



2018 All School Reunion Committee left to right; Front row Vicki Rhodes, Beth Hodgman. Back row; Harl Burzlaff, Dan Lulf, Emery Kleven, John Pechacek

The All School Reunion is now complete. As I mentioned at the reunion, you don't realize how much work goes on behind the scenes until you get selected, or drafted in my case, for the committee. It is great fun but the final days get very busy. My hat's off to my fellow committee members led by John Pechacek. He and his wife Sharon took charge and kept us all busy in our respective duties. Dan Lulf did a tremendous job with our alumni directory and as our social media director, has kept everyone informed via Facebook. Vicki Rhodes was the group's treasurer and helped in about every aspect of the reunion. Beth Hodgman did as well. Beth has been involved with reunions since the Centennial one back in 1985.

Of course it's not a reunion without Harl Burzlaff. We were proud to present Harl with a nice plaque for his many years of service to the All School Reunion and to the West Concord community. In the picture to the right is Harl receiving his plaque from All School Reunion Committee Chairman John Pechacek.



Harl made a discovery several weeks ago that we want to tell you about. We had thought that the oldest living alumni were from the class of 1937 with three members, Reverend Stanley Cain, Richard Hubner and Dorothy Woodcock Fischer.



But Harl made this discovery as he was rehabbing at the Care Center in Dodge Center. Harl was playing cards and one of those across the table was 103 year old Evelyn Robinson Edmond. Harl said that Evelyn was a pretty good card player.

An added note: Evelyn was living at Fairview Care Center in Dodge Center and passed away on March 5th, 2019. Evelyn, pictured here on the left, was a member of the West Concord High School graduating class of 1933

We had a record attendance at this year's reunion. The 530 attending beat the old record of 480 in 2008. The oldest attendees were Bob Rundquist and Maggie Pechacek Hutton, both from the class of 1939. The youngest attendee was Sarah Giesler Hodgman, class of 1990. They are pictured to the right.



The attendee that came the furthest distance was Melina Kelsey Gibbins, a 1986 exchange student from Melbourne, Australia, who graduated in 1986

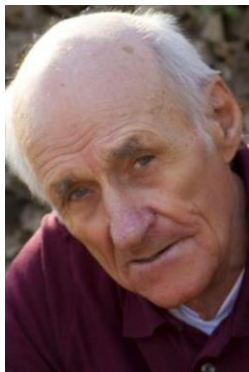
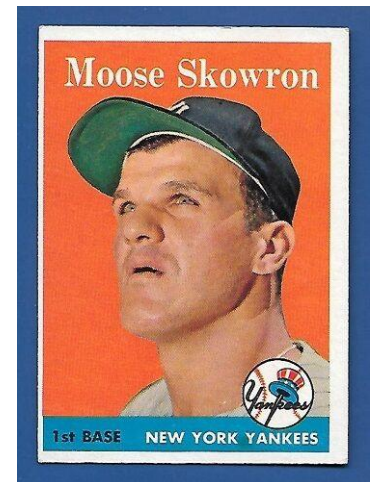
Of the over 1600 living alumni, 1216 live in Minnesota with 165 of those living in the West Concord 55985 zip code. Wisconsin has the 2nd most alumni with 42 followed by California with 37, Iowa with 31 and Arizona and Texas tied for 5th with 26 each. Rounding out the top ten are Florida – 17, Colorado – 15, Illinois and Missouri with 10 each. Along with Australia, we have alumni in Ireland, Canada and Switzerland.



From left to right: Rita Raddatz, Mary Ann Bucher and Richard Raddatz

I had a nice visit with Richard and Rita Raddatz who reside in southern California. I've mentioned in a previous column that Richard was quite an athlete in high school and college. He turned down a job to punt for the Detroit Lions in the late 1950's because it just did not pay enough. We got talking about town baseball back in its heyday. Richard's dad Boots was quite a baseball player too. Richard told me the story about the Southern Minny baseball league in southern Minnesota that had some pretty good ball players. Towns like Faribault, Austin and Albert Lea were among the teams. This league was class AA town team baseball

It seems that on one visit to Las Vegas, Richard ran into this stocky guy with a short buzz cut. Turns out it was Bill 'Moose' Skowron. Moose was quite a football and baseball player. He went to Purdue on a football scholarship but ended up All Big Ten in baseball. Moose played some of his minor league baseball for the Austin Packers. Skowron was so impressive that the Yankees signed him to a contract. This was in 1950 and he played his first major league game for the Yanks in 1954. He ended up playing 13 seasons, was an 8 time all-star and played in 8 World Series winning 5 of them including one with the 1963 Dodgers. Skowron was traded to Los Angeles by the Yankees and then Skowron had quite a World Series that year to help the Dodgers beat his former Yankee team in a sweep.



Now I tell you all of this because of the chance encounter and visit Richard Raddatz had with Moose in Las Vegas. They got talking and Moose mentioned the Southern Minny League. He told Richard that throughout his entire career, including all those 13 years in the majors, the best pitcher he ever faced was a pitcher in the Southern Minny League. His name was Paul Matti from West Concord. Paul, pictured here on the left, graduated from WCHS in 1940. Some of you may have heard the stories or knew Paul. That is quite a complement from a player with the credentials of Moose Skowron. Paul passed away at the age of 95 back in June, 2017.

I love hearing the old baseball stories and thought I would pass this one along. Richard's brother Jim was telling me a while back that the West Concord town team had a pitcher who lived in Faribault and was a former Brooklyn Dodger pitcher. I don't have all the details so I guess I'll have to go listen to some more baseball stories before I can pass them on.

