

## Princeton High School Class of 56 60<sup>th</sup> Reunion Reminiscence

### THE WAY IT WAS

*By Jeanie Stratton*

How nice that we can all get together again. Here are a few reminiscences of the way it was; just a few signs of the time back when — you remember.....

Ike was president, the Dodgers were still in Brooklyn, Princeton University undergraduates were all male, and the PC, DVD, and CD, etc. etc. were barely a glimmer on the high tech horizon. Renwick's, Viedts. and the Balt were the places to hang out on Nassau Street, as was Grigg's on the corner of Witherspoon and Hulfish.

We got our cardigans and crinolines at the Clothesline and Joan Shop on Palmer Square, and at Bamberger's in the new Princeton Shopping Center. The guys got chinos and cords at Eric Mihan's dad's English Shop and at Harry Ballot's and Langrocks. We had our pictures taken at Clearose Studio, owned by classmate Louise Rosendorf's family.

When it came to music, we sang along with Elvis, Pat Boone, and Patti Page; we "Rocked Around the Clock" with Bill Haley and the Comets", and we "Never Felt More Like Singin' the Blues" with Guy Mitchell. We had never heard of the Beatles!

The Playhouse as well as The Garden showed the latest flicks, and we could even sit in the balcony as we watched Anastasia, Friendly Persuasion, Giant, White Christmas, The Man in the Grey Flannel Suit, and Invasion of the Body Snatchers. And of course, there were those unforgettable Route One drive-ins!

On TV, we tuned in to Lucy, Father Knows Best, Gunsmoke, and What's My Line, and if you had a day off from school, you could check out the latest on the soaps — As the World Turns, The Edge of Night, and Search for Tomorrow.

When Broadway beckoned, we could get the train or bus to the Big Apple to see Long Day's Journey into Night, Separate Tables, The Matchmaker (later to become the everwonderful Hello Dolly) and of course, the legendary My Fair Lady.

For those who preferred to read, best sellers included The Last Hurrah, A Certain Smile, JFK's Pulitzer Prize winner, Profiles in Courage, and Diamonds Are Forever, starring the Brits' favorite spy, James Bond. What everyone was reading though was that spicy look into small town life — you remember — Peyton Place.

We read magazines, too — Life, Look, The Saturday Evening Post, Colliers, not to mention those fan magazines, Photoplay and Modern Screen, which reveled in the transformation of Oscar winner Grace Kelly into Princess Grace of Monaco. Then, there were True Confessions and Confidential, precursors of today's raunchier relatives, The National Inquirer, The Star, etc., etc.

All the local news was available in Town Topics and The Princeton Packet, and if you wanted serious national and international news, you could choose from seven NYC dailies, as well as all the Philadelphia papers.

Visitors to town not only stayed at the historic Nassau Inn but at the much favored Princeton Inn (now a University dormitory). Green space was still abundant in Princeton and nearby areas: development,

gridlock, and the Route One Corridor were all in the future. Traffic tie-ups were a novelty — except on football Saturdays, Reunion weekends, and graduation. People drove American cars, including Studebakers, Packards, Oldsmobiles, and DeSotos; Toyotas, Hondas, and KIAs had not yet taken over the highways.

Here's a little additional miscellany. Other than face-to-face, if you wanted to communicate, it was via telephone, telegram, or letter-writing. Pen and paper were necessary for letters — no email, texting, twitter, facebook, etc. — and no zip codes were needed. Just stamps for three cents! Telephone numbers in Princeton began with Walnut 4 or Walnut one, and there was still an occasional party line, but no call waiting.

It seems like another age but, in fact, it was just a moment ago in time. It was 1956, and the year of our graduation from Princeton High School.