

Bennett High reunion was a marvelous time

I returned to Buffalo the last weekend in August to attend my 50th Bennett High School reunion with a.) more enthusiasm than I had as a student; b.) my husband, Jonathan; c.) a little black dress; and d.) a bigger little black dress in case I couldn't fit into c. Here are other things I wish to share:

- I wore the bigger little black dress. No one knew. Until now.

- The footlong hot dog at Ted's, our first Buffalo stop, tasted as good as I remembered it.

- I recognized most of my classmates when I saw them at the School 66 (North Park Academy) tour Saturday afternoon, remembered the poem from my fourth-grade safety play when I played a rusty nail and recited it to the group in the auditorium, which looked exactly the same.

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- After driving along Hertel Avenue and by the houses of my friends and relatives on Colvin, Jewett, Starin, Parkside and Woodbridge, I rang the bell of my childhood home on North Drive. The owners invited us in. The bay windows, fireplace and my little bedroom at the top of the stairs were the same as when I lived there. Homey. Cozy. I felt my parents' spirits everywhere.

- Jonathan was impressed with Buffalo's residential areas and architecture.

- Our second Ted's footlongs were as good as the first.

- Driving by Kleinhans Music Hall and thinking about the Van Cliburn, Glenn Gould and Leonard Pennario piano concerts I attended with my mother, I felt her presence even more.

- Inez, my first best friend, greeted me at the reunion dinner with so much love and so many hugs. Some things never change.

- Others do. I didn't recognize the stores at the University Plaza or on Hertel and Delaware.

- My classmates look great. Without reading name tags,



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which I couldn't anyway without glasses, we recognized each other.

- I know myself better now than I had in high school.

- I was not a cheerleader then.

- I would not qualify now.

- I would not qualify as one of the good dancers, either.

- Al, who helped me pass French, kept it a secret that I didn't have an ear for languages.

- Don, my first boyfriend, is just as good-looking and more talkative now.

- I must have been part of the reason he kept so quiet back then.

- Miss Gerase, our history teacher, attended the reunion. I had the opportunity to tell her that she and the psychology class she also taught changed my life. It was my favorite class at Bennett. I majored in psychology.

- Fast dancing with the girls is still tons of fun.

- Roast beef on weck and chocolate frozen custard at Anderson's for lunch – and dinner – on Sunday did not disappoint.

- In between, we visited my parents' friend at the Park Lane apartments and then drove to Niagara Falls. The falls still wowed me. The ride seemed shorter than it did when I went as a child with my parents.

- The Park Lane, where I got married the first time, is gone. Millard Fillmore Hospital is half gone.

- Eating egg sandwiches at Wegmans and walking up and down the aisles before driving home brought back memories of shopping with my father and could not have been a better send-off.

- My husband said that Wegmans, Ted's and Anderson's, but mostly my classmates, are warm and welcoming. True. The Bennett reunion beat going to high school. I had a blast in my bigger little black dress.