

Class of '64

*We will never again
be as young as we are right now*



AGAWAM HIGH SCHOOL

A Class of our time

By: John Klenakis

Recently, a classmate asked if I thought my happiest years were in high school. I said no, I thought my happiest years were the last twenty because I had reached a stage in life where family and work were well established and the journey to get there – which is its own kind of challenging fun – was well behind me. Thinking more about it I don't even think I would put high school in my top five lists of "happiest years" but that doesn't mean high school didn't have its special moments.

In 1950, Agawam (translation: "unloading place") was still a sleepy hamlet even though there had been some aggressive in-migration right after the War. Now that we were at peace and with a depression over as well, towns like Agawam became repositories for families hoping to start anew, settle down, and begin a family. All across the country everyone was looking to leave the cities and head out to the suburbs. People desired what the cities could no longer provide: open space, affordable homeownership, and quiet surroundings. Thus was born the nation's great suburban migration. The Springfield area was no exception and Agawam, which grew by over 50% during the decade of the fifties, was one of the neighboring communities benefitting from Springfield's population exodus. The family story goes that in 1945 my Dad, awaiting discharge from the Navy, instructed my Mom to purchase their first home on Rowley Street while she was still carrying me. I had been the product of an earlier visit she made to Philadelphia where my Dad's ship docked after serving in the Pacific. That last sentence may be too much information.

We were the baby boomer generation, the happy gift our parents gave each other to celebrate the end of World War II. We grew up at a time when the Country was growing more populous and becoming more affluent. Since we did not experience the great World War or Depression as our parents did, it was easy to just look forward and be optimistic. But when unfettered optimism meets disappointment and tragedy, usually anger and cynicism follow. A number of years later, some in the Class of 64 joined with so many other baby boomers across the country, after witnessing many of the horrific events of the sixties unfold, and rebelled against the status quo and questioned the traditional values held by our parents.

One of those values was a sense of duty. They didn't question authority; they worked hard, followed the rules and sought to live the American dream. Most of all, they wanted us to have a better life than they did. As far back as I can remember I was told that I was expected to go to college, something beyond the reach of my parents despite their very obvious talents. During the day my Mom worked as a librarian at the Newspaper but spent all her evenings writing poetry and wrote hundreds before her untimely death in 1965. My Father was the oldest child of ten and left high school to work with his father in a local foundry to

help the family make ends meet. He enjoyed math immensely and used this skill to eventually become the “go to” guy in the Greater Springfield Greek community for anyone needing help with their tax return.

The connection between education and a better life was not something that registered in me until the day my mother took me to pick up my Dad from work not long after a teacher had told both that I wasn’t devoting enough time with my studies. He was still a molder at a forging company, working around open fires and chemicals. It was mid-June, very hot, and we waited in the dirt parking lot while he slowly walked from the plant to the car with his shirt off, the scars on his back visible from the time he backed into a fire a few years earlier. I didn’t know at that point what I wanted to be later in life but I sure did know what I didn’t want to be and that’s when it “clicked” that college was my way out. Yet, despite what he went through, I never heard my Father complain. Complaining wasn’t part of his generation’s DNA. Shortly before his passing I told my Dad that story. He told me he had no memory of that day but I did notice a faint knowing smile.

Walking into AHS in 1960 was both exciting and scary. The school we now refer to as our alma mater was built five years before we entered as freshmen and the ‘Class of 64’ had the distinct honor of being the first class of the new decade. Where we had come from - Agawam Junior High - was a much older and smaller building but at least it was comfortable territory and, more importantly, we believed we ruled there. Now, we had to adjust to new terrain and learn once again what life was like on the bottom rung of the social ladder. But we were optimistic, and why not? We were not at war and there was prosperity everywhere, well, at least as far as we could see.

And we had a new President elected our freshman year, one who challenged the Country to move in a new direction and many of us listened to that call. He was from our State. He was *our guy*. My mother, who was active in the Agawam Democratic Committee, had met JFK while he was a Senator and I still have that picture. What stood out for me was that he was the first national politician that didn’t look old. He looked the way we wanted to look and spoke the way we wanted to speak. We all wanted to be him and the girls all wanted to be like Jackie. We were so naïve about national and world affairs and certainly had no idea what impact the events unfolding in the next few years would have on us and how they would affect the rest of our lives.

But, already, things were different. I remember when JFK appointed a woman as the White House Physician I turned to a buddy and asked: “how is she going to check things down *there*”? More importantly, JFK followed up on a campaign promise and put into effect a new program designed to send American citizens all over the world to help improve the lives of people in distressed countries. It was called the Peace Corps. Alan Shephard became the first American to travel into space, one month after the Russians accomplished the feat so, not to be outdone, JFK announces to the World the U.S.A’s intention to put a man on the moon before the end of the sixties. But not all the news was hopeful as we learn of a CIA

backed failed invasion of Cuba. Closer to home we are witness to the beginnings of the Civil Rights movement as freedom riders get arrested in Mississippi for “disturbing the peace”.

I don’t remember how much I was thinking about these things my freshman year. I just wanted to be with my friends, have a few laughs, play sports, and be part of a group. Then, when I became a sophomore I could do it all over again. What I didn’t realize back then was that High School was a laboratory exposing us to many of the experiences we would again face later in life, when more would be at stake. It was our first taste experiencing real life attributes: effort, success, failure, authority figures, first love, second chances, social positioning, third chances, friendship, love again, conflict, competition, winning and losing. Did I mention love? And, of course, how you performed in each of these would help determine the future ahead. So, not much was at stake, right? But I didn’t see the larger picture back then. Who did? Well, maybe a few. At that time my only concern was whether I would be alive at the end of Mr. Kibbe’s freshman football practice each night.

Some excelled in this laboratory because they caught on right away or followed the instruction of parents who understood these things but might not have known how to communicate in a way we understood or relate to which helps us understand that the phrase “because I said so” was part of the universal parent language of the time. Others of us would get it in future life laboratories because part of the genius of America is that (even more) second chances is built into many parts of the system.

As freshman we didn’t know the terrain and quickly learned our place was with other freshman although, if you scratched beneath the surface, integration with upperclassmen did occur sporadically. Some classmates broke through the “class ceiling” and hung around (does that term even exist today?) with upperclassmen including (gasp) seniors. When we occasionally heard of a freshman co-ed dating upperclassmen, not kind words were said but deep down there was admiration for her adventurous spirit. I remember getting a “crush” – by the way, what a strange term – on a senior co-ed and all she had done to earn my affection was to star in a school play. I think I must have followed her in the hallways for two weeks. It’s a good thing they didn’t have stalking laws back then. Three years later things came full circle as the freshman sister of a classmate told me in front of her girlfriends that she had a “crush” on me. Surprisingly, I didn’t know what to say in return.

We survived our freshman year and, in the fall of 1961, moved into the ranks of varsity as sophomores. Since we were assimilating more into the general population I hoped things would get easier but pure hope provides no predictive outcome. It turns out we were challenged even more: by parents, teachers, coaches, even friends. Social groupings took place, not that they didn’t before, but now everyone was watching. And, who you knew and who you hung around with (there’s that term again) was planted on you like Hester Prynne’s scarlet letter, only this mark glowed like neon in the dark. To this day when I reminisce with classmates someone will say: “oh, you hung around with.....”

The world was rapidly changing and some of it was not favorable to our side. During our sophomore year there was a crisis in Europe because the USSR was not happy so many of its East German citizens were leaving for West Germany. A diplomatic confrontation ensued and the Berlin Wall was constructed by the USSR. All across the USA people began to construct fallout shelters in their basements. Less noticeable at the time but an act that would have even more profound consequences for us later was the placement of 18,000 U.S.A. "military advisors" in a faraway little country in Southeast Asia no one ever heard of: Vietnam. At home we found a new hero in a Marine Corps pilot named John Glenn who became the first American to orbit the earth aboard *Friendship 7*.

Those were the great issues of the day but at the time mine were a bit different: what could I do to get Mrs. Sherman off my back about my missing Algebra homework?; what would Coach Leonardi and my football teammates think if I went out for the school play?; who would I run into at Friendly's on Friday night?; and would 'so and so' want to go "steady?" (one of the great terms of the sixties now abandoned). For the most part, we were not really socially aware and had no idea how world events would have such an impact on how it would affect our lives and who we would later become. In this respect I am not sure we were that much different than other predominately white suburban high school students across the country or, for that matter, previous generations.

But we had something previous generations didn't, rock n roll. We called it music. Our parents called it something else. It occupied our time and attention and gave us a reason to socialize and, for the better dancers among us, express ourselves in motion while others gazed in admiration. New performers on the national stage emerged almost daily and we were even introduced to new dances: Chubby Checker's The Twist became a national sensation and Joey Dee and the Starlites almost topped it soon afterwards with The Peppermint Twist. Even Dee Dee Sharp had a minor hit on her hands with Mashed Potato Time. This was the year the Shirelles made it to the charts with Soldier Boy, Gene Chandler sang *The Duke of Earl*, The Crystals gave us *He's a Rebel*, and even good ole angelic Shelley Fabares from the Donna Reed Show had a hit with *Johnny Angel*. Every Friday night many of us would gather at Robinson Park Elementary School to, presumably, socialize and dance. And, some did. Others of us kept our backs to the wall wondering if we should trek all the way to the other side and, if we did, would we be greeted with acceptance or rejection? Either way, there was always Friendly's afterwards.

When the doors opened to greet us as Junior's in the fall of 1962 the Soviet Union had just agreed to arm Cuba. Castro declared himself a Marxist Leninist and vowed to make Cuba a socialist paradise. There was no way JFK could allow the Soviet Union to place land based missiles 90 miles from our shore so an embargo was ordered. We saw this last event at the time as the forces of good versus evil and believed it could lead to the end of the world because we were staring down the Russians. It was Kennedy vs. Khrushchev, and the missiles of October. I remember being in Mrs. Hallbourg's math class when she announced that she was never as afraid as she was at that moment. A chill went down my spine. This was a TEACHER talking, not just my parents.

Other events were taking place at home as well that were just as profound as the world stage. In Birmingham, Mississippi, Dr. King and his followers were arrested for “parading without a permit” and King wrote his letter from a Birmingham jail stating that people have a moral duty to break unjust laws. I remember learning that a black man (James Meredith), took his case all the way to the Supreme Court for the right to attend the University of Mississippi and that sit-ins were occurring at lunch counters all across the South because people of color were denied service. I can’t say I was surprised to learn this because when I was about 10 years old, my parents took me to visit my Dad’s sister in North Carolina. At that time you had to take a ferry for part of the trip and, while on the ferry, I went to get a drink of water at a fountain but was pulled away by my parents because the sign above said: “Colored only”. I remember them telling me I couldn’t use that fountain and also that they had a great deal of difficulty telling me why.

By the time spring arrived in 1963, the Class of 1964 had established a familiarity with our overall school environment and AHS began to feel like a place we were both part of and part of us. Underclassmen treated us with deference and we began to engage teachers in a more casual way, as if they were an older, friendly mentor rather than the person who stood in front of the class stiffly handing out information. The Class of 1963 was on their way out the door and we were the very willing rulers in waiting. Things began to feel easier but new pressures were coming our way as some began plotting what they would be doing after high school. Visits to colleges began to occur and, for the first time, we had to think of what life would be like separated from each other.

But we continued to dance and the music became even better. We were introduced to groups influenced by the California beach life like The Beach Boys (*Surfin USA* and *Surfer girl*) and Jan and Dean (*Surf City*). Female groups were beginning to get recognized and songs by the Chiffons (*He’s so fine*), The Crystals (*Then he kissed me*) and the Angels (*My boyfriend’s back*) were hits but none compared, in my mind, to Martha and the Vandella’s singing *Heat Wave* although the Ronettes came close with *Be My Baby*. The events of the times were making their way into music as folk groups like Peter Paul and Mary (*Blowin’ in the Wind*) were gaining notoriety but not yet a lot of traction.

When the doors opened for the first time in September of 1963 it felt like the keys belonged to us. Now we were fully engaged and the destiny of all things AHS was in our hands. If we lost a big game we could no longer blame upperclassmen. If the school play didn’t go well, we owned it. We had to perform, not just in the classroom but beyond as well. A Year Book had to be produced, proms needed to be planned, and a graduation had to be performed. And we were both the planners and the stars in every production. Those who actively – I was not one – participated in the preparation of these events probably never received the thanks from the rest of us they deserved but they did get a lasting reward because acquiring those skills at an early age is truly the gift that keeps on giving.

I have to say something about football, not because I played but because it has always been such an important part of Agawam High. We had a good team but not a championship one.

We won more games than we lost – thank God – and we beat West Side. I have so many stories about football but what I took away from it is that I underwent a very challenging experience with a group of guys I liked and succeeded, something no one can ever take away from us. Practices were brutal and games were intense. You really learn about the importance of hard work, sacrifice, cooperation, and competing at a high level. I don't think, until now, I ever truly appreciated the gift that Mr. Leonardi and Mr. Kibbe gave me (us) through this experience and how it affected and influenced me throughout my life. It helped me get through some difficult days that lay ahead.

We were in the midst of a very respectable season. Our record was 4 wins and 2 losses and there was just one game to go with conference leader Chicopee who was undefeated. We had conducted a scrimmage with them earlier in the year and beat them up pretty good so in late November some of us were looking forward to – in our minds – the upcoming upset. I was headed to football practice when Mr. Petrone passed me and asked if I had heard the news that the President had been shot. I had not. I walked in a kind of stunned silence to football practice and got dressed in a silent locker room. After we practiced for about fifteen minutes Coach called us together, said he didn't feel right with us practicing, and told us to go home and be with our parents. I kept hoping that there was some mistake or that he would miraculously recover and be okay. That night when Walter Cronkite announced he had died I saw the anguish on my Mother's face. In the subsequent three days of TV watching we witnessed JFK's funeral, LBJ's oath of office as President on an airplane with Jackie by his side, and Oswald's assassination. It all came at us too forcefully and too quickly.

Everything else that happened in high school pales in comparison to that moment. That final game with Chicopee was cancelled and never replayed. Like every other Class of 64 across the country, our Yearbook was dedicated to JFK. In the subsequent years we would endure thousands of lives lost in Vietnam, riots in the streets, campus bombings, the next two Presidents leaving in disgrace, and a growing mistrust of Government which continues to exist to this day. One can only imagine how different History would have unfolded had this horrific event not occurred.

We grieved but at the same time we had to move on. As difficult as JFK's death was to overcome we still had to get ready for life. We knew that in the last half of our senior year we would have to begin to let go of AHS and think about what would come next. Some would head out to jobs, others to college, and still others would go into the service. Many of us would only see each other again at reunions and the experiences we had – so rich at the time – would be reduced to memories. As tragic as some events were it did not take away from the reality that our four years together shaped who we would become and instill values that would last a lifetime.

And it's not as if the events affecting our lives decided to take a break. A few months later, in his 1964 State of the Union speech, President Johnson declared a national war on poverty. About this time Soviet jet fighters shot down an American jet fighter on a training mission that strayed into East German territory, killing all three crew members. In the spring of 1963

Secretary of Defense Robert McNamara declares that the U.S. Government intended to increase military and economic aid to Vietnam in the war against communism.

It was easier to understand our fight with the Soviet Union because it could all be classified as *good versus evil*. What was going on at home was not so easy to comprehend because we lived in what we were taught was an open society that valued freedom, democracy and opportunity yet here we were listening to speakers on the nightly news telling the world that America oppressed people, conducting “sit-ins” at lunch counters and marching in protest all the while singing “We shall overcome”. That wasn’t the America I knew. Mr. Carbone tried to enlighten us by inviting a Professor at Springfield College who was the local NAACP leader to speak to our *Problems of Democracy* class about the fight for equality. At the time, the NAACP was pressing in a militant way for change so I thought we would hear someone angry, emotional, and strident in tone. We got just the opposite. His was a reasoned, well thought out presentation on the promise versus reality in America for persons of color. Another shock to my system.

These are issues that, upon reflection, can be viewed from the experience that fifty additional years brings but, back then, it was all new to us and our context at that time was the somewhat sheltered upbringing we had. Perhaps as a residue of our own parents value system we believed and trusted authority figures and “the system”. Thus, those protesting authority – no matter the reason – became suspect. In order for our minds to embrace change we had to be convinced that those we respected did as well. At some point in the fight for Civil Rights the Federal Government changed its posture from passive observer to active supporter on behalf of those protesting conditions in the South and for this 17 year old kid from Massachusetts, it made all the difference in the world. The entire south, I reasoned, had long ago lost its collective mind and the Federal Government was going to make things right. I was no longer angry at the angry voices. Now, I thought, I could understand their cry.

If music had a hold on us before, in our senior year it became almost an obsession. It was no longer just rock n roll. We began hearing of something called the “Motown Sound” emanating from Detroit that brought us groups like Diana Ross and the Supremes, Stevie Wonder, The Four Tops, The Jackson Five, Marvin Gaye, The Marvelettes, and the Miracles. And then, things REALLY changed. I remember being picked up on a weekend night and after I entered the car and said hell-o I didn’t hear hell-o back, just a “shut-up, the song is coming on”. When I gave a puzzled look one of them said, “Greek, you got to hear this” and that was the first time I heard the Beatles sing *I want to hold your hand*. At first listen, I wondered what the big deal was but later that evening at the Friday night dance, I was hooked. And, that’s when things really got crazy. All of a sudden, all of the guys were growing out their hair to look like the Fab Four. I had the required haircut for all the football players, a “butch”, and just when I was thinking of growing it out I ran into Coach Leonardi in the hallway while another student was walking by who had already adopted a Beatles like haircut. Coach went on to tell me his opinion of guys growing out their hair and that was the

moment I changed my mind about doing it. I stuck with the “butch”. Even back then I displayed enormous courage.

Yes, we had great music but our time for dancing together was coming to an end. Graduation was upon us and we would be drifting out of AHS in separate directions. Some would go off to college or technical school, others would start a career early, and some would enlist in the armed forces. When you are in high school it’s impossible to predict where you will be fifty years later and what kind of person you will become. We all have aspirations to do something in particular and take steps to get there but other things happen in-between that forces a change in direction. The change can be temporary or permanent. We are no exception. We have all travelled different paths; have different beliefs, and value systems. In some respect what we achieved in life, and how we got here, is not really that important. What is important is that we went through a time together that was critical in defining who we are as individuals and that these seminal events played a major role in shaping our lives for better or worse. It’s our shared experience and no one or thing can take that away from us.

Welcome to the 1964 Class reunion.

Address: 403 Cedar Street
Newington, CT 06111

Phone: 860-335-4034

Email: taffleckclu@aol.com

Website/Blog: www.taffleckclu.com

Favorite Teacher:

Favorite Class: all four English classes

Favorite Activity: Band

So, tell us... How you doin'?

Did a post-grad year at Mount Hermon after AHS.

Graduated from Dickinson College in 1969 with BA in History.

Married high school sweetheart, Sherry Royer, while a senior at Dickinson.

Elementary school teacher in Baltimore 1969-1972.

Life insurance agent 1972-1975.

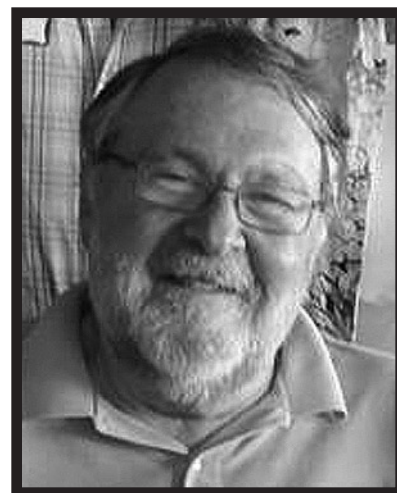
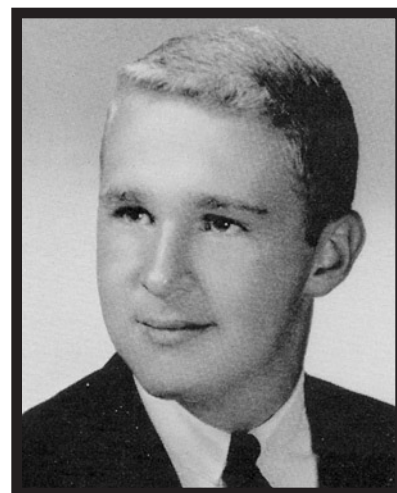
One son, Timothy, born in 1973.

One "surrogate" daughter, Kris, and two "surrogate" grandsons,
Jaxon and Erik

Worked in Home Office of Connecticut Mutual Life Insurance Company
1975-1999.

Accepted early retirement offer in October, 1999 and set up shop as
independent consultant providing expert witness services in litigation /
arbitrations involving life insurance products.

Enjoy family gatherings and fishing excursions at summer lake cottage on
Big Pond in Otis, MA in the Berkshires (although recent lightning strike
exploded top of tall hemlock tree sending three chards through my porch
roof, a large branch through second story bedroom roof breaking two
rafters, and another branch onto opposite side of cottage breaking half of
my deck railing).



Ted Affleck

Address: Box 121
33 Russell Road, Huntington, MA 01050

Phone:

Email: toby1574@verizon.net

Website:

Favorite Teacher: Brennan

Favorite Class: Any Science

Favorite Activity: Friendly's

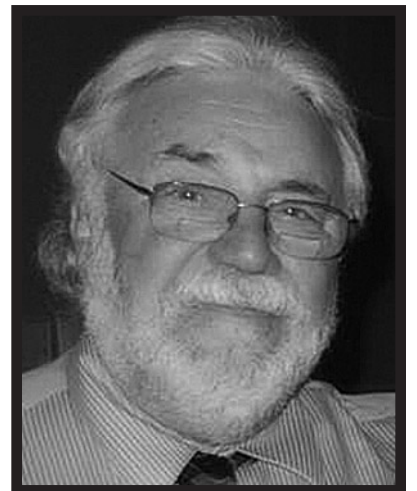
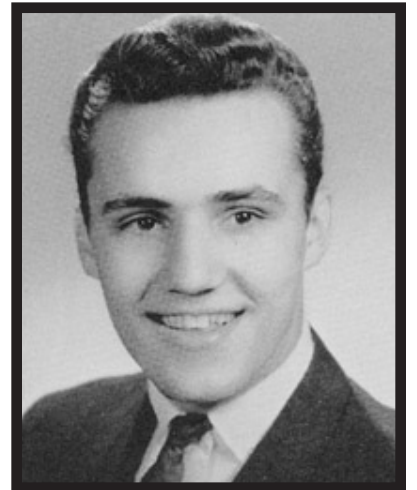
So, tell us... How you doin'?

Well. Adjusting to retirement.

Physically, with a 150 year old house and 20 acres, there is always something to do. Enjoy going in the woods, cutting firewood and hauling it out with my tractor

Heartfully, I miss Respiratory therapy so I volunteer w Hospice, good hearted people w large shoulders.

Heartfully 2, I go to a place called the Keystone Arches in Chester, Ma. It is a river that winds it's way along a railroad track in a wildlife area. Walking through, listening to the river, looking at close and distant hillsides is an ethereal event. Sometimes, I bring a folding chair, sit on one of the arches with binoculars, a book of poetry [Braided Creek by Kooser/ Harrison] and occasionally a mason jar of Patron, to maybe catch sight of an Osprey, Otter, Deer etc. Breath.



Jim Arnold

Address: 1657 Garnet Ridge Drive
St. George, Utah 84790

Phone: 435-216-7538 or
425-248-1725

Email: falco.toadfoot@gmail.com

Website: n/a

Favorite Teacher: Joe Faucette

Favorite Class: Seriously!

Favorite Activity: Baseball

So, tell us... How you doin'?

After high school flunked out of college and was drafted in January 1966. Discharged in January 1968.

Went back to college (University of Hartford) in the early 70's and eventually found myself writing software.

Married in 74. One son, Ian, who was born in 1987, graduated from Connecticut College in 2009 and is currently getting ready for his last year of law school in Chicago.

Worked for several New England companies in the 70's/80's writing software, mostly communications type products.

Lived in Pepperell, Ma. from 1980-1989. Avid tennis player.

Moved to California in 1989 to go work for Apple Computer.

Took up cycling while living in California, typically piling up more than 5000 mi/year.

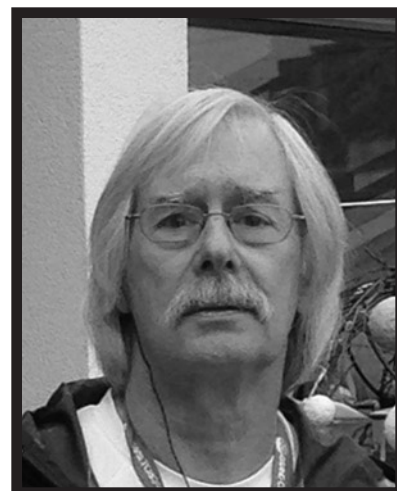
Moved to Washington (state) in 2005 to work for a small company.

Moved to St. George, Utah in 2010 and continued full time for the company in Washington.

Retired in 2012, although still do a bit of software consulting.

Rediscovered my tennis game after moving to St. George.

My wife Pat and I will celebrate our 40th anniversary on September 27th, 2014.



Bob Barnes

Address: 503 Silver Street, Agawam, MA 01001

Phone: 413-821-6993

Email: joe_didonato@verizon.net

Website: www.JoeDiDonato.com

Favorite Teacher: Mrs. Nardy

Favorite Class: English

Favorite Activity: Golf Team

So, tell us... How you doin'?

"When people ask me about my life, I usually tell them it was a result of a "keypunch error." Here's the short story.

At UMass, I signed up for the Army ROTC, but instead of keypunching a '1' it must have went in as a '0' and I was signed up for the Air Force. Assuming that I could simply fix the error, I went to the commanding officer of the ROTC unit at UMass and said that I was REALLY afraid of heights because I fell off my roof helping my dad once. Then I added that I respectfully would like to go into the Army ROTC program where I had less chance of falling out of the sky. He started to smirk in a knowing cynical way, and said that only a select few ever got to fly a multi-million dollar aircraft, and that I would probably - and more likely - spend my life on the ground guarding one. Denied. (Turns out I wasn't afraid of heights. It was a fear of 'falling,' which was exasperated by the flight instructor telling us at a mandatory "how to use a parachute" course about a French pilot who managed to fall to his death because when he couldn't find his rip cord, he clawed through his chest and pulled out a rib. He said that the French have the rip cord on the other side of the parachute. I think he could have spared us the story and just told us which side our rip cord was on. You should have seen how many people it took to get me into that T33 trainer jet after that little story.)

Anyway, after I had applied for California as my first choice and Italy as my second choice, I got my orders for Rome. Turns out that was also a town by that name in New York. To this day I still can't remember if I wrote 'Italy' after Rome. Next, I signed up for the OSI (Office of Special Investigations - the 'weirdo's' that chase after UFO's and then tell the public that it was simply a trash can lid. Wanted to see area 51 personally...). Unfortunately, the OSI unit was disbanded shortly after I went in, and I was made a Hospital Administrator.

Wait! A Hospital Administrator?!? What did a Marketing major with a BBA know about medicine?!? Turns out that there wasn't a big calling for Marketing people in the Air Force, and they explained that because I had worked as an Inhalation Therapist on weekends during college, I was more than qualified. WTF. I got the job because the Chief Inhalation Therapist wanted golf lessons.

Anyway, this is where I met my first wife. Seems that we were constantly running out of supplies - probably due to my expertise - so it was my job to go beg for IV's and such from the local hospitals. She was a nurse at one of those hospitals. That marriage gave me 3 beautiful children - well 2; and 1 nut case because of the divorce. (We try to keep that "shared view" of him, from him.) I'm kind of skipping over the fact that after applying for jobs as a "hospital administrator" which were met with smiles and skepticism, I ended up back in the business world and in Marketing. A series of random occurrences led me to being in the right place at the right time, and after changing jobs countless times, I actually became rich and a CEO and all that. Long story short, my ex got all that, and then dumped me and the 50,000 shares of Oracle stock she demanded, at \$2 - just prior to its splitting 34 more times, which put me and the kids back in work mode. Made it again, and then lost it all again by spending over a \$1 million for a California home (worth about \$50K here) just before the market tanked.

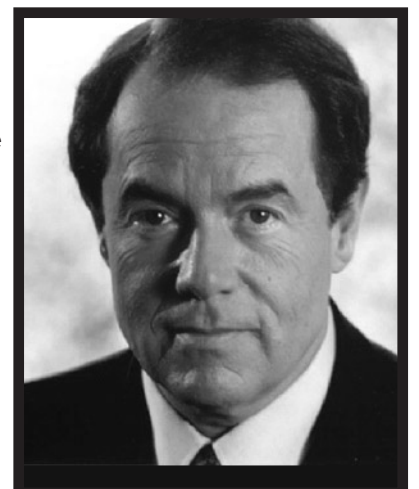
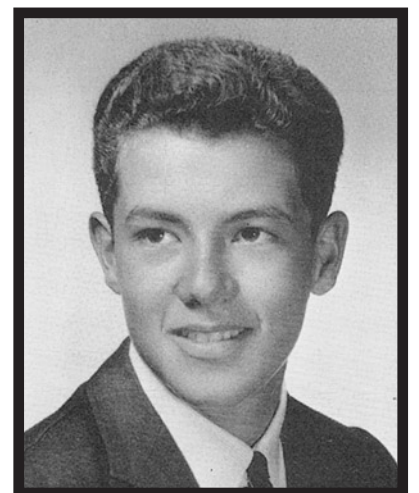
However, during that wondrous journey, I was invited by the Russian Department of Education to go over and help them get distance learning to the remote orphanages. Now my only memories of Russia were from our making fun of their beauty queens in a TV commercial that showed 8 huge women throwing around a big ball in gray one-piece bathing suits, with bandanas on their head. Turns out that was also a lie. The James Bond movies were much closer to the mark.

That resulted in my winning the "wife lottery." Turns out the only person who could speak enough English to take me around to the orphanages was also a wonderful woman that the kids adored, and for some reason she also seemed to like me. She was also divorced. Her ex was a lot more famous than I would ever be. He would have also been our worst enemy. He was the former Admiral of the Russian Navy. His claim to fame was the basis of that unfortunate "Widowmaker" submarine movie. Turns out he was also kind of a jerk in his personal life as well. Anyway, she's MY WIFE now! And adding further insult to injury, my newest (drop dead gorgeous) 38-year old daughter took my last name. Hah!

So turns out that the military keypunch error also had a military significance after all. That was my sole contribution to our liberties here.

So here we are now back in Agawam. And fittingly, I'm back in the house that I grew up in. (My dad always said to be nice to the people that you meet going up in the world, because you seem to meet them all again on your way down.) But I'm not done yet!!!

In the interim of this wondrous adventure that I would never had had if it weren't for that keypunch error, it's been absolutely fantastic to renew my friendships with my old classmates, golfing buddies, and even the 1,398 relatives that seem to have sprung up while I was gone."



Joe DiDonato

Address: 108 Valarie Way
Henderson, NV. 89074

Email: holyoke80@gmail.com

Favorite Teacher: Mrs. Nardi

Favorite Activity: Band

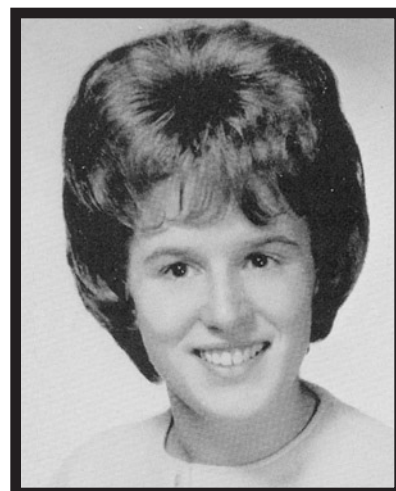
So, tell us... How you doin'?

Doing great, thankful for life just as it is.

Phone: 702-545-0504

Website/Blog:

Favorite Class: English



Georgia Haskell Wenzel

Address: 267 River Rd.
Agawam, MA 01001

Phone: 413-789-0874

Email: lynnlitchfield@comcast.net

Website/Blog:

Favorite Teacher: Bob Fassnacht

Favorite Class: History

Favorite Activity: Chorus

So, tell us... How you doin'?

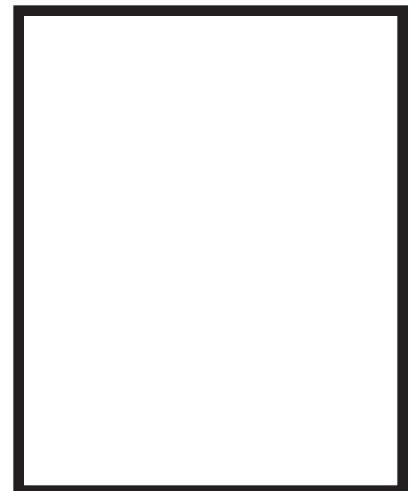
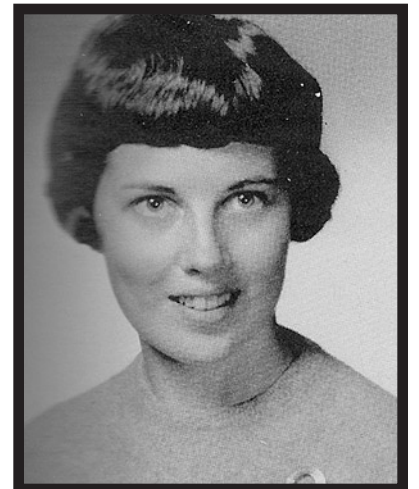
After high school I attended American International College and earned a B.A. in History. I went back to AHS and taught there for 34 years, retiring in 2004.

I married my high school sweetheart, John, Class of '63 in 1969. We have 2 sons, Mark and Scott. Both are married, living in Massachusetts and they each have one daughter.

I have kept busy in my retirement. I volunteer at my church, tutor young children who are struggling to learn to read, and I facilitate and score the Massachusetts Teacher Licensure exam.

John's career has been in travel and we have done a lot of it and continue to do so. Next, we are off to the Caribbean in early December.

Looking forward to seeing my classmates at the reunion.



Lynn Kupec Litchfield

Address: 4601 NW 46th St.
Ft. Lauderdale, FL 33319

Email: squeeekie946@aol.com

Favorite Teacher:

Favorite Activity:

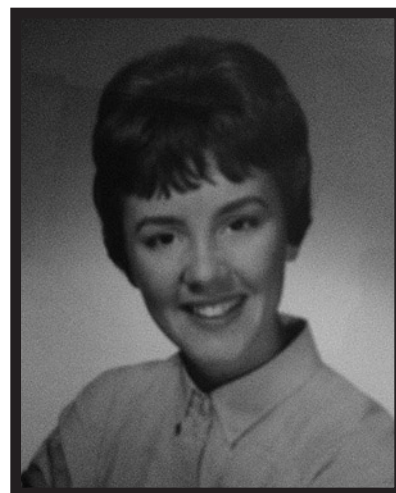
So, tell us... How you doin'?

Happy, single & loving retirement!

Phone: 352-875-7224

Website/Blog:

Favorite Class:



Nancy Monahan

Address: 240 Dover Circle
Lake Forest, IL 60045

Phone: 847-295-2418

Email: sjm@b2bSolutionsLLC.com

Website/Blog: www.b2bSolutionsLLC.com

Favorite Teacher: Joseph Faucette

Favorite Class: Physiology

Favorite Activity:

So, tell us... How you doin'?

After high school I went to AIC to study hoping to enter the field of marine biology, but soon realized I liked working at First National Supermarket a whole lot more than the courses I was taking. After leaving AIC, I went to Andover Business Institute for a semester, where I pursued excellence in the cards; spent a lot of hours playing Pitch. Time to move on from Andover.....

As a First National Supermarkets employee, I applied for and won a scholarship to attend the Stockbridge School of Agriculture at UMass, and in 1967 I graduated with an Associates Degree in Food Retailing. I then transferred to UMass and graduated with a B.S. in Agricultural and Food Economics in 1969. During my junior and senior years I was awarded a Teaching Assistantship which sure helped pay the bills.

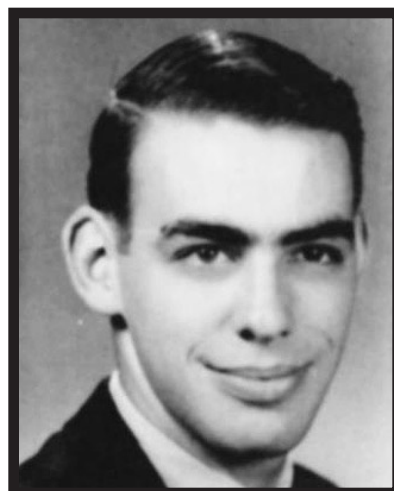
Next up, the MBA program at UMass, 1969 – 1970, after which it was time for the Army.

I was drafted in the last call before the lottery began, thus, after one year of grad school, I was called Recruit Montgomery. Fun fact - during my basic training, I ran into William Shakespeare (class of '64), who was an officer at Fort Dix.

Sue Cimmera, my high school sweetheart, and I had married in June of '68. In early 1971, Recruit Montgomery, wife, and newborn daughter, Amy, spent the next year of our lives as an Army family. My assignment was to the 66th Military Intelligence Unit in Munich, Germany, and we were fortunate to get military housing. Upon our return to the states, we welcomed another daughter, Kristin, to our family. Army life was quite an experience, and brought us some great travel adventures and forever friendships.

Military obligation was fulfilled and it was time to get a job. We bought and operated two different franchises from Dairy Mart in 1972 and 1973. In 1973 I went to work for Dairy Mart and held a number of positions, including President and Member of the Board. In 1985 Dairy Mart purchased 700 stores based in Ohio, and we made the move to the Midwest, landing in Hudson, Ohio.

I joined Amoco Oil as General Manager of Convenience Stores and we moved to Chicago in 1990. I resigned from Amoco in 1994 and founded a consultancy specializing in working with retailers and suppliers in the convenience store industry, which Sue and I still operate. We're in a suburb 40 minutes north of the city, and like it here a lot. Both daughters are now close by, and we love having our two grandsons, now 10 and 7, close by. Hard to believe it's been 50 years since Sue and I walked the halls of Agawam High School!



Steve Montgomery

Address: 11 York Ledge Drive,
Cumberland Foreside, Maine 04110

Email: jswweightyissues@gmail.com

Favorite Teacher: Mr. Joseph Faucette

Favorite Activity: Cheerleader

So, tell us... How you doin'?

Upon graduating from AHS, I went to UMass and joined the sorority, Kappa Kappa Gamma. Little did I know at the time that my membership would have far reaching effects. I have maintained a long-term friendship with a Kappa sister. Serendipitously, Kappas continued to come into my life thru extended family and new friends.

During the college period, summers were spent working on Cape Cod and in Maine. They were a lot of fun and enhanced my love of the beach and the ocean. Today it is my favorite place to be.

Following my college graduation, a sorority sister and I went to Europe. We traveled through 14 countries in 2 ½ months on \$5 a day. It was quite an adventure. Upon returning, I went directly to Columbia University in NYC for my Masters Degree. My professors were some of the best in the field of counseling and education. It was a life- altering experience and taught me the value of a good quality education.

Having appreciated my time at Columbia, I chose to have my wedding at St Paul's Chapel, which is located on the campus. My husband, David, raced sailboats as a hobby so for our honeymoon we went to South America for a World Sailing Championship. We worked in NYC for a couple of years. I taught for the NYC Public Schools while David worked on Wall Street. Then came the yearning to return to small town living.

We moved to Falmouth, Maine where we joined Foreside Community Church and Portland Yacht Club as well as myself joining The Junior League. My career continued by being the first Jr./Sr. High School Guidance Counselor for the Cumberland School System. After 4 years, I left the position to give birth to my son, Carter, and 5 years later, to son Tyler. Before long, I went back to work as a Behavior Education Counselor. Several years later, I started my private practice, Weighty Issues where I counsel people regarding food and weight issues. As part of my work, I lead support groups and teach for the local university as well as for businesses and organizations. My work also provides wonderful learning opportunities: A fellowship to Boston University, the Stone Center at Wellesley College, national conferences at the Renfrew Center, a 10 Day Meditation Retreat and The Hoffman Institute are a few of them. Throughout these years, our family traveled to the Caribbean, Hawaii, Florida, Cape Cod and made innumerable trips to Skaneateles Lake in NYC to visit in-laws. Sadly, after 32 years of marriage, David and I went through a divorce.

Today I continue to find my work meaningful and challenging. As I have given to my clients, I am blessed to have received so much from them as well. In my spare time, I enjoy walking, biking, dancing, art, reading, traveling, gardening, meditation, music and getting together with family and friends. I am especially proud of my sons. Carter lives in Portland with his wife Molly. Tyler lives in Va. with his wife Andrea and 2 little adorable girls, Julia and Evelyn.

I am thankful for all the traveling, all the courses, all the experiences, all the people who have come into my life. They have helped shape who I am today.



Joyce Sarat

Address: 22 Parker Street, Unit 7
Malden, MA 02148

Phone: 781-322-3035

Email: grafikschmidt@verizon.net

Website: n/a

Favorite Teacher: Geraldine Schilling

Favorite Class: Art

Favorite Activity: Art

So, tell us... How you doin'?

I'm pretty happy. I like my life. I've had a very good time. I've had & still have fabulous, supportive, creative friends & my family puts the fun back in dysfunction.

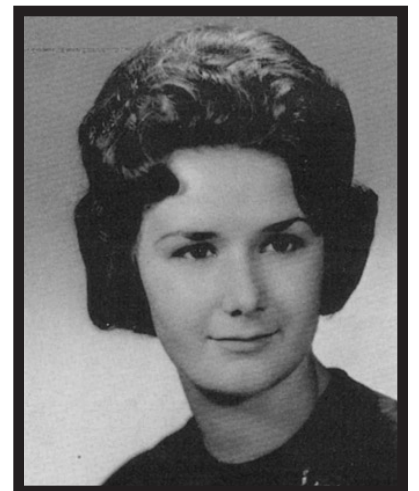
After High School, I worked for Mass Mutual for a couple of years to put myself through Art School. I graduated from Vesper George School of Art in Boston. It's not there anymore, it went condo in '84. The South End got trendy.

I am an Art Director/Graphic Designer who spent the first 10 years in television, a few in advertising & a few freelancing but the best time was the 17 years working for Parker Brothers & playing games for a living.

Even in retirement, I'm still pursuing art. I will always be a designer, just now it's in clay. I never did get over playing in mud as a child.

Anyway, I'm still having fun & hope to for the remainder of my days.

In regards to the picture at the right... so young, so thin (sigh).



Karen Schmidt

Address: PO Box 248 Manhattan Beach, CA. 90267

Phone: 310 - 428 - 5033

Email: Kari@eKari.com

Website/Blog:

Favorite Teacher: My history teacher,
can not think of his name

Favorite Class: gym

Favorite Activity: biking and hiking and climbing

So, tell us... How you doin'?

I am doing well. I have lived here in S. CA on the coast in Hermosa Beach for the last 45 years. I came here after meeting so many people while traveling in Europe in 1969 for 4 months from California that when they invited me I had to come. I never looked back.

There was sunshine here rather than the grey overcast skies at home.



Kari Walker

Address: 1307 Downeymeade Lane
Raleigh, NC 27603

Phone:

Email: kathy4765@nc.rr.com

Website/Blog: <http://www.children-may.com> (our)

Favorite Teacher: Mrs. Kalloc

Favorite Class: Science classes

Favorite Activity: Latin Club

So, tell us... How you doin'?

Like most I think, I have been through sad times, tough times, very happy times, and, for me, I've even had a dream come true. Overall, I've fared well the past 50 years for which I am very thankful.

Three days after graduating from STCC in June 1965 I married my husband Alan, a career Navy Seabee. In the next several years we were blessed with our daughter Wendy and our son Michael, both successful adults today. We also have three granddaughters; Wendy is their mom.

Being a Navy wife, I have had the opportunity to experience living in Tennessee, Mississippi on the Gulf Coast (Hurricane Camille 1969), and Naples, Italy 1970-1974. Living in Italy was my dream that came true! I have been fortunate to have seen a bit of this beautiful country of ours through the years having crossed it four times by car moving to a new home or while on vacation. I am especially fond of Oregon where I lived 14 years before moving to North Carolina 19 years ago to be near our grandchildren. It has been a joy being a part of our granddaughters' lives and watching them grow into beautiful young women.

In 1976, when my husband retired from the Navy and our youngest was in school, I began working outside the home. Medical Lab Assistant was my course of study at STCC and although much time had passed, the medical field still held my interest. A rewarding position early on was that of phlebotomist in a hospital. In the same hospital, same lab, I began my career as a medical transcriptionist working in the field of pathology. I've been transcribing 30 years, 26 years in the field of dermatology. My present position of 16 years has been a dual one of transcriptionist and medical records manager in a dermatologic surgery practice. I have truly enjoyed my work, but I am now looking forward to retirement.

My husband and I enjoy camping at the beach. Sewing, cross stitching, and gardening are my hobbies and I enjoy time spent with my family, the theater, movies, music, and our pet Yellow-napped Amazon parrot.

Yes, life has been good; I hope it has been for you. May you and yours always be blessed with fair winds and following seas. Kathy



Kathryn L. Kane, nee White