



The 55th Reunion is Only Nine Months Away!

In case you misplaced the last newsletter, our 55th reunion is on May 15 – 17, 2009 in downtown St. Pete. *Those Were The Days* is the theme and we hope to re-live the fun of the '50's era in which we were students at SPHS.

The [Hampton Inn & Suites](#) is accepting reservations for this event now, so contact them at (727) 892-9900 to get your place in the fun. Mention the SPHS Class of 1954 when you call.

We are hoping our classmates will help us award great door prizes, by contributing something from their locale or something they made. If you can provide a door prize, please contact Sally Cook Vazquez at (813) 949-1451.

Also, our classmates have really stepped up to underwrite the funding for the reunion activities. This reunion will have **no registration fee**, and everyone is invited to drop by the hospitality suite in the Hampton Inn to greet and visit with former SPHS classmates. There is plenty of room to socialize and snack on goodies in the hospitality suite, as shown below:



So, even if you do not plan to attend either the Friday or Saturday dinners (\$), you can still participate in this reunion Friday afternoon, all day Saturday, and Sunday morning in the hospitality suite.

We will be publishing a registration form for the reunion in the next newsletter, where you can

register and also pay for the meals at the St. Petersburg Yacht Club. You may also indicate if you will only be participating in the socializing at the hospitality suite.

Classmates Sponsor Our Reunion

Class Treasurer, Lil Olsen Classen, reports that our classmates have been very generous in sponsoring the 55th reunion. We can still use more sponsors, so let Lil know if you can help.

GRADUATION GOLD

Marlene Matouk Haugland

GREEN DEVIL GREEN

Sally Carlson Cronk

Myrtle Siemers Larson

Lois Gillies Phillips

Deane & Doris Mohr

Marie Ortner Cowart

Joe Flad, Jr.

SOCK HOP WHITE

Don Vaughn

Sylvia Hommer Acton

Ron Starling

Mary Liz Slater Turner

A big THANK YOU to all of our sponsors.

When did your family first come to St. Petersburg?

The St. Petersburg Museum of History is starting an on-going project to trace the families of St. Petersburg, from the first settlers up to our time. The first part of this project will be to identify up to 100 families who still have descendants living in our area. If any members of your family (grandparent, parent, aunt, uncle...) were here before World War II, please let us know. We would be interested in any information that you could share with us -- their names, when they came, where they came from, what they did, where they lived, and who in the family, if anyone, is still in or near St. Petersburg. It also would be good to know how many generations of your family have gone to SPHS! Thank you so much for helping on this exciting project!

All best, Sherry Harris (SPHS '60). Please respond directly to Sherry at totoro88@verizon.net.

Your Help is Needed

The Hospitality Committee plans to have a picture board in the Hospitality suite at the Hampton Inn. We are asking all classmates to send a current or recent picture. You may include your spouse/significant other or family if you choose. Please identify everyone in the photo. Also, please provide your name and address if you want the photo back after the reunion. Even if you are not able to attend, please send your photo to be included in the display. In doing research for this reunion, many committee members have found pictures of school events and classmates in different settings. If you have any pictures of interest, as many of us do, we would love to have you send us an 8" x 10" **copy** that we can share. We are asking for **copies**, as we wouldn't want anything to happen to your originals. After all, 55+ year-old treasures and memories are too important to chance a loss. You can send all pictures, recent or historic, to: Myrtle Larson, 200 – 92nd Ave. North St. Petersburg, FL 33702 Thanks so much for your interest and participation. We are looking forward to May, 2009 and seeing our classmates again!

Graduation

Our class lost Virginia Cottrell Wilson on April 29, 2008, according to the *St. Pete Times*. She succumbed at the Hospice of Citrus County. Virginia had lived in Hernando, FL in recent years. She loved doing needlepoint and she loved anything Disney. She is survived by her husband, John O. Lee, two sons, a daughter, a brother Edward and five grandchildren

May Picnic Was Delightful

The May 3 SPHS Class of 1954 picnic was held at War Veterans Memorial Park in Bay Pines. The weather was great and everyone enjoyed the get – together. Sally Vazquez brought a yummy door prize and everyone had fun. We also discussed plans for the 55th reunion and set a time for the

next quarterly activity, a luncheon at the Columbia Restaurant, on September 6. Here are some photos from the picnic:



Bill Classen took this photo of one table, showing L to R: Nancy Litten, Sherry Rasmussen, Boyd Acklin, Sally Vazquez, Bette Jackman LoBue, Pat Acklin, Phyllis Doescher and June Ward Fleisher.



Above we see Bob Kaniss, seated, listening to a Joe Flad and Phyllis Reichelderfer Doescher discussion.



Even Classmate spouses Bill Classen and Frank LoBue enjoyed the picnic.

Hollywood Stars Visit SPHS

Do you remember having assembly programs in the auditorium? We had all kinds of people visit there, including a visit by some Hollywood stars. Here is another keepsake photo that Tom Fredrick took during an assembly in 1953.



It shows on the SPHS stage, from left to right: Barbara Ruick, our Frances Ellinwood, Mel Ferrer and Carlton Carpenter

Barbara Ruick appeared in movies and musicals from 1952 to 1974. She died an untimely death from a cerebral hemorrhage when only 42 years old. In this photo, she is 23 years old.

Mel Ferrer is a Cuban-born actor, unrelated to Jose Ferrer. He has been actor, producer and director of films. Ferrer has been married five times, most notably to Audrey Hepburn from 1954 to 1968. He was 36 years old in this photo.

Carlton Carpenter was 6' 3" and served in the Seabees after WWII. He appeared with Debbie Reynolds in such movies as *Three Little Words* and *Two Weeks with Love* in which he and Debbie sang *Aba Daba Honeymoon*. The record of *Aba Daba Honeymoon* went on to sell over 5 million copies in 1950. His last movie was in the 50's was, *Up Periscope*, a WWII movie about submarines in which he appeared with James Garner, Edmund O'Brien and Frank Gifford. He also went on to a career in TV, where he had over 6,000 appearances. Although he was successful as a song

and dance man in musical comedies, movies and TV, additional fame came in the 60's, 70's and 80's when he wrote best-selling mysteries. He also wrote a book, *Deadheads*, which was turned into a Broadway play. Carpenter was 27 years old when he appeared on the SPHS stage.

"Retarded" Grandparents

A teacher asked her young pupils how they spent their vacation. One child wrote the following essay:

We always used to spend the holidays with Grandma and Grandpa. They used to live here in a big, brick house, but Grandpa got retarded so they moved to California and live in Palm Springs with a lot of other retarded people. They live in a condo-minimum and have rocks painted green to look like grass.

They ride around on big tricycles and wear nametags because they don't know who they are any more.

They go to a building called a wrecked center, but they must have got it fixed because it is all right now. They play games and do exercises there, but they don't do them very well.

There is a swimming pool too, but they all jump up and down in it with their hats on. I guess they don't know how to swim.

At their gate there is a dollhouse with a little old man sitting in it. He watches all day so nobody can escape.

Sometimes they sneak out. Then they go cruising in their golf carts. My grandma used to bake cookies and stuff, but I guess she forgot how.

Nobody there cooks, they just eat out. And they eat the same thing every night: Early Birds.

Some of the people can't get past the man in the dollhouse to go out, so the ones who get out bring food back to the wrecked center and call it pot luck.

My Grandma says Grandpa worked all his life to earn his retardment and says I should work hard so I can be retarded one day, too.

When I earn my retardment I want to be the man in the dollhouse. Then I will let people out so they can visit their grandchildren.

Class Reunion Contacts:

Hospitality – Myrtle Siemers Larson,
flarson1@hotmail.com or (727) 576-4095

Door Prizes – Sally Cook Vazquez,
YANKISAL@aol.com or (813) 949-1451. Sally
 needs help getting stuff for door prizes.

Arrangements – Joe Chamberlain,
jchambe3@tampabay.rr.com or (727) 393-6408.

Joe is our interface with the Hampton Inn.

Entertainment – Lil Olsen Classen,
lbclassen@verizon.net or (727) 343-7945

Decorations – Phyllis Reichelderfer Doescher,
pjdladybug@aol.com or (727) 541-5406.

Contributions, and Reunion Sponsorships, are
 appreciated at any time. Please send them to:
 SPHS Class of '54, C/O Lil Classen, Treasurer, at
 8037 Elbow Lane N., St. Petersburg, FL 33710.

Classmate whereabouts, news-to-share, etc.
 should be sent to: Ron Rasmussen, Editor, 10212
 58th Street, Pinellas Park, FL 33782-2632, (727)
 547-6857 or ronr@alumni.ufl.edu .

Next Class Event is a Luncheon at the Columbia Restaurant

Plan to join your classmates for a luncheon
 on Saturday, **September 6** at 11:45 a.m.
 We will be inside, where it is cool and the
 view is grand on The Pier. If you want to
 attend, RSVP to Nancy Cramer Litten by
 September 2 at: elitten@tampabay.rr.com
 or (727) 392-7417.

You can get to the Columbia several ways:
 Park at the foot of the Pier (\$3) and take
 the free trolley to the head of the Pier,
 Valet Park at the head of the pier (\$5 +
 tip), or walk from downtown. ☺