

Alumni Association

Keeping Ties with Our Alumni



TAYLOR
School District



July 2018 Newsletter

2018 GRADUATION

HARRY S TRUMAN HIGH SCHOOL held their last graduation ceremony June 7th in the packed Sportsplex in Taylor. This was Truman's 44th and last graduating class. They had the person who received the very first diploma back in 1974 on stage with the person who received the very last Harry S Truman Diploma 44 years later.

John F Kennedy High School also held their ceremony in the Sportsplex. Approximately 200 graduates were led into the ceremony by 20 previous graduates dressed in white caps and gowns. Groups of

four representing the previous graduating classes entered in order of decades the 60's then the 70's, 80's 90's and 2000's. The female graduates wore red and the males wore blue. Students were granted permission to decorate the tops of their caps and they looked super.



JFK FAREWELL HUGE SUCCESS

Ken Renner reported over 1,000 graduates attended one or more, of the three-day celebration events. One graduate flew in from Germany. Graduates were present from all over the USA.

The graduates truly enjoyed seeing more than 50 of their teachers at the Friday gathering.

The rains came on Saturday but did not deter Grads from attending. It is reported that some 500 were there at various times.

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WHO IS KENNETH RENNER

Who is the person who put together the JFK three day closing event? It was Kenneth (Ken) Renner... let's get to know him.

Back in the sixties , the world was changing rapidly - riots, Woodstock, political unrest, World Series Champions, and student rebellion or was it just the coming of age? John F. Kennedy was elected President and a new sense of vigor and youthful exuberance overtook the country.

So, who is Kenneth (Ken) Renner? A student many knew but didn't really know, a quiet "wall flower" in the JFK class of 1970.



Ken Renner Class 1970

Someone who wasn't known in Mr. Pantalone's office and barely known in Mrs. Manley's counseling office, the average Joe student.

Without a crystal ball of the future, who would have known what was in store for this kid. Those intangible things that teachers instill in students without us really knowing they are doing it was in his immediate future.

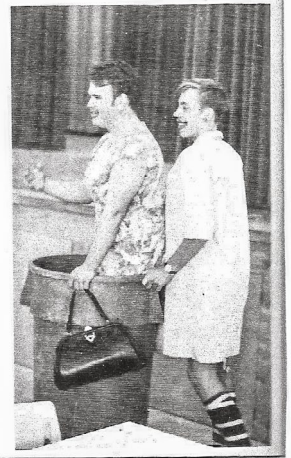
It wasn't until later in life that I started to realize what JFK really meant to me. Who were the teachers who may have seen the hidden potential in this average Joe? Mr. Sclater was one and unknowingly started instilling leadership in me, not on the football field but in gym class, by having me start our class with calisthenics, leading others.

Laura Evans-Trent, my junior year Spanish teacher. I wasn't a good, not even a bad student, I was her worst nightmare. Remember I said "wall flower" earlier? I wasn't about to get up and do a skit, in Spanish, in front of the whole 2nd hour class. I'd like to think that I changed her as much as she changed me, by giving me more latitude than others in doing these skits.

While college was short lived in 1970, the work place became my life. Becoming a Journeyman Electrician, at McLouth Steel, likely rekindled those leadership seeds first planted by those listed above and many others. It was part of our job description to train others, leading others. As time passed I acquired valuable training by leading others on committees at work in employee work groups; to find better ways of doing things.

The 1990's have now rolled around and college once again called, where plant food and sunshine finally got through the fog to the "wall flower". My wife, in 1992 and fellow JFK classmate, Susan Landis, says that she has created a social butterfly by watering that "wall flower." Becoming Student Government President, at

Varsity Club Club of honor and pride



L-R Ken Renner & Dan Miller
Class of 1970.

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Wayne County Community College, was the match that really lit the fire. By now my daughter, from a first marriage, was starting to look at college opportunities' and a recruiter from the Coast Guard Auxiliary trying to get her to go to the Coast Guard Academy. Well, that didn't happen but Susan and I joined the Coast Guard Auxiliary in 1997. In the auxiliary, leadership is the key component of everything they do and it just clicked for me. Member Training was my vehicle to success as I rose up to the National Training Department Division Chief for Leadership.

So, why a weekend party? After the Last Homecoming, I overheard some Facebook chatter, from those unable to make it on that nasty weather night in October, for another get together. By November there was a positive response and I just jumped on the idea. At first I thought of the carnival at the end of the movie Grease. Thank goodness for someone bringing me back to reality. The idea finally settled in on a weekend event like most class reunions. A call for a committee of volunteers was put out and many responded. I was appointed Chairperson with co-chair Adrienne Trent Johnson "95", Susan Landis "70", Ray Lauerman "72" Mike Connelly "69", Michele Marchand Rinehart "69", Roseanna McGuckin Hammons "71", Tim Entwisle "04", and Cathy Mallon Taylor "70" made up the foundation of the group. I petitioned the school board with our idea and got their approval, then went before

Taylor City Council to get a waiver on the costs for permits, after some discussion it was approved.

So time has really flown by and things are changing once again. Declining enrollment of public schools, the reasons why will be left for others to define. After 53 years, time has finally caught up to our beloved JFK, and closing was, a fate no one could fathom. Now 2018 would be the end of the building that was home for those formative years of our lives. However, the one thing no one can take away from us are the memories that helped shaped us and the legacy of John F. Kennedy High School. To the teachers who started our learning, to the administrators who tried to keep us on the straight and narrow to success, the spirit of Camelot and John Fitzgerald Kennedy will remain with us forever.

Once an Eagle Always and Eagle!

Kenneth (Ken) Renner, Kennedy V.P.
Alumni Association

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continues from page 1, JFK Farewell

Over 100 were back Sunday for the Pancake Breakfast and at noon gathering in the gym to sing the Alma Mater.

Ken would like to express his appreciation to his committee and other volunteers who helped to make this a huge success.

GOOD THINGS ARE HAPPENING IN THE CITY OF TAYLOR

Taylor



Left to Right: Mark Sweeney, Principal Deputy Librarian of Congress; Sarah Roe and Vanessa Verdun-Morris, Taylor Community Library; Karen Keninger, Director, and Richard Smith, Chief, Network Division, National Library Service for the Blind & Physically Handicapped

► Library of Congress Honors Taylor Community Library for Service to Blind Readers

Sarah Rowe, JFK Graduate and Vanessa Verdun-Brown HST Graduate are responsible for this program

The National Library Service for the Blind and Physically Handicapped (NLS) at the Library of Congress has honored Braille and Talking Books at Taylor Community Library (BTBTCL) in Taylor, Michigan, with the Advisory and Outreach Center of the Year Award for their outstanding service in 2017 to readers who are visually or physically disabled.

“Each year the Library of Congress recognizes the work of state and local libraries that provide braille and talking-book services over the previous year to people who cannot use print materials,” said NLS director Karen Keninger.

Braille and Talking Books at Taylor Community Library—an advisory and outreach center of the Michigan Braille and Talking Book Library—was created in 2016 to meet the needs of more than 1,000 blind and disabled patrons when the Wayne County Braille and Talking Book Library closed.

Among its achievements in that short time, it has introduced a monthly book discussion, a support group for people with visual impairments and a program that focuses on assistive technology instruction and developments. The library also installed a conference line so people who cannot attend events can participate remotely.

“Serving people, regardless of ability or disability, is our passion,” said Vanessa Verdun-Morris, assistant library director at BTBTCL. “Anyone can walk through our doors and be sure staff will take the extra time to help them find materials or solutions that work for them.”

The Network Library Awards were created by NLS in 2005. A committee of librarians and consumer-organization representatives select finalists from among nominated libraries based on mission support, creativity, innovation in providing service and demonstrated reader satisfaction. The winner is selected from finalists by the NLS director.

The NLS administers the braille and talking-book program, a free library service available to U.S. residents and American citizens living abroad whose low vision, blindness or disability makes reading

regular printed material difficult. Through its national network of libraries, NLS mails books and magazines in talking-book and braille formats and playback equipment directly to enrollees at no cost. Music instructional materials are available in large-print, ebraille, braille, and recorded formats.

➤ In June the Taylor Library presented a 4-step series on employment searching.

June 2nd	How to write resumes
June 9th	How to write cover letters
June 16th	Job search strategies
June 23rd	Interview preparation

➤ **Biking for Health—Fun—Camaraderie**

Every Thursday in Heritage Park, bikers gather at 7 pm. Sixty to seventy bikers participate in bike runs of 10 to 15 miles lasting 2 to 3 hours. Spread the word! Fun-fun-fun, Room for you!

Contributed by our newest reporter, Larry Keck, TCH 1963

WHAT'S HAPPENING IN THE TAYLOR PUBLIC SCHOOLS

➤ Randall Elementary School - Students, faculty and parents of Randall Elementary attended a concert presented by 3rd, 4th and 5th graders. The concert was in support of third grade teacher James Newsome. Newsome developed an infection in January 2018 and went into septic shock. He endured 13 surgeries and lost both of his hands and feet and most of his right leg.

“He is one of the most beloved teachers in Randall,” said teacher Donna Calahan. Mr. Newsome was in attendance and it was the first

time students had seen him since January. The function raised over \$3,000 to help offset the cost of prostheses.

The story of the event was on Channel 4 in Detroit and may be seen at www.clickondetroit.com, and search James Newsome.

➤ Bair Moody - Blair Moody “Hoop House” is a greenhouse operated by the students and volunteers. It is used to teach gardening and to raise vegetables for the local food banks. A fundraiser is to be held July 14th to support this project. “Taylor In Bloom” is a tour of 11 gardens in Taylor. The cost is \$8 per person. Check in at the Taylor Conservatory & Botanical Gardens between 9 am - 11 am. Maps will be available at check in. Vendor shopping will be available from 11 am to 1 pm at St. Constance Church on Kinyon Street. Lunch for sale will be in the garden.

➤ Taylor Foundation Awards Scholarship - Twenty nine 12th graders were awarded a total of \$17,150 in scholarships from the Foundation. Ken Nelson, Chairman of the Scholarship Committee, has stated that the cost of a college education is so expensive and there are so many needy students, that he would like to raise \$100,000 for scholarships next year. Why not consider donating to the program? Just let us know of your interest and we will discuss the program with you. Any amount is appreciated. For as little as \$500 you can name the award and meet the student selected to receive it. It is a truly gratifying experience.

ALUMNI NEWS!



Welcome New Lifetime Members

Ian Simpson, JFK 1973

Sue Vogrin O' Sullivan JFK 1971

Why have you not become a lifetime member?

It is simple, just make a \$25 check payable to Taylor Alumni Association include school and year of graduation and mail to: Taylor Alumni Association, 11501 Beech Daly Road, Taylor Mi 48180.



We Heard From You!

➤ John Frasure, TCH 1969, regarding the Truman Room 126 – Mr. Alexander story that appeared in the Alumni Newsletter April 2018.

Mr. Alexander was an inspiration to me and the

reason I became a history teacher. I will retire next year after 45 years of teaching. He challenged me that I would not get an A on his final exam. After the school year ended I rode my bike to school just to see my grade. I got an A. It took a few years for me to realize what he was actually doing (inspiring me to be great). I also played basketball at TCH and he ran the clock at our home games. We would talk about the game before class the next day. He criticized my play when I deserved it. I was not the most talented player on the team.

Each semester I have one or two of my students surprise me with a letter or card telling how much I changed their life. When I read the article in the Alumni News, it reminded me where I got it from. My only regret is I did not tell Mr. Alexander how much he meant to me. I hope he knew.

Would Appreciate Your Help

➤ I saw an article stating that Michael Gray, TCH 1966, had been appointed to the Naval Academy by Congressman William D. Ford. I would like to do a followup. Please help with information on getting in touch with Michael.

- John Pantalone

WHERE ARE THEY NOW?

DON PAGETTE

Don Pagett 1962 graduate of Taylor Center High retired in 2008 from his position as Executive Director and Chief Executive Officer of the Foothills Area Authority, a four-county public program providing mental health, developmental disability and substance abuse services to citizens in need in Western North Carolina. Prior to his work with the Authority, Don served as the Director of the McDowell County North Carolina Department of Social Services. He also directed state institutions that provided rehabilitation services for juvenile delinquents in Texas and North Carolina and served as CEO of a residential facility for persons with developmental disabilities. Don began his 40 year career in public service as a Peace Corps volunteer in Nepal. He lived in a thatch hut in a small village near the Indian border and assisted the farmers in his village with rice production. Don graduated from Olivet College in 1966 and later earned his Master's degree in Public Health from the University of North Carolina.

Don and his wife Marilyn, a retired psychotherapist, live near Asheville, NC. They have traveled extensively throughout India, Nepal and southeast Asia. One trip lasted 18 months from mid-2013 to early 2015 where

they established a semi-permanent residence in Pokhara, Nepal. Don and Marilyn have made many friends in Asia and visit with them for 2-3 months every year since 2008.

Don may be reached at dandpagett@gmail.com. He can also be found on Facebook.

UGLY YTTERP

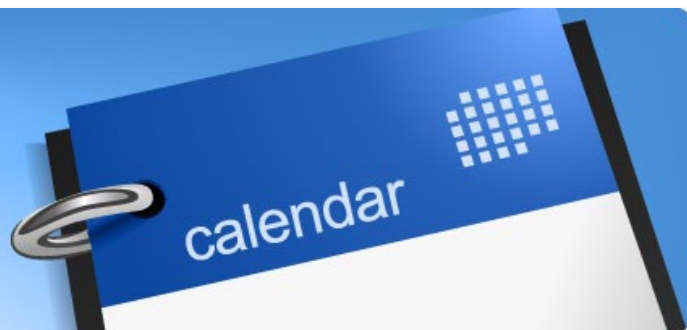
I'm very ugly,
So don't try to convince me that
I'm a beautiful person
Because at the end of the day
I hate myself in every single way.
And I'm not going to lie to myself by saying
There is beauty inside of me that matters.
So rest assured I will remind myself
That I am a worthless, terrible person
And nothing you say will make me believe
I will still deserve to be loved
Because no matter what
I am not good enough to be loved
And I am in no position to believe that
Beauty does exist within me,
Because whenever I look in the mirror I always think
Am I as ugly as people say?

(now, read from the bottom up)

We would appreciate any comments you have on this writing.

Upcoming Events

Mark your calendar



August 11th

Truman High School Class of 1978 will be celebrating their 40 year reunion at the Taylor Conservatory & Botanical Gardens, 22314 Northline Road, Taylor, MI 48180 from 6:00 PM – 11:00 PM EDT. All classes are welcome to attend. The cost is \$50 and includes: Appetizers, Dinner & Dessert from Alvi's BBQ, Music, Bonfire & Tons of Reconnecting, Reminiscing and Fun. 1978-era Music and Dance Floor. \$\$ Cash Bar \$\$\$. Please wear comfortable attire for an outdoor garden party. Note - heels may be challenging in the grass. Purchase tickets via the Eventbrite link, click [here](#).

August 18th

JFK Class of 1978 40th reunion. Masonic Hall 23263 Goddard Road. Dinner and Dancing followed by a picnic in the park on Sunday, August 19th. The cost is \$35, please send check to "JFK Class Reunion" c/o Kathy Davis 11141 Westpoint, Taylor MI 48180. For more info email Kathrynquiel2017@gmail.com.

October 6th

JKF Class of 1968's 50th Reunion will be held at the Taylor Meadows Golf Course, 25360 Ecorse Rd., Taylor, MI 48180 from 6:30 pm to 11:30 pm. If planning to attend the cost is \$40 per person for dinner and dancing and must be paid by June 30, 2018. There will be a cash bar. Please make checks payable to John F Kennedy Class Reunion and mail to Mary Burgraph Baugh, 8320 Stephenson Rd., Ousted, MI 49265. We have a block of rooms at the Holiday Inn, 17201 Northline, Southgate, MI, 734-283-4400 (please mention JFK Reunion). Rooms cost \$99.99 king bed or \$109.99 for two beds. Please direct questions to Nancy McVay Strong at 734-654-8395, Mary Burgraph Baugh 734-512-7272, or Lynn Carson Boughton at 517-902-4406. headcount is needed please email nmcstrong@charter.net if you plan to attend.

OBITUARIES



The Alumni Association members would like to extend their deepest sympathy to the family and friends of the former classmates mentioned below. You will forever be in our thoughts and prayers.

Taylor Center High

Wayne Thweatt, class of 1960 (passed May 21, 2018)

John F Kennedy High

Robin Nutt Cloutier, class of 1970 (passed May, 2018)

Patrick Richey, class of 1970 (passed May 7, 2018)

Doug Pileggi, class of 1968 (passed March, 2018)

For more information about the deceased and their families, please visit the alumni website tayloralumni.org and click on "In Memoriam".