

50th IHS Class of 65 Reunion

By

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Well, here we are, “The big 5-0.” It is a pleasure to see you all tonight. I only wish everyone could be here. At this stage of our lives, one can only guess how many of us will be here for the 55th.

So, why do we celebrate our High School graduation? Why bother after so many years? Each of our classmates left IHS that spring of 1965 and went our own way, made new friends, moved all over the country, perhaps never looking back on those days spent at the top of Union hill. I have thought about this, asked myself why I care. Dug deep to understand my motivation, because as many of you know, I really love celebrating our Reunion.

It seems to me that we grew up in a magical time. WWII had ended and our mothers and fathers came home to an economy rebounding from the great depression. They married and started making families, and boy did they make families—they created us. We even have our own generational definition- the Baby Boomers. Neighborhoods swarmed with kids. Most of us lived in families that worked hard to provide us with a better life than they’d had as children, withering in the harsh years before the Great War.

From birth to the end is an evolutionary process. Each phase of life a point of discovery about the world we live in, but more importantly, discovering who we are, and what we can become. In the early years we were protected, and as each year passed by we were given more freedom to be that person we can become.

Even in Junior High we were still under watchful eyes. But when we hit High School, everything began to change. In four short years, the evolutionary process went into warp speed. Older, wiser, hormones racing, and most of us were preparing an academic launching pad to enter the next phase of their lives. Our High School lives were filled with academics, sports, plays, student councils, band, and oh so many other activities testing our abilities. We began driving, going on dates, going to dances at the Teen Lounge, Armory, Rose Ballroom in Belding, the Swamp in St. Johns, and of course in the summer, the Crystal Palladium. We began to understand love and physical attraction.

We cruised Big I, along with many out-of-towners, making the loop through the A&W (the Dub), swinging up to the Dog and Suds then back through a car jammed Main Street. We’d fill up our cars at the Zephyr station for 20 to 25 cents a gallon. Many of us learned to drink, cruising the gravel back roads going to grassers.

Boys became men; girls became women during those four years of high school. For most of us, the travelers tagging along with us on this four-year journey became lifelong friends, soul mates, brothers and sisters. The kind of relationships that even after 20, 40, 50 years when you

meet one of your old friends it seems like it was only yesterday and you pick up your conversation as if you were never apart.

Then, on a sunny June afternoon in 1965, high school ended. Leaving the comfort of our daily routine for the past four years, heck 12 years, most of us were anxious, yet ready. We struck out to conquer the world. Some went to college, some went to work, some went to war, taking with us the confidence, social skills, and knowledge we had accrued to that point, especially during those last precious, formative, four years of our lives.

We've evolved into the people we are today during those formative first 18 years of life. And hopefully we have all continued to evolve throughout the years since, finding greater meaning and purpose to our lives.

I do not pine for the "Good Old Days", but I do appreciate and savor the wonderful memories of that era of my life. And, most importantly, I relish the friendships made and sustained to this day.

Was the Class of 65 unique? Of course we were, just as every other class before and after us were. But the Class of 65 was our time, and in some large ways, some small, those days had a significant impact on my evolution, for which I will be forever grateful, and is why I love to celebrate our Class Reunions.

We are the Class of "65"