

Calendar of Upcoming Events

CALENDAR

- June 2 - Regular Meeting, 7:30 p.m., NHS Library
- July 8 - 5:00 p.m. Annual Members Only Picnic and Wall of Honor Selection Announcement - Cranbury Park
- August 4 - Regular Meeting, 7:30 p.m., NHS Library
- September 1 - Regular Meeting, 7:30 p.m., NHS Library
- October 3 - Wall of Honor Dinner - Norwalk Inn and Conference Center
- October 6 - Regular Meeting, 7:30 p.m., NHS Library
- November 3 - Regular Meeting, 7:30 p.m., NHS Library
- December 1 - Regular Meeting, 7:30 p.m., NHS Library
- Annual Christmas Party
Date TBD

QUARTERLY
ALUMNI
NEWSLETTER

NorwalkHighSchool
ALUMNI ASSOCIATION



JUNE
2010

PO Box 493
Norwalk, CT
06852-0493

NHS West Ave. to NHS East Ave.

By Michael E. Errico
President, *Class of February, 1938*

There was joy but mostly there was sadness when we left Norwalk High School on West Avenue for the last time. It was for the Christmas holidays in December, 1937 and we would no longer report to the West Avenue school because, after the holidays, we would report to a brand new high school on East Avenue, a beautiful One Million Dollar edifice.

We had spent three years in the antiquated 1908 building on West Avenue, but we would spend only three weeks in the new high school. The new school opened on January 3rd in 1938 and we graduated on January 24th. There were only 52 of us. We lost many from our class by attrition because of the great depression and some members decided to change to earlier or later classes because they preferred a June graduating class. Ours was the last mid-term class ever from Norwalk High.

Of course we were excited about the new high school. It would have only one session for everyone, from 8:25 AM until 2:32 PM. Different, indeed, from the old school where two sessions were necessary to accommodate all 1200 students. The juniors and seniors attended from 8:05 until 12:23 and the sophomores from 12:35 to 5:03. And some students were housed in portables when there was an overflow.

We didn't have many extra curricular activities on West Avenue. We did have a student government, some clubs and the National Honor Society, and we started the school

newspaper, The Green Wave. But in the new school the sky was the limit.

The new school had a large gym. At West Avenue we had to use borrowed gyms, including the YMCA, which was just up the street. The new school had its own athletic field. We used the Jesse T. Dunbar Field in Broad River with its elevated fence in right field to protect houses from line drives. That's where we practiced football as well although the games were played at Amusement Park in So. Norwalk. Perry Bean coached the sophomores, Wesley "Mike" Wilson coached football and Ferroll Green coached baseball.

With the advent of the new high school, Eugene "Ike" Kern, a backfield star at Colgate, was hired to coach the football team which proceeded to make history by playing its first and only bowl game in Jacksonville, Florida, on January 1, 1939. They won with the unofficial help of Frank Leahy, who later was to become an outstanding coach at Notre Dame.

(cont. on page 2)



Norwalk HS on West Avenue, circa January 1938

To help you to
better enjoy your
NHSAA membership:

SAVE THE DATE

SUMMER PICNIC FOR ANNUAL MEMBERS THURSDAY JULY 8TH 5PM AT CRANBURY PARK.

What do you think of our new format? Let us know at info@norwalkhs.org

Letter from the President



In our first meeting this year, The Norwalk High School Alumni Association discussed ways we can make a positive impact on our community and, at the same time, bridge the generational gaps between all Norwalk Alumni classes.

Little did we know that this opportunity was going to present itself so quickly.

It was earlier this year that Bryan Damato, Class of 1992 and owner of Damato Landscaping, approached me and asked how he can get involved with the Alumni Association. Attending the monthly meetings wasn't an option for him but he still wanted to find a way to show the Association his support.

The day after the big March wind storm I saw that my neighbor Lil Banks' (Class of 1944), yard was hit hard with debris and leaves. Lil is a widow and her husband Bill (deceased) is also from the class of 1944. I remembered my previous conversation with Bryan and immediately called him up and asked for his assistance. The following Saturday, Bryan and his crew spent the day cleaning Lil's yard spending almost 4 hours cleaning, removing fallen branches, trimming and creating flower beds. Also on Bryan's crew was Derrick Mullins from the class of 1994.

Lil's appreciation to the Alumni Association was very telling, she is "blessed to be a part of such a nice community and I feel like I have a brand new yard"

For me as President of the Association, it was a great start to the term to have someone in the Class of 1992 assist a fellow alumni from a class almost 50 years before his. This event was documented in the Norwalk Hour and since that article has come out, I have received numerous requests from Alumni who own businesses asking how they can better reach out to our community.

I wish all of you a healthy Spring and look forward to seeing you at our Summer Picnic!

Best,
Matt

Matt Scully Class of 1993
President, Norwalk High School Alumni Association.



Set-up committee members, Heidi and Dan Godleski pose with Catherine Vigilante

Superintendent Susan Marks, BOE member Susan Hamilton & NHSAA past President Glenn Iannaccone



Margaret Jarvis Durham



Richard & Ginny O'Grady (past recipient) visit with Frank X. Fay



Ben & Phyllis Isenberg (past recipient)



Teacher's Honor Roll

Honor Roll Chairwoman, Catherine Vigilante, Inductee Frances Medley Middleton, Deidre Oanella and Melissa Baskay (receiving the award for Betty Ann Smith, deceased), Margaret Jarvis Holmes Durham to be inducted, President Matt Scully, and inductee Eleanor Muro Hegedus

Continued from front page

We had a science lab on West Avenue but on East Avenue there was a SCIENCE LAB. Same for home economics, manual arts and so many other things including an enormous and beautiful library and a fabulous auditorium with the best acoustics in the state even today. And now there would be no more walking home in the dark of winter for the sophomores. (Yes, we walked. There were no school buses back then.)

We had no envy for those classes which would follow ours in the new high school. We made do with what we had and we were proud of what we accomplished in our overcrowded but homey building on West Avenue. And we were sorry to see our grand old lady fall to a demolition ball many years later with the construction of Interstate 95.

Addendum: There are 18 left from the original 52 members of the Class of February, 1938 and we meet yearly for lunch at the So. Norwalk Boat Club. This year seven or eight of us, who live nearby, will meet on Saturday, July 10th, to celebrate our 72nd reunion, augmented by more family members than class.

The Magic Power of Music and Memory

Is it just me, or do we all hear music when we think about high school? No matter what event or person or memory I recall, there always seems to be a song attached. It's an overused and lame cliché, but there really is a soundtrack to our lives; at least to my life. The music doesn't always have anything to do with the memory thematically (maybe it's just what I was listening to at the time) but the music and the memory join in an emotional and eternal bond.

For me, 1981 was rock and roll's last great stand before the sterility of synthesizers and MTV forever changed music. In my freshman year, music was still basic, hard, and real and it has stuck with me. Bands like REO Speedwagon, Triumph, Journey, April Wine, Styx, Billy Squier, Van Halen, Rush, and .38 Special filled my record collection then and they fill my CD collection and iPod now.

Some major deaths in rock music the year before still reverberated in 1981. John Lennon's murder sparked many tributes, including George Harrison's endearing and reflective "All Those Years Ago" and Elton John's poignant "Empty Garden (Hey Hey Johnny)." I still remember the impassioned tributes spray-painted on the walk in front of the main entry to NHS. Bon Scott's death inspired his band AC/DC to create their masterpiece tribute Back In Black, one of the most impassioned, powerful, and best-selling hard rock albums of all time. While not explicitly inspiring tributes, John Bonham's death did lead to the end of Led Zeppelin and the symbolic end of the seventies rock era.

In the summer of 1981, the summer before my freshman year, I had just started listening to rock radio. There was one particular song that was getting heavy airplay and I loved it. The DJs never gave its name on the air, but it encapsulated my growing passion for music and its lyrics spoke of the power of music to transform and lift the heart and soul. One Saturday night, I-95 was doing their Saturday Night Six-Pack show, playing six complete albums. I was in my bedroom listening to the show and didn't pay much attention to the first song off one of the albums, but when the second song opened with its glistening arpeggio guitar against a subtle keyboard background I knew immediately that it was my song- that it would always be my song. Triumph's "Magic Power" remains the one song that I would keep in my collection if I could keep only one song. Freshman year and "Magic Power" are one and the same memory to me. One could not exist without the other.

As freshman year began I met a girl in English class. I will spare her the embarrassment of giving you her name, but I was as completely, totally, and innocently in love with that girl as only a 14-year old kid can be and it

paralyzed me. I never did anything about it of course (I barely even talked to her), but when she leaned forward and whispered in my ear in class she shook my soul and I thought my entire life would explode. She has a lot of songs on my soundtrack, including the J. Geils Band's "Centerfold" (for purely innocent reasons), .38 Special's "Fantasy Girl," the entire Kinks album Give the People What They Want, Foreigner's "Waiting for a Girl Like You" (obviously), and Billy Squier's "Everybody Wants You," the one song we actually did dance to because she dragged me onto the dance floor. When love has a musical soundtrack, it's an impossible memory to shake. Michael Jackson's Thriller was, of course, huge during high school. When it first came out (and before it became a phenomenon) I remember singing "P.Y.T." at lacrosse practice and amazing my good friend and teammate who didn't think a suburban white kid could like Michael Jackson. I laugh at that now. Little did we know how big Thriller would become, or that Jackson would become one of the biggest stars in music history, reaching the heights of Elvis and the Beatles, and transcending racial, musical, and cultural barriers like few artists had before or have since.

Other musical touchstones of the early eighties were Journey's iconic "Don't Stop Believing" (on the eternal power of young love), Quiet Riot's "Metal Health" album (which I cranked every day as I drove Walter, Andy, and my teammates to football practice), Billy Joel and James Taylor (who were part of memories too numerous to mention with the Fluff Heads and me), and Survivor's "Eye of the Tiger." I still remember riding my bike home from the Norwalk mall as fast as I could so I could put that 45 on my turntable. Female artists also came into their own in the early eighties as Pat Benatar, Joan Jett, and Madonna became fixtures on the radio.

Music allows teenagers to feel connected and express who they are and who they want to be. It affects the clothes they wear, how they speak, and the people they hang out with. It makes them feel whole. High school memories always have a soundtrack that captures the emotions of those turbulent years, and hearing those songs will always bring us back to those moments. The music we discover in high school will always be our favorite. As we mature and grow personally we explore other musical forms, but music will never have the emotional immediacy or impact that it had in high school. Or maybe it's just me.

Scott graduated from Norwalk High School in 1985 and now lives near Austin, Texas, where he is a professional technical writer and editor. He spends his free time immersed in the Austin music scene and writes mysteries and other short stories just for fun.

NHS ALUMNI ASSOCIATION

Please send me _____ tickets to the Wall of Honor dinner, October 3rd at the Norwalk Inn.

Amount enclosed at \$60.00 each \$ _____.

Name _____

Address _____ City/State/Zip _____

Please list me as a booster in the Wall of Honor Program

My contribution per line is \$10.00 (25 letters or less) List me as: (please print clearly)

Mail this form, along with a check made payable to NHSAA to: NHSAA, P.O. Box 493, Norwalk, CT 06852-0493

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Wall of Honor Tickets

Barbara O'Connor, '71

Wall of Honor Selection

Matthew Scully, '93

Upcoming Class Reunions

(Note: Check the Reunion Link on our website for any changes to these reunions: www.norwalkhs.org)

Class of 1937: Feb/June A date in June 2010—TBD; contact Ellen Kirtland at 203-847-3468.

Class of February 1938: The last class to graduate in February from Norwalk High will celebrate its 72nd reunion on Saturday, July 10, 2010. Contact Mike Errico at 203-441-8204, or email him at mikeerrico@verizon.net.

Class of 1945: reunion will be held on August 15, 2010 from noon to 3:00 p.m. with a brunch buffet and music at the Shore and Country Club. More info is available by contacting Jean Kleis at 203-866-6692 or jeankleis@optonline.net.

Class of 1950: Save the date: Sunday, October 17, 2010 for our 60th reunion brunch at the Shore and Country Club. Contact Dr. Donald D. Yanell, 83 East Avenue #202, Norwalk, CT 06851, (203) 838-2203 or email donalddyanelldds@aol.com

Class of 1952: Sunday, September 26, 2010 is your 58th reunion at the Shore and Country Club. There will be a champagne brunch. For information please call Elaine Yanell in Westport at (203) 227-0773 or call Thurley Burns in Newtown, CT at (203) 270-6977 or email thurleyo@charter.net.

Class of 1955: Friday, September 10, 2010 at the Norwalk Inn and Conference Center and a Clambake on Sunday, September 11, 2010 at the Penfield Pavilion in Fairfield For fur ther information email dkatakacs@prodigy.net.

Class of 1960: THE BIG ONE IS HERE! The 50th reunion is Friday, October 15, 2010 at the Norwalk Inn. Additional festivities will be held on Saturday, October 16, 2010 at Birchwood Country Club. For information call Ginny DeMarco at 203-853-1363 or email Diane Langlois Hyzy at LadyDi62842@aol.com.

Class of 1975: Summer 2010 TBA; send email to nhsclassof75@aol.com, attention Reunion Committee, c/o Marie Strolin or call 203-459-8472.

Class of 1990: Fall 2010, date, time and location to be determined. For more information contact Jennifer Zinsser-Wilson, via email at jenniferzinsser@yahoo.com.

Class of 2000: November 2010! Class 2000 – November 27, 2010, Cocktail Party at Sono Brewhouse. Contact Stephanie DiScala Fitzgerald via email at steph.fitzgerald@gmail.com or Jill Ireland at j.ireland@hotmail.com.

Norwalk High School Alumni Association



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