

Reunion Newsletter

St. Louis Park Class of '63

June, 2023

Lynn Bolnick, Editor

Here we go again. There's another reunion coming up, our 60th, on September 22 and 23. And, as has become a tradition, we'll have newsletters the three summer months leading up to the big event. The theme of this year's reunion is "Homecoming" and I'll be featuring some items here to share info about the home we're coming back to. You might think you recognize the St. Louis Park HS building as you pass by, but as we dig a little deeper, there are some things that are the same - and so much more that is very different. I hope you'll enjoy a look at St. Louis Park High School and the class of 2023.

DEI in St. Louis Park

You may have read or seen in news reports that DEI is pretty controversial in various parts of the country these days. Apparently, "diversity, equity and inclusion" are things that liberals have foisted upon educational institutions in this country and conservatives are prepared to zap those "woke" concepts out of existence. Some states (most, south of the Mason Dixon line) heard bills this legislative session to ban funding for DEI. Some have been successful; some not.

As it happens, St. Louis Park High School appears to have come by diversity the natural way. There is now a student population at St. Louis Park High School (grades 9-12) of 1,504 students. (Seniors, by the way, are 377 of those students - approximately 100 less than the

size of our senior class and significantly less than the baby-boomer classes that came after ours.) The ethnic breakdown is as follows:

White	49.5%
Black, African American	25%
Hispanic, Latino	13%
Asian	3%
American Indian, Alaskan Native	0.5%
Two or more races	8%

A bit of a change isn't it??

I can't speak to the success of the "equity and inclusion" elements at Park High - but it appears there's quite a bit of that. A quick look at the list of student groups and array of students in leadership gives a sense of some level of success certainly. There's a Jewish student union and a Latino student association. There's a prayer room for Muslims. The first annual PowWow is being co-sponsored by the American Indian Advisory Council and the Youth Intertribal Council of SLP HS. There's a group called Students Organized Against Racism. And a Gender and Sexuality Alliance. By Your Side focuses on students with disabilities and Natural Helpers is a group of trained students who help other students with challenges. . . .



While We're Looking at Numbers. . .

Four-year graduation rate at SLP HS (2020)	92.3%
Percent of grads who go to college within 16 months	86%
Number of International Baccalaureate classes	38
Number of varsity athletic teams	26

There are 160 courses offered (in a course catalog more like what we would have seen in college). They fall into 12 academic departments.

- Twelve different Advanced Placement (AP) courses, ranging from AP Micro- and Macro-economics to AP Psychology
- Thirty International Baccalaureate classes
- Post-Secondary Enrollment Options (for college courses while in high school - both on campus and online)
- Twenty-one CTE courses for Technical or Community College credit (new in 2021-2022, students can earn a Certified Nursing Certificate free of charge)
- Building Assets Reducing Risks - for students with special needs
- Learning Lab - providing student aids

86 students were named to the Advanced Placement Scholar Roster.

- 52 students were named AP Scholars
- 10 AP Scholars of Honor
- 24 AP Scholars of Distinction

Four students were awarded International Baccalaureate Diplomas.

Eight students have been recognized by the National Merit Scholarship Program, based on their PSAT scores.

- 2 were semi-finalists

- 6 were commended scholars

Six students were named Wallin Scholars (a state program) and will receive \$16,000 over four years - as well as continued advising and support.

Honors Graduates are named in three categories:

- Cum Laude
- Magna Cum Laude
- Summa Cum Laude

Students with a 4.0 average are recognized for Principal's Awards.

(SLP uses a 4.0 grading system - and AP and IB classes are not figured in. SLP no longer uses class rank.)

SLP HS has been named a Nationally Designated School of Excellence and Named 30th Best Public High School for College Prep in MN.

There are 96 teachers, 83 of them with advanced degrees.

This is clearly enough of numbers. I hope I haven't bored you. You get the idea - there's been some changes. The next two issues will get into some of the more interesting programs, including a look inside some of the biggest changes in student life. Maybe some direct comparisons.

If there is anything in particular about today's Park experience you'd like to know about, send me a note and I'll do my best to include that info next time. lbolnick@outlook.com



Changing the Subject. . .

If you retire at 65, you have a 76 percent chance of living ten more years, a 38 percent chance of living 20 more years, and a 5 percent chance of living another 30 years.

Elderguru.com, 1/18/21

As already noted, we are now in the lead-up to our 60th high school class reunion. We are no longer saying, "can you believe it??" We believe it. Our lives have taken a turn. For most of us, we've adjusted to post-retirement life. When we were in high school, this period for our grandparents was just not that long. We, on the other hand, are in the midst of another lifetime (20+ years perhaps). What are the things that are meaningful in this stage of your life? Have you started a new venture? Are you taking classes - or teaching classes? Are you writing? Painting? Inventing new products? Playing cards? Completing puzzles? Planning outings with grandkids? How do you spend your time? What gives you satisfaction? Pleasure?

If you feel like sharing - and I hope some of you do -- drop me a note (lbolnick@outlook.com). I'll put comments in one (or both) of the next pre-reunion newsletters.



And, Speaking of the Reunion

The Reunion Committee is busily planning for the two-day event on September 22 and 23. They're putting finishing touches on plans now - and hopefully you're saving the days to see old friends and have a little (lot of) fun.

Friday's highlight (September 22) is a "meet and greet" from 1 - 4 p.m. at Park Tavern. There's no charge for this event. And Saturday (September 23), there's an early evening dinner with music and dancing for those who are so inclined. There is a fee for Saturday's activities which will begin with a cocktail hour at 5 p.m. at the Braemar Golf Course Clubhouse.

Between the "big events" are other activities. Vic Lewis will again lead a Back to Nature visit to the Westwood Nature Center on Saturday morning. A tour of St. Louis Park High School will be available, as will golf with classmates.

Lots of opportunities to "schmooze" with former classmates, old friends - and have some fun at the same time.

Hope to see you there. In the meantime, watch for the next - July - newsletter.

