

Larry Sidwell - 12 September 2021

My address at 60th High School Reunion

As we close this very memorable 60th reunion there are some classmates we would really like to recognize for their efforts to make it the best reunion ever.

First, is there too much we can say about Larry Holland and his Daydream Ranch and Allen Kennison and the Monkey Wrench Garage? Could you guys stand up for a minute?

I thought long about what we could get to recognize the contributions of all our find committee members. None of us needs nor wants some permanent plaque to hang on our wash room wall for a few years, so I got something we they can pass on to their grandkids, or in the case of some of them, Robin, for instance, great-grand-kids. So Larry and Allen here are your tigers!

Ron, Bonnie, Robin, David, and Ilene, could you stand up? I have been meeting on Zoom weekly for a year and a half. The planning, correspondence, accounting, web-building, researching and finding were done by these guys. Thank you so very much! Here are your tigers!

We also had a wonderful group of committee members who have pitched in to prepare this weekend in so many ways. Here are your tigers!

You are a remarkable group of classmates—The Jerome High School Class of 1961. As members of this remarkable group, we had a chance to grow up in a Magic Valley, in a magical decade of relative peace and prosperity for most, where traditional values mattered, people talked with and valued one another. Parents generally stayed married and took their parental responsibilities seriously. We experienced and created many special memories during our time here, and those memories have remained and perhaps even grown stronger through the decades of our lives.

Those were days never to be forgotten. Santa came to town on a Fire Truck. The town center Christmas tree was a sagebrush plant. We rode to Twin in a school bus to see “The Ten Commandments.” We worked! We farmed, milked cows, drove tractors, stacked hay, we picked rock, we harvested, we threw, no, picked, potatoes, bucked spuds, moved sprinkler pipe. We got up at 3 am and brought the water down the ditch to water our place. We suffered through measles, mumps, and chicken pox, earaches and sunburns and blisters, bug bites. We visited friends in an Iron Lung, and stood in line for the Polio vaccine. We bought toys at King’s five and dime, tools at Van Orman Hardware, clothes at the Idaho Department store, songs on the juke box at the Magic Valley Café, ate Challenge milk, ice cream and butter from the Jerome Cooperative Creamery, Root Beer from the A&W, and cherry phosphates from McCleery Drug Store. We went to Saturday matinees at the Voris theatre, and Saturday night movies at the drive-in, went to Twin to see “Psycho.” We went swimming at the park or at Banbury’s, or Durkee’s Lake or in the canal. We played baseball in the parks, went bowling, we learned to play an instrument, we had rodeos, community barbecues, and showed animals at the fair. We had bonfires, and roller skating, skiing and broom hockey, and dances, had hayrides and plays and bands, dragged Main, rode motorcycles. We watched the Magic Valley Cowboys play ball, watched the Jerome Granary burn down. We hunted jackrabbits from the back of a pickup out in the sagebrush and lava rock, went down into the canyon and looked for arrowheads. We camped in the glorious Idaho wilderness and hunted there in the fall. We had High School basketball and track and football, cheerleading, school assemblies, and pep rallies, student elections and a mock national election. We sang the National Anthem, pledged

the flag, and rejoiced in our good fortune to be born in America. We had clubs by the bucketful. We bought lunch tickets 5 for a buck and complained when it went to a buck twenty-five. We played Ping Pong at noon and bought candy in the bookstore. We had after-school jobs. We had friends we could count on and our word meant something to us and to those around us. We went to church, spoke about God in school, visited, and helped our neighbors. We got pinned and wore someone's letterman's jacket, and we experienced emotions of love and rejection. We were a special generation, full of promise, and full of goodness.

When we graduated we went our many ways. Each of us has a story unique from everyone else. We went to college, we got married, we farmed, took jobs, went to war, started businesses and families, served in our communities, our nation and our faith. We went through trying and changing times. We have achieved; we have had difficulties--wins and losses. We have lost some special people along the way. But we have persevered and endured, and have come together as classmates many times over the years. We have become a uniquely tight-knit group of friends. I want you to know that I love and respect every one of you. I am grateful you are here. I hope you feel at home, for indeed, here in our little community of Jerome, we truly are home.

In several places the Lord himself told us that the worth of souls is great in his sight. I hope you concur, that every soul is of infinite worth, and especially includes each of us. When you leave tonight to take up your lives and face whatever joys and challenges the next five or ten years bring, know that you are part of a special group of friends who value you, surely as much as any of us can.

We hope this reunion has met your expectations. Many people have put in much time in our service to make it happen. Through our website we have the potential to stay connected in ways not possible in the past, and I hope we will. God bless.