

HAVING A PERFECT REUNION!



CHALINDA ENTERTAINMENT

Basic Timeline for Planning Your Reunion:

Initial Planning Meeting (10-12 months)

- i Talk about the type of reunion
- i Decide on treasurer and open an account
- i Create various committees—Decorations, Set-up, Clean Up, Program, Entertainment, Videographer, Photographer, Activities, Friday, Saturday or Sunday committee, Reservations, Registration
- i Decide how money is to be raised/fundraisers/raffles
- i Assign research topics/venues/printing
- i Discuss the state of your class database

Second Meeting (9 months)

- i Discuss research results
- i Decide on the type/duration of reunion
- i Decide on a date and ticket price
- i Stuff and mail Press Release looking for missing persons
- i Decide on wording of invitation
- i Decide how and who will be responsible for reservations
- i Details: Deposits: Venue, DJ, Printer; Liquor - venue or class responsibility; Door Prizes; Security

Third Meeting (8 months)

- i Discuss details and make final decisions on same
- i Prepare to mail invitations at next meeting: printing, envelopes, postage, etc.
- i Send out postcards as receipts as checks are received

Fourth Meeting (7 months)

- i Press Release announcing reunion
- i Fold, stuff and seal invitations and mail

Fifth Meeting (6 months)

- i Discuss how plans are going; feedback from classmates
- i Discuss details
- i Choose menus and confirm reservations with photographer, entertainment, caterer, etc.
- i Invite special guests

Sixth Meeting (4 months)

- i Review how reservations are going
- i Send out reminder invites to those who have not responded
- i Press Release announcing event

Seventh Meeting (3 months)

- i Discuss how plans are going; feedback from classmates
- i Discuss details

Eighth Meeting (2 months)

- i Discuss how plans are going; feedback from classmates
- i Discuss details
- i Press Release announcing event and final deadline

Ninth Meeting (1 month)

- i Discuss how plans are going; feedback from classmates
- i Create a detailed checklist of all reunion-day tasks
- i Discuss details

- i Make name tags, centerpieces, printed program and oral program
- i Press Release announcing open event

Tenth Meeting (2 weeks)

- i Discuss how plans are going; feedback from classmates
- i Discuss details
- i Prepare final list of paid attendees
- i Prepare registration packets including prepaid and will-call
- i Make signs
- i Give meal count to caterer and final payment to facility
- i Verify room set-ups and equipment arrangements with banquet manager

Eleventh Meeting (1 week)

- i Discuss how plans are going; feedback from classmates

BUDGET WORKSHEET

Anticipated Expenses		Anticipated Income	
Facilities Rental		Admission Fees	
Food			
Lodging			
Publicity			
Speaker Fees			
Supplies			
Technical Support			
Travel			
Security			
DJ			
Videographer/Photographer			
Decorations		Other Income:	
Other:		Other:	
TOTAL:		TOTAL:	

The first decisions to be made are type of reunion, how long, time of year. If possible poll your classmates to avoid conflicts and get a consensus for several choices. Time of year has many different possibilities to consider:

- Summer is when the kids are on vacation
- Autumn is when kids are in school
- Winter is good to go skiing or head south for warmer weather
- Spring is the time to beat the winter blahs
- In the off-season, rates are lower
- Some people like getting used to the same date (or weekend or month) each time
- Long holiday weekends give you extra travel time

How are 10-year, 25-year and 50-year high school reunions different?

Everyone agrees that the ten-year high school reunion is definitely the 'show off' reunion. Most class members have been out of school a few years and are on a career track. They're anxious to show off their accomplishments. Peter Zarter, a representative with Taylor Reunion Services in Dallas, Texas, says, "At the ten-year reunion, they are definitely out to impress. At the 20-year reunion, they are not out so much to impress because many have arrived. They're just at the reunion to have a good time." Reunions of 30 years and older, he said, generally have more school spirit, more fond memories. Those at 10-year reunions haven't been out of school long enough and things haven't changed that much. "Fifty-year reunions are kind of sad," he added, "because they realize this may probably be the last time they will see some of these people."

Who Does What?

Don't spend any money on services volunteers can perform. Assess your classmates' skills and talents to see if there is a volunteer solution. Is an artistic classmate willing to design invitations? Can someone provide and arrange flowers? Would a talented cook help cater a picnic? Or is someone with a computer willing to input and maintain your mailing list? Who wants to get together to kvetch, gossip and stuff envelopes for mailings?

Make sure many others get in on the action. How do you find volunteers? Ask, beg, demand, cajole, plead. Do whatever it takes to involve others in your success. Mention volunteer service lavishly in your correspondence and newsletter. For example, in the first mailing, ask for help to keep records, do subsequent mailings, produce a program, memory book, family history, cookbook or quilt. In the second mailing include a list of who volunteered to do what and what you still need volunteers to do. In your last mailing when you generate excitement and enthusiasm for the reunion itself, solicit on-site volunteers. And remember, volunteers don't even need to be in the same city. They can stay in touch by phone, fax, mail, and e-mail.

Committees

Some volunteers will be members of committees. Committees add to the fun and "ownership" of reunion organizing. They share planning, generate and implement ideas and inspire attendance. These are some committees to consider creating for your reunion team:

- Accommodations/housing: Selects site, makes reservations, site arrangements and welcomes members.
- Fundraising: Develops long-range fundraising projects and plans and stages reunion day fundraisers. Selects and purchases personalized souvenirs. Collects and organizes items to sell, auction or raffle at the reunion.
- Program: Plans and coordinates Reunion Day activities. Arranges event facilities or locations. If both a banquet and/or dance and a picnic/barbecue are planned, have a different coordinator for each. Also in charge of entertainment, sports events, games, ice breakers, books the band or DJ and arranges for a public address system, if necessary.

- Food: Plans, chooses and provides food, works with a caterer or banquet manager, or supplies eating suggestions for local restaurants.
- Transportation: Provides directions, maps, instructions. Lists accommodations and restaurants along the way, airport pickup, arrangements to move members to different locations during the reunion (hotel, picnic, tours, church, for example).
- Registration: Recruits a welcoming committee, checks in new arrivals, makes and distributes name tags, gets change and collects money from last minute arrivals.
- Photography: In charge of the photographer, videographer, and memory album. Hires professionals and arranges payment or locates willing classmates with the right equipment and expertise.
- Awards, scholarships, and prize coordinator: Sets criteria, announces, promotes and supervises judging, recruits judges, orders honorary plaques and presents awards.
- Worship or fellowship: Plans and presents rituals, ceremonies, memorials.
- Set-up/clean-up: Works hard on Reunion Day.

Create small get-togethers beforehand to ensure for a bustling class reunion.

To improve your chances of making a success of your reunion, organize small sessions in the months leading up to the reunion. It could simply be a lunch or dinner at a nearby restaurant or even a gathering over a cup of coffee in somebody's house. Doing this will keep your contact with others alive and active and ensure their participation in the planning. You will also get a feel of the kind of event being planned once you hear their views on expectations.

Again, you may choose to plan it for another time of the year. You can have a lunch or dinner to go with it, along with a tour of the school. Or you can let everybody know the time and place to meet in a pub and see how many show up.

AVOID THESE MAJOR REUNION PITFALLS:

- Can't talk to each other - too dark, too noisy. One problem we'd all experienced was right after dinner the lights go off, the music goes up and you're stuck if you don't dance. I'm not fond of our first solution to hold the dance in an adjoining room. Two sets of double doors connected the rooms so you can see in and mill between the rooms. Next we are going to try having a very big room with dancing at one end. Hope it works.
- Music - If you plan to include a dance for the event, make sure you play the hits that were popular during your teenage years. It is the only music that would suit a reunion dance. But try and arrange for a certain section of the dance hall or an adjoining room, for those who are more eager to catch up with long lost friends. Hits from high school will provide just the nostalgic feeling everyone will be looking for.
- Paying for drinks - We think it's kind of tacky to pay \$40-50 for an event and then be expected to pay \$2-3 for drinks. Even cokes! Some committees provide all drinks and some limit liquor to beer and wine. And finger foods after the meal keep people at the party.
- Have a real program - The last high school reunion I attended had a five-minute program thanking people for being there and acknowledging those who came from afar. Period. A program helps connect classmates and feel like they got their moneys worth.
- Ice breaking - Even though we are adults, everyone still finds it hard to go up to others and strike up a conversation. Some of the committee members should be in charge of circulating and saying, "Hey Bob, do you remember John? Come over and say Hi!" This gets conversations started. It doesn't take long before many people are talking and having a good time.
- Not staying - Some classmates don't feel they fit in. Give them a job. "You can't leave, I need someone to help hand out the awards." Or any job that makes them feel part of something - even clean-up detail.

BEWARE OF SURCHARGES AND HIDDEN FEES

The travel industry has started to really watch some hotels and resorts—they're adding surcharges and fees at check-out time! Experts say the hospitality industry started adding surcharges and charging fees to recoup losses suffered after 9/11. They have since recovered but this practice continues. Check-out is not the time you want to be disputing surprise fees and surcharges. You may want to add this list to your questions when negotiating for your reunion location:

Early check-in fee	Early check-out fee	Shuttle service fee
Baggage holding fee	Housekeeping fee	Mini bar deposit
Mini bar restocking fee	Ice and bottled water charges	Room service surcharge
Room service delivery fee	Bartender charge	Meet/eat fees
Room block fees	Cancellation fees	Guaranteed date fees
In-room safe surcharge	Room set/re-set charges	Internet charges
Phone service	Fax service	Business center
Fitness room	Golf club transfer fee	Resort amenity fees
Pet fees	Tourism promotion fees	Energy surcharge

These fees have become so ubiquitous that it is now a focal point in travel advertisements. Notice the hotels and resorts that advertise "no hidden fees or costs". This is the reason

TOP 10 REASONS NOT TO MISS YOUR HIGH SCHOOL REUNION

OK, so you're planning your reunion and you need something punchy in your next announcement to stimulate excitement about the event. Something to get those naysayers, procrastinators and ho-hummers to send in their reservations! While there are many reasons alumni don't attend their reunions or they put off making a decision until the day of the event, it drives reunion organizers CRAZY! As reunion planners, we want everyone to be as excited as we are about the upcoming event. Most alumni look forward to attending their reunions and are just happy someone has taken on the responsibility of planning them. But organizers need to get a large contingent of alumni to attend. So, what are some things you can do to create interest?

Put some pizzazz into the invitations.

- Make the announcements newsy, funny and enticing to create banter about the reunion. For example, include current updates about your alumni or high school.
- Invitations can include directions, maps, special requests and events (tours, parties, auctions, raffles), keepsake orders, accommodation instructions and menu choices.
- Offer discounts for those who respond early (a 5% discount or something free)
- Ask alums, including those unable to attend, to send in humorous high school stories or greetings for your next mailing.
- Include a list of top ten reasons your reunion is the event not to be missed. I offer my 10 best below:
 1. You'll laugh, cry and reminisce with some of your oldest friends.
 2. You don't have to lie about your age.
 3. Feel better realizing you are not the only one who has been married, divorced, married, divorced and is still looking.
 4. Of the many alumni coming to their first reunion, make them feel fully appreciated for finally showing up.
 5. Rekindle or begin new relationships.
 6. Even if you had some negative experiences in high school, don't fret about it, you'll most likely laugh about it now.
 7. Enjoy an evening out without the kids or grandkids, as the case may be.
 8. Use the reunion as an opportunity to diet and shape up.

9. Humor the committee; they usually are a bunch of deluded diehards who think everyone should show up to appreciate all their efforts.
10. And finally, studies have shown that those who were initially hesitant about attending their reunions discover it was the event they wouldn't have missed!

Make the questions for your biography questionnaire more interesting:

- What have you done in the five years since the last reunion?
- What pushed you to choose your life's work?
- In the past 50 years, what events have meant most to you?
- What have you learned in the past 50 years?
- How have you changed since 1951?
- What gets you up in the morning?
- What makes you smile?
- What makes you happy?
- What gives you the greatest satisfaction?
- What do you remember about one or two of your classmates (nothing embarrassing, please)?
- What do you remember about a teacher (that we can print)?
- What is your philosophy?
- What are your words of wisdom?
- What do you plan to do now?

CLASS PROJECTS

Cookbooks (can be a fundraiser too)

Recruit volunteers to collect and input recipes, stories, traditions and hints. Emphasize deadlines and follow-up regularly. Volunteers can sort recipes and stories into folders, one for each food category. They should eliminate duplicates and clarify confusing recipes, standardize measurements and abbreviations and proofread every word...over and over and over again.

It takes a dedicated volunteer editor to solicit contributions, provide overall direction and enforce deadlines. Additional volunteers are needed for book design, layout, production and distribution. Most of the work can be adapted to suit volunteer schedules and talents. You will still need volunteers even if you choose instead to contract with a printing company that specializes in cookbooks.

Quilts

If your project is a quilt, You will need volunteers to distribute, produce and collect the pieces. Then, someone must assemble and sew the final product.

Fundraising

Solicit volunteers to organize between-reunion activities to help pay for ongoing expenses. Volunteers can negotiate group rates, food prices, transportation and tickets, then mark-up the price and add the difference to your reunion account. These activities could include a theater party, style show, progressive meal or party, casino night, clambake, pig roast or bus tours.

Engage the most gregarious, outgoing committee members as a hospitality committee. A friendly atmosphere and people to talk to will help them have fun. Identify these goodwill ambassadors with bright red vests or special nametags. They can watch for first-timers and introduce them around.

Liquor:

Hard liquor, a regular sized bottle (4/5 qt., 26 oz., 750 ml.) bottle of hard liquor will give 17 servings, 1 1/2 oz. each.

You will need approximately 3 bottles of mix, or 1 1/2 liters of mix for every bottle of hard liquor. Plus some mix for the non drinkers. You will need orange juice and tomato juice too.

Depending on your crowd, you can choose the liquor accordingly, whisky, vodka, rum, beer, coolers, sherry etc., whatever their preferences.

Allow 3 drinks per person for 3 hrs.; 4 drinks per person for a buffet dinner and 5 drinks per person for an all evening late/night party.

Here's another:

HOW MUCH DO YOU NEED?	Here are some buying guidelines you may find useful. These are purchasing guidelines only, that you can adapt to suit your guests' and your product preferences.	number of people	50% beer case of 12 bottles /cans	30% wine 750 ml bottle 6-4oz glasses	20% spirits 750 ml bottle 24 drinks	Handy Party Calculator*
		12	2	2	1	
25	4	3	1			
50	9	10	2			
100	16	20	3			
150	25	30	5			
200	33	40	7			
250	42	50	8			
300	50	60	10			

*Table based on 4 drinks per person during a 3 hour event

And one more:

You can also manually calculate the alcohol you need. First, estimate how many people will be drinking at the event. Second, multiply this number by four (most people drink 2 to 3 standard drinks at a party. We estimate one extra drink per person so that you won't run out!) This tells you the number of standard drinks you need to accommodate. Next, translate this standard drinks number into the different kinds of drinks. A bottle of beer provides one drink, a 750ml bottle of wine provides five drinks, and a 750ml bottle of any spirit is about 17 drinks.

Finally, multiply those numbers by the preference percentages above (50% beer, 25% wine, 25% spirits) and you have a shopping breakdown of the alcohol you need to buy.

For example, a typical selection for a party of 100 people would be 400 standard drinks, distributed in this way:

200 12-oz. bottles of beer (200 drinks) *AND*

20 750ml bottles of table wine (100 drinks) *AND*

6 750 ml bottles of spirits (100 drinks)

FINDING MISSING CLASSMATES

Free Online Search Engines Help Find Missing People

Reunions magazine has the following suggestions for trying to track down missing friends using the free online services that are available:

SUPER PHONE BOOKS

Switchboard <http://www.switchboard.com>

You provide a last name. Because Switchboard requires only a last name, you can do nationwide searches for uncommon last names. This won't help with the Smiths on your list but will definitely simplify finding the Schwarzeneggers.

InfoSpace <http://www.infospace.com>

You provide a last name. You can select "Metro Area" if you know the person lives near a city.

AnyWho <http://www.anywho.com>

You provide last name and state. When someone moves they may keep their old phone number and you can search for that phone number and find the current address.

NEEDLES IN HAYSTACKS

Intelius <http://www.intelius.com>

You provide a last name. Intelius helps distinguish between different people with similar names, i.e. separates the 50-ish John Smiths from the 20-ish John Smiths. It helps track people who have moved. If you have an old address for Jane Smith, Intelius will tell you the latest state Jane lived in. Use almost any detail you have for someone to narrow down to a state then go to your Super Phone Book.

Peoplefinders <http://www.peoplefinders.com>

You provide a last name; can also search by date of birth. With reasonable accurate last name and ballpark age, Peoplefinders can give you the town and state. Then you can go to a Super Phone Book. Peoplefinders can show many former addresses dating back over 20 years which can help track people who have moved.

Tip: When Peoplefinders displays a list of names, click on a name to see several previous addresses associated with that person. You can do this for free, even though the display is part of the Peoplefinders order system.

US Search <http://www.ussearch.com>

You provide a last name and approximate age. Also searches by birthdate, maiden name and a range of ages. Provides similar info as Peoplefinders but lists twice as many entries for each search.

E-MAIL PHONE BOOK

MESA <http://mesa.rrzn.uni-hannover.de>

You provide first and last name. It is sort of a phone book for email addresses. It actually uses seven other databases of email addresses to find what you are looking for.

IF ALL ELSE FAILS

Google <http://www.google.com>

You provide any name information and you receive references to name. Try several variations on the person's name and enclose the name in quotation marks.

The following are search suggestions are more local to Cleveland:

<http://probate.cuyahogacounty.us/ml/pa.urd/mliw1000.display>

Real good for finding the married names---enter in the female's last and first name--see who they married--before you leave that page--put in the same female--with married last name, first name--and see if they remarried for a second, third time, etc.

<http://www.skipease.com/>

Pretty good for finding people anywhere by just first and last name because it will search all states--and give you "more info" which could give other clues where they might be.

<http://www.daplus.us/?Partner> <http://www.mamma.com/>

Probably the best one to start with. I suggest you just put in the person's first and last name--leave the city blank (because "parma" might actually be listed as cleveland), then just put in "ohio" in the state name and see what comes up.

There will be a section under it for "more listings"--keep going if you don't find it on the first screen.

Also--on the bottom all the way down--there may be some listings from "high schools" that sometime may give you another tip--although not always correct.

It will just take some practice--try to locate your name first. Just starting off is pretty easy---gets a little tougher when you start to find "james smith", "cathy jones", etc.

DECORATIONS

Planning and throwing a fabulous class reunion requires a great deal of work and effort on the part of the reunion committee. Adding decorations to your reunion party will make it that much more special for everyone attending. Decorations may be the last thing on your mind, but don't leave them until the last minute. Coming up with ideas and finding everything you're looking for can take much longer than expected.

Start discussing decoration ideas with your committee early on in the planning process. Assign this task to at least two people on the committee. Discuss and come up with a reasonable budget. You don't want to spend too much on decorations, but depending on what you're looking for they may not be that cheap either. Make sure that you factor the cost of the decorations into the ticket price.

Try and incorporate your school colors into all the decorations. This is easily done with colored balloons and streamers. You can also get banners printed up saying "Welcome Class of ____ " in your school colors. Balloons are a great idea because they're very effective and at the same time very inexpensive. Get a helium tank and place the balloons in every corner and even on the ceiling. If you have a fairly high budget you can also do flower arrangements in school colors. This is very effective and alumni will love it.

Flowers can be very costly so you may want to limit them to the registration table and up by the podium. Try to raffle everything off as door prizes since everyone has paid into the decorations. A great decoration idea is then and now pictures of all alumni. Ask everyone to send in a recent photo of themselves with their RSVP. You can then use this photo and their grad photo to make a then and now poster. Place these posters throughout the venue, everyone will enjoy checking out how their classmates have changed throughout the years.

You can also ask alumni to email or send pictures of their school days. Create a bulletin board of memories that everyone can check out and enjoy. They will bring back some great memories that many alumni may have forgotten.

Some other great decoration ideas include and school mascot memorabilia, old school jerseys, trophies that were won by alumni, and graduation caps and gowns. Anything that brings back fond memories of your school days will make a great decoration. Creating a memorabilia book for classmates to take with them is also a great idea. You don't need to do anything fancy, just a few features on classmates from different groups. Add any great pictures that were sent to you as well as memorable moments for your grad year. With all the home desktop publishing software available you can create these books with ease and at a relatively low cost. Special decorations will help make your class reunion a wonderful event that everyone will have fond memories of. By putting a little extra effort into the planning of this party your classmates will be impressed and thrilled with all the committee has done.

ICEBREAKERS AND ACTIVITIES

Reunions have the potential to be a lot of fun but a successful get-together needs detailed planning to keep the tediousness and stress levels low. The ingredients needed for a memorable class reunion are good food, old friends, alcohol and other drinks, plenty of conversation and a few interesting activities to keep the merriment flowing to keep the group coming back every year. More than the ingredients though, a creative way of bringing these elements together for a memorable gathering is key.

Unfortunately, after a few years of not seeing each other, perhaps everyone in the class reunion may seem like strangers with possibly different faces, looks and attitudes and it may be a bit difficult to break the ice and start conversations going with everyone for that much needed catch-up.

Nothing trivial about the pursuit

What better way to liven up a reunion than by doing some trivia. It will definitely be one of the highlights of the party as everyone gets to know or is reminded by interesting tidbits about each other. Playing a trivia game will get everyone involved in catching up with each other and make it much easier for information to flow especially if it's been a while since the class has last seen each other.

Tips for tidbits

Keep tabs of the places people have lived in since school, the jobs they had, or the number of children they have if any. Interesting bits of information are bound to turn up after some queries that will make for very interesting trivia. This is also a way for people to find out about others who may not think of offering information about themselves because they may think it uninteresting conversation topics. But on the contrary, reunions are about catching up and learning the interesting things that have happened to everyone since school.

Revive the vote

Most likely, your class voted on each other during your senior year. Review the votes and see if the results from back then still hold true now. It would be interesting trivia to remember who was voted what and who won what and if they can still stake their claim on the awards.

Remember though to leave certain votes out if you feel that some of the votes are sensitive in nature and may hurt someone's feelings or dredge up old hurts. Keep in mind that the goal of the reunion and the trivia game is to have fun and build camaraderie and not to ostracize some members of the group or make them feel self-conscious.

Teacher's pet

Look up old teachers and find out how they are and what they are doing. It would be interesting to have a set of photos of your teachers then. Have a before, during and after shot of each teacher and guests will find it interesting to see how much the teachers have changed from before you met them, while they were your teachers, and now after all these years. You can also have the guests guess what the teachers are doing now, how long have they been teaching and perhaps even guess their age.

Photo “Me”

Aside from doing a photo game with your teachers, it would also be nice to ask each guest to bring a baby photo of themselves and a current one as well. Then, guests would have to match the baby photo with the current photo and every time a match is made, you can show the person's photo from the year-book to track the changes in the person's appearance throughout the years.

Other Ideas

Plan a tour of your alma mater. Our hayride ended at the high school where a staff member supervised our visit. Except for classmates who continue to live in Canby, few had been back to the school since graduation. What a bunch of kids we suddenly became. Memories flooded back. We remembered the oddest details, laughed and commiserated over campus experiences. It was fascinating to explore every nook and cranny of the building. The staff person grinned through it all and asked if the school looked smaller. "Yes!" was the resounding reply.

Invite teachers as honored guests and pay for their meals. People are interested in what has become of faculty, especially those who have retired. At reunions student-teacher relationships become friend-friend.

Track down classmates who moved away before graduation, even those who left in the elementary grades. This can be a real challenge. At the reunion everyone can brainstorm names of lost friends and collect any known information on their whereabouts. Recruit an ambitious volunteer to continue to gather addresses over the next five years (or whenever the next reunion is). Lost friends will be flattered to be found and remembered and it will make for good visiting.

Share organizing chores which tend to fall on those who live in the old hometown. But with today's ease of communication, even those who live farther can effectively do some of the work (compiling biography booklets, planning entertainment). The older we get, the more nostalgic we become for the good old days of our youth. These tips can help make great the reunion that reunites us with those who shared that special time in our lives.

PROCLAMATIONS, KUDOS, CITATIONS, AND GREETINGS OF ALL KINDS

Your reunion group is special in many ways. Have you included public recognition of your group's uniqueness? Among the many ways to highlight, honor and celebrate your group is to solicit citations. Who do you think should know about and acknowledge your reunion? The mayor? The governor? Senators? Congressional representatives? The President of the United States? All possible. All doable.

The following is a sample of a letter written to solicit a proclamation. Specific questions necessary to prepare your proclamation should be answered in your initial correspondence. You'll need to introduce your reunion — what's special about your group? Include the date, place and number expected. Allow plenty of time. Note that in the example, the writer allowed seven months.

McNair-Brazil-Scott Reunion July 8-11,1993
Milwaukee, Wisconsin
Our reunion theme for 1993 is "Today's Youth. . .Our Families Future"

January 12, 1993
To: County Executive F. Thomas Ament
Milwaukee WI
Subject: Proclamation/Resolution honoring the McNair-Brazil-Scott Family Reunion

Dear Mr. Ament:

Milwaukee is hosting the annual McNair-Brazil-Scott family reunion at the Marc Plaza hotel from July 8

through July 11, 1993. We want to showcase the best that Milwaukee has to offer and would like to have our family honored via a proclamation. Our roots are in the state of Arkansas and our family has settled all over the USA with a sizable group in Milwaukee, Wisconsin.

We are expecting 250-300 people (visitors) for our 4 day reunion and want to have the proclamation presented at our family dinner on Saturday night, July 10, 1993. The proclamation should honor the legacy of the African-American Family as exhibited in the many generations of the McNair-Brazil-Scott Families.

Thanks for your time and effort. Please contact me ASAP when you have approved and scheduled the issuance of the proclamation. If you are available, we'd be honored if you'd personally present the proclamation to our family elders.

Sincerely,

Tyrone P. Dumas, Reunion Committee Chairperson.

City of Parma Heights, 6281 Pearl Road, Parma Heights, Ohio 44130, 440.884.9600

City of Parma, 6611 Ridge Road, Parma, OH. 44129, 440.885.8000

Governor Bob Taft, 30th Floor, 77 South High St, Columbus, Ohio 43215-6117, 614-466-3555

White House Salutes Reunions

Do you want the White House to recognize your reunion? Send a letter a minimum of four to six weeks in advance to Carmen Fowler, Room 91, The White House, Washington DC 20500. Include the name of your family, school or military group, reason for the reunion, date and name of the contact person. The busiest times are March through July and October through January.

Reunion Games

Make your own reunion puzzles!

Make your own reunion word game and play it at your reunion or include it in a newsletter. Go to <http://www.puzzlemaker.school.discovery.com/WordSearchSetupForm.html>. At the website, go through the steps to create a word puzzle using classmate names or words pertaining to your reunion. For example, I typed in the list of words shown after the puzzle.

Hints for creating a word search puzzle are also available online. It's easier and faster to generate smaller word-search puzzles. The smaller the puzzle, the more enjoyable it will be to solve.

The program ignores one- and two-letter words, punctuation, capitalization and duplicate words. It allows three-letter words in a puzzle, but they advise against it. Punctuation is treated as a space. Try not to use parts of words that might get lost in the puzzle or confuse the solver. For example, if you input the words cat and catalog, the word cat could get hidden in the word catalog.

Try and put together a nostalgia section for your reunion which could be a table filled with artifacts and souvenirs from your school days. You'll be delighted with the way it can spring up great conversations from everyone and revive memories long forgotten.

To make it even more involving ask each invitee to bring along an artifact from their school years. It can create a lot of fun and excitement and of course, uninhibited interaction.

Put up a photo gallery next to the section and encourage others to bring along theirs to pin up.

AWARDS

Few reunions miss the opportunity to award special people and deeds. Members of the National Association of Reunion Managers (NARM) are responsible for these suggestions.

First or Last to Register, Biggest Lottery Winner, First to Retire, Best Brush with Greatness Story, Turned Out Just as Expected, Still Drives (or is still restoring) the Same Car, Lives Closest to School (Never Left Home, Never Married, Woman with the Youngest Husband and Most Body Piercing.)

Use Senior Prom designations instead of "the usual." King, Queen, Biggest Flirt, Still Most Likely to Succeed. Use your noodle ... anything goes. Presentation can be Oscar-like with two different classmates giving each award; draw more classmates to the podium (circumvent old cliques). A handsome bald man can give a Hair Award (I like hair awards) and classmates-married-the-longest can give the Newest Newlywed award.

Who gets which award? Design your registration forms to collect "quantitative" information to present Most Children, Youngest Child, Oldest Child, Married Longest, and Newest Newlywed awards. Then there are always qualitative awards, such as Changed the Least or Biggest Beer Belly. The all-knowing omnipotent reunion committee can simply choose who gets these awards or the class can take nominations from the floor and do an "applause-meter" vote. You might want to limit the number of nominations from the floor. If giving an Eligible Bachelor/ Bachelorette Award, ask nominees to the microphone to present "campaign platforms."

When it's time to serve a buffet, instead of calling table numbers, a fun way to get a buffet line started is a trivia contest. Whoever jumps up with the correct answer first gets first table position to chow down. By the time the next question is asked and answered correctly, it's time for another table to get in line, and so on. Make sure questions aren't so hard that no one knows the answer or so easy that the entire room is likely to jump up at once. It's also a great way to keep everyone entertained while they're waiting their turn.

MORE TIPS FOR SCHOOL REUNIONS

- 1) Because school reunions require a lot of organization, as well as work to track down missing classmates, you should get started a least a year ahead.
- 2) You must have a lot of patience because it is usually just a small core of people who are really interested enough to get involved in the work of planning a reunion.
- 3) Get the most organized of these people to lead and the others to follow. The more people you can recruit the cheaper it will be and the more successful it will be.
- 4) Taking all this into consideration you might be very wise to contact a company that specializes in organizing school reunions. Run the phrase "school reunions" in several on-line search engines to come up with some of these companies.
- 5) When the day comes for the reunion recruit professionals to handle the registration process. That's so that none of your classmates have to miss precious hours of socializing because they are volunteers stuck at the registration tables.
- 6) Don't schedule the reunion during holidays or summer vacation time.
- 7) Guard that expanding contact list with your life. Make several copies and get it transferred to a good computer database program such as Act or Goldmine. Now you can do mass contacting through fax and email and generate "Where Are They Now?" directories with relative ease.
- 8) Select a site with more than ample parking and make sure that you can occupy it into the later evening hours.

9) Keep your classmates updated with emails, letters, and faxes of your progress and keep urging them to schedule to attend. Once the date and site are set immediately send invitations with instructions

10) Send a video invitation! Total cost of a couple of bucks per invitation. Let the committee members talk on camera about the reunion and get people motivated to come. The additional perk of this is showing everybody some of their old classmates on the tape. You will get higher participation than with just a paper invitation.

11) Other than "warm ups" or "ice breaker" games and introductions, don't plan a bunch of games. People mostly want to talk. Give people time to get re-acquainted and move about trading stories and remembrances. This is really what they came here to do.

12) The ladies want to dress to kill so don't restrict them by choosing a theme that demands a certain costume. In fact, this is one event you really do not need a theme for and we advise against it.

13) Definitely have a dance floor and a bar. Of course, have the DJ play all the "class songs" from back in the day!

FAMOUS SONG MATCH UP

Objective: Work against the clock to match songs and artists/songwriters.

Categories: Adults, Ice Breakers

Game type: Passive. Little or no movement is required.

Players: 3 or more players

Needed: Song lists for each player

Rules: Using famous songs, list song titles on one side of a page, and the original artists or songwriters on the other side. Make enough copies for all guests. Challenge guests to match as many as possible. See idea list below.

Reunion Toast

"Today we toast our memories –
the students, athletes, and friends
we once were – reunited for a time,
reliving our shared past.

Everything that happened here
played its part in shaping us,
so we return to remember
the youth we were.

We also honor those who
taught and encouraged us.

We remember old friends –
those with us now,
those who couldn't make it,
and those who are no longer with us.
Dear friends, lift your glasses with me
to our younger selves – their activities,
their plans, their promise.

May we always remember with gratitude
their part in making us who we are today."

Friends in High School Are Forever Young

Friends in high school are forever young.
Unchanged, they're where you always will belong.
The crowd is never gone, the pleasure stays,
The music of the moment always plays,
The time remains a field of wistful grace
To which you may return from anyplace.
Of course, you may still know them later on

When you are someone else and years have run;
And you may love them dearly, and they you,
But time must make their friendship something new.
Meanwhile, flourishing within your heart
There is a whole, of which you were a part:
A group of friends, one in love and pain,
In whom your longing comes alive again.

AFTER THE REUNION

How do you keep in touch after the reunion?

Class officers should do an annual postcard mailing. Just say "Hi. Are you still there?" If you mail them once a year, they will still go to a forwarding address if the person has moved. Annual newsletters and directories with addresses and names of spouses and children also help. Classmates who live close should plan a local annual event like a picnic to keep friendships alive.

Final reunion committee meeting:

- Send memory books and other hand-outs to those who paid but did not attend.
- Send thank you notes, follow-up letters
- Close bank account once all checks have cleared.
- Store reunion supplies in a convenient location for next time
- Keep the ambiance alive by maintaining a regular newsletter
- Discuss what worked and what didn't work for future reference
 1. Did we meet our goals/objectives with this event?
 2. Did we meet our budgetary goals?
 3. Did we have enough volunteers for the event?
 4. What could we have done differently to make the event better/more productive?
 5. Did we have enough advertising/PR for the event? How could we have made this better?
 6. Did we execute the program in a professional manner?
 7. Did we face any group conflict with this program? What was it? How was it resolved?
 8. Would we bring the vendors/performers in again? Was it worth it?

And don't forget to send the Alumni Association your latest database to maintain as well as an article about your reunion for the Association newsletter and website.

CLASS REUNION TIME

Every five years, as summertime nears,
An announcement arrives in the mail,
"A reunion is planned; it'll be really grand;
Make plans to attend without fail."

I'll never forget the first time we met;
We tried so hard to impress.
We drove fancy cars, smoked big cigars,
And wore our most elegant dress.

It was quite an affair; the whole class was there.
It was held at a fancy hotel.
We wined and we dined and we acted refined,
And everyone thought it was swell.

The men all conversed about who had been first
To achieve great fortune and fame.
Meanwhile, their spouses described their fine houses
And how beautiful their children became.

The homecoming queen, who once had been lean,
Now weighed in at one-ninety-six.
The jocks who were there had all lost their hair,
And the cheerleaders could no more do kicks.

No one had heard about the class nerd
Who'd guided a spacecraft to the moon;
Or poor little Jane, who'd always been plain;
She married a shipping tycoon.

The boy we'd decreed "most apt to succeed"
Was serving ten years in the pen,
While the one voted "least" now was a priest;
Shows you can be wrong now and then.

They awarded a prize to one of the guys
Who seemed to have aged the least.
Another was given to the grad who had driven
The farthest to attend the feast.

The look at a class picture, a curious mixture
Of beehives, crew cuts and wide ties.
Tall, short or skinny, the style was the mini;
You never saw so many thighs.

At our next get-together, no one cared whether
They impressed their classmates or not.
The mood was informal, a whole lot more normal;
By this time we'd all gone to pot.

It was held out-of-doors, at the lake shores;
We ate hamburgers, coleslaw and beans.
Then most of us lay around in the shade,
In our comfortable T-shirts and jeans.

By the fortieth year, it was abundantly clear,
We were definitely over the hill.
Those who weren't dead had to crawl out of bed,
And be home in time for their pill.

And now I can't wait; they've just set the date;
Our fiftieth is coming, I'm told.
It should be a ball, they've rented a hall
At the Shady Rest Home for the old.

Repairs have been made on my hearing aid;
My pacemaker's been turned up on high.
My wheelchair is oiled, my teeth have been boiled;
And I've bought a new wig and glass eye.

I'm feeling quite hearty, I'm ready to party;
I'll dance 'til the dawn's early light.
It'll be lots of fun; I just hope there's one
Other person who gets there that night.

'Anonymous'