

# THE OWLETTE DISPATCH

Fresno High School Class of 1958

Newsletter No. 16

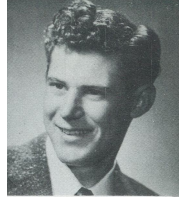
Spring 2011

## In Memoriam

*This issue is dedicated to those classmates who are no longer with us.*



Judy Adams



Lee Billigmeier



David Daggs



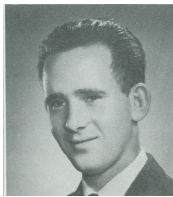
Judy Headlee Livingston



Doane Myers



Bob Reese



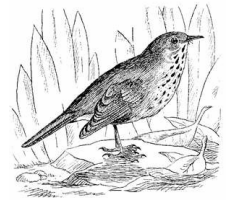
Eddy Richardson

And Ron Horg

two heavy Yellow Pine cones to the ground, and ran down the trunk. The cones had fallen under a bush, but the canny little fellow knew exactly where to look and went after them. Although they were twice as big as he, he managed to drag them out and demolish them—finding inside two sweet nuts for his breakfast. As he finished eating he saw Muir watching him and scurried up the tree. Curious, he perched on a branch and began looking at Muir.



Muir began to whistle—the squirrel moved to a closer branch and prepared to listen. Muir whistled and sang a dozen or more Scot's tunes from his homeland—as each one was completed and a new one begun, the squirrel began to turn his head from side to side. Other animals joined him—chipmunks, birds, and one very interested speckle-breasted thrush, who flew toward Muir, stopping mid-air just in front of his face, like a humming bird, looking at him with great curiosity. Satisfied, he returned to his perch. Through it all, the Douglas Squirrel kept his eyes on Muir.



Feeling a sense of the spiritual aspects of this moment, Muir moved from his lighthearted Scot's folksongs and began to sing the psalm tune, "Old Hundredth." The Douglas Squirrel did not appreciate that at all—he let out a screech; gave Muir a look that said, "How dare you be so serious;" turned tail and ran up the tree. The others followed.



Several years later, Muir tried singing his songs to a group of ground squirrels in the Coast Range Mountains. They sat erect and listened intently. The moment he started to sing "Old Hundredth," they made a beeline for their holes. Muir never did figure out what it was in that lovely only tune that was so offensive to squirrels. It was a puzzle that was never solved.

## A FOREST CONCERT

By Catherine "Vernie" Morison Rehart

In 1894, John Muir published a book entitled, *The Mountains of California*. Dedicated to his wife, Louisa, it is a must-read for anyone wanting to get a taste of his philosophy of the wilderness and his experiences in the Sierra. The book has some charming tales...one of them follows.

Early one morning, Muir rose and was going about the business of preparing his breakfast. He heard a great deal of chattering and scampering and, looking up, saw a group of Douglas Squirrels sitting high up in a tree. One of them broke away from the others, jumped to another tree branch, knocked

## JOHN MUIR

American Naturalist  
Date of birth: April 21, 1838  
Date of death: December 24, 1914  
Profession: Mountaineering, Writer, Engineer  
Board member for: Sierra Club



## JAMES' JABBER

By James Palmer

Farewell Oliver H. Bidwell. Ollie's funeral services were held on August 4<sup>th</sup>, 2010 in Modesto, California. He will be missed by loved ones and many individuals. Ollie's reputation spanned 60 years as a player, coach, umpire, pro-scout,



teacher and administrator. He first coached at Roosevelt High School then at Fresno High School and McLane High School. His Central Section history at the three schools was 230-80-3, one of the best winning percentages at .740. Coaching baseball was on the top of his priorities. Over

the years his teams excelled—he had talented squads of young men. If a college team dared to play them they were ready, willing and able to compete with them.

The 1958 FHS team had a 25-0 season 30-1 overall. He received the John Eulless Award in 1952, eight league titles and trips to the state finals for the American Legion. His ability to form teams and teach them his knowledge will never be forgotten. After his coaching career ended he became a scout for the Philadelphia Phillies and Cleveland Indians.

Three among his FHS 1958 team were drafted by the Major Leagues. **Dick Ellsworth** played for the Chicago Cubs during the sixties. **Jim Maloney** was with the Cincinnati Reds through the sixties. Pat Corrales played for the Pittsburgh Pirates then spent decades coaching other teams. **Lynn Rube** played professional ball until 1962. **Ellsworth** commented, "He was the second most important man in my life. His objective was to train you longer and harder than all opponents did. At my first spring training camp the drills seemed easy for me. Others asked me how did you prepare yourself. My high school coach taught me."

**Jim Maloney** remembered, "Ollie did fundamental drills as much as playing games. He taught us that many games are won by the team who executes the right play at the right time spontaneously---plays such as hitting the cut man, backing up bases, the pitcher always backs up first base when any ball is hit in right side of diamond, sliding techniques, double plays and more."



Ollie will never be forgotten. He was a member of "Four Bs" in Fresno; Pete Beiden, Bob Bennett, Len Bourdet and Ollie Bidwell. If his name is not in use at FHS already I suggest naming the main baseball diamond at FHS Bidwell Field to the FHS Alumni Committee. Our respects.

## SEE THE WORLD; CHANGE YOUR LIFE

By Wayne Palmer

After receiving an Economics degree from Fresno State in 1963 and getting a job at Traveler's Insurance, I realized I hated sitting there in a grey suit at a grey desk. So, I decided along with a friend of mine to make a trip around the world. Up until that time I had been as far as Tijuana and Crater Lake so a world trip was a big leap for this Fresno kid. My accomplice in this adventure dropped out but I moved ahead.

After massive research and a year later, I bought an around the world ticket for \$1,200 which included a stack of 25 tickets, one for each destination. My parents were horrified at me setting off alone to places like Hong Kong, Calcutta or Rome. In their life, a trip meant going to Morro Bay or Shaver Lake.

In late October, at the age of 24, my first stop was Honolulu for a week but this turned into three weeks as I stayed with Fresno friends who were on their own adventures. Every day was time at the beach and every night was hitting the clubs and parties, what a life. Japan was my next stop and along with my book, "Japan on \$5 a Day" was quite a challenge because in 1964 everything was in Japanese. The book helped with comments like, "Walk 30 paces to a door with a sign that looks like this, turn right and go 50 paces, etc." I was traveling last class so I took the local bus into town, an event in itself, but everyone on the bus took care of me and made sure I got off at the right place. I had booked one night at the Tokyo Station Hotel and listened to the station announcements, it was noisy and really weird, but I was exhausted. The next day I moved to the YMCA and was taken under the wings of many locals. On an English language bus tour I met two Irish Aer Lingus flight attendants and spent a week exploring Tokyo with them.



Little by little I learned how to travel on the cheap and meet people I could talk to. I met lots of people who were of like mind with no particular plans. Because I was from California, the locals were sure I was a movie star and asked to have a picture with me. I was tall, blue eyed and had a beard, a lot different from them and really stuck out while walking the streets of Japan.

While in Japan I also visited Kyoto and Nara with beautiful shrines and historical sites. It's a very beautiful part of a beautiful country. I stayed at a traditional inn, sleeping in a futon on a tatami mat floor. It was November with no heat, but very, very hot baths at night would keep you warm once you got in bed. I would leave every morning and not come back until dinner. One day I had to get ready for an early dinner and ended up changing my clothes in the kitchen as the entire Inn was taken over by school children. I imagine had I spoken Japanese they would have told me that they also rented it out during the day. The only no-no while changing in the kitchen was that I forgot to take off my shoes. There was lots of screaming until I took them off ---I figured out only too late.

I met an Italian woman at a shrine who was probably in her 50's (pretty old to me then), a sculptor and very interested in Japanese design and art. I was also interested in art and we enjoyed all great design that is so evident in Japan. We often had dinner together and she was obviously quite wealthy so I never paid for my meals. Since I would eventually stop in Rome, she gave me her name and number as a contact. One of my Japanese friends told me she was the Countess Borghese, I had no idea the name was so huge in Italy.

Next stop, Taiwan in December. Missing family holidays made me very sad and I almost scrapped the whole trip until I



met up with two German girls and a guy from Mexico who were heading to Hong Kong, same as my itinerary. Eventually, Jorge went back to Mexico. While still in Hong Kong I was walking down the street and saw a woman I knew from Fresno. It was Julie Lindschied. Her husband worked with the Asia Foundation in Cambodia and she was Christmas shopping in Hong Kong. They were living in Phnom Penh, Cambodia and invited the three of us to come there when we left Hong Kong. That's how traveling was working. You had no idea where the next adventure was coming from and now we were going on to Cambodia. Cambodia was wonderful. This was before the horrors of the mid 70's. By Southeast Asian standards they were well off. They actually exported rice, people lived simply but no one was destitute. The people were gracious and welcoming and I spent New Year's Eve at a British Embassy party. My "fancy dress" (Brit for costume) was a sport coat and tie; it was 1964 and I wore that stuff on the plane.



I met a guy at the New Year's Eve party who offered to take me to Mekong and show me the countryside. He worked with a private aid group similar to the Peace Corps. We headed out in his jeep and I lived "local" for a few days. I sat in a school he held where English was being taught and I learned a few words in Cambodian that I have long since forgotten. But it was fascinating to see these people trying so hard to learn. There were rats in the village and at night I would hear them scurrying around my friend's house. My bed had mosquito net with each corner tied to a rope. One night, the rats chewed through one corner rope and the netting fell down on me. Scared the hell out of me and gave me a taste of rural Asia.

I later connected with my German friends and off we went to Angkor Wat which to this day remains the most beautiful and amazing place I have ever been to. Built between 800 and 1200 A.D., it has over 100 temples of the original Kumer people. We hired a guy with a cyclo---a motorcycle rickshaw---and wandered around for three days. We stayed in a great old French hotel, long since gone, I'm sure. Chickens woke us up in the mornings and life was leisurely and slow. Curiously, the shower in my room sprayed into the middle of the bathroom, meaning you had to take everything out or it all got wet---towels, toilet paper, personal gear, whatever. I'm not sure who thought that up but I'm guessing they didn't know what a shower really was supposed to do. It was, of course, a great way to clean the bathroom. From there we flew to Bangkok which was a huge change of pace.

## THE PROM

By Rich Ballow

The annual spring event of perceived great importance, of lengthy preparation and excited anticipation, of disappointment for some but for most of us, a fond memory was the junior/senior prom. For the girls, getting ready was half the fun, for landing "Mr. Right" involved intrigue and ingenuity. I remember Dave passing Diane on the stairs

between classes, he casually wondering if there was a dance next week-end and Diane responding, "I would love to go to the prom with you!" This remarkable event rapidly traveled the school through the feminine, underground communication system by whispers and notes and what do you know? -- Before lunch Dave and the whole school knew when he was to pick her up, the color of her dress and with whom they would be double dating. Now the guys, as usual, were more oblivious to the whole process and waited until the last moment to order a tux, make dinner reservations at the Hacienda, wash and wax their car, call the flower shop and stop by the barber shop.



Finally the night arrived and there I am, standing on my date's front porch ringing the door bell. Her mom answers the door and invites me into the living room where her dad gives me the once over. And then the "interview," followed by questions about my driving skills and ends with sage advice on the proper time to redeposit his princess on the front door step. (I should add here that my dates' mothers always liked and trusted me, often more than my dates did and always more than their fathers.)

And the moment finally arrives when my date appears, looking absolutely lovely, like a fresh, blooming flower, all wrapped up in pastel pink taffeta, her shoulders bare, her cheeks aglow and undoubtedly the fairest of them all. The ribbon tied box that I had been nervously holding is finally presented. She carefully opens it to reveal a beautiful, perfectly shaped, white orchid with just a blush of magenta showing around the edge. Although I was not up to the challenge there were those of steady hand who were brave enough to pin that flower on their date, just above her fast beating heart. My flower was easily worn as a wrist corsage.



Then we drove off to meet our group for dinner, the girls hardly touching their expensive food. We arrived at the dance; it was well under way and we circled the perimeter, seeing and being seen, stopping along the chat and admire dresses, flowers, decorations and music. We were having fun all dressed up, feeling so



sophisticated. (After all, I was in a white dinner jacket with black cummerbund.) We applauded the prom court, we danced and we congregated around the punch bowl, which was carefully guarded by a faculty member who was posted against the threat of someone spiking it.

Later that memorable evening, listening to Pat Boone's "White Sport Coat and Pink Carnation" on the car radio, we arrived at my date's well lit front porch at exactly the precise moment of that clearly stated curfew. Another prom was in the books and we had a date to remember!

*"Come let's stroll, stroll across the floor, now turn around baby, let's stroll once more." The Stroll by the Diamonds.*

## JOHN MUIR ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

By Catherine "Vernie" Morison Rehart

By 1912, Fresno was continuing to move northward. Neighborhoods were developing east and west of Fulton and Van Ness avenues. With an increased population of school age children in the area, an elementary school was needed. The Fresno School District purchased a site for a school in 1912. In the fall of 1919, John Muir Elementary opened in temporary portable classrooms. By fall 1921, a two-story red brick structure, designed by well-respected architect Charles Butner, was completed facing Ferger Avenue. This building would house grades K-6 until 1971, when it was declared unsafe and torn down. A single story school facing Dennett Avenue was built to take its place.

A history of the school, written in journal form by Robert Firth, who worked at John Muir from 1960-1988, is housed in the Central Library's California History & Genealogy Room. Thanks to Firth's work, a picture emerges of an active P.T.A. In 1941, it was the parent/teacher's group that worked together to establish a school library. They also pushed hard to get the play areas blacktopped so the students would no longer be playing in the mud on rainy days or in the dusty fields at other times. In 1942, they also held First Aid classes for parents and Civil Defense Workers in the school auditorium. In the same year they conducted a war bond drive. The school has a proud history and many of its students went to Fresno High School.

If anyone would like to send in memories of your years at John Muir, we would like to share them in our next newsletter. I'm sure there are many of you who have stories about a favorite teacher, event, classmate or something about your years there that had a special meaning for you. Just write your memories down and send them to JoAnn...we will all look forward to reading them in the next newsletter.

### 12<sup>TH</sup> ANNUAL ALL-ALUMNI DINNER

The 12<sup>th</sup> annual all-alumni dinner will be held in front of Fresno High School on Saturday, May 7 at 5:00 PM. As in years past, there will be a short program which will allow for a quiet dinner catered by Gary Lanfranco from Cosmopolitan restaurant. Dinner will be served by current Senate members who are aptly qualified at keeping tables bused and dinner served timely and efficiently.

The dessert silent auction was so successful and so much fun in 2010, there is the same plan again this year. Desserts are bid in silent auction style and the winners share their dessert with others at their table. Win big and you will have lots of desserts to share.

The Fresno High Jazz band will be one of the before dinner performers and Mrs. Bangerter, Campus Cultural Director, and Leadership will benefit from this year's 50/50 raffle. Last year, \$352 was split between the winning ticket holder and Leadership.

Reservations can be made at [www.FresnoHighAlumni.com](http://www.FresnoHighAlumni.com), or by calling Marie Campopiano Slater at 559-224-5241. The price for dinner is \$40 and if you are a \$100 Alumni Association member, you have one dinner already paid for, make sure to mention this when making reservations. Make your reservations early

which will confirm a place for dinner as there will be no last minute reservations accepted. No tickets will be sold at the door of the event.



*Happy diners, All-Alumni dinner, 2010*



*Mary Tootikian Elia (1936) & Dennis Elia (1959) at All-Alumni dinner, 2010*



*All-alumni jazz band, All-Alumni dinner, 2010*

**WE'VE HEARD FROM:**

**Dick Baskin**.....thanks to all for the good work you do.

**Don Mossette**.....We've been in Nipomo at Monarch Dunes for a year. Looking forward to the next reunion.

**Roger Beer**.....Great job on the Owlette Dispatch

**Deann Luca Walters**...I love the Owlette Dispatch, but I get a little worried when I can remember high school more than I can remember what I did yesterday.

**Mike Harding**..Thanks so much for the newsletter. Opple's article was eloquent. I called Alee Robins in Florence, OR. We did a skit together at Hamilton; Mrs. Price taught drama. I had Ginsburg for track in '56 and Bobby Fries in '57. I'm still life guarding at the YMCA and teaching swimming—20 hours a week. Best job yet. Thanks for the energy put into the newsletter.

**Linda Anderson Thomas**...I so look forward to the newsletter. Memories are a gift that keeps on giving.

**Chuck Rubey**.....Thanks to everyone involved with the newsletter, I really like the stories and information on who's doing what. After working 36 years in Aerospace, I retired in 1995 and moved from state to state looking for a good place to call home. My wife and I moved back to Southern California and become deeply involved in professional baseball. We spent each spring in Arizona, finally moving here from California eight years ago. During those eight years we moved three times, finally settling in Peoria, which we love. I still enjoy outdoor activities such as fishing and hunting and still visit friends in Fresno.

**Patsy Merris Brayman**....I'm far away, under lots of snow in Kansas City, but with warm memories of FHS.

*Notification*  
Please notify someone on the reunion board of any changes to your personal information. Updates on changes for street address, email address, phone number or name will keep the FHS Class of '58 database in tip-top shape.

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**A GRACIOUS THANK YOU TO ALL OF THOSE who donated after the last newsletter went out. How nice it would be for everyone to give \$5 to cover the cost of two newsletters each year and remember, any donations greater than the actual cost of distribution will go to help those who cannot afford to attend our events. Your tax-deductible check payable to FHS Class of '58, c/o Buddy Arakelian, 529 W. Scott Ave., Fresno, CA 93704 will continue to help with future gatherings.**



\_\_\_\_\_ \$5 \_\_\_\_\_ \$10 \_\_\_\_\_ \$25 \_\_\_\_\_ \$50 \_\_\_\_\_ Other \_\_\_\_\_

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

**CONTRIBUTORS**

The following classmates have recently made contributions: Your reunion committee thanks each and everyone one of you for your loyalty and support.

**Norm and Linda Acres, Linda Anderson Thomas, Tom Baird, Dick Baskin, Roger Beer, Larry and Sandra Cross, Brent Graham, Mike Harding, Deann Luca Walters, Doug MacDonald, Patsy Merris Brayman, Don and Jackie Mossette, Cecil Newbrough, Karl Smith, Connie Spencer Klaudt and Sharon Tranberg Kelley.**

*"The great art of giving consists in this: the gift should cost very little and yet be greatly coveted, so that it may be the more highly appreciated."*

*Baltasar Gracian*

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