

LIVORNO

AMERICAN HIGH SCHOOL ALUMNI ASSOCIATION

December 2004

NEWSLETTER

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(Do not publish or link to this page)

Class of '61

lahsclassof61.homestead.com/index.html

Adopt A Youth In Cambodia

Gioia (Joy Thigpen) Michelotti (LAHS 1962) has established a Christian mission in Phnom Phen, Cambodia, and is currently sheltering and educating about 50 youths who would otherwise be on the streets or living in bad family situations. You can help with this amazing project by "adopting" and supporting one of the students who will then write you personal letters and send photographs of their life in Cambodia. Contact Harry Heflin for more information at (626) 359-2203 or harryhef@earthlink.net

Italian Reunion 2004

by Julie Clarke

How to start? How do you describe something like our October LAHS reunion in bella Italia? What a trip? A magical mystery tour? Lost In Translation?

For those of us staying in the Golf in Tirrenia, it was a time warp. How many of our families made their first stop at the Grand Hotel Golf so many years ago while looking for a more permanent residence? I know ours did. I couldn't remember where it was but once I got into my room, I realized that all they had done was paint the place over the years. I think the glassware and cutlery were the same! The pictures on the walls hadn't changed. Shannon Moore '69 pointed out to me that there were post cards still available at the front desk that showed our friends' parents playing golf in 60-something.

For those of you who stayed at the Sea Pines on the base, it must have yanked you back to those years as well. Although the entrance to the base has changed drastically in the 'post 9/11' pattern of all military bases, once you got onto the main drag, you realized that not a heck of a lot has changed. And then when you tried to get into the post office you REALLY realized how little things had changed: open 11 am to 3 pm. Perfect convenience for those who spend their lunches on base. Well, people have more important things to do than work, right? By the way, the base buildings are all still the same tobacco stained yellow they were 35 years ago. Also MEDDIV is gone which means that there are not nearly as many people stationed at Campo Darby and very few young people at LAHS. There are currently three seniors for example.

Pause for a commercial break: many thanks go out to a lot of people who worked really hard to make this such a pleasant and memorable experience. . .

El Presidente:	JoAnna (Covelli) Nevadomski '69
The Web Master:	Harry Heflin '62
The Major:	Stephen Zglinicki '72
Lots of hard stuff:	Margaret Robbins

So let's see. What all did we do? Once we had recovered enough from the trip in to be coherent (ok as coherent as we are capable of being. . .) we formed clusters and talked to one another until our ears began to bleed. Some of us, who shall remain anonymous, actually lost our voices in the melee. Others then had to take up the slack. I was accosted as I lay like a dead flounder in my bath trying to soak off the travel grime by the yelling voices of my dear friends, JoAnna and Shannon, hollering at me first "Room Service" and then insisting I come out and have some BIG FUN. Who could resist? I love yelling through walls. Gives you kind of that 1000 Motels feeling. We ventured out in the Nevadomski's rental, and had dinner at the Sette Nani eating scads of fresh seafood and yapping at one another continuously. Pop quiz: is that Seven Dwarves or Seven Grandpas?

The next day, Sunday, was the only truly rainy day as one by one more of our compadres began to roll in. Patty Germano and Roxy (Roenigk) Feldman, Mike Grant (all 69ers so far) and his sister, Claude Grant Luce, showed up next. The noise in the kitchen of Shannon Moore and her Irish cousin, Eilesh Wright, was deafening. All this drinking primarily tea, mind you.

We met more of our fellows at the breakfast tables at the Golf. By the way, the coffee was like mud, but the fresh baked breads they brought in daily were divine. Met the Denmark sisters, Bitsy and Harry, John and Gayle McKay, the Ulrey sisters, we found out soon enough that there weren't a lot of people other than reunionites staying at the fabulous Golf. Unless you wanted to count the 100 or so hard-smoking hairdressers who piled into the conference room daily.

The dinner arranged for us at the Officer's Club/Activities Center and wine tasting was a great success. Another ab fab job by our support team! So great, in fact, that many more showed up than those who had signed up. Some of the troopers in the class of '69 ate standing or went into the bar to eat so that everyone else could sit down. There was a DJ who played lots of tunes, although perhaps his taste was somewhat different than many folks, he did play a large number of songs that people could wiggle and boogie to. You should have seen his face when I asked him if he had any Elvis. Most ev-

everyone joined in when we formed a conga line – way to go fellow alumni/ae! Shake it up babies!!! The dinner was good, the company unmatched. Some of us were interviewed for a television spot, I saw Harry Heflin, '62 and dear JoAnna, amongst others. When we had completely exhausted ourselves, we went back to our lodgings, with another fond memory. We managed to dance so much that we steamed the windows in the bus!

I didn't attend the tour of the school – I was being a bum on the public beach that day, but here's a note from Mimi (Florence Wells) Doan '63 to tell you about it.

"A really neat part of the reunion was the opportunity to attend some classes in the school and be led around by a couple of seniors. We were able to teach them the school song which has been missing for a few years. It was also great to be a part of the announcement of the gift from the attendees of this year's reunion."

Harry H. had some further comments about our gift: "It seems that just as our reunion group arrived, the student council at LAHS voted to name the interim lion outside the door "J" in honor of J Verna, and they will very likely name the permanent lion they purchase with our donation "J" also."

Eilesh (the Irish cousin the class of '69 has adopted) and I kicked around town, buying fruit from a lovely fellow in a vegetable truck who sang beautifully according to an older lady who was anxious to try her English out on me. Of course, I wanted to butcher Italian to communicate with her, so we had quite a time between us. Tirrenia itself has changed so little it's kind of spooky. Luna Park is still there, the Gran Bar, the old Lanterna has changed names. Well, we used to call it the Lana Turner when we were there, so I guess it has changed names again. The pizza was as awesome as we remembered. We found some wonderful Italian anachronisms – furry purses and four hundred dollar shoes with enough leather to cover your navel.

Many of us wandered around and found our old houses. JoAnna, Roxy, Patty and myself did so, making the acquaintance of a lovely older lady who was now living in JoAnna's old digs. This is right next door to where I had lived for a while at the Contessa's.

Dianne Denmark '64 and Mary Denmark Johnsen '71 had similar experiences: "[they] found their old house in Tirrenia using a lot of hand gestures, showed old photos of themselves in front of the house to the current occupant. They also went next door and spoke to the Swiss family who still remembered them (how could they forget six noisy kids with an army sergeant for a father?) Mary embarrassed her sister by relating how Dianne always spoke of 'the cute Swiss boy.' 44 years had disappeared and it was just like yesterday."

That eerie feeling was shared. There we were, as if we had fallen into a black hole, in our teens again, in some cases acting with every bit as much élan and grace as we did then – NOT!!

The trips that had been arranged for us were nothing short of fabulous. Our guide, Dan the Man, was so helpful and informative! There we were, huddled in front of the Golf, at 6:00 am (we won't tell you how late the night before we had yammered!) looking like the living dead. Dan picked us up and hauled us to the base to get the Sea Piners, then on to the train from LaSpezia to Riomaggiore, the first of the Cinque Terre. If you haven't been there I don't think there is any way I can describe this to you, but you knew I was going to try, right? Five small towns on the mountainous coast, linked by a trail that runs along the sea wall, over the coves and back through grape and olive country to these postcard quality towns perched over the sea. Oh, did I forget to mention that we ran into a group of firefighters that everyone had to pose with? Firefighters are the same the world over, beautifully developed. What else do you want? Oh, good food, wine, shopping? These towns had it all. The fresh anchovies! The vino! The setting! Harry has a picture posted on the LAHS website of a large group of us eating on the 'balcony,' there must be a military word for it as it was on a fort, overlooking the tiny bay in Vernazza, stuffing ourselves with carbs carbs carbs. Atkins followers beware. Avoid the whole country – visit Canada.

Don't misunderstand me, the trip was lovely but the trail was not in the best shape. The footholds in places were not good. In other places, the trail sort of fell away from you. It was very difficult for some and others simply took the train between the towns. But the beauty of the coast, the rugged terrain, the colorful towns, the underwear hanging out of the windows! Bellissima! And Dan made the whole thing easy for us. He told us where to and not to go and herded us onto the beginning of the trail. Without him, we would have probably ended up in a dead end alley or walked off a cliff. We all took the train back to LaSpezia together and then sopped up cappucini waiting for the bus. What an experience!

Some of us took a side trip to Florence the next day. Maria (Ledford) Crane '69 and her husband Stephen joined us and took the train up there, ate at the restaurant with the surliest waiter in Western civilization, shopped, wandered, and sopped up more vino and cappucini. Managed to eat our weight in gelato throughout the trip as well. The bravest waited to see David and the other guys at the Uffizi, those with money burning holes in their pockets shopped for gold at the Ponte Vecchio.

The next trip was with Dan to Assisi and once again, his guidance was invaluable. Seeing the teeny church within the church of Santa Maria Degli Angeli that St. Francis and his 'homeys' had built

themselves, the rose garden where he threw himself (the roses didn't look very lethal, but you have to go with the flow here.) The gift shop made me think that St. Francis is on the same plane as Elvis. He just lacks Priscilla Presley to help with the marketing.

The sanctuary on the hilltop in Assisi was lovely, although not built for tall people (right, Harry and Steve?) and they had no use for PICNIC. Signs constantly exhorting us not to even think about picnicking. They made us feel an urgent need to spread a checked tablecloth. The air was crisp at this altitude and we were glad to find pockets of sunshine to warm ourselves in.

The town itself was constantly surprising. 2,000 year old baths that still had running water. A temple to Minerva that became a Christian church. Remains of the Roman amphitheater scattered throughout neighborhoods. Roman doorposts poking out along the streets. I got into every church along the whole route in my shorts, but at the final basilica, the fashion police drop kicked me out the door. I managed to lose my compadres while they were shopping, but ran into other friends along the way. Dave Sherden '58 and his lovely wife Sharon, who was on a mission as in re: shopping, were along my route at multiple points. Hooked up with Dianne Denmark '64 and we found the right parking lot together at the end of our journey. Even got a stamp snafu solved for her at the Italian post ufficio with my crummy Italian. At least at this stop the bus didn't have to wait for me. Sharon had been swept away by the shopping fairies. We were all very relieved to see her coming into view! No matter what your belief system, Assisi is a town where you can reach out and touch antiquity, which is quite magical and we were thankful (awed?) to have experienced this.

The final trip that the group took was one to Florence on Saturday. I was already en route to Milan and didn't go along, but once again, Mimi has given me a précis to share with you.

Florence Trip

by Mimi Doan

As I disembarked the bus (returning from the trip to Florence,) I heard my name "Mimi, Hey Mimi, over here" In the square near the exchange were two senior girls who were waiting for a ride home and waving to me. I can't begin to express how good that made me feel. We had spent a little more than an hour and 1/2 in the high school and spoken to most of the classes, telling them how much we appreciate our experiences in the school and they listened well enough to remember a name. We are as connected with our own classes as we are with the class of 2005, How cool is that??

"Six lucky souls traveled by bus from Camp Darby to Florence on Saturday and were met by a wonderful guide who took us through the city and introduced us to its major sites. Florence is a wonderful city, full of art and architecture that people travel from all over the world to experience, they were all there with us, but even with the crowds, the city was magic. After our tour we all went to lunch at the Ponte Vecchio restaurant and had a wonderful typical Tuscan lunch. (Tuscan = too much good food) We separated for a couple of hours to see what we had each missed. Some went to the Petti palace and Boboli gardens and others to the Accademia. We met again for the bus ride home and dinner in Tirrenia. A delightful meal with wonderful company to end the reunion week."

Are you seeing the recurring themes here? Great food, the best of company and the special magic of Italia. What a great idea, JoAnna! Although I bet the next time you have such a great idea, you get someone else to bring it up, right? Before they draft you?

Some asides: Harry H said "My fondest memory, other than running around with the other 'classics' and meeting all the 'kids', was seeing my ol' buddie and classmate Tom Hadden for the first time in about 44 years."

Share with us the unmatched experience of Roxy Feldman and Claude Luce as they returned to the Golf in the wee hours from one of the local emporia. They encountered a pair of 'lovers' getting down to business on a park bench and were asked to join the fun, I

think. I am convinced they could feel the love.

And Fred Firmani '69 dropped by the Golf to say hello. I ran into him downstairs and reported back to JoAnna that one of her Italian cousins was downstairs. Oops. It's been a long time, ok? And those were weak brain cells anyway.

It was wonderful meeting everyone and sharing experiences on the same turf with some of our oldest and dearest friends. OK, well maybe not THAT old. But you get my drift. Old Walt Disney could not on his best day have come up with anything in his Magic Kingdom to match this experience. Thanks once again to all the people who made it possible. Mille grazie! E arriverderla!

A hopefully complete list of the attendees: Bob and Mimi Doan '63, Diane Denmark '64, Mary Denmark Johnsen '71 and Ralph Johnsen, David Sherden '58 and Sharon Sherden, George Parton '61 and Diana Parton, Thomas Hadden '62 and Joan Hadden, Isabel Edwards and Harry Edwards, that's Bitsy Galvin '59 of course, JoAnna (Covelli) Nevadomski '69 and Steve Nevadomski, Mrs. Covelli - JoAnna's mom, Shannon Moore '69 and Eilesh Wright, the Irish cousin, Michael Grant '69, Patricia Germano '69, Claudia Grant Luce aka Claude '70, Roxanne (Roenigk) Feldman '69 that's Roxy!, Marilyn Sue Wright '61 and Wilburn Wright aka Dub, Kathryn Jackson '79 and James Jackson, Gayle McKay and John McKay '60, Connie Heflin and Harry Heflin '62, Jane Baxter Hogue, Fred Firmani '69, Patri-

cia Ann Spencer '61, Dana Marinacci, Maria Christina Kirylo '67, Michael Kirylo '74 and Sonia Kirylo, Joseph John Runewitsch '67, Kim Mancuso '82 and Jeri Hall, Mary Nollinger Ulrey '73, Ann Nollinger Ulrey, Toni Ward and her family, Richard Kirylo '71 and Ezia Kirylo and their daughter Ariel, Maria (Ledford) Crane '69 and Stephen Crane, Ann Tenschert '75, Mark Michanowitz '77, Monica & Cecil Cheni '74-'76, Patricia McCammon '74, Parker '61 '71-'74, Parker '64-'66, Edwards '79, Julia Crocker.

Returning To Italy

A poem by Mary Ulrey '73

*Returning to Italy
I've dreamed of for years
The first time it took effort
To calm all my fears*

*Some changes have happened
yet are somehow we seem
Connected by history
That seems like a dream*

*The cars seem much larger
The roads sure do not
The food is delicious
We sure ate a lot!*

*Camp Darby's not Army
It seems very strange
Carabinieri at the Main Gate
That's a very big change*

*The school's gotten smaller
A great tour provided
School spirit was evident
By the students who guided*

*The Teen Club is gone
O' what a shame.
The small number of kids
Is probably to blame*

*The Tower's still leaning
The roads are still bumpy.
The guards at Camp Darby
Seem less cute and more jumpy.*

*Florence is timeless
So fresh, and yet old
The shopping amazing
Leather, textiles and gold.*

*Cinque Terra, it seems,
undiscovered back then
Was new and exciting
I will go there again*

*We've all gotten older
And gone separate ways
But a thread will connect us
To the end or our days.*

Livorno School Alumni Visit Darby

by Spec. Christopher Meadows AFN Livorno
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Camp Darby recently hosted the 50th reunion for the Livorno American High School. It's an event that is normally held in the United States, but for such a big milestone, it was time to take it back to where it all began.

"It was important for me to come because it was a high school reunion. I attended one before [in 1989] in the states, but this was the first one in Italy, and I have not been back since I graduated from high school," said Roxy Roenigk Feldman, a student from the class of 1969 who came all the way from Jupiter, Fa., for the reunion.

Unlike bigger high schools, with graduating classes in the hundreds, Camp Darby graduates anywhere between five and 20 students a year, with 20 being on the high side.

With such small classes, it isn't feasible to hold a reunion for each class individually, so every 15 years they hold a school reunion, where the alumni from every year come together.

This year's reunion began at the Darby Community Club for wine tasting, dinner, and reminiscing. Friends embraced for the first

time since they graduated, and alumni from the class of '59 mingled with the class of '77.

Day two had the alumni wandering through the hallways of their old school, led by some of the current tenants. While many of the sights were new, like the computer room and the video editing lab, they drew comfort in finding many things still the same.

Harry Heflin, from the class of 1962, said he found something still in place that he remembers to this day. "On the south end there's a stairway that goes up to the second floor. And that was the stairway we always used for our class photographs. So that's the thing I remember most about the school. Bigger or smaller, I don't know, but I remember the stairway," Heflin said.

"It's a wonderful place to have had a high school," said Joanna Cavelli Nevadomski from the class of 1969. She spoke fondly of her time at the Livorno American High School saying, "Those high school experiences are wonderful in themselves, but to have had it and be in Italy, you really can't ask for anything better."

Upcoming Events

LAHS 2005 REUNION

MEETING MISSISSIPPI COASTAL STYLE

October 7 - 9, 2005

I have begun work on the reunion and have enlisted the help of the MS Coast Convention & Visitors Bureau. Our coast is a very popular destination and working with the Bureau will save me leg work and expense. Time is of the essence as groups / functions are booked months in advance. The Bureau has a data base and has sent out solicitations to motels / hotels to see who is interested in having our group. As of this writing, I have five (5) proposals from motels / hotels / casinos for review.

Because the coast is a gambling destination, it is served by several airlines. Prices to fly into Gulfport (GPT) are about as reasonable as they can be these days. And, some of our alumni can drive to the reunion. The airport is well located and we should have no problem picking up/dropping off folks.

When the facility for our reunion has been selected, pre-registration forms will be sent to the Alumni. This is necessary in case we have to switch to a smaller / larger facility.

It is very exciting to think that the LAHS Reunion will be on the MS Gulf Coast. It is only natural for me to be proud of the coast and the activities it has to offer. I want to share the coast with you so please mark your calendar and plan to join me.

Please visit the Gulf Coast site at www.gulf-coast.org.

Pat Spencer, Class of '61

November 8, 2004

Mini Get-together CHARLESTOWN RACES & SLOTS Charlestown, WVa.

Anyone interested in getting together for fun, slots and reminiscing in February, weather permitting, e-mail Debbie Holloway Corrigan '76 at Debbiecorrigan@mac.com.

Date has not yet been set.

Who Sees Who?



Marty Pritchett, Debbie Corrigan & Bobby Firmani and son got together for lunch in Martinsburg, West Virginia on November 6th. Bobby's wife Eve and mother-in-law Peggy also attended.

Your Generosity Was Appreciated

by Mimi Doan

All the alumni who attended the 2004 reunion in Italy should be congratulated for so generously working together to give the school \$500. Because our school is so small the word got out easily amongst the classes and those who remained behind were given abundant kudos for the gift. I felt you all should know that what you did was no small gift and was greatly appreciated by the staff and students. We should as a group, consider giving annually to our school so they can benefit from some small extras that make teaching and learning a bit easier and more fun.



Photo Gallery

