Cinderella and as the clocked ticked toward midnight, the magic slipper of time and youth began to slide from our clothing. Beneath it all was the nagging fear and certainty of finality; a coming to grips with the same age old question that haunts all of us..."where did time go? It was supposed to happen to others, but not to us!"

As many readers know, I've always thought Roosevelt - the school and the graduates are unique. The size of our alumni group confirms it as does the passion of our neighborhood. Still, I'm guessing many other schools have the same feeling, so maybe I'm totally off base. None of that matters now and reality dictates a total change in demographics, educational standards and identity with our school. Now is not the time or place to delve into the quagmire of dysfunctional devolution that's become bane of the public educational system here and elsewhere. Now, I want exclusively to capture a brief moment when RHS had meaning and the class of 1965 felt we were unstoppable.

What I want to say is once, a long time ago, we actually felt the

school, or at least we thought we did. Were we different? Were we the last of a dying America? We can easily identify with the movie American Graffiti but we all know our connection with what we now witness usually causes us to shake our heads in disbelief. Does every generation feel the same way? For me, I would have liked to take each person I saw at the reunion and travel with them back to RHS, where we'd stay forever young and our biggest worry was getting money for the drive-in. I think I'm too lost to cerebral fantasy to come close to catching what all the RHS kids felt. I don't know... really, I don't know.

I titled this piece, "Not Too Long Ago"; this was a very little known song from a group called the *Uniques*, in the spring of 1965. It got very little air time, and for the last 50 years, I've wondered why? I loved the song; the theme, rhythm, tempo and design of the song always seemed to capture who we were. As mentioned in my open, I'm hopelessly romantic. But, if any of you reading this want to know why, go on your computers and find the song; a guy named Chuck Benjamin has a grainy video of the group. I hope it resonates with all of you.

Thanks for the memories,
- Jim -

Jim is a lifelong resident of North Portland.

If you would like to respond to his article or have memories you'd like to share too with readers, send them to reviewnewspaper@gmail.com.

Coyotes rumored to be

By Barbara Quinn

There have been recent rumors of coyote sightings in the St. Johns neighborhood near Fessenden Street. It is good to keep in mind urban coyotes pose little threat to humans though residents should be aware of their presence and especially careful about leaving food out that might attract them. It is never a good idea to feed wild animals intentionally or inadvertently since abnormal or aggressive behavior is most often associated with unnatural food sources. It is best to learn to live peaceably with wildlife including coyotes.

According to a study of urban coyotes in Chicago, the animals prefer to be active at night when humans are near. The study disclosed that the largest part of their diet consists of rodents and to a lesser degree rabbits. Both species' numbers become unnaturally high when there are no predators. In fact, Rodents are far more dangerous to us since they can carry transmittable diseases. The population of urban coyotes in an urban setting most likely correlates with the population of rodents present. The study also disclosed that a sizable 25% of the animal's diet consists of



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