

Don Edwards, Class of 1952

In social gatherings, especially cocktail parties, Don quietly bides his time until the safe small talk about high school reunions emerges. He patiently defers to others in his cluster while they tell their stories about where they attended high school, what student life was like in those days, and then finally, some wistful or humorous commentary about their most recent high school class reunion. Now the stage has been set.

Don, what about you? Where did you go to high school?

Actually, I graduated from a high school in California, and my class boasted the largest number of graduates in the history of the institution. Even though we did not fully appreciate the historical significance of this graduation, it was quite a landmark occasion for the school, we were told.

Wow, how many graduates in the class?

Fourteen.

Fourteen? You have got to be kidding. Whoever heard of a high school in California with only 14 graduates? (Chuckle.) Have you even bothered to organize a class reunion?

Glad you asked, yes we did. For our 50th reunion, we met at the end of the earth, on Cape Breton in Nova Scotia. Two of us showed up, and we spent many a day reminiscing and toasting our fellow classmates, those dead and those alive somewhere else on earth. We had a great time, and our wives didn't seem to mind it much, either.

As chance would have it, I was a member of Don's high school graduation class and the other participant in the festive 50th reunion.

As is the case with other high school graduates, class members scatter with the winds, some never to see each other again. Small as it was, such was the result for our class as well. Some have died, some have never been seen or heard from again, some are known but choose not to be, and only two have stayed in contact – and this only in recent years – Don and me.

For one thing, we shared a common past. Albeit in different years, we each attended the same boarding school, we attended the same high school, the same college, and we were both members of the same Catholic monastic religious order. As old guys now, this shared early life gives us a lot to reminisce and reflect about without having to explain ourselves.

Don went on to become a computer engineer who served with IBM. He (and his wife and daughters) lived much of his adult life in London, Kobe, Rome, and Paris. When Don reconnected with me, he was retired, living in Atlanta, and I in Sacramento, the onetime hometown of his childhood. As of this writing, he and Valerie have relocated to Ajijic, Mexico. His final move? I think not.

Aside from our 50th reunion, email has served as our conversational medium. Hundreds and hundreds of emails, a few letters, and only four or five telephone calls over this period have enabled us to revisit more than 50 years of living, working, thinking, marriage, raising family, traveling, religion, retirement, writing, and growing old. This reconnection with a colleague from the 1950's has been a godsend for me personally, but especially for my writing. Every writer, especially a wannabe like me, needs a human sounding board and encouragement. Don is my friend.

Have a nice Friday, Don.