

Letter to the Editor: Upcoming nostalgic boarding school reunion

Written by Gallupsun Staff
Friday, 16 August 2019 01:38



I have previously read about school reunion announcements in the *Gallup Independent* and the *Navajo Times*

for some BIA (Bureau of Indian Affairs) off reservation boarding schools such as Intermountain in Utah, Riverside in California, Chemawa in Oregon and Phoenix in AZ.

These off-reservation boarding schools were closed over 50 or more years ago but their former students still get together every spring and summer and I salute them for their firm dedication in getting together in their 80s perhaps.

Since I was a student in St. Michaels Indian School during 1950s, I would like to announce school reunion planning to be held at St Michael Indian School on Friday, September 6, 2019 from 10 am to 12 pm at the school gym.

This school reunion will be held in collaboration with the school personnel, Ms. Renee Tsinnie, who oversees Alumni Relation. She will give a tour of school campus buildings where changes have been made. Our last school reunion was held at St. Michaels Indian School on 9/24-26-2010 as noted on the attached photo.

The purpose of the meeting is strictly to socialize with one another and especially with your classmates and/or dorm mates. Microphone will be available for anyone to talk about their life experience since he or she left school.

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My life experience is a simple one since I left in 1957. I applied the concept and the old adage saying “when opportunity presents itself, do not reject it, but accept it whole heartedly” which I have done with most of my job offers. A month after my graduation from University of Denver in Denver, CO, the Navajo Nation Public Service Division called me to offer me a job as a Tribal Welfare Worker in Ft. Defiance Agency.

Do not be too surprised if you do not recognize me with all my old age symptoms like big ears, large nose, white hair with a cane, not able to hear right and can’t remember names and places. Not long ago, I had a chance to visit with my former dorm mate friend, Herbert Yazhe, who was waiting to see his dentist.

He kept looking at me and I kept looking at him to see who he was and I was afraid to go up to him and ask if he was so and so until they called his name and, certainly, I wanted to visit with him which I did. He was in a hurry but we did exchange some information with a pleasant smile.

At other times, I have met with some of you at some stores in Gallup. So, let’s all get together and get reacquainted before it’s too late like some of our former students who recently left this world: Lee Mitchell and his brother, Leo Mitchell, and their uncle Carl Jones, from Mexican Springs. Others include: Mike Allison, Jr., in Tohatchi and Thomas Notah, Sr., in St. Michaels, AZ.

We pray that their spirits rest in peace. It would be nice if you could bring the school annual book and I will bring the 1957 CO X0 COI annual book for viewing but do not take with you, “just kidding.” Let’s all expect to have a good and wonderful time, OK??? Bring your spouse and/or a friend. Registration fee of \$30.00 will be collected to be donated to St. Michaels Indian School.

If you get a chance to read about this school reunion planning, please call me at (505) 870-0998 or email me at: applejones1938@yahoo.com . Since I know where some of you former students live in the Navajo community chapters, I would like to designate some of you to help with recruitment and contacting students as follows:

Anthony and Patricia Harvey will contact students in Lukachukai and Crystal Chapters; Edison Jones and David Charley will recruit in Mexican Springs, Coyote Canyon and Tohatchi chapters; Stanley Martinez and Samuel Woody will contact students in Chinle and Many Farms

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Chapters; Elvira Hickson and Paul Lincoln will recruit in St. Michaels, Ft. Defiance and Hunters Point Chapters; Lenora Beecher will contact students in Laguna & Acoma Pueblos; Lloyd Polacca and Delbert Fritz will contact students in Polacca, AZ; Joe Stesbistay and John Bowannie will recruit students in Zuni and Cochiti Pueblos; Justin Sorrelman and Lucy Zahaunnie will contact students in Phoenix, AZ; Rosalie & Alice Kellywood will contact students in Albuquerque, NM; Virginia Knoki will contact students in Denver, CO and Mitzie McCormick will contact students in Pauma Valley, CA; Richard Analla and Marie Upshaw will contact students in Gallup, NM; and Richard Mike will recruit in Kayenta, AZ.

Recruiters, please do your best in contacting students for the '50s & '60s School reunion.

Irvin Jones
Gallup, N.M.