

## ONE OF THE BEST LESSONS I LEARNED IN HIGH SCHOOL

The class of 1962 was the first class to spend all three years in the newly built Seymour Senior High School. Yes, the word Senior was used at that time with the High School. We spent our first year in High School as members of the Shield's H.S. Freshmen Class on Walnut Street.

A convocation/assembly happened in the auditorium of the new High School during either during my Sophomore or Junior year.

A hypnotist put on a performance for the entire student body of approximately 1,000 students. Ten to twelve students were hypnotized and seated on the stage of the auditorium facing the rest of us.

I have forgotten most of the performance by the hypnotist and what he did except for one individual student—Mike Story—a student in the class ahead of me.

Mike, evidently, was asked to act like he was driving his car. He was braking with his one foot and shifting the clutch with his other foot, (On lots of cars still had standard transmission at that time in the early 1960's) in his imaginary automobile. But Mike also had his hand out an imaginary driver's window flicking the ashes off of his cigarette. The students were going crazy with laughter at this action and the excitement of his gestures. One rule we students knew back then—any student caught smoking within three blocks of the High School—was automatically expelled from high school for 3 days.

But the main reason why I remember the assembly. The hypnotist took each student back to the age of three and asked them to remember what Christmas gifts they had received that Christmas .

Once again, I have to focus on Mike Story. Not only did Mike remember the name of the gifts that he had received as a 3-year old but he said the names of the presents in baby-talk. You can imagine the laughter from the auditorium. It was loud, raucous, and full of disbelief that a 16-17 year old could remember—names of the toys—from age 3.

But that was a most important learning of the day for me. I learned: "It's all up there! In your head! All you have to do is bring back to your

mind the “tapes’ from your brain.” I am sure a psychologist would have a proper medical name for this process.

The above paragraph has been proven. On CBS’s News, 60 Minutes from a program years ago, a professor from a California University had found six people in the United State, who knew everything of every day of their life.

Mention a date to them, for example, June 11, 1974 and they will tell you what day of the week it was and what they had for breakfast, lunch and dinner also other activities they did that very day. These six individuals were not socially well-adjusted according to the Professor and most were divorced.

Another example, my father, Allan Waldkoetter, had dementia late in life. I had never heard him speak a word of German his entire life although he was raised in a German-speaking household. Yet, in his declining years, he was bringing up “tapes” from his brain and speaking in German.

What a wonderful resource the brain is to bring up memories and remembrances of years gone by. There is a recent psychological study that senior citizens, or anyone, should share these interesting stories over and over, with your family, friends and especially grandchildren! That way they will remember you and the story. And it is good mental health for both parties.

Jerry Waldkoetter—Seymour High  
School Class of 1962

P.S. Although Mike Story, Class of 1961, is no longer with us. Thank you Mike for the unbelievable laughter one day in High School and the lessons that day taught me.