



Class-Wide 75th Birthday Party!

As planned, we observed a class-wide 75th birthday party on October 8. It was a luncheon cruise on the [*StarLite Majesty*](#) out of Clearwater Beach city marina. After the cruise, we moved the social time a couple miles south to the Sheraton Sand Key Resort. There were 46 classmates and guests in attendance, and the weather cooperated for the cruise. We saw classmates from all over Florida and from Texas and Alabama

Our unpaid class photographer, James Lyn Provo and his wife Suzanne were there to capture the event. We are indebted to Lyn for doing this and for his providing glossy photos of our big events to attendees – all at his cost. Lyn took these photos:



L to R: Sandra Collins Stephens, Jean Dickenson Fielden and Mary Jane Dulin Halyard.



Before leaving the marina are, L to R: Pat Reeves Acklin, Sally Lou Carlson Cronk and Don Bogue.



L to R: Linda Wrachford Rothwell (SPHS '56), Nancy Anne Shenk McDonald and Harry Rothwell.



L to R: Dick Jemison, Sonia Jemison and Susanne Provo (SPHS '56).

Most of the celebrants stayed inside the dining room, but a few did go out on deck.



On deck, L to R: Jeri Martin Willingham, Walt Lettau, Nancie Swope Crabb and Phyllis Reichelderfer Doescher.

After lunch we had a yummy birthday cake ceremony with favors and door prizes.



You cannot see in this photo the spot where Boyd Acklin sampled the icing ☺.



This was the scene for the cake cutting ceremony.

A copy of the following poem by John Hadley was read and provided to each 75th birthday celebrant. It could be the wish of each of us.

Old Bones

Old bones inside an old raincoat
Old bones inside of old shoes
Old friends at the hotel
Come by to wish me well
And keep me up to date on all the old news

Sometimes I have an old whiskey
And I fall asleep in my chair
And I dream that I'm a man
Much younger than I am
I bet you'd think by now that I wouldn't care

But I love life; I'd like to do it again
Though I might not be much more than I've ever been
Just to have the chance to turn back the hand
And let my life begin
Oh yeah, I'd like to do it again

It's time for takin' it easy
It's time for takin' it slow
Old bones don't move so fast
As they did once in the past
Now if I have to run, I simply don't go

But I love life; I'd like to live it again
Though I might not be much more than I've ever been
Just to have the chance to turn back the hands
And let my life begin
Or yeah, I'd like to do it again
Oh yeah, I'd like to do it again.

After returning to the dock, most went to the Sheraton Sand Key for further socializing and snacks. It was hoped that there would be a spectacular sunset, but clouds on the horizon obscured it. Several classmates stayed on Clearwater Beach before and after the cruise – making it a mini-vacation on the beach.

Letters & Notes

Sally Cook Vazquez writes: "Myrtle, June, Lois, Phyllis and I had our December lunch at the Renaissance Vinoy Hotel where we had a gift exchange to everyone's delight! The grand old hotel was simply decorated and the food was excellent. For our Nov. luncheon we celebrated Myrt's 75th birthday (she's the baby of the group) at the famous Chattaway Drive-in. From there we shared a special birthday dessert (compliments of June Fleisher) at her home so that Fred could enjoy the celebration too! Myrt's family visited through the weekend."

Myrtle Siemers Larson provided her own report on the class cruise/luncheon to **Neil Gatewood**, who had inquired of her about it:

"We had 46 classmates & spouses/significant others who really had a good time, even though the weather could have been less windy. They seated our party on the port side in tables of six with two tables of four, as we had expected 50. That would allow each table to have a view of the water. The food was excellent and impressed most folks. It is cooked fresh aboard. Dessert was a delicious chocolate and white cake with raspberry filling and our "Green Devil" head in the middle (from Publix). Donations from Marlene [Matouk Haugland] and Myrt [Siemers Larson] covered the cost of the cake. Lyn Provo took lots of pictures and I'm sure they will be available quickly,

as he is such a great photographer and SPHS '54 supporter.

Attendees were listed on our website. Those missing, in addition to the **Gatewood's**, were **Nancy LeVangie Warrenfells**, who missed her plane in Greenville, SC and **Merilyn Sweet Johnson**, who had developed pneumonia.

Walt Lettau was able to join us at the last minute and **Sandra Collins Stevens** came from Texas. **Joan Steward Hurst** and her husband came from Alabama. Several came from other parts of Florida.

While the sun was shining on the cruise, the wind prevented us from gathering as planned outdoors at the Sheraton. We did have 39 come to the after-cruise party. Some had health issues that made the day too long for both activities. (And some had to watch their college teams, I guess). **Phyllis** and some very helpful "Devilettes" transformed the dining salon of the ship into a party place with balloons and decorations. The same balloon bouquets did double duty @ the Sheraton, and the next day, as we were leaving we gave them to hotel personnel to distribute to children who were there. Sally [Cook Vazquez] was our "go-to" girl with Sheraton and some of us stayed there Saturday night.

Some commented it was so much fun that they were looking forward to our 80th birthday. Others just wanted to know what our next event would be. **Harry Rothwell** was in favor of Green Devil hats and sun visors – leading us to consider a sports-oriented theme, among others. However, 2014 [60th graduation reunion] is still three years from now, so many suggestions will filter through the thought process between now and then.

I read a song/poem entitled Old Bones and distributed a copy to each party-goer. Door prizes were won by **Lil Olsen Classen**, **Boyd Acklin**, **Ed Evans** and **Mary Jane Dulin Halyard**.

Yes, the SPHS Class of '54 was and is very special. I'll leave you with a question posed to many: Would you rather be 17 and a high school senior or 75 and a senior citizen? Think about it (nooooo, there is not a third choice for this question. Regards, may you have even more blessings in the future."

Prayer Concerns

Ed Evans' wife, **Roberta**, returned to Moffitt Cancer Center for further treatment, coincident with

our birthday cruise. We were pleased that they could both join us.

John Patrick, who we knew in school as John Hillyer, continues to struggle with an illness that seems to rob him of strength. His wife, **Kathy**, says he is mostly in bed and trips to see the doctor drain his energy. So, John needs our continuing prayers.

We are thankful that **Phyllis Reichelderfer Doescher's** son, **Kenny**, is better after treatment at Moffitt for tonsil cancer.

Myrtle Siemers Larson's husband, **Fred**, had been recovering from his fall and second back fracture last August. He had been able to remove his brace just weeks ago, and then he fell again, injuring his back in the same place. He was hospitalized and tested to determine the extent of injuries. Thankfully he did not break anything this time. Both Fred and Myrtle need our continuing prayers.

Tragically, **Nancy Cushman Atchison** lost her brother **Tom** in an auto accident on September 27 in Hernando County.

Nancie Swope Crabb recently encountered a health problem that she thought was pneumonia, allergies or stress. It turned out that she needed a pacemaker to keep her heart in sync! She is doing well now.

Donna Thomas Scoates had planned to attend the birthday party, but developed severely painful hip bursitis. She could not face a motor trip from Gainesville, even though her sons were going to bring her.

Fran Ellinwood had made plans to attend the 75th birthday cruise, but had to cancel. For the first time ever, she developed painful gout or cellulitis that kept her at home. We pray that this has been resolved and that she is now mobile.

Helping Out

Many thanks go to these classmates for donations to the class treasury in this quarter:

Phyllis Reichelderfer Doescher
Daniel Richardson
Irene (Mike) Hillengas Renbarger
Lona Mae Herndon Love
BettyAnne Cooper Watkins
Myrtle Siemers Larson

Class Contacts:

Class web site, where you can find addresses:

<http://home.roadrunner.com/~parkcentral/>

Reunions Chairman: Boyd Acklin, 1110 42nd Ave. N., St. Petersburg, FL 33703, (727) 527-0361 or eacklin1@tampabay.rr.com

Contributions: Donations are a big help and they keep this newsletter coming. Please send them to Lil Classen, Treasurer, at 8037 Elbow Lane N., St. Petersburg, FL 33710. Please make checks payable to: "SPHS Class of '54",

Classmate updates, news-to-share, etc., should be sent to: Ron Rasmussen, Editor, 10212 58th Street, Pinellas Park, FL 33782-2632, (727) 547-6857 or rrasmus1@tampabay.rr.com

Next luncheon is**Saturday, January 14, 2012**

We will meet at the Columbia Restaurant on The Pier. Gathering time is 11:30 a.m. If you plan to attend, please let Nancy Cramer Litten know no later than Wednesday, January 11. Nancy's phone is (727) 392-7417.

Remember, you can get there by shuttle from the parking lot at the foot of the pier, by *walking* or by valet parking at the pier.

