

Falling into a tuba is no excuse to miss your class reunion

BY NED HICKSON
News Media Corporation

When it comes to receiving unsolicited material in the mail, few things are more frightening than an invitation to your 30th high school reunion.

Except maybe a voodoo doll made from your own clothes and hair.

The difference, of course, is that high school reunions don't come along every day. And while a voodoo doll is certainly unsettling, it's not as unsettling as talking with someone who remembers what you looked like in really tight parachute pants. Not that I ever wore any. I'm just saying, in the 80s, a lot of people did. And there's a chance someone who looked like me might've been wearing a pair when — after losing circulation in his legs and buttocks — he fell headfirst into the tuba section during a homecoming game.

The truth is, all of us had embarrassing moments in high school. That's what made those years so memorable, and why now, when we gather to re-live those special times as adults, we do so within the general vicinity of an open bar. This is especially true if, like me, you made the mistake of looking back through your yearbook the night before the reunion — an experience that can prove more traumatic than high school itself.

After looking through it, I just kept reminding myself that times have changed. I've matured. Experienced life. Made my own way in the world. No one would ever recognize me as the geek I once was.

Especially since today's geek is 25 pounds heavier. And with less hair. Except

for around my ears and nostrils, which, for some reason, have suddenly kicked into high gear, producing enough hair to qualify as my body's primary cold-weather defense. If you don't think God has a sense of humor, this has to at least make you wonder.

However, if you're looking for undeniable proof of your high school geekiness, look no further than your prom photos. If that doesn't work, then look at mine. It's amazing how perspectives change. At the time, I thought I looked like James Bond in my tuxedo when, in fact, I actually looked like an undernourished waiter caught in a bump-and-grind while trying to sneak bologna from the snack table. I've never been a good dancer (and by this I mean someone who is a danger to himself and others), and thanks to our high school yearbook staff, this frightening display has been documented as far back as 1984.

They say the past makes us who we are today. Because of this, I plan to attend my reunion. It will be a chance to re-connect with those who, regardless of who we were then and now, I will always have a bond with through that shared experience. It will also be a chance to share that part of my past with wife.

Plus according to my therapist, it could go a long way in helping me overcome my phobia of tuba players and parachute pants.

Ned is a syndicated columnist with News Media Corporation. His book, Humor at the Speed of Life, is available online at Port Hole Publications, Amazon Books and Barnes & Noble. Write to him at nedhickson@icloud.com

PARK

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night lighting and security cameras and no smoking signs and completion of the interior of the park's bell tower.

The report also spells out improvements that could be made to the park's "maintenance regime," including repair of the flagstones, the possible official renaming of the park to "Opal Whiteley Park" from "All-America City Square" and maintenance of clean restrooms.

City Planner Amanda Ferguson said the public may not have previously been aware of the planned addition of some of the changes. Security cameras have already been purchased and

should be installed there soon, she said; the City had already planned to finish the tower, and a City intern had been enlisted to craft interpretive signage. The City will also look for a quote to gauge the cost of refurbishing the mural.

Ferguson also said that the City's Public Works crew can execute much of the work itself, though most updates will not occur until traffic in the park slows this winter.

The park plan will be submitted to the City Council at its June 27 meeting; in the meantime, the report is available on the City's website, cottagetrove.org.

T&T

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The family enjoys watching Fuzzy waiting, as they drive into the driveway, then running up to greet them. They just wish that at night she wouldn't leave her prestigious paw prints all over their car!

The family's white and black spotted family bunny, Lyric, is not bothered by Fuzzy's presence. (On a fun note, Lyric's spots are shaped like perfect musical notes!)

Rebecca laughed when asked to be interviewed about her rental house's Fuzzy accessory because, "We have our own pets and this article is all about our notorious stray!"

A whimsical fact is that when the Angel Scibe family adopted a rescued ancient Himalayan cat, they named her Mini Purrl in honor of our neighborhood's fur-rendly Queen.

TIPS

Use rubber gloves to pick up pet fur off FUR-niture and clothes.

Stretch an old T-shirt over a cardboard box leaving the shirt's neck as the opening for a door for pets to nest in.

Cut a 1 inch opening on the side of an empty water bottle, place kibble in it and let pets play for their treats.

Place cat toys into a bag with

cat nip. Shake. Serve!

Cut a few rows of 1" holes into a 4" tall cardboard box lid (shoe boxes are purr-fect). Cut the back side out of the box. Hot glue a toy mouse to a stick. Wiggle the mouse inside the box from another cut-out door for the cat to hit it for its own mousey Jack-in-the-Box.

The best way to bond with a pet is to play with it.

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