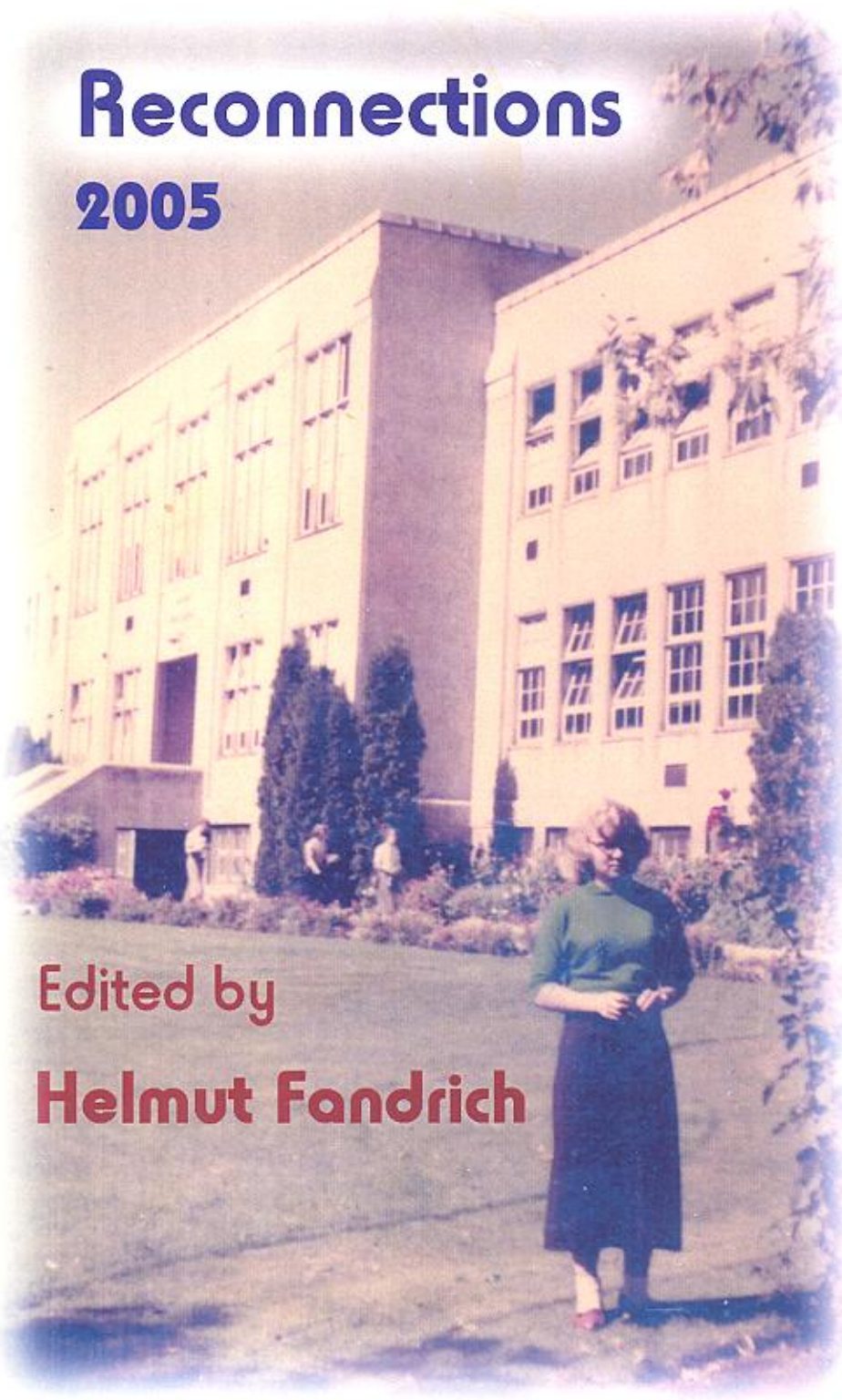


Reconnections 2005

Edited by
Helmut Fandrich



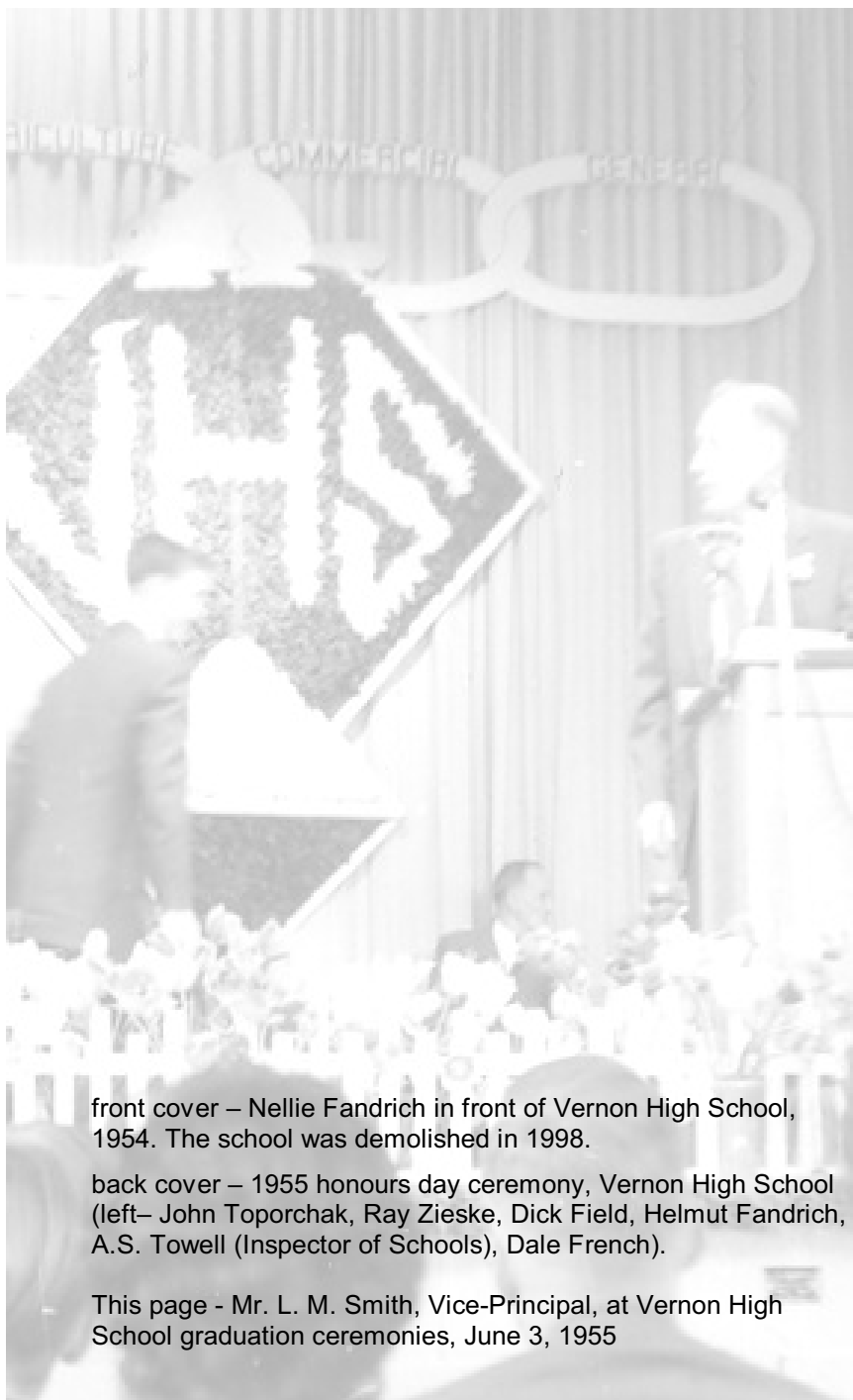
Reconnections

Fifty Fascinating Years for the
Vernon High School Class of 1955



Edited by
Helmut Fandrich

2005



front cover – Nellie Fandrich in front of Vernon High School, 1954. The school was demolished in 1998.

back cover – 1955 honours day ceremony, Vernon High School (left– John Toporchak, Ray Zieske, Dick Field, Helmut Fandrich, A.S. Towell (Inspector of Schools), Dale French).

This page - Mr. L. M. Smith, Vice-Principal, at Vernon High School graduation ceremonies, June 3, 1955

Here are some spontaneous responses to "Reconnections":

Received your booklet. Thanks! It's obvious you put a lot of effort into it. Witty, philosophical, humorous. I stayed up past midnight reading it last night. . . . You deserve a Pulitzer prize for it. . . . **Walter Worobey**

Thank you very much for sending on the reunion book. It has been wonderful reading it all. What a great bunch who have done so well with their lives. Thanks again . . . **Maureen Beardsley (Carswell)**

I'm glad that the VHS Reunion was so successful and well attended. And, as for the standing ovation, you deserved it if not for just for undertaking the production of the Reunion booklet but then I can see how you earned the ovation simply because it was done so professionally . . . **Sharon Dick (Smith)**

It was so interesting to read and you did a fabulous job of editing it. . . . **Edith Trowers (Ziemer)**

I just want to tell you how much we (yes, I read parts to Joe) have enjoyed the reunion booklet. I always knew you were scholastically gifted, but only now discover your wit . . . **Karen Ulrich (Steiner)**

Your "Reconnections" booklet arrived yesterday. It is absolutely marvellous!! Thank you very much Helmut! Now I understand what everybody has been raving about !! You have really touched everyone with this wonderful "look back". . . . Congratulations on producing such a wonderful memento of our happy times in high school and helping each of us to understand and appreciate what our classmates have done with their lives since we left high school. . . . You made great use of wit, humour and sensitivity in your writing and I am VERY impressed with the final result!!!
. . . . Thank you again Helmut . I wish you well as you continue your journey in your amazing life of accomplishment and achievement . . . **Jerry Jellison**

The book arrived - excellent!! -obviously you should take up editorializing in your retirement . . . **Barry Thornton**

This email is really to thank you for taking so much of your time to put together the book "Reconnections" I can appreciate the time and effort that you put in, also I enjoyed your sense of humour. Our class is very fortunate that you took on the task, stayed with it, and produced a book that we will all cherish. My friends were amazed that we had such a well organized reunion and that some one actually produced a book! . . . **June Chisholm (Husband)**

You did a fantastic job on the book . . . **Bev, wife of Alfred Fester**

I received your booklet in yesterdays mail and I thank you very much. It is an extremely well done booklet, one that every graduate will treasure and those that have not taken the time to submit bios, photos, etc., will be

most disappointed. With reference to your self-esteem, which is mentioned on page 36, I have ensured your stellar reputation by inserting at least one dozen photographs of which you are a part of in my School Scrapbook and which I will be making available to all in attendance at our weekend reunion . . . **George Parchomchuk**

I just wanted to tell you what a great job you did on the book you so beautifully prepared . . . I've showed to several people and my two brothers and they had a great time reading some of the bios because my brother Tom is only one year behind me . . . and he will be going to his 50th next summer. I'm sure their book will not be able to match ours so I thought I would just let him know what a great one looks like. . . . **Marian Gergely (Barr)**

Now I want to say "Thanks again for the wonderful "Reconnections" book that you put together for us. " I read it on Friday and Saturday nights until very late and just couldn't put it down. Tony also read it and was very impressed. My sister Helen, who we visited in Vernon, borrowed it. . . she let my brother-in-law read it. He read it the whole time. She later skimmed through it and made me promise to bring it back when I come again in a few weeks or so. Everyone was VERY IMPRESSED and I really want to thank you again from our whole family. . . God has really blessed us with great classmates and good friends . . . **Lydia Cumming (Price)**

. . . what a wonderful weekend reunion. your book is excellent , congratulations . . . **Ted Kozub**

Great job on the booklet. You are very talented! I love the anecdotal way you've approached each one of us. . . **Eleanor Hatten.**

I continue to be amazed at your great feat in producing our "Reconnections 2005". Was reading it in bed last night! . . . **Joan Gideon (Genovy)**

I'm absolutely thrilled with the reunion book. Sidney Ann will be even more thrilled . . . You don't know me, but I am **Sidney Ann Thomson's** sister, **Heather Lanaway**

How I enjoyed "Reconnections." . . . How can we classmates ever express our appreciation for such a gift, to celebrate 50 years. . . . Really, Helmut, I am just totally overwhelmed with the student/class pages and how you have created unique "stories" page after page. . . You made the booklet very readable and seem so easy, natural and almost predictable . . . Your flare for humour, continued, with the personal comments here and there. It was a joy to read. . . **Jean Wetherill (Ferguson)**

Reconnections

Somewhat embellished biographical sketches
of the class of 1955
Vernon High School
Vernon, British Columbia

Compiled and Edited by
Helmut Fandrich, PhD, PEng

Acknowledgments

Photographs were submitted by classmates or taken by the author. The newspaper clippings were taken from the author's files so please excuse the highlighter. The ideas expressed are those of the author unless he can blame them on others.

Thank you Nellie Thompson, George Parchomchuk, Eleanor Hatten and the Reunion 55 committee for preparing the class lists and requesting bios. Thank you Class of 1955 for supplying biographies.

Special appreciation is due Gerda Fandrich, the author's patient wife, for allowing him the months of time required to put this booklet together. Also special thanks to the author's son-in-law Steven Rudy, a language educator and consultant in Santa Barbara, California, for his insights and suggestions, to world citizen and classmate Joan Gideon for helping make the booklet more readable, and to Dr. Deane Downey, former Associate Academic Vice President and English Professor at Trinity Western University, for helping the engineer make the writing more technically correct.

Thanks to classmate Jean Wetherill. Her lavish praises such as "Wow – what a treasure it is, a keepsake for life" encouraged the author to keep concentrating on the bios as they kept coming in. Without empowering praise to reinforce his own sense of wanting to improve the presentation, the booklet would have been far more unworthy of praise. So, on behalf of the class of 1955, thank you Jean!

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[Ed: I can't stand paper being wasted even though aerial harvesters collected enough cones in 1993 to produce 1.3 billion tree seeds which would produce enough seedlings, if planted in rows at 4 metre intervals, to encircle the equator 130 times. Four years at that rate there would be a new tree planted for every person living on earth. Because of my space-makes-waste attitude toward blank pages, and my desire to increase the net amount of beauty in the universe, I just had to include a photograph of some Noble Fir cones. The website www.coneharvesters.com has more pictures and information.]

Preface

Reading your 101 bios (biographies to those not versed in the need to make haste of all things) was a fascinating experience. Over the years I've often wondered what some of you have been doing in life. Now we, the Class of 1955, have the rare privilege of not only having our curiosity appeased but also a pictorial record to aid our memory that, at least for some of us, seems to crash more and more frequently.

Absorbing the varied endeavours of the 122 graduates half a century after our esteemed valedictorian, Jerry Jellison, intoned, "May success and happiness go with you," made me appreciate the good times we live in. A common fibre of your submissions was the satisfaction of having lived in our great country in the golden years of the last century.

There are some who wanted to escape life but most contributors wanted to prevent life from escaping them. Many stretched their minds with new jobs, new homes, new countries and new spouses. A mind once stretched never shrinks back to its original form.

Some of us felt the power of our support group during crisis. They showed us that doors were opening to new opportunities. We focussed on worthwhile goals and on enriching relationships. Many affirmative outcomes are in this booklet.

Our life is not judged by the number of breaths we take but by the moments that take our breath away. In this booklet are some of those special moments.

I hope I'm reasonably accurate with what has been written. The engineer within me wants to stick to facts whereas the scribe within me wants to aggrandize with embellishments.

My goal is to leave reminders of our sojourn on earth. Yet I don't want you to renege on your responsibilities and write me a note on the back of a diaper something like, "I've been sitting here in Tim Horton's for an hour reading your booklet when I should be changing my grandson's diapers." Stop reading. Make him feel better. Make use of this booklet. [Ed: What I meant is you could wrap up this booklet and give it to him on a birthday!]

During our adolescence in high school we talked about hopes, dreams and loves. We went through the young adulthood stage of talking about children, family and jobs. Now that we are seniors, we can talk about deeper meanings, intrinsic values, and the blessings of sharing. From what we got we made a living, but now, by what we give we make a life.

Fifty years from now it will not matter where we lived or what places we visited or what work we did. The world will be different because of how important we were in the life of a child. Most of us have wondrous opportunities in the lives of our beautiful, adorable, charming, lovely, admirable, coquettish, cherubic, angelic, sweet, lovely, endearing grandchildren. Hopefully this booklet will help them reminisce on the wonderful grandparent or great-grandparent they had.

May this booklet aid the joyous celebration of our reconnecting after 50 years in Vernon, British Columbia in the Schubert Centre and in the National Hotel Beer Parlour afterwards. [What? It's gone? I haven't even missed it.]

May God bless us all, the old fogies.

Helmut Fandrich. Abbotsford, British Columbia, May 6th, 2005

As once we were in elementary and high schools



1948 Mr. Poleteski (Grade 5 teacher); 2nd row Birdie Cooney, Dale French, John McGowan, Marylyn Follis, John Dobernigg, Ruth Steffens; 1st David Neal, Ken Hall, Helmut Fandrich, Rita Watkins, Phyllis Hodgson, unknown, Marian Barr.



1950 Grade 7-D, Charles Pierce, teacher



1951 Grade 8-C . 4th row Ralph Harvey, George Parchomchuk, Harold Tung, Harry Costerton, Bill Ujiye, Helmut Fandrich, Bill Seaton Sr., teacher;
3rd row Shirley Wreede, Jerry Jellison, Brian Backler, Andy Sokol, Don Bearisto, Billy Melynychuk, Alan Trehearne, John McGowan, Maureen Carswell;
2nd row Elsie Schonemirer, Edith Ziemer, Sally McBride, Mary Lou Brown, Helen Sasges, Verena East, Linda Missal, Jeanne Bickert, Barbara Turanski;
1st row Nancy Kawaguchi, Janet Glana, Jean Ferguson, Walter Worobey, John Toporchak, Don Bock-Phillipps, Shirley Rivett, Sharon Irvine, Francis Smigol.



1953 Cheerleaders after a track meet: Doreen Hayhurst, Ann Firman, Loretta Urbetis, Birdie Cooney, Jean Ferguson, Shirley Rivett.

sh. TORCH

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No. 18

April 5, 1954.



Miss Reekie and her two choirs for giving such a wonderful performance at the OK Music Festival last week. The mixed choir won the Vernon Business and Professional Women's Shield and the Girl's Choir won the Pentiction Gyro Club's cup.

Harry Costerton for giving such a fine speech at the VFC Speaking contest in Chilliwack for which he came first.

John Dobernigg and Helmut Farnrich for placing 3rd in the Team Judging.

John Toporchak who came in 3rd at the Tractor Rodeo.

John Dobernigg for placing 3rd in the Individual Judging aggregate.



Norman Galloway, teacher



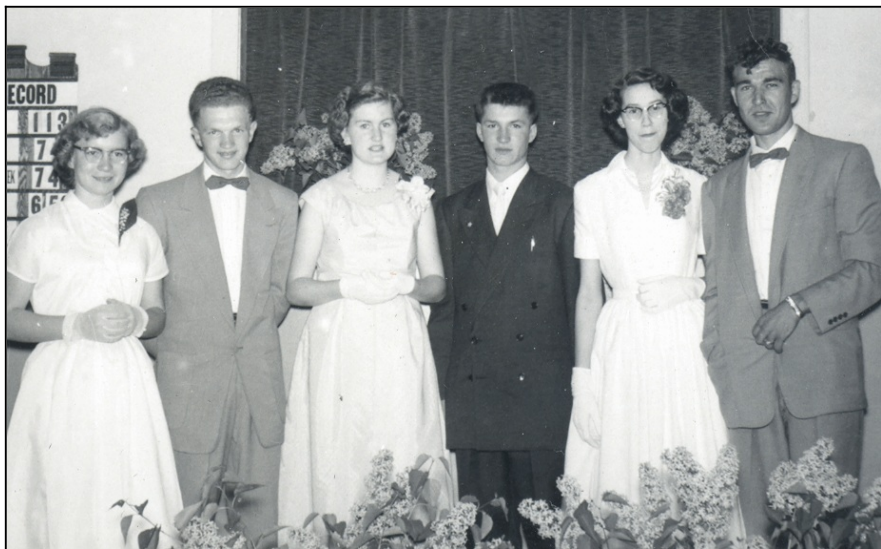
Vernon High School track, where many records and hearts were broken

As once we were in 1955





1st row Rita Gellert, Edith Ziemer, Miss Reekie, Shirley Wreede, Nellie Fandrich, Edith Merke; 2nd row Helmut Fandrich, Harry Costerton, Nelson Kuhn, Hans Hildebrandt, Sig Wolf.



Nellie Fandrich, Walter Worobey, Velma Forry, Helmut Fandrich, Eleanor Hatten, George Parchomchuk – Graduation 1955



Okanagan Valley Volleyball Champs: 1st row George Parchomchuk, John Yarama; 2nd row Charlie Kuhn, Walter Dobernigg, John Dobernigg, Walter Worobey. Missing: the photographer, Helmut Fandrich.

[Ed: Do you wonder why George Parchomchuk is in so many pictures? Is it because handsome people make good pictures or is it because he knew that success is knowing where to be?]



Polson Park from Mr. Paul's biology lab



Barb Curry, Sharon Aktemichuk, Betty Baird



Rita Gellert

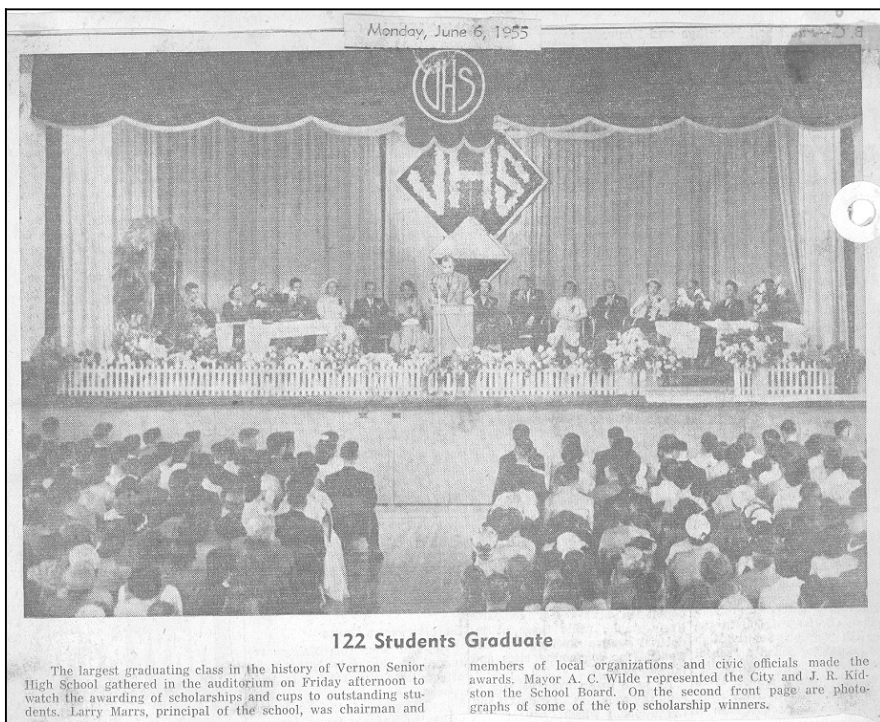


Bill Ujiye, George Parchomchuk,
John Dobernigg



Janet Glana, Rita Gellert, Hannelore Hildebrandt after a toboggan run

As once we were on Graduation Day, 1955





Three Cup Winners At VHS

Arnold Miller, left, was awarded the Cecil Clarke Cup as top student in Industrial Arts. Jean Ferguson won the Ayres Cup for citizenship and John Top-

orchak took the Willowspring Trophy for agricultural studies. Jean and John also took minor awards in academic studies.



Academic Awards For Grade XII

Verena East and Walter Worobey show the awards they received as top students in the academic field for Grade XII. Each year, top students in Grades X, XI and XII are recognized with these awards. Mrs. J. B. Kidston presented them to the winning students.



Outstanding Students At VHS

Ralph Harvey, left, Margery Goodale and Andy Schol stand under the arch they had entered previously to receive the scholarships they won as outstanding students of Vernon Senior High School. Margery won the Florence Aust

Brown scholarship, awarded by Ralph Brown. Ralph was awarded the Canadian Legion scholarship and Andy was the recipient of the Henry Meyerhoff scholarship. Ralph and Andy also won major awards in the academic field.



Valedictorian, 1955

Jerry Jellison, who occupied place of honor among this year's graduating high school class, gave annual valedictory address in poetry form (see inside). Other pictures on second front page.

City's Young Graduates Make Colorful Ceremony

It was a fine June day on Friday and the girls were pretty as butterflies as they fluttered around the high school lawn in their pastel frocks of pink, white, green, yellow and blue.

It was a day that all 122 graduates of Vernon High School will always remember, for, as their principal, Larry Marrs, told them, it was a culmination of six years in elementary school, three in junior high and three of senior high.

At two o'clock, after having beginning and, as they entered their pictures taken, the grads new fields of endeavor, he hoped trooped into the auditorium for the presentation of scholarships. "We will watch with interest," he said, the progress of this year's awards and cups.

The stage, with vari-colored tulips nodding over a little white fence and with bouquets of lilac on the tables, was the work of 81 Miss Myra Lang, a Senior High teacher. Frank Paul, another teacher, had arranged the awards.

Mr. Marrs, in the opening address, advised the graduates that, although they had spent 12 years in school, their education was

For Grade X, the girls' award was won by Elsie Schipkula, runner-up, Rhonda Hooper; boys' award went to Robert Sterling, with runner-up being Lee East.

For Grade XI, two girls' awards went to Linda Campbell-Brown and Yaneke Kawaguchi, with Lilian Sokol as runner-up. In the boys' class, Basil Myktyuk was top winner with Bill Phillips runner-up.

Grade XII, Verena East won top place with Linda Missal as runner-up. Walter Worobey was first in the boys' class, Dick Munk was runner-up.

Minor awards went to the following: Gordon Bristowe, Doreen Johnston, Pat Phelps, Linda Campbell-Brown, Nancy Kawaguchi, Ann Pickford, Harry Costerton, Jamie Kidston, Marie Schuster, Helmut Fandrich, Audrey Kosty, John Toporchak, Jean Ferguson, Mike Lee, Barbara Turanski, Sharon Fralich, Maureen McMorie, Sandra Tyrell, Joan Genov, Karen Mendenhall, Phil Vecqueray, Shelly Gibson, Leslie Neilson, Larry Yakamovitch, Marian Greeno, Shirley Nistor, John Yarama, Buddy Jellison, Jan Olmsted, Edith Ziemer.

City's Young Graduates

(Continued from Page One)

"So we will watch the grads of 1955 with equal interest."

The first scholarship, from the Canadian Legion, was presented to Ralph Harvey by J. A. J. Illington, president of branch No. 25.

The Florence Ann Brown scholarship, given by Delph Browne to be leading Coldstream student, was presented to Margery Goodale by Mrs. J. B. Kidston, wife of Reeve Kidston of that municipality.

The Alice Stevens Memorial scholarship, given by Vernon Business and Professional Women's Club, was awarded to Rose Malysz by Miss Anne Gaustin, president of the club.

The Henry Meyerhoff scholarship was given to Andy Sokol by Mrs. A. S. Towell, wife of School Inspector Towell.

The IODF bursary, awarded for the first time by the Silver Star Chapter, was presented to Frances Smigol by Mrs. H. A. Synathe, educational secretary of the Chapter.

The Student Nurse Bursary, awarded by the local branch of the Registered Nurses' Association, was presented to Betty Mori by Mrs. Phyllis Piddington, president of the Vernon RNA.

In a Valley-wide competition, the scholarship awarded by the Federation of Fruit and Vegetable Workers' Unions was won by Helmut Fandrich. Bryan Cooney of Okanagan Centre, making the award, said that it went to a student who had majored in agriculture.

Two \$50 bursaries were given by Grade XII students themselves from money raised under the chairmanship of A. N. Humphreys, one of their teachers. They were presented by Mr. Marrs to Verena East and Walter Worobey.

Nine cups were awarded to outstanding students.

The Ayers Cup for citizenship was presented to Jean Ferguson by Mrs. A. C. Wilde, wife of Mayor Wilde. The CJIB Award went to the runner-up in the Ayers Cup, Jerry Jellison, class valedictorian, and was presented by Miss Gaustin.

The Geel Clark Cup for Industrial Arts, awarded for the second time, was presented to Arnold Miller by A. J. E. Saunders.

teacher of industrial arts.

Inspector of schools A. S. Towell presented the Willowspring Trophy in Agriculture to John Toporchak who is taking over the management of his father's farm this summer.

Mr. Marrs awarded the Commercial Cup to Yvonne LePage as the outstanding student this year in that class.

Mrs. Towell, assisted by Mrs. Frances Leng and Miss J. L. Reekie, presented the cups won in musical and dramatic fields. The Betty MacDonald Cup for best actress went to Caryll Irvine; the Doreen Blanchard Cup for best actor was won by Phil Vecqueray; the Okanagan Valley Music Festival cup for girls' choir was presented by Wilma Pagan; the Music Festival cup for dancing went to Ann Pickford; and the cup for the Band Trophy was awarded to Len Anderson.

The athletic awards were presented by Mrs. J. B. Kidston, assisted by Miss Frances Baum-brough and P. E. Greer, physical education teachers in the school.

John Yarama won the H. M. Ramsay cup for the senior boys' relay; the Thomas Lawson Trophy for Interior junior basketball went to Les East as team captain; the A. C. Cochrane cup for outstanding athlete in the school was won by Dick Munk who also took the G. A. McKay cup for broadjump for boys under 21, a record that still stands, and the Vernon Rotary Cup for City League basketball.

George Parehunchuk was awarded the Penitents Boys' H-Y Cup for Okanagan Valley senior boys' volleyball; the Gyo Cup for Interior juvenile basketball went to Barry Thornton; the Soquel Cup for the 440 yard dash for boys under 21 went to Larry Yakimovitch, as well as the Students' Council Trophy for the 100 yard dash.

Marilyn Hein took both the Madge Price Trophy for outstanding girl athlete, the Paddy Clarke Trophy as athlete of the day at the Valley track meet, and the Okanagan Valley High Schools' Trophy for field sports.

Other sports awards went to Gordon Bristowe who won the Summerland Review Cup for the 220 yard dash when he made a new record.

In curling, the David Howrie Cup went to Don Carmichael and his rink, the James Moebes Grand Challenge Trophy was awarded by Lorne Shockey as skip for his rink.

Mrs. Kidston, assisted by Leo Smith, vice-principal of the school, made the academic

Major awards went to: Barbara Curry, Dick Munk, Phyl Hanson, Helen Sages, Ralph Parvey, Elsie Schipkula, Marilyn Hein, Andy Sokol, Jerry Jellison, Lilian Sokol, Yvonne LePage, Elizabeth Woods. Six degrees in the local chapter of Future Farmers of Canada titles were awarded to: John Toporchak, Dale French, George Parvey, Helmut Fandrich, Dick Field, Ray Zieskie.

Fifteen certificates for acting went to: Carol Bertrand, Ann Carswell, Ann Collins, Joan Genov, Carol Irvine, Charlie Kuhn, Sally McBride, Loreta Myers, Jan Olmsted, Pat Phelps, Elsie Schipkula, Barbara Turanski, Sharon Valair, Phil Vecqueray, Elizabeth Woods.

June 3rd

HONOURS' DAY BANQUET

1955

"O! Canada"

(Pianist: S. Aktemichuk)

Grace Shirley Rivett

Toast - "The School" Andy Sokol
Response Mr. D.L.Marrs

Toast - "The Graduating Class" Mr. J. Wells
Response Frances Smigol

Trio - "BEAUTIFUL HEAVEN" Rita Gellert
Shirley Wreede
Edith Ziemer

Toast - "The Senior Matrics." Mr. F. Paul
Response Charles Kuhn

Quartetto - (1) "SENTIMENTAL JOURNEY" Gordon Bristowe
(2) "SWING LOW" Philip Bulman
Jerry Jellison
Dick Munk

Guest Speaker - Rev. George Affleck
Thanks to Speaker Harry Costerton

Chairman's Remarks:

THE QUEEN

- o -

MENU

dinde froide
salade en gûlées à la menthe
laitue

crème glacée

salade aux pommes de terre
cannberge en coupe
tomates

gâteau

café



Vernon High School in Polson Park, 1954. It was demolished in 1998.

As once we were way back when



Reunion 1981 Teachers



Reunion 1981 More teachers



Reunion 1981 The Class of 1955 is like a big beautiful flower, with each petal contributing a little to the colourful mosaic that is beauty. Women contributed a little bit more than men.



Reunion 1981 3rd row Bev Nolan, Mary Sterling, Shirley McTaggart, Birdie Cooney, Shirley Rivett, Joellanne Locheed; 2nd row Audrey Kosty, Jean Ferguson, Joan Genovy, Jeanne Bickert, Evelyn Stusek, Marnie Beveridge; 1st row June Husband, Barb Fishler, Sheron Aktemichuk, Shirley Nistor.

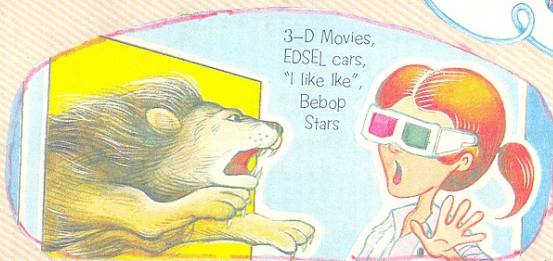


Reunion 1981 (left) Yvonne Lepage, Joye Sengotta, Ellen Hein, Helen Sasges with husband Ray, Eleanor Hatten, Rose Malysch

SOME REMINISCENCES FOR YOUR 25th ANNIVERSARY



Do you remember when you grooved on "Rock Around The Clock" and "Secret Love"?



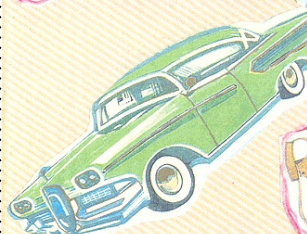
3-D Movies,
EDSEL cars,
"I like Ike",
Bebop
Stars



Roger Bannister RAN away with your praise
Gals were groovy in poodle skirts and
poodle haircuts, guys were cool in duck
tails and leather jackets.



Remember rockin' and rollin'
at the sock hop? You flipped
over MARILYN MONROE and
ELVIS? And WILLIE MAYES
was a real HIT!



You played with HULA HOOPS
and SCRABBLE SETS, you dug
drive-ins and malteds (most
of all, you DUG EACH OTHER!)



You cruised in convertibles and
listened to Eddie Fisher and
Patti Page on 45 r.p.m.'s. Remember
afternoons spent with American
Bandstand, Monday nights with
I LOVE LUCY and Sunday evenings
with ED SULLIVAN?

The card that rekindles pleasant thoughts of our days at Vernon High was made for Helen (Sasges) and Ray Donovan on their Silver Wedding Anniversary by their children.

.....

As once we were in more recent times



Gordon Hughes



Stan Hoyer



Charlie Pierce



1989 Jean Ferguson, Shirley Nistor, Bev Nolan



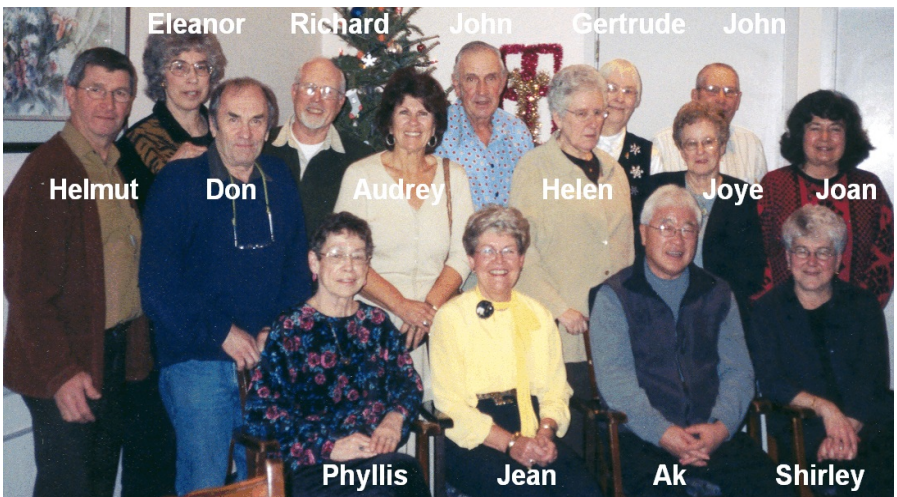
Reunion 1992 1st row Joye Sengotta, Marge Ursulak, Sheron Aktemichuk, Shirley Rivett, Nancy Kawaguchi, Joan Genovy; 2nd Ak Sakakibara, Don Bock-Philipps, Loretta Urbetis, Art Fester, Anne Firman; 3rd Yvonne Lepage, Marnie Beveridge, Loretta Schwartz, Fusae Sakakibara, Miyoko Chiba, Hilda Ketterer; 4th Arlene Biollo, Gordon Worth, Ellen Hein, Phyllis Panasiuk, Betty-June Sherba, Shirley Advent, Jean Ferguson; 5th Harold Pillar, Joanne Braun, Rena East, Judy Nash, Helen Sasges, Marlayn Follis; 6th Rick (Alan) Trehearne, Walter Dobernigg, Jim Gordon, Kenji Shibata, Ray Beal, John Desimone, Harry Costerton.



Reunion 1992 1st row Shirley Nistor, Nellie Fandrich, June Husband; 2nd row (Audrey) Samantha Kosty, Grace Kreutzer, Loretta Blower, Phyllis Hodgson; 3rd row Velma Forry, Lydia Price, Vera Marchand; 4th row Julie Valouch, Betty Baird, Barbara Curry, Marilyn Hein, Mary Sterling, Robert Ouellet; 5th row Shelley Gibson, Eleanor Hatten, Patricia Bristow, Maureen Carswell, Evelyn Stusek, Margaret Duncan; 6th row Ray Zieske, John Dobernigg, Helmut Fandrich, John Toporchak, Len Klinger, George Parchomchuk, Lee Smith.



Exam question: Name those from the Class of 55 who were at a **mini-reunion in 2000** as shown above. I was going to figure out who all these classmates were but then I, like a professor, got this brilliant idea of asking an exam question so you would do the work. You are allowed to look back to see what they looked like eight years before or below to see what many of them looked like three years later. Don't do what Jean did and just close your eyes or look away like Joan or hide behind Lydia like Eleanor. It would be better if you whistled like Shirley or sat upright like Nellie or wore a brown and black blouse to match your black hair like Audrey. Then you'd only have to know that Joye is shorter than Helen to have all the girls names. Boys' names? Does somebody care? Anyway, I'm out of space.



Classmates in 2003. 1st row Phyllis Hodges, Jean Ferguson, Akira Sakakibara, Shirley Nistor; 2nd row Helmut Fandrich, Don Bock-Philipps, Audrey (Samantha) Kosty, Helen Sasges, Joye Sengotta, Joan Genovy; 3rd row Eleanor Hatten, Richard Combe, John Dobernigg, Gertrude Beckman, John Toporchak.

As we are now

B8 Friday, March 25, 2005 - The Morning Star

LIFE

EDITOR: KATHERINE MORTIMER • PHONE: 550-7924 • E-MAIL: lifestyles@vc



KATHERINE MORTIMER/MORNING STAR

HELMUT FANDRICH and Jean Wetherill look over the souvenir booklet for their class of 1955 reunion.

Reprinted with permission

Class of '55 reconnects

By Katherine Mortimer

Morning Star Staff

Maybe there was something special in the water at the drinking fountains, but whatever the reason, the Vernon High School Class of 1955 produced more than its share of success stories.

A flip through the souvenir booklet reveals more than one Ph.D., several nurses, a handful of teachers, plenty of parents and grandparents, and countless other careers, and Jean (Ferguson) Wetherill is proud of every one of her classmates and their achievements.

"We're getting close to our final planning meeting and we've contacted a total of 100 graduates out of 125," said Wetherill, adding that the class has lost 23 of its graduates over the years. "We have 80 former students confirmed that they are coming for the reunion."

The reunion takes place June 10, 11 and 12 at the Schubert Centre and the planning committee has been busy with every detail. Class of '55 grad Helmut Fandrich was in town earlier this week to meet with the committee and share some of his ideas.

"What amazed me is that I haven't talked to some of these people in 50 years, and yet the relationship is still there," he said. "Although I have to admit it does take time to recognize some of them."

For Fandrich, the reunion is a chance to catch up with those he hasn't seen since high school. After graduating, he went on to the University of British Columbia, where he earned his B.Sc. in mechanical engineering.

His yearbook write-up appears to have been accurate: "To college 'Mutt' does plan to go, To be an engineer, you know. He's often seen with George and Wayne Running around and raising Cain."

Born in Poland, Fandrich and his family moved to Canada to a homestead north of Edmonton in 1938. With four university degrees to his name, Fandrich's education got off to a dubious start when he failed Grade 1 in Alberta.

"But my father always stressed the value of education to all six of us children. I never had any hesitation about going away to university and leaving my hometown," said Fandrich, adding that he and his siblings have earned a total of 14 degrees among them. "My sister, Nellie, graduated with me."

Fandrich worked after school, Saturdays and during the summer at his father's planing mill, where he piled lumber, trimmed lumber, operated the planer and moved lumber. His family lived on Silver Star Road for 40 years, and Fandrich

became a Canadian citizen in 1956. Between his university studies, Fandrich also married his wife, Gerda, raised four children, and built a solar-heated house in the Fraser Valley, where they still live. The couple has travelled the world, at a rate of three new countries every two years for the past 40 years.

"I like the experience of new adventures," he said. "But we're always happy to come home."

As a mechanical engineer, Fandrich started Fandrich Cone Harvesters Ltd. in 1980, to develop aerial cone harvesting and other helicopter-handled machines.

"My father had many of his own designs and inventions, so I grew up in an environment when we were building things and putting things together, so it was natural to go into engineering," said Fandrich. "I'm always working on new ideas."

And, while he may not have had much contact with his classmates over the years, the past year has been one of reconnecting, on paper at least, through the publication of Reconnections: Somewhat embellished biographical sketches of the 1955 class of Vernon High School, Vernon British Columbia.

"It was fun to do the book," said Fandrich, "and to get reacquainted with former classmates. I have so many pleasant memories."

"The biggest change for me when I come back to Vernon is that my old home on Silver Star Road is no long there. What was once 10 acres of orchard and meadow is now a gravel pit."

The booklet features both original grad photos and write-ups, along with more recent photos of graduates and their families, plus details of their lives.

"During our adolescence in high school we talked about hopes, dreams and loves," Fandrich writes in the booklet. "We went through the young adulthood stage of talking about children, family and business."

"Now that we are the old generation, we can talk about deeper meanings and values learned from the lessons of our experiences. From what we got we made a living but now by what we give, we are making a life."

Fandrich has compiled interesting statistics of his classmates, such as the fact that Ralph Harvey is the father of 12 children; Walter Worobey helped develop the touch-tone phone and the plasma flat-screen TV; Loretta Blower

flew by helicopter to mines in the Northwest Territories; Jack Dale repaired helicopters in Papua, New Guinea; Fusae Sakakibara devoted herself to a nursing career.

Wetherill's school memories were pleasant enough that she returned to the classroom as a teacher, working in Vancouver, Toronto, Melbourne, Australia, and New Guinea.

"I have such fond memories of hanging out at Nick's Candy Kitchen," she said. "Vernon still feels like the same place it's always been, just a little busier."

For Wetherill, who returned to her home town as a young widow after some years spent in Australia, her memories of life at Vernon High are pleasant ones.

"I don't know what it was about our class, but I think in the '50s we had quite a good rapport with our teachers and we had teachers who, if you had the time, they took the time for you," said Wetherill, who has been married to Ellis for 35 years.

The reunion will be a chance for former classmates to get reacquainted, beginning with the large name tags everyone will wear.

As the class of '55 graduates enter the hall, they'll hear the music of The Platters and their song, Moments to Remember. Old records will be used as decoration, and the school colours - blue and white - will feature prominently.

And they'll recall the words of class valedictorian Jerry Jellison, in his graduation address all those years ago, "...may success and happiness go with you."



Helmut Fandrich relaxes with a book in the grounds of Vernon High School, in its old location in Polson Park.



March 2005 Reunion 55 committee: Jean Wetherill, Gert Kashuba, Eleanor Hatten, Deanna Toporchak.



Joye Raber, Helen Donovan, Pat Bock-Philipps, Phyllis Scott, Shirley Ogasawara



John Toporchak, John Dobernigg, Joye Raber, Helen Donovan, Phyllis Scott

Executive summary of biographies

The retina-scans of the bios that were submitted revealed how varied the paths were that we, the Class of 55, had followed. Of the 101 submissions received, 75 came from those who had graduated in 1955 and 26 came from those who did not graduate in Vernon.

Of the grads who responded, 22 became nurses, 18 taught, six have post-bachelors degrees, two have PhD's, and no one has owned up to being in jail. No one has admitted being a lawyer either.

Thirteen (11%) out of our graduating class of 122 have already died. Another sixteen (28%) of the 57 from the Class of 1955 who didn't finish school in Vernon have died.

Thirty-four (28%) of our graduating class didn't submit bios. Of the 172 former classmates on the mailing list, 27 did not respond.

Generally we've been quite prolific. Four of us had five children – Joye Sengotta, Edeltraud Karius, Hilda Ketterer and Gert Beckman. Fifteen of us had four children – Ann Grierson, Alfred Fester, Art Fester, John Toporchak, Judy Nash, Helen Sasges, Elizabeth Krestinski, Eugene Weleschuk, Shirley Nistor, Dick Field, Rena East, Helmut Fandrich, Marge Ursula, Dorothy Dilts and John Lane.

Alfred Fester, Dorothy Dilts, Joye Sengotta and Ruth Steffens already have opportunities to empower great-grandchildren through lavish praise and enthusiastic encouragement.

Then there is Ralph Harvey. He is in a class all by himself, leading the Grade 12 pack with high marks, his own 12-pack with loving discipline and his pack of 34 grandchildren with enthusiasm.

Dorothy Dilts has been married the longest and Joan Genovy the shortest. Ted Kosub was married most often and Eleanor Hatten least often.

Some of us were in the forefront of scientific knowledge. Dr. Walter Worobey helped develop the touch-tone phone and the plasma flat-panel TV. Walter's discoveries affect the life of each one of us on a daily basis.

Alfred Fester constructed great roads for us, Nellie Fandrich made sure road contractors were paid, and Dick Field and John Desimone made sure the contractor's heavy equipment worked properly.

Walter Dobernigg serenely drove those who toured by bus, Eleanor Hatten sped along roads on her vacations, and George Parchomchuk made sure we didn't speed. If we did speed recklessly, Alan Trehearne was there to embalm us.

Some classmates increased our standard of living by giving us choices. Yvonne LePage sold us GM cars, Ak Sakakibara sold us Toyota cars, and Roy DePourcq sold us Rambler cars and then Chrysler cars. Art Fester serviced cars and filled them up with gas.

Jack Dale rode a bicycle to work so he could fly planes all over the world. Barry McGill jumped from a plane and landed in a hospital. George Parchomchuk was shot down in a police helicopter but still got his man.

Helen Sasges felt a need to increase ten-fold the number of books in a school library. Shirley Rivett felt a need to swallow dozens and dozens of Graval pills on a sailing trip to San Francisco. Rita Gellert felt a need to adjust the Mona Lisa in the Louvre.

Ted Kozub wrote our income tax laws. Sheron Aktemichuk interpreted the tax laws. Phyllis Panasuik worked with a magistrate in a court for those who broke the laws. Joelanne Locheed, Bill Palmer, Kenji Shibata, Ray Zieske, Bill Ujiye and Len Klinger paid taxes, and taxes, and more taxes according to the income tax laws. [Ed: These six classmates didn't submit bios but you can *always* count on death and taxes.]

Anne Grierson sold hockey tickets for twenty-five years. Betty-June Sherba arranged curling and golf club activities for thirty years. Jim Gordon attended most World Curling Championship competitions for forty years. Don Bock-Philipps stopped hockey pucks with one hand and wild bucks with one shot.

Joan Genovy fired up our enthusiasm with cheer leaders. Marguerite Griffiths wowed the Germans and us with baton twirling. Jeanne Bickert excited us with her song and dance routines. Barbara Fishler stimulated us with ballet dancing. Shirley Wreede calmed us with her heavenly singing.

Shirley McTaggart painted pastel portraits. Maureen Carswell collected eggs. Karen Steiner riveted airplanes for free. Marge Ursula was paid for exercising. Marian Barr was paid to look beautiful.

Brian Backler found “gold in them thar hills”– and nickel and zinc and iron and diamonds and money. Eugene Weleschuk’s gold grew on trees. John Lane’s ex-wife parted with his gold.

Joanne Braun flew planes. Janet Glenna rode motorcycles. Anne Firman ran. Barry McGill pedalled like heck while standing still.

Helmut Fandrich supplied viable seeds. Edgar Hunter grew upright seedlings. Harold Pillar cut upright timber. Grace Kreutzer supplied straight lumber. Harry Costerton made sure we grew up morally straight.

Shirley Nistor sold groceries. Anne Grierson pretended to sell groceries. Lydia Price sold shoes. Hilda Webster sold us goods. Barbara Austrup sold out. Phyllis Hodgson sold grass . . . and hay.

Betty Baird stuffed twin’s diapers in to hampers. Jean Ferguson modelled hampers for Eaton’s catalogues. Some of us farmers used catalogues in the little house out back.

Loretta Blower flew by helicopter to lighthouses on the BC coast. Brian Backler flew by helicopter to mines in Northwest Territories. Jack Dale repaired helicopters in Papua, New Guinea.

Marguerite Griffiths monitored the peace in Germany. Alan Trehearne got medals for keeping Cyprus peaceful. Ralph Harvey kept the world at peace by chasing Russian submarines in the Arctic. Audrey Kosty ensured long-lasting peace by helping the needy in Mexico. Lydia Price assisted peacekeeping by sending her husband out of the house . . . and off to Israel with a kiss.

Sharon Smith caught frogs. Barry Thornton caught steelhead. June Husband caught lobsters. Norm Hubner caught halibut. Chickens next to the Fandrich shop caught Avian Flu but Mary Sterling was no longer in Infection Control to monitor the quarantine of the warehouse.

Barbara Austrup raised horses. John Toporchak grew grass to feed horses. John Dobernigg grew apples to feed John T.

Birdie Cooney grew grain. Dale French fed grain to fatten cattle. Ellen Hein cut the fat off.

Rena East looked after adults in Day Care. Phyllis Hodgson, Betty Mori, and Joanne Braun looked after us when we listless and needed Sick Care.

Miyoko Chiba evaluated how well nurses worked. Velma Forry evaluated how well our minds worked. Bev Nolan evaluated how well our hearts pumped during open heart surgery.

Barbara Turanski was on the operating team that performed the first laser surgery on gall bladders in Western Canada.

Betty Baird dispensed medicines. Judy Nash helped in surgery. Edith Ziemer assisted with operations. Arlene Biollo played doctor during unscheduled emergencies and births. Barbara Curry made sure doctors sutured properly. Fusae Sakakibara nursed us until she suffered a heart attack and needed help herself.

Dr. Walter Worobey taught university physics for one year. Lydia Price taught Home Ec for seven years. Ralph Harvey taught math and science for 10 years. Wayne Halvarson taught science for 13 years. Barbara Fishler taught for 21 years, Marnie Beveridge taught for 26 years, Richard Combe for 36 years, and Eleanor Hatten – most of all – for 39 years.

Francis Smigol taught Aussies cooking. Ruth Steffens taught musicians music. Annette Daem taught nurses nursing. Joan Genovy taught teachers teaching. Jim Gordon taught fire truck pump operators fire truck pump operation.

Edeltraud Karius has been retired the longest – 49 years. Barbara Turanski has worked the longest – 46 years – and she's still not retired.

There is talent for a new TV series which could be called ***Four Girls in an Orchard***. John Lane could write the script, Jean Ferguson could host the show, Ted Kozub could supply financial backing, Ivy Hayden could look after publicity, John Dobernigg could provide the orchard, Anne Firman could look after the romantic garden setting, and Alfred Fester could sign up his four vivacious starlets.

Ann Pickford's daughter became a professor, not a confessor. Joyce Arnold's daughter became a veterinarian, not a vegetarian. Edith Ziemer's daughter became a pediatricist, not a periodontist.

To her five children, gentle Gert Beckman was a tough caregiver (as in Dr. Dobson's book, *Tough Love*); to her husband, Joye Sengotta was a proper care giver (as in Dr. Laura's book, *The Proper Care and Feeding of Husbands*); and to her patients, Liz Krestinski was a tender care giver (as in Dr. Inu's book, *Needles: 'tis better to give than to receive*).

Loretta Urbetis was flown out of an isolated bunkhouse after a scary two months. Shirley Nistor was assisted out of a store-house and into a beach-house by four growing sons bulging the walls. Charlene Drage was frozen out, flooded out, and smoked out before she transferred out of the frozen north.

Karen Steiner doesn't think much of moving back to the Okanagan Valley. John Desimone wants to move back. Anne Firman would if she could convince her children to move. Richard Combe already did. Shirley Nistor never really left.

In 1956 Jean Ferguson rode the first PGE train from North Vancouver to Squamish with the opening of the southern extension. In 1958 Nellie Fandrich flew on the 2nd flight from Vancouver to Kelowna with the inauguration of CPA's daily flights.

Jerry Jellison stayed with the Bay for 43 years until he was Regional Development Manager in Calgary. Walter Murby stayed with Bank of Montreal for four decades until he was a Senior Manager for US Operations in New York City. Ivy (Winifred) Hayden moved from job to job and place to place just doing what she wanted to. Gordon Wirth accomplished "nothing of significance".

Shirley Rivett suggested we have **LARGE PRINT NAME TAGS** at the Class of 55 Reunion. [Is she practical or what!]

It's curious that nobody said they made the world safer by spending time in a maximum-security prison, although George Parchomchuk made us feel safer by sending some there. [Okay, George, I've used your name four times. Will you help me with my self esteem? I'm still trying to figure out if I should be a farmer, engineer, or scribe when I smarten up.]

The rest of you? I've given up waiting. It is 3:42 pm, Friday May 6th, 2005. I'm about to press the **print** button to print and assemble 21,888 pages. It's going to be a very long weekend.