

John Marshall High School Reunion Information

John Marshall High School Alumni Association
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Guidelines for Reunions

It is recommended that classes wait ten years before holding their first reunion. It seems to work out better that way since many students will be graduated from college or established in their jobs and more settled by then. But keep in mind that people will be moving around after they graduate from high school and college and tracking them down will be much easier if you start with a five year effort. The girls will get married and the name change can put them into the “lost” category forever. The most difficult part of having a successful reunion will be that of finding classmates that have moved away and not kept in touch with fellow classmates and/or the Alumni Association.

If you do elect to have a five year reunion, make it a casual, drop-in affair at a local gathering spot, or hold a class picnic or some other low cost function. Be sure to gather information about your classmates such as their married name, current address, and names of one or two people who are likely to always know their future whereabouts (another Marshallite w/class year or brother/sister etc.) This will prove invaluable to future reunion planners.

Call a meeting of class members interested in planning the reunion. At this time, you may want to keep your committee small (about ten to twelve people). You can add more people as you continue the planning process. Be sure to include class members from all of the different “groups” in your class and do include anyone who volunteers to help.

Reunions can be held at any time. The most popular dates are in the summer or early fall. For younger families, be aware of possible conflicts with school dates. Also, younger classes sometimes prefer holiday weekends, especially if there are many members with families still in the area. Be aware that there will always be people who aren't satisfied with the date – try to accommodate the majority.

The JOHN MARSHALL ALUMNI ASSOCIATION has a list of names and address for most classes. The Alumni office will be glad to assist your committee in your search for current addresses and name changes for your classmates. The records are computerized in Microsoft Access and specific reports are available to committees as well as printed labels for mailings if desired. The policy is to share class info for a particular year with the class reunion committee. The last committee to register with the Alumni Association will be given the information unless that committee declines. If that is the case, a new committee can register and receive the information. Please note that the Alumni Association will not provide class lists to anyone other than the reunion committee of record.

The class database is only as good as the information received by the Alumni Association. Many classmates will be listed as “lost”. This simply means that mail to their address has been returned with no forwarding address given. The Alumni Association does not have the resources to track down “lost” alumni. This is why it is so important to get an early start to locate as many missing classmates as possible. After your reunion, be sure to send a copy of your updated class list to the Alumni Association with **all changes highlighted** so the alumni database can be updated. Check our website <http://www.jmhalumni.com> for updated information.

CHAIRPERSON – COMMITTEES – PROGRAM

Elect or appoint a chairperson at the first meeting. If the class president still lives in the area, he or she might like to fill that position. You will also need a treasurer and a secretary (reservation chairperson). You may also appoint someone to coordinate work on the reunion book, entertainment committee and to serve as Alumni Office liaison. By all means, make sure that the decisions you make are decided by a consensus of the entire committee. If one strong willed person tries to dictate what you are going to do, you can counter act this by calling for a vote.

1. CHAIRPERSON: The function of the chairperson is to schedule meetings and to check that subcommittees are on schedule. In general, the chairperson is the catalyst for keeping things running smoothly.

2. TREASURER: The treasurer is responsible for all money matters. He or she opens the bank account, keeps the books, deals with the bank, pays the bills, keeps receipts and makes deposits.

3. SECRETARY: The secretary keeps written records of meetings and handles correspondence. He or she works closely with the treasurer and keeps track of all reservations.

In addition, the following chairpersons may be appointed:

4. REUNION BOOK CHAIRPERSON: The reunion book chairperson is responsible for all questionnaires (sending and receiving). He or she selects the book format and does the editing, writing and orders the printing with the consent of the committee.

5. ENTERTAINMENT COMMITTEE: This committee determines the overall reunion structure and type of entertainment. The chairperson hires the band or deejay after obtaining approval from the reunion committee.

6. ALUMNI LIASON: This person works with the Alumni Association which will furnish class lists, assist with missing persons, assist with publicity and, in general, answer questions and offer guidance.

Other committees may be needed to work on publicity, decorations, name tags, etc. Some classes have furnished name tags which have the classmate's yearbook picture on them.

FORMAT FOR THE REUNION

When planning your reunion, think in terms of a full weekend of activities. It is far easier for out of towners to attend when there are several activities, rather than only one.

A typical weekend may be scheduled as follows:

FRIDAY NIGHT

Informal ice-breaker at a hotel, restaurant or special night spot. Cash bar and snacks. No program necessary.

SATURDAY DAYTIME

Some classes provide a tour of the WEST PARK and CLEVELAND areas. This can be done by hiring "Lolly the Trolley." If your reunion is in the summer, trips on the "Goodtime" or other similar attractions are pleasant possibilities.

A tour of JOHN MARSHALL HIGH SCHOOL might be possible during the school year in the evening when night classes are held. This must be organized in advance by contacting the High School or the Board of Education.

Some classes hold their family picnic on Saturday. With the Metroparks so close and familiar to JMH graduates, this can be done without much effort. Usually the committee picks the area and families can "bring their own."

SATURDAY NIGHT

The committee arranges for the format of the evening highlighted by the reunion dinner. Some possibilities to consider are sit-down or buffet dinners, with cash or open bar, live music or DJ's, photos, videos, etc. See the next page for additional planning hints.

SUNDAY

If you do not hold a picnic on Saturday, hold a brunch or family picnic on Sunday. The same format as above can be followed. Games and prizes for children and adults may be planned.

PLANS FOR THE DINNER

The committee should first research locations and dates for the dinner since this is the featured event. Plan about ONE YEAR ahead of time to allow for a full choice of options. The major decision should be where to hold the reunion. Be sure to book your location early because party centers fill up quickly. Be sure to get a SIGNED CONTRACT.

Many class reunions are held at local hotels or party centers. Keep in mind that any location that sells liquor, such as a hotel, will not allow you to BYOB. A country club may suit YOU well, but be sure to be sensitive to the comfort of ALL your classmates when considering a place that is exclusive. Instead, be creative, go back to the site of your prom, try the Flats or Downtown Cleveland; there are many unusual and exciting places around!

Consider the COST. The most expensive places will be unaffordable to many people, including retirees or younger classmates just starting out. This is also true for out of town travelers who must deal with air fare and hotels. Try to keep the dinner dance affordable. We suggest \$50-75.00 a couple if possible.

Formality is not necessarily the key to success. Some classes and people feel more comfortable in a casual setting. Remember too, the place is secondary to the event. Getting together in a spirit of fun and congeniality is the real key to the successful evening.

ENTERTAINMENT should be short and sweet. The chairperson can give a thank you to the committee, some words of welcome, and maybe a prize or two for:

Most children, farthest traveled, longest marriage, etc.

Some classes sing the Alma Mater or Pep Rally songs just to get in the spirit. Door prizes can be donated by businesses, but keep this to a minimum; it could get boring. Some classes include raffles and other such games specifically to raise money for the next reunion.

Also you may be the one who has to tell the band or DJ to keep the sound down so that classmates can socialize. Most people are more interested in renewing old friendships and sharing memories. For this reason, think about making the music during the dinner hour background music only.

REUNION MEMORY BOOKS

A reunion memory book may be as simple or as elaborate as the committee would like and as funds permit. Some classes just type a list of names and addresses. Others include data from a questionnaire (see examples on following pages), photographs and advertisements. With the advent of computer technology, you can even put your memory book on a CD and mail it to the attendees and others that could not attend for a small fee. The CD could include photos and audio/video clips from the function along with address data etc. DON'T forget to share a copy of your memory book with the Alumni Association.

If you wish, you may sell ads to local merchants in your high school neighborhood and to classmates. This will certainly help underwrite the cost of the book.

The Alumni Association has copies of yearbooks from almost all years. If you wish to include pictures on name tags, please do not hesitate to ask to borrow a book. There are some copies for sale, also. See the website www.jmhalumni.com for availability. We also have copies of other reunion memory books from past years.

Be sure to include a questionnaire on what your classmates liked or disliked about the reunion weekend. Also give them a chance to volunteer or make suggestions for the next reunion.

AFTER THE REUNION CRITIQUE

Have a full committee meeting to critique the reunion. Don't be disappointed if it did not measure up to your expectations. Those in attendance will remember the fun they had and will not be aware that anything was amiss. Besides, the next one will be better as you become more proficient at running a reunion.

You may want to keep a file, write a report, or make an outline for the next reunion. Too many details are lost in the ensuing years and no one wants to re-invent the wheel. After your reunion, be sure to send a copy of your updated class list to the Alumni Association with **all changes highlighted** so the alumni database can be updated.

If you have any money left over, be sure to keep money for the next reunion, but do also consider making a DONATION to the Alumni Association. We do most of our work gratis, and with ever increasing costs, we will be delighted to receive additional help.

If you can afford it, an inexpensive Thank You dinner for the committee is in order. You worked hard and you deserve it.

HANDLING YOUR FUNDS

Some classes are fortunate enough to have a treasury from a previous reunion. If you are not among the lucky, you have three options:

1. Have your committee “ANTE-IN”. You may consider that amount to be a deposit on their reservation for the reunion.
2. Send out a request for donations with your first mailing.
3. Have a party for class members and charge admission to be used as committee money for deposits, etc. Hold a raffle, sell memorabilia, etc. for fund raising.

These funds will help provide the deposit for your dinner and your band/DJ.

BANKING

Have your treasurer open an account at any bank in the name of JOHN MARSHALL HIGH SCHOOL CLASS OF _____. Use the treasurer’s home address for the account.

This account should be used to handle all funds, incomes, and deposits until the last bill is paid. Your treasurer will be liable for any tax on the income derived from this account and should be reimbursed for it.

The Alumni Association is prohibited by the IRS from giving out our tax-free ID number for class reunion use.

COSTS

Consider everything when calculating the cost of your reunion. Be sure to set up a budget for all of your expenses and try to stay within it. Figure the cost of the dinner, gratuity, mailings, memory book, printing, guest dinners, entertainment costs, favors, prizes, decorations, name tags, etc.

Add all of these costs together and divide by the number of people expected. Add another 15% to cover any unanticipated expenses. This should be the cost of your featured reunion dinner event. You should itemize and price the other events in the same manner.

You may wish to have a “package price” to cover all your events. You should also itemize each event separately for anyone who wishes to attend only one or two events. This should be included in your final invitation with a return envelope. Do not bother to send tickets, it adds to your time and your costs and is not necessary. However, be sure to state that tickets will not be sent. This will eliminate unnecessary phone calls. You can identify people at the door with a check in list. Many reunions have you pick up your name tag at the door as your ticket.

MAILINGS

Some classes have as many as three mailings:

1. Send a postcard or a “save the date” letter. Send this out about ten months to a year before the reunion. If you choose to send a letter, enclose a list of missing persons from your class asking for help in finding them.
2. Four to six months before the reunion, send a mailing with a finalized schedule of costs, hotel information, reservation information, a questionnaire for the reunion book and another updated missing persons list. Some Classes require a deposit at this time. Others require full payment. A small discount for early reservations will help bring in the money. If not, most people wait until the deadline or later. The deadline should be four to six weeks from the date of this mailing.
3. Shortly after the deadline, you may wish to send a follow-up to those who have not responded. You may wish to include a list of those who have already made reservations (with maiden names).

The Alumni Association has a Postal Permit Number that allows us to mail our newsletter and other large mailings at a reduced rate. There are many restrictions on the use of this permit and new Postal Regulations require that addresses and zip codes match exactly. The Alumni Association has previously allowed reunion committees to use the permit for mailings, however, this is no longer possible.

THE INTERNET

The advent of the world wide web has given reunion planning a new tool that can be used very effectively. Email is a “no cost” way of keeping in touch with your classmates and getting their input about reunion planning. More and more people are getting on the internet and both seniors and the younger generation alike are surfing the web these days.

The Alumni Association tracks email addresses in the database along with street address information. But people do change their email addresses when they change internet service providers and often do not think about sharing that change with the Alumni Association. The nice thing about the internet is that an invalid email address will usually bounce back to the sender. Use email when possible and US Mail as a backup for communicating with your classmates.

There are many “search engines” available on the web where you can find people by name, address, phone number, email address etc. Some sites have other information such as marriages, births, deaths, mortgages, criminal records etc. but may be subscription based. Never-the-less, you may want to spend the money to find your classmates after the free sources have been exhausted. Sites such as <http://www.classmates.com> are good sources for information, however, they do have a subscription fee if you want to send notes or start new subjects on their message board. The committee may wish to pay for a subscription to classmates.com for one committee member for the period of time that the reunion is being planned.

Most internet service providers give their subscribers “web space” for a personal website. Many people have their own website and may be willing to provide web space for a class reunion. Web space is also available for free from Cleveland.com and this is a great way to advertise your reunion and share class news and event dates. Find someone to act as the “webmaster” and funnel all information for the website to that person. You might find someone who is proficient in web design and willing to provide web space on a server. This will allow more versatility for web content than “cookie cutter” sites like Cleveland.com. A website will generate interest, but it must be kept up-to-date. If your classmates go to the site every month and find the same information with no updates, they will lose interest and are not likely to return often. News items are easy to post and will show everyone that the site is active. Most people crave information and will check back often to see what’s up. Pictures are still worth a thousand words and digital cameras and scanners make it easy to add photos to your website.

Here are some samples of JMH Class websites:

Class of 1985: <http://groups.yahoo.com/group/jmh85/>

Class of 1963: <http://www.papays.com/jmh63/>

JMH Alumni Association: <http://www.jmhalumni.com>

Plan to use the internet to help facilitate your reunion. It will generate interest and not break your budget.

Guide to Finding Lost Alumni using the Internet

Phone Directories

There are two popular Internet phone directories that are easily accessible www.whitepages.com or www.smartpages.com. Each of these sites offers not only a regular search by name, city and state. They also offer a reverse address and reverse phone search option. If the alumnus has an unlisted phone number, the committee will not be able to locate them using this method. The committee may want to check to see if the alumnus parents are still located at the address in which he graduated. Then, try contacting them to see if they will provide the current address and phone number information.

Here are some other popular search engines for finding people:

people.yahoo.com
channels.netscape.com/ns/search/searchtools.jsp
theultimates.com
411.com or switchboard.com
ussearch.com (more info if you pay)
whowhere.com
dogpile.com & google.com
whitepages.com & smartpages.com

County Web Sites

If the committee is unable to locate the former classmate through the use of the phone directory, the committee may want to check out the county web sites. Do not limit the search to the county in which the school is located. Be sure to search connecting boundary counties.

Here is a list of the nearby county web sites:

Cuyahoga County	www.cuyahoga.oh.us
Lorain County	www.loraincounty.com
Medina County	www.co.medina.oh.us
Summit County	www.co.Summit.oh.us
Lake County	www.co.lake.oh.us

If the lost classmate lived out of state, the committee may want to do this same type of search by determining the county that city was located in and check to see if the county has a web site.

The **Cuyahoga County** web site is a useful tool in gathering information on the lost classmate. The committee can begin by clicking on the Permits and License button that will lead to the Marriage License Department. The committee can then search the Historical Marriage License Database or, after 1998, the Current Database to try to determine whom the lost classmate might have married. The information that is contained on the database is very limited. It only contains the bride's and groom's name, the volume and page number the certificate is located on. The committee can obtain a copy of the marriage license by mail. The cost is not expensive. Be sure to specify that the committee only wants a copy and not a certified copy. If the committee is successful in obtaining the name of the spouse, the committee can then search the phone directory again to see if there is a listing under the spouse's name.

The **County Auditor** is also an excellent search site. If the lost classmate has an unlisted number but owns a home, the committee should be able to possibly locate an address for the lost alumnus. **BEWARE: Not all websites for the counties are the same, nor are the database applications used for storing the information.**

The **County Recorder** also is good search site. The committee can obtain a little more information but it is a more time consuming search.

The **Common Pleas Court** is also a good search site. The Civil Case Docket database can be helpful by providing information in case of lawsuits and divorces. An address usually is listed with the plaintiff's and defendant's name. Be sure to check the date of the case in determining how current the information will be.

If the committee is unable to find any information on the lost classmate by using the above information, there is still hope in locating them without resorting to paying a company to do the search for the committee.

The Cleveland Public Library has an excellent genealogy department and their website includes databases for research. The website for the Cleveland Public Library is: www.cpl.org. The genealogy databases include the Necrology file that consists of death notices that appeared in the newspapers from the late 1890's to 1975. The Cleveland News Index contains a list of names that articles (including death notices) were written about. This is an excellent source to determine if the alumnus parents are still alive or deceased. The Necrology file that is on the database actually lists how the death notice appeared in the paper. It can be a tedious job if the lost classmate has a common last name e.g., Brown, Smith. The Cleveland News Index gives very limited information that includes spouse or one child's name and the date of the article and the newspaper name and page number. The Cuyahoga County Public Library's Fairview Park Branch has an excellent genealogy department that includes newspapers on film. A death notice can be obtained for free by going to the library and using their facilities.

There are a number of genealogy websites that the committee can also go to that will help with the search. Some of them will have the Social Security Death Index feature as a search method. ***One thing to remember in doing a Social Security Death Index search is that the committee may not find someone listed in this database, only because it usually does not include those who were not receiving Social Security Benefits.***

MISCELLANEOUS CONSIDERATIONS

You may want to check area hotels and motels to see if it is possible to hold a block of rooms. A centralized location can be fun for those who need accommodations. In addition, some places will throw in a hospitality suite with coffee, etc., as a central meeting and greeting spot.

If you wish to invite teachers and administrators (past or present) as guests, the class naturally pays for their dinner. The Alumni Association has a list of some retired teachers for your reference.

If your class is especially uninvolved or uninterested in a reunion, try approaching the previous year's class or the following year for a joint reunion. So often, members of the classes overlap and this can be just as much fun for everyone.

You may want to make your chairperson a permanent appointment. This provides continuity and he/she becomes the focal point for class activities. However, the chairperson should be someone who has truly enjoyed the job and whose location is likely to be stable.

Many classes find it works best to have the same people serve on the reunion committee each time. Again, the committee should consist of those who truly want to plan reunions. Also, you should make an effort to include anyone who wishes to take part in the planning process. Be sure to include class members from all of the different "groups" in your class.

Your class may have had such a wonderful time that they would like to have another reunion in five years instead of ten. If so, and if you want to do it again, by all means DO IT!

There is no hard and fast rule about how often classes can get together. Some have yearly picnics for their families.

Make sure that you keep good records of everything you do. This will make planning the next reunion so much easier.

Name _____ Spouses' _____ Maiden _____

Address _____ City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Phone Number _____ - _____ - _____ Email Address _____

Occupation & Co. _____

Spouses' _____

Marital Status _____ How many years? _____ How many times? _____

Children's names & ages _____

Grandchildren _____

How did you meet your husband/wife? _____

Who was your favorite teacher? _____

What is your favorite high school memory? (silly, sentimental, or otherwise) _____

What is your favorite activity now? _____

Clubs, hobbies, interests, vacations, unusual pets, etc? _____

What do you like most about our changing times? _____

Least? _____

What has been your most unusual or interesting experience since graduation? _____

In 19__, when you thought about the future, what did you think you would be doing now? _____

Are you? _____

What do you hope the future holds for you in the next 10 years? _____

If you were writing YOUR story in the memory book, what would you say about yourself? _____

ALUMNI DIRECTORY QUESTIONNAIRE

Please complete information and return to reunion committee as soon as possible.

Please Print - Please Print - Please Print - Please Print - Please Print

First Name _____ **Middle Name** _____ **Last Name** _____

Maiden or Previous Last Name _____

Phone No. ____ - ____ - ____ **Email Address** _____

City _____ **State** _____ **Zip** _____

Occupation _____

Spouse's Name _____

Spouse's Occupation _____

Children's Names	Age	Children's Names	Age
_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____

Grandchildren's Names	Age	Grandchildren's Names	Age
_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____

Achievements or Awards: _____

Community Activities or Experiences: _____

Hobbies or Travel: _____

Vivid Memories or Ambitions: _____

Thoughts I would like to share: _____

