

Dear LP-53 Classmates, Spouses, and to the Holiday Season of 2008. It brings everyone. It is the "hard copy" evidence blessed our lives from early childhood Us All in our goings and comings and thankful for our blessings. -- Alan



Friends; this letter is sent as we come best wishes from everyone to of cherished friendships that have days to the present. May God Bless gatherings, and may we all be

Signs of the Times

Bob Hughett did some driving around town during our 55th reunion. He told me that while driving on First St. in La Salle, going west from Tonti to Bucklin streets, he counted 27 empty store buildings on the north side of the street. I mentioned this to John Steinbach and Dan Weber who had been taking a walk on the same street, in the opposite direction. They told me that there were probably that many empty store buildings on the south side of First St.

Our web site is noticed. Last July, Ray Klobucher gave me a book titled; "Now When I Was A Kid ..." by Dan McGuire. The book contains short story memories of a boy growing up in Chicago area in the 1940's - 50's. Imagine my surprise to receive a email from Dan McGuire, dated October 20, 2008! While doing some web searching, Dan came across our web site, and thus my email address. Dan sent a link to his "little online book store" at www.BackWhenBooks.org, a variety of subjects, all with a yesteryear theme. Dan commended the web site and our class.

Parker Field sent me a page from a yesteryear book about his adopted retirement home town in the north woods of Michigan, Traverse City, which had a link to his original home town. The book writes about a century of life (1839-1939) in Grand Traverse County. Page 13 of the book includes the words; "Some of the timber taken from the present site of Traverse City was used in the construction of a bridge across Illinois river at LaSalle, Illinois." This would have been in the 1850's - 1860's. There is another link ... we have a son-in-law, born and raised in Traverse City.

A NewsTrib story, dateline Neponset (my birth place), described "Three Minute Mike," the proprietor of Mike's Barber Shop in downtown Neponset (that's a oxymoron). Mike has not changed the price of a haircut, \$1.75, since he opened for business in 1961. Mike wasn't the town barber when I spent time during the summer in Neponset, but I got my hair cut in the same building ... it has always been a barbershop. Today, in addition to the barber shop, only the post office, the bank (interesting that it is still open), and the tavern are occupied. But, the grain elevator is still operating, a testament to the productivity of Neponset's farmers and to the richness of the land. However, there no longer is a trucking company in town, nor a stock holding pen at the rail yard. I often rode in one of the semi-trucks of the Hill Trucking Company when one of my uncles was shipping cattle or hogs to the Chicago Stockyards. No more ... the fields are covered with corn and beans ... no livestock. And, no more Chicago Stockyards (See "Did You Know" at the end)

What's New in LaSalle-Peru

"The canal boat's uh comin', why don't you hurry hurry home."(Or, was it a shrimp boat?). All during May and June, Kaye sent me NewsTrib articles about the finishing, delivery from Albany, NY, launching and dedication of *The Volunteer*, the 76 foot-long by 15 foot wide replica of a 1850s Illinois & Michigan Canal boat. The name honors the volunteers who began restoration of the I&M Canal back in the 1970s. The boat is docked at the canal's Lock 14, just down the hill from First and Joliet Streets. Two mules, named "Larry" and "Moe" are penned up in the park area at the lock. Larry and Moe alternate duties pulling the boat, walking on the improved towpath, for tourist rides. A volunteer, in period dress, provides commentary of the I&M Canal's history, including some stories. About 30 of us enjoyed a ride on *The Volunteer* during our reunion. On the ride, I learned that there is a canal aqueduct crossing over the Little Vermilion River about a mile east of Lock 14. I did not know about the aqueduct, but there it was to see.

Memories

Article in the NewsTrib under the 50 Years Ago section: "July 3, 1958, Cricketts and Buddy Holly were on their way to the Les Buz Ballroom. Tickets were \$1.75 in advance. The band (will) play hits; "That'll Be The Day," "Peggy Sue," and "Oh Boy."

On the Saturday of our reunion, several of us went to the Igloo for lunch. None other than our own Bob Kessel took our orders. Bob has worked at the Igloo for 61 years (and so as his wife, Marjorie)!! There are very few changes in the Igloo building or its menu (or its proprietors) since our times. I note these changes; no "curb service," no windows on the exit drive west wall where we used to drive around and try to see who was inside. The windows were removed because kids would stop their cars to talk to inside customers, blocking the exit drive. Elaine (Benvenuti) sent me a article from the August 16, 2008 Ottawa newspaper which chronicles the Igloo's history and notes that it is for sale. The first day of business for the Igloo was July 4, 1937, opened by Louie and Pat Mazzarona. I can actually picture in my mind Louie and Pat.

Let me tell you, if I was having a bad day, and was nearby, I would go to the Igloo and have Bob Kessel cheer me up.

Our reunion agenda included a tour of the high school. About 25 of us participated in the tour which began in the Matthiessen Auditorium. The auditorium is in first class condition, following recent restoration work. It is indeed a wonderful venue for cultural events. Our tour guide mentioned that the organ doesn't get much use, because nobody can play it. We pointed out that our own Nancy (Nelson) on the tour, played that organ many times. We spent a lot of time at the library, first checking out the Canterbury Tales mural, painted by our Dianne (Mason). The mural is in wonderful condition. The library is much different from our times. There is a great reduction in the number of books on the shelves, having been replaced by tables full of computers to use for research. I didn't count them, but easily 10 tables with 5 computers each. The library has been expanded with a large room built into the space between the east and west wings of the building. We visited the new gymnasium, and crossed the street to the old gym and swimming pool. Everything is in very good condition. One comment by our guide points out the conditions of attending high school in 2008 - the building has 100 cameras all over the place to monitor things, and there is a 24-hour security staff. With the addition of the new gym, that

corner on the main floor, down from the library, where the boys used to gather before home room, no longer exists. One of our tour members mentioned how she hated to pass that corner every morning to get to her locker.

In Memoriam

Since the last issue of our newsletter in March, 2008, our In Memoriam list has increased to 79.

Classmates:

- *Joan Marie Cattaneo Obrien*, 72, of Naples, FL died May 15, 2008. Joan is survived by two children, two grandchildren, and former husband.
- *Gerald "Jerry" Weiden*, 72, died at his home in Peru, June 3, 2008 following a six month illness. Jerry is survived by five children, five grandchildren, and his second wife, Cheri.
- *Richard Nawa*, 72, died at home in LaSalle, August 20, 2008 following a extended illness. Richard is survived by his wife Betty, three children and six grandchildren.
- *Ernest Sobkowiak* died in 2006. We learned of his passing when a relative responded to our reunion announcement in the NewsTribune.

Family Members:

- Sharon Coulter's husband *William J. "Bill" Barron* passed away August 13, 2008.
- Arlene Pelsynski Pusser lost two brothers in a short time this past summer. Her brother *Gerald*, died June 18 and her brother *Richard*, died on August 6.
- Francis Mrowicki's brother *Edward "Bouncer" Mrowicki*, 76, passed away on November 22, 2005.

*All those we love are part of us,
For things of beauty leave their trace.
And memories of all we've shared,
Are treasures time cannot erase.*

---- Anonymous ---

Class (and Family) Information

I had some time to visit with Francis Mrowicki at our reunion. He passed me a note with some information about his 35 years on the radio in Texas (didn't tell me what station). On the air, he went by the name of Frank Noren, because it was easier to say than Mrowicki. Francis had the opportunity to have lunch with the real Elvis Presley, and met Paul Harvey, Crystal Gayle, Jerry Lee Lewis, Jim Reeves, Don Gibson, and many others. He did on the air interviews with five (5) presidents. Francis introduced Linda Davis at age 14, playing her first record. She is now a member of the "Grand Ole Opry."

A note from Larry Storkman, too late for previous issue, related spring trip with wife, Dottie, and brother Bob and his wife, Carol to Egypt. Somehow, they were given the Winston Churchill Suite at the Mena House resort hotel in Cairo ... two bedrooms, two baths, living room, dining room, outdoor deck from which they could see the pyramids. Larry didn't tell me the cost. They visited Luxor, took a 3-day Nile River cruise up to the Aswan dam with local sight seeing ... tombs, mosques, bazaars.

Nancy Nelson Valesano sent me a copy of a NewsTribune article, April 7, 2008 titled; "Manual makes national museum." The museum referenced is the National Museum of the U.S. Air Force,

Wright-Patterson Air Force Base, Ohio, two miles up the road from our house, and a place I often visit. The manual referenced is "Control Tower Operations," written by Nancy's uncle Glen Mackey when he was stationed at Maxwell Air Force Base, Alabama during WW II. At that time, Maxwell was a advanced training base for multi-engine (bombers) aircraft pilots. One of those pilots was Jimmy Stewart, "fresh off winning the Oscar for best actor in "The Philadelphia Story," Mackey recalled. One has to imagine the need for traffic control when the WW II buildup at the base increased takeoffs and landings from a few to a few hundred each day! All without radar control to keep separation between airplanes. Nancy was able to visit her uncle on the first day of our recent reunion. Sadly, the next day, her uncle passed away ... another from "The Greatest Generation," gone.

Sharon Huffstodt Badenoch is now a two time winner of the Amelia River Women's Golf Club Championship, having won the 2008 tournament. At our reunion golf outing, Sharon teamed up with Ann Murray Huggett to play against Bob Hughett and Buzz Byczynski. The girls beat the boys. Buzz said they lost because Hughett doesn't know how to play golf. Hughett said they lost because Buzz plays on the wrong (left-handed) side of the ball.

Address Changes

Mail Address Change reported note a change from the 55 th reunion booklet.

- Harry and Lynn (Sitterly) Conkey thought they would move back to Illinois, but changed their mind and moved to: 4800 N. 68 th Street, Scottsdale, AZ 85251.

Email Address Changes: These changes are all in the latest booklet, but if you didn't order a booklet, you don't know that.

- Marilyn Carr: marilyn.carr@comcast.net
- Sharon Coulter Barron: berthalee777@gmail.com
- Esther Curtis McMinn: esther180@sbcglobal.net
- Astrid Jensen Berkson: astridjb@comcast.net
- Bob Kessel: luckybob33@comcast.net
- George Renkosik: cargeo@ivnet.com
- Wayne Schultz: waynel_schultz_256@comcast.net

55 th Reunion Class of LP 1953

The reunion was held September 25-28, 2008. We had a full agenda of activities, good weather, and a good time was had by all. Following is a listing of classmates (maiden names) who attended one or more of the reunion events:

John Baima	Mary Barra
Eugene Beck	Elaine Benvenuti
Alan Berry	Angie Brejc
Mary Jean Brennan	Jim Brooks
Don Byczynski	Bob Carter
Mike Castiglia	Pauline Celano
Shirley Chambers	Sharon Coulter
Darwin Croisant	Esther Curtis
Rose Marie Geraci	Ken Gielow
Joyce Grubar	Don Haas

Mazie Halm
Kaye Harl
Bob Hughett
Connie Hylla
Astrid Jensen
Kent Kain
Doug Kimber
Joan Lipka
Elaine Lodi
Beverly Morrison
Jim Mueller
Jean Myers
Earl Papini
Lois Peters
Carol Piscitelli
Darlene Rigazio
Marilyn Schalla
Ron Senica
Sylvia Starovasnik
Burton Stevenson
John Thompson
Minnie Venturelli
Dan Weber
Sandy Zubowski

Marge Hammon
Sharon Huffstodt
Jerry Hurst
Jerry James
Audrey Johnson
Pat Kelly
Ray Klobucher
Bill Lipka
Don Mayszak
Francis Mrowicki
Ann Murray
Nancy Nelson
Loretta Perscett
Sharon Petite
Chuck Pohar
Kay Saathoff
Wayne Schultz
Joe Smith
John Steinbach
Norman Taylor
Betty Trillet
Lorraine Watts
Rudy West

Spouses and guests enhanced the pleasure of our events.

I extend my personal, profound thanks to everyone who took care of the reunion planning and event details, and to all those who attended. I'm glad we had three days of activities that allowed more time for visiting. All of us enjoyed the PowerPoint show that Jim Brooks put together. Several people asked me if they could get copies of the show. Jim is working on methods to make a DVD or CD copy, with the music. More info later....

A part of Jim's show was our Marriage Album. At one time, I had thought about printing a hard copy of "then" and "now" marriage photos, but gave up on that idea when I ran into copyright problems of old photos that were obviously taken by a professional photographer. So, it worked out well to show the pictures as we did. Being a genealogist of sorts, it was interesting to me to learn that Rudy West's wife, Jeanette, is a sister of our classmate Herb Rimmele; and that John Baima's wife, Darlene is a sister of our classmate Elaine Lodi Day. The picture of Judy Batchelder's and Jack Turner's wedding includes six of our class; Jack and Judy, Caryl Evans, Nancy Correl, Jim Mueller, and Alan Berry.

Let me tell you a story about the first showing of Jim's show. Jim and I had made arrangements by email to meet in the lobby of the Starved Rock Lodge at 3:00 PM on Thursday, September 25. I was there, but didn't see Jim. So, I went to my room and did some unpacking, and then went back to the lobby ... still, no Jim. At 4:30 PM, I went to the Starved Rock Room (the location of our event), and there was Jim, with the Lodge's Sales Coordinator and the Banquet Coordinator. He had had the two of them helping him since 3:00 PM, getting the show set up. This room has a very high ceiling ...

maybe 20 feet. The projector is mounted on a rod high up, and the screen, 6 foot by 6 foot, comes down from above. When I arrived, the three of them had gotten Jim's computer hooked up to project the computer file onto the screen. Everything looked OK to me. But, Jim said to the Banquet Coordinator; "The image is not in the center. Don't you have a remote control to direct the angle of the projector lens?" The coordinator had a remote control, but it didn't do anything. Jim said; "This is not good. We've got to change the angle of the projector." So, the coordinator called his maintenance crew. They brought in a 20-foot ladder. The coordinator climbed the ladder and moved the projector until the image was just right ... right in the center of the screen. Jim said; "That's good." The coordinator said; "I'll keep the ladder just outside in case you need it." The sales coordinator said to me; "Your guy is pretty funny. He has had us here for two hours, and we have enjoyed every minute."

Many of us enjoyed a visit to see how Don Haas is coming along with his boat building project. I tell you, it's difficult to discern the progress since our reunion five years ago. But, I couldn't build a boat. Don now has a engine for the thing and he started it up to show that it is a real engine. Darwin Croisant said it's the same model engine that the guy who shelled his corn 20 years ago used. Don has fabricated a steering wheel, from scratch, that is very impressive wood working, and he has built a form, contoured to the form of the keel, that he will use to cast 7800 pounds of ballast that has to be attached to keep the thing upright. Don has two alternative plans for that job. Jim Brooks didn't make the visit. He said, "The next time I want to see that boat is when it is christened." I figure we will have two more reunions, 60th and 65th, before that happens. We like to kid Don. He whispered to me, "Hey, I don't play golf. This is my recreation. I'm in no hurry to finish." Good attitude, Don. And, nice looking boat.

A year or so ago, I had written that our 55th might be our last. I shouldn't have written that ...it evidently raised concern. Several people asked me if we were not going to have any more reunions. Our intention is to have a 60th reunion in 2013.

Earl Trobaugh Memorial Scholarship

The recipient of our Class of LP 1953 memorial scholarship for 2008 is Jacqueline Zeman, from Peru. Her mom and sisters are teachers, and they inspired Jacqueline to pursue a teaching career.

By the way; the hostess for our reunion visit to the high school complimented our class for establishing the scholarship, the only one the school has that is supported by a former class.

By its October 1, 2008 letter the LP Foundation advised that our scholarship fund Certificate of Deposit amount was \$10,438.60. In addition, we had \$654.03 in the Foundation's operating account, after the 2008 scholarship was paid to IVCC on behalf of the recipient.

At the reunion, I consulted with some of our members, but did not take a vote, recommending that we use part of the generous contributions to our reunion's "Other" costs to make a gift to the LP Foundation that would cover the 2009 scholarship shortfall in the Foundation's operating account, which would allow the CD to rollover for another year. A gift of \$600 was given to the Foundation.

Financial Report

This report covers the period from 2/20/08 through 10/31/08. The report is for the class' checking account. Money in the class' checking account is not used for newsletter or web site expenses.

Balance as of 2/20/08 ...	\$329.58
---------------------------	----------

Reunion receipts 4/23-10/6..	\$7678.50
Balance plus receipts....	\$8008.08
Less all reunion expenses ...	\$5310.74
Balance after expenses ...	\$2697.34
Refunds for cancellations...	\$227.00
Balance after refunds ...	\$2470.34
Less scholarship contribution	\$600.00
Balance 10/31/08 ...	\$1870.34

I meant to apologize at the reunion for having the “Other” expenses line in our reunion announcement. I should have listed a suggested amount for “Other” expenses, like \$2.00 or \$3.00. Leaving the amount open, caused our generous class mates to give \$2,244.00 for “Other” expenses. At the reunion, Jerry James said to me; “I’m going to put you in charge of the next fund raising effort for ... (I forget if he said his church, his favorite charity, or his retirement fund).

Financially, we are in good shape. We shouldn’t have to have a line for “Other” expenses in our 60 th reunion announcement.

Did You Know?

I’m sure that all of you know of the Civil War Naval battle between the first ironclads, the *Monitor* (Union) and the *Merrimac* (Confederate). Did you know that William Keeler, from La Salle, was a sailor aboard the *Monitor*? After the battle, Keeler wrote a short note, dated March 9, 1862, to his wife and children back in La Salle saying; “I am safe.”

The correct name for the Chicago Stockyards is The Union Stockyard and Transit Company.. The word, “union” represents the consortium of nine railroad companies who started the operation. The stockyards opened December 25, 1865, and closed July 31, 1971. At its peak, the stockyard and meat packing companies had 25,000 employees and produced 82 per cent of the meat products consumed in the U.S. Animal waste was dumped into the Chicago River and found its way into the Illinois River. Now you know why the Illinois River was polluted.


Information & Stories

Please send information, retirement activities, stories, address changes, etc. to:

Kaye Arkins OR
437 N. Woodland Ave.
Oglesby, IL 61348
(815) 883-8818

Alan Berry
2358 Meadowgreen Dr.
Beavercreek, OH 45431
(937) 429-0092
Email Alan at: beansb@woh.rr.com

Email Jim Brooks at: james.r.brooks@lpths.org
Jim Brooks
3518 Calvelli Ct., San Jose, CA 95124

Use your Browser Back Arrow 
(Far left on top task bar)
to return to the '53 page.