

WHS 45th REUNION DINNER

--delivered 7:15 PM, 10/23/2010, at the
General Sutter by David Newcomer

Teacher guests, fellow alumni, spouses and friends, and others..."Strausvuichi." That — for those of you who never attended one of Mr. Will's Russian classes — means "hello." I have actually had occasion to use some of the Russian I learned under Mr. Will's able tutelage while attending Russian patients in my surgical practice over the years.

Well...here we all are. Forty-five years, 4 months, 1 week, 6 days and a few hours after the instant we thought we knew it all — the 1965 Warwick High School commencement exercises. Since then we have come to realize how wrong we were. At that time we had accumulated some knowledge, but we had yet to gain experience. Little did we know what life had in store for each of us.

Over the ensuing 45 years, the sum total of our experiences has turned us into whom and what we are today. Some of those experiences have been exhilarating, some glorious, some painful, some exasperating, and some joyous — but they have all undoubtedly been interesting and of course unique for each individual. Members of our class have variously become school teachers or school principles, nurses, painters, masons, money managers, secretaries, electricians, career military personnel, successful entrepreneurs, accountants, bankers, office assistants or office managers, doctors, lawyers, Indian chiefs — wait, no, I don't believe there have been any Indian chiefs — counselors, engineers, homemakers, parents, and grandparents. And some of us have even become great-grandparents.

Before going any further I would like to ask you to join me in pausing for a few seconds to reflect upon those unfortunate classmates and teachers we knew who have passed on either while we were in school or since graduation. Let us pause now...(PAUSE 8 SEC.) Thank you.

How can I possibly recall even a fraction of the fun and experiences we all had while in the Warwick Class of 1965, grades one through twelve? And in only a few minutes? I can't. So I shall relate a few of the memories I have and some that have been told to me by fellow classmates. Some of these recollections may even be true.

For starters, what was it with those nicknames? "Squeak." What's with that? I well remember the first day I went into the operating room at the Lancaster General Hospital after 4 years of undergrad school, 4 years of medical school, and 5 years of surgical residency...trying to act very professional my first day in practice and as I was

donning my sterile gloves, Sally Griswold, a Warwick grad, from behind her mask during a moment of dead silence says, "Hi, Squeak," for all to hear. Sally was an operating room technician then...and still is. Fortunately (I guess) the patient was asleep. And there were other nicknames just as weird like Head, Rabbi, Crash, Shakespeare, Froglips, Mouse, Duffy, Gundy, and Bill — that last one was Bill Pezick's nickname. Even some of the teachers had nicknames: like Bimbo, Itchy, Peeney, Botch and Pinhead. Of course none of the erudite teachers in present company had any.

Does anyone remember one of our fourth grade teachers at the Lititz Elementary School, Florence Longenecker? Mrs. Longenecker was a short, stout ball of fire who really knew how to get kids interested in learning. A bunch of us in her class.....Dick Gundrum, Lynn Adams, Dick Posey, Tim Forrey, Carol Good, Trina Leed, Joe Adams, and I just to name a few, (without her permission, of course) used to go down to Mr. Swartzbaugh's office every Monday morning to reserve gym time for the upcoming week for as many hours as were allowed...and then some. When we went to the gym, we loved climbing on the ropes and playing kickball indoors when it was too cold outside, especially during the winter months.

I've also got to mention Mr. George Remetz who was a very popular sixth grade teacher and still lives on New Haven Drive on Kissel Hill, I believe. I am sure Mr. Remetz is well into his 90's by now.

Does anyone remember the time Botch Brubaker "knocked me agin' the wall" in one of his science classes for reading the Weekly reader instead of paying attention to one of his screwed up lab demonstrations? I do — very well. I also remember getting an even more stern reprimand when I got home and my parents found out about that incident. In those days, parents didn't sue the teacher and school when their child was disciplined by a teacher.....appropriately or not. I also remember being bounced out of Mr. Roehm's 7th grade math class once or twice. But I don't remember why.

I recall a number of very practical things I learned while at Warwick. For example, the twenty helping verbs from Miss Enck:

IS	WERE	MAY	COULD	HAVE	WILL
AM	BE	CAN	WOULD	HAS	DO
ARE	BEING	MUST	SHOULD	HAD	DOES
WAS	BEEN	MIGHT	OUGHT	SHALL	DID

I run across very few people of any level of education who can recite the helping verbs as fast as I can...which I find quite useful.

Also in those days we thought it was a big deal to sneak under the football field bleachers some weekend night and have a few beers and a cigarette. You never heard or read much in the newspapers about marijuana, coke or hard drugs such as heroin — except maybe in the inner cities. But it was foreign to most of us in Lititz. That has all changed now. In the 1960's every teenage boy's biggest fear was getting his steady girlfriend pregnant — that probably hasn't changed much. We didn't have crash dancing in those days, just the stroll, the mashed potato, and the jitterbug. And do you remember that song *ALLEY OOP* by the Hollywood Argyles? That happens to be one of my karaoke favorites.

Peggy Bard told me that she was called aside by Mr. Schoenberger after school one day to tell her that "Bruce Singer needs to stay in school and should not have a lot of outside distractions." Peggy says she wasn't sure what he meant by "outside distractions," but she figured they were about ten inches above her navel. Apparently Coach S. hoped Bruce would not end up having to drop out of school like his older brother John did.

By the way, does anyone know how Rabbi and his buddies got one of Peggy's bras to run up the flagpole? She claims not to know. A likely story!

And speaking of Coach, what was it with that hat? It was the paradigm Indiana Jones fedora some twenty years before Indiana Jones had even been conceived by George Lucas. Did you ever wash that thing? Do you still have it? If so, it should be bronzed and put into the archives of Warwick sports memorabilia.

I have a confession to make. It was Rabbi and a few cohorts, including yours truly, who went around in his Nellybelle-type jeep throwing eggs at mailboxes, among other things, in the wee hours of the morning. I don't remember selectively picking on any teacher's residences or cars. By the way, did anyone ever buy a hamburger at Rosie's truck parked on Broad Street next to the Lititz Springs Bank? I did. You couldn't get a better hamburger anywhere before or since.

How about dances at the Lititz Rec. Center next to the park? I actually remember the OLD dilapidated, fire-trap Rec. center before the newer one was built a few years before we graduated.

No one at a Warwick football game before or since has seen racing pigeons with red and black streamers trailing behind fly around Grosh Field after each touchdown. What was I thinking? To this day I don't remember how I got the idea to do that. I DO remember the fun we had on the band bus going to and from football games with a burlap bag of racing pigeons clucking along in the back of the bus. And playing trumpet in the pep band was a real hoot. Does anyone remember this Warwick band bus favorite sung to the tune of the Notre Dame Fight Song?

Beer, beer for old Warwick High;
 You bring the whiskey, I'll bring the rye.
 Send those freshmen out for gin,
 And don't let a sober senior in.
 We never stagger, we never fall;
 We sober up on pure alcohol
 While the dear old faculty
 Lies drunk on the barroom floor.
 Da--da-da-da--da-da-da--da...
 (all subsequent verses, same as the first)

Speaking of football games, do you remember that horrible last game of Warwick's 1963 season played at night at Ephrata's War Memorial Field in the driving rain where Ephrata ruined our undefeated season? I remember well sitting in the stands with the band and getting soaked that night. I'm sure Coach Schoenberger would like to forget that one.....it was a real nail biter, not a rout — 16-6. (I had to call my brother-in-law Terry Grube to get that final score.) The 2010 Warwick football team three weeks ago avenged that loss to Ephrata again on their home War Memorial Field by trouncing the Mountaineers 35-28. Way to go Warriors!!

I would like to thank everyone on the reunion committee for all the work they put into this weekend's activities. I am not going to mention anyone in particular because their names are printed on the program, but when you get a chance, please thank them personally. If you didn't take an airplane ride today, try to come out for one tomorrow anytime between 9AM and 3 PM...the weather is supposed to be good for flying. If you took a ride today, had a great time, and would like to take a second ride, please feel free to do so tomorrow. If you took a ride today and didn't have a great time, don't tell anybody.

This evening should not only be about the past. We might fairly ask, "Where do we go from here?" I would suggest that we keep doing what it was that got us this far successfully.....with even more enthusiasm and more curiosity than before. Keep enjoying to the max what life has to offer us, and don't forget to stop and smell the roses along the way. And one thing I want you all to remember: each of you is very important to the people around you and to those whose lives you touch every day. Never forget: whatever our time on this Earth, we all create and live a unique biography and weave ourselves into the complex fabric of human history. And that biography can never be erased. Thank you all for coming and we will be looking forward to seeing you at our fiftieth in five years. Until then, be safe everyone!