

Fern Creek Traditional High School Reunion Guide

Introduction

This booklet has been prepared for you by the Fern Creek Traditional High School Alumni Association. Its purpose is to aid you in preparing for and implementing your upcoming reunion. The ideas presented here are the summary of many previous reunions and, hopefully, you will find them useful. It is never too early to begin your planning and you are encouraged to get started at least a year in advance. You will find it almost mandatory to gather a few classmates who are interested in helping to form a "reunion committee".

Getting Started

Recruiting volunteers and assigning specific jobs:

Once the plans are underway selecting a Chairperson (or Chairpersons) is a good idea in order to bring order to future planning. Heads of committees are also a good idea with the aim of getting specific jobs assigned. For one or two people to attempt the handling of the entire reunion is not a good idea.....the more people involved, the more likely it will be a success.

Where to begin

Finding Classmates:

While this can be a daunting endeavor, modern technology and the files kept by the Alumni Association can make the job a lot easier. Contact the Alumni Association and request a current list of addresses for your class. This list will give you a starting place to assist you in reaching your classmates. A letter should be sent to each of your classmates that have addresses listed in the Alumni Association roster or are known by you or members of your committee. The letter should state that a reunion is in the planning stage and you are requesting that each classmate contacted send to you the names and addresses of other classmates of which they have information. It is amazing how many people stay in contact with former classmates. The Alumni Association may be able to help with initial mailings.

Computer technology can also be an aid. AnyWho.com and 411locate.com are commonly used address seeking internet sites that are available to the public. More

sophisticated sites are also available but, most of them require a membership fee.

Determining what the class wants in a reunion:

It is, of course, necessary to get a general 'feel' for what the majority of your classmates would like in the way of reunion activities. This can be requested in your initial mailing or contact them by email order to reduce postage costs and time. Carefully formulating your questions in this letter will be worthwhile in getting the highest degree of information.

Selecting Dates:

This also should be addressed in the opening letter to your classmates. Specific dates should be avoided at this juncture but, generalized times such as, 'Late Spring', Mid-summer, Fall, etc. should be considered. There are advantages and disadvantages to each time of year. Times that might want to be considered are integrated with what activities are planned. For example, tours of the school are much easier to arrange during the school year. Outdoor activities, of course, would be more suitable for spring or summer time. An example of this might be a cruise on the riverboat, Belle of Louisville. Some classes elect to have their reunions in Mid October in order to coincide with the Alumni Association Hall of Fame weekend or attend a home football game. This allows your class to participate with this event and makes the scheduling of school tours somewhat easier as a tour is usually conducted with the Hall of Fame Breakfast on Saturday.

Another consideration is the age of your class. For example, 50th reunions usually involve mostly retired individuals who can attend at almost any time of year. Working age people often prefer to hold their reunions in the summer for various reasons.

The final date can be firmed up once all the logistics have been considered.

Determining Format (Casual, Formal, Number of events, etc.)

This item for consideration is very sensitive to the make up of your class. Usually a mixture of formats is suitable. An example of this would be a casual get-together on Friday evening with a more formal banquet on Saturday. The final make-up of your reunion is, of course, totally at the discretion of your class.

Putting the show together

Selecting events and locations

This item is of importance. If the perception is that the reunion will not be fun or interesting, numbers of classmates may feel it is not worth their while to attend.

Specifics on this matter are totally in the hands of each class however, some general guidelines are noted. It is important that the members of your class be afforded an opportunity to express their desires. A response to the initial letter or email can accomplish this if the wording is done wisely.

The wishes of the attendees will usually be affected by the place of residence of the bulk of the class. For example, if everyone is living in Louisville a tour of the city may not be in order. However, if there are significant numbers of out of town members then sightseeing may be near the top of their desires. The changes that have taken place at the school and the city at large present a number of possibilities

Reserving facilities:

Significant care should be given to the location of each event planned. For instance, whatever event is chosen to be the 'centerpiece' of the reunion (dinner-dance, riverboat ride, etc.) should be given a great deal of attention. The available sites should be within the budgetary restraints of the reunion as a whole and menus carefully chosen....a bad meal or a lousy location can be real turn-offs. Obviously, the nicest places are desired and should be selected (within budgetary restraints).

The earliest this aspect can be established, the better. Obviously, certain places are taken by other groups early. Food choices should allow for some selection by each attendee. Some people can't eat red meat, others hate fish, etc.

Entertainment can be an important factor. Some groups prefer a

dance, while others merely want an in-depth meeting with old friends. This aspect is also age dependent. By this, it is meant that what would be preferred by people in their early 30's would not necessarily be the choice of people attending their 50th class reunion. My personal view is that you should strive for at least one outstanding event during the reunion period. Many reunions allow for multiple activities over a weekend time period. Some examples include:

Friday Night-Casual gathering. This can be with or without spouses, and is usually held in an open setting that does not require reservations, but may have accommodations which allow the group to be somewhat separate from the entire population. (TK's Pub is one such venue. There is a back patio which allows for some privacy.) If your group decides on a fall reunion make it a group night at a home football game.

Saturday Afternoon-Tour of the school. This can be arranged through the Alumni Association.

Saturday Evening-Dinner/Dance can be with a DJ, Band, or the committee can provide the music. This is usually held at a Hotel, Country Club, or Community Rental Hall. This event is typically designed to include classmates and their dates or spouses. Sunday-Picnic at a local Park, Day at the Races (Churchill Downs), or other family oriented event. This event allows an opportunity for families to attend. Minimize the cost associated with this event by asking for people to bring their own food for a picnic, and or pay at the door for the event.

The following is a list of commonly used venues for FCHS reunions:

Woodhaven Country Club: 7200 Woodhaven Road 491-7112

Wildwood Country Club: 5000 Bardstown Road 499-1261

The Fern Creek Fire Department: Contact person is James Heid 594-8927

Holiday Inn 1325 South Hurstbourne Parkway 426-2600

Housing:

Many attendees will live in or near the Louisville area. For these people, housing is not a factor. However, at least some people will be coming from significant distances. Thus, advice to them relating to available hotel accommodations is needed. A good idea is to gather information on two or three levels of pricing and the same number of location choices. A person on a moderate budget and lack of available personal transportation may dictate a hotel near the activity sites

Souvenir booklet:

Class groups often prepare a souvenir booklet of some kind. This may contain names and addresses of the class members, their photographs, a short biography, and anything else you may see fit to include. Some class members may be adept at graphic arts and can help with this. The Fern Creek Alumni Association can be of some help in this also. The overall construction of this booklet can be as elaborate or simple as you wish. A color cover is a nice touch if possible, but photographs could be monochrome if need be. Once again, the choice is fairly well dictated by the amount of money the class wants to spend on the reunion. One other bit of printed material that is of **great importance** is the fabrication of name tags. It is helpful if they include a yearbook photograph of the person so that recognition of each other does not become an embarrassing situation. Believe me, if you have not seen a classmate in 50 years, you will not recognize them. By all means, these should be given out at the *first event*.

Cost:

The cost per person and for couples should be decided in the early stages of planning. When a venue has been chosen, and the cost has been determined for food, etc., a cost per person can be calculated. Remember to budget for printing, mailing and decorations. When you have calculated your entire cost, then divide this by the number of individuals that you can reasonable expect to attend. A successful reunion will have 100 to 125 people. While this is difficult to predict, it is not hard to achieve with timely mailings and diligent volunteers. As with other issues, group consensus should determine the cost per person. A balance needs to be struck between the possibilities of keeping people away by too much cost against the other end of the spectrum whereby the entire affair is left wanting due to too much cost cutting. Remember to plan for activities which will allow you to

collect more money during the reunion. i.e. raffles split the pot drawings, and simply asking for everyone to donate a few dollars to help the reunion committee cover costs. All of these will help raise more money to cover costs associated with the reunion. If money is left over, the reunion committee can bank these funds for future reunions. Any bank can be used for reunion funds; It is a good idea to require more than one signature for all check writing on this account. Republic bank has worked with several reunion committees for Fern Creek High School.

And last, but not least, a photographer should be on hand to photograph the class. This is usually done at your most significant event so that most, if not all, people will be in attendance. You may be lucky and have a very advanced photographer in your class. Otherwise, hire a professional. The following is a list of photographers you can contact for your reunion pictures:

Bob Kuprion, 1752 Chichester Ave. phone number 568-4863
Jeunesse of Louisville, 6007 Colebrooke Lane phone number 968-3033

One aside....make sure that the photographer has plenty of room in which to work. If the photographer has to do his work without sufficient space he (or she) would need to resort to a wide-angled lens on the camera. This is guaranteed to make everyone in the group look distorted to some degree. Several committee members can take candid shots throughout the evening. Remember to give this task to a few different individuals, so that you end up with a lot of pictures from the reunion activities. These can be shared via e mail, and or sold to classmates as yet another fund raising opportunity.

Correspondence with your classmates:

As you contact your classmates remember to ask for e mail addresses. You can provide reunion updates, ask them to vote on venues and or dates, and keep them informed during the planning process. This is an excellent way to stay in touch with a large number of individuals, and it will cut down on mailing costs. Create an e mail list and continue to update them on committee meetings as you plan your reunion. This may help you recruit new committee members a long the way, and will certainly assist in generating excitement about the reunion. This will also give you an opportunity to remind them of the event. One person from your

committee should join classmates.com. This forum will give you an opportunity to post information about your reunion, as well as to reach people that you do not have good addresses in any other format. Keep the information out there, and update it monthly. Make sure you post information on the alumni web site, and keep this information updated. HYPERLINK "http://www.fchs.us" www.fchs.us is our website, and you can post announcements about the reunion in the forum section of this website. Remember to list this website on all of your mailings, so that your classmates will know where they can find their reunion information.

Follow Up Meeting:

One of the most important committee meetings is the follow-up meeting. This occurs after the reunion is complete. One final meeting to discuss the event, say goodbye to the individuals that you have spent so much time with, and to congratulate yourselves for a job well done. In this meeting, you can discuss the funds, take notes about the successes, and make tentative plans to reconvene for future reunions. This is also when you coordinate a final list of addresses that you have collected. This list should be given to the Alumni Association, so that they can continue to stay in touch with your classmates over the next few years. We appreciate your cooperation in giving us any updates that you have with respect to your classmate addresses.

As mentioned earlier, the Fern Creek Traditional High School Alumni Association is willing to give advice and help that can to make your reunion a success.

The association address is:

**Fern Creek Traditional High School Alumni Association
P.O. Box 91266, Louisville, KY 40291
502-485-6362**

Our web site is: <http://www.fchs.us>

The Fern Creek Traditional High School Alumni Association is an organization dedicated to promoting and helping the school. It is comprised of a great number of members. In addition, the group has a Chairperson, Board of Directors and other interested members who help to carry on the Association's activities. As you can imagine, we have some fun as well. If you are not a member, we encourage you to become on. The dues are modest and include a quarterly newsletter.