

SundayLife

HEALTHY RECIPE
Smoky Cream Of
Broccoli Soup With
Sharp Cheddar L10



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SUNDAY, SEPTEMBER 30, 2012 • SECTION L

'THE CASUAL VACANCY'

JK Rowling's first novel for adults debuts L4

'THE VIOLINIST'S THUMB'

Author ties DNA to everything from cat hoarding to cannibalism L4



Got your
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YOU DOCS, L10

A different kind of class reunion

Class reunions normally hold about as much interest for me as lawn-dart tournaments; I can take them or leave them. But the All-Schools Reunion in McCall this month was something else altogether.

I was there as a member of one of the bands that played for it. We've played a lot of reunions through the years, but none like this one. Imagine a class reunion attended by hundreds and potentially thousands of people you knew in high school. Not just your own high school, but every high school in the county. And not just your own class but every graduating class of the entire decade you graduated.



Commentary

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That's what this was. Every Boise, Borah, Capital, St. Teresa's, Bishop Kelly and Meridian high school class that graduated from 1960 through 1969 was invited. Only a few hundred people attended this time, with this being the first year and all, but in years to come we could be talking some very

serious crowds here — with all of the profits donated to The Idaho Foodbank.

The person who came up with the idea is Denis Smith, a 1962 Boise High School graduate who now lives in Reno, Nev. His inspiration, sadly, was the recent death of his friend, Doug Haight.

"Doug was always kind," Smith said. "He took time to get involved with people's problems, volunteered for hospice work through his church and offered financial help to many people, while always keeping it to himself. He was a friend who stood by you through thick and thin."

See REUNION, L7



Doug Haight's 1962 high school graduation photo. He and Denis Smith were friends for life.



Best friends: Denis Smith, left, and Doug Haight, before leaving to pick up their dates for a Boise High School prom in 1962.

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It was Haight’s dream to hold a reunion for all the high schools that existed in Ada County when he was in high school. Now, thanks to Smith, it’s happening.

“When I thought of doing an event in Doug’s memory, the reunion idea struck me,” Smith said. “Doug was a strong supporter of the Foodbank, and that’s why it was picked as the recipient of the funds generated.”

Smith wrote the Foodbank a check for \$500 this year. He’s confident that next year’s will be larger.

“The next reunion will be all weekend long,” he said. “I’m hoping to expand it to include a golf tournament, a car show and a Sunday jam session. ... Ideally the event will grow and become a tradition, one that younger classes will carry on after we’re gone.”

It would be great if that happened, for a couple of reasons: a) It’s for a good cause, and b) it’s a new and interesting twist on an old idea.

For an ordinary class reunion, you get a notice months in advance, fill out a form saying you’ll be there and spend a weekend making small talk with classmates you saw at the last reunion. At the All-Schools Reunion, you see people you haven’t seen forever. Not just from your own class, or even your own school; you’re likely to run into people who graduated years before or after you did, from whatever schools they attended, and who you may have known from parts of your life totally unrelated to high school. You go to McCall, pay a \$10 admission fee and watch ghosts from the past materialize when you least expect them.

It happened to me before the band even started to play.

“Are you Tim?” a tanned, gray-haired woman asked as I was setting up my gear.

“Yes.”

She introduced herself, giving a name I remembered as that of a cheerleader from my class at Boise High School. Gone was the fresh-faced girl I remembered, replaced by a woman whose beauty was deeper, a beauty born of time and character.

I, of course, hadn’t changed at all.

One surprise followed another. There were people there who would never attend a typical class reunion — ever. People who normally wouldn’t dream of going to a class reunion ... but they went to this one.

The band was finishing its second set when two nicely dressed, vaguely familiar-looking gentlemen approached the stage and introduced themselves.

“I was Dick Cates and the Chessmen,” one of them said. “He was Paul Revere and the Raiders.”

The crowd noise was so loud that I had trouble hearing him, so at first it didn’t click. Then something about his face rang a bell.

“Did you say you were Mike McCarty?”

“No, that’s my brother. I’m Bob McCarty. I played sax with Dick Cates and the Chessmen.”

So there, two feet away, was one of my teenage heroes. With Paul Revere and the Raiders, Dick Cates and the Chessmen were the best band in the Valley when rock and roll was young. Roy Orbison had nothing on Cates, the Chessmen’s lead singer. Anyone who ever heard him sing will tell you that. And Paul Revere and the Raiders were then one of the hottest groups in the Northwest, about to ride a rocket to the national stage.

“I’m sorry,” I said to the Raider half of the twosome. “What did you say your name was again?”

“Is there something wrong with your eyes?” he asked.

“Something wrong with my eyes?”

Granted, there was something decidedly familiar about him. The hair was shorter and grayer, but the face ... I definitely knew that face.

“I’m Charlie,” he finally said.

“Charlie? You don’t mean ... Charlie Coe?”

It was Charlie Coe. My old guitar teacher, unseen in nearly half a century. At the top of his game, he was a virtuoso. He could nail virtually every song Chet Atkins ever played. He had introduced me to Atkins, jazz greats Howard Roberts and Django Reinhardt and other wizards. He had the distinction of being the only person to play lead guitar for Paul Revere and the Raiders twice, and his technical prowess was the envy of every guitarist who knew him.

We spent the break between sets catching up. He said he hadn’t played guitar in years; golf had replaced it in his life. That was a bit of a disappointment — I was sort of hoping to score another Chet Atkins lesson — but nothing stays the same forever.

Bob and Charlie were the highlight of the evening for me, but for the rest of the dance, and for a long time afterward, people with faces dimly remembered continued to approach the stage and share long-forgotten stories. Stories of the people we used to be, half a lifetime ago. Some were sad, some funny, all were compelling in one way or another. I don’t know when I’ve enjoyed an evening more.

Next year's reunion has already been scheduled. The goal again will be to raise money for the Foodbank.

And, with a little luck, you'll get to party with old friends you never expected to see again.

Who knows? You might even run into an old flame.

If you went to any high school in Ada County in the 1960s, you're invited. Put Sept. 13-14, 2013, on your calendar and stay tuned for details, to be posted on mccall60sreunion.com

I'll try to remember to give you a reminder a month or so in advance.

Think about it. You'd be helping to feed hungry people, and it could be one of the best times you've had since high school.

Tim Woodward's column appears every other Sunday in the Life Section. It's posted on woodwardblog.com the following Mondays. Email him at woodwardcolumn@hotmail.com

Read more here: <http://www.idahostatesman.com/2012/09/30/2292934/a-different-kind-of-class-reunion.html#storylink=cpy>