

“In the end, you always go back to the people who were there in the beginning.”

REUNITED, AND IT FEELS SO GOOD!

By Suzanne (Ball) Parkhurst , PHS Class of 1961

High school seemed just like yesterday, until an email, announcing a belated 60th class reunion, was, at long last, a reality.

This momentous occasion was to be a streamlined version of elaborate reunions past, a casual evening and a brunch with no formalities but another chance to remember the way they were.

Now, at 80 years, these golden agers were not out to impress but to celebrate being together 62 years after their high school graduation.

Gathering with friends every five years can be deeply nostalgic. But observing a milestone far beyond the half-century mark is sobering. More poignant.

It's not only about being heartbroken for “fallen Tigers,” but also knowing the pain of seeing a lost love across the room or never resolving adolescent grievances.

So, they squint at each other's name tags, search unfamiliar faces, then hug warmly, saying, “Lovely seeing you! It's been so long! “

By brunch the following day, a relaxed crowd eagerly rekindles more forgotten memories. The topics of conversation are also about what really matters in life—children, grandchildren, health, travel, hobbies. Story after story. Photo after photo.

Thankfully, a heavy downpour delays the dread of saying final goodbyes. Eventually they drift apart, Best Friends Forever, bound by shared histories and fond memories of an exceptional school that shaped young lives by their experiences there.

For all the swapping of emails and plans to have lunch together, the big question then lingers—will there be a 65th? It's a heavy burden.

Mary and Art Hufford, faithful alums and co-chairs extraordinaire, have steadfastly held this class together, orchestrating 10 amazing reunions that have brought this class back home time and time again. And Sheila Phillips Smith has lavishly decorated every one.

Not every class is fortunate enough to have a web master. Joelle Reese Gibson uncovers every tidbit and photo from their past and posts them online for all to read.

There is no certainty that there will be a 65th sentimental journey down memory lane for the Class of 1960, only time will tell, but I won't bet against it.

Hail to thee, our Alma Mater
True to thee we'll be.
To thy teachings and thy standards,
True eternally

Pensacola, Pensacola
Is our ringing cry;
Loyal to our Alma Mater,
Pensacola High .

Editor's note: Suzanne Ball Parkhurst was married to Frank Parkhurst, PHS Class of 1960. Frank passed away in 2020, but Suzanne continues to grace our reunions and is an honorary member of the Class of '60.