

Fun at Multiple Year High School Class Reunions

By Nora Beane

Takeaways

- High school class reunions can really get boring and repetitive.
- Having a multi-class high school reunion can put a new twist on your reunion experience
- Multi class reunions gathers up people who were part of your school experience but not your class

Fun at multiple year high school class reunions can be the answer to your reunion committee's quest for success. Having served on several high school class reunion committees I know the experience of gathering together and poring over address sheets, trying to flush out old high school friends from their self imposed exile and ending up at a gathering of people that almost entirely resembles the group gathered together for the last reunion, only five years older. Finally someone in our town suggested that we jump on the multiple class bandwagon for our next class reunion and the results included these positive effects

First encouraging people to come was much easier than before. We still did some digging to do in order to connect with as many people as possible, but this time we felt like we had something unique to offer them. Instead of just seeing the folks who shared the same graduating class, this new approach meant we could encourage folks to come to a much larger event that would include people who had graduated a few years ahead and a few years behind them. Here was something different that got us out of the reunion rut. Not only were we as members of our own class trying to round up folks to attend an event, other reunion committees across an entire decade were hard at work doing the same thing. All of the individual class committees were more energized than we could remember and it showed in the overall efforts and in the turn out. When invited to attend a multi class as opposed to a single class reunion larger percentages of former students from almost every class made the effort.

Folks who came were not disappointed. This was not a costly reunion weekend with informal and formal evenings, a cruise or a trip to nearby Cape Cod. This was a simple get together held in the old high school that we had all attended. With such a variety of guests under one roof, all we really needed to keep everyone happy was some music and refreshments. A multi class reunion may be lots bigger but with all classes chipping in and less demand for entertainment, the reunion for each class treasury can end up being considerably less.

The most obvious fun of the multi-class reunion was that we all had the chance to catch up with old friends we had been close to in high school but never saw again simply because we graduated in a different calendar year. Guys that played football, girls that were cheerleaders, guys and girls who played in the band, acted in the school drama club, were on Student Council together but happened to be a little younger or older than one another really got a chance to reminisce in a whole new way than at a simple single class reunion. In some cases starting teams were almost totally in attendance. The multi class reunion brought back memories not just of one class but of an entire high school experience.

An interesting and unanticipated offshoot of the multi year reunion was that some returnees found themselves for the first time ever at a high school reunion with their own siblings or cousins. While you might not have spent any time together at all when you were a senior and your brother was a sophomore, coming together for a multi class reunion seemed oddly enjoyable. In addition to seeing your siblings in a whole new light you we also found we had a chance to catch up with our siblings group of friends, all grown up, a both humorous and revealing experience.

Of course there were a few who rather dragged their heels about changing the format of the reunion. There were some committee members in each class who probably would have preferred to stick with the old way of doing things simply because it was the familiar and known way of doing things. But when folks saw the turn out and experienced for themselves the fun of connecting with old friends, not part of their graduating class, who had come from hundreds of miles away to share the evening, most became believers in this new system of class reunions.

For sure the multi-class high school reunion is less appealing for those recently out of high school. A 5 year class reunion really seems to belong to each particular graduating class. Its like a party after the prom, you just want your classmates there. But after the 10 or 15 year reunions go by and the number of attendees begins to drop off, one way to revitalize the idea of renewing old friendship and reliving old memories is to give the multi year reunion a try. There's little to lose and lots of old friends to regain.