

## Class of 1964 Profile .. 2024

Wally Graese

I didn't know I was having an identity crisis until I started to fill out the registration for this year's class reunion. On the form after the blanks for names, email address and the box to check for the amount, the instructions near the bottom said, "send a check payable to Class of 1964 Reunion".

My first thought was: Who writes a check anymore? That's crazy. Who are these old people? Now I don't pay with my watch, but I have half a dozen credit cards with various bonus cash back offers all with different categories so I have to check my cheat sheet to see which one is best for fast foods and which one to use in restaurants. We have PayPal, Venmo, ApplePay and ACH. (Wait, why don't I pay with my watch? Maybe I am old.)

The next thing that struck me was that the bank would see my check made out to the Class of 1964.....Hell, I list my *birthday* as 1964 when I can get away with it, and if questioned, blame the 1946 / 1964 transposition on my dyslexia. Why would I want anyone in the bank to know I graduated 60 years ago?

Then I thought: Why am I sending money by untraceable mail to someone who contacted me? I didn't contact them. How do I know this isn't a scam like the guy in Nigeria that is going to send me hundreds of thousands of dollars as soon as I cover the modest legal transfer fee? I just put all of my checking account information in an envelope and sent it off. Old person paranoia for sure....I guess I was born in 1946.

No, it is OKAY. I addressed the envelope to Evelyn. I dated Evelyn before I even knew how to make-out. No, I trust Evelyn. No worries.

I also trust my wife Karla of 55 years. I trust she will help me sort-out the names of all my class mates who will attend the reunion even though she went to Holy Family in Denver. She is so much better at faces and names than I am. I couldn't do it with out her. I did notice all of the names at the bottom of the email from our webmaster Dwayne. I can start practicing on those 11 people, and who knows, that might be half of all the classmates able to show up. Now I feel old again.

Karla and I have lived in Nebraska for nearly 24 years now; however, we spend what we hope are the coldest months in Mexico. Since Ms. Greeson didn't teach us how to order two beers with lime (Dos cervezas con limón) in Spanish class, and I didn't learn or retain anything except how to ask "where is the library", we stay in San Carlos, Señora, Mx where 50% of the people are from the USA, and the other 50% are from Canada, so

language is not a problem once you learn to say “eh” which the Canadians use almost as much as “cheers”.

I no longer ski, or wind surf and my bicycle will never need new tires. My sport of choice is the fastest growing one in the United States, Pickleball. We play for fun in both NE and MX. I am only a half-fast player.

I was never a rebel in LHS, at least not compared to some of my unspoken idols from those days. I have moderated my driving speed, and generally cruise between 79-80 on the interstates. I drive the speed limit on city streets, and my wife reminds me to slow down for school zones. I do however have a tendency to *all of a sudden need* most anything the government says it is going to ban and NE is a good place to wear my 2nd Amendment ball cap.

We have been blessed with decent health, self-sufficient kids, wonderful neighbors and family. I still shop Walmart, Costco, and use special offers to eat like Taco Tuesday, or Senior Sodas. My life work now consists of pulling weeds in the garden, mowing the lawn, trying to solve a crossword or Sudoku during lunch, and looking for my lost disc-golf discs in the desert in Mexico. That IS ME “eh”?

Life is Good / Cheers.

(Why don't I pay with my watch?)

My Travel Thru Time  
(Wally Graese – 2019)

I was born in Loveland at a very early age, and soon distinguished myself in Pre-school and Kindergarten in the accompaniment of several future Class of 1964 students. (Were my mother Anita Belle alive, she could help me list the exact ones. But she is not and, like most of the rest of you, I am now an orphan,) I believe Cindy, Glenna, Jon, Tom, Jim and I were together from the first day of school. My CRS keeps me from being able to list the others, but then I'm getting ahead of myself.

First grade in the old Garfield school was a set back. The teacher pointed out several of my faults including a rooster-tail like cow-lick on the back of my head that was very pronounced and dominated my black and white silhouette cut out from that grade. And my bright orange iodine dyed fingers let the rest of the class know she was not pleased that I liked to put my fingers in my mouth.

I prefer to think of our move between 2nd and 3<sup>rd</sup> grade to rural America as progressive, enlightened, and a futuristic instead of a banishment from town. You are welcome to your own opinions. I learned to ride a school bus, play in the dirt and drive a tractor. Wait! I take that back. I'm pretty sure I learned to play in the dirt in first grade with my orange colored fingers.

98% of the ground we farmed was dry-land, and we always hoped it would rain instead of hailing so the wheat would grow taller than the resident rocks. The ample opportunity I had to study red ants, grasshoppers, miller-moths, and flying ants convinced me never to be an entomologist. My inability to spell prevented me from studying etymology.

After being trampled by a beast of burden at a donkey-baseball game, and thrown off a sheep at the Larimer County Rodeo, I decided I didn't want to raise horses or be a rancher. Thousands of hours sitting on a metal tractor seat, covered with dust, plodding along at 3 1/2 miles an hour gave me no impetus to pursue farming.

But between farming and Sunday-School, I didn't find much opportunity to get into trouble unless Raspy or cousin Fritz was around. Working at the dog track ("Cloverleaf Kennel Club" as their marketing department preferred you call it) for three seasons did broaden my horizons and I was sure I wanted to go to college.

At CSU I was voraciously quick and learned to party in just one year. One or more of the Deans put me on a special list and I was not permitted to return the following fall, so

I graduated to other endeavors. Even after a year of hydrating at college, I was still parched from all of those hours on the tractor and decided crystalline water in the mountains would provide some relief. But like many from our class the military enlisted my body. But the Navy failed to capture my soul as I sat for thousands of hours in a darkened room atop a desert hill at Guantanamo Bay Cuba and tracked the U2 overflights of Castro's world.

My next assignment was a mine sweeper stationed in S. Carolina where I discovered sitting in a darkened room plotting sonar contacts on a piece of paper could make me very sea-sick especially after hydrating the night before. Thank heavens we never really went anywhere.....except for a field trip to find a nuclear bomb that some poor Air Force pilot (who cut his career very short) accidentally dropped in the Atlantic on a routine sortie.

Marriage followed the military and we migrated to the mountains where the movement of millions makes moguls in the meadows. We learned and worked in the recreational industry for the next 30 years. After starting at the ski areas we continued to the marina on Dillon, then to our own mom and pop motorcycle shop in FC and finally to the Anheuser-Busch brewery where we merrily made beer for the multitudes after our two children were married.

This year we sold our house in FC, gave up our CO driver's licenses, and registered to vote in a state that is as conservative as Colo used to be. We are now pillars in our NE community where Karla is the President and I am the water-boy. We have a garden and I'm back to playing in the dirt.