

THE OWLETTE DISPATCH

Fresno High School Class of 1958

Newsletter No. 2

Spring, 2004



Second Floor of Main Entrance to Royce Hall

RESTORATION OF ROYCE HALL

By Cathy "Vernie" Morison Rehart

On the afternoon of January 8, 2004, **JoAnn D'Ambrosio Woodward, Buddy Arakelian**, and I met in front of Fresno High School. We were on a mission that day—to learn about the aftermath of the terrible fire that had ravaged Royce Hall.

We walked into the administration office and, while we waited to be shown into Principal Bob Reyes office, we looked at historical photos of all the principals of the school that lined to wall. Mr. Reyes came out, greeted us warmly, and ushered us into his office.

Mr. Reyes talked to us about Fresno High School and the International Baccalaureate program that is now being offered to students. I think we all felt a sense of real pride in our school as we listened to him talk about the difficult and challenging curriculum that the students are tackling. After all, the history of our school is one of academic excellence. How wonderful that these standards are still being met!

Then the conversation turned to Royce Hall. Mr. Reyes told us about the afternoon of October 15, 2002, when smoke began to pour out of the upper part of the building. Fire trucks raced to the scene—within minutes firemen were pouring water on the blaze, ultimately putting the fire out.

When the smoke had cleared and the damage could be assessed, the task facing the school was staggering. Two classrooms on the third floor were lost. Water had run through the building clear down to the basement—not only doing extensive water damage, but bringing with it lead-filled paint that attached itself to everything. Since there was asbestos under the floor tiles, the state brought in HAZMAT, the hazardous material team. The south side of the building was hit particularly hard.

What were they going to do? It was imperative to save the building. After all, Royce Hall is the only tangible symbol left

of our historic campus and its importance as a symbol to the entire neighborhood cannot be overstated. Luckily, a major modernization of the whole campus had already been planned. Money was available for that project and, out of those monies, funds were available to restore Royce Hall. The firm of Temple-Anderson-Moore Architects was hired to be the consultants for the project. According to Martin Temple, they did a "restoration with a little bit of artistic interpretation." Mr. Reyes told us that the completion of the project has brought a renewal of school spirit. "When you almost lose something, you realize how precious it is."

As Mr. Reyes talked, we became very anxious to see how Royce Hall looked. He escorted us out of his office and up the steps to the front door. We walked inside and gazed in absolute awe and wonder at the exquisite work that has been done. Royce Hall has never looked so good! "The 1922 plans for the building showed medallions and sconces on the walls that were never put up," Mr. Reyes said. He told us that Jack Fowler and the FHS Alumni Association members took on that project. Royce Hall is now painted in shades of purple with highlights of gold. It is stunning!

Mr. Reyes led us upstairs, then down to the basement (our Warrior Waldorf) and then we came back to the main floor and went into the auditorium. We walked to the front and sat down where we sat as seniors. My eyes filled with tears as memories came flooding back—Eddie Peabody playing his banjo; the Ink Spots; talent shows; assemblies; the annual Christmas pageant, *The Gloria*; the senior class play, *She Stoops to Conquer*; and the singing of our *Alma Mater*. The seats are still the same—the numbers have faded, but they are still there. The architects wanted to put in new plush seats, but I, for one, am glad they didn't. It just wouldn't have been the same. I looked at JoAnn and Buddy and could tell they were feeling it too—that wonderful sense of belonging to a time and place that may only truly exist in the past, but, at least for a few moments, could live again.

We thanked Mr. Reyes and walked down the front steps together. We paused briefly at our Class of '58 marker just north of the front door. Then we walked down the steps and through the front gate of the school.

Yes, indeed, you CAN go home again.

45TH CLASS REUNION

*By JoAnn D'Ambrosio Woodward and
Buddy Arakelian*

Everyone had a wonderful time at our 45th class reunion. From what was heard at both the brunch held at San Joaquin Country Club and the dinner held at The Downtown Club, the get togethers could not have been better. There were 122 classmates and five teachers for brunch and 176 attended the dinner. Many classmates have told us that the dinner at the Downtown Club was the best ever. Different committee

members prepared all kinds of information for those who attended. There were two boards displaying senior pictures of those who are no longer with us. There were photos of classmates from high school and junior high school, as well as boards that held the pictures of our “lost” classmates.



Carson Mah, Bruce Brownlow and Arlene Mazgedian Cartozian at the 45th reunion brunch

Many thanks to **Harold Zahlis** for providing copies of the Hamilton Yearbook to classmates from Hamilton Junior High. We urge classmates from other junior high and grammar schools to send pictures, news articles, memories or any other material to reunion committees. There are specific listings for each junior high at the end of the newsletter. Anyone who wants to volunteer for a junior high not mentioned or who wants to be on a specific committee has lots of contacts from which to select.

Jack Fowler and Jackie Garo Boyajian, of the Fresno High Alumni Association, were at the brunch to present several classmates with special awards. Block letters were handed out as well as special recognitions for some jobs well done.

A special note from **Buddy Arakelian**, chairman of the 45th Class Reunion: *“I would like to personally thank those classmates who contributed to the watercolor of Fresno High School which was presented to me at the brunch; an extra special thanks to **Harold Zahlis** who organized the gift effort. Thanks to **Glenn Schmidt** who paid \$500 worth of drinks for classmates at the dinner. Another thanks to classmates who paid the way for the teachers we invited. Finally, thanks to **Don Hyberg** (Class of '57) who designed and installed the computer program which allows us to keep track of classmates.”*

Here are some email comments received by the committee about the reunion:



Hi and a great big thanks for your hard work and the hard work of the committee which was obvious

at the reunion. It was a very special affair. We appreciate the time to visit, the ease of milling around, the display boards, and the food was even good! It was a very well planned affair. Thanks, and see you in 5 years!!! **Richard and Phyllis Wardlaw.**

Hi group. What a great reunion it was and many thanks again to Buddy and the committee for putting on such a great reunion. You know that it was a success when the spouses want to return every 5 to 10 years....just kidding of course, but when I saw Jim Portman (**Carol Emerzian's** husband) dancing with **Suzy McLaughlin Upham** (he had never met her before) I knew that the evening was a winner. Incidentally, the 40th reunion album included a photo of Jim Portman along with Jim Maloney. He now thinks he graduated from FHS. Just a little trivia....does anyone remember our class colors? I believe they were mint green and white, but I'm not sure. Close friends tease me about my long-term memory often asking what they wore and whom they dated. I often remember who was wearing the spaghetti strapped dress but often forget who won the war. The most fortunate aspect, besides family, is having terrific friends, namely **Carol Emerzian Portman, Joyce Sheppard Markarian and Charlotte Maranian Fanucchi.** Let's have another reunion soon. Your Warrior Friend, **Arlene Mazgedian Cartozian.**

I just wanted to take a few minutes to tell you and your committee that I had a great time at the reunion. Thanks for all your hard work. You are appreciated!! We had such fun connecting with our old “gang/crowd” that we are planning to get together every year for a mini reunion. **Mickey Badiali Vermon.**

FOND MEMORIES OF FHS

From **Ken Marcantonio**, “getting caught on top of the gym.”
Editor's note: Maybe we can convince Ken to let us know what he was caught doing.

Who wore a spaghetti strap dress to school and got all of her friends sent home from school that day? That would be **Norma Rose Day.**



There were two classmates who were the first girls ever to take auto shop. Do you remember that was **Gerilee Schneider Cave and Judy Kensinger Akins?**
Editor's note: I wonder if they take care of their own cars today.

Richard Reiter told us his favorite teacher was Defoe!!
Editor's note: Richard, could that be a mistake?

Do you remember dragging the “main” and swimming at Millerton Lake? **Chuck Harmon** does and he did this with his best friend, **Jack Whitting.**

Johnny Richards remembers Stan's Drive-in with fond memories. *Editor's note: Do you also remember Stan's Private Line on KMJ radio where you could dedicate songs to your sweetheart?*

Dian McCloskey Hale was shocked when **Pat Rossi delaMontanya** picked her up after a play rehearsal in nothing but a long coat and shoes. *Editor's note: Wish we had a picture of that for the 50th reunion.*

One Friday night in 1960, **Buddy Arakelian**, was in a car with **Stan Ryan** and Richard Gunner (Class of '57) at the Blue Onion Drive Inn in Santa Barbara. They were talking to a couple of really cute blondes in a car next to theirs. The girls said they were also from Fresno. The girls asked them if they knew **Glenn Schmidt**. When the guys responded they did know Glenn very well, lots of giggling started and the blondes said, "We call Glenn, Sex on Wheels."

WHAT'S HAPPENING?



Bob Knott went to Australia in 1971 along with a Killer Whale captured in British Columbia. While working at the Tarongo Zoo, he fell 30 feet off a cliff and broke several vertebrae and left knee. After that he started managing a gun shop and then retired in 1996. He and his wife, Kirsten, live 2/3 of a mile from the ocean and loves fly fishing and watching his grandchildren.

Roger Thompson and his wife, Deema, retired in 2002 and moved to Belize, Central America. They have a lovely home by the sea and would be happy to help anyone experience their wonderful place. Contact them at seaside02@red83.com.mx. Their mailing address is 167 Rainbow Drive PMB 6708, Livingston, TX 77399-1607.

Dr. M. Wayne Alexander didn't have a funny story to tell, except he thinks it's funny that at age 63, he has a nine-year-old daughter who twists him around her finger and runs him ragged. You can catch up with him at www.mnstate.edu/alexand.

TIME CAPSULE



If there is anyone who remembers anything about the time capsule that was buried underneath our class plaque, please get hold of **Pat Scheidt Austin** or any of the other reunion board members. The idea is to open the capsule at our 50th reunion but there are a lot of questions without answers before we get to that point. It is not clear whether there is even a capsule left to uncover.

When **Buddy Arakelian**, **Vernie Morison Rehart**, and **JoAnn D'Ambrosio Woodward** visited with Mr. Reyes, Principal of FHS in January he had no clue about the capsule. He was quite helpful in pointing us in many directions to solve

the questions we had. His first thought was when the campus was modernized in 1971, the plaques had to be moved and the capsules were discovered to be damaged and thrown away. He also thought they may be located at the Chapel of the Light, as a vault was donated to the school.

When we viewed the plaque, it did not look as if it had been disturbed in the 45 years since it was set. So, as stated, there are lots of questions without any answers. **Pat Scheidt Austin** is taking the lead in trying to locate our time capsule and it's precious secrets. If anyone knows any information about the capsule: maybe a committee was formed to determine what went in, maybe someone remembers what was put in, maybe someone remembers who made the decisions regarding the capsule, please let us know.

WHY A NEWSLETTER?

By Jim Shields

That seasonably warm June evening, 1958, was not "just yesterday". It was really a long time ago. Following the "Pomp & Circumstance", we began our own group diaspora, resulting in a wide scattering of our friends and contacts. We have tried to keep in contact with the memories and relationships, but sadly, there are almost 200 classmates whom we cannot find. Our reunions have bridged the gaps of time, helping to further the durability of our FHS recollections.

Our reunion committee is initiating a newsletter to assist in the efforts to remain both in touch as well as sharing information. We think that many of our classmates might like to receive this item and to perhaps provide long-missing bios and other interesting stuff to our readers. The second publication will be going out to almost 400 '58 Warriors, from address files that seem to be as complete as they have ever been. Let's develop a two-way communication with this outstanding class.

In light of the fact that a publication of this type and objective will need \$\$\$, we respectfully ask that those of you who would like to contribute can send a tax-deductible gift to assist us in providing a credible, interesting and informative piece that meets the standard of excellence that 1958 Warriors deserve. We appreciate your involvement. Please submit ideas, memories, comments and contributions to:

Fresno High Class of '58
c/o Buddy Arakelian
529 W. Scott Avenue
Fresno, CA 93704

DID YOU KNOW?

By Jackie Garo Boyajian

Fresno High School has a very active Alumni Association. Alumni and friends are invited to join the Association, and your membership will help the Association provide needed support to the school so that it may continue to reflect the proud tradition, which began in 1888. Send your name, address, phone number, and year of graduation to FHS Alumni Association at P.O. Box 27516, Fresno, CA 93729. With the following levels of contribution, membership gives you a newsletter, membership card, and other FHS information as available. These are the annual donations:

Chief - \$50 or more
Warrior - \$25.00
Brave - \$10.00

(con't on next page)

Fresno High Class of '58
c/o Buddy Arakelian
529 W. Scott Avenue
Fresno, CA 93704

Return Address Requested

(con't from previous page)

We are in the process of staging our 5th Annual All-class Dinner, May 1, 2004 at 7:00 pm in front of the school. It is a really nice event with dinner, silent auction and entertainment. This year - we are paying tribute to the **1958 Varsity Baseball Team**. Please come out and join us in honoring this great group of guys.

Call Jackie Garo Boyajian (1960) at 559-224-6643 for more information.

FHS REUNION CONTACTS

Editor's note: When contacting any classmate by email, use FHS, or Class of '58 or something similar so the email will not be deleted.

Reunion Board Members: **Buddy Arakelian**, co-chairperson. Reach him at mrcentralv@aol.com, 529 Scott Avenue, Fresno, CA 93704, 559-229-0850. **Lyn Darby Maloney**, co-chairperson. Reach her at jaspentravel@aol.com, 7027 N. Teilman, #102, Fresno, CA 93711, 559-439-7525. **Pat Scheidt Austin**, austinart@comcast.net, 2500 E. Menlo Avenue, Fresno, CA 93710, 559-299-8446. **Donna Farris Gaither**, paulndonna@comcast.net, 6758 N. Malsbary Avenue, Fresno, CA 93711, 559-435-2411. **Vernie Morison Rehart**, crehart@aol.com, 5110 N. Fruit, #123, Fresno, CA 93711, 559-226-6620. **Jim Shields**, shieldsdad@aol.com, 499 E. Kelso, Fresno, CA 93720, 559-434-3899. **JoAnn**

D'Ambrosio Woodward, ja_woodward@hotmail.com, 351 Baron Avenue, Clovis, CA 93612, 559-298-9296.

Lost Alumni Committee: **Donna Farris Gaither, Pat Feliz Bandoni**, 4830 E. Harvard, Fresno, CA 93720. **Peggy Duggan Culp**, 355 W. Sierra, #118, Fresno, CA 93704. **Mickey Badiali Vernon**, badmon@hotmail.com. **JoAnn D'Ambrosio Woodward**.

Reunion Decorating committee, many thanks to: **Pat Feliz Bandoni, Donna Farris Gaither, Dennis Libby, Lyn Darby Maloney, Vernie Morison Rehart, Jim Shields, Mickey Badiali Vernon, JoAnn D'Ambrosio Woodward**.

Newsletter committee: **Vernie Morison Rehart**, co-editor, crehart@aol.com, **JoAnn D'Ambrosio Woodward**, co-editor, ja_woodward@hotmail.com, **Grace Masuda**, masutani@earthlink.net; **Jim Shields**, shieldsdad@aol.com; **Mickey Badiali Vernon**, badmon@hotmail.com.

Time Capsule Committee: **Pat Scheidt Austin**, austinart@comcast.net, 559-299-8446.

Junior High Committees:

Jan Charshaf Kelley, 2094 W. Magill, Fresno, CA 93711, 559-439-5272, and **James Palmer**, Jjf5864@yahoo.com, 559-233-7596, for Washington Jr. High. **Harold Zahlis**, hpzahlis@aol.com, 559-298-4151, for Hamilton Jr. High.