

Memory Lane - Class of 1959

Memory is a lens that is peculiar to each of our focus. What this says is that Larry will remember things differently than Lynn and Lynn differently than Travis and Karen and Nancy differently than Kathryn and Kathryn different than Kathleen and Bette differently than Maria and **Rick Lilliott** different than **Rick McDowell** and so forth. Well, maybe I'm wrong about that because **Bette Azadian** - aside from being voted Most Beautiful Girl in Lamar - remembers virtually everything. She has been our Den Mother these last ten years and has done as much as anyone to keep as many of us as are here together. (*A hand for Bette*)

Because memory is quite personal and subjective, I'm not going to try to take us on the typical stroll down memory lane. Everyone knows that while we were in Lamar that Eisenhower was president. That Castro came to power in Cuba in 1958 and that **Mr. Keding** and **Mrs. Glossup** had the two greatest chorale groups in the history of Western Civilization.

We almost won the state championship in Football - got goosed by a bunch of Ganders in the quarter finals down in Baytown. We came close to the same in track...particularly in the mile relay...but that's a story that needs to be saved for a little later in the evening as **Richard Davis** makes his confessional contribution.

The Choralettes were traveling all over the state and nation...I know because **Bart Jones** and I were their managers and traveled with them. Bart and I came on this absolutely wonderful, divinely inspired, incredible idea to volunteer to Mr. Keding to take down their risers and put them up again. If you don't know what a riser is then we'd best leave this alone. The Mixed Chorus had risers too. The Mixed Chorus, I always thought, was a group of folks who could read Music...and they were beyond great. I don't know who put up their risers...and I have absolutely no idea who took them down again.

It for sure wasn't **Jeremy Wicker**. Although he was in the mixed chorus he was quite busy in the dramatic arts as well. Surely no time for risers. In the fall of our junior year (1957), he tried out for the male lead in **Mrs. Denney's** production of the Broadway musical "Plain and Fancy." This showed Wicker had real talent, for most of us were in the "chorus". **Johnny Holmes** and **Dale Ledbetter** tried out singing "*That Good Old Mountain Dew*." I'll go on with the story. Professor Wicker won the part, narrowly beating out a multi-talented

fellow student. Obviously, the role called for singing and acting talent and Jere clearly had both.

The day after the last performance, Mrs. Denney called him into her office in the Drama Shack - **Lasca Sullivan** should remember this. Mrs. Denney looked him squarely in the eyes with her blue eyed icy stare and declared: "Wicker, you've got a great voice, but you can't act worth a damn!" Oh I almost forgot, the guy Jeremy beat out was **Robert Foxworth!** He got even, he stole Wicker's girlfriend and ended up making a huge mistake himself. Foxworth won that year's Darwin award for turning down the role of JR in Dallas.

Arlen Ferguson's wonderful pantomime of a girl getting dressed in the morning - replete with girdle and hose - almost got him sent to **Mr. Costlow's** office by **Mrs. Gates. Margo Garrett** laughed until she had tears in her eyes...saying over and over, "It's just exactly like that!" For my part, I had secretly fallen in love with Arlen during his act.

Beyond these and others, our memories are radically different in content. For example, some of us will think that **Mr. Camp** (and later Mr. Costlow) gave harder pops than **Mr. Pepper** or **Mr. Sanderson** or that **Mrs. Leavell** could be more severe than Mrs. Denny expressing disappointment whether behaviorally or dramatically. **Barbara Curtis** and **Rosemary Davison** - after having ridden their bikes to school on a whim decided, it turns out quite unwisely, to ride them down the main hall. Enter Mrs. Leavell's extreme displeasure resulting in both their receiving a "U" in conduct...for the semester.

All this notwithstanding, I suppose that our memories will inform us, regardless of what we thought at the time, that our teachers, principals, coaches, deans and counselors had nothing but our best interest in their beautiful hearts and wonderful minds. I really wished I believed that about Mr. Pepper and Mr. Kivell. **Mr. Longcope**, no question. We all loved **Bert Kivell** and ran our hearts out for him...you think Chariots of Fire was a good movie. "When Lamar needed a victory we ran it for her"...almost.

Lynn Zarr and **Buzzy Creekmore** particularly loved Coach Pepper. If Buzzy is here he needs to tell his story about the night of the Blocking Sleds. But, some of you will remember that during the season the football team - along with their parents - met every Monday night to go over the game films. Mrs. Zarr-Flowers would of course attend. She would invariably come up to Fred and

say..."It's so nice to see you Dr. Pepper." Lynn begged his Mom not to do that. Time after time this happened and time after time on Tuesday afternoons following, Coach Pepper would holler across the field, "Zarr, she did it again...take another lap."

Aside from the later "immigrants"...we came from several grade schools and two junior high schools. I know that **Mike Hattwick** came from River Oaks, and Lanier. I never knew a guy that could play the trumpet, was an Eagle Scout and was so smart as Mike. I always thought he, **Joe Lovelady** and **Gene Clements** had come from the Planet of the Brains. This is when my mother started mentioning to me things about "late bloomers" and "learning disorders" and increasingly fell to using the phrase "child psychiatrist."

There are several of us in this room, **Glen Stanbaugh** included, that clearly remember **Dick Cooksey's** long touchdown run - scoring six points - that saw the Pershing Pandas beat the Lanier Purple Pups for the City Championship in the fall of 1955. For the record, Glen didn't miss the tackle. In the fall of 1956 these two cultures were mixing at Lamar...and getting along like well, panda cubs and puppy dogs. The boys and girls of both schools quickly discovered each other and all kinds of "faithfulness" as in going steady was put to the test of "new friends." By the time we were juniors and young seniors many of the girls solved this dilemma for us boys by starting to go with "Rice boys." Oh well.

We quickly discovered that what was fast at Lanier was very slow at Lamar. That what was great acting and dancing at Pershing was juvenile display at Lamar (If you didn't know that Mrs. Denny and **Tommy Tune** quickly pointed same out.)

Most of all we found out what was "smart" at Lanier and Pershing was just the beginning of what "smart" really was. Put another way, I'm absolutely convinced that the older we get, the smarter our parents and teachers are and were.

To illustrate this, **Asa Weldon**, **Jay Tucker** and **Tom Herren** hitched a ride with **Sue Gerrard** in her Dodge convertible to go downtown to see the Rodeo Parade in February before we graduated in June of 1959. They got down town and somehow got ensnared in the Parade itself. Driving through horse leavings and peanut hulls, they got caught up in the spirit of things and started waving

to the crowd and nodding just like burgeoning Rock Stars. Problem is that it was Asa, Jay and Tom who were sitting on the back of the car acting like Parade Queens waving at the crowds and sweet Sue was driving. They even made the television news that day.

Karen Tellepsen - by her now and modern admission - loved Sadie Hawkins dances. She recently told me she and countless Lamar girls would plot and plot and plot some more to make certain that they asked just the right guy...and most important that he would say "yes." I wish I knew what all you "just the right guys" were wearing...I was never asked to a Sadie Hawkins dance. Not once. I did ask Arlen Ferguson to go once but, he wouldn't go.

The Gospel of Matthew's infancy narrative talks about the Three Kings. We had Queens...a lot more than three of them. The ROTC had sponsors - **Gail Norris, Marietta Morris, Harriet Hopkins, Margo Garret, Carol Fannin, Mary Francis Harris, Kay Olsen** and **Karen Tellepsen** among them...but they were queens as well. **Maria Burke** was it concerning POW-WOW, **Sukey Fegnolio** ruled the Irari Court and **Pat Shannon** was Ramal Royalty. **Barbara Hoffman** was our Track Queen...I'll never forget seeing her in our silver warm ups...and of course none of us will ever forget her incredible voice. Then there was Queen of the May, Pat Shannon and her court...not one time did any of these lovely queens ask me to a Sadie Hawkins dance...nor did they Rick McDowell. Maybe that's the reason McDowell and I ended up roommates and life long friends at SMU...we even had to ask Donna and Cheryl to marry us.

Now lets, get some action from out on the floor. I was with **Joe DeLorenzo** - both of us were eating cookies in the library - when Miss Fuller sent us to Mr. Camp. Joe, why don't you finish the story for us?

(Richard Davis and others...

*Stories and sharing from whomever and wherever. Greetings from **Jerry Fonville.**)*

(Presentation to Larry - The Connie Doll replete with "White Shoulders")

Vic Driscoll mentioned this but it could come from any and all of us concerning **Gail Jordan**. She sang for a group who played for a Lamar dance. As she began her first number, everyone rushed the stage to watch her sing. She

sang a few lines then in a very casual way waived her hands and said, "Now its time for everyone to dance."

*Jon Fleming - Lamar Class of 1959
May 1, 2004*

Our Departed Classmates

Susan Campbell Lee

Gail Jordan Brown

Kay Patton Jones

Patsy Smith McClendon

Linda Williams Raley

Janet Willis Mason

David Adams

Clint Baird

Richard Browning

Gene Clements

Dick Cooksey

Roland DeWaal

Kirby Dupree

Stephen Engberg

Robert French

Donald Gartner

Sue Gerrard

Mack Glover

John Greenwood (died when we were in the 10th grade)

Jane Hand

Bill Holman

John Jamison

Clayton Munger

Ray Poage

Charles Schirar

Margaret Siefert

Medford Stuckey

Harold Taylor

Frank Winterhalter

Along with these dear friends and remembered ones, it has fallen to our generation (as it will be to our children's in time) to endure the loss of our parents, spouses, siblings and tragically some children. As we silently reflect on these and others we are bold to say our Thanksgivings for our enormous blessings and our time on earth. We are reminded that the reason that there's a shadow in the Valley of Death is because God's light is shining there too and always will.