

To the Legendary Class of 1959 on your Huge Five-O:

Want to take a trip back in time? Read on:

First of all, let's clear up the puffery. "Mountain Lakes" still lacks mountains (The Tourne tops out at a staggering 850 feet above the mean sea level at Lavalette after a pagan orgy, or maybe an ant hill more, and isn't in the town at all, to the everlasting pride of Boonton...Up above Lookout, Summit Ave. rises to 750 feet, and the nearest real mountain is in the Catskills). Many of the more libidinous Lakers preferred to do their mountain climbing by moonlight on Sheep Hill in Boonton anyway. Furthermore, there are just five significant ponds and a couple of puddles and canals covering a total of 167 acres of the town but no lakes of the Greenwood Lake (1,920 acres) or Lake Hopatcong (2,686 acres) scale in the tiny borough, or everyone would drown. The "Big Lake", as it is usually referred to, is eighty acres in area, or one eighth of a square mile.

But the town's mellifluous identification, though a bit of charming exaggeration, is indeed a great name, and certainly the town's founding father, Herbert J. Hapgood, and the guys back in the flapper era did not want to hear people singing, "When old Hill Ponders gather, it is never very long..." Poor Herbert went bankrupt in 1922 and high-tailed it to South America, but the core of Craftsman homes were already launched and all that stucco would never look the same. Remarkably, 450 of the original homes still survive and the rough but easily paintable stucco gives the town its uniquely colorful ambiance and style. This design motif persists, even though humongous homes, including some built by MLHS grads, have taken the place of so many of the more modest designs that became tear-downs after decades of lacrosse balls being pounded against their interior walls. So Hapgood and Holton get way too much credit. It was actually Lewis van Duyne who conceived of the whole idea in 1920. And Belhall took over after Hapgood vamoosed and built a bunch of Tudors (naturally, they had front doors and back doors, for total of two) and

Normans and Colonials, but he went belly up during the Great Depression.

Arthur Crane built the Lake Arrowhead subdivision and Fox built The Village after WW II.

And it was Gustav Stickney who developed the original Craftsman style that Hapgood and others borrowed from. But we tend to remember only those people who had streets named after them.

The Borough of Mountain Lakes covers 1899 acres, or less than three square miles, but as kids on foot or bicycle, I bet it seemed far larger to us all. Pedaling from Birchwood to Diaper Village to Powerville Road and then up Laurel Hill Road was like the Tour de France stretched across a continent of rhododendron and mighty oaks. (The US Census lists it as 3.1 sq. mi., or 1,984 acres, so there may be some land in the Twilight Zone that does not appear on the tax maps!) 707 of the acres are devoted to single-family housing and the average lot size in those zones is 25,000 square feet or three fifths of an acre, but again, the undulating woodland terrain, the dense plantings surrounding and isolating the massive houses with their sprawling porches and porte-cochere, and the serpentine roadways with their dips and twists and slopes always imbued this relatively cozy environment with a feeling of vastness and mystery that were the stuff of grand illusion. The 511 acres of park space contributed to this sense of enchantment, as if we were surrounded by Sherwood Forest and not poised precariously on the edge of the vast industrial sprawl of Megalopolis just down Route 46 towards the City, a daunting vista seen so easily from the top of the great sledding hill on Pollard Road. Even today there is a peacefully euphoric decompression that everyone feels when they turn off the speedway of I-80 and then the hyper-density of Route 46 and enter the gates along Crane Road...it is like passing through a magical portal into a soothing cocoon of serenity that is all too rare in the manic madness known as 2009.

Anyway, as you contemplate your upcoming Golden Reunion, I thought it might be fun for the Immortal Class of '59 to look back at the community and the times that provided your launching pad and treasure trove of indelible memories, mostly delectable ones for sure, for the last 50 years of life. (I wonder how many in your class were actually born in Mt. Lakes...and never left it?...maybe Mike can find that out at the Club while everyone is still sober and before you bust some moves or whatever on the dance floor.) So, because I have way too much time on my hands, I did some digging on some topics of possible interest to your class:

THE NAME GAME

Start with your names: Back in 1941 when you were hatched, the top boy baby names in the US were Robert, John, James, William, Richard, Charles, David, Thomas, Ronald, and Donald. The girls were led by Mary, Barbara, Patricia, Carol, Linda, Judith, Sandra, Maria, Betty, and Nancy. The top names in the class of 59 were Mike and Peter. No sign of Aiden, Jacob, Ethan or Ryan...or Emma, Madison, Ava, or Emily. And you will find no Hernando or Chamiqua of Abdullah or Wuhan or Dweezil either.

WHEELS

The top selling cars that in 1959 were the Chevy, Ford, Pontiac, Rambler, and Olds. No sign of big sales yet from Toyota or Honda. There were no SUV's in existence except the barn-like International Travelall and a few Jeeps. A lot of Laker parents unknowingly presaged Clark Griswold and drove Wagon Queen Family Trucksters. Almost no cars on the road had front or four-wheel drive, or independent suspensions, or rack and pinion steering, or padded dashboards, or recessed steering wheels, or disc brakes, or radial tubeless tires, or crush zones,

or air bags, and just a few had safety belts. Run into a teacher in the parking lot and it was just your noggin going one-on-one with the chromed radio buttons on the dash, and the laws of bones and physics were unrelenting. Fatality rates per mile of driving were three times higher than they are today. But would you trade the safe and sleek techno-capsule you are cruise-controlling around in these days straight up for a mint version of your mammoth beast of a high school ride? Bring back that '59 Caddy and we'll let you decide. Come to think of it, our aging flesh could use some rejuvenation at Earl Scheib, and the heck with the cars. Or would you go back to your '56 Rambler with all the jokes and adolescent fantasies that went with its seductively reclining seats?



59 Caddy



59 Edsel

BREAKIN' UP

The divorce rate back then in New Jersey was 0.8 per 1000 population. Now it is 3.4.

Most mismatched couples in '59 just suffered in silence or heaved the cookware at each other until their shoulders wore out. You could debate whether the much higher divorce rate now is an unmitigated disaster in a disposable society or a wonderful awakening to the possibility of

change after so many naive misjudgments made at an early age by hot-blooded kids. Some 59ers are still whistling along with their first love. But let's not talk about the golfers. And some have been trading in the older models with regularity. Different yolks for different folks. Many long and twisting highways will intersect on October 17 after your last five decades of gallivanting around the planet and navigating the tempting and addictive but notoriously treacherous waters of human relationships.

BRING OUT THE GERBER'S

Who was born in your senior year? Here are a few to make you feel young... Kevin

Bacon was born on 7/8/58 with loose feet, the late Billy Mays on 7/20/58 (cable TV's most obnoxious salesperson) came out screeching about floor care products, Mark Cuban (7/3/58) was born yelling at the refs, Madonna, practicing for her career, popped out stark naked on 8/16/58, the late Michael Jackson was born temporarily black and male but definitely moonwalking on 8/29, Tim Robbins was born on 10/16 before being able to redeem his collection of shawshanks, Alan Jackson emerged from his mother's Chattahoochie on 10/17, Jamie Lee Curtis had a perfect delivery on 11/22, Keith Olbermann was born going crazy on Bill O'Reilly on 1/27/59, NY Giant Lawrence Taylor (LT) was born and immediately sacked the head nurse into the crash cart on 2/4/59, southpaw tennis wizard John McEnroe emerged on 2/16 and began whining profanely to the nurses about the diaper rash, rapper Flavor Flav was born on March 16 and was probably not happy with his given name of William Jonathan Drayton, Jr., rocker Brian Setzer was born on Long Island on April 10 and began strutting after all the stray cats immediately, Terry Francona was born on April 22 and began plotting how he would outwit the Yankees in the next

millennium, news anchor Brian Williams arrived on May 5 when everybody watched one of three networks...and now there are thousands of them...and Nicole Brown was born on May 19, and you all remember how she died in 1994...but thankfully, OJ promised to find her real killer in the second cut of rough.

TOP TEN 45's FROM 1959

<http://oldies.about.com/od/50srockers/tp/topten1959.htm>

We can argue this until doomsday, but here is Robert Fontenot's top ten list of 45's:

1. Ray Charles: What'd I Say? , parts 1 and 2
2. The Drifters: There Goes My Baby
3. Ritchie Valens: Donna/La Bamba
4. The Flamingos: I Only Have Eyes for You
5. Jackie Wilson: Lonely Teardrops
6. Fats Domino: I Want to Walk You Home/ I'm Gonna Be a Wheel Someday
7. Frankie Ford: Sea Cruise
8. Chuck Berry: Almost Grown/Little Queenie
9. Wilbert Harrison: Kansas City
10. Santo & Johnny: Sleep Walk

Try reading that list without hearing and feeling something primal and amazing. Your patellae and perhaps other dormant body parts are already beginning to awaken to the beat and revive the muscle memory of the bop and stroll and cha cha and jitterbug and lindy. No, you weren't twisting yet, for Hank Ballard and the Midnighters' hit in 1959 did not become the wild dance

craze until 1960 when it was "covered" or ripped off by Chubby Checker. By then you were in college or the military or working as a stock boy at Rockaway Sales.



Chuck Berry

THE BOOB TUBE

Here were the 25 most popular TV shows during your senior year:

October 1958 - April 1959

1. Gunsmoke
2. Wagon Train
3. Have Gun Will Travel



4. The Rifleman
5. The Danny Thomas Show
6. Maverick

7. Tales of Wells Fargo
8. The Real McCoys
9. I've Got A Secret
10. The Life and Legend of Wyatt Earp
11. The Price Is Right
12. The Red Skelton Show
13. Zane Grey Theatre
14. Father Knows Best
15. The Texan
16. Wanted: Dead or Alive
17. Peter Gunn
18. Cheyenne
19. Perry Mason
20. The Ford Show
21. Sugarfoot
22. The Ann Sothern Show
23. The Perry Como Show
24. Alfred Hitchcock Presents
25. Name That Tune

Notice that seven of the top ten were westerns. Think of that every time you use the terms vamoose, I reckon, yup, down yonder, rustler, cowpoke, saloon, or box canyon.

CURTAINS

The greatest causes of death back around 1960 were heart disease (433.1 per 100,000), cancer (179.4), stroke (88.5), and accidents (39.9). By 2002 those four killers were still the grim reaper's favorite tools, but the rates had dropped except for cancer: Heart disease down to 262.0 per 100,000, cancer up to 207.5, stroke down to 46.8, and accidents of all sorts down to 30.3.

By 2003, only 19.5% of New Jersey adults 18+ smoked cigarettes. Back in 1960, 58% of men over 30

and 27% of women over 30 smoked tobacco products of some sort. Smoking was permitted just about everywhere. The show *Mad Men* portrays that aspect of our culture accurately. Recall how the hallway outside the teachers' lounge always smelled like the toxic atmosphere of Venus.

Medical technology had advanced, there is better health care prevention and education, and as we noted

above, cars are built much safer although even speedier than they were back in the day....but those huge

V-8s seemed to be insanely powerful to the average 17-year-old kid. Speaking of buying the farm, here

are a few people who bit the dust during your senior year in *Empty Lakes*: August 14: The King's mother,

Gladys Love Smith Presley at the age of 46. Actor Tyrone Power at 45 on November 15. Hall of Fame

center fielder Tris Speaker at age 70 on December 8. Film director Cecil B. DeMille on January 21 at 78.

Of course we all remember the day the music died on February 3 of Ritchie "LaBamba" Valens at age 17,

JP Richardson ("The Big Bopper") at age 28, and Buddy "Rave On" Holly at the age of 22.

MURDER UNINCORPORATED

Speaking of checking out of Heartbreak Hotel, the murder rate in the USA in 1959 was 4.9 per 100,000

and by 2005 that rate dropped back down to 5.6 after peaking at 9.8 during the urban crack wars that peaked in 1991. Did this affect Mt. Lakes? There were no homicides in either year in that rare sanctuary

from the mayhem. In '59 there were less than 5000 people behind bars in NJ...but by 2005, there were

28,107 getting scared straight at Rahway and other comfy spots across the "Guardin' State." But the police in Mountain Lakes had to deal with one rape, one case of arson, and 46 thefts...not exactly a tour of duty in Baghdad. And the average police officer in town pulled down a cool \$60,817 for this essential public service.

THE RACE IS ON

Back in '60 the state of New Jersey was 8.5% African American, although our society called them Negroes then. By 2005 it was 14.5% Black and 7% Asian. Hispanics, who could be of any race, had increased to 14.9%. How about lily-white and non-Latino Mt. Lakes? Back in 1960 there were only 4,037 of us with 350 or so at the high school...and almost everyone was of Caucasian ancestry. The population of 4,336 in 2005 was 91.8% white, with Asians forming the largest minority group, and by then the increasingly fancy high school had bloated up to 636 students, with kids from upscale Boonton Township fueling the expansion.

NOT BORN IN THE USA

Bruce never sang it that way, but for many decades all sorts of foreign-born have built their futures in New Jersey. The 1.5 million foreign born citizens of all ages in NJ back in 1960 came from Italy (1/3 of the total), Germany (1/6), Poland (1/6), UK (1/7), and Russia (1/10). I wonder how many of your parents were foreign born? And how many survive today in their

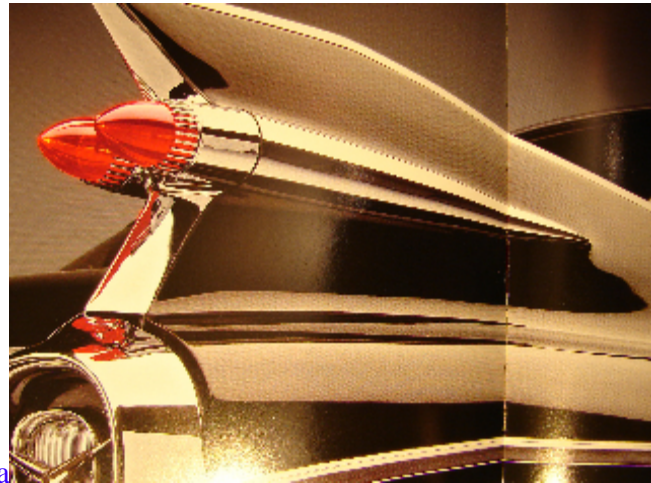
nineties or even beyond the century mark? By 2005, NJ had 1.65 million foreign born, 27% of whom came from Southeast Asia, 17% from South America, 15% from the Caribbean, 7% from Central America, 5.5% from Mexico, and 4% from the Middle East. The times...and the accents...are 'a changin'.

CAR ADS IN 1959

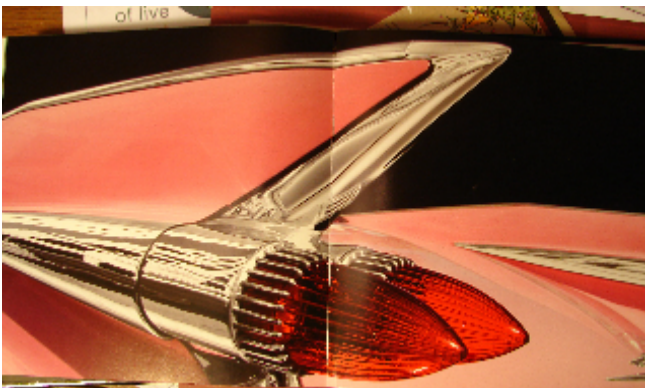
Enough about stuff that does not involve cars. The dream machines in the late fifties were given animal traits, or served as metal sculptures of status and dominance for the driver, or came laden with barely concealed sexual innuendo, jutting symbolism, and double entendre. The enormous behemoths were sold as metallic prosthetic extensions of ego, and they were given annual facelifts that obscured the fact that they were relatively unchanging rear-wheel drive monsters that lacked independent suspensions, or radial tires, or rack and pinion steering, roll cages or crush zones for safety in collisions, or disc brakes, and a host of other smart features. But with those protruding chromed bumpers, they looked like they could snap off mighty oaks along Lake Drive at the stump without suffering a dent. Here are a few excerpts from ads appearing in Life magazine that year: For a '59 Plymouth with the "forward look": "The massive grill and low-slung bumper give it a powerful poised look." For a red '59 Pontiac convertible: "If you like your action taut-and sheathed in clean, crisp lines, Pontiac '59 is the one car that wraps up everything you want on the grandest, most glorious scale you've ever known." Meanwhile, "Oldsmobile for '59 introduces the new linear look...the start of a completely new styling cycle." And for a white '59 Buick, "...and it proclaims your good judgment, your good taste, to the whole world. "

There were cars named after sleek wild animals (Impala, Jaguar), those named like spaceships

(Rocket 88, Star Chief, Galaxie), those that conjured up exotic places (Eldorado, Riviera, Catalina, Safari), those named for road races (Bonneville, Grand Prix), and those that reeked of snob value (Ambassador, Fleetwood, Patrician, Imperial).



Cadillac and Chevrolet Impala



IN THE CHIPS

Never a struggling suburb, these days Mt. Lakes is still one of the highest income towns in the USA, with a median income of a cool \$154,000. Back in 1969 it was \$23,000, not even double the NJ median. Now it is more than 2.5 times the NJ median household income of \$61,672. That's a small BMW per year higher than top cities Greenwich CT at \$112,000 and Cupertino CA at \$111,000. But it is only about #13 among the towns of surprisingly ritzy New Jersey. Of course, consumer prices have gone up more than 700% in the last half century, so the town was just as flush with big dough back in the day as it is now. As you already know if you have priced your old Mt. Lakes home on zillow.com, the median house value in 2005, before the recent tumble, was a healthy \$880,400...and if you want to live on a lake or in an original Hapgood, bring an extra million or two along to make a good impression on the realtor and seller. For the indescribable pleasure of buying into the scenic little borough for that incredible quality of life, the average homeowner shells out \$8,632 in real estate taxes each year, or more than \$700 per month. And the monthly payment (P+I) on a \$600,000 mortgage at 5.5% would be another \$3407 per month at 6% fixed interest. And then there is the matter of insurance on the old firetrap. The median American family with an income of \$50,000 in 2009 need not even ask about breaking into this exclusive hamlet for the very well-heeled. A tenement next to the factory in Hackensack awaits you. Billy Joel was right on target when he asked, "Is that all you get for the money?"

By the way, the median house value across the state of NJ was recently an "affordable" \$333,900. 77% of adults over 25 in Mt. Lakes have earned 4-year college degrees and many studied way beyond that to get professional bragging rights in law and medicine and business. Unemployment hovers at around 1%, possibly as people take some time to switch careers. Back in '59, a nice Hapgood stucco palace away from the lakefront would have cost your folks about

\$25k to \$40k. On the lake it could have commanded \$50k or \$60k. Okay, let's hear the chorus from you now: "If we had only....." Just a reminder: Had your family put \$30k into a broad index of the stock market in 1959 and left it there until today, it would be worth about \$1280k. (Compounding the investment at an average of 10%/yr.) But you can't sleep in a stock certificate. Just take a gander at Mary Pickford's old place where the Schell family used to live, the next time you are driving way up on Crestview:



EXCITING ECONOMIC COMPARISONS:

Don't zone out on me now. George Wilson will administer a brutal multiple choice exam on all this trivia at the top of the Tourne with prizes to include medicine balls and juggling pins autographed by Emma Brocklebank. From 1959 to 2009 while we were all aging inexorably, the USA grew 72.5% in population from 178 million up to 307 million. Some classmates helped fill up those station wagons with their rug rats back in the sixties and seventies. Meanwhile the GDP in phony cheesy inflation-ravaged dollars grew 23 times larger! When adjusted for inflation the GDP only actually tripled in size. In June of 1959 the Consumer Price Index was 29.1, while by July of 2009 it had climbed to 214.5. Though the US now outspends the entire

rest of the world combined on "defense" (and "offense" too), it is only 4% of national output, but defense was a whopping 9.4% of the GDP back when JFK had his 1000 days. We spend proportionately less on defense than we did during the missile race of the sixties.

By the way, as many of us learned through painful experience, the minimum wage back then was \$1.15...but that is the equivalent of a plump \$8 per hour today. And the national debt was only \$285 billion, or \$1,600 per citizen. Now it is over \$10 trillion, or about \$33,000 per American. Even after adjusting for inflation, that's nearly a tripling of the real debt burden per person. Families and governments and everybody is hooked on plastic, and both parties ran up the bill. Would you have voted for people over the years who promised loudly on the stump to deliver you "higher taxes and reduced benefits!?" Of course not. So we all whipped out the national credit cards and partied hardy for half a century. Let your kids and grandkids cleanup after the orgy.

.

SLANG OF THE FIFTIES

<http://www.newberry.k12.sc.us/mchs/50sSlang.htm>

Cut the gas and split, Daddy-o, or I'll have a cow and deliver you a knuckle sandwich for playing backseat bingo with my baby with the classy chassis, cause you are cruisin' for a bruise...you know I've got dibs on that stacked paper shaker ever since that unreal night at the passion pit on Route 46...and hear me, Spaz, this greaser pounds all party poopers and then floors it flat out and lays a patch with my jacked up machine that the heat can't touch, so get bent and agitate the gravel, you four-eyed goof, or I'll go ape... buzz off, Pizza Face, cause I've got it made in the shade.

STYLES OF THE FIFTIES

Duck tails, letter sweaters, bobby socks, saddle shoes, flats, converse sneakers, rolled up jeans, comb in the back pocket, ponytails, pedal pushers, poodle skirts, Playtex over-the-shoulder boulder holders with way too many hooks, Bike jock straps, rolled-up t-shirt sleeves, cashmere sweaters, Brylcreemed hair, flat tops, collars up, spit curls, and white socks with black penny loafers. And from one of the countless canned nostalgia web sites, what about candy cigarettes, wax Coke-shaped bottles with colored sugar water inside, soda pop machines that dispensed glass bottles that you slid along the rack and lifted out, real dining car diners with table side jukeboxes to flip through, blackjack, clove and teaberry chewing gum, home milk delivery in glass bottles with cardboard stoppers, newsreels before the movie, P.F. Fliers, telephone numbers with a word prefix...(Raymond 4-601), party lines, peashooters, cootie catchers, Howdy Doody, Hi-Fi's & 45 RPM records, Spin and Marty, 78 RPM records, Green Stamps, mimeograph paper, etc.

To illustrate the point, check the Laker website that Mike did such a great job putting together for a candid shot taken at 365 Morris Avenue of an unidentified younger brother flogging Barbara Van Til in 1959 for dating infamous leprechaun Mike O'Donnell and causing humiliation to the entire family for generations to come.



BANG FOR THE BUCK

Here are a few prices from 1959 to share with your incredulous kids or grandkids or young friends: Hershey bar: a nickel. Wetson's basic burger: 15 cents. A real steakburger at Paul's, much more than that but you would survive it. A 1 lb. loaf of Taystee bread...probably white: 20 cents. Want some round steak? A pound will set you back \$1.04. Dozen eggs? 52 cents. Remember: multiply consumer prices (on average across the board) by a whopping seven and a half to jump the 50 years to 2009! Viewed that way, the good old days don't seem that cheap anymore.





BIG SPORTS NEWS

MLHS Ruled! And in the lesser stories, the Bill Russell's Celtics beat MVP Bob Pettit's St. Louis Hawks in '59. It wasn't until 1960 that Wilt the Stilt began scoring bigtime, especially off the court, and began his string of seven NBA scoring titles in a row. The LA Dodgers beat the White Sox 4 games to 2 in the World Series. Shortstop Ernie Banks of the Cubs was the NL MVP and Nellie Fox of the White Sox was the AL MVP. The Pack topped the Giants 16-7 for the NFL Championship, back in pre-Super Bowl days. The Leafs took the Stanley Cup. Sonny Liston took away Floyd Patterson's heavyweight crown. Rocket Rod Laver and Karen Hantze took the Wimbledon singles titles. Arnie took home the Masters and the British Open, but Jack snared the US Open. Italy took home the World Cup over the Germans in Spain. 1960 Olympian Wilma Rudolph was a great American sprinter of her era at 11 flat in the 100m and Dawn Fraser of Australia was the first woman to break a minute in the 100m freestyle. Now suburban kids in nuclear-powered shark-like Speedos can do that before breakfast.

WAR BABIES...THE CLASS OF '59 ALWAYS HAD GREAT TIMING!

When you were born in the year of Pearl Harbor, your peers in the quaint bassinets included Rev. Jesse Jackson, Joan Baez, Robert Zimmerman (Bob Dylan), Neil Diamond, Dick Cheney, Faye Dunaway, Warriors' center Nate Thurmond, lifestyle guru Martha Stewart, Dick

Trickle (I kid you not...the race driver...and you used to chortle at the lame I.P. Daily jokes), TV correspondent Lesley Stahl, Secretary of Health and Human Services Donna Shalala, the volatile Rev. Jeremiah Wright, singers Percy Sledge, Harry Nilsson, Paul Simon, Ritchie Valens, and Barrett Strong (who sang the original of "Money"), Colts' wide receiver Ray Perkins, the Jets' RB Matt Snell, the Cowboys' DB Mel Renfro, Fighting Irish and Bills' QB Daryle Lamonica, RB Jim Turner of the Packers, goddess actress Julie Christie, sex kitten Ann Margret, right-wing columnist George Will, nurse killer Richard Speck, Texas Tower mass murderer Charles Whitman, dancer Twyla Tharp, constitutional lawyer Laurence Tribe. What a crew you joined.

LONGEVITY

If you were 18 in 1959, the guys had 51.9 more years of life expectancy remaining...but the gals had 58.3 years more years to curse the traffic on Route 46. That seems like kind of depressing news, especially for you guys, who appear to be enjoying every decadent decade of debauchery. However, if you made it this far to age 68 in 2009...and anyone reading this garbage I am spewing out obviously survived the ordeal.., the tables turn in your favor: That erstwhile cool guy would be expected to live to 82.6, and the once swingin' babe on his arm could anticipate an extra 2.6 years of blissful solitude to 85.2 after she sells off his golf clubs. Of course to those who ditched the "starter wife" during the dotcom boom and married the night shift hottie at Hooter's, have fun listening closely to the lyrics of the Eagles' "Lyin' Eyes" when you are whipping around Sun City in your turbocharged golf cart.



TIMELINE

You remember what was happening at Mt. Lakes High in 1958-59, from sporting heroics to GAA shows to planning for college or careers to writing in yearbooks to suffering through college board exams to parties to proms to boring and totally ignored speeches at graduation. So I thought it would fun to wrap up this insanity with a list of things of significance that were happening in the big scary world in during your senior year:

6/29/58: 17-year-old football phenom Pele scores a hat trick as Brazil defeats Sweden 5-2 for the World Cup...but had you ever watched a soccer game by then?

7/7/58: Ike signs his name and Alaska becomes the 49th state...how many of you have been there since?

7/7/58: First I-Hop opens for business in Toluca Lake, CA. American waistlines will never recover

7/11/58: Two kids in Liverpool named Lennon and McCartney record "In Spite of all the Danger" for the Quarrymen. I wonder what happened to them?

7/26/58: QE II gives painful natural birth to Prince Charles and both his ears

7/29/58: NASA created by Congress, and Cape Canaveral will never be the same

8/3/58: USS Nautilus goes under the North Pole...submarine race watchers at

Birchwood pay attention

8/18/58: Nabokov's "Lolita" published in US and lechers nationwide discover the Mann

Act

9/12/58: Jack St. Clare Kilby invents the first integrated circuit

10/4/58: BOAC Comets provide the first transatlantic jet service

10/9/58: Pius XII dies, proving that not even the Pope can cheat the Reaper

10/28/58: John XXIII takes over after the puff of white smoke above the Vatican

12/21/58: Charles DeGaulle elected president of France with 78.5% of the vote

12/25/58: Nutcracker is shown in color on prime time TV...did you have color by then?

12/31/58: Che Guevara's invasion of Cuba, while wearing his own cool T-shirt, forces

Batista to resign his dictatorial presidency

12/31/58: Data show that air travel to Europe exceeds ship travel for first time, causing

shuffleboard skills to wane

Also in 58: The Baby Boom ends as people decide their huge station wagons can be filled up with other less obnoxious stuff; puppeteer and educator Jim Henson starts a little company you might have heard of, the US economy dives into a brief recession that looks trivial in retrospect, the '59 cars reach new heights of colossal tail fins, instant noodles go on sale for the first time and soon become the primary food group for college students, and the USA and USSR and Great Britain agree to stop testing nukes in the atmosphere for three years...so the world gives them glowing praise, Nelson Rockefeller gets elected NY governor, Boris Pasternak wins the Nobel Prize in Literature for Dr. Zhivago, JK Galbraith's Affluent Society comes out and

says we are obsessed with private riches but impoverished in our public sector (sound familiar?), Frank Lloyd Wright's Guggenheim Museum opens in NY, Van Cliburn wins a huge Tchaikovsky piano competition in Moscow, the cha cha cha becomes the latest rage and drops its third cha in common parlance, students nationwide memorize the lyrics to the Purple People Eater, stereo recordings come into widespread use, the Beatnik movement spreads across America from California and presages the arrival of the hippies of the late sixties, Arnold Palmer wins his first Master's tourney at Augusta, Sugar Ray Robinson beats Carmen Basilio for the middleweight boxing crown, the Yanks edge the Milwaukee Braves 4 games to 3 in the World Series,

1/6/59: Fidel Castro takes over in Havana. Right...like he will ever remain in power for fifty years!

2/3/59: The day the music died...Buddy Holly, The Big Bopper, and Ritchie Valens perish in Iowa plane crash

2/6/59: Titan ICBM launched from Cape Canaveral...all Empty Lakers feel so much safer immediately

2/17/59: US launches first weather satellite, blows the next forecast anyway

3/9/59: Barbie is born, weeping with her mascara running until Ken arrives at her Malibu beach house years later

3/18/59: Ike says Hawaii can join the club too as state #50. Barack is born there in the United States of America 3 years later, although Sara will never believe it

3/31/59: The Dalai Lama flees the Chinese takeover of Tibet and moves to India...this problem should end soon!

4/9/59: NASA chooses the Mercury 7 Astronauts and the space race is off and running

4/20/59: St. Lawrence Seaway opens, dam it all!

5/4/59: First Gramophone Awards held (The Grammys) "Volare" song of the year,

The Champs "Tequila" best R&B record

5/7/59: Dodgers beat Yanks in exhibition before 93k fans in LA in benefit for the

paralyzed Roy Campanella

5/26/59: Diminutive lefty hurler Harvey Haddix of the Bucs pitched a 12-inning

perfect game against the Braves, but lost 1-0 in the 13th on a double by Joe Adcock

6/4/59: 190th and final Three Stooges episode released, in a related story, Class of '59

completes training in table manners

6/6/59: Ike's voice bounces off moon as first satellite communication...moon seems

unfazed by it all

6/8/59: Timothy Berners-Lee turns four years old. Why do you care? He would invent

the World Wide Web in 1990.

6/10/59: Rocco Domenico (Rocky) Colavito hit four straight homers for the Tribe

against the Orioles

6/16/59: Superman (George Reeves) shot dead in his home in Hollywood...Lois never

located thereafter

6/9/59: USS George Washington launched, carrying ICBM's. George would have been

so proud.

Okay, I know that a lot of other cool stuff happened that year, such as the Class of '59 heading

out into the unknown...but it is a trip to dredge up all those memories.

ONE REQUEST TO YOU ALL: SOME UNSOLICITED ADVICE FOR

OR DISMISS

Nothing ruins a reunion worse than political ranting or arguments about religion or boasting and whining about personal assets or the alleged perfection of every genius hyper-cute grandchild. The country is so polarized now, that I wish you could all declare a moratorium on venomous feuds from today through the reunion and the happy times afterwards when you treasure and nurture the rejuvenated friendships.

I wish you could all forget red, white and blue for a weekend and become colorblind for a while, a collective "time out" from the rants of the Left and the Right, so you can focus on the music of your friendships and the compelling stories of your lives and your families and your memories of each other, those special times so long ago but still so fresh in your minds, that have sculpted you into the people you are today.

Wishing you peace and love and enduring friendships, for tonight and for whatever fleeting moments remain of forever.

Roy Van Til, MLHS '62. This rambling romp is presented as a gift to the Class of '59, whether you want it or not. I did something like it for the 45th Reunion of my class in '07, so you are getting a retread. I hope it was worth your time and trouble to slog through it.

Roy Van Til

577 Town House Road

Vienna, ME 04360 USA royvantil@mac.com Home: 207-293-2451