

TAA 41st Annual Reunion

Bringing Friends Back Together

Another large turnout of Thorp High School alumni attended the 41st edition of the annual reunion held at the Quonset Hall east of Thorp. The memorabilia display was open at 1 p.m. along with the opportunity for early registration. The event began with the social hour at 4 p.m. followed by a traditional family style dinner.

This year the Class of 1940 celebrated the 75th anniversary of their graduation. Of the class, two members and their families gathered to celebrate the event. Marvin Piwoni and his wife, Kathryn, live north of Thorp. He is the last surviving officer of the first FFA officer team when it was organized in 1940 at Thorp High School. Ella Lenz Welgos of Thorp and her two daughters attended. Ella was one of those students from Lublin who worked for a local family for her "room and board and 25 cents a week" so she could attend high school. When Gilman started school bus service, Ella transferred to Gilman for her senior year and lived at home. Four other classmates were not able to attend; however, their interviews were published in the TAA Newsletter.

Other classes celebrating their reunions were: 1945 – 70 years; 1950 – 65 years; 1955 – 60 years; 1960 – 55 years, and 1965 – 50 years. Both 1950 and 1955 had a large attendance.

The Miss Thorp Court was introduced by Bettie Butek Valek '61. Miss Thorp is Hannah Koltis; Junior Miss Thorp is Breahna Fitzl; and Princess Thorp is Kendall Luzinski. These young ladies represent Thorp at area events throughout the year.

Brian Hendricks '58 introduced two of the three scholarship winners this year. While Chet Abramczak was not able to attend, Brian related the accomplishments of Chet as well as Ashley Fazendin and Paige Hunt. Both girls have completed college credit classes while attending high school. They are well on their way to attaining their college degrees, and they haven't yet left town! Following dinner, Brian asked them as well as the Miss Thorp Court for ideas on how the TAA can help future students wanting to further their education and job skills.

The annual meeting of the Thorp Alumni Association was held on Saturday morning, July 4, 2015 at the Thorp Public Library. Officers for the 2015-2016 year elected at the meeting are: President – Paula Teclaw Paskert '68; Vice President – Brian Hendricks '58; Secretary – Bettie Butek Valek '61; Treasurer – J. Peter Bartl '61. Gerri Dudansky '58 was appointed as assistant secretary. The Newsletter contributors will be the officers and Jacqueline Glasshof '81.

A change to the TAA's By-Laws was discussed and enacted. Due to inflation, the loss of "buying power" of the monies in the Scholarship Fund is a problem. It was decided to expand the scholarship program to include awarding grants of assistance to Thorp students and graduates, with a \$9,000 annual cap. This opens an exciting new chapter in the administration of the TAA Scholarship Fund.

Reunions are held to reconnect with old friends and enjoy each other's company. Plan now to attend the 42nd annual TAA reunion to be held on Saturday, July 2, 2016.