



# Taft Alumni Newsletter

Vol. XV No. 3

July, 1996

## WELCOME GRADUATING CLASS OF 1996

Congratulations to the graduating class of 1996. You are now part of a special group of men and women known as alumni of Taft High School.

The purpose of the Taft Alumni Association is to provide means for Taft alumni to continue or renew friendships begun at Taft, provide service to the school and most importantly to preserve its history. We publish a newsletter four times a year to let you know what other alumni are doing, keep you informed of activities affecting the Taft community and to invite you to special events at Taft.

As you continue your education, work a full time job, or get married, remember us. Drop a line to let us know your new name or address and what you have been doing since graduation. This information will be very helpful for your first class reunion five or ten years from now.

An application form to join the Association is on the last page of this newsletter. The membership fee is \$10 - which covers two years of membership. Considering the rising costs of printing and postage of these newsletters, that's a pretty nice bargain! Best of luck to you. Hold your head high and be proud to say you came from Taft High School.

## WHAT'S IN IT FOR ME?

Membership dues to become a member of the Taft Alumni Association is \$10, which covers two years. Why bother? What do I get from it? Yes, I'm already an alumni, so why do I need a "membership card"?

The Taft Alumni Association is run by a group of dedicated volunteers who continue to hold a special attachment to Taft, even years after graduation. The membership dues are used to cover costs of maintaining alumni records, publishing quarterly newsletters and coordinating reunion plans. We endeavor to furnish an annual scholarship to a deserving senior financed through special donations. Through membership dues, fund raisers and donations, we sponsor productions at Taft to encourage continuing interest in the drama

department. Some of the most recent efforts have been "Mame" (1991), "Play on" (Fall 1991), "Bye, Bye Birdie" (1992) and "The Dining Room" (1993). A special drama workshop headed by a Taft alumnus and specially written play was performed by Taft students in 1994. Also, we have provided funds for buying hats and overlays for the marching band and a laser printer for the journalism department.

It is an advantage to have your name listed in our alumni file, so it will be available for a class reunion when one of your class members (or even you) decide to probe such a possibility. With Alumni Association guidelines and assistance, this venture is much easier to arrange.

As "Sponsoring Alumni", you can help make this association the largest, most responsive group of high school alumni in the area. It is a fact that Taft graduates are dedicated to the school's principles and carry forth a tradition with which few other high schools can compare. We got our roots at Taft and they are strong and enduring. Any non-paying Taftites reading this is invited and encouraged to join the 3,500 supporting Eagles. We've held this cost down for quite a while now, and hope to continue to provide the best service for the lowest cost possible to allow more alumni to continue to participate.

We go forward with pride and determination. Helping where needed, the Association works closely with the PTA and Local School Council. Your financial aid will strengthen our treasury and give additional confidence to our alumni volunteers.

You were an Eagle in high school. Now join the Alumni Association and soar like an Eagle for the rest of your life.

## NAVAL JROTC A REALITY!

Look for a change at Taft this fall! NJROTC starts its first classes in the newly refurbished facilities. Work to return the original classrooms, offices and rifle range back to working order has already begun and will continue throughout the summer. Thanks to **Kay Kuciak**, TAA President, for organizing a team to go through the area last month to identify, tag and remove (and save)

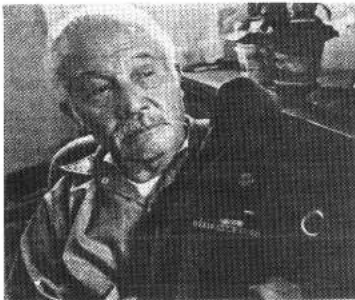
many items stored there from past shows (at least ten year's worth!!) of the Drama and other departments.

Initially proposed by Rear Admiral **Larry Marsh** (class of June, 1959) and recent inductee into The Taft Alumni Hall of Fame in May, 1995, the NJROTC successfully brings military training back to Taft. While Taft provides the facilities, the Navy pays for two naval science instructors, uniforms, textbooks, equipment and transportation for outings.

As outlined last issue, there are two courses of instruction planned. The Naval Junior Reserve Officers Training Corps has over 120 students registered for the program, who will earn 1/2 credit for Naval Sciences. With the help of Whitney Young High School, Taft's local Chicago Public School sponsor, we believe a new tradition is in the making!

### MEMORIAL DAY MEMORIES

Grand Marshall of the Norwood Park Memorial Day Parade this year was our own **Sam Ozaki**. Mr. Ozaki, respected principal at Taft in the 70's and 80's, retired in 1989. Recently, he was honored by the City of Chicago as a 1995 inductee into Chicago's Senior Citizen Hall of Fame.



Although the weather didn't cooperate, it didn't dampen the spirit of **Kay Kuciak** (class of January, 1963), **Jerry Bloom** (class of June, 1962) and **Ingrid Telfors** (class of 1981) who marched through the drizzle, encouraged by numerous Taftites along the parade route and were honored to listen to the emotional speech of Mr. Ozaki in front of Taft at the end of the parade route. He is a World War II U.S. veteran, part of the much-decorated Japanese-American combat team in the European theater, the Army's 442nd Infantry unit.

Also honored at the end of the parade with the Mariners' Black Sheep Squadron Drum and Bugle Corps, led by **Tom Day** (class of June, 1958) whose unit won the Best Community Organization award.

### CLASS REUNIONS

#### CLASS OF JANUARY / JUNE, 1947

Date: July 19, 1997  
Location: Holiday Inn - O'Hare  
Contact: **June (Bailey) Brinkman**  
847/540-0796

#### CLASS OF JANUARY, 1951

Date: To be determined  
Location: Orlando area  
Contact: **Elaine Philips**  
6825 Derrick Dr.  
Orlando, FL 32818-4043 - (407)880-3455

#### CLASS OF JUNE, 1955

Date: October 12, 1996  
Location: Holiday Inn - O'Hare  
Contact: Alumni Systems - 1-800-924-6643

#### CLASS OF JANUARY / JUNE, 1956

Date: September 14, 1996  
Location: Best Western - Elk Grove, IL  
Contact: **Nancy Johnson** - 847/825-0966

#### CLASS OF JANUARY, 1957

Date: May 24, 1997  
Location: Wynham Hotel - Itasca  
Contact: **Leo Drummer** - 708/208-1637  
or **Irene (Boer) McInerney** - 847/437-0367  
or **Herb Paske** - 847/205-0234

#### CLASS OF 1966

Date: To be determined  
Location: To be advised  
Contact: **Lynn Ostfeld**  
122 S. Michigan - Suite 1800  
Chicago, IL 60603  
e-mail: cd000861@interranp.com

#### CLASS OF 1976

Date: November 30, 1996  
Location: Rosemont Convention Center - Rosemont  
Contact: **John Thompson**  
PO Box 31250  
Chicago, IL 60631-0250

#### CLASS OF 1986

Date: November 29, 1996  
Location: Rosemont Convention Center - Rosemont  
Contact: Taylor Reunion Services - 1-800-677-7800

## LETTERS TO THE EDITOR:

Dear Kay,

The article in the last Taft Newsletter ("Grease" Revisited) was about as accurate as the spelling of my last name throughout the piece.

Where did this reporter come up with the plane crash bit ending the career of **Ral Donner**? Not from me.

For the record: Ral Donner died on April 6, 1984 of lung cancer at the age of 41.

Regards, **Jim Jacobs** (class of June, 1960)

[Editor's note: I wrote the article based on information gleaned from an article in the Chicago Tribune (which also spelled your name incorrectly) and from my own (fuzzy) memory and confusion with Buddy Holly. I regret the misinformation was not cleared first by our very capable historian, Kay Kuciak. Jerry Bloom, Editor]

Dear Kay Kuciak:

The article "'Grease' Revisited" in the April issue of the Taft newsletter have some very incorrect information about "Ral" Donner.

I've enclosed an obituary article on **Ral Donner** from the Sun-Times, but unfortunately, I didn't keep the exact date - I believe he died in the spring or summer of 1982. [Ed. note: see correction in above letter. jbb]

The first time I laid eyes on Ral was at the "Shooting Gallery," a teen hang-out on Milwaukee and Devon, back in 1956. I was thirteen. He was only fifteen, but had the confidence of a grown man as he walked up to the juke box, put in his quarter and sang and performed to Elvis' "Treat Me Nice." Although we may have secretly pranced around our bedrooms and dreamed of getting up on the stage, most of us his age were too self-conscious and could only imagine being so daring and open. But not Ral. He didn't just dream it...he did it.

The next time I saw him up close was about twenty years later in the waiting room of the Oncology Department of Rush Presbyterian Hospital where I worked part time. I pulled the charts of patients for the day, and there was his name. When he arrived with his wife and two sons, I spoke to him of my memories of him and he was there to face another bout of treatments in his effort to fight the disease that eventually took his life. Like many teens today, Ral smoked at a very young age, with no thought of the possible consequences.

He was thoughtful and sincere and because my son Lou was interested in music and my brief association with Ral, he sent him a letter when he was 8 years old. Ral graciously responded by sending a Christmas card and his latest Christmas record to him in the winter of 1981. Lou still has it in a scrap book. They have a few

things in common. Both loved music at a very early age, and loved to perform and made the dream come true. Both attended Taft, and both were born on February 10.

I hope someone else passed on to you their memories of Ral Donner too. These are mine.

**Margie (Saiger) Hallwas** (June, 1961)

Hi Kay,

January 1946 class had a great reunion May 17th at the Park Ridge C.C. Greeting of classmates, the taking of pictures and sharing memories at Taft kept us all busy. The program was entertaining and many thanks go to the reunion committee. Even **George Zima** showed up to give our Taft Cheer.

Thanks to all who participated, it was very nice to see them again. The evening was much too short, but I am grateful for those fifty years since graduation day and those special friendships I made there.

**Mariann Leversen Erlenbach** (January, 1946)

Among my wonderful students were:

**Vicki Hastings, Lisa Liccuardi, Keith Westerburg, Janice Jackson, Rich Lindberg** (1971)(speaks highly, Kay, of the T. A. News), **John Psiharis, Tim Rydel, Larita Atkins, Glenda Dismang.** **Jerry Bloom** sings with the Grieg Ladies Singing Society as does **Diane [Litchfield] Spenny** (1970).

**Mila Nolan** [Taft Music teacher of the 60s and 70s]

Dear Kay,

Thanks to you for supplying the addresses. I was able to contact two of my June '51 classmates while in the Phoenix area. **Edwin Archambault** and **Carol Dehlinger Gayle**. Unfortunately they did not know of any others in the area.

As we discussed before I left, I have enclosed a photo of the reunion in Las Vegas last June with classmates from Farnsworth Grammar and Taft High School. Most of us have been friends since kindergarten. **Mary Ann Slahor [Fromm]** attended Beaubien and joined up with us later. **Beverly Anderson Brudnick** living in Houston, TX was unable to attend the reunion. The silly name "Kawagees" was made up when we formed the group as children from letters drawn from a hat.

I have enclosed a poem written about the reunion by Evelyn Staiger Schietzelt. After reading it over, I realized it is probably not appropriate for reprinting in the newsletter but I have sent it along anyway for your enjoyment. Perhaps you too are fortunate to have had good friendships for many years.

Sincerely, **Charlene Johnson Hurt** (June, '51)  
Chicago Hts., IL



"Kawagee Club 1951" (front row, L. to R.) **Mary Ann Slahor Fromm, Dorores Peerenboom Lechner, Barbara Bates Anderson, Audrey Thirsk Schulien;** (back row, L. to R.) **Barbara Kreller Shane, Charlene Johnson Hurt, Leah Staudte Day, [missing] Beverly Anderson Brudnick and Evelyn Staiger Schietzelt.**

Dear Kay,

With regard to reintroducing Junior ROTC back into the Taft curriculum after a 20-year absence I am wondering if we are taking two steps backward to go one step forward. Perhaps the program had some viability in the 1940s and 1950s, but I can tell you from personal experience that during the height of the Vietnam War in the late 1960s and early 1970s it had become something of a standing joke. Toward the end of its long run, Taft's ROTC program suffered from dwindling enrollment, apathy, gross mis-management and indifference of the part of those who were most responsible for its day to day operation.

The way the program was structured, a retired U.S. Army Sergeant was employed by the Board of Education to serve as the "Senior Military Instructor." However this individual spent the better part of his day sequestered in his office smoking cigarettes, reading the newspaper and swapping stories with other faculty members while junior and senior officers conducted the classes - such as they were - and graded the course books of the freshmen and sophomores under his signature.

A good ROTC program blends classroom instruction in military history, theory of command, the role of the military in peacetime and war, and it instills in the young man or woman a sense of responsibility and discipline - or so one would hope. After four years of ROTC, the only thing I came away with was an understanding of how to spit-shine my shoes for Friday's uniform inspection day, and the nomenclature of the M-

1 Rifle, which is still locked in my memory to this very day. Too much power was vested in the junior and senior "officers" who were usually selected on the basis of favoritism - not academic merit or achievement. "Browning up" to the S.M.I. became the sure-fire way (the only way) to advance in this program.

Attaining rank, the desire of every cadet who lasted in the program until senior year, was a sure-fire way of securing signed passes from the S.M.I. excusing them from late afternoon classes under the guise of some questionable ROTC activity. Physical training was virtually non-existent proving the old bromide heard frequently around school that ROTC was just an excuse to avoid gym. Power-mad class officers treated freshmen and sophomores in a cavalier, sometimes sadistic fashion. This litany of complaints can go on of course, with the point being that if Naval ROTC is to be a success - and it can I am sure - it all goes back to the dedication and leadership qualities of the individual who is hired by the Board of Education, and the support it receives from downtown. Otherwise, the program will devolve into what it was during its declining years - the school joke.

**Richard Lindberg, Class of 1971**

## REMEMBERING OUR TEACHERS

Dear Kay,

What a marvelous idea to have graduates (and maybe even non-graduates) identify memorable teachers that made a difference while they labored at Taft. I applaud the editorial decision as well as the special efforts made by the writers.

It occurs to me that there are common threads lacing these teachers together. Names like **Julio Tiritilli, Pat Daniels, and Jim Stamm** can easily be joined by **Tony Kosinski, Lois Tortorelli, Harold Roberts, Maude Stanfield, Mary Fox, John Swider, Caryl Heinichen,** and \_\_\_\_\_ (you fill in the blank). These people made students into learners, and the job of the learner became meaningful. They took their responsibility for managing student learning seriously and displayed an ability to motivate.

They cared about the well being of the students in their charge through attention to the nagging administrative chores that keep schools operating efficiently. the test packets were gridded error free, the programming was in on time, the grades were fair, concerts and plays and games and proms were attended, grade books were never misplaced, transcripts were relatively error free, and they were never the first to sign out at the end of the day. They made my job easier and Taft High



caught us. No punishment, he just told us how disappointed he was that we lied to him. We never did anything like that again...at least not with him. During graduation week we had a poker game at **Dave Lauridson's** house and Vern came to play. After four years and a few hours from graduation, it became "Vern." I never had him for a 'real' class, but he certainly made a positive mark on my adult life. Vern, I hope you are enjoying your retirement...I see your get and raise you a nickel! Thanks. By the way, if you have access to a Taft Yearbook, 1959, let me know...I'll pay dearly for it!

A message to **Jim Stamm**...I was just getting into jazz and Jim played a great jazz piano. He came to Taft during my Junior year, replacing Mrs. Ernst as Mixed Chorus director. Within a few weeks of his arrival we had a concert to perform. I was the student director and he asked that I direct the chorus instead of him. That was a real thrill. Jim, I'm surprised that you still had a job after my gig! I think you'll be pleased to know that I'm currently arranging for a jazz vocal quartet that I put together and playing piano in my own group, the Jazz Spectrum. Thanks to you, too, Jim.

**Bob Zaun** (class of January, 1958)

### **Julio Tiritilli**

Mr. Tiritilli opened the world of literature and writing for me. I was a student in his 1966-67 Advanced Placement English class. **May Stechiewicz** was also in the class - 29 years later she and I are still the closest of friends. Mr. T. was one of the few teachers who had a true sense of humor. He was all discipline however when giving instruction on how to write our first term papers. He taught us to analyze college level literary works and write creatively. It was the Sixties -- we were into spilling our feelings. He made us do it the grammatically correct way.

Largely because of my successful experience in his class I majored in English at Rosary College and did student teaching at Steinmetz High. After graduation I joined the Navy, went to Officer Candidate School, then overseas, and 20 years later am a retired Navy Commander. The writing skills I honed in Mr. Tiritilli's class served me well as a naval officer and in graduate school;. Now, still writing, I am employed as the Public Information Officer for the State of Nevada Industrial Insurance System. I live out my dreams with my husband, Greg, riding our horses on the Nevada range. I recall many enjoyable leaning days in Mr. T's classes which forced me to set goals and use my imagination.

**Carol (Smythe) Evans** (class of '68)

Carson City, Nevada

My fondest memories of Taft are associated with **Mr. Stamm**.

I still remember the day that I auditioned for Mixed Chorus. I was very nervous and so happy when I "made the cut". I felt special when I was chosen to play Gloria Upton in "Mame". One day he said I'd be considered for the lead in "Hello Dolly". I doubt that he was very serious about that, but it made me feel like a "star". He signed my yearbook stating "You'll never starve." At the time I thought he was commenting about my weight. Years later I realized he was paying a high compliment. He was conveying his belief that I'd live a fruitful life. He added an element of self-esteem that I've continued to carry with me.

I moved to Los Angeles and dabbled in the entertainment industry, but realized success in that field was not my calling. Both of my parents died and being an only child I needed to make a "serious" living as a teacher.

My husband and I just had our second child and I'm working toward my Ph.D. as a child psychologist. I've accomplished many things in my life but I haven't achieved "success": just yet. I just want to thank J.J. for giving me the sense that I could "make it" in this world. Sincerely, **Nancy (Balla) Ezra** (class of 1972)

### **NAMES IN THE NEWS**

**WARREN BERG** (class of June, 1942) is the author of the recently published HISTORICAL DICTIONARY OF MALTA. The work is the 10th in a series of European Historical Dictionaries being published by Scarecrow Press of Lanham, MD and London, England. Mr. Berg (Ph.D., M.A., University of Iowa, B.A. Luther College) is professor emeritus, Luther College, Decorah, Iowa, where he has served for 47 years in the Department of Economics, Accounting and Management, most of it as department head. In 1966-67 he was selected to be the first Senior Fullbright Professor at the Royal University of Malta, lecturing in Economics. In 1988-89, upon his retirement from Luther College, he gained a second appointment to the University of Malta, lecturing in International Business. He and his wife, Jan, have directed five student-study tours to Malta in addition to personal visits there.

Bright lights just keep on shining! One of our newly inducted members of the TAA Hall of Fame is **JERRY KRAUSE** (class of 1957). This year he added to his long list of achievements by being voted as the NBA (National Basketball Association) Executive of the Year by his peers. Congratulations, Jerry and best wishes for another Bull's championship team year!

**CHRISTINE FRANSEN** WAS JUST SELECTED AS ONE OF THE THREE Illinois secondary school

winners of the 1996 Presidential Awards for Excellence in Science and Mathematics Teaching (PAESMT). This was awarded by the Illinois Council of Teachers of Mathematics (ICTM). It is a very prestigious award and is awarded based on contributions made to the students in the classroom. She will formally receive a plaque for this honor in Springfield, IL on October 17, 1996.

**CHAR (CHIKELES) ROMANO** (class of 1977) was highlighted recently in the local Lerner TIMES newspaper. She is a YMCA Program and Rental Coordinator at the Leaning Tower "Y". Best wishes!

Fairy tale weddings had been talked about before, but who ever attended one? **PAANDREA ODLE** (class of 1986) exchanged vows last May in Fox Lake with her new husband, Keith Paisley with the entire wedding party dressed as characters of different fairy tales, including Sleeping Beauty, Beauty and the Beast, Cinderella, Wizard of OZ and Snow White. The reception hall was decorated with a balloon castle with drawbridge, castle-shaped cake and hand-made Disney character centerpieces on each table. Best wishes to the happy couple!

Following the 1996 Olympics in Atlanta this summer, watch for our own **CARA DUNNE** (class of 1988). She is competing August 15-25 in Atlanta for the Paralympic Games in the Cycling Team event. She and her partner, Scott Evans (a sighted partner on the tandem cycle) are first-seated for the games with two first places and two second place spots from the Paralympic Trails in Colorado Springs in early June. Qualifying speeds in the "Flying 200's" was 1/8 mile race at 11.92 seconds, which equates to 38 mph! She (they) also won the U.S. Cycling Federation road race (42 miles) in Santa Rosa in June. Watch for the results of their efforts at the U.S. Cycling Track Nationals in San Diego on July 8-12. Blind since she was five, Cara has never used her "handicap" as an excuse to pursue dreams, challenge limits and excel through her efforts. She was inducted into TAA Hall of Fame last year and continues to amaze us and make us very proud to know her. We wish her the best in the upcoming competition.

Congratulations to **ISRAEL VELAZQUEZ** (class of 1996) on his nomination for the Pioneer Press 1995-96 Scholar-Athlete from the Central Bureau area. He was an all-conference pitcher for the baseball team two times and also competed on the swim team at Taft. He also was honored with a Junior Achievement Scholarship, All American Scholar Award and National Physical Education Award.

Two recent 1996 graduates, **JOE SALVO** and **CLAUDIO BOTELLO** were named as part of Pioneer

Press' All-Region team for baseball. Joe was an outstanding outfielder and hitter (.431 batting average) and Claudio starred as pitcher, with a 7-1 win record and 2.02 ERA this season.

**JENNIFER WILLIAMS** (class of 1996) was recently presented the 1996 TAA alumni scholarship by TAA Board member, **Anne Lunde** (class of 1969). Jennifer served as the student Local School Council representative for the past year. She also was Drama Club President, Golden Apple nominee, Yearbook writer, President of H2-0 Club, Freshman tutor and performed in several drama presentations during the past four years. Congratulations!

### WHERE ARE YOU?

Searching for old classmates who have fallen through the cracks - no word or no sign of them? It is the policy of the Taft Alumni Association that we cannot provide names or addresses of alumni from our records other than for legitimate class reunions. If we are requested to help in the search by listing the name of the person you are looking for, we can publish it in the newsletter. If that party responds to us, we will forward that person's name and address to the requesting party.

The suggested donation for this service is \$5.00 per name. If you wish to respond, send to Taft Alumni Association, c/o Kay Kuciak, 47 W. Lancaster Lane in Des Plaines, IL 60018.

This issue we offer:

-- **Barbara (Aletis) Hecox** (Jan., 1942) is looking for **MARY JANE (SHIRLEY) BAUMGARTNER** (Eddie) (class of Jan., 1942). Her younger sister was Florence (married name not known).

-- **Jim Mularz** is looking for **JUDY WAYMAN** (class of June, 1967)

### IN OUR MEMORIES

**KARL BASS** (class of 1993) age 21, died from injuries sustained in an automobile accident on June 28, 1996. He had been employed as a computer machinist with an engineering firm in Niles, IL.

**CAROL (EWALD) MALEK** (class of June 1941) died August, 1995 of a heart attack.

**DANIEL TRINSKI** (class of June, 1960) died in Florida August, 1995.

**GLORIA (KARL) WOJECK** (class of June, 1962) died June 7, 1996 at the Willowcreek Community Church in Chicago-suburban area.

School was the beneficiary. I sincerely hope the next generation of Faculty can learn from the past.

**Bob Goldberg** (Asst. Principal - 1963-1990)

Dear Kay,

I have enjoyed reading the recent letters concerning outstanding teachers.

It seems like almost the entire staff provided me with a quality education that prepared me for the academic demands of a highly regarded private college.

One person however had a tremendous influence on me that remained with me throughout my career as a business executive and even today. **Joe Kupcinet** was a great football coach that dwelled on fundamentals and execution. He was a firm but fair disciplinarian. I remember that he would not allow any locker conversation before games even though our opponents were singing and shouting in the adjoining locker room at Winnemac Park.

I'll never forget his comment -- "Gentlemen, We'll sing AFTER the game." -- and we did on our way to winning the North Section Championship in 1948.

Joe prepared me for a successful college football career but much more important is that he fully prepared everyone he touched for the "game" of life.

**John Will** (class of Jan., 1949)

Fountain Hills, AZ

Dear Kay Kuciak & Jerry Bloom,

I hope it is not too late to submit a short essay for your newsletter featuring teachers of Taft.

To me there were three types of teachers. The first helped me PREPARE FOR COLLEGE by stretching me alot. **Nick Mitchell** taught U.S. History and made us outline EVERY chapter in the book. While at the time I joined other students in complaining, this study technique came in handy at the University of Illinois. **Tony Kosinski** taught math at a high level as we learned that it was "his job" to challenge our intellects. I recall his response to our complaints of how hard the test was, stating, "May you be careful what you ask for, for you may get it." I use that same line with the fifteen girls (8&9) in my Girl Scout troop today.

The second type of teacher was one who HAD MORE CONFIDENCE IN ME THAN I DID IN MYSELF at the time. **Don Giannette** was my counselor for three years. He pushed me to take the PSAT, ACT and SAT so I could get into a good college. His work with our bunch in Student Council gave us leadership opportunities which in turn helped us gain more confidence. **Betty Betts Kerkorian** also pushed leadership by involvement in GAA, the Girl's Athletic Association

(which was prior to Women's Sports for you youngsters).

The last group of teachers gave me a great appreciation for music and the arts. **Mrs. Mila Nolan** taught general music to freshmen who probably couldn't care less. Well I did, and she may be happy to know that I still know the words to the Little Brown Church in the Vale and love the opera HMS Pinafore twenty years later.

**James Stamm** gave hours to those of us involved with plays, choir and humanities. His work taught me the love for musicals which I still enjoy today. **Ron Dluger** also gave me appreciation of the arts by teaching Seniors a class called Drama Workshop.

While Taft was not a wealthy school with a fancy building like many in the suburbs, it was still a rich experience for me. I applaud you both for taking time to collect thoughts of Taft Alumni, edit the work and "share the stories" with the faculty. Thanks for all your efforts.

**Jan Mason Rauk**, class of 1974

Moscow, Idaho

Dear Kay,

I've meant to send you a note for forever. Thank you for forwarding my letter to **Mrs. Meites**. She had already answered my letter and phoned me by the time I got your note. She was thrilled to have been contacted. My sister Janet (1959) and I then had lunch with her on April 1st. It was great. We visited about 2-1/2 hours and were never at a loss for what to talk about. I believe we will now keep in touch for some time. She's doing wonderful for 86 - very active. Just what I would expect her to be. Take care and thanks.

**Judy Jacobsen** (1970)

Dear Jerry:

As an alumni of the graduating class of January 1959 I would like to greet two of the teachers listed in the last newsletter from as far back as the 50's. **Mr. Johnson** may remember me as the clumsy female in Chemistry who broke a fresh tube of nitric acid spilling it on my hand. Although I still have a scar (it was good stuff!), it was probably the only reason I passed the class!

PE class was always a highlight of my day and **Mrs. Knickerbocker** was one of the reasons I enjoyed it. Although I was never the best athlete (girls weren't supposed to be back then), I must have passed some of my love for PE on to my daughter who has enjoyed and excelled at sports of all kinds and to my son who was a soccer player and successful competitive gymnast through high school.



These teachers may remember me as one of the "Berg twins" and although I live in Portland, Oregon and my sister Kay lives in Scottsdale, Arizona, we still confuse people when we're together. I enjoy receiving the Alumni Newsletter even though I haven't lived in the Chicago area since 1973. Although we were a small graduating class (approximately 130), it's fun to run across familiar names and keep track of what's happening.

You may use these comments in any way you wish -- I hope I haven't procrastinated too long in getting this information to you. Thanks for the opportunity to greet these teachers.

Sincerely, **Karen (Berg) Sandberg** (January, 1959)

To: **Julio Tiritilli**

Your teaching enriched my life, and I'd like to think I'm wiser because of your instruction. You showed me the beauty and power of the English language.

To: **J. J. Stamm**

Through your love of music, you opened my ears to composers I'd never listened to before, such as Copland, Prokofiev and Vivaldi. I think of you in all the notes and composition. Even if I should become deaf, I'll always hear songs because you instilled your passion for music in my head.

To: **Patricia Daniels**

Thank you for giving me confidence and a belief in my ability to write. Whether I become a famous author or not, it won't matter because you ALWAYS taught me to never give-up or lose my aspirations.

Thank you ALL for making a difference in my life!

Sincerely, **Melody Childs** (class of '71)

Dear Alumni Newsletter Members,

I think your idea for letters to former teachers to be a great one. Thanks for the opportunity. I have enclosed three envelopes as indicated in your instructions. Thanks again.

Sincerely, **Jerry Benson** (class of 1969)

St. Charles, IL

Dear Kay,

Thanks for this wonderful opportunity to say hello and to say thanks. As a current high school teacher this chance to look back hits very close to home. Feel free to publish or edit any of all of this. What you don't print, please forward to the particular teachers.

SPECIAL HI'S to **Ruth Knickerbocker**...phys. ed. teachers were so warm, friendly and accessible and **Mrs. Sonneleiter** too; thanks to **Robert Nachtwey** who once "congratulated" me after a disastrous assembly speech for at least making it through without

breaking into tears...I have learned: to **Mrs. Unseth**, thanks, and kudos to **J. J. Stamm** for being one of the first to "discover" **Donna Mills**.

My main thoughts go to **Gerald Cuny** and **John Blacharski**. Mr. Cuny was Mr. Student Council in the late 50's and a fine job he did introducing innovations such as the sportsmanship trophy and the Taft Code. I send additional thanks for the many things he sent me when I first started teaching. His greatest impact on my life was suggesting I run for Student Council President in spring 1959. I countered with "Girls don't run for president!" and Why, not" he answered. Thanks Mr. Cuny for being a 50's feminist and pushing me into the real world. I will never forget the advice or the message. Now for John Blacharski...a most memorable teacher for Latin freshman and sophomore years...how I wish I had taken more, but I had my own agenda. Regrets. His method of discipline was firing chalk at malefactors at the back of the room. How I wish I could do that...one, that it was allowed, two, that I could throw so well. What a guy! Guess we all wondered how his finger was cut off?? John, I thank you for my love of all language, especially English, the piece of cake French was in college and even Italian in night school. German I don't do so well on. Thank you. Rarely a day goes by that I say to "my kids" this means such and such "from the Latin." Your good works live on.

Kay, your fine efforts are much appreciated.

**Judy Greasley Mich**, June 1960 (seems like yesterday)

Dear Kay,

I enjoy reading the Taft Newsletter and occasionally hearing about the kids I used to know. The recent "Remembering Teachers" column was particularly heart-warming (especially since I have been an educator for 22 years). Where is **J. J. Stamm** now? He was one of my favorites (and so was Mixed Chorus). I have so many special memories from the competitions we participated in. Thank him for me and for all the students whose lives he touched.

Thank YOU, Kay, and your entire staff of Alumni officers for consistently producing this enjoyable publication.

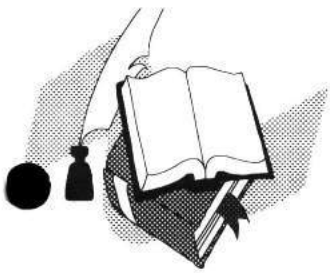
**Mary (Stoklosa) Ferrandino** (class of '68)

Dear Kay,

A note about **Vern Vanderah**...we must have been his first home room class. Heck, he wasn't much older than we were, and he was "cool." **Bill Pland** and I won a spot on the swim team and we told Mr. Vanderah that we had to practice during "long division," at which time we went to the gym and shot baskets. One morning he



# CLASS NOTES



## 1940s

NINA (CHRISTENSEN) HANSEN (JUNE 1941) lives in Chicago, has 1 child and is retired.

HERB MELLOR (JUNE 1941) MARRIED JANE (GEIB) (JUNE 1941) Herb graduated from Northwestern BA 1948, retired from the Air Force & Civil Service now President of McChord AFB Museum Foundation. They live in Tacoma, WA, have 2 children and 1 grandchild.

HELEN (BOOTH) FESS (JANUARY 1943) lives in Park Ridge, IL, has 4 children and 5 grandchildren and is a retired school secretary.

MARGARET (MAREK) NEUMAR (JUNE 1943) lives in Glenview, IL and is a retired secretary.

TED PFISTER (JUNE 1943) graduated from Monroe College of Optometry & Roosevelt School of Music, married HELEN (HERMANN) (JUNE 1944) they have 4 children, live in Montpelier, OH and is retired.

PHYLLIS (LANGE) WILSON (JUNE 1943) graduated from LaSalle Extension 1945, lives in Spokane, WA, has 3 children and 4 grandchildren and is a housewife.

HOWARD G. NELSON (JANUARY 1944) graduated from Northwestern BS, BA 1949, lives in Pewaukee, WI, has 3 children and is a retired CPA.

MARLYS (GARMOE) MURRAY (JUNE 1944) lives in Peotone, IL, has 3 children and 9 grandchildren.

WALTER REINECKE (JUNE 1944) lives in Minden, NV, has 4 children and is a retired Park Ridge Police Officer, also retired

as security supervisor at Harrah's Tahoe Hotel.

TAFT LOWELL (JANUARY 1945) graduated from Lake Forest BA 1949, married HAZEL (IDLE) (JANUARY 1946) they live in Arlington Hts., IL, have 3 children and 2 granddaughters, Taft teaches conversational English and Hazel is a housewife.

EDMUND MAZUR (JUNE 1945) graduated from U of I BS 1952, U of WI MS 1972, has 4 children, lives in Edgewater, FL and is a retired Architect.

MARIANN (LEVERSON) ERLNBACH (JANUARY 1946) lives in Chicago, has 4 children and 4 grandchildren and is retired from United Airlines.

DOLORES (TOLESON) PINKONSLY (JANUARY 1946) graduated from IL Wesleyan 1950, lives in Augusta, GA, has 3 children and 2 grandchildren, retired executive secretary and has won many awards for china painting.

LORRAINE (BARRY) LATORIA (JUNE 1946) lives in Elk Grove, IL, has 3 children and 5 grandchildren and is a retired secretary.

MARILYN (SIUDA)LITCH (JUNE 1946) graduated from U of I BS 1950, lives in Desert Hot Springs, CA, has 1 child and is a bacteriologist.

MARGARET (PFENDER) WINTERSDORF (JANUARY 1947) lives in Trevor, WI, has 7 children, 19 grandchildren and 1 great grandchild and is retired.

CHARLES AVICHOUSER (JUNE 1947) graduated from Roosevelt MA 1970, Chicago Music College, lives in Chicago and is a retired teacher, choral director.

JEANNE (HALVORSEN) DOST (JUNE 1947) lives in Seneca, SC, has 2 children and is a housewife.

JACQUELYN (PRIMA) HOWARD (JUNE 1947) lives in Temecula, CA, has 4 children and 6 grandchildren and is in import-export family business.

DONALD LEWIS (JUNE 1947) lives in Crystal Lake, IL, has 6 children and is an Old Style beer distributor.

FLORENCE (EGAN) STANTON (JUNE 1947) graduated from San Jose State BA Psychology 1969, MA 1974, MS Counseling 1975, lives in San Jose, CA, has 4 children and is a Psychologist and Docent at San Jose Art Museum.

SHIRLEY (HUNTMAN) TAYLOR (JUNE 1947) lives in Holiday, FL, has 3 children and is a retired musician.

GERALD WARTON (JUNE 1947) graduated from Mc Kendree College BS Chem. 1951, Central Oregon Comm. College AS 1985, lives in Mesquite, NV, has 3 children and is a retired Lt. Col. USAF, now a golf course pro shop asst.

MARILYN (THOREN) HINDMAN (JANUARY 1948) lives in Cool, CA and is retired.

FRANK HEYER (JUNE 1948) lives in Chicago, has 1 child and is retired.

WILLIAM HOPKINS (JUNE 1948) graduated from Wright, lives in Palatine, IL, has 5 children and 9 grandchildren and is a wholesale tire broker.

EMIL MEIERKORD (JUNE 1948) graduated from IL State, lives in Lacon, IL, has 4 children and 2 grandchildren and is a real estate broker.

JAMES PETERSON (JUNE 1948) graduated from U of I BSME 1953, lives in San Diego, CA, has 5 children and is retired from General Dynamics.

## 1950s

ROBERT SCHMIDT (JUNE 1950) lives in Bossier City, LA, has 5 children and is retired.

JAMES HANSEN (JUNE 1951) graduated from Trinity College BA 1956, Trinity Evangelical Divinity School, lives in Trnsfer, PA, has 2 children and is a Minister.

MARY (WELSCH) VASIL (JUNE 1955) graduated from Wright AA 1957, De Paul BA 1962, lives in Berwyn, IL, has 2 children and is a housewife.

AUDREY (PETERSON) HAMPTON (JANUARY 1957) lives in Lombard, IL, has 4 children and 2 granddaughters and is a housewife.

BARBARA (SWANSON) KLEIN (JANUARY 1957) graduated from Passavant Hsp. RN 1960, lives in Scottsdale, AZ, has 2 children, is a RN doing volunteer work with homeless, recently outfitted and planned medical mission to Honduras.

BARBARA (VAUGHN) WOLFF (JANUARY 1957) lives in Chicago, has 3 children (all Taft Grad's) and is a part time travel agent.

DONALD GIFFORD (JANUARY 1958) graduated from Iowa ST BS Mech. Eng. 1963, lives in Glen Ellyn, IL, has 4 children and is a application engineer.

ANTOINETTE (WESLEY) DILTZ (JUNE 1958) graduated from Northern BS 1962, lives in Fullerton, CA, has 4 children and 2 grandchildren and works in industrial sales.

ANNA (LUNDBERG) OTTO (JUNE 1958) lives in Waynesboro, VA, has 8 children and 8 grandchildren and owns D'Lolo Trucking Bus Tours Co.

# CLASS NOTES

PATRICIA (SANTELL) LUTZ (JUNE 1959) graduated from IL Wesleyan BS 1964, lives in Arlington Hts, IL, has 2 children and is director of public relation for the greater Woodfield Convention Bureau.

## 1960s

MARY (ELLIOTT) ASCHBRENNER (JUNE 1960) lives in Glen Ellyn, IL, has 3 children and works the Jewelry Dept. at Walmart.

BARRY BRUNER (JUNE 1960) graduated from AME Academy of Art, Wright, Chicago Teacher College, lives in Chicago, has 1 child and is an art teacher at Whitney Young HS.

ALICE (EASTMAN) HEYDEN (JUNE 1961) lives in Park Ridge, IL and has 3 children.

SANDRA (TREFNY) MICHAELS (JUNE 1962) lives in Gurnee, IL, has 4 children and is a bookkeeper and Wilton cake decorating instructor and in the Wilton Hall of Fame.

JOHN KNECHT (JANUARY 1963) graduated from U of I BSEE 1968, Loyola MBA 1973, lives in Chicago, has 2 children and is an electrical engineer and also enjoys singing in the Taft Alumni Christmas Concert every December.

DARLENE (LEFF) POLZIN (JANUARY 1963) lives in Arlington Hts, IL, has 3 children and is a receptionist.

GARY PIEHL (JUNE 1963) graduated from U of I BS 1971, lives in Redwing, MN and is in retail management.

MARY (FIJAK) THOMAS (JUNE 1963) graduated from U of I BS 1970, MARRIED JIM THOMAS (JUNE 1963) they live in London, Ontario, Canada, have 2 children and 1 grandchild. Mary is a VP in Finance.

MALAMA (MITCHELL) XERRAS (JUNE 1963) graduated from Boston U BS 1967,

lives in Peabody, MA, has 2 children and 2 grandchildren and is an accountant.

MICHAEL LOPRIORE (JANUARY 1964) graduated from Corpus Christi College, MARRIED CAROL (VOTAVA) (1966), they live in Prospect Hts, IL, have 2 children and he is self employed.

JUDITH (WALASZEK) AIKIN (JUNE 1964) lives in Sedona, AZ, has 3 children and 3 step-children and owns an ice cream parlor.

PATRICIA (PAUL) OLBRISCH (JUNE 1965) lives in Niles, IL, has 1 child and is self employed, typing service.

KATHLEEN (WOIT) ROMANO (JUNE 1965) lives in Rosemont, IL, has 1 child and 2 grandchildren and is a communications analyst.

JUDI (LUGA) STEPHENS (JUNE 1965) graduated from U of I BA Fench, Middlebury College MA French, lives in Niles, IL, has 3 children and is a housewife.

CHARLES EDWARDS (JUNE 1966) lives in Chicago and is an accountant.

BRUCE HAERR (JUNE 1966) graduated from Elmhurst College BA 1974, lives in Prospect Hts, IL and is a senior account executive.

ALAN DITTMER (JANUARY 1967) graduated from U of I BS 1971, IL Benedictine MBA 1978, lives in Glendale Hts, IL and is president of a consulting company.

WAYNE GIBSON (JANUARY 1967) lives in Arlington Hts, IL and is a postal clerk.

LARRY HERZOG (JANUARY 1967) graduated from Harper BS Law Enforcement 1972, U of I BA Criminal Justice 1976, Northeastern MBA 1996, lives in Park Ridge, IL, has 3 children and is Deputy Chief of Police in Park Ridge.

WILLIAM ECKHOLM (1968) graduated from Rochester Inst.

Of Tech. AS MKTG 1978, lives in Cary, NC, has 3 children and is a senior VP.

NANCY (JOHNSON) KANDOLA (1968) graduated from Northeastern 1969, U of MO 1973, lives in Overland Park, KS, has 2 children and is a program clerk.

## 1970s

STEVEN TERLECKI (1970) graduated from U of NM BA Geology 1974, lives in Littleton, CO, has 3 children and is a consulting petroleum geologist.

RICHARD ANDERSON (1971) graduated from Southern IL BS, lives in Schaumburg, IL, has 4 children and is a Schaumburg Firefighter.

NANCY (MATELING) CIBIC (1972) lives in Algonquin, IL and is an air traffic analyst at the FAA.

RICHARD EVANS (1973) MARRIED DONNA (SCHALLER) (1974), they live in Hampshire, IL and he is a branch manager for an electronics company.

MARK KREJCI (1973) lives in Glendale, AZ, has 4 children and is a senior electrical designer.

CHRISTOPHER IACULLO (1974) graduated from De Paul BS Accounting 1981, MST 1988, lives in Park Ridge, IL, has 1 child and is a CPA.

DIANE (SICILIANO) BUGAJSKI (1975) lives in Arlington Hts, IL, has 1 child and is an office manager.

MICHAEL KERSEY (1976) lives in Schaumburg, IL, has 2 sons and is a store manager.

JOHN SOKOLOWSKI (1976) graduated from Northeastern BA 1982, Natl. Louis M Ad 1992, lives in Rolling Meadows, IL, has 1 child and is import manager/transportation teacher at College of Du Page.

NICK CHIUSOLO (1977) lives in Prospect Hts, IL, has 1 child and is a general manager.

LINDA KUFFEL (1977) lives in Chicago and is an export administrator.

JOHN MATELING (1977) MARRIED KAREN (BECKER) (1977). John graduated from Northwestern BS 1981, U of I MS Public Health, Karen graduated from U of I BS 1981 occupational therapy, they live in Grayslake, IL, have 3 children. John is a Health Physicist and Karen is a Psychiatric Occupational Therapist.

STEPHEN ANDREWS (1978) graduated from Northeastern, lives in Barrington, IL and is a Continental Airlines Skycap working at O Hare.

TINA (ATHANASAS) ATSAVES (1978) graduated from Northern 1982, lives in Glenview, IL, has 1 child and is a graphics arts, imaging.

GERALYN (CONWAY) DONOVAN (1978) graduated from U of I 1982, IL Benedictine MBA 1990, lives in Darien, IL, has 1 child and is a marketing consulting firm owner, Conway, Donovan & Assoc.

THOMAS BOMBA (1979) graduated from Southern IL BS 1983, U of Chicago MBA 1993, lives in San Francisco, CA and is a consultant.

## 1980s

ANNE (KOENIG) SCHROEDER (1986) lives in Chicago, has 1 child and is an asst. manager, risk management for Natl. Roofing Contractors Assoc.

DIANE RYCHLIK (1988) lives in Chicago and is a medical student.

EARL WASHINGTON (1989) has 3 children and is on active duty US Navy in Bahrain, also served in Desert Storm/Shield.

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Editor - Jerry Bloom - 312/774-5320  
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## Expired??

Look at your address label on the back of this newsletter. Check your year of graduation on the upper left corner. Is it correct? The date on the top right side is the expiration date of your TAFT Alumni Association membership. If the date is close, it is TIME to sit down and write out a check for \$10. It's not much money, but you get a bundle of value! Not one, but TWO full years of newsletters, opportunities to learn about classmates, reunions, school events and alumni programs. What better way to keep the ties to the "good-ol' days"? Be sure to use the application form below to fill in the latest updates in your life. We LOVE hearing from you!!

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Name of Spouse			Year Married: 19	
Number of Children:	Ages:			
College(s) Attended, Degree(s) Earned, Year of Graduation				
Occupation:			Other Interests:	
Other News or Information:				
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