

GRAPEVINE HIGH SCHOOL

Class of 1966

JUNE/JULY 2011 NEWSLETTER

Summer 2011 – difficult to believe it could be 45 years ago that we were OUT OF HIGH SCHOOL – actual GRADUATES of Grapevine High School, listening to the Beatles and Beach Boys and wondering what was in store for our lives! Well, as it said on the Reunion Program – “...we used to sing “On the Threshold of Tomorrow...” – We have met the threshold and long since crossed over! And I would say we have done so with a lot of class, dignity, character, and love & respect for each other over the years.

I apologize for the lateness of the June Newsletter, here in July, but I was truly spending some time trying to get things ready for our 45 Year Class Reunion, which I'll discuss later....

As has been the case for some years now, it seems as though a good many – too many, of the emails and info sent out is often unpleasant. Unfortunately most of those emails these past several months have also been notices of sad and difficult times. In March, we got word that Wiley Hokett's cousin, Tim Harrington, Class of 1968 passed away on Sunday, March 6th.

On March 13, after a long illness, we received word that Ricky Quenichet (I think from the GHS Class of 1961) had passed away. Then, within a day or so we received word that Kent Kennedy's father had passed away following a fall and stay in a nursing home in Decatur.

Each of these losses we and our friends endure are always difficult, but the loss of a child, no matter the age, is the one that hits our hearts the hardest and has an impact the never goes away. Our classmate Bob Havran and his wife Joy lost their son, Barrett Martin Havran, on March 18, 2011 at the age of 32. I know from all the emails and phone calls and conversations that our class entered into a time of prayer for the Havran family. I also know that our class is still in prayer for Bob and Joy and Barrett's brother Blake even today as we all pray for comfort that only the Lord can provide. Having lost a child, I know that you'll need those prayers for a long time to come and I know that our class will continue to keep Bob, Joy and Blake in our prayers.

In May, we received word that Harry Lemoine passed away. It was only days later that we received news of the passing of Scottie Wright (Randy's and Debbie's Mom). The Wrights owned the City Drug for a number of years and they lived for a time just a block away from me. In late May, a life-long friend of mine and father to Linda and Gerrie Graham, Norris Graham passed away. Norris was/is well known in Grapevine for Silver Lake, Quick Way and certainly at the Grapevine Municipal Golf Course. While I was a teacher (12 years) and was off in the summers I spent many days playing golf with guys like Norris, Harlan Jewett, and others. Linda is a life-long friend (more years than she would want to admit) and I was even Gerrie's teacher. And let me assure you that there is no finer lady than Norris' wife Ruby. They are a wonderful family and Norris was a great gentleman. At the service I truly enjoyed the eulogy given by Linda's husband and my long time friend David Harwell who offered a great tribute to Norris.

In June, I received an email from Donny Huber (GHS Class of 1968), that his father, Herbert Huber had passed away just three days short of reaching his 92nd birthday. Mr. Huber is another of those Grapevineites that I have known most all my life – the Hubers living next door to Chris Ashton when we were in school, I saw him often and continued to see him over the years with his involvement in the City. Mr. Huber was another of those gentlemen we knew in Grapevine that modeled a lot for us that we didn't even realize. Then, an email arrive in mid-June from Alta Crowley Daniel that her brother, Dwayne (GHS Class of 1964) had lost his battle with cancer on June 13th. Jack Dyer's mother passed on June 29th and I know a number of you and our friends remember her driving a bus for the Grapevine Public Schools. Word came to me via Wanda Blagg in July that her brother, Dwight Watson passed away and services were held in Stephenville.

The Midland Reporter Telegram had an article in early July about a golfer most of us certainly remember – Coach Richard Harvey (aged 80) hit his second hole-in-one in his lifetime that first Friday in July – using an 8 iron (I am telling you that because the professional golfers in our class like Yancey, Lipscomb, Box, Florence, Stacy, Linthicum, Cumbie and such find that information very very important!). Congratulations going out to Coach Harvey!! Thanks to Kathy Lipscomb Pirkle for sending me that info from her cousin Frances Dee Lipscomb Harvey! By the way – there were two witnesses!

In early April another Get-Together was held at Sammie's Bar-B-Q in Fort Worth...this was attended by over 25 GHS graduates along with many spouses. As usual, lots of stories and a great time was had by all. I encourage you to try and make plans to attend these occasional events – I know you'll be glad you did, and different folks show up all the time – I know the last time that Dick Shanklin joined the group for the first time!

I sent out an email to a number of our class and others reminding them that Harlan Jewett's 87th birthday was on Friday, July 22, 2011 asking that you send Harlan a card, give him a phone call or stop by and see him! Harlan has been a great friend to our class and lots of others over the years and I know many contacted him to wish him that HAPPY BIRTHDAY this year – and thanks to those of you who did so.

I to want let you know about an important event that is coming up. Holton's Drive for SIDS is being held again this year, but the date is earlier and the location is different. This event is a fund raiser for SIDS research and named after Holton Spradley, grandson of David and Darlene Florence, who passed away as the result of SIDS. This year's Holton's Drive for SIDS event is on Saturday, August 27th, at Texas Star Golf Course in Euless, Texas. Please check out the website and see how you can contribute at www.holtonsdrideforsids.com. The golf tournament may already be full but they probably have a waiting list (if you are interested in playing, the Class has a couple of foursomes and maybe a spot or so left – so let me know if you are interested). However, you can still contribute in numerous ways, so please check out the website and support the wonderful event for a most wonderful cause.

OK --- stop for a moment and clear your mind before reading any more --- I'll give you a moment.....

As I am writing this next part of the newsletter, four days have passed since we had the GHS Class of 1966 45-Year Class Reunion. For those 46 class members who attended and the 34 guests who attended I know that you can validate what I am about to report:

The Grapevine High School **Class of 1966 is Special** - And our **Class is a Family**.

The Reunion at Cross Timbers Winery may have been the best reunion we've had. Now, at our age, we may not be able to remember it in a few months, but I suspect we will. At this reunion we had a record number of classmates attend. We had a record total number of attendees. We had a classmate who departed our beloved class in the seventh grade and joined with us to celebrate our reunion this year. I truly appreciate Gwyn Austin Milner attending our class reunion after leaving the fold some fifty years ago (yes, 50-that was not a typo). I also know that James (Pat) Tiffin attended his first GHS Class of 1966 Reunion. I received an email from James (hard not to call him Pat)...

"Boy did I have a great time. I can see that I have missed a lot over the years by not coming to the reunions. What a great bunch of kids we were back in 1966 and we still are a great bunch of older kids. You and others did a great job of putting this year's reunion together and I thank you for your work. As you know things haven't been going well in my family and I really needed the love that everyone showed me last night. Again, thank you and all my classmates of 1966 for inviting me back for the 45th reunion"

I heard from a number of classmates after the event talking about what a wonderful time it was seeing everyone and having lots of laughs and hugs and stories. I let Ms. Shumate know about our Rick Photo auction and told her she would have been proud of me...here is her emailed response:

Thank heavens some people never change. I am more than proud! Say, "Hey" to the whole gang. Much love. Shu

I also got an email the next day from Rick's mother (she didn't mention the auction) that I wanted to share with you as well...

There is nothing that can take the place of lifelong friendships, no matter how many new friends you make along the way. Rick had texted that he was going to his 45th Class Reunion. I told him to say hello for us. I hope he remembered to do so. I still and will always feel these are "my kids" as we enjoyed watching so many of you grow up. We continue to wish you all God's richest blessings. I thank you again for keeping us in the loop. Merrill and RJ, too

Our Reunion Queen, Betty Derby Vandiver also sent me an email the next day...

Last night was wonderful. Classmates who did not come really missed out. Thank you for crowning me Queen, What a wonderful surprise! I want to thank everyone who contributed to last night. Especially, I want to thank you for keeping us "together" after all these years. GHS class of 1966 is truly blessed! Love to all! Betty Vandiver

From Bobbie Jo Benson Mitchell....

It was a wonderful time for all of us. As usual, it is always a pleasure to gather together with everyone and share the past and the present. Give all the Glory to God for the prayer. In times like these we all need prayer. May God continue to Bless all of us in everything we say and do. Be Blessed, Bobbie

From Carolyn Cody....

*To all my 1966 Classmates..... Thank you for making our 45th class reunion so special. It was a pleasure to see and reconnect with so many friends. We all owe Larry and his "committee" such a commendation for making the evening so fun and entertaining. As I said in my little talk, I look forward to the next 30 years and being a part of these celebrations with you. Love and Blessings to each of you,
Carolyn Cody*

Pam Cooper came back to Grapevine from the far northwestern US for the reunion...

Dear Classmates: What a great group of people you all are!! I had a great time and loved seeing everyone. Thank you so much to all those who made the reunion possible. In all the experiences that I've had (which have been plenty, as you know) and the networking with people I've done personally and professionally, I've never come across a group of school friends so connected. And even the label "school friends" does not pay tribute to the caring and friendships you all share. It's been hard on many levels to participate in this experience and attend the reunions, so I've admired it from afar but now finally feel part of the group, even though I'm a mid-year, 5th grade interloper and wild child of the 60s. We all grow up, open doors, support each other and love harder. Thank you for a memorable experience. Love, Pam

From Caroline Cason Wilkinson...

What a Fabulous time! My grandfather would have asked me if we "tripped the light fantastic". Yes we surely did. My daughter Carrie always laughs at me when I say "we are like kissin' cousins". We will keep this spark alive and enjoy our journey till we meet in Heaven and continue on!!!

I guess what Pat, Pam, Betty, Caroline, Bobbie, Carolyn, and others said is what I'm trying to convey – we come together, whether as two classmates or 46 classmates and we are propelled back to a time we were all together every day and we pick up as though no time had passed. The big difference is that what we share now is not just plans, aspirations, or the more selfish things young people seek, but we share genuine love and concern and caring for one another. Our class has managed to hold on to that feeling for a long time and it continues to grow. We continue to stay in contact, help, support, care for, and pray for one another. Those who attended this reunion could not have been there and not have felt that bond that has been growing for more than 50 years. How happy our time was together – we shared tears and lots of laughter. We shared lots of hugs and kisses and memories.

There were many "events" that you should always remember of our reunion this year, but few will be remembered more than the wonderful "Blessing" of our class and reunion and dinner that evening that was presented by Bobbie Jo Benson Mitchell. If the Lord didn't touch your heart and mind during that prayer, you had to be asleep. Now think about that while I ask for Bobbie's indulgence – think about the fact that Bobbie Jo Benson Mitchell was the first African-American to be handed a diploma from Grapevine High School. I say that because of her name she would have received her diploma first among those African-American students in our class. Our class was the first – do we truly understand the significance and importance of that – I hope you do, and that you're proud of that. Stop and let that sink inthere will not be another first like that. The other event that evening that probably brought about as much smiling and laughter as this group has ever experienced was the wonderful auctioneering performance of our own "burning money" Rick Stacy. I want everyone to know that I continue to have security forces in place. However, let me assure you, my view of all of you with the looks on your faces

and the smiles and laughter that Rick allowed us to share was a lifetime experience that I will never forget. As I brought that photo across the room panning from one side to the other – the looks on faces were priceless. And, I know you all join me in thanking Rick for letting us play a little trick on him, but what great medicine it was during that time of laughter. Thanks Rick and please let me know when I can release my security force. Diane – thanks for sharing the photo!

I also want to share an email from Russell Kidd, President / Grapevine Ex-Student Association. After Russell viewed the photos of our reunion, his email was -“*thanks for sharing, I wish we had a class that was like yours*”. Hopefully most of Russell’s class won’t read this, but I share that (and hope Russell won’t mind too much) to say again “We are Special”. I talk to a lot of ex-students (taught a great number of them) and I often hear and they often say that they watch our website, they hear and know about things we do. They heard about our Alaskan Cruise in 2005, they hear and continue to be amazed that we don’t charge people to come to our reunions, but that a number of classmate for each reunion (and by the way this was our eight reunion) have contributed the funds so that any classmate that wants to attend can show up without having to pay. For classmates in today’s society that is almost unheard of. They notice on Face Book, in Newsletters, or Emails about trips classmates take together. They see and hear about our “Get-Togethers” and Class Christmas Parties. We are special, but more importantly **each one is special**.

At this year’s Reunion we brought in some Honorary Class of 1966 Graduates, I know there are some others we need to recognize in the future. But did you see how proud they were to receive that diploma – in spite of the talk of diamond class rings by a couple or so of the female inductees! **It’s good to be a member of the GHS Class of 1966!**

I also want to again say that our first ever KING & QUEEN of a REUNION – King Larry Cox and Queen Betty Derby Vandiver. They truly represent us. They represent the love and camaraderie we share as well as any could. I know that the committee was very proud of this award selection.

Who could not appreciate the recognition for the color of Roger Hardin’s hair after these years? Who could not appreciate that Tom Walker, who taught many of us in Jr. High School & High School, still wants to hang around us! Who could not appreciate Dr. Box cutting on Darrell Faglie! Who could not appreciate the stories that Johnnie Mae continues to share! Who could not appreciate the All-Around Good Sport Awards for Wylie and Rick - always willing to support any of our class needs over the years?

I want to thank so many of you who have called or sent emails thanking me for helping get things together for our reunion. I want to sincerely thank Don Bigbie and Cross Timbers Winery for doing things so “right” for us and making the event so successful. A huge THANKS to Shelley Debnam for taking the photos! I also want to say that it is not what we do that makes our reunions fun or successful, it is **you - my classmates** that make it happen. You have all touched the lives of one another more than you can ever imagine, and I pray that God continues to watch over us and that we continue to turn to Him. May God Bless the GHS Class of 1966!

Respectfully submitted,
Larry Oliver