

# The Class Of '62

by Lynne Belluscio

After fifty years, I am going to make a correction in the 1962 *Oatkan*. It seems that the caption under David Paganin's name read "George J. Papp" and George's caption was for David.

I was reading through the '62 *Oatkan* hoping to find some fodder for this article and was thumbing through the senior pictures, looking for someone I knew. I said to June Dusen, "That doesn't look anything like David Paganin! He couldn't have changed that much!" and she pointed out to me that the two names had been reversed. So in the official yearbook here at the Historical Society, I have made the change, so that in the future, when David's great, great grandchildren stop by to see their great, great grandfather's yearbook picture, they won't question what happened.

The Class of '62 will be having their reunion at the Country Club on Saturday night. (If I had lived in LeRoy, I would have been in the same graduating class, but I grew up in Rochester and graduated from Monroe). All of us, who graduated in 1962, like generations before us and generations to follow were filled with a sense of relief that we had made it through final exams. For those of us going on to college, we were wondering if we were headed in the right direction. We knew we had to have a good summer job to help pay the way. A few of the guys were headed into the service; 1962 was to be a year that foreshadowed many things to come.

In 1962, the Cuban Missile Crisis was on the front page of the newspapers. Krushchev agreed to remove missiles from Cuba if the U.S. would do the same in Turkey. The Cuban government began releasing prisoners captured during the Bay of Pig invasion. Gary Powers, the captured American U-2 pilot, was released in Berlin in exchange for a Soviet spy, Rudolf Abel. Full racial integration in military reserve units was ordered by the Defense Department and later, by Executive order, racial discrimination was prohibited in

all housing built with federal funds. In the South, segregation in universities was broken, but only after mob violence and several deaths. James Meredith was escorted onto the University of Mississippi and eventually 3,000 federal soldiers were called to restore peace.

In 1962 we saw the launch of Telstar, a communications satellite which relayed telecasts from Andover, Maine to France and Great Britain. On February 20th, Lt. John Glenn became the first American to orbit the earth in the Mercury capsule "Friendship 7". On May 24, Scott Carpenter, orbited earth aboard Mercury capsule "Aurora 7". And on October 3, Wally Schirra completed five orbits around Earth in "Sigma 7" before splashing down in the Pacific Ocean.

Other launches were not as successful. "Ranger 3", a lunar probe designed to transmit close-up television pictures of the moon was launched from Cape Canaveral (later to be Cape Kennedy). However, because of excess velocity, it passed the moon and was sent into orbit around the sun. "Ranger 4" crashed into the far side of the moon, 64 hours after launch. The Nobel Prize for Medicine was awarded to three men for the discovery of the molecular structure of DNA.

The "twist" was born in a New York City nightclub, the Peppermint Lounge. Boots and fashion wigs became fashion accessories. The romance between Elizabeth Taylor and Richard Burton on the set of "Cleopatra" made headlines. The first basketball player to score 100 points in a game was Wilt Chamberlain, star of the Philadelphia Warriors and the New York Mets, a new National League baseball team lost 120 of 160 games, under manager Casey Stengel. Sonny Liston, knocked



George J. Papp



David G. Paganin

out defending heavyweight champion, Floyd Patterson. The World Series was won by the New York Yankees over the San Francisco Giants. And the US Golf Tournament was won by Jack Nicklaus who beat Arnold Palmer by three strokes in a playoff.

A year later, in 1963, the US would resume underground nuclear testing. The nuclear powered submarine "Thresher", sank with 129 men on board during a test dive. Medgar Evers was assassinated and the Freedom March on Washington was held on August 28, when Rev. Martin Luther King told the assembled crowd, "I have a dream ..."

President Kennedy presented to Congress the largest federal budget to date, totaling \$98,800,000,000 with a projected deficit of \$11,900,000,000. On February 21, the President submitted to

Congress a medical-insurance plan financed through Social Security, known as Medicare. Nine months later, the nation would mourn the death of the President, who was assassinated in Dallas.

Indeed, the Class of 1962 has witnessed a lot of history, and as they gather to remember the good old days, may they remember the better times as written on the last page of the *Oatkan*. "Life will offer many challenges, and we must supply the answers to these challenges. To be prepared for whatever will present itself, we must be alert, intelligent, informed, and without prejudice. School has taught us many useful and valuable concepts about life and our fellowmen. We must now face the future alone and together. May all of us find our places in life and reap happiness and true satisfaction."



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