



**Class of '67 and Friends
Landscaping Fundraiser Committee**

**Final Project Report
July 4, 2007**

In early January, Glen Van Slyke suggested via email that we consider donating money for planting oak trees around the new Oak Ridge High School building. I presented this suggestion at a meeting of the Class of '67 Reunion Committee on January 5, 2007, and it was accepted by the committee. I agreed to be in charge of the subcommittee, and Becky Lee Szymanski agreed to help. We also made plans to combine this project with a proposed tour of the new high school to be held as part of the reunion festivities.

I met subsequently with Dr. Tom Bailey, the Superintendent of Schools, to propose this project. He was enthusiastic about our offer to help and explained that all the funds for landscaping had been cut out of the budget. He set up a meeting with me and Bob French, the architect, and we developed a list of 12 sub-projects with costs for each. He agreed to take us on a tour of the high school on the afternoon of June 17, 2007.

In order for the donations to be tax deductible, it was necessary for them to be given to a tax exempt organization officially recognized by the IRS. After discussion with my company's accountant and Dr. Bailey, we decided to process the donations through the Oak Ridge Public Schools Educational Foundation (ORPSEF), an organization set up so that individuals could make tax deductible organizations to the school system. See <http://www.orpsef.org> for further details. This organization is managed by Lila Metcalf. She agreed to this arrangement, and obtained from Dr. Bailey a commitment letter that any money received for the "Class of 67 project" would be applied only to landscaping in accordance with instructions we provide on which particular sub-projects we are wanting to fund.

At the February 5, 2007 meeting, the project was discussed again and a draft brochure containing proposed details was passed around. This brochure had previously been sent around to all Reunion Committee members in PDF format, and comments received were discussed with the commenters and factored into the final draft. The finalized brochure (attachment 1) was sent out to class members along with the reunion information brochure and a directory form, in order to save on postage costs. My company, Pegasus Technologies, covered the costs of the brochure designs, the paper, and the printing, with the proviso that the Reunion Committee would pay for postage, envelopes and labels from reunion proceeds.

The brochures were mailed on February 14. The first donation was received on February 14, 2007. The fundraiser officially ended on Sunday, June 17, 2007. At the time this report was completed, the total collected was \$13,772. Attachment 2 includes listing of donations received by name and donation level, and project votes. Full details on who donated exactly how much will be retained but are not included as part of this report for privacy reasons. Attachment 3 includes copies of the letters transmitting monies received to Lila Metcalf of ORPSEF.

Communications/Advertising

In addition to the mailed-out brochures, we used a variety of other methods to advertise the fundraiser. The class website/forum contained a topic for the landscaping project, and this topic was updated each time a donation was received or additional information was decided upon. This is a closed forum, however, and only registered members were able to access this information.

We decided to individually contact certain of our classmates that we knew had done well financially. Becky Lee Szymanski and I developed a list of candidates along with input from several others, and personally contacted about 50 people.

Martin McBride helpfully agreed to write press releases which he submitted to various local newspapers on the project. In order to make this a worthwhile operation, we decided that the fundraiser should be opened up to everyone and would be styled as "The Class of '67 and Friends." The first press release was issued near the end of April and the second in early June, shortly before the reunion weekend. We will work with him on a final report shortly. Press releases are included in Attachment 4.

As the time for the reunion approached, the Reunion Committee decided it was appropriate to send out emails and a postcard reminding people of the reunion and asking them to RSVP so we could notify the caterer. Emails were sent to all classmates for whom we had an email address. Because of the concerns of some on the reunion committee that people would feel pressured if the project were mentioned in this email, it was omitted. Postcards were sent to all for whom we had a mailing address but no email. This postcard did contain a brief reminder about the project and the tour. Attachment 5 is the text of this postcard.

Each contribution, except those I received face to face, were acknowledged either by email or letter. In addition, all contributors that were identified by name received a thank you from ORPSEF which constitutes their receipt for tax purposes.

Secret City Festival & Party Table

We decided to have a table at the Oak Ridge Secret City Festival, as part of Bobbie Martin's history exhibit, on Friday June 15 and Saturday June 16. The table was manned during the entire festival, and the exhibit was then carried over to the reunion and set up in the room with the food. The exhibit consisted of a tri-fold foam board exhibit, a small tree made by Bobbie Martin, a plastic bottle for donations, and a CD playing on a laptop that showed architectural models of the new high school. Various "incentives" were offered at different donation levels. Fred Heddleson, a local artist, sold us, and offered us on consignment, several sizes of black and white and color drawings of the old High School. David Hackett devoted much time and effort into digitizing the Senior section of the old Class of 67 annual which was available on CD for a \$10 donation. Also, Charlie Setlow provided a CD of jazz/blues music where he was the primary artist, and these were available for a \$15 donation. Various people manned the table during the day, including myself, Becky Lee, John Hendrickson, Doug Hammitt, and Jane Holz Vercruysse.. During the reunion it was not continually manned, but my husband Jim Pearce did stay in the same room and kept an eye on it.

High School Tour

Dr. Bailey personally conducted about 60 of us on a tour of the partially-finished high school on Sunday afternoon, June 17, 2007. We were able to see several completed areas, and a number still

under construction including parts of the A building which are being totally renovated from the walls out. He spent over 2 hours with us, describing the way the building would be when complete. We all owe him a big thanks for coming out on what turned out to be Father's Day!

Aftermath

Becky Lee and I met with architect Bob French again on July 3 to work out the final details on which sub-projects our class is funding. Because life intervenes with construction, some of the earlier-anticipated project were scrapped because of ground and underground conditions encountered during the building. We agreed on the distribution as follows:

1. Plant 15 oak trees along the front ellipse.
2. Ornamental trees and plantings for the flag plaza across from the front entrance.
3. Small ornamental trees in the former amphitheater area.
4. The balance will be used for additional ornamental trees and shrubs for the front of the building.

Our contribution will be recognized with a plaque in the lobby, which will be located on a wall along with other plaques honoring donations for the school. It will state that front landscaping was provided by "The Class of '67 and Friends."

These decisions were mostly in line with the votes received from donors, with the exception of the third-place vote winner, the amphitheater, which is not being done because of certain cement underground structures encountered that made this project expensive and unfeasible.

Conclusion

In general, this project was very well-received by classmates and the community. I heard many positive responses from both donors and those classmates that did not choose to donate for whatever reasons, that they believed this was a worthwhile and valuable undertaking, and that they felt good that our class was doing something this significant and appropriate for the school. Response from the public and the school system was enthusiastic.

However, some members of the Reunion Committee reportedly heard that several people felt intimidated by the project and felt they would not be welcome at the reunion if they didn't contribute. As a result, some Reunion Committee members are recommending that no further projects be undertaken in conjunction with future reunions.

Obviously, the Reunion Committee that is charged with planning the next reunion will have to make its own decisions about a project at that time. It would be unfortunate, however, to make a decision based solely on a few isolated, negative hearsay comments in the face of many, many other positive ones.

Respectfully Submitted,

Karen Edwards
Class Project Chair