

THE OWLETTE DISPATCH

Fresno High School Class of 1958

Newsletter No. 9

Fall 2007

In Memoriam

Since the last issue, we discovered the following classmates are no longer with us. Charles Van Valkenburgh, approx 1995. John "Jack" Romano, approx 1998. Yvonne Mason Lyman, June, 2007. Chris Bolin, August, 2007.

DATE SET FOR 50TH REUNION

From Buddy Arakelian

Our 50th reunion will be held on Saturday, September 20, 2008. There will be a brunch for class members only in the morning and a dinner in the evening which will include spouses and guests. There will be a golf tournament on Friday, September 19.

We consider the 50th reunion to be a milestone event and we wanted to inform classmates a full year in advance so they could start making plans.

We looked at many places, including country clubs, outdoor facilities and even the Fresno High cafeteria. In the end we decided on a banquet facility called Grand Occasions for both the brunch and the dinner. The staff was the most helpful of any place we visited and we were able to obtain a double size banquet room which would give us much more space than any place we have had in the past. Several of us have attended functions there and all were satisfied with the quality of their service.

The reunion committee is going all out to make this the best reunion ever. I hope that all classmates will be able to attend at least one event. I know that some people are uncomfortable about attending the dinner. Well, I have good news for you: at our last reunion there were more classmates at the brunch than at the dinner. The total number of people at the dinner was greater because of spouses

and guests. But, the brunch, which was open only to classmates, had a few more classmates in attendance. If you go to both the brunch and the dinner, you will have an opportunity to see everybody, but, if you go to the brunch only, you will still have a great time. In other words, we have something for everybody.

We will have more information on the 50th when we send out invitations, including preferred hotels for classmates.

I'm still keeping my hopes up that we will have a lot of classmates who have not been to a reunion in a long time, and also classmates who have never been to a reunion. Just imagine, seeing classmates you haven't seen for 50 years. It's almost like a heavenly experience, but its here and it's now.

A fund is being set up to help classmates who may not have the means to attend our 50th reunion. If you feel you qualify for this, please contact Buddy at one of his contacts listed under the board member listing. All inquiries will be confidential.



Grand Occasions Ballroom

JAMES' JABBER

By James Palmer



Being a small, isolated, agricultural town in between mega cities like Los Angeles and San Francisco hampered Fresno's expansion of entertainment without doubt. Although Fresno had its share of celebrities over the years, many went elsewhere to follow a career.

I mention a number of activities happening during the forties and fifties. Movie theatres were: Warnors with the pipe organ set up, White, Wilson, Hardys, Kinema, Sequoia, Crest, Tower, Motor-in and Sunset drive-ins.

Ryans Arena had been known to the "Boxing World" for decades. Many trained there and well-known matches were held there---even pro wrestling events happened there.

Barnum and Bailey Circus came in annually to perform at the Memorial Auditorium on Fresno Street. I recall tumbling down the grass hill on its west side for hours was fun. "Mom, I fell off my bike and got dirty"... 'Yeah, I know,' she said. The Harlem Globe Trotters also played games there. Geece Ozby was one player on that team. I saw them play in Hawaii when Meadow Lark Lemon joined the team.

Local baseball had a well known team named The Fresno Cardinals who had a good record as a minor league farm team of The St. Louis Cardinals. A woman's softball team named The Fresno Rockets won a Worlds Title.

On Fresno and Olive Streets was a military-like Quonset hut building with an ice rink in it. People could skate there and see the Fresno Falcons play minor league hockey. I fell, got soaking wet, sprained my ankles and decided, "I will take four-wheel skates next time."

Fresno State College played their home football games at Ratcliffe Stadium on Blackstone, as well as our Alma Mater. It seemed crazy to see so many limp off the field.

The West Coast Relays was a May event held at Ratcliffe for track and field. Many athletes competed to place themselves on the Olympic Team statistics. Rafer Johnson and Bob Mathias were two of many who competed.

Two local parks were available then. Roeding was in the city and Kearney was in the county. The Fresno City Zoo was at Roeding and I remember school children collected pennies to help bring Nosey, the elephant as an attraction. She passed away not long ago.

A racing stadium on Kearney Boulevard had been in use for sometime.

If you attended a race there you sat on wooden bleachers. Racing included motorcycles, midgets, jalopies, hard tops, modified hardtops, stock cars and more. Do you remember these famous names: Vukovich, Pombo, Sargeant and some guy who went to FHS named Duane Woodward who competed there? I lost my class ring at that track and Marshall Sargeant ran over it.

After "dragging the main" (Fulton Street at the time) the evening would not be over without visiting a drive-in restaurant. Stan's on Broadway was number one it seemed and the carhops rolled out on skates. Remember Stan's Private Line broadcast on Saturday nights? I think Sam Schwann was the DJ and you could call in requests for songs. The Imperial was on the S.W. corner of Belmont and Palm; next to it was the Barrel that had very good root beer. Mars was on the N. W. corner of Belmont and Palm and Reed and Bell was on Belmont and Echo. Hey Dick, remember our lunches there in your '57 Chevrolet? The Alaska was on Belmont and San Pablo. So, how many places did I miss?

See you at our Golden number 50 reunion.



ANOTHER FRIDAY NIGHT

By Rich Ballow

It wasn't the Bunny Hug, Charleston or Turkey-trot. It was however, the Bunny Hop, Fox-trot and a west coast version of the Jitterbug---called Swing. And, boy could we swing! Wrap your gal's arm around her waist, spin her out like a yo-yo until you stopped her at arm's length and then pull her in again. Round and round, circle skirt flying---we had more fun than a "barrel of . . ." Well, you get the picture.



Then we would do the Bunny Hop snaking around the room in long lines, giggling, laughing and pretty much acting our age. . . hop, hop, hop!

After that it was time for the slow dances. It was snuggle and hug, cheek to cheek, to the romance music of Les Baxter's "Unchained Melody" and the Platters' "My Prayer." We would glide so smoothly over the wax dusted floor, so close as to cast but a single shadow, whispering silly nothings in each other's ear.

From the darkened ballroom sparkling from the flashes of light thrown from a slow turning, spot lit mirrored globe on the ceiling, the dancers' identities nearly indiscernible in the dim light, this sea of teenage lovers danced on into the night. Veiled inner thoughts as indiscernible as the dancing forms themselves concealed tales that can only be imagined. Meanwhile Nat King Cole crooned on and sentimental memories were in the making. These moments were sweet indeed.

SENIOR WORLD SERIES

By Tom Marsella

Our team is gearing up for this year's World Series again which is played on the lovely major league spring training diamonds in Phoenix. My team mates are from 11 different states. We use the wooden bats and play regulation ball in the 65+ bracket.

Actually, this last year a team pitched a one hitter against us. Some of the fellas have played major league ball before. Jose Canseco (Oakland) plays in a younger group as does Saberhagen, a one time pitcher in the majors.

I classify myself as an average player who gets lucky at the plate now and then. So very blessed to be able to play at all.

I am sending in my application to try out for the California Senior Games in track to hopefully qualify for the Senior Olympics in SF in 2009. Hope the track is down hill.

Editor's note: Tom's son Darin, who is married to **Vic Lamanuzzi's** daughter, Janene, recently "shipped out" to the Gulf with his Naval Reserve Special Weapons Unit assisting the Navy SEALs. Tom

has been active in supporting troops in the Middle East by frequently sending Jelly Bellies in large boxes to be shared by our armed forces. The Navy in Lemoore is so grateful for the Jelly Bellies Tom supplies their troops, that they are sending him on the carrier USS Nimitz from the last leg of its return duty in Iraq leaving from Hawaii September 24.



50th REUNION MEMORY BOOK

Grace Masuda (lives in L.A.) has volunteered to create the Memory Book for our 50th class reunion. She is looking for someone who can import photos into her Word documents or has experience with Photoshop. She is also looking for resources in printing the book so we can watch the cost of production. Contact her at masutani@earthlink.net and include "FHS '58" in the subject line.

UPDATE FROM FRIENDS

Marcia Fisher..... has written a book on healing. She will let us know when it is published

Janice MacDonald Martin.....John (John Martin, Class of `56) and I look forward to all our reunions. I've never missed one. I would love to see **Lonna Enos**. We shared an apartment for a few months after high school. It was good to see her name in the newsletter.

Pat Cobb Veatch.....I have enjoyed the many issues of the Owlette Dispatch. I recognize so many names and do enjoy reading about them. I will admit that some names I haven't heard before. Hi to all for me and look forward to seeing all for the reunion

Wayne Palmer.....I really appreciate what you and others are doing in keeping up with communication of class members. Of course I will be there next year for the 50th. Pretty amazing that I'm even writing that number, don't you think?

Hollie Johnsey LenrootI was most happy to have my newsletter arrive in my mailbox after so many years. I thank you so much for your hard work. Please know that it is appreciated.

Arlene Mazgedian Cartozian How good it was to receive our most recent class newsletter. With good health we can enjoy the happy times ahead as well as the memories of our shared past.

Helen Nordeman FordI enjoyed the newsletter as usual. I love hearing about what's going on with my classmates. It is my plan to attend the 50th. Thank you so much for all that you and the committee do to keep us all informed and together

Vic Manzullo..... I enjoy getting the newsletter. It must be a lot of work for everyone who puts it together. Thanks to all of you for your hard work. Maybe I'll get to the 50th if my health holds out.

Barbara Miller SanneThanks for the wonderful job with the newsletters. They are most welcome and fun to read and recognize familiar names.

Bette Buell Presley.....Thanks for all you have done for FHS Class of `58. I look forward to receiving each Owlette Dispatch.

MEMORIES OF HIGH SCHOOL

I do have one memory that I'll share. I think it was in our Junior year and I went out for the intramural wrestling program. **Norman Kohl** and **Dennis McCauley** were both good friends of mine who were on the Varsity Wrestling Team and had shown me various moves. What I did not know was that Dennis had shown another intramural wrestler a countermove to something he had taught me. When I went for my move, my opponent had me on my back with nowhere to go within a nano second-it was a beautiful pin. Thanks a lot, Dennis....**Jerry Boggs**.

When looking back, I think I remember people more than events. Over the years I have realized why the memory of certain people stayed with me, I guess you could say I was forming my values. I was impressed by those who were kind, generous, and funny, and could look you straight in the eye and show respect.

My most vivid memory is of Mr. Kinzel. For awhile, I wanted to be Mrs. Kinzel (a little denial about the fact he already had a wife). Fortunately, I loved the French language, and studied hard to make a good impression. I thought he treated us like adults, and was kind and respectful. Not to mention I loved being referred to as "Mademoiselle", instead of "Boobs", a name that made me want to carry my books over my chest. He could also be tough when needed and always seemed fair to me. To this day, I can still speak fractured French with a modicum of ease. I'm sure I could get by very well in the south of France. Thank you Monsieur, wherever you are.....

Linda Weems Tyler

My memories of Fresno High School are long ago; but sweet. I enjoyed the Sci-Engineers club and I was one of the "tall, dark and handsome" shepherds in the Christmas Pageant, **Gloria**. My wife, Donna Shreckengaust, played the **mother** in **Amahl and the Night Visitors**, **Fiona** in **Brigadoon** and she was also in **Down in the Valley** while I was at Fresno High. Our son and daughter are successful and we are content. God bless you all. I cannot believe it has been 50 years. As for me, I am still "bright eyed and bushy tailed" and work full time as a Nuclear Medicine Technologist II at CRMC. God Bless.....**Loren Matlock**

OUR HERITAGE

By Guy Shannon

Starting out in Fresno and then venturing to other parts of the State, there was something that drew me back to this place of origin and the old neighborhood of Fresno High. Living across the street from the school as a child, I looked at this place with awe because it meant I was a grownup, which is what every kid wants to be. And as I grow (ahem!) older, I am thinking more and more about our Fresno High School family that goes way back. My mother, then Gertrude Hines, with her older brother and younger sisters would ride a wagon all the way in from Fowler and Shields. The girls would go to Fresno High School, and the brother to Fresno State. This generation is where my own Fresno High family started; and I bet you will remember and know many of the family names from back in 1917.

The old school was still standing then and was quite magnificent. And as I look at the students in the OWL of that year, I see many familiar names that may be related to members of our own class, or otherwise known to the history of our city. Blasingame (how about that great cattleman Knox B.); Chandler (or Chandler field); Cowan (does music ring a bell); Leon Cranmer (Susan and Sally Cranmer); George Emerzian (Carol Emerzian); Elizabeth Hansen (Neil Hansen); Roxie Markarian (Frank Markarian); William Newman (Arlene Newman); Robert Porter (Marcia Porter); Claude Rowe (Claude Rowe); Edward Sarkisian; Leola Shaver (lets go to the lake); Joy Threlkeld (Robert); Fern Weaver (Lola); Suren Casparian (Who could that be?); John Gray (I don't think in our class, but do you know that Orphan Annie was a real person named Anne Gray?); Harry Sample (of that great family in Clovis); Ellis Thorwaldson (went on to be Fresno County Sheriff); Fanny Craycroft was in the Tennis Club (Craycroft bricks – used in many of our schools and buildings).

All this took place when Fresno was just a town and almost all of the businesses were downtown. There was a Chinese Cemetery back on the Northwest corner of the school (now covered over with a baseball field). Some of the OWL sponsors were: Bank of Italy (now Bank of America) – the old building is still there at Tulare and Fresno; Blackstone was a street (St.); Hume Printing, Coopers, Homan & Co., Levy Bros, Twining Labs, The Warner Company, Heald's College, Sun-Maid Raisins, Lisle Brothers and Harry Coffee's. You could reach these businesses by calling a 4 digit number, like 1010. But, that was 90 years ago!

Next time, we'll go back to 1916 and visit such names as Aloojian, Buckner, Coombs, Dau, Hartman, Kawasaki, Kazanjian and Kellogg, Kurkjian, Peckinpah, Pollard, Sweet, Weimert, and more. We have a great heritage.

NO LONGER LOST

Since our last newsletter, we have made contact with these classmates who were previously listed as lost.

Florence Brown Smith-McClurg, Art Dunn, Shirley Gresco Brown, Dee Revolinsky Gonsalves, Dean Reynolds, Melvin Tucker, Bruce Ursenback, George Volz-King and Lola Weaver Honn.



TH

REUNION CELEBRATION



\$20



Friday golf



Picture taking

Memory book



Campus Tour



Dinner

\$50

WALL OF CHAMPIONS

The first annual dinner is scheduled for Wednesday, October 10th at Pardini's banquet hall on West Shaw and North Van Ness Blvd. in Fresno.

An induction ceremony will honor this first group of ex-warrior athletes to be voted onto the "Wall of Champions" by the Fresno High Alumni Association selection committee. The main goal of the dinner and "The Wall of Champions" is to instill in the present generation a sense of awareness and pride in the great sports history and legacy of the athletes, coaches and teams of Fresno High School, "School of Champions."

For questions regarding nominations or the dinner, please contact Jim Fugman at 559-434-2484, or e-mail: jfugman84@comcast.net or check out the alumni web site for nominations form and dinner reservations form. That web address is www.fresnohighalumni.com. I would suspect there may be 1958 athletes inducted this first time around, don't you?

REUNION GOLF TOURNAMENT

By Lyn Darby Maloney



GET YOUR GOLF CLUBS READY for our first-ever Golf Tournament to be held on Friday, September 19, 2008, the day before our 50th FHS Class of '58 Reunion brunch and dinner. This event is open to classmates, their spouses and/or significant others. You may sign up as couples or as a single. Details will appear in our next newsletter but we request that

you please let us know as soon as possible if you would be interested in playing. We need at least 16 to 20 players in order to proceed with planning this event. Please contact **Jim Maloney** (co-chair) at 559 439-7525 or email him at fresnomullion1@aol.com, or call **Donna Pedroncelli Firpo** (co-chair) at 559 439-6428. You don't need an established handicap to take part in the tournament. This will be a great opportunity to reconnect with fellow classmates!

ALASKAN VACATION



Lyn Darby Maloney and Jim Maloney spent 16 days this summer in Alaska and are pictured here with some of the Sockeye (red) salmon caught on the Kenai River. They also brought home halibut caught in the Cook Inlet off the Kenai Peninsula.

MOVING AWAY

By Vernie Morison Rehart

In January, my doctor told me that the smog in the Valley was wrecking havoc with my lungs and that I needed to leave. So began a process that found me, at the end of June, living with my daughter Kate and her family in Oregon City, OR, where the air is clean. Talk about a major life change! After years of living alone, now I'm part of a family again. It's wonderful to see my granddaughter everyday and to have the time with my daughter and son-in-law. I'm enjoying this very much. I also am able to breathe more normally...taking a deep breath is now possible...it's amazing how we take such things for granted until we can't do them. Now I give thanks for the deep breaths. My children not only gave me a bedroom, but also a room for an office, so I'm writing everyday...the KMJ stories keep me busy and the Fresno County Sesquicentennial book went to the printers...so work is still going on. I am enjoying my new life, but homesickness has really set in. I never dreamed I'd leave Fresno and I miss it terribly, but, most of all, I miss all my friends--especially my FHS classmates. I'll be coming home from time to time and hope I'll see you then.

Notification

Please notify someone on the reunion board of any changes to your personal information. Updates on changes for street address, email address, phone number or name will keep the FHS Class of '58 database in tip-top shape.

Editor's note: When contacting any classmate by email, use **FHS, Class of '58** or something similar in the subject line so the email will not be deleted.

CONTINUING THIS NEWSLETTER: Without your support, this newsletter cannot continue to be published. Each issue costs nearly 90 cents and consumes money that can be used towards future reunions or helping others who cannot afford to attend our reunions. Send your tax-deductible check payable to FHS Class of '58, c/o Buddy Arakelian, 529 W. Scott Ave., Fresno, CA 93704. Any amount will be greatly appreciated.



_____ \$5 \$10 \$15 \$25 Other _____

CONTRIBUTORS

The following classmates have recently made contributions to our newsletter: **Bette Buell Presley, Pat Cobb Veatch, Larry Cross, Lyn Darby Maloney, Hollie Johnsey Lenroot, Jim Maloney, Vic Manzullo, Janice McDonald Martin, Arlene Mazgedian Cartozian, Barbara Miller Sanne, Helen Nordeman Ford, Wayne Palmer.**

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