

June 1969

By Tom Bodle

It is hard to fathom that a half century has passed. In the summer of 1969, the thought of the year 2000 seemed light years away. The 21st century was an era for science fiction novels and society beyond our comprehension. Our 50 year reunion? We had not even graduated yet. To contemplate this for a teenager that year was simply “out of sight.” Yet here we are. We have survived years of education and employment, family building, community involvement, health issues, successes and failures. We have advanced from the industrial age to the information age. We have observed, participated in and maybe even made history in our world. Through the years many of the 484 graduates of our class have remained in contact with their Viking roots. We have had seven class reunions. St. Joseph and Villa Angela-St. Joseph High schools have benefitted from our classmates who have served as teachers, coaches, activity moderators, advisors, mentors and perhaps most importantly those who have sent their children to the school. Several members have been inducted into the school’s Hall of Fame. And sadly over 60 have passed on to their eternal rest.

As we approach the golden anniversary of our graduation, the reunion committee wishes to chronicle the times and events of 1969-70, which brought us joy and sorrow and helped to mold our lives. We will be presenting through e-mails, facebook and instagrams a weekly flashback of our lives at St. Joe’s during our senior year. Most of all we hope to renew the friendships and reaffirm the bonds of our Viking brotherhood so that as many classmates as possible can join in our reunion celebration over the weekend of September 24-27, 2020.

What a wonderful feeling leaving St. Joe’s for the summer, having just completed junior final exams. The class of ‘69 had just graduated and with much anticipation, our class would take over the helm of the Viking ship to continue to grow the legacy of St. Joseph High School.



1970 VIKING

st. joseph high school
cleveland, ohio





The mellow sound of “Crystal Blue Persuasion” permeated the radio waves at the beginning of June 1969. Richard Nixon was in his first year as President. His choice for the new Supreme Court Chief Justice, Warren Burger, was sworn in at the beginning of this month to introduce a new era for the Court.

Baseball legend, Mickey Mantle retired from the Yankees. Joe Frazier TKo'd Jerry Quarry to take the heavyweight boxing championship. In entertainment, “Oh Calcutta!” opened on Broadway, with its counter cultural theme.

Close to home, the Cuyahoga River made international news as a portion of the industrial valley caught fire. The Zagar and Evans tune, “In the Year 2525”, presented a haunting futuristic look at humanity as we entered into the summer of our senior year.

Although school was out for the summer, St. Joes hosted a myriad of activities in preparation for the coming school year.

The Student Council, under the leadership of President Phil Herrick, gathered committee chairmen together to map out the events for the year. The Dance Committee, led by chairman Vic Gattozzi, already was active, having scheduled summer mixers in our famed “Purple Palace” gymnasium. Yearbook and Newspaper staffs were organizing “the Pub” as they trained and began preparations for their publications. Viking footballers participated in captain’s workouts to condition for a season in hopes of extending their undefeated streak. Our State Champion Cross Country runners trained to defend their title. And evening rehearsals by the Drama Club prepared for their July 5th presentation of the “Fantasticks”. As the sun and fun of summer vacation began, the seeds for an exciting year were being planted at the corner of East 185th and Lake Shore.

