

ALUMNAE SPEECH 1960

by: Stan Bernard 19 June 2010

I'm Stan and I bring you greetings from the class who graduated just 50 years ago – the MHS Class of 1960.

We held our reunion last night with seventy-nine class members present along with their spouses and guests as well as three of our high school teachers.

Seeing everyone at the reunion reinforced two beliefs --- like it states in the movie, "Stand By Me," your old friends are very often your best friends and as you can see; the girls in the class of 1960 are still beautiful.

We had a busy day today...many of the ladies lunched together as did the guys. Mayor Dick Church was our guide as some of us toured downtown Miamisburg to see how it's evolved in the 50 years since we graduated. We had a great time because it brought back so many memories of being there before all the malls were built.

We all agreed that we're a class that's young at heart even though our favorite high school songs can be heard in elevators.....and we aren't sure how sexting takes place on something as small as a Blackberry.....and, we admit it, (the guys in our class now carry hearing aid batteries in their wallets instead of those other things.

In the TV coverage of the Olympics this year, I noticed that if they wanted us to know one of the athletes more personally, they didn't give us all their statistics. Instead they took us to their home town and showed us how and where they grew up. And I think I can follow their lead and best describe our class if I tell you what it was like to grow up in a little Midwestern river town called Miamisburg.

The TV show 20/20 called our high school years "**the last age of innocence.**" We were pre-pot, pre-pill, and pre-protest.

We said the Lord's Prayer together in school every morning whether we were going to have a math test or not. God was kicked out of public schools three years after we graduated. We hated that for our children and still think it stinks that our grandchildren can't pray in schools if they wish.

We could share the same bottle of Star City pop with friends and no one actually died from it. We played baseball in vacant lots with no coaches and no umpires. Almost everyone owned a bike and almost no one owned a dog with a pedigree. I can assure bullies were never our friends. **We addressed all adults as Mr. and Mrs.** Any agreement could be sealed with a handshake.

We would leave our house on a summer morning and play with our friends all day as long as we were home for supper. Then we could go back outside and play under the street lights.

In 1960 most of the boys owned a pocket knife that we carried to school and played mumbly peg in the school yard at lunch (if you don't know what mumbly peg is, ask your grandfather.) Many of the boys owned **BB guns** and we all graduated with two good eyes. And if we could afford them we wore an \$8 pair of **Converse All Stars**. The girls wore skirts, sweaters, and saddle shoes with bobby socks. Our lives were **not cluttered with a lot of "stuff."** We didn't need a lot of stuff to make us happy. Our families had one car, one TV set, and one bath tub where the bath water was sometimes shared by all the kids in the house.

It was common for some of us boys to **hitchhike** to neighboring towns like Germantown, Franklin, West Carrollton ...or even into Dayton. Two of my good friends hitchhiked to Germantown and attended a carnival where one of the attractions was: for 50 cents if you could wrestle an orangutan and pin him to the floor, you would receive \$5.00. Well, my two

friends stepped into the cage and prevailed by pinning the orangutan. Their winnings went to Dr. Snyder the next day for **stitches, bandages and tetanus shots.**

This experience and many others in the 50s prepared all of us for later life when we were faced with challenging situations....like these two who pinned that orangutan. Please meet retired **special agent with the criminal justice division U.S. treasury department, Tedd Boomershine...and his orangutan wrestling partner retired United States Air Force fighter pilot with 214 Viet Nam combat missions under his belt, Colonel Don Johnson.**

(Once you fight an orangutan, everything else is a breeze....)

These are two of many successes our class has experienced.

We swam in the Miamisburg pool, fished in the Miami River and paid 25 cents to see **movies at the Plaza where the good guys always won.** (The good guys then were cowboys who wore hats as white as they were. We would all learn later in life that not all the good guys are guys....some are women. And as we grew older, many of us made friends with other good guys who did not always look like us or think like us....but are still “good guys.

I want to close with some comments to the class of 2010. In trying to prepare my speech, I read a speech given at a high school graduation in 1943 in the midst of W. W. II where the speaker stated **“We will hopefully never have to go through this again.”** And here we are in 2010 and we’re still faced with a world full of uncertainties.

We wish we could pass on to you, the same world we had in the 50s with an independent freedom that’s difficult for me to describe in words. Our world has experienced many changes and yours will too. We hope you hold **enough memories of growing up in Miamisburg to keep yourself grounded.** And in 50 years, you **return to talk about those good memories and the success you’ve enjoyed.....like the Class of 1960.**

Thank you and God bless you...

