

Alumni News

Vol. 6, Issue 3

Quarterly Newsletter
Highlands Alumni Association (HAA)
The only certified non-profit HAA organization

May 2017

PREZ'S PONDERINGS

By Kristine Kouw Mann

Like all of you, I've been touched by the recent tragedy at our beloved school. To think that someone would attack two women taking their morning stroll around the track, where many of us once ran laps, shakes us to the core. There's no other way to put it. One woman survived the attack and has a long recovery ahead of her; we wish her well. The other woman did not survive; tragic indeed. Our best wishes to all who loved her.

This attack should not reflect badly on our alma mater. So many of the students are working hard and studying diligently to try to make it in the world they will inhabit as adults. Nor should this tragedy reflect badly on the North Highlands community. Sure, our one-time home has its challenges, but many groups in the community (churches, businesses, citizen groups, parents groups, etc.) are doing what they can to meet those challenges, which includes lowering the crime rate. We wish them the best as they deal with these challenges.

What can the Alumni Association do to work help North Highlands meet those challenges? Ponder this, then let us know your ideas via e-mail. Go to www.highlandshighalumni.com. Then scroll down the left-hand side of the home page to "contact," where you can get directions on how to send your comments to the Alumni Board by **Thursday, July 6**.

Note: A celebration of life will be held for the victim, Fusako Petrus, on **Saturday, June 3, 2017, at 11 a.m., at the North Highlands Community Center, 6040 Watt Avenue**. Maybe a few of us can attend.

Graduation season is upon us as many of us will endure the strains of "Pomp and Circumstance" once again. This year members of the Highlands' class of 2017 will toss their caps into the air on **Wednesday, May 24**. We wish them the best as they begin college or pursue a career. Whatever they choose, we support them.

We will offer our scholarship winners their checks at the Board meeting on Saturday, July 8, at 11 a.m., at the SAFE Credit Union on Watt Avenue. You are invited. Let's support our newest alumni.

SCOTS FOREVER!

DATES TO NOTE ON YOUR CALENDAR

Please note that all meetings of the Alumni Board are held at the SAFE Credit Union on Watt Avenue, south of Roseville Road. They start at 11 a.m.

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| Wednesday, May 24 | Highlands' Graduation |
| Thursday, June 1 | Last Day of School |
| Monday, June 12 | Summer School Starts |
| Saturday, July 8 | Alumni Board Meeting |
| Thursday, July 20 | Summer School Ends |
| Tuesday, August 8 | First Day of School |
| Saturday, September 9 | Alumni Board Meeting |
| Saturday, November 11 | Alumni Board Meeting |

If there are any changes to the above events, alumni will be notified by either e-mail or Facebook.

NEWS FROM THE ALUMNI MUSEUM

Two things to remember from the Museum:

1. Volunteers are needed on Wednesday mornings from 9 a.m. to 1 p.m., and there is good news: you don't need to come every week or stay all 4 hours. Just come when you can. Several alumni are staffing the museum every week, and when they go on vacation, have medical

appointments, etc., help is need. Certainly you can volunteer on occasion. Contact Ruth Beavers Welch at ruthew@pacbell.net if you are interested or if you have questions.

2. When classes have reunions, class members are welcome to visit the Museum on the day before the reunion (usually Friday) from 2 p.m. to 4 p.m. Members are also welcome to donate mementos they no longer want to keep. If you are interested, contact Ruth Beavers Welch at ruthew@pacbell.net or Mary Anderson at marya195821@gmail.com.

ALUMNI GATHERINGS

Do you want to meet with your fellow classmates throughout the year? Here are the times when you can do so:

First Saturday – The classes of '59 to '69 meet at Lou's Drive-In, on Watt Avenue, north of Don Julio Boulevard, from 11 a.m. until about 2 p.m.

Third Friday – The classes of '59 to '69 meet for lunch at Mimi's on Alta-Arden, between Howe and Ethan, at 11:30 a.m.

Last Saturday – '70s folks meet at Lou's, from 11 a.m. until about 2 p.m.

Are there any other groups meeting regularly? If so, then notify Mary Anderson at marya195821@gmail.com.

NOTES FROM RECENT ALUMNI BOARD MEETINGS

A representative from the Sacramento Kings has contacted the Alumni Association to see if we are interested in setting up events at a Kings game, including discounted tickets to a Kings game, having our picture taken with Kings players, etc. President Kris Kouw Mann will talk with the representative to learn more about the offer. This opportunity will cover the upcoming 2017/18 season. Stay tuned.

Reunion News

1967 - Their 50-year reunion is set for **Saturday, September 16, 2017**, at the Holiday Inn in Downtown Sacramento. This will be a joint reunion with Foothill High School. Flyer will be sent in a separate e-mail. Also, attendees are invited to visit the Alumni Museum on **Friday, September 15, from 2 p.m. to 4 p.m.**

1972 – Will celebrate their 45th class reunion, covering 2 days.

The first day will be **Saturday, September 2, from 6 p.m. until 11 p.m.**, at the Lions Gate Hotel (formerly the Officers' Club), 3410 Westover Street, McClellan, California 95652. No host bar from 6 to 7 p.m., Dinner is at 7 p.m. Dancing to music by Galaxy Mobile DJ. \$60 per person. Send checks or money order to:

Arleen Cushman DeGregorio
4345 Aponte Street #103
Las Vegas, NV 89115-1624

Arlene can also take payments through Paypal using her merchant account: ladymegan@ladymegansgifts.com. Just put "reunion" in the description. Rooms are available at the Lions Gate Hotel at a special rate of \$114 per night plus tax. Just book under "Highlands High School Reunion".

Sunday, September 3 – There will be a gathering at Lou's Burgers from 11:30 a.m. until 3 p.m. Come hang out at our old haunt on Watt Avenue in North Highlands.

Call Arleen at 702.888.4843 for more information.

1982 - The class of 1982 will hold its 35-year reunion on Saturday and **Sunday, August 26 and 27, 2017**. The Saturday night festivities will be held in the Rocklin Community Center at the Johnson-Springview Park in Downtown Rocklin. A buffet dinner will be served, and a D-J will provide music for dancing. The Sunday afternoon gathering will be a picnic in the Johnson-Springview Park itself. Reunion attendees are encouraged to visit the Alumni Museum on **Friday, August 25, from 2 p.m. to 4 p.m.** For more information, contact Sheila Lemire Ashburn at sheila.ashburn@comcast.net.

1997 – Can you believe it? 20 years have passed since the class of 1997 graduated. The gathering to remember those years will take place on **Saturday, July 22, 2017**, at Fat's Catering & Banquet Facility in Old Sacramento. Tickets are \$60 per person. DJ, door prize, cash bar, photo booth, lots of fun for classmates. Contact Monique Langer, President of the Class of 1997 Reunion Planning Committee, at www.highlands1997.com or at [facebook.com/groups/highlands1997](https://www.facebook.com/groups/highlands1997). Again, members of the class of 1997 are welcome to visit the Alumni Museum on **Friday, July 21, 2017, from 2 p.m. to 4 p.m.** Note: Flyer is attached.

Future Reunions

Hey, members, of the class **1962, 1977, 1992, 2002, 2007, 2012** – 2017 is your reunion year. You can have your reunion news posted on the Alumni website at www.highlandshighalumni.com, or you can send the information to me at marya195821@gmail.com. The Alumni Association wants you to know a successful reunion, and we can help you with the publicity. You can send me the dates and locales of planning meetings for classmates who want to take part.

IMPORTANT: Plan a visit to the Legacy Room as part of your reunion plans. Notify me at marya195821@gmail.com if interested. We can probably arrange for a visit the Friday afternoon of your reunion weekend. Let us know if you have questions.

NEWS FROM THE TWIN RIVERS SCHOOL DISTRICT

Joseph Murphy has won the bid to do roofing work at Highlands during the summer. The total bid is \$487,520. Ouch!!

2017 MEMORIAL DAY PARADE

The parade will take place on Monday, May 29, on Watt Avenue, from I Street to A Street. The festivities will start at 10 a.m. Look for Highlands Scots. Garnett Gilmore ('64) is honoring her late father with by staging this parade.

Let Us Remember

These are the Scots who passed away between March 1 and April 30, 2017, or whose passing we have recently learned.

Teacher George Vernatchi, PE teacher during Highlands' early years.



- 1960 Ron Crawford, Jean Kell
- 1963 Loraine Deffner
- 1966 Eveline Small
- 1967 Richard (Rick) Charles, Helene Haworth
- 1970 Scherry Branson
- 1971 Geri Geivett
- 1974 Bruce Baker
- 1977 Marie Levesque
- 1979 Paul Fox
- 1980 Lori Stapleton
- 1982 Terry Stanley
- 1986 Clifton Bynum
- 1991 Lara-Jean Jorgensen

If you hear of the passing of any Highlands alumni, any Highlands teacher or administrator, or any Highlands support staff (e.g., custodians, cooks, clerical support), then notify me (Mary Anderson) at marya195821@gmail.com and Rita Woods at rita.jens.2010@gmail.com. We ask that you identify the source of your information, such as a newspaper death notice, a family notice, or a notice posted by the funeral home.

Remembering Eveline Small. I'm sitting here in the Alumni Museum, jotting down a few thoughts. Some of those thoughts center around Eveline Small, whose name is on the "Let Us Remember" list. Eveline served on the Alumni Board and wanted to get the Museum up and running. In the early days, she and I met with Vice Principal Nick Seiler, who helped us with the setting-up process. Along with Michael Denson ('72), we traveled to the Twin Rivers District warehouse and chose some of the furniture used in the Museum today. Shortly after, Eveline moved to Oregon to be near her family. Oregon is where she passed away after battling cancer. Many thanks to you, Eveline, and may you rest in peace.

Remembering Loraine Deffner. Another person we lost is Loraine Deffner, whose family were the next-door neighbors when we moved to North Highlands early in 1955. She and her sister Laura ('61) often served as the babysitters for my siblings and me. I was eventually to babysit Loraine's daughter Terri many years later. Our families remained close throughout the years, including providing comfort in time of need. I'm grateful to say that we were there for the Deffner sisters when they lost both their brother Richard ('69) and their father Earl in 1988. My last memories of Loraine were of her attending the gala celebrating Highlands' 50th anniversary. She had a good time! What meant the most to her was her seeing Mr. Chambers, the Social Studies teacher who was one of her favorite instructors. Rest in peace, Loraine, and our sympathies to Laura.

You are welcome to honor someone who meant something to you with a paragraph or two. That will mean a lot to the person's family, friends, and classmates.

NORTH HIGHLANDS' HOME-GROWN BILLY GEIVETT CLASS OF 1981

By Michael Thayer ('78)

William Paige Geivett was born on July 25, 1963, taking his first breaths at McClellan AFB. His parents, Morton and Amanda Geivett, came to North Highlands in 1958. They moved into their home on Graylock Lane, and Mrs. Geivett still lives there. Billy's dad was a Navy man, and his mother was a homemaker. Billy was the sixth of the Geivetts' seven children, all of whom

graduated from Highlands. There is Margie ('65), Patricia ('68), Laura ('69), Geri ('71), Mort ('76), Billy ('81), and James "Jimbo" ('83). (**NOTE:** Geri Geivett passed away in April.) The Geivetts spent three decades at Highlands. In fact, three of the Geivetts are in education. Mort was a high school teacher and is now a superintendent, James is a teacher at Highlands, and Patricia (Pat) was a teacher at Rio Linda and Highlands and was also a lawyer for the district. Billy also taught at Long Beach State.

Billy credits his upbringing and being raised in North Highlands for much of his success. When asked where he is from, he doesn't hesitate to say, "North Highlands!" For Billy, growing up in North Highlands was one of the best things that could have happened to him. He had everything at his fingertips. The Base was close to schools and parks, and all of his childhood friends lived right on his street. According to Billy, growing up in North Highlands back then was like no other place. Graylock Lane had so many families living on its block. If you lived there, it wasn't hard to make friends, and it didn't hurt to have six siblings. Billy recalls, "Back then that's all you did was play in the streets and you felt safe. Families would look out for one another." Billy remembers that there were kids like Bobby Weston and Theresa Ortiz and families like the Andersons, the Bells, the Browns, the Hawthrones, the Lawtons, and the Millers, to name a few, all living on his side of the block. With all those kids, Billy was right there in the mix.

Playing with kids his age, but also playing with older ones, probably gave him an advantage and a competitive nature. Billy recalls playing catch with a baseball at about four or five with one of the Miller kids. He said he wanted so badly how to learn to catch that he would get frustrated when he would drop the ball and would cry. (He said he still cries when he drops the ball.) Billy would also tag along to practice with other teams just to get the practice in, then they would let him because he was good. Finally when he was eight, he was old enough to play and that's when he started his baseball career as a Little Leaguer. You might notice that Billy wore No. 6 most of his baseball career because his all-time favorite player was Sal Bando, who wore No. 6 with the Oakland A's.

In Billy's growing-up years, he excelled in baseball, when he dominated at Larchmont Little League and at Campus Verdes Jr High. High School and the Larchmont Big Leagues were no different. Billy won championships on some great Larchmont Big League teams. Playing baseball at Highlands, coaches soon saw his potential and moved him to varsity his sophomore year. Billy was a 3-year varsity starter for Highlands. He was at times one of the top hitters in the league, and he credits a lot of his coaches along the way for his success. There

were Coaches Alan Oshier, Stanley, Windley, "Chunky" Harris, Hal Steward, and the late Bob Rodness.

During his time at Highlands, Billy met the love of his life, Bonnie Cooper. Bonnie was a junior while Billy was a senior. The story goes that Billy didn't want any distractions when he was playing baseball. So he was quick to notice this beautiful young lady volunteering to be a scorekeeper at the games, and he actually complained to his coach that he didn't want her on the bench because she was a distraction. Billy lost that battle!! Soon after, they attended some "Twirp Week" functions, and the rest is history. Billy and Bonnie fell in love and were married in 1988 and have two children, Rachel (age 21) and Sam (age 19).

Billy was catching the eye of baseball scouts after graduating in 1981. He selected Sacramento City College to start his baseball career under Jerry Weinstein, a highly respected baseball coach. During his time at Sac City, Billy was drafted by the Los Angeles Dodgers in the Seventh Round of the 1982 draft, and the Chicago White Sox drafted him the Fifth Round in 1983. He turned them both down because he wanted to finish his education.

Then Billy moved to UC Santa Barbara (UCSB), where he was offered an unprecedented full-ride scholarship to join their team after a lot of offers from other big schools. This was the first time Coach Ferrer of UCSB ever offered a player a full ride, but that decision proved to be tremendously successful. While attending UCSB, Billy was making an impact on his baseball career as a Gaucho, a 2-time Big West first-team honoree. He was third-team All-American in 1985, coming through with a senior season that remains one of the greatest seasons that a Gaucho has ever had. Geivett hit a school-record .412 that year, and set new records for at bats (243), hits (100), runs (74), triples (8), and total bases (146). Geivett reached base in over 60% of his at bats. In Billy's junior year, the Chicago Cubs drafted him in the Eleventh Round in 1984. He once again declined all offers and decided education was more important to him.

After Billy completed his education, he finally signed on the dotted line with the California Angels, and started the long process towards the Big Leagues. He worked his way up to Double A, but in 1988, his playing career ended when he suffered a knee injury while running out a ground ball.

In 1988, Billy started his second career in baseball behind the scenes. With his education and baseball background, Billy took advantage that his spot at third base always positioned him next to the opposing head coach in the third base coach's box. He spent years soaking in the knowledge and the intricacies of the

game. He would be so inquisitive about all the aspects of coaching and used it to his advantage. He started his coaching career at Loyola Marymount University (Los Angeles) in 1989 and at Long Beach State in 1990.

Not stopping there and moving on up, Billy broke into the majors as a scout with the Yankees from 1991 to 1993. From there he moved on to Montreal as Director of Player Development from 1994 to 1996. He then became a special assistant to the General Manager for the expansion Tampa Bay Devil Rays from 1996 to 1998. Longing for a return to California, Geivett took a job with the Dodgers and worked his way up to Assistant General Manager. He worked under Hall of Fame manager Tommy Lasorda from 1998 to 2000. In 2000 the Colorado Rockies hired him as the Senior VP of Major League Operations, where he was until 2014.

During his 28-year career in professional baseball as a player, a scout, and a front office executive, Billy never shied away from helping people to land jobs. The whole time he was thinking, "At some point I have to write a book." That's what he decided to do. After his time with the Rockies, he developed a sports website and started writing his book, *Do You Want To Work In Baseball?*, which was released in 2017. It was an 18-month project, and it was truly a family affair, with his brother Mort, sister Pat, and brother-in-law Randy Hughes ('71) all helping him along the way. His book is getting great reviews and he also appeared on the TV show *Hot Stove* on the MLB channel. The first copy of his book went to his mom Amanda. I will attach a link to his book for baseball lovers, those who are looking for a job in baseball, and mostly to support a Highlands alumnus. It's a must read.

Billy Geivett has never forgotten his roots in North Highlands. He stays in touch with long-time neighborhood friends, players he played with along the way, and his friends from Highlands. He often visits North Highlands, meeting up with friends, playing golf, and reminiscing. He even attended one of our Lou's gatherings. Billy and Bonnie live in Vail, Arizona, and are raising their two children.

As an alumnus, I can tell you I am very proud of Billy and his accomplishments. From a Hometown Boy who grew up on Graylock Lane to a baseball executive and now an author, I hope you're as proud of him as I am. Can't wait to read the next chapter in the book on Billy's life.

ITEMS FOR NEWSLETTER

If you want to submit an item for *Alumni News*, you are welcome to do so. Share with your fellow alumni what is going on in your world. Whatever it is, notify your fellow alumni so that we may partake in your joy, or even your sorrow with the loss of a job or a home or with the loss of a fellow Scot. News articles needed by **Wednesday, July 5**. You are welcome to submit photos with your articles. Send your items to me (Mary Anderson) at marya195821@gmail.com.

In the next issue, we will talk about the history of Lou's Burgers. Share your memories of the burgers, the fried, the milk shakes, and the friendships. Did you meet your one-and-only at Lou's? You're welcome to write about that, too. Send your items to me (Mary Anderson) at marya195821@gmail.com, by **Wednesday, July 5**.

If you are wondering about the 2017 Golf Tournament, we will have an article in the next newsletter. I'll work with the Tournament committee to get information about the facts and figures, and the plans for 2018. In the meantime, Happy Fathers' Day and play it safe both during the Memorial Day weekend and on July 4.