

Looking back to 1965 through old eyes

By Joe Gavin, September, 2015

As it is with most people who reflect back on the world we lived in almost 50 years ago, I see clearly now that our lives were certainly different. The world was a much simpler place. Most of us were wide-eyed optimists.

Only a few of us in 1965 ever heard of a hell-hole called Vietnam. Gasoline was really cheap, and big V-8 engines were king. Remember the Chevy 427 with dual-4 barrel carburetors and the Ford 406, or Chrysler 413? Our idea of Air Conditioning was rolling down the windows.

Some of us went (frequently) to the Southland 75 Drive-In (sometimes even to see the movie). We cruised the Hasty-Tasty and Frisch's endlessly, or for a change went to the Kountry Kitchen or to Parkmoor for some chicken (Yum)!

Vic Cassano WAS the King of Pizza to us before it was sold and became a caricature of itself, albeit cheese-on-a-cracker.

The only radio station that we ever listened to was WING, Radio 1410AM with Bob Holiday (on at 3pm for our Top 40 countdown), Bob Harper (7pm with "Squeaky Wing"), around 9pm was Gene "Bye Golly" Berry. Remember him say "Bye-Bye, buy bonds, got to go now, got to see a man about a record". Nobody ever listened to FM, after all it was only classical music and besides who had a car radio with FM?

And rebellious lyrics in Louie-Louie from The **Kingsman!** Remember when it couldn't be played in the school? (Louie-Louie was also the subject of an FBI investigation about the supposed but non-existent obscenity in the lyrics, an investigation that ended without prosecution.)

We loved and embraced the British Invasion! The Beatle's, the Stones and Herman's Hermits. They were all on the Ed Sullivan **shew** and we went totally nuts.

And the Stones "Satisfaction"? NOBODY will ever forget that opening riff; you know the song in the first 4 notes.

When 007 arrived, the world changed again. Everyone went Bond crazy. Auric Goldfinger was a great villain! And he even had his own jet with a personal assassin Oddjob too boot!

In 1966 many of us got a "Greetings" notice from our local Draft Board. Remember 4A status or 2A Student deferred? (I still have both card and Greetings notice) To me, 1966 was not a great year to be a 19 year old!

Many of us got the call, some of us went voluntarily, and some were drafted, but each one of us that were called, served, none of us ran and went to Canada.

We might have gone kicking and screaming into that unknown and very hostile society that was called the "military", but we went nonetheless. We learned what we needed to do and how to do it. Remember running the "Confidence Course"? None of us who did it will ever forget that.

Some went to 'Nam others got lucky and were sent to Europe. (I was one of the fortunate ones; I was in Germany with my longtime friend Steve Shade. Some of us returned physically wounded, some psychologically wounded, but most of us returned home alive.

But unfortunately, some gave all. We all miss and honor all of our fallen comrades, rest-in-peace all.

The world as we knew it had grown into a very violent place. Assassination after assassination, less than 48-months from our graduation, our youthful wide-eyed innocence and optimism was totally shattered and the world for us would never ever be the same again.

When we returned home, there were riots in the streets, "flower power", hippies, Woodstock and mounds of a five leafed plant that when dried and ground-up was smoked or ingested. Remember "Alice B Toklas Brownies"? Or the slogan "Know your grower"? Purple Haze took on a whole new meaning. Psychedelic rock music kept us company during those years. I of course knew nothing about the horticulture.

We became hardened, jaded and very skeptical of anything the Government said and it didn't matter which party said it. Somethings never change.

On a more positive note, we are part of the generation which has seen the development of an amazing array of inventions, discoveries, and products, such as Color TV (NBC Peacock); microwave ovens; Polaroid-Land cameras; a

Stereo anything; 8-track tapes; Cassette tapes; VCRs; CDs; DVDs; Camcorders; HDTV; the Sony Walkman. To name a few

The Mercury, Gemini and Apollo astronauts; the moon landings; space shuttles; Personal Computers that came in a kit; the internet (remember back when it was only 4 nodes? They were: **UCLA, Stanford Research Institute, UC-Santa Barbara, and the University of Utah**); cell phones; digital photography; and of course anything in the Apple family: the iMac the iPod, the iPad and iPhone.

As a side note, the cars we drive now have multiple times the compute power of all the early spacecraft.

We also witnessed the civil rights movement and the resulting Civil Rights Act, the eradication of polio, Medicare and Medicaid, and of course Watergate and a Presidential resignation to name but a few such events.

Many of our classmates have travelled both near and far from the vibrant green corn and even tobacco fields of West Carrollton. Remember when West Carrollton didn't have 5,000 people to even qualify with the state to be called a city? Many of us still reside in the comfortable and familiar community of our youth; however, it is no longer the semi-rural community of homes and farms of our time.

Many of our homes became business offices, some were even razed. But undeniably, it is now a bustling suburb of Dayton, with few (if any) farms. It now has multiple shopping malls, strip centers, restaurants, hotels, and 2 interstate highways.

Remember back when the Dayton Mall was a corn field and SR-725 and SR-741 was just a stop sign intersection? Remember when the local politicians were screaming about I-675 being a waste of money and no one would ever use it?

Wow! My head hurts just trying to remember all this stuff and there are a bazillion things I don't for sure except that I hate getting old, but none-the-less I grow older with each passing day, and there is much that I miss about "the old days", but I am growing old with my wife and best friend Penny (Cooper) Gavin. I cherish every day I have with her because I know that time goes on, but we won't last forever.

Yeah, I know Mr. Collins would rant and rave about my run-on sentences, tense shifting and generally bad writing, but hey... I can only get so many red "E"s from the guy...

I wish each and every one of you the very best always and in all ways...

Joe Gavin
West Carrollton Class of 1965