E-news Update

Paulette (Zemaitis) English (1967)
TAA Web Editor

We're excited to announce that the electronic newsletter is nearly ready to launch. How do you receive it? First, we ask you to sign up. Go to www.taftalumni.org and click on the link for Electronic Newsletter Signup.

A form will prompt you for the information we'll need to verify your membership, your preference to continue receiving the paper newsletter or not, and to give us permission to send you email. When the newsletter is ready for viewing, you'll receive a message with a current password giving you access to a directory containing the current newsletter as well as an archive of past issues in PDF format. Most of you will have a PDF reader, but if not, we'll provide instructions for a free download.

If your membership lapses, you'll not receive the next password. So please, remember to keep your dues current. If you wish to provide feedback or have questions, please use the "Contact Us" form on the TAA website.

Extra! Extra! Taft Today Receives Top Honors!

On Thursday, March 19, Taft Journalists competed against public and private Chicago area schools in the McCormick Foundation Media Awards, claiming recognition in 10 categories! Congratulations to the Taft Today Staff!

Superior Awards
• Overall Newspaper
• Overall Newspaper Layout
• Non-Sports Photo - Grace Pisula

Excellent Awards
• Overall Web Site & Overall Web Design - Jessica Viola and Krako Barjaktarevic
• General Feature story - Jessica Spurgeon
• Sports Photo - Anna Soltysiak
• Computer Graphics - Grace Pisula
• Editorial Write-Off - Sylvia Dakowicz
• Sports Write-Off - Anna Soltysiak

This report was taken from the www.tafths.org site for current Taft students. "Taft Today" is the current school paper that superceded the "Taft Trib" we remember. The students today are awesome with their professionalism, competency and computer technological skills.

We congratulate all these budding Journalists, the rest of the "Taft Today" staff and their faculty sponsor Patrick T. Levins. We invite you to take a look at a digital version of one of their latest efforts of the newspaper:

Hopefully, one day soon we can encourage one (or more) of them to join our TAA staff to bring our newsletter efforts up to match their current standards of excellence!

Taft Chorus Memories CD - last call!! See page 9 for details.
*** Taft Class Reunions ***

January 1955
Date: August 22, 2009 - 9:30am - ‘til ?
Place: Grove #1 Des Plaines Forest Preserve
(Bring your own picnic "everything")
Contact: Marilyn Goodell McGee - megmageesemail@gmail.com

January 1959
Date: September 18-20, 2009
Place: The Abbey, Fontana, WI
(Lake Geneva)
Contacts: Norm Gunther - NGunther@aol.com
Nancy Peterson-Smith - NPSmith721@sbcglobal.net
Barb Peterson - BPete1914@aol.com
Glen Templeman - XmathMan@sbcglobal.net
Karen Whitney-Rogalla - 847-639-0394 or WhitMC.net

June 1959
Date: September 24-27, 2009
Place: Hilton Garden Inn - Des Plaines
(River Road)
Reception; Dinner/Dance; Super-Dawg
Catered lunch in Taft H.S. cafeteria and tour of school; Farewell Brunch; (? Tour of Chicago)
Contacts: www.taftreunion1959.com
Larry Marsh - fairseas2u@cox.net
Pat (Santell) Lutz - patlutz@comcast.net
Kent Meyer - carolekent@accelplus.net
Sue (Willers) Bruce - mrmrsjbruce@verizon.net

Class 1969
Date: Mid-Fall 2009
Place: TBD
Contact: Anne Lunde - 773-631-1104 or Tafts1969@gmail.com

Class 1970
Date: August/September, 2010
Place: TBD (see article below)
Contact: Richard Winge - richardwinge@earthlink.net

Class 1989
Date: August 29, 2009
Place: Niko's Restaurant, 7600 S. Harlem,
Bridgeview - 708-496-0300
Contact: Varsity Reunion Services
1-877-844-1014 cyndi@varsityreunions.com
Committee Angela Johnson Pierre-Jacques,
Carolyn Williams, Corkey Wilburn

All Taft Classes - 7th Annual Reunion Picnic
Date: Sunday, March 7, 2010
Place: Ft. DeSoto Park, St. Petersburg, FL
Shelter number 14 - Noon to 3 PM
Cost: (NEW this year...) $3/each
Pot Luck (a food item to share) + BYOB
(Note: photo shoot at 2:30 pm)
Contact: Leon Kathan (if needed)
117 Monte Real Blvd. Sebring, FL 33876-8056

Elementary School Reunions

1959 - Thomas A. Edison School
50th Reunion
Date: June 13, 2009
Place: Edison Park Bowl, with tour of school on Friday, June 12th.
Contact: Carolyn (Feare) Rominski (1963)
carrominski@yahoo.com or Margie (Stewart) Doud (1963) at Mcdoud@yahoo.com

1970-1981 - Frederick Stock School
Date: May 16, 2009 - 7:00 PM
Place: Edison Park Inn, 6715 N. Olmsted
(across street from Metra Train Station)
www.edisonparkinnchicago.com or
773-775-1404 - Stop in & reconnect
Contact: Deb Altman (1979)
strictlybirds@yahoo.com

Class 1970 Special Notice
“Introductory 1970 Reunion Information” packets were sent by U.S. mail to all 1970 alumni in March 2009. If you did not receive a letter from us, we either have an out-of-date address for you or none at all. Contact Rick Winge or Judy Jacobsen – gordonsdatter@gmail.com and we will promptly mail the 1970 reunion information packet to you.

Committee to date: Judy Jacobsen, Debbie Ewanic Allen, Mike Costanzo, Lynn Halicki Arnold, Linda Rogers Lewandowski, Rich Bolinder, Gary Richert, Susan Peterson Dwyer and Rick Winge Special Faculty Committee Member: Mr. J. J. Stamm.
PebbleCreek "Grease"

Kay Kuciak, TAA Pres. (Jan 1963)
My husband Tom [Kuciak - June 1962] and I had the honor of attending a very special production of "Grease" as we were guests of Lynn (Forty) Blomquist, class of 1954 and husband Bob.

The production was performed by residents of PebbleCreek, a local (Goodyear, Arizona) retirement community and the range of ages for the actors was 51 to 83 years old. WHAT FUN! Part of the "Director's Notes" was quite fitting. "As many times as I have directed, this was the first time I had to think about such things as: If I ask an actor to get down on his knees, can he get back up again? Hair, or the lack thereof, was a real issue. We may be "oldies but goodies," but some of us have more hair than others! Tonight, you will see some of your friends and neighbors with more hair than you probably ever thought possible!"

We probably had more fun attending this production than any I've seen (except the one we did for Taft's 50th anniversary) because of the ages portraying the teenagers we used to be.

Lost Taft Ring(s) Found!

There seems to be a rash of finds in recent times of Taft class rings. In the past 18 months or so, we have been involved with searching for owners of several "found" rings, identified as belonging to Taft alums. The first was from late in 2007 and was posted on our TAA website and in our Summer issue of the TAA newsletter. Peter Czosnyka, (who says he is from class of 1970??) was digging in his garden and came up with a girl's ring having a blue stone and an eagle on the front. Initials matched to a class of '54 graduate, named Geraldine Patricia Edman... To date, we don't know the resolution to that query.

Then, another Ring turned up... Our TAA 2nd VP Frank Heyer got a call from a lady who works in the jewelry section of a local Wheeling area thrift shop. She has a class ring from 1980 that did belong to Maureen Quinn. (How she determined that detail, we do not know!) Frank said, "I looked thru all the names that I have on our master list but didn't see any girl by that name in that class." Does anyone recognize that name and know her current whereabouts? Let us know so we can follow up with the two parties and get them connected.

Lastly, the most recent was from one of Milwaukee's finest. Police Officer Tina Kurth contacted us through our website while attempting to locate a student who graduated in 1981 with the initials WMS. She came across a Taft class ring when at work which contained these initials in Milwaukee. She said, "I did call the school and they believe the owner may be William M. Schatz. (The ring is a man's ring by the way). I have not been able to locate Mr. Schatz. The last known address that the school had was from 1988. He has moved since then." We provided the latest address we had for him from our expired member file. To date, we have not heard whether or not she was successful in contacting Mr. Schatz. But, we'll keep you informed if we learn more. There must be a backstory on this one!

TAA Board Meeting

The next TAA board meeting will be held at Taft on May 14, 2009 at 7:00 pm.
Phone 773-775-8524 for details.
Alumni are always welcome to attend.
In Our Memories

Julio N. Tiritilli - English Teacher extraordinaire at Taft from 50s into the 90s died February 25, 2009. To view some student comments, see Chicagotribune.com site http://www.legacy.com/Link.asp?I=LS000124638413X

Norma Tess Cherry (January 1942) passed away October 31, 2008.


Lois (Varnell) Balzer, class of June 1942 died October 28, 2007 from cancer.

Shirley (Seaholm) Lundgren, class of January 1946 died February 28, 2009 after complications from suffering a stroke.


Don Peterson, class of January 1946 died of a massive heart attach December 26, 2008.

Kenneth C. Henry, class of January 1947 died of natural causes at home in Lake Bluff, IL. A member of Taft's Hall of Fame since 2001, he was an Olympic Gold Medal speed skater at the 1952 competition in Oslo, Norway. He was married to his high school sweetheart, the former Roselle Johnson (June 1950).

John David Burgess, class of 1948 died March 29, 2009 in Texas. He had been an active duty pilot, Korean War vet, and flew for TWA for 33 years.

Mary (Mueller) Magrowski, class of January 1954 passed away from cancer on December 20, 2008.


Ronald Jakubiec, class of June 1966 died on June 28, 2008 from cancer.

Roberta (Roess) Halley, class of 1969 died January 16, 2009 from cancer.

William Handske, class of 1970 passed away May 15, 2006 in Moline, IL from renal failure.

Bruce Hougesen, class of 1971 died suddenly on January 17, 2009. Bruce may be remembered as the jovial Beauregard Burnside III in Taft’s 1971 production of “Mame.” He went to the U.S. Naval Academy in Annapolis, then into the Navy. There, a religious group called the “Navigators” inspired him to become a minister. Bruce served many years as Navy Chaplain as well in Presbyterian churches in Florida and Arizona.

Robert E. Gilroy, class of 1976 was killed about September 1977 by John Wayne Gacy. See letter elsewhere in this issue.

Keith Benedix, class of 1978 passed away on February 4, 2008.

Lost Classmates

Are you looking for old classmates you've lost touch with? We will help you in your search by publishing the name(s) in this newsletter. If that party responds to us, we forward that person's name and address to you.

Send your request and/or response to Taft Alumni Association c/o Taft High School, 6530 W. Bryn Mawr Ave., Chicago IL 60631 or email us at taf-talum@cox.net.

The suggested donation for this service is $5 per name.

This issue we have Earl Nielsen (1957) looking for Louis Tulga (Jan ’51).

Bayside Wins Special Award

Bob Johnson (January '65)

For seventeen years Chicago area engineers have been hosting a design competition for 7th, 8th grade Chicago area students. This year marked the first time student participation from TAFT- 7th-8th grade. The Illinois Engineers Council presented the Taft team, comprised of Deana and Patrice Pirpis with a "Special Award" for the Best Emergency Response Program for their design city “Bayside”.

I've been a volunteer to the competition for all the years Chicago has been hosting the event. Any TAFT Alumni having 7th and 8th grade students for the FALL ’09 semester are encouraged to sign up a team from their school.

There are regional competitions throughout the country - see www.futurecity.org, but for Chicago info see www.futurecitychicago.org.
1940s

RUTH (QUIRAM) RIGG (JUNE 1941) lives in Huntington Beach, CA, has 2 children, 5 grandchildren, 7 great grandchildren and is retired.

RODNEY LOWELL (JUNE 1941) lives in St Charles, MO and has 3 children and 8 grandchildren.

ARLENE (EDGREN) SCHALK (JUNE 1941) lives in Chicago and is retired.

Cynthia (Blumberg) Brown (JUNE 1946) lives in Des Plaines, IL, has 5 children, 12 grandchildren and is a retired corporate officer in the advertising display industry.

VERA (O BOSLA) KOVACH (JUNE 1942) lives in Menominee, WI, has 5 children, 8 grandchildren and 1 great grandchild and is retired.

RICHARD PARIGINI (JUNE 1942) graduated from Lake Forest BA 1949, lives in Prospect Hts, IL, has 2 children and is retired.

AL GNAKSI (JANUARY 1944) lives in Buffalo Grove, IL, has 5 children, 7 grandchildren and is retired after 36 years with the Post Office.

NORMA (BRAWNER) COOKSEY (JANUARY 1945) lives in Meridan, MS, has 3 children, 6 grandchildren and is a retired secretary.

ROBERT BIEDERMANN (JANUARY 1946) lives in Des Plaines, IL and is retired.

ROBERT FUDES (JANUARY 1946) GRADUATED FROM Bradley BS 1952, lives in Chicago and is a retired clinical biochemist.

EVE FILL (JANUARY 1947) lives in Chicago and is retired.

JAMES GEISLER (JANUARY 1947) MARRIED MARIE (KAULFUSS) (JUNE 1949), they live in Brewster, MA, have 4 children, 3 grandchildren and owns Ocean Gold B & B.

RODNEY LOWELL (JUNE 1947) graduated from U of Chicago BA 1951, lives in Tucson, AZ, has 2 children, 6 grandchildren and is a physics technician who is retired.

FERD (SCHULTZ) LENDY (JANUARY 1948) lives in Elk Grove, IL, has 5 children, 15 grandchildren, 1 great grandchild and is a housewife.

JOHN NELSON (JANUARY 1948) graduated from Purdue BS 1952, MS 1953, U of MN PhD 1960, lives in Kingston, WA has 3 children, 2 grandchildren and is retired.

FRANK OCKERBY (JUNE 1948) MARRIED BARBARA (NELSON) (JUNE 1946) they live in Charlton, MA, have 3 children, 3 grandchildren and are retired.

MIKE SGOBBA (JUNE 1948) graduated from IL State BS 1952, Chapman College MA 1966, lives in Scottsdale, AZ, has 5 children, 13 grandchildren and is an Arizona Diamondbacks scout.

SHIRLEY (GUNDERSON) DAVIS (JANUARY 1949) lives in St Charles, IL, has 3 children, 10 grandchildren, 9 great grandchildren and is a retired audio visual library clerk.

BARBARA (BURGIS) ZUEGEL (JANUARY 1949), graduated from Millikenn BA 1953, lives in Park Ridge, IL, has 2 children, 2 grandchildren and is a retired teacher.

MARY (MULKERN) BEHR (JUNE 1949) graduated from IL State BS 1953, lives in Boulder, CO, has 3 children and is a retired physical education teacher.

MARION (MEISNER) HARKER (JUNE 1949) graduated from U of AZ BS 1953, lives in Orchard Park, NY, has 3 children, 6 grandchildren and is a retired HS teacher.

RUTH (PETERSEN) ROTH (JUNE 1949) lives in Ft Myers, FL, has 2 children, 3 grandchildren and is retired.

1950s

KENNETH MEYER (JANUARY 1950) MARRIED CAROL (EBNER) (JUNE 1950) he graduated from Trinity BA 1954, MADIV 1956, Rice PhD 1978, they live in Rockford, IL and Naples, FL. They have 3 children, 8 grandchildren and are retired.

RICHARD MURBACH (JANUARY 1950) lives in Las Vegas, NV, has 4 children, 7 grandchildren, 5 great grandchildren and is retired.

R. PETE GLASS (JANUARY 1951) lives in Huntsertown, IN, has 2 children, 4 grandchildren and is a retired food broker.

CHARLENE (JOHNSON) HURT (JUNE 1951) lives in Huntley, IL and is retired.

DOUGLAS MENDER (JUNE 1951) graduated from Wright AA 1955, De Vry 1961, Oakton C.C. AAS 1985, AA 1987, AA 1988, lives in Glenview, IL, has 3 children, 2 grandchildren and is a retired mfg. engineer.

JANET (ANDERSON) MILLS (JANUARY 1953) graduated from IA State BS 1957, IA ED cert. 1969, lives in Decatur, GA, has 2 children, 3 grandchildren and is a retired teacher.

RICH ALBRECHT (JUNE 1953) graduated from Beloit College BA 1957, lives in Fountain Hills, AZ and Lake Geneva, WI, has 3 children, 6 grandchildren and is retired.

GRACE (PETERSEN) GOETTSCHE (JUNE 1953) lives in Chicago, has 3 children, 3 grandchildren, 2 great grandchildren and is retired.

ROLAND BRENDLE (JUNE 1955) lives in Ft Royal, FL, has 5 children, 14 grandchildren, 2 great grandchildren and is retired from RJR Nabisco.

WALTER JOHNSON (JUNE 1955) lives in Woodstock, IL, has 2 children, 6 grandchildren and is retired.

1960s

JUDY (OLSEN) GAMMON (JANUARY 1960) lives in Tampa, FL, has 5 children, 2 grandchildren and is a retired receptionist/secretary.

CAROLE (AUMULLER) SHARP-LYNCH (JANUARY 1960), lives in Gulfport, FL, has 2 children, 4 grandchildren and is a retired legal secretary.

BARRY BRUNER (JUNE 1960) graduated from AME Academy of Art, Chicago Teachers 1967, lives in Chicago, has 1 child and is a retired art teacher and artist.

DAVID KNICKERBOCKER (JUNE 1960) graduated from Purdue BSEE, Northwestern MSEE, lives in W. Hollywood, CA and is a retired electrical engineer.

ALVIRA (KOHNKE) SOBIESKI (JANUARY 1957) lives in Grove City, FL, has 3 children, 6 grandchildren and is retired.

ROBERT STEIGERWALDT (JANUARY 1957) graduated from Wartburg College BS 1961, lives in Delmar, IA, has 3 children, 6 grandchildren and is a retired farmer.

ROBERT SOSKE (JUNE 1957) lives in Barrington, IL, has 2 children, 1 granddaughter and is our retired printer of the newsletter.

ROSALIE (SCIEMECA) FEILEN (JANUARY 1958) lives in La Valle, WI and Sarasota, FL, has 2 children, 4 grandchildren and is retired.

BOB GUNDERSON (JANUARY 1958) graduated from GIU BA, AZUSA MA, lives in Victorville, CA, has 1 child, 3 grandchildren and is a teacher.

REID LEWIS (JANUARY 1958) graduated from U of I BA 1965, lives in Elgin, IL, has 1 child and is a French teacher, motivational lecturer and director of Adventure Francaise, Inc.

JOHN SCHMIDT (JUNE 1958) graduated from Nat’l College of Education BED 1962, Med 1965, lives in Chicago and is retired from U of I.

JEFF CARSON (JUNE 1959) lives in Phoenix, AZ, has 2 children, 2 grandchildren and is retired.
Marilyn (Boettcher) Trowell (June 1960) graduated from Augustana Hospital RN 963, Oklahoma City BS 978, lives in Crossville, TN, has children, 5 grandchildren and is in real estate.

Charles Williams (June 1960) graduated from Northern BS 1965, MBA 1968, De Paul MA 1986, lives in Arlington Hts, IL, has 4 children, 2 grandchildren and is an industrial engineer.

Bob Braude (January 1961) graduated from Parsons BS 1966, lives in Kennesaw, GA, has 4 daughters, 8 grandchildren and is retired.

Holly Nielsen Rogers (January 1961) graduated from North Park BA 1966, lives in St Helena, CA, has 3 children, 4 grandchildren and is a retired bookkeeper.

Warren Schimpff (January 1961) married Jill (Wagner) (June 1963) he graduated from Wright AA 1962, U of WI BS 1965, U of MI MS, MPh, PhD, Jill graduated from Northeastern BA 1967, U of MI MA 1968, they live in Jeffersonville, IN and own Schimpff’s Confectionary.

Mary (Herman) Drish (June 1961) graduated from Grimmell College BA 1965, lives in Palos Hts, IL, has 2 children and is a retired non profit CEO.

Sandra (Trefny) Michaelis (June 1962) lives in Gurnee, IL, has 4 children, 1 grandchild and is a retired bookkeeper.

Carol (Lundberg) Miller (January 1963) lives in Larchwood, IA, has 3 children, 4 grandchildren and is a retired librarian/bookkeeper.

Ellamae Braun (June 1963). Lives in Barrington, IL, has 2 children, 1 grandchild and is a receptionist.

David Guettler (June 1963), lives in Pasadena, CA, has 1 child and is president of Crown Coffee Service.

Jo Ellen (Trefny) Hart Pacheco (June 1963) graduated from Northern BS 1967, lives in Lake Havasu City, AZ and is retired from rental investments.

Kenneth Wyse (June 1963) lives in Quincy, IL, has 2 children, 5 grandchildren and is a retired battalion chief.


Diane (Grudziens) Hart (June 1964) lives in Clemson, SC, has 4 grandchildren and is an HR coordinator.

Louise (Johannsen) Menter (June 1964) lives in Deerfield, IL, has 3 children, 5 grandchildren and is a teacher.

Linda (Becker) Lasseigne (January 1965) graduated from Valparaiso U BS 1969, lives in Auburndale, FL, has 2 children and is a substitute teacher.

Nancy (Wentz) Gunning (June 1965) Graduated from Luther College BA 1970, lives in Park Ridge, IL, has 4 children, 5 grandchildren and is an HR administrator.

Pamela (Stern) Hendricksen (1965) graduated from U of I BA 1969, lives in Prospect Hts, IL, has 2 children, 2 grandchildren and is an administrative assistant.

Katherine (Schneider) Knapp (June 1966) graduated from Northeastern BA 1971, lives in Henderson, NV, has 2 children, 1 grandchild and is in human resources.

Wayne Gibson (January 1967) lives in Arlington Hts, IL, and is a postal clerk.

Robert Badgley (June 1967) graduated from Northern BS 1971, lives in Los Angeles, CA and is an insurance underwriter.

Paul Frizane (1967) graduated from Northeastern BA, lives in Mesa, AZ and is a semi retired teacher, also former substitute at Taft.

Beverly De Fouw (1969) lives in Skokie, IL and is in accounting.

Katherine (Reeg) Karch (1969) graduated from Western BA 1995, Bethel MA Div 2004, lives in Arlington Hts, IL, has 2 children, 3 grandchildren and is the Pastor at Edison Park Community Church.

1970s

Richard Bolinder (1970) graduated from IL State BS 1976, Nat’l College of Education MS 1991, lives in Hoffman Estates, IL, has 2 children and is fitness director at Oakton Community College.

Kenneth Naatz (1970) graduated from U of 1 BS 1974, De Paul MBA 1985, lives in Elmhurst, IL, has 3 children, 1 grandchild and is benefits manager for Mc Donalds Corp.

Susan (Morper) Simpson (1970) lives in Geneva, IL and has 2 children.

Richard Winge (1970) married Arlene (Kaell) (1971), graduated from Western BB 1974, U of WI MS 1976, lives in Napa, CA, and is executive VP 401K advisors USA.

Richard Lindberg (1971) graduated from Northeastern BA 1974, MA 1987, lives in Chicago and is a professional writer/editor.

Barbara (Pracht) Quealy (1971) lives in Carol Stream, IL, has 2 children and is a homemaker.

Charles Riggle (1971) graduated from Georgetown BS, U of MD MA, lives in Fort Washington, MD, has 1 child and is an international trade analyst supervisor.

Amy (Ozimek) Steeple (1972) graduated from Western BS 1975, lives in Boonville, IN and is an erosion control tech and a beekeeper.

Peter Watson (1972) graduated from Southern BS, lives in Belleville, IL and is a database administrator for Boeing Co.

Judi (Peron) Lenihan (1973) graduated from Northern BS, De Vry BSEE, lives in Chicago, has 3 children and is a retired electrical engineer.


Dominic Di Biaso (1977) married Wendy (Woods) (1980) they live in Chicago, have 2 children, Dominic is an electrician and Wendy is a 2nd grade teacher.

1980s

Raymond Kindlar (1981) lives in Mt Prospect, IL and is a purchasing agent.

Georgia (Pappas) Fee (1982) graduated from Bradley BS 1986, lives in Geneva, IL, has 3 children and is a housewife.

Ralph Walton (1982) graduated from Loyola BBA 1986, lives in San Diego, CA and is a VP with Union Bank.

Daniel Podkowa (1983) graduated from U of I BA 1987, John Marshall Law JD 1991, lives in Mt Prospect, IL, has children and is a bankruptcy attorney.

Kristine (Sleeman) Kernan (1984) lives in Des Plaines, IL and is a nanny.

Mark Keske (1987) lives in Virginia Beach, VA, has 1 child and is a business owner.

1990s

Barry Hitchins (1998) graduated from De Vry BS 2001, lives in Bloomington, IL, has 1 child and is a systems analyst.
Letters to the Editor

To: Taft Alumni Association
Enclosed is my check for $100.00 as a donation to the Alumni Association in thanks for the assistance I received from Shirley De Weese with a special request. It is great to know that the Alumni Association is there to assist with almost any questions or needs we may have.

Thanks. Neil Frumkin (June ’56)

We appreciate you publicly acknowledging board member help for the general good of the association and its members. Your kind gift will be well used. Thank YOU, Neil. Kay Kuciak, TAA Pres.

Aloha Taft Alumnus,
It’s me Julia Ustich.
I taught PE then coached at Taft from 1986 to 1990. Then I moved to Maui and everything changed for the good!
I just wanted to say aloha to all my former students and teams, especially to Division 031 - you’re the best! I hope all of you are doing well as I am going great myself. If you should ever get to Maui (or not), you can look me up; I’m in the phone book and teaching at Baldwin High School. Go Bears! Be good, have fun & be safe - you’re always in my heart & thoughts.

Ms. Ustich (former Taft teacher)

Hello Taftites!
I want to thank you for all you do keeping Taft memories alive. It’s great to know that you are out there keeping track of memories and promoting alumni events.

Ana Bagaric Barun (1989)

[In case you didn’t recognize Ana’s name, she was one of our earlier TAA scholarship recipients. J. Bloom, TAA News Editor]

To TAA:
I’m the admin for the Taft HS website and we’ve had a number of alumni contact us for information that you might want to post on your website. Transcripts for alumni who graduated from 1980 to present are available in the Taft main office for $4, cash or money order. Alumni who graduated prior to 1980 should contact: CPS Office of Former Student Records, 3542 W. 47th Place, Chicago, IL 60632. Tel:773-535-7722, Fax:773-535-5894.

Trent Eaton (Taft Teacher)
[Trent, thank you for the information. I may have been responsible for any flurry of inquiries as I’ve pointed a number of people to the wonderful CPS website. I’ll post this information online and see that it is published in the TAA newsletter. Paulette English (1967) Web Editor, TAA]

Hi Jerry,
Thanks for the reminder of the upcoming Taft reunion in St. Petersburg. I always think it would be nice to make it to the picnic, but I don’t do it. Looks like this year will be more of the same. It is just about the time in March that I have to get serious about my business.
I have no plans on retiring, but I no longer do any snow removal. It makes it a little easier to travel during my off-season. I was able to get to Europe in November, and to Mexico both in December and again in January.

Stu Crippen (January ’58)

Hi,
I noticed on my latest newsletter that my date of graduation was wrong. It should read June 1964 not June 1954. Please correct this. Thank You.

Roger Powell (June 1964)

Dear Jerry,
What a nice surprise to see word from Arlene (Edgren) Schalk of the class of 1940 in the Winter 2009 newsletter. The Schalk family was our next door neighbor on Odell Avenue in Edison Park for about 40 years. Until reading Arlene’s letter I had never understood how we three Nielsen girls interrelated with the three Schalk siblings. Now it’s clear.
Wally, Howie and Arlene were our grownup allies in the neighborhood. Wally would be Walter who graduated in 1940 with Arlene Edgren, and they later married. Howie was a couple years younger than Wally so he probably graduated about 1942. Their sister, also Arlene, the youngest, remained in the house with her family after the parents left.
My sister Judy was born in 1940, I in 1942, and my sister Karen in 1945 so we arrived just as Wally, Howie and Arlene graduated from Taft. We enjoyed many happy years there with memories of their visits as we grew up. We were saddened, however, at the passing of the sister Arlene during childbirth around or after our college years.
I want to thank Arlene, ’40, for putting these pieces together for me. I’m sorry to hear Wally passed away in 1993 but it sounds like their lives
were very full and productive. I wish Arlene, her three children and nine grandchildren well from all the Nielsen family.

The Nielsen family is now just myself and my sister Karen Nielsen Gableson, Jan ’64. Our sister Judy Nielsen Blanchetta, Jan ’58, passed away at age 37 on 10/13/77. Her three children and husband remain in the DC area. Karen’s two daughters and husband Allen Gableson, Jan ’64, live northwest of Chicago. I am celebrating my 42nd year in the San Francisco Bay Area - Saint Helena in the Napa Valley since 1992.

Thank you, Jerry, for passing on the interesting news that brings back fond memories of yore for many Taft Alumni. Who’d a thought this age old puzzle would be solved?

Holly Nielsen Rogers (January 1961)

Jerry---

In the latest newsletter I read a note from Arlene Schalk (June ’40). She and her husband Wally were friends of my older brother Fred Fassnacht. Wally lived only a couple of streets away in Edison Park. When I moved to St. Louis in 1966 Wally and Arlene were already there so we asked them for advice on where to look for a house. One of the areas they suggested was a development called River Bend. We ended up staying in the same neighborhood for 34 years! Our 2 daughters still look fondly at their time growing up in the “old neighborhood”. My wife Paula and I will always thank Arlene and Wally for steering us to West St. Louis County.

Keep up the good work. You’re doing a great job editing the newsletter.

Bill Fassnacht (Jan ’48)

Hi, I need to report a death. Robert E. Gilroy (class of ’76) sat next to me in Study Hall one year. He was a quiet kid who I never forgot. He lived for horses, working at Happy Day Stables where a Red Lobster stands now on Cumberland (I believe at Montrose). Anyway, Bob was killed by John Wayne Gacy in 1977. He was to attend a riding clinic in Maryland and never arrived, disappearing Sept. 15, 1977 (he was 18). He was discovered in Gacy’s crawlspace as one of the young men he viciously murdered. My heart aches, and has for more than 30 years. I found out via a newspaper article a year after graduation. I’ve put that clipping into my yearbook, as a permanent reminder of my friend Bob. PLEASE include him in your In Memory page.

Speaking of which, I was disappointed the In Memorium page did not allow me to scroll through all the names of classmates who have died. Picking a name to search on seems fruitless to me. A readily available list seems much more user friendly.

Karen Kruse (1976)

[Karen, we’ll certainly include your classmate on the Memorials page as well as in the newsletter. That episode was an unspeakable tragedy, but it’s wonderful that you’ve kept Bob’s memory alive all these years. As to the TAA Memorials page online, if you enter the desired graduation year alone and click Submit Query, you’ll be presented with a full list of deceased alumni from that year. I’ll try to make that option clearer on the web page. Paulette (Zematis) English (June ’67) Web Editor, TAA]

Jerry,

As a result of the article [in the Winter 2009 issue], Fred Allegretti (June ’59) has contacted me about providing some of the music I have for the 90 minute DVD he is putting together for the ’59 reunion. I’m going to share the music with him and he’s going to give me some photos for the CD cover.

And a Joyce Luga Selker (class of ’70 I believe) is dropping off a tape she has of the Chorus. She called last night. Turns out she lives about 5 miles from me. So this thing is beginning to take on a life of its own.

Dave Barth (Jan. ’62)

To TAA:

Please let David [Barth] know that I have the following records (as in vinyl records):

Taft HS Mixed Chorus March 28, 1966: Russian Easter Carols of the Trees & Joshua Fit the Battle of Jericho

Happy to send it to him if he’d like to add it to the collection!

Alexis Bernard (Jane A. Bernard ’68)

[Would be happy to have your records to add to the collection. Dave Barth]

[Letters to the Editor continued on page 10]

Check Your Attic or Basement…

by Bob Friedlander (Jan ’67)

I am willing to do a history of Taft sports on DVD. Only problem, I don’t have a lot of footage. I got a hold of all the football films from 57 and 58 and transferred them to video some time back.

I also have some baseball footage when I played in 1967 but that is it. There was a person selling all the Taft football games on video from the sixties to the seventies but they went out of business before I could purchase any games.

Then, I talked to Nick, the school’s athletic director years ago and he said there is a video of when the Eagles played in the Prep Bowl in the late seventies. I know the fellow who is in charge of Driver’s Ed at the school and he has a film of the baseball team from 1969 but I got tired of begging him to send it to me.
So, any chance you could check your attic or your parent's attic for home movies that dad took so we could have a history on DVD of Taft sports?

I will put it all together at no cost and we can sell the DVD's if we ever get that far. First you need to contact me at bfriedlander@aegworldwide.com and let me know what you have. We'll go from there.

Report on the Mixed Chorus CD Project

David Barth (June '62)

I am very pleased to announce that the project of producing a two CD set of the Mixed Chorus under the direction of JJ Stamm is coming along nicely. To date we have about 50 orders and some of the most heart warming notes you would ever want to read. From my own musical experience, I know what JJ has meant to me, but I would have never guessed how so many of you also felt about him, and how he touched your lives in so many ways. When all the orders are finally in, I going to take your notes and letters and present them to him. He and I have already talked a little about your responses, and I can tell you how appreciative he is of your thoughts.

So here's the final deal. You have until Saturday, May 16 to get your order in. Make a check payable to me (David Barth) in the amount of $12 and send it to 1035 Hummingbird Way, Bartlett, IL 60103. The amount includes shipping for the CD set. I'll acknowledge your order with a letter back. And remember, I'm not going to deposit your checks until I actually start to run the CD's, which will be the third week in May.

On behalf of JJ, thank you for your response. And thank you to those who sent along additional MC recordings. I've been able to use some of the selections. Looking forward to hearing from more of you.

Taft All-Class 6th Annual Picnic
DeSoto Park - St. Petersburg, FL
March 15, 2009

Pictured (in no particular order): JJ Stamm (seated in center), Jerry Beesley Bloom (June '62), Bernie Bloom (Lane June '52), Paulette Hase McGuire (June '56), Sherry Kelly (Jan '63), Mike Kelly (Jan '60), Evie Miller (Jan '46), Mariani Erlenbach (Jan '46), Barbara Peterson Gerhardt (June '56), Paul Gerhardt (Jan '54), Annette Knuth Gustafson (June '56), Marjorie Klarquist Nehlsen (June '56), John Mihalik (Lane June '53), Gail Anderson Gornick (June '56), Jim Gornick (Jan '55), Margie McLehn Kullman (June '61), Janice VanPuymbrouck Shmales (June '61), Leon Kathan (June '56), Tom Pozziwilo (1968), Judi Moers Handman (1953), Joyce VanPuymbrouck Tuttle (June 61), Ralph and Dorothy Teufel Wenzel (June '54), Joyce Baxter (Jan '61), Eileen Thorne (Jan '63), Helen Thorne (Jan '66) Vivian Baxter (Jan '67), Carl Bolinder (1977), Rich Bolinder (1970), Victor Gramza (1973), Rick Winge (1970), Sharon Hines Dykes (1964), Jeannette Olsen Gilbertson (1963), Patti Fabri Evans (1966) Rich Vevang (Jan '51). Photo taken by Tom Pozziwilo
Dear Jerry,

First off thanks, and thanks again for your marvelous and much appreciated efforts on the Taft newsletter. Every now and then one can "go home again."

Think I have at least the start of an answer to Jo Ellen Pacheco's (June '63) question about the shield and chevrons. The boys had the Lettermen's club and their T letters. Girls had GAA, Girls Athletic Association. First award was the shield, followed by annual chevrons. I'm sure I don't remember all the criteria to earn them but some were: a good grade in P. E. probably S or E; high achievement on the annual proficiency tests...jump rope (could never do it), free throws, throwing a basketball length of the gym, long jump, vertical jump...maybe others; chosen for the "select team" in each gym class, e.g. volleyball; dental or medical exam. That's what I recall. Don't know when it was phased out and girls got their own sports both varsity and IM. A start.

And if he'd give me some discernible words of the "Mystery Number" I could consult current songbooks and a friend who is a church organist. Amazing, I was thinking at Christmas time, how so many of the songs we sang (I was Girls Chorus) were religious and they just wouldn't make it in today's public schools. And while I do understand and accept the religious avoidance, the kids also lose out on some history's great choral music. Again my thanks for all you do to connect us to our roots. (Once an Eagle)

Judith Greasley Mich (June '60)

Hi Judy!

Your correction on "Adoramus" has been so noted. Thank you!

I would love to give you some discernable words but that's part of the problem. Neither JJ nor I can understand them and he doesn't recognize the melody. So here's your challenge. I've attached the selection as an MP3 file right off the tape. Because of extreme extortion levels, we had to fade in after the number starts, so we'll give you an extra point for the handicap. You have until May 1 to "Name That Tune!"

And you're so right about sacred music in today's schools. I have a choir director friend who was asked to develop and teach a new course in music history for freshmen. About two weeks into the semester he was accused by some parents of teaching their children "religious" music. In the principal's office with parents present, he politely reminded them that Bach, Brahms, etc, did not write rock n' roll or rap. They would get to those genres later in the year, but right now he was exposing them to the great masters of classical choral music, and everything they wrote was SACRED! At which point he asked to be excused from the meeting so he could get on with teaching their children. Yea for him!!!

Jerry, a quick sidebar for you. I received a note and check from a 1949 graduate... She said she never sang in the chorus at Taft, and further obviously never even heard of JJ. She just wanted to hear the music. Boy, are we reaching out to people! David Barth (January '62)

Judy's note was passed on to David Barth, and the following is his response.

[Note: No further word about the "Mystery Number" yet. J. Bloom]

Judy, I cannot believe we live in a Dead zone, when we are overly active.... could not resist. [Response from request for replacement of "lost" newsletter.] Actually my mail comes from the post office on NW Highway, just about 10 blocks from Taft High...I live south of Higgins Rd second house from Bryn Mawr. West of Harlem it is south of Higgins, North of Higgins Rd running along side of Taft when it is East of Harlem. Living here since 1939 I have seen many changes. We moved our house to make way for the Kennedy or it would have been in the middle of it.

My father was also the Butternut Bread deliveryman for this area and served Taft when it was first open. His boundary was Nagle to NW hwy, Park Ridge south to Gunnison. Although I think it was larger when there were fewer stores here. I am just glad to still be here to talk about the old neighborhood! We even had 2 mail deliveries a day then. Gas lights on the corner. Enuff of history.

Now, I am still pondering the cartoon on page 13 by Frank Zemaitis (June '40)[see TAA Winter 2009 issue]. Who is Eddie Mason? And what is the humor with his kids?? I dont get it, should I?

Mariann (Leversen) Erlenbach (Jan '46)

[Note: Ha Ha! The joke's on you! The cartoon is really a generic one, and there is no REAL Eddie Mason. Just a typical "kid" at reunions depicted by Frank Zemaitis, who loves to show off his old photos to rekindle memories of school and/or his family.]

J. Bloom note: Frank Zemaitis is the class of 6/1963. Her brother was John Mount and with us in our 1949 Kindergarten class of 1949. I expect to hear further from her. He is now deceased.
unfortunately, but got a job with the Austin, Texas Police Department due to his ROTC training at Taft. Sincere thanks - the blessing of our wonderful grade school reunion just keep coming. One of these days we'll make it down to DeSoto Park for the picnic.

Lynn Hibarger Saracco (June '62)

Dear Kay,

Way back in 1949 Taft won its first city title in baseball. That was 60 years ago. I am sure that it was our first city title in any sport.

Our coach was the legendary Jim Smilgoff. It would be good to hear from any members of that squad.

Ron Bentsen (1951)

Enclosed is a picture of the team along with the player's names. Unfortunately some have already died, including team manager, Bruce Beresford, Steve Kiewitz, Richard Salat, John Osko, and George Maier.

Taft 1949 Championship Baseball Team

Front row, L. to R.: H. Manig; O. Halleen; S. Kiewatz; R. Bentsen; D, Swanson; R. Lilla; W. Topolinski; J. Tortorelli. Middle row: J. Osko; H. Wagner; L. Landerholm; A. Orr; G. Maier; M. Weber; T. Smusyn; P. Skogstrom; H. Oquist; E. Scheel. Standing: B. Beresford; R. Anderson; Capt. B. Benson; H. Johnson; E. Fagerstrom; R. Salat; R. Sienklewicz; C. James; R. Baker: Coach J. Smilgoff.

2009 TAA Scholarship Awards Coming

April 24, 2009 is the deadline for current Taft seniors to submit their applications for consideration for this year's Taft Alumni Association Scholarship Awards. The committee will be reviewing all submittals for the four scholarships. We have the $1000 Hendriksen Award, the $1000 John P. Graven Award and two $750 Taft Alumni Association Awards. Next issue we will reveal the deserving winners’ names.

Voices of Norwood Park

Norwood Park Historical Society opened an exhibit, "Voices of Norwood Park" on March 28 based on an oral history project. They were excited to be able to use funds received from a grant. Taft alumni Carol (Nordengren) Larson and Bob Larson (both Jan. '50) and Tom Spenny (Jan. '58) are among those included in recorded media. The NPHS headquarters is located at 5624 N. Newark Avenue, Chicago and is open each Saturday from Noon-4pm.
Friday, March the 13th was a lucky day for Taft’s seventh and eighth grade girls on the Taft Academic Center’s Girls basketball team. The Championship game was hard fought and tense as many of their games have been but in the end Taft prevailed again, remaining undefeated and maintaining the best record for season play in all of Area 1.

Getting to the Championship was not easy; Taft had a tough schedule and faced many talented teams including: Palmer, Canty, Albany Park Multicultural, Garvy, Aspira at Haugan and then finally, Onahan for the championship. The game was very exciting and there was a capacity crowd in the Taft gym.

The action was nonstop with Kyra Vidas and Megan Merida leading the Eagles to victory as they have all season with help from eighth graders Siria Arzuaga, Katie Bargo, Elena Hernandez, Deanna Pirpiris and Nicole Wdowiak along with seventh graders Amanda Bernacchi, Brittany Brodersen, Claire Tierney and Nicole Williams. Coaches Walt Merida and Craig Williams were very proud the girls’ success so far and are hopeful for their future prospects.

Their great record is no surprise since some of the girls started working on their skills over the summer at the Basketball Camp held at Taft for 6th, 7th and 8th grade girls in the Taft attendance area. The Little Lady Eagles moved on to the Region 1 Championship on Wednesday, March 18th at Von Steuben. For information about Taft’s Jr. High Girls Basketball, contact Coach Bret Nishibayshi at: coachbrett15@hotmail.com

TAA Board Meeting

The next Taft Alumni Association Board Meeting will be held at Taft High School on May 17, 2009 at 7pm. All Taft Alum are welcome to attend.

The Spoiled Under-30 Crowd!!!

This humorous article was sent around the Internet recently. If you are 30 or older, we think you can relate:

When I was a kid, adults used to bore me to tears with their tedious diatribes about how hard things were when they were growing up; what with walking twenty-five miles to school every morning ...Uphill...BOTH ways...Yadda, yadda, yadda...

And I remember promising myself that when I grew up, there was no way I was going to lay a bunch of junk like that on kids about how hard I had it - and how easy they've got it!

But now that... I'm over the ripe old age of thirty, I can't help but look around and notice the youth of today. You've got it so easy! I mean, compared to my childhood, you live in a Utopia! And I hate to say it but you kids today -you don't know how good you've got it!

I mean, when I was a kid we didn't have the Internet. If we wanted to know something, we had to go to the library and look it up ourselves, in the card catalogue!!

There was no email! We had to actually write somebody a letter, with a pen! .....Then you had to walk all the way across the street and put it in the mailbox and it would take like a week to get there!

There were no MP3's or Napsters! If you wanted to steal music, you had to hitchhike to the record store and shoplift it yourself! Or you had to wait around all day to tape it off the radio and the DJ ' d usually talk over the beginning and mess it all up!

We didn't have fancy things like Call Waiting! If you were on the phone and somebody else called they got a busy signal, that's it! And we didn't have fancy
Caller ID either! When the phone rang, you had no idea who it was! It could be your school, your mom, your boss, your bookie, a collection's agent, you just didn't know!!! You had to pick it up and take your chances, mister!

We didn't have any fancy Sony Playstation video games with high-resolution 3-D graphics! We had the Atari 2600! with games like 'Space Invaders' and 'Asteroids'. Your guy was a little square and you actually had to use your imagination!! And there were no multiple levels or screens, it was just one screen. Forever! And you could never win. The game just kept getting harder and harder and faster and faster until you died! Just like LIFE!

Sure, we had cable television, but back then that was only m-net and there was no on screen menu and no remote control! You had to use a little book called a TV Guide to find out what was on! You were out of luck when it came to channel surfing! You had to get up and walk over to the TV to change the channel and there was no Cartoon Network either! You could only get cartoons on Saturday morning. Do you Hear what I'm saying?! We had to wait ALL WEEK for cartoons, you spoiled little monsters!

And we didn't have microwaves, if we wanted to eat something up we had to use the stove ... imagine that! If we wanted popcorn, we had to use that stupid Jiffy Pop thing and shake it over the stove forever like an idiot.

That's exactly what I'm talking about! You kids today have got it too easy. You're spoiled. You guys wouldn't have lasted five minutes back in 1980!

Regards, The over 30 Crowd

In the News

Margaret Olsen (June 1962), an accredited senior appraiser for the American Society of Appraisers has been very busy with Internet and magazine article interviews as the current economic conditions have brought gold speculations soaring. Connect with her at http://www.4preciousmetals.com.

Jim Jacobs (1960) has been enjoying a resurgence of his forever young musical "Grease" taken from experiences and memories of his Taft days in the 1950s. To keep in touch with current events of his USA tour, check out www.GreaseOnTour.com.

Note: Deadline for photographs, articles, or ?? to be included in next issue: June 30, 2009

Taft is Still in 6th Place

Last issue had an article about the fairly new Chicago Public School website. Those who attended any CPS are encouraged to sign up and provide the names of schools they attended. It was mentioned that at that time, only 81 names were registered for Taft. In the listing with all the other schools in the city, we ranked in sixth place.

Good news - our numbers jumped to 128 names. Bad news - we still rank in sixth place, behind Lane, Steinmetz, Lindbloom, Hyde Park, Schurz and Roosevelt (in that order).

If you are still in the Chicago area, and have access to the local papers and TV news stations, it probably isn't a high priority item to join. But, for many of us who are now scattered around the country, and yearn for connections to our "past", this is a great avenue to see and participate in the memories of grade school and other high schools through comments, photos and stories of former classmates.

Our own website - www.taftalumni.org is geared to Taft graduates. And, current Taft students have a great website at www.tafths.org But, we still encourage you to participate. Join, add your comments, feel a connection with other Chicagoans. Taft grads still have the competitive spirit - and don't want the other high schools in the CPS system to outrank us - even here! We will continue to monitor the CPS site and keep you informed on our progress. With only 12 more names, based on our current ranking, we'd be in 4th place. Can we do it? Yes, WE CAN!!
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City/State/ZIP: ___________________  Phone: (____)_____

Send check or money order (no cash please) with completed order form to: Taft Alumni Association, 6530 W Bryn Mawr Ave, Chicago IL 60631

Please use a separate order form for separate addresses.


Special THANKS to **Barbara (Gromke) Stephens** (June 1956) for sending us her personal copy of the Taft 1956 yearbook "collection". Gratefully accepted!!

Still needed to complete our archived set: Only ONE year remains elusive… 1958. Donation of this yearbook gratefully accepted!
## TAFT ALUMNI ASSOCIATION
### APPLICATION FORM

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Chicago IL 60631

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  - Editor - Jeraldene Bloom (1962) - (920) 743-8449
  - E-mail - Jerrybloom@fales.org
  - Assistants: Kay / Tom Kuciak - (623) 544-0226

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**Expired?!!** Check your address label for your year of graduation on the upper right corner, just below the postal permit. Is it correct? Also, check the expiration date of your current membership with the Taft Alumni Association located just above your graduation date. If that date is close, sit down NOW and write out a check for $15, or just $20 for husband/wife graduates at the same address.

You’ll receive **TWO** full years of newsletters filled with opportunities to learn about classmates, reunions, school events and alumni programs. Be sure to use the application above to fill in the latest updates in your life.

The Taft Alumni Association publishes the Taft Alumni Newsletter quarterly. Send all general correspondence and changes of address: **Taft Alumni Association**, 6530 W. Bryn Mawr Ave., Chicago, IL 60631 or E-mail at Taftalum@cox.net

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Alumni E-mail Directory: eagleemail@taftalumni.org