

## KIS Class of '72 – 50<sup>th</sup> Reunion

The KIS class of 1972 held their 50<sup>th</sup> reunion at TWIN ROCKS Friends Camp in Rockaway Beach, Oregon from September 12-15, 2022. The site was perfect: the beautiful Oregon coast with both wide flat beaches and steep cliffs, nearby mountain trails for hiking, cool weather, comfortable lodging and great meals!



The goal was to have 50 people attend this reunion and we almost made it! Thirty class members and 17 brave spouses and “significant others” came from all over the US, Canada, and even Amsterdam and Switzerland! We know some had to cancel at the last minute and many others wanted to come, but just couldn’t this year. Please know you were remembered and missed!



The reunion began informally on Monday afternoon with hot chai (enjoyed in our special reunion mugs), “I J” and welcoming cheers as folks arrived and greeted each other. Some had attended our 20<sup>th</sup>, 40<sup>th</sup> and 45<sup>th</sup> reunions, but many had not “been seen” since graduation, 50 long years ago. Fortunately, everyone was recognizable – all having “aged” very gracefully!

Our first meal was a delicious chicken biriyani and vegetable curry dinner with assorted Halwa for dessert. We did not even attempt to sit on the floor and no one missed the banana leaves! The flavors and smells set the mood for the reunion, taking us back to our shared Indian roots. The rest of our meals were provided in the camp dining hall, but we had use of a private dining room. The dining experience was reminiscent of boarding school: cafeteria lines and set meal times! However, without meals to prepare and dishes to wash, we had more time for conversation and other activities! Overall, the food was very good.



Most of the couples had rooms at the Pacific Lodge and the large social room there became our central gathering place. Chai, coffee and snacks were always available. Flowers from Laura’s garden graced the tables and there were comfortable seating areas for small groups to gather. Sue Lomperis brought her old Eucys and other memorabilia which jogged our memories of our Kodai days.

Bob Moon was our unofficial emcee and kept us laughing with his memories and jokes. We appropriately sang the Indian national anthem – which we all actually remembered! (The spouses were very impressed, though how would they really know?) For our fellow Canadians, we sang “O Canada” which we remembered learning in 3<sup>rd</sup> grade music. (Thank you, Mr. DeJong!) And yes! We sang the Kodai School Song - the words are forever etched in our brains. Sadly, the battle of Orange vs Blue still divides us!





Each evening we took turns sharing the 50 - year journeys of our lives since leaving Kodai. For efficiency and equality of time, we each prepared a "Pecha Kucha" power point presentation (10 slides, 20 seconds each) of pictures and text of whatever highlights or events we wished to share: education, careers, family, travels, hobbies, etc. We even viewed a couple from classmates unable to attend the reunion. John Friesen patiently coached us with these and put them all together for us. The presentations (and those that just shared) were very interesting and generated many questions

and discussions! We quickly realized how little we really knew (or remembered) about each other and were both surprised and encouraged by who we have become. Someone noted, "I was surprised at how many expressed their appreciation of Kodai School when they were only there 1 or 2 years. The rest of us 'lifers' were 'enduring' without a choice." Varied interests, talents, opportunities and circumstances have led us to become doctors and nurses, lawyers and teachers, engineers and IT specialists, artists and pastors, bakers and chefs, farmers and scientists, homemakers and grandparents! WOW!! Most of us are retired now - enjoying time with family, traveling and pursuing old and new hobbies, but Chris Schmitthenner and a few others are still going strong.

Other Kodai-related activities were incorporated into the reunion as well. Before breakfast each morning there was an optional devotion time to share what God has been doing in our lives. Tuesday morning, the more adventurous members went hiking up the various Charlotte's Mountain trails. The rest of us strolled the miles of sandy beach, enjoying the misty views of the twin rocks. A lovely walk, but don't forget the bridge code!



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Tuesday afternoon was set aside for boating on the camp's lake. The lake was small and there were no punts, but it still provided a nice paddle in canoes or kayaks.



Kodai memories include trains! So, Wednesday afternoon we all took the scenic coastal train ride from Garibaldi to Rockaway Beach and back. The coastal views were lovely, but we mostly enjoyed the noisy rocking ride, cold air in our faces and each other's company. At the half way point, some sampled some of Oregon's famous Tillamook ice cream. Others toured the Tillamook Cheese factory in Garibaldi afterwards, sampling both the ice cream and the cheese. Delicious!



Wednesday morning was filled with more beach walks and taking the class picture. We all found places on a picturesque log and the spouses/significant others all stood opposite watching us - kind of like at the zoo!!



**Back row:** Sherri Perret Foster, Barbara (Bo) Kapenga, Jan Slater, John Froese, Gary Root, David Miller, Alden Poetker, Matt Riesz, Maarten (Mitz) Baavinck, Keene Pickard, Bob Moon, Laura Linn Johnson, Katrina Klawe Poetker, Ann Seibert, John Friesen, Rebecca Penner.

**Front row:** Barth Lewellen, Ted Carey, David Leuders, Sarah Weddington Smith, Sue Lomperis, Judy Michalk, Gwen Peck McDonald, Gwenda Emerick Fletcher, Diane Sauble Breuer, Doug Chin, Ron (Terry) Seaton, Chris Schmitthenner, Jeanne Marie Scott, Esther Roth Hawkins.



*A special THANK YOU to our supportive spouses and significant others, who willingly came and joined in our activities without any hesitation! You have helped us become who we are today and hopefully after this reunion, you will understand us better!!*

*Still not sure which ones were the monkeys!! 😊*

After breakfast Thursday morning we packed up and went our separate ways. Some toured more of the west coast, hiking and visiting National Parks, but most headed home – back to reality! The best part of the reunion was just being together! It was nice to get reacquainted as adults, forgiving and forgetting past hurtful experiences, ignoring past reputations and adolescent misconceptions, and building new relationships based on shared experiences and struggles we have had since leaving Kodai. As Judy aptly said, “I appreciate our class more and more. The guys turned out to be thoughtful and nice. The gals are strong and brave.” AMEN!



The reunion committee deserves to be recognized for all their hard work and years of planning: Laura, Ann, Sherri, Rebecca, Gary, Alden, John Friesen and David Miller. Their choice of site, extensive planning and handling of details were fantastic! THANK YOU! We now have more good memories of our great class of 1972! The committee was each gifted with a framed vintage print of a Kodai scene circa 1895-1910, which we all signed.

Thank you everyone for coming! You each made a special contribution in your own way. It was great to see you and refresh relationships. Everyone is already looking forward to 2027 and our 55<sup>th</sup> reunion. We just need volunteers to plan it!! So, if you know of a good venue, interesting place or have a desire to help plan a reunion, please speak up! A class reunion takes time and planning to organize, but everyone will be grateful. We look forward to many more classmates joining us next time! Until then, be safe, stay well and keep looking UP!

Photo credits: Sue Lomperis, Alden Poetker, Judy Michalk, and Dave McDonald (class picture). *THANK YOU!*  
Report written and compiled by Gwen Peck McDonald. *ENJOY!*

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*Helping to keep the memories alive:*



*Did you notice the dinosaur among us?  
Something older than us!*

*Or see this coastal view approaching  
Rockaway Beach?*

*See you all in 2027!!*