

The following is a wrap-up to our very successful 50<sup>th</sup> reunion weekend. For those of you who were able to attend, we hope that you had a very enjoyable time. The weekend was a huge success and the emails and comments continue to flow into the committee. The positive responses have been overwhelming.

Many class reunions come and go, but in our case, the memory of our 50<sup>th</sup> reunion will remain with us forever. The weekend of September 27-28, 2019 marked our 50<sup>th</sup> reunion and what a memorable weekend it was from start to finish.

To all the classmates who attended and participated in the reunion.....THANK YOU! Everything went exactly as planned (more on that later), we stayed within the budget, we had a great time planning the reunion and most importantly, the outcome was a tremendous success.

## **THURSDAY NIGHT**

The weekend began with a Pizza Party on Thursday evening in the lobby of the Wingate. The intent of the informal gathering was to welcome classmates who arrived in St. Clairsville early for the reunion weekend. Classmates who live in the St. C. area were also invited to attend. The lobby proved to be the ideal location for about 35 classmates who enjoyed "Home Pizza" and debated the cost of and the number of pieces of pepperoni on a piece of pizza in the 1960's. A special THANK YOU to one of our classmates, who has asked to remain anonymous, for buying all the pizza! When the pizza was gone, the group ventured upstairs to Undos to continue visiting, catching up on the latest, showing their family pictures and making it a fun evening.

What a nice evening it was and a prelude to what was coming up next. Getting a good night's rest was in order for the committee members since there was much to do the next day. What began by accident became a morning ritual of the "Breakfast Bunch". Several classmates staying at the hotel (and are early risers) met each morning for the complementary breakfast with cinnamon rolls, scrambled eggs, biscuits, cereals, bagels, fruit, juice, coffee and more. They call it "free", but I'm pretty sure that we paid for it in the cost of the room.

## **FRIDAY MORNING**

Tee time for the golf outing was 10:00 at Cadiz Country Club. The group was small, but the course offered terrific views and challenging play for the group. The well-groomed fairways and greens were a welcome relief after the trip on State Route 9 to get there. Remember Route 9?? All the twists and turns from St. C. to Cadiz?? We have it on good authority that it is not among the most winding roads around the world, but growing up we sure thought it was.

## **FRIDAY AFTERNOON**

Decorating at the Country Club began at noon. We had lots of help from committee members, classmates and guests. There was plenty to do, so we all set out to get things done. Getting an early start was a must in planning this Saturday night event. The registration area was arranged in a manner that would greet our classmates in an orderly fashion. The photo booth was created making sure that guests had an exciting and unique way of capturing their memories. Of course, no reunion goes without having timeless photos of our school days and memorabilia that represented us... the Memory Lane slide show was one of the busiest areas during the evening. Banners were hung, the Memorial tribute and Veteran sign arranged, and the tables decorated in their red and grey splendor. We were now set up and ready to go. We grabbed a bite to eat at the Club and talked excitedly about our upcoming reunion events.

## **FRIDAY NIGHT**

Friday night began around 6:00 at the American Legion. We had name tags on hand, because we were pretty sure that we would not recognize all of our classmates. We had plenty of snacks to munch on and everyone was on their own for drinks. The American Legion proved to be an ideal venue for this casual get-together. There was plenty of indoor space plus a large outdoor pavilion. We were having a great time mingling, telling stories and laughing when the lights went out. As I alluded to earlier, this was not part of the plan. The lights literally went out around 7:15 pm. The emergency lighting came on automatically when the Legion experienced the power outage. It was not immediately known what caused the outage or how long the lights would be out. It wasn't long before it was confirmed that one of the power lines outside the building was on fire. Cars parked below the burning power line were moved and speculation began on the cause of the fire. It was a gorgeous night, so a lightning strike was ruled out. Rumor had it that a squirrel may have caused the incident. We are pretty confident that the squirrel would have been fatally shocked and we were not told of any squirrel remains being found. So, the cause of the black-out remains a mystery. The fire department as well as the power company were dispatched to the scene. Power was restored several hours later. Did darkness put a damper on our festivities??? Heck no. The partying continued. At our age, we all look better with the lights dimmed anyway. When the lights came back on, we circulated the rooms and reintroduced ourselves to classmates who may have arrived "in the dark", just in case we weren't recognized with the lights on. The partying continued 'til about midnight. It was a great evening that was totally unaffected by the black-out.

## **SATURDAY MORNING**

The reunion weekend continued with Saturday morning activities. Music is always a big factor in planning reunions. Even at our age, we love to dance to great music. Belmont Hills is not known for having a great sound system, so we rented one to assure high quality sound. The sound system was set up at the Club early on Saturday morning. In keeping with the music theme, we also hosted Line Dancing Instruction at the Cafetorium at St. Clairsville High School. How lucky we were to have Linda Herman Kelly as our instructor. Linda, a 1965 St. C. graduate and former Radio City Music Hall Rockette was extremely patient with about 20 classmates (including a couple of brave guys). We weren't sure if 5 or 50 classmates would show up for this activity, but those in attendance enjoyed being together to get some exercise without actually exercising. Linda did a quick walk through to get the gist of the dance and then we danced. We enjoyed the fun and didn't take the workshop too seriously. There was no judgement. Just FUN! And.....lots of laughing!

## **SATURDAY NIGHT**

Saturday evening finally arrived. The main event. Belmont Hills Country Club was the perfect venue for our 50<sup>th</sup> reunion. The event was a "comfy casual" celebration. The registration area was filled with laughs, hugs, kisses, pats on the back and a name tag. For some of us, we needed that glance to the chest area to compare name tag and face as we greeted our classmates. A cash bar and hor d'oeuvres were available. Classmates gathered at Memory Lane to enjoy the photo presentation and a few ventured into the Photo Booth area to take some candid shots. The Photo Booth gained in popularity as the evening progressed and the frequency of visits to the bar increased. The class photo was taken without too much bedlam. The front row (who sat on the floor) did require some help in getting back up on their feet. Classmates were welcomed and dinner was served. The buffet offered sumptuous good eats all lined up and ready to be devoured. Following dinner, committee members and veterans were recognized.

Time doesn't take sides. Time can be an enemy or a friend. It's what we make it. It is a window of opportunity. Several of our classmates were not with us because they had run out of time. We spent a moment in silence to memorialize those classmates. All of us who were there knew that time had changed us. We were grateful to use this weekend to renew friendships and remember the gift of time together we had been given 50 years before. High school was filled with intricate strata of cliques. All of that nonsense dissolves with time. Classmates at our 50<sup>th</sup> reunion weren't trying to impress anyone. We reveled in memories of youth. We danced, reminisced and reconnected. We had more fun with old friends than we've had in a long time. No one was camera shy, because everywhere you turned, photos were being taken. Comments heard throughout the night included....."best reunion ever;" "had a great time;" "you outdid yourselves;" "can't wait for the next one;" "music was great;" "enjoyed the food;" "it was super having the class photo developed before the evening ended;" etc. etc. One comment, however, stuck in our minds, "the bar has been set so high; there is no way you can top this." It was a nice compliment and much appreciated by the reunion committee who worked really hard to make this the "best reunion ever."

You might ask, "Why should anyone try to keep in touch with classmates from 50 years ago?" Because we were friends. We shouldn't allow time to erase past relationships. Every relationship we have is a gift to be cherished and with today's technology there is no excuse for not staying informed. We are not suggesting that we have to constantly communicate with everyone we meet, but we may regret not staying connected. As one classmate said, "Why is it that we don't get together more often? We had so much fun that really....we should do this more!"

Are there future reunions on the horizon? We hope so. The committee recently had a follow-up meeting to discuss what to do and where to go from here. We plan to organize annual gatherings. October 10, 2020 will be the date of our first get-together. It will be a casual event at the American Legion in St. Clairsville. Much like our Friday night event this year, snacks will be provided, but everyone is on their own for drinks and food. We talked about having a more "elaborate" event for our 55<sup>th</sup> reunion. The committee will continue to discuss these possibilities as it gives us a chance to get together and plan future events. Keeping it simple and inexpensive will make such events easy to organize and much more desirable for both out-of-town and local classmates to attend. We will keep everyone informed via the website, email and Facebook.

We have received a lot of requests for viewing pictures especially from classmates who were unable to attend. We have had photos submitted to our website. If you haven't already submitted your photos, please send them to: [webmaster@stcclassof69.com](mailto:webmaster@stcclassof69.com). We appreciate any and all photos you wish to share with us.

Visit our website. [www.stcclassof69.com](http://www.stcclassof69.com). This is the place to look for information on our class. Your input, comments and encouragement is greatly appreciated.