A REUNION TO REMEMBER

Our reunion committee had met approximately a year ago and established a date and secured a location for the featured dinner. Those of you who have been on reunion committees know that the hard part was done and now the fun meetings began. Future meetings allowed time to bring other members up to date on our lives: who is doing what to whom and reminisce about the old days: who did what to whom and everything in between. Special emphasis was on what trips and vacations we have had and especially what medications we are on. During these meetings we even took time to plan reunion activities: a two-day event including a tour of The Marshall and a cruise on the Mississippi River the first day and a luncheon at Jax Cafe the second day.

Our age showed through on all the planning. All events were planned to begin in the morning to allow us to drive home from them in the daylight. Also, the dinner would be held on the first floor, no stairs to climb, and in proximity to the rest rooms, no further explanation needed for that. Definitely name tags would be provided and in print large enough to be read from three feet away, yet forcing us to be close enough for the wearer to hear us introduce ourselves. It should be noted that some classmates wore their name tags up-side-down so they could remember their own name.
Classmates were contacted by E-mail or, for the ‘I’m-not-into-computers’ folks, by snail mail and, probably hard-line, telephone, months in advance. This allowed classmates to plan ahead, getting the reunion on their calendar before it filled up with less important activities such as grandchildren’s birthdays or a cruise with their spouse. Classmates who could not attend were encouraged to send a letter telling us about their activities since last seen. And some did.

On the second day, the lunch buffet was held at Jax Cafe ‘the ultimate in private party facilities’ in NE Minneapolis beginning at 11:00 am. Classmates came from as far away as The Netherlands. Thirty graduates participated and the total attendees numbered about fifty.

They were greeted at the door of our private room, registered, given name tags and class listing and could avail themselves of (purchase) a 50th reunion souvenir booklet that showed photos of our graduating class. They then could participate by bidding in a silent auction that included dinners, bricks from Marshall High, a fishing trip guided by Jack Fecht and carved decoys by Bob Lerfald. Socializing was the theme from then on. Waitresses served alcoholic libations to those who could imbibe without compromising their prescription medications.

At noon we were officially greeted by our Master of Ceremonies Tom Daly (our class president) with jokes and witty banter and information on the silent auction process. Tom introduced entertainment by Joanne Howard Hed and her dance troupe. The dances and costumes were great. During costume changes by the dancers, Anne Moellman Lindgren presented responses we had received in letters from classmates unable to attend the reunion.

The buffet meal followed. As usual, Jax provided a delicious buffet featuring grilled chicken breasts, beef tips with mushroom sauce and oven broiled salmon. The afternoon passed too quickly and soon the winners of the silent auction were announced signaling an end to the party.

Accolades are due to the committee members: Ron Anderson, Millie Bjergen Caspersen, Liz Jackson Curren, Tom Daly, Jack Fecht, Jan Hathaway Ott, Joanne Howard Hed, Kyle Johnson, Otto Lausten, Bob Lerfald, Anne Moellman Lindgren, Bill Slather and Joel Westerberg. Additional thanks goes to our greeters Jack and Judy Dawes and Bob Hayes. This committee is not exhausted, but rejuvenated by its success. The post-reunion committee meeting was not an end, but the start of planning of the next reunion; maybe a picnic at Van Cleve Park one year from now.
Touring The Marshall

As part of our reunion activities, we arranged for a tour of The Marshall, the apartment complex that has replaced our high school. At 10:00 am on Wednesday, August 12th we met Cayce Gearrin and Amanda Korts at Cayce’s leasing office at The Marshall.

Cayce and Amanda led us on a very interesting tour of The Marshall’s amenities which included a basketball court and exercise area, a swimming pool, study rooms, a lounge with two big screen TVs, a large courtyard with several grills and plenty of patio furniture, and an apartment that had four bedrooms and four bathrooms in addition to its kitchen and living room.

The Marshall includes several reminders of Marshall High School: one of Marshall High’s original archways has been included in an exterior wall, several large pieces of flooring from the Boys Gym decorate the walls in the lounge area and, of course, the name “Marshall” lives on. It was a very good tour, and it was very good to be with Cayce and Amanda who have been featured in previous issues of the Alumni Newsletter. 

The Boat Cruise on the Mississippi

Another part of our 60th reunion was taking a boat cruise on the Mississippi River. Wednesday, August 12th was a perfect day for a cruise. We left Bohemian Flats Park at noon on the Minneapolis Queen. We cruised upstream first and went through the lock below the Stone Arch Bridge. Going through a lock is always an interesting experience and a reminder that rivers are running downhill.

The river and the scenery were beautiful, and the Marshallites on board became a very friendly group. The captain held the boat in position while he gave a description of the history and the highlights of the area. Then he turned the boat downstream, and we headed through the lock again. We cruised toward the Franklin Avenue Bridge and were able to see how the shoreline had changed since we were kids who grew up near the river.

Before reaching the bridge, we turned upstream again and returned to Bohemian Flats. Our group included Ron Anderson, Millie Caspersen, John and Judy Dawes, Vera and Gordon Sohl, and Tom Daly. Several of us commented upon how enjoyable it would be to take the cruise again in the fall when the leaves are changing. There is a very good possibility we will do just that. If you are interested in joining us in the fall, let us know.
The Silent Auction Generates $612 for Disabled Students

The silent auction that was held at our reunion on August 13th was really the brain child of Otto Lausten. It began when Otto “liberated” a dozen bricks from the pile of bricks that had been John Marshall High School. Almost immediately Otto began talking about auctioning off the bricks at our 60th class reunion in August. That led to the idea that we would have a silent auction that would include the bricks and other items of interest.

At a planning meeting, Jan Ott and Liz Curren volunteered to gather other items for the auction. Jack Fecht offered to donate his services as a fishing guide, and Bob Lerfald offered a pair of wood ducks that he carved and painted. At our reunion, it was evident that Liz and Jan were very successful in getting donations. They provided gift cards from Vescio’s, Manning’s, Kafe 421, Blarney’s, Jax Café, Visa and Target.

When the silent auction was over, we discovered that Otto’s idea that began with a dozen bricks from Marshall High had generated $612 to be donated to MAEF, the Marshall Access and Education Fund for disabled students at the University of Minnesota. Good idea, Otto.

MAEF Scholarship Winners To Be Honored in October

Disability Services at the University of Minnesota has announced the names of the students who will be awarded Marshall Access and Education Fund (MAEF) scholarships for the 2015-2016 school year. The three students are Joshua Heim, Aaryn Wilson and Alex Wilson.

The students are all seniors at the university, and each will receive $1,100. They will be honored at the University of Minnesota Scholarship Luncheon sponsored by the University of Minnesota Foundation. The luncheon will be held in the McNamara Alumni Center on Friday, October 30.

Marshall High School alumni applaud and congratulate Joshua, Aaryn, and Alex. We hope that you have a great senior year.
As the 60<sup>th</sup> class reunion was approaching in August, a number of classmates who were not able to attend wrote letters to the committee. The committee chose to share these with those who did attend. The following are excerpts from these letters meant to share with a broader audience.

**Catherine (Eck) Blumfeld**

Catherine lives in Lawrence KS. She just gave up ballet class and tennis but continues aerobic's dance. She is a volunteer for the Spencer Museum of Art and stays busy playing duplicate bridge twice a week.

**Jean (Murray) Burress**

Since graduation, Jean has spent 57 years in California and often times still calls Minnesota home. She celebrated her 50<sup>th</sup> wedding anniversary last January and they raised two sons. They have five grand children. Some years ago, they visited southeast Minneapolis and other things she said she hadn't thought about in years. One of our classmates visited her two years ago, which she said, gave her an opportunity to reminisce and read Marshall High School memorabilia that she had stored in a box sitting in a closet for years.

Jean also told a story about her mother, a friend in CA and the friend's mother. As they were visiting they discovered that Jean's mother and her friend's mother were in the first graduating class of John Marshall High School. Some time later, the friend found her mother's yearbook and they discovered Jean's mother had signed her mother's year book. Jean said “Life has been good!!”

**David Cornell**

David and his wife live in Lynnwood WA. They continue to be very involved in musical concerts, variety shows and local church social programs. David said “I practice the piano (almost) every day”. One travel event he and his wife did this summer was in a Norwegian Line Cruise of the Baltic Sea from Copenhagen to Berlin, Tallinn (Estonia), St. Petersburg, Helsinki, Stockholm and back to Copenhagen.

They love cruises and he described how on one the cruise director, who was multi-lingual in five languages and only a fraction of the passengers spoke English, gave the best laser-illuminated show of the night sky that he'd ever seen. David said “It was a crystal clear night over the South Atlantic Ocean and the audience saw shapes and names in the sky that we didn't know existed. It was really awe-inspiring.”

**Patricia (Goldnik-Hoel) Ekblad**

Pat lives in McGregor, MN. She said she was not joining us at the reunion because “Summer is a very busy time when you live on a lake”. She also shared “I started out my life on a rocky road, however, except for the death of a child, it has been a great journey”. She added “Enjoy the day. Love to all”.

**Donald M. Hayes**

Donald lives in Montgomery, TX. He has spent the last 24 years of his career at Sam Houston State University, teaching, reading papers at professional meetings, chairing University, College and Department committees and advancing through the ranks to tenured professor. He also volunteered to teach a class in the state prison each semester.

Don retired in 1999 and took up bicycling. He rode a week in the mountains of the Big Bend Country, another along the Wisconsin River from its headwaters in the north to where it joins the Mississippi in the south. He spent another week along the Blue Ridge Parkway. Each of these rides was 500 miles.
Don said “It was usual for me to ride eight to ten thousand miles a year and I rode over 14,000 in one year”. Donald started traveling on cruises with Garrison Keillor and the Prairie Home Company radio show to Alaska in 2006, Norway in 2007, from Amsterdam to Barcelona in 2012, to Venice in 2013, from Dover around the Baltic Sea in 2014 and the Eastern Caribbean in 2015. Don's request was “How about each member of the class writing a one-page biography, having them bound by Kinko, so we can all discover how many times we have crossed paths without knowing it?”

Carol (Schinke) Kapotas

Carol lives in Minneapolis, MN. She and her husband just celebrated their 54th anniversary. Carol suffers from arthritis and, in the near future, will have both of her knees replaced. Carol sent her love to all.

Allen Kienitz

Allen and his wife live in Tucson, AZ. They had already filled their 2015 schedule with as many travels as possible. They were preparing for a trip to Ireland for 21 days. In July they took their Roadtrek camper up to northern CA and OR where their kids and grandchildren reside. In August they rented a small cottage on Cape Cod until after Labor Day.

Allen said “When I reminisce with my neighbors and new friends where everyone is retired, I was a little surprised to hear how many really hated their high school experience. If they went to a reunion it was only to show off how they had overcome the pain of those years. We, however, were blessed with about 150 very nice teenagers as classmates. Based on my trips to past reunions, we've grown up to be really nice adults too.”

Raymond Leone

Ray lives in Columbia Heights, MN. He wrote, “To the class of 1955. I wish them all many more years of good health in their senior years.”

Jon McVay

Jon and his wife live in Mount Vernon, IA. Unfortunately, Jon had to change his plans at the last minute due to health problems, and was not able to attend the reunion. However, he sent a picture of himself and friends who are involved in a flying club. They were all attending the “World-wide Cloud Tramp Mass Launch”. All of the aircraft are rubber powered.

Carol (Letourneau) Robinson

Carol lives in Sartell, MN. Carol had also planned to attend the reunion and at the last minute could not, due to health problems. She sent a note thanking the committee for continuing work on the reunion and also said “Take care, stay well. I hope we all have many good years ahead.”

Buzz Rongstad

Buzz and his wife live in Jacksonville, FL. and have for the past 17 years. Previously, they lived on the west coast of FL for 6 years where he played golf three times a week. It was here that Buzz was diagnosed with RA and needed the Mayo Clinic. He said “Mayo worked another miracle on me and I am as active as a 78 year man can be. I can play golf and exercise any time I feel the desire. Buzz and his wife have 14 grandchildren, three of which live in Jacksonville. They are very active in their church and assist the Vacation Bible School, serving 1015 kids with tons of food and love. They lived in Tampa when the Bucs won the super bowl and the Rays won the Stanley Cup. Buzz said “I have become more of a hockey fan as one of my grands ons plays hockey for the University of Alaska. We have been blessed with a wonderful family and many great friends and life is Good”.

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Robert Schorn

Bob lives in Seattle WA. He said “Sorry I cannot make the meeting this year. Maybe next year.”

Joanne (Carlson) Turcotte

Joanne lives in North Oaks, MN. She and her husband were married for 53 years when he passed way in 2009. They have two sons and four grandchildren. They built a successful trucking company beginning in 1979, which continues to flourish today under the leadership of their youngest son and his wife, Joanne was very active in the business in the beginning. She and her husband spent weekends at their cabin on Mille Lacs Lake or camping in their motor home. During the winter they wintered in Pharr, TX. Joanne is currently active in an ethnic dining group which meets monthly and volunteered with her church. She paints with acrylics and does a lot of sewing to fill her days. She said “I attribute my artistic interest with the classes taught by Mr. John Socha at Marshall High. I have many good memories of the years spent at Marshall and of the many friends made there. Those memories include many friends that went through Sydney Pratt grade school. I extend to all of you my very best wishes and hope that life has been as good to you as it has been for me.”

Claudette (Cook) Turner Claudette lives in Louisville, KY with her husband. They will be celebrating their 58 wedding anniversary next year. They have one daughter, one son and one granddaughter, all of whom live close by. Claudette stays busy with water aerobics, yoga, reading group, art projects and added an occasional nap. She said “I have always thought being a teenager in the 50's was an ideal time to be growing up. They have resided in Kentucky, the Bluegrass State for 44 years, but added “Minnesota will always be my first love and home. Best wishes to all for good health and a happy future.

Bricks from Marshall High gave us the idea for a Silent Auction to raise money for scholarships.
After a planning meeting at Van Cleve Park, the committee relaxed at Mannings on Como Avenue.

Photo above: Ellie Westerberg, Jan Ott, Anne Lindgren enjoying a lunch in Jack and Anne’s Gazebo.
Photo above: Committee members dine and plan in Jack and Anne Fechts’ backyard. Much was accomplished! Thanks Fecht’s

Photo below: posing in front of a doorway taken from Marshall High & saved from demolition. The tour on Wednesday was thorough and full of information.
Photo above: We cruised the river on the Mississippi Queen. We hope to do it again in the fall.

Photo below: Our Master of ceremonies, Tom Daly: A great leader and friend—personable, organized, intelligent, and likeable.
Joanne Howard Hed and Rhinestone Rocketts entertained us. They enhanced their performance by changing their attire between songs and dance.