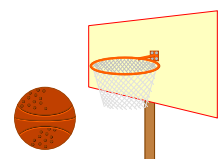


## Irvington Varsity "I" Club Newsletter

Vito Miele  
P. O. Box 184  
Lavallette, NJ 08735  
(732) 793-6689  
E-mail: VarsityI@aol.com  
Web site: <http://www.varsityi.com>



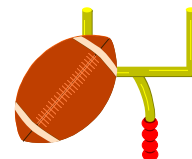
NEWLETTER # 74

DEC. 2002

Hi Folks:

Happy Holiday To ALL.

With the holiday season coming and this being our festive month we wish all our Irvington friends a Happy Holiday Season. Are the children visiting or are you visiting them? Isn't wonderful to visit or have them visit you at this time of the year, to have Grandpa or someone else in the family play Santa Clause and open all the Christmas presents on Christmas day. But doesn't it feel good at the end of the Holiday season as old timers and senior citizen you are able to go home to your own bed, relax, and think of all the wonderful enjoyment you had with your grandchildren on Christmas day. Yes, it is a wonderful feeling and I hope you all can experience it.



I have asked you folks to send me letters of your experiences in Irvington. I have not received any mail from you Gentlemen, are you sharing these Newsletters with your spouse? Why not let your spouse write the letter, you can look it over, to see what she has missed, women like to write, remember I cannot continue to write this letter without your input. Here is one from Nick Fiorentino '39 now living in Maplewood.

Hi Vito:

I received your Newsletter # 73 and enjoyed it very much. I am from the class of June '39 I was born Nov. 12, 1920

I could not believe the site where Rex used to be was demolished and as soon as I read it in your Newsletter, I took a ride with my wife to the site.

I lived on Stewart Ave near the Tri City Stadium, I remember we used to park cars in the empty lots and made movie money.

We moved to Irvington in 1925, my father to get released from the V.A. had to move to an open area. He had a tailor shop in Vailsburg and after school at Irvington High days I used to walk to his store and I used to deliver clothes etc.

I remember your store at Irvington Center. I drove to Stewart Ave the other day and the house that I grew up in was still there. I went to Chancellor Ave School up to the fifth grade then to Union Ave School, which was then a new school.

I worked at Olympic Park in 1934 and 1935 at the Radio stand and the Doll stand for a Mrs. Brenner. I was so good at it that she took me to the Danbury State Fair for nine days. I had to cut school for it.

I miss Miss Hyer, we used to correspond with her and also called her on the phone.

I have enclosed some xerox copies of movie houses from this area. Did you know that Irvington had two pre 1920 movie houses on or below the Center, called the CITY and the one near Olympic Park called the PARK.

At one time Newark had over 75 movie houses plus live theatres.

I met my wife at Olympic Park in 1940. I was on the Merry Go Round, we saw a few girls walking up the path. We threw some Brass Rings at them and they threw



them back, we were three fellows and five girls, we drove them home. Today we are married 56 years 10/7/02.

**Lots of Luck with your Newsletter**

**Nick Fiorentino'39**

Here is a letter we received from Don Blair, from Venice, Florida.

Dear Vito.

Born in Newark in 1933 but lived on Sanford Ave a few doors west of Elmwood Ave. until after the war and then on Ridgewood Ave. the other side of Clinton Ave till the fall of 1948 when we moved to Hunterdon County. I left Morrell High early in my sophomore year. Our Sanford Ave number was 1052 and only 3 or 4 doors from Elmwood Ave. We had short walks to either Florence Ave. school and then, later, to the high school. How do those neighborhoods look today? I am almost afraid to ask.

Everybody recalls and laments Olympic Park. We haunted the place especially when various companies printed those strip tickets and some rides were a few cents plus a perforated ticket strip with the name of the ride on it.

We had a short walk to the wonderful Sanford Theater where top films of the day were a dime and the "pretzel boy" was always set up with his pretzel basket in a store doorway nearby - five cents or three for a dime. During the war... some Saturday matinees were free with any can of food... other times... any old aluminum pot or pan and on other days... you got free Popsicle with your admission. I always mention Lindeboom's ice cream parlor across Springfield and a door or two north of Sanford as our hangout but few remember.

Other fond memories... father and grandfather donning their helmets and arm bands during an air raid alert... walking Sanford Ave. and using their whistles at homes showing too much light. Headlights were painted half black ...like drooping eyelids. Rationing ...red points for meat... blue, I guess for other stuff and saving fat in coffee cans...very valuable for making explosives.

The Olds dealer at Lyons and Springfield...making khaki-colored flashlights during the war when there were no cars to sell anyway. An Army or Navy E (for excellence) over some of our factories. Our supermarket was the Big Bear... bags and bags of food for 10 or 11 bucks

A real Army jeep rolling into the big paved yard a Florence Ave School. We kids were in awe. My quarter allowance... a movie a, pretzel and Pepsi and candy bar after the show. Imagine blowing all that money in one afternoon.

It was a great, great town.

**Don Blair, Venice, Florida.**

How many of you folk knew Leon Druze, Leon was a basketball player at Irvington in 1933 and I believe he was a classmate of mine, being of the same age. Succumbing to the rigors of life, Leon passed away at the age of 86 on Nov 5<sup>th</sup> at his home in Manchester N. J. Leon was the brother of John Druze now living in Scottsdale, Ariz..

Got a thank you from PAUL RUGG for given him the address of Harold Mullen who Paul has been trying to locate for years. Harold is my deceased brothers stepson Thank you again for the big favor.

This is an example of the many things this Newsletter can do, we are always happy to join families and friends. Maybe we can help you?

Got a note from SAUL DONNER '37 Saul and his group had their 65<sup>th</sup> Reunion at the "L 'Affaire" in Mountain Side, N. J. on Sept 20, 2002.

At the affaire I spoke with Stan Wnek and John Bisset. What a memory John has, he said, " I remember you, and you recovered a fumble and ran for a touchdown"! And I was only a right guard. Saul

Saul sent me picture of the group, IRVINGTON H.S. 1937 twenty five in all, ten men and fifteen women, all looking as beautiful as ever.

Got this note from TOM MAHON, now living in Sebastian, Fl.

Dear Vito; After graduating from Seton Hall in 1950 I went to Miami Fl. To check on a job offer from a friends father and never came back to Irvington. I loved Irvington, but the offer was really a good and Miami was a great town at that time so I stayed.

I visited my folks in Irvington, Union, and Chatham several dozen times but I could never locate any of my High School friends with the exception of Bill Miller, and John Walsh. Looking at Irvington slowly going and down really shocked me. But I will always have great memories of the Town and Irvington High School.

I graduated from the High school in 1943 along with Bobby Blake, Ben Ulbriet, Joe Nogo, Al Oberman, Harry Neigel, John Walsh, Terry McSherry, Norm Burnett etc. a great bunch of guys and pals were in that class.

I was on the cross-country and track and field teams. Harry Wasassier was our coach and we had fair teams. I was in your store a few times for athletic equipment. I guess it must be over 60 years since I last saw you. Please put me on your mailing list for your NEWSLETTER as I have a lot of catching up to do.

Thanks Vito

Signed Tom Mahon

Another letter from Don Blair:

Dear Vito:

A bit of tragic irony enclosed. As I may have pointed out in earlier letters I did not graduate from Frank H. Morrell since my family headed for the country early in my sophomore year (1948). However that did not stop me from flying up from Florida for the 50<sup>th</sup> reunion of the class of 1950 and it was worth every penny. There were 17 of us from Florence Ave School.

Ironically, we moved to a sleepy little dairy, chicken and corn-growing town called Whitehouse Station in Hunterdon County. It is still charming and quite crime – free but take a look at the coincidental circumstances in the enclosed article.

This poor devil...Bob Maffacci...a resident of Whitehouse Station ...for whatever reason, finds himself in the scary city of our youth...Irvington...trying to earn an honest dollar and gets slaughter for his trouble. It makes you want to scream...Bob...for God's sake, why didn't you check with us old Camptowners first...you don't go to Irvington unless you have armed guards with you.

The story was in the last issue of the Hunterdon County Democrat, which I continue to receive here in Florida because it often carries stories about people I knew and went to school with. Unfortunately some of these names turn up in the obituaries...as recently as a week ago. Nonetheless it is a connection to a past, which I treasure and hold on to.

Just thought you would be interested in the continuing tragedy that is the great town that we all grew up in. It is centered on a guy who may have thought that living in the country was his assurance of safety.

Signed

Don Blair

The situation Don writes about occurred in our community of Irvington Mr. Maffucci , 38, was shot and killed in an apparent robbery in Irvington at 6:15 am . Two men were arrested and charged with the killing

Robert Maffucci a self-employed bread delivery man, was murdered while making deliveries with his SUV on Springfield Ave. one of the main thorough fares through Irvington. His vehicle crashed into an empty storefront and he was pronounced dead at the scene, a bullet wound to the stomach, police reported.

Bilal Muhammad, also known as Curtis Purvis 45, and Howard (Hak) Williams, 36, both of Irvington, were charged with murder. The two were picked up by Police in the area of the killing about 6 hour later on unrelated charges and were latter linked to the murders.

**I GOT THIS E MAIL THE OTHER DAY, I DON'T KNOW WHO THE AUTHOR IS, BUT THANKS TO ALL WHO DO SEND E MAIL.**

Growing up isn't what it used to be. Hey Dad, " one of my kids asked the other day, What was your favorite fast food when you were growing up? "We didn't have fast food when I was growing up. " I informed him "all the food was slow." "c'mon seriously. Where did you eat?" "It was a place called home "I explained. " Grandma cooked every day and when Grandpa got home from work, we sat down together at the dinning room table, and if I didn't like what she put on my plate I was allowed to seat there until I did like it". By this time the kid was laughing so hard I was afraid he was going to suffer serious internal damage, so I didn't tell him the part about how I had to have permission to leave the table. But here are some other things I would have told him about my child hood if I figured his system could have handled it. Some parents never owned their own house, wore Levis, set foot on a golf course, traveled out of the country or had a credit card. In their later years they had something called a revolving charge card. The card was only good at Sears and Roebuck. There is no Roebuck anymore; maybe he died.

My parents never drove me to soccer practice, mainly because we never heard of soccer. I had a bicycle that weighed about 50 pounds and only had one speed (slow). We didn't have television in our house until I was 11 but my grandparents had one before that. It was of course, black and white, but they bought a pieced of colored plastic to cover the screen. The top third was blue, like the sky, and the bottom third was green, like grass. The middle third was red. It was perfect for programs that had scenes of fire trucks riding across someone's lawn on a sunny day.

I was 13 before I tasted my first pizza. It was called "pizza pie". When I bit into it, I burned the roof of my mouth and the cheese slid off, swung down, plastered itself against my chin and burned that too. It's still the best pizza I ever had.

We didn't have a car until I was 15. Before that, there only car in our family was my grandfather's Ford. He called it a "machine". I never had a telephone in my room. The only phone in our house was in the living room and it was on a party line. Before you could dial, you had to listen and make sure some people you didn't know weren't already using this party line.

Pizzas were not delivered to our home. But milk was. All newspapers were delivered by boys and all boys delivered newspapers. I delivered newspapers, six days a week. It cost 7 cents a paper, of which I got to keep 2 cents. I had to get up at 4:00 am every morning. On Saturday, I had to collect the 42 cents from the customers. My favorite customers were the ones who gave me 50 cents and told me to keep the change. My least favorite customers were those who seemed to never be home on collection day.

Movie stars kissed with their mouth shut. At least, they did it in the movies. Touching someone else's tongue with yours was called French kissing and they did not do that in the movies.

If you grew up in a generation before there was fast food, you may want to share some of these memories with your children, or grandchildren. Just don't blame me if they bust a gut laughing.

On Friday Nov 1<sup>st</sup> The StarLedge had head lines saying GIBSON GETS PROBATION IN PLEA BARGAIN. Former Mayor admits tax fraud, ending 6-year-old kickback case. Gibsom admitted in the U.S. District Court in Newark to a single charge out of a 17 count indictment that also used him of paying bribes and kickbacks and using his engineering firm in the theft of more than \$1.million from the impoverished Irvington school district.

The federal investigation, which began in Sept. 1996, had yielded two previous convictions. David Fuller, formerly Irvington's Business Administrator and president of the school board, pleaded guilty in Feb. 2001 accepting kickbacks from Gibsom after the former mayor's firm had been awarded the school construction contract. Fuller testified that Gibson had given him about \$14000 in payoffs.

Another former president of the Irvington school board, Donald Silas, was convicted of witness tampering in April 2001, for urging Fuller to lie to FBI agents about the two of them accepting kick backs from Gibsom.

The company, Gibsom Associates was sentenced to five years probation and was ordered to pay Irvington schools, \$349,000 in restitution. It is apparent that that decision will have no effect on the Company as they do not have any funds and it is unlikely that they will have any in the future. "SO THE SCHOOL BOARD IS STUCK' GIBSOM IS FREE AND JUSTICE IS SERVED. "AMEN"

#### COMMENTARY

Patterson, Newark, East Orange, Camden, Irvington, and now Asbury Park. These are the poorest communities in the state of New Jersey. And why are they poor. All have now succeeded in taken over the governments of these respected Towns with African American Mayors. The African American Mayor has the wrong concept of Politics, he thinks that is the shortest way to heaven, but it isn't, it is the shortest way to hell. Yes, there are many good African Americans who are interested in good Government. With this past election Good African Americans have won and the bad African American has been defeated. We must give the new Mayor, Wayne Smith the chance to revive the Town. This past week the Council had eight buildings destroyed, the view of this inter section 21<sup>st</sup> and Nelson place could well be the epitome of urban decay ( how many of you folks lived in those houses). There was an ordinance passed to spend \$500,000 for township playground improvements. So it seems as though this Council and Mayor are trying. We will report what happens in the future.

All these communities went to pot when they got African American Mayors. Newark is trying to revive itself by building an arena to house the Nets and the Devils. The Devils could not sell out when they won championship, the Nets won last year and they could not sell out. The people of Newark need schools and other educational needs. Although it has passed by the Newark Council, it is a bad deal and opposition is growing.

Camden got its Aquarium and they thought that would revive the city. It has not. Now we have Asbury Park, how many of you remember Asbury Park as youngsters. Bruce Springsteen and his group, using the Stone Pony as a stepping-stone, have failed to revive the beach or boardwalk as crime has permeated the City. And the African American mayor cannot do anything about it. Monmouth County prosecutor's office has many indictments against many of the politicians in Asbury Park. Here, it is land deal.

We wish to thank Ruth (Mehrer) Bonner '44, Joan Jennings Santoriello '50, Dorothy Hecht '46 and Myrtle Hodopp for all the little tib bits you have been sending me. E Mail etc. If you gentlemen noticed all the information I have been receiving comes from females. If you gentlemen don't get on the ball, be careful, the women are going to take over the World . That is my prediction, by the year 2025, the women will be Running the government and the World.

By the way are you gentlemen permitting your spouses to read these Newsletter's especially if the also graduated Irvington High School?.

#### HAPPY BIRTHDAY

Al Cimirro	01/10/25	Herm Pizzi	02/05/30
Saul Donner	01/27/19	Wilbur Hartl	02/08/16
Anthony Pilone	01/17/37	Joe Schilling	02/26/07
Harold Mullin	01/20/31	Joe Masterson	02/09/32
Dave Lipkin	01/18/10	Richie Ross	02/19/35
Donald Pace	01 /11/39	Jack Matthews	02/23/20
Peter Gillicce	01/24/32	Herb Simon	02/10/30
Harry Neigel	01/30/26	Tony Sytko	02/04/29
Ralph Augenstein	02/28/34	Bob Lapp	03/18/27
George Brown	02/22/27	Bud Gallagher	03/14/12
Jim Panos	03/ 09/33	Bob Dickie	03/02/37

These are some of the gentlemen we have on our mailing list, if you have misplaced their address, we may be able to accommodate you. They all would appreciate a Birthday or Christmas card from you.

We hope you all have had a pleasant THANKSGIVING. Now to all our Christian, Jewish and Moslem friends we wish you all a HAPPY HOLIDAY with your respected family.

This is the last letter I writing this year. Our next Newsletter will be in Feb. March, 2003 God willing . This period will give you sufficient time to gather your thoughts and write me something about you and your experience in Irvington, or the school system. Your classmates , that you have not seen in years would like to hear about you.

Where did you live, is the house still standing. Who was your favorite teacher etc. Men as I have asked you, show this letter to your Spouse, if she also went to Irvington High she must have some preference

THANK YOU for helping me get through 2002 who knows, maybe you can help me get through 2003.

THANK YOU AGAIN.

VITO