
Medical Lake High School

Alumni Association



Birds of a feather - MLHS Cardinals - Flock together



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Editor's Notes

Four months and counting down to Founder's Day 2009. The winter, again this year, slowed us up in our planning. We are, however, on track for another great weekend with our classmates. We really would like to see more classmates that have not taken the opportunity to attend one of our gatherings recently or have never attended. I need to remind those of you who need to arrange your schedule to be able to attend, *Do it now before it is too late!!...*

We would like to honor the class of 1959 (50th year) to ride in the parade on Tim House's truck "Emma" on Saturday... Details to follow in a future Newsletter.

Committee Meeting Notes and Schedule

The committee continues to meet on the first Wednesday of the month at 6 PM. This month (February) we did not meet at the High School because it was closed due to structural safety issues. We should be meeting at the High School in March. If you want to verify the location of the meeting contact Bill Carl at (509) 993-4723 prior to the meeting and I will tell you where we are going to be. Schedule of meetings through Founder's Day:

March 4th

April 1st

May 6th

June 3rd

June 18-21(Founder's Day)

Reunion Notices

Rich Sloan '60 contacted me last week and asked if I would include a query for the classes of 1959, 1960, and 1961. He would like to know if there is an interest for these classes to organize a reunion for this year (time is short) or next year. Please contact Rich at: (509) 276 8293 or PO Box 13 Chattaroy WA 99003-0013

The 40 year reunion for the MLHS Class of 1970 is scheduled for the first weekend of August, 2010. Any classmates of 1970 who have not yet heard from the committee are invited to contact Donna (Inman) Sealock for information at: djsealock@aol.com or (509) 389 5175. We are planning a 3 day event including a golf opportunity and tour of the High School in addition to our traditional activities. Details and registration info will be mailed to all classmates on our roster in February. Hope to see you there! -- Donna

Fund raisers

The MLHSAA will hold its Second Annual Garage Sale at Darrell Cogswell's Medical Lake Home on the projected dates of May 8th and May 9th. Confirmed dates, address and times will be in the April Newsletter.

Founder's Day

Unless someone has a better idea, we will schedule the following events from June 18th to June 21st :

Thursday Evening:

Lake Coeur d'Alene Sunset Dinner Cruise

Friday All Day:

Bowling, Golf, Tour, Wineries, Etc.?

Friday Evening:

All Class Reunion Potluck Get -Together

Saturday A.M. and P.M.:

Alumni Booth, Parade, Yearly Meeting, Dinner and Dancing

Sunday Morning:

Breakfast

Dates, Events and Times will be in the April Newsletter.

We need people to walk in the parade, work the booth and attend the yearly meeting

For Alumni coming from out-town the motel of choice is:

Stratford Suites
11808 W. Center Lane
Airway Heights, WA 99001
509.321.1600 or 888.705.8877

Suite includes:

Two Bedrooms – 2 Queen Size Beds
Bath
Small Kitchen
Living Room with Very Large Cable T.V.
Air Conditioning, Phone, and More
Very Nice and Close To Events
Good Price

Call Peggylee @ 509. 466.5069 or email @ peggy44lee@aol.com for any questions and room numbers. Sandy (Wood) Rohrich and Peggylee stayed there last August and had a great time!

They picked out a block of rooms so everyone would be close together.

One of Our Own

HENRIETTA NIEMAN WILKES

Class of 1925 – Medical Lake High School

On October 7, Henrietta Nieman Wilkes turned 102 years young, becoming our oldest alumni of Medical Lake High School and the oldest member of St. John's Lutheran Church in Medical Lake.

In 2002, St. John's Lutheran Church celebrated their Centennial and produced a booklet on the history of St. John's and Henrietta gave a summary of her life in Eastern Washington. Here are a few of "in her own words" of Henrietta's history:

"My Parents were William and Henrietta Nieman who came from Germany in 1900 with two children and homesteaded in Washtucna. They bought the land from the government for \$1.00.

We were in the land of sand, sagebrush and rattlesnakes....There were a lot of Native Americans close by, some very personal friends of the folks. I can remember when they would come to the house I was afraid of them and would crawl under the table that had a tablecloth hanging low so they couldn't see me. Water had to be hauled from the Snake River below the property.....

When I was five years old, I had the chicken pox and mother said she could not keep me in bed so I developed pneumonia and was sent to St. Luke's Hospital [the old St. Luke's on the west side of Spokane]. I was not expected to live and was baptized on April 22, 1911. I can remember the day I came home by horses and wagon. I was on a bed in the back. When we came through the field, I could see the house and it was like heaven had opened up. My mother developed asthma and the doctor advised her to move to a better climate and get away from the sagebrush and dust.

My father loaded our personal belongings including our cattle and other animals on the train and moved to Medical Lake. We lived north of Martin St. on 12 acres of timberland. We arrived in the evening and were greeted by an elderly man named Bill Whalen who had lived in the house.

Henrietta was the 5th Nieman child of 8 children (4 boys and 4 girls). All of Henrietta's school days were at the only school in Medical Lake, some of us refer to it as the old High School which is now the tennis courts on LaFevre Street.

After graduation in 1925, Henrietta worked at Lakeland Village and in 1929 married Harry Wilkes. Henrietta's father, Gus Nieman, operated a trucking freight business. Harry and Henrietta moved to Walla Walla, WA while Harry was working for the trucking freight business and then moved back to Medical Lake in 1935 or 1936 when Harry's father, John Wilkes, died. John Wilkes had been the Mayor of Medical Lake and operated a lumber business where the current Masonic Hall is located. Harry continued working the lumber facility adding hardware and feed. The business, Village Supply eventually moved to the current location on Lake Street. The Wilkes moved into their home on the corner of Washington and Herb streets in 1940 and Henrietta resided there until recently. Harry also built a motel across the street which Henrietta supervised and often her niece, Eleanor Ahlf (class of 1937) would clean for Henrietta. Eleanor remembers that Henrietta was a stern task master in running the motel. The motel is now apartments/group home.

The Wilkes did not have any children but contributed to their community in many ways. Harry served on the Medical Lake City Council. Both Harry and Henrietta were very active in St. John's Lutheran Church.

Henrietta and Harry were married for 70 years and Harry died when he was 97. Henrietta has out lived all of her siblings.

I recently visited with Henrietta and asked what she contributed to her longevity. Henrietta said: ***"My mother always told me to keep busy and always have a purpose."*** Quoting again from St. John's Centennial booklet:

"I taught Sunday School and was the first woman to serve on St. John's Church Council. I made hundreds of quilts for the church. For a couple of years no one was working on quilts so I worked by myself at home. The first year I made 40 and the following year I made 42. I packed them myself and they were sent to New Guinea."

Henrietta loved to make quilts and one could always tell a quilt made by Henrietta by her feather stitch. For St. John's centennial, various members of the congregation each created a square decorated in any style they chose. All of the squares were made into a large quilt wall hanging (I am guessing it is 4' by 6'). Henrietta made a quilted square with a cross in the center and various pastel stripes for the shaded background. Henrietta's square is the center of the wall hanging which shows off her special feather stitch.

Henrietta was constantly baking and giving her baked goods to those in need. Her husband Harry would have a large garden each year and pass out the produce to friends, neighbors, etc. and Henrietta loved her flower garden. Henrietta drove and baked until she was 99. She has a large collection of salt and pepper shakers, approximately 100 sets. Harry made her special shelves to display her collection

Henrietta's sister, Marie was an Army nurse and traveled all over the world, and was the major contributor to Henrietta's collection.

My memorable moment of Henrietta: After church when she was in her late 90's, I asked if I may assist her to her car. The choices were to descent several stairs with a strong railing to the ground level or go out the front door and a very steep ramp in front of the church. Henrietta was using a cane at the time. It was a beautiful day and she chose the ramp instead of the stairs!!!! Henrietta is 5'10" and I am 5'3" so we very slowly and carefully shuffled down the ramp. As we approached Henrietta's car, I noticed the driver's side mirror was dangling by a cord and there were various green scraps and dents from the front fender to the back. After I secured Henrietta in the vehicle and walked to my car, I also noticed the passenger side mirror was dangling and the same green scrapes and dents. I watched Henrietta back out of her parking space without checking to see if any vehicles were approaching. She turned right on Herb St. and proceeded through intersections again without checking for traffic. A quick tap on the breaks and she made an abrupt left turn entering her driveway, without slowing down and AIMED for the garage. As I drove by Henrietta's garage, I thoroughly understood why she had no side view mirrors and all of the scrapes and dents on each side of her car. Henrietta's garage was made for a compact car not the sedan she was driving.

Henrietta is still a spitfire and doesn't mince her words. If some teenager was sent to the Village Supply on errands by their parents, that individual would ALWAYS be on their best behavior and under no circumstances did anyone ever dare to sass Mrs Wilkes.

For those who would like to send Henrietta a card congratulating her on the achievement of 102 years AND that she could celebrate her 83rd class reunion from Medical Lake High School this past June, here is her address: Henrietta Wilkes, Cheney Care Center, Rm. 20, 2219 N. Sixth Avenue, Cheney, WA 99004

Article written by:
Linda Anne House,'63
Secretary, MLHS Alumni Assn. and
St. John's Lutheran Church
Council

Memorials

The Association wishes to extend it's sincere condolences to the families and loved ones of the below named alumni who are no longer with us.

Nancy (Griffith) Rice-*Class of 1952*- The staff of Medical Lake School District lost a long-time employee and friend on December 1, 2008 with the passing of retired school secretary, Nancy Rice. Nancy was a well-respected and loved secretary at Blair Elementary School and Michael Anderson Elementary School , retiring in 2005 after 40 years of service. She is remembered by staff who worked with her as the person who could answer any question, as well as a good person to talk to if things weren't going so well. One teacher said "She would remind us of things we never knew we needed to know".

Nancy was a native to the Medical Lake community, having been born and raised in Deep Creek, and attended Medical Lake High School. Nancy's family includes her husband of 56 years, Ralph and daughters Janeen VanSlyke, Cheryl Ring(Ken), Claudine Muelken(Lance) and Teresa Rae(Dennis).

If you are aware of other alumni who have passed, please advise a committee member so they can be mentioned in the newsletter.

