

FROM TOM BITTNER - September 2014

(The following is an excerpt from an e-mail Mr. Bittner sent to Peggy Malchow Sass)

I hope that you will not suffer too intense a shock by getting a message from me. It has been a long time, and I beg your forgiveness.

Yes - I have the Loveland Class of '64 website bookmarked on my computer. I have kept watching the list of those planning to attend the reunion (97???), and it looks like quite a fun group. For awhile I had "toyed" with the idea of making a surprise trip to see all of my old western acquaintances, but rapidly put that idea away. I know that this body would not be very comfortable. This summer things have been sliding downhill. I shake like a tree in a hurricane at times which makes writing & word processing difficult; I have difficulty with walking; Falls have increased, & because the left ventricle of my heart is aging & growing stiff, it does not pump blood properly and I also develop breathing problems. There - that is a quick list of my problems. You don't want to just hear complaints from me, I'm sure. I get along - still driving, but primarily in West Bend - I hired a cleaning lady, friends do the weekly shopping & laundry, etc. It is great to still have caring friends (just like in Loveland!!!)

The class website is great!!! Was it designed by Mr. Ballard? Well organized and really encourages participation in events during the reunion. Sounds like Loveland has made some real changes. What have they done with the old high school building? Is the motel/hotel you are using in an area I might recall?

Be sure to say hello to any of the class that may remember me. Tell Dick, Ron, Ken, Rich, and the others I will try to get a Holiday letter out this year, but that is not a major promise. Suggest, please, to some of them that they send an occasional note - are any "old" teachers coming? - I'd like to catch up on all of them. My phone number is 262-334-9138. How many of you have retired? Will you be taking photos? I'd like to see how many of you still look the same as you did in '64. My e-mail address is bittnerr4784@sbcglobal.net, and I also am on Facebook, but do not use the latter much. (Notice the TWO "r"s in my e-mail name.)

Well, time marches on. I hope that all of you have a GREAT time. I'll certainly be thinking of you next weekend. Please give my best to all.

With fond memories,

Tom (Bittner)

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FROM TOM BITTNER - July 2009

Greetings to the "oldsters" gathering to share memories of their days at the "old" Loveland High School!

I was very excited when I was sent word of the reunion, and even gave consideration to attending myself. It would be great to see all of you again, visit the mountains, and express awe at how Loveland has changed. Then, my Parkinson's disease (along with other physical problems) decided to pick this summer to control my body and mind. I knew that it would not be practical for me to try to come out there. I know Peg and some others from the group will send word about the highlights. Oh, yes, if you take a group photograph, I would like a copy (will pay for it) and would like someone to label it with names since I know some of you have made some body alterations since I last saw you (haven't we all?).

I imagine that all teachers probably remember the first class groups they had the best. I am certainly no exception. I came to Loveland when you were sophomores, and left the year that you graduated. When I looked at your wonderful web site and saw that list of students for the first time this year, a majority of the names brought images of faces and memories of the fun (and not so fun, sometimes) experiences we shared. I remember (not in any special order of importance):

1) The time a group of students got together, bought a cake and a few funny gifts, and drove up to my apartment to celebrate my birthday. Wow!!!

2) That one of our home economics teachers (before Jean Penrose) took a leave of absence. Harold Ferguson called me into his office and asked if I would use one of my planning periods to fill in for one of her classes for awhile (WEEKS!!!). Sure - I could do that!!!! "What will I be teaching?" I asked him. His answer was "SEWING"!!! Me, Tom Bittner, teaching these shy (HA!!) young ladies how to use a pattern, cut fabric, and sew a blouse. I sat after school for hours, but somehow we got the job done - and the kids & I learned it was fun - TOGETHER!!

3) That Harold Ferguson could get me to do anything!! Either I worshipped the ground he walked on or was a very gullible young teacher. It was, I think, my first year that he asked me if I would be a Pep Club sponsor. Wow!! Pep Club!! Sounds like fun!!! Sure - I could do that. What is Pep Club???? Oh, just an organization of a few (!!!!!) girls who went to athletic events to cheer on our brave "warriors". There I was - a man with all those girls -marching up & down the football field - SOMETIMES ON CRUTCHES (Remember the crutches??). Cheering away??? Didn't Harold have a family member in your class (Do you know Cindy??)? She was a sweetheart too - likely still is.

4) Remember where you were when President Kennedy was assassinated? I do. I was asked to go to the lunch room to announce the news. We also were to open a play (it was either "A Full House", "Diary of Anne Frank", or "The Guy from Venus") that night & had to decide - Does the show go on? It did!! We thought that you kids had been working hard & it might give Loveland a chance to escape from what was a shocking day.

5) Rag Days were great!!! I have never seen anything like it in any of the schools where I taught after I left Loveland!!!

If I were to relive every wonderful sports event, drama moment, music concert, club meeting, or conversation I had with you folks, you would still be reading this when you retire! Oh yes, many of you are already retired, aren't you? I keep forgetting that I am only seven years older than most of you. Suffice it to say that I loved my time in Loveland.

After I left Loveland, I went to the San Francisco area, back to Neenah, Wisconsin, back to Colorado Springs, then to work in the Colorado Juvenile prisons as an educational coordinator, and then landed here in West Bend, Wisconsin in 1971, where I have remained. I keep up with the news from there regularly through Peg Malchow Sass, but would like to hear from many of you about your lives since I last saw you.

My e-mail address: bittnerr4784@sbcglobal.net

Please be patient. I will answer your correspondence. It just takes awhile sometimes. Peg can confirm that.

Have a wonderful reunion!!! My thoughts and "heart" will be with you.

Tom Bittner