

JON REIFF'S COMMENTARY ON OUR 65TH REUNION:

Email from Jon Reiff to his roommates and buddies about the 65th Reunion !

Dear Ed [Parker], Dean [Morley] and Dave [Kipp], and Nancy, Lynn and Marcia, and in honor of Don [Moehring] and Carl [Close] and Sher [Reynolds] and Ed [Todd] – here is the report of our 65th Reunion!

Got back at 4 am last night (today) [June 23, 2025] due to flight delays and intend to do nothing until I have written the report to you. So I don't forget it – NOT due to my decline (but depends on who you ask) , but for reasons of the reunion I will describe. Huge success.

AND. Nobody cares if you are in a wheel chair like Jim Connors and another one or two – girls, GET THESE GUYS TO THE 70th. The 70th was UP FRONT at everything, we were in rows 10 back etc – of the Entire Yard at the Alumni Day Program !

Well. Of course, it was magnificent, activities, lectures, shuttle busses for our class everywhere, and they have these little golf cart shuttles running all over you can hail. Meals (upgraded box lunches and some buffets like scrambled eggs for breakfast) in tents either (for us) behind Sever or next to Phillips Brooks. Beautiful 70s weather.

Our banquet in Memorial Hall, entirely successful sliced brisket, alternative chicken, opening night buffet at Faculty Club, reasonable. We stayed at the new Hyatt on the Charles near Central Square and had shuttles (traffic awful of course). (They have made everything one-way which means to go to a building 100 yards away in a bus the route is a half mile and takes half an hour.)

So why am afraid I will forget it and get all mixed up? We had 144 attendees (not sure if they count spouses) of whom 10 were Cliffies (none I knew). We would go in busses and sit in programs and at these tables for ten and walk places, and we would be sitting next to some guy with a vaguely familiar name, or upgrade from that – and ask “I don't really recall knowing you at the time, but tell me about it all!” And they would. And you would see how to connect – “Oh, squash (or another subject) (or his house where your buddy was) (or “Really from Oklahoma? I didn't know that . Do you know Ed Clover... [or whoever]” and except for people you really knew, you “knew of” practically half of them.

A continuous scrambled set of overlapping remembrances from person after person after person until you are just dizzy! And not just me – the others were saying the same thing! People would say , “ Did we discuss this yesterday or was it another classmate?” in one form or another.

WOW. AND. It IS 65 years. So to focus. Here are specific people and etc. and comments. AND, I had decided to go to see what Harvard was both doing and saying, if you could find out, about the big attack on Harvard and what was real (on any subject)... Got both OFFICIAL POSITION and some very random but very telling comments or experiences. Pretty close to ALWAYS, we reunion goers did NOT talk about any politics or these issues. Harvard appears, to my observation and these judiciously chosen inquiries and information, just as overwhelmingly WOKE as the critiques of it say. And apparently it has NO IDEA it is. My observations for you to digest however you do, below.

First, reunion people. The MAIN THING is, Everybody, with or without hearing aids, is hard of hearing! So don't feel bad. [What's that you say?] [Were you talking to me?]

Most fun was four classmates who seemed to be great old friends even though we were not the specific "buddies" at the time. First, Alan Perry, from K-House. He is a doctor now in Alabama, but was from Upstate New York (which is 100 miles south of Montreal...) like me! These four guys I often located at some event and joined with the other people that were there, getting to know all of them as well.

Second guy was Boyd Ratchye, who worked with me 3 years in the kitchen at Adams House. Big lawyer in Minneapolis later. Seems lots of people knew him. Big event at Adams House was that the window to turn in trays was table top level, so if we workers looked out you could see the guys and their dates playing kneesie. We'd all call the others to come observe!

Third guy was Dave Ries who I knew in ROTC (Reardon, Reidy, Reiff, Ries, Rosewater). Big lawyer in Boston who knew and worked with Dave Donaldson (K-House) who was a member of our hockey team and a good buddy also (now deceased. Any of you remember Dave Donaldson ?

The fourth guy was Bob Holloway, a defenseman on the undefeated SSJA hockey team [South Straus Jock Association, for cc readers, my brother and girlfriend...] [which, for them who did not know , won the Freshman Dorm Athletic championship, (how would anybody not know about such a thing)]. He was a lot of fun , as we reconstructed the South Straus personnel and comments thereon and events that took place there. B-22 was all Milton Academy including Bart Dunbar who was usually with him and their wives who were our age and greatly sprightly and still real personality kids, and cute, and fun.

So we related to all the goings on during big Girl Weekends in Straus South to the shock of all and great fun. And at the banquet in Memorial Hall I sat with them and Sam Halaby, apparently their big friend as well, who was also a lot of fun, and from and made a big career in Rochester New York. He was famous in our class for something. Boy these wives are fun! If I wasn't chasing [my original high school girlfriend]

I'd ask the Class Secretary [Henry Marcie, who was all over, doing stuff for us – also cc] [with his cute wife Jean] for a list of class widows (with pictures and financial statements...).

First person I met at the Hotel on arriving was Jim Connors and his wife Cindy. He is in a wheel chair having had a stroke but we could happily converse – knows Oklahoma Bluegrass personalities, etc. Tried to figure out how I knew him (like all the people - who from Alabama? Jim Pruett? Who in our group?)

Couldn't figure it out, didn't even think of Dean! Cute wife Cindy a PH.D evidently second wife (maybe 60 something?) Many real sharp wives our age, and younger cute "replacement" wives also... [OK girls, we are "replacement husbands..."].

Then Davis Kennedy, who had been a good friend, whose bank would not honor his cards in Massachusetts and a big crisis and would have to pay cash and where to get it if card would not work and what would he do and bank closed and did I have a couch so I guaranteed his \$ 541 room for him [and took a lien on his granddaughters for the Tren Arguella ...]. Next day he got it fixed and took my card off... Hung around with Davis as well, he also being alone. Nice talk with Ed Baum from K-House.

The college had guides ALL OVER to help everybody . I had come a day early to see my favorite places and do some favorite things alone and buy stuff at the Coop so I had it well organized by the start of it. [At one banquet I was looking for Ron Goodman from Andover, but didn't connect with him. Jack Readon is now skinny – but missed him too. [He always had good comments on admissions having been director of it, such as if we didn't honor legacies neither John Kennedy nor FDR would have gotten in...].

First dinner at Faculty Club I sat between two doctors I did not know but one (as discovered in above system) knew Lew Walling from the Fly Club (not sure of the name) but was it Fly Club, Dave,? So I bragged on Dave's 2 hit shutout of Yale gradation day, etc..

But new acquaintances are new compadres, etc, and always with doctors, they were fascinated by [my daughter] Jennifer's Heart Transplant and pictures and details of it all.

Last the commentary on the Harvard / Trump Crisis. Some will completely agree and others completely disagree. [They had a talk by a law professor on international trade.] As background, [Jon speaking] we have for 80 years put together a trading and economic system designed to promote business creation in the destroyed industrial countries and underdeveloped countries to create a business and working and managerial class everywhere, which we hoped would be a foundation for peace, since nobody would wish to destroy it. We studied this exactly so in economics and international affairs of the government dept. as a major. Therefore, Canada wholly embargoes American dairy produce; Germany embargoes all American cars but both sell in the US and Germany has subsidies to car manufacturers to do so. So in the process, we have moved all kinds of critical things overseas (90% of pharmaceuticals to China, total destruction of many industries here, like clothing manufacture, plywood went from 95% ours to 5 % etc.) I am very pleased to tell you that our last speaker (law professor on international trade)

confirmed this statement (my analysis and knowledge) exactly.) His conclusion: There are about eight economic and political factors at play in all of the countries whereby they all want fairly dramatic changes to the “Rules Based System” that initially worked to achieve the modern world but almost all countries think seriously prejudices them. The factors will have to be worked out over a longer term than the Trump administration, but IT is trying to get it realigned for our benefit and continuing soundness. This will take quite a few years and will also depend on major political shifts, namely Chinese push in every way. But “going back” before Trump “destroyed it all “ [that is the anti-Trump view] is impossible, not because of Trump’s actions, but because it is out of kilter in everybody’s view, and Trump was the first one to go after it from America’s point of view.

This lecture asked for a show of hands as to who thought Trump was wrecking the world and those who didn’t think so (I forget how they stated that) and the professor pointed out that a third did NOT raise their hands. She (introductory professor) made that point about the Harvard attendees. (So it ain’t hopeless at Harvard for us conservatives.)

Big speech at alumni day by head of research about how the threatened cuts will destroy it all, of course everybody (elsewhere) agrees the threats will be evaluated (like the food aid being restored to Gaza in about 6 hours) [tragic it seems food aid cut off for Darfur] but of course they are terribly worried and hostile. Pres. Garber’s talk was that any huge enterprise will make mistakes and they will fix them.

As to Anti-Semitism, the only political talk I had was with this Radcliffe grad at her 60th who was eating alone before the conference who came over to sit with me to have a companion for eating (lunch). Her husband was Middle East prof at BU, so I told her about Nick [running the Gaza aid] asked her for his views (for those who don’t know, my nephew Nick Reiff is chief logistics organizer for almost all of the Gaza relief supplies, his assistant killed by the Israelis). We thus discussed it all at some length. As to the demonstrations, SHE said her daughter, a Jewish student at Harvard at the time, said there was NO anti Semitism at that time or otherwise and had always felt perfectly safe. Thus the criticism of Harvard stating that there is, (was) anti-semitism is plain wrong because she is “on site.” The camp-in and demonstration was apparently carefully controlled to be Pro- Palestinian , anti Israel, not anti Jewish. She explained that at some length. So the criticism of THE CONDUCT of such demonstrations is, as it applies to Harvard, entirely wrong and unfounded. [I’ll grant you this is a sample of ONE but the Mom was quite passionate about it.]

OHERWISE – lastly – seems the “WOKE” pressure on students is real – and Garber is saying “we will correct deviations from the educational purpose” – it would seem Dr. Ben Sass’s comment in Wall St Jnl article May 31 [he former Pres. of Univ. of Florida and a senator] could be true – he says what does a future as a “biomedical researcher...have to do with woke orientation staff foisting racial division into every corner of freshman arrival week?” That appears to set some sort of stage Garber is “promising” to correct. [Would be just as bad to foist MAGA “ into every corner of orientation week.]

Good grief, so long. But a Major Event is the Retirement Phase of my life, and you all can share it with me – and You All are MY people and I depend on being a part of YOU. So I share what you too have experienced as the major founding building block of your lives just as it was of mine, and that is the update. COME TO THE 70th! Best to all JON Comments welcome of course.

PS 1. Big talk on renovation of houses featured students being ALONE – big questions criticizing that from our group --- Andover has something for new students on “How to Relate to People” ..good grief. 2. All the food everywhere, restaurants, the meals we had – weird unusual “vegetables” some kind of hard rice and weird leaves – all everywhere - can hardly find what we would call “real food” .

JON

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