



The Brick & Mortar Board

the newsletter of the HHS Alumni Association, Inc.
www.hobartalumni.org

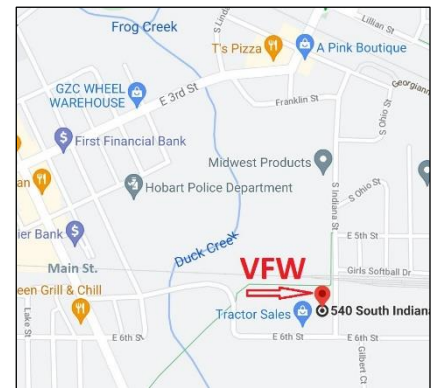
Volume 11, Number 1

September, 2021

Don't Miss the BrickieFest Homecoming Picnic! Saturday, October 2, from 12 noon to 3 pm

The BrickieFest Homecoming Picnic will be held at the Hobart VFW, 540 S. Indiana Street, on Saturday, October 2, from 12 noon to 3 pm. All Hobart High School alumni and their families are invited. Hot dogs and brats, chips, and bottled water will be served courtesy of the Hobart High School Alumni Association, and you are welcome (but not required) to bring salads, snacks, and desserts. Come and join us!

Make it a weekend! Friday night, October 1, is the Homecoming football game against Kankakee Valley at the Brickyard. Then come to the VFW on Saturday at noon for the Homecoming Picnic. Go Brickies!



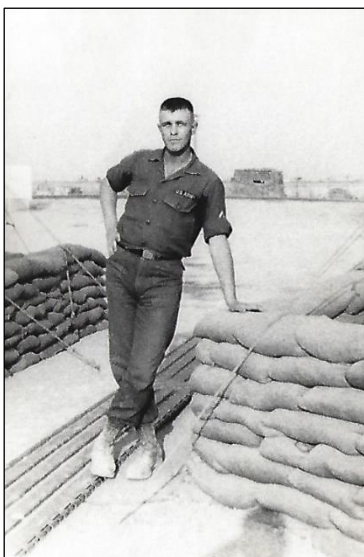
Map to the Hobart VFW

A Note From the Thrones

To our dear friends that acknowledged our 94th birthdays in April and our 73rd wedding anniversary on June 27th. You are all very special and we truly appreciate your friendship, many of you since September, 1949. God bless and many thanks to each of you for being an important part of our life.

Ruth and Paul Throne, School City of Hobart, IN, 1949 to 1987

Alumni Spotlight



Michael Grdgon, Decorated Vietnam Veteran, Now Helping Other Veterans

Our spotlight this issue is on Michael Grdgon, HHS Class of 1965. Michael appeared in the [September 2019 issue of The Brick & Mortar Board](#) after receiving a Congressional Veteran Commendation at the Texas State Capitol. Our interview begins here.

What are you doing these days?

I am currently retired from my occupation and I am a Veterans Advocate and aid in helping Veterans with their disability claims.

Alumni Spotlight (cont.)

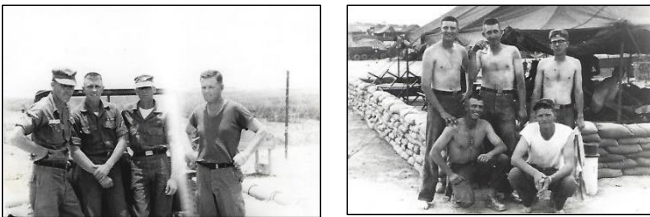
Can you describe the path from Hobart High School to where you are today?

The path from Hobart High School was difficult. When I graduated, I didn't have any certain career path that I knew I was certain to follow. In 1966, when I was drafted into the Military, I knew my life would change. The discipline that I learned in the Military and from Combat changed my view of my career path significantly. I would have not been successful in my overall career without my military experience.

Is there anything from you Vietnam experience you'd like to share?

Yes, I was in Vietnam from March 1967 thru March 1968. During my tour of duty, which was 12 months. Each day was a new threat, I say that because you never knew if you were going to survive that night and live to fight another day.

My most terrifying moment was the 1968 "Tet" Offensive. The 1968 "Tet" Offensive was the only true time that I knew that I was not going to survive and be killed in Vietnam and would not be coming home!!!!



Michael Grdgon and Army pals in Vietnam

Tell us about receiving the Congressional Veteran Commendation in 2019, and other awards you have received.

The Congressional Veteran Commendation in 2019, was one of my most highlighted awards of my military career. It was a Distinguished Honor for me to accept this award. In my heart, I was not just accepting the award for myself, but for all veterans who served in combat in Vietnam.

I have received numerous awards before the Congressional Commendation. First: Two weeks prior to June 2, 2010, I presented with a Medallion from the Secretary of the Army, thanking me and my unit for our distinguished service in Vietnam and to our country.



*Michael Grdgon and U.S. Representative Pete Visclosky
(Photo by Kyle Telechan / Used by permission)*

On June 2, 2010, I was notified by Congressman Peter Visclosky office that I would be presented with additional citations and medals that were not on my original DD-214. They are: Valorous Unit Citation, Meritorious Unit Citation, RVN Cross of Gallantry w/Palm Device, RVN Civil Action Honor Medal and a third Bronze Star for the 1968 Tet Offensive Military Campaign. Also, my unit, the 199th Light Infantry Brigade, was Awarded the "Presidential Unit Citation".

After leaving Vietnam, I had been awarded the Combat Infantry Men's Badge (CIB), Army ARCOM, Purple Heart and Good Conduct Medal. These were in addition to the so-called standard three-pack of ribbons every Vietnam Veteran received. They are the National Defense Ribbon, Vietnam Service Ribbon and the Vietnam Campaign Ribbon.



Since 1995, I have dedicated my services and help in assuring all veterans receive the benefits they

Alumni Spotlight (cont.)

so rightly deserve. I do offer my expertise on a case-by-case criteria. I have helped numerous veterans and their families receive the benefits they are entitled to and deserve.

Were there any teachers or coaches at Hobart High School who had an influence on your life and/or your career?

On my life, yes! On my career, not so much. The three people at Hobart High School who I believe set the stage for my career goals and future achievements are: Coach Kurth, William Cope and Paul Throne. All three of these individuals set the standards for which I live by today. Honesty, Loyalty, Trust and above all Humility.



The Austin Police Dept. Pipe & Drum Corps. Michael Grdgon is standing behind the bass drum.

What advice do you have for young people today, as they prepare for their careers?

Today, as we all know, we are living in different times than my generation. I chose a path of construction when I came home from Vietnam.

I worked my way up from being a timekeeper, surveying engineer, field coordinator and project manager. I retired from the construction industry as a Senior Project Engineer and Assistant VP.

My advice is that you should set out your goals in five-year increments. Don't set your goals too high that they cannot be achieved. If after a five-year period, you have not reached your goals that you have set for yourself, you need to re-evaluate your goals and reset them for the next five years.

Always remember, the best advice I can give any young person is: "If you don't like the world you are living in, only you can change your world."



Michael Grdgon, Ralph Kennedy, John Koritko, James Lafevre and Ivan Heistand. All are Hobart HS alumni, and all are Vietnam veterans.

Our Supporters



NEW LIFETIME MEMBER (since our July newsletter):

John D. Scott (1969)

Save The Date!

2021 BrickieFest Homecoming Picnic
Saturday, October 2, 2021 from 12 noon to 3 pm
Hobart VFW, 540 S. Indiana Street, Hobart



All Hobart High School alumni and their families are invited
Hot dogs, brats, chips, and bottled water courtesy of the HHSAA
You are welcome (but not required) to bring salads, snacks and desserts

Your Brickie Stories: What Do You Remember?

We want to hear your stories about your time at Hobart High School. If you remember any of these things, or if you have your own stories to share, send them to me (Paul Addison) at paul@hobartalumni.org, and we'll add your story to the conversation!

DO YOU REMEMBER? The Water Tower

From Joyce Kerr Wackett (Class of 1955): Remember the old Hobart Water Tower? Is it true that people used to break into it and swim there? That would be in the 1950s and 60s? (If you have knowledge of this happening, please send your stories to paul@hobartalumni.org.)



DO YOU REMEMBER? Were You Frozen in Class?



During the winter, as students attended the old Hobart High School on Fourth Street, sometimes the heating system wouldn't work and it would lose its heating ability. When temperatures dropped to 60 degrees and under in the classroom, teachers would allow students to get their coats and sweaters from their locker and then return to class. On page 5 of the 1958 yearbook, pictures of students are shown in the classroom wearing their winter coats, and snow can be seen out the window covering all of grounds. Does anyone remember being in class at any time when this occurred? Please send your stories to paul@hobartalumni.org.

REPLIES TO DO YOU REMEMBER? The Dust Bowl

From Ken Main (Class of 1966): As a freshman, my dad, Glenn Main, booster club member, built for Coach Deal a lineman charging sled out of rough cut dunnage lumber that came out of rail cars. It was heavy oak. As seven freshmen lineman, you might move the sled on that sandy dirt of the dust bowl. As you progressed and you went through all year weight training with Coach Howell at his health club in Glen Park, seven senior linemen finally got the strength to push that sled around the bowl with Coach Deal riding it. The Brickie football team had the strongest legs in northwest Indiana. BTW – Glenn Main passed away this year, April 11th at the age of 98.5 years old. [Here is a link to his obituary.](#)

From Donna Farley Ford (Class of 1974): I grew up in Little Hollywood which was east of the dust bowl. Back then they did not provide bus service because we lived too close to the school so we either walked to the junior high or caught a ride with a parent or older sibling. When we walked we would cut through the dust bowl. Many of my junior high mornings were spent walking through there. I remember the one year that Indiana experiment with the time change. It was so dark still when we had to leave for school and it was pretty scary walking through the bowl that year. And of course you all know that junior high boys took every opportunity to try to scare us to death.

The Brick & Mortar Board is a publication of the Hobart High School Alumni Association, Inc., a non-profit, 501(c)(3) corporation. It is an electronic publication, delivered by email to members of the Association. Membership is \$10 per year, or \$100 for a Life Membership, and donations are tax-deductible. Make your check payable to: HHS Alumni Association, and mail it to: HHSAA, PO Box 68, Hobart, IN 46342. Our website is: www.hobartalumni.org. The editor of The Brick & Mortar Board is Paul Addison.

HHS Alumni Association Board

The Hobart High School Alumni Association was officially incorporated on July 17, 2010. The current members of the Board of Directors (as of July 1, 2021) are:

OFFICERS

Paul Addison, Class of 1970*President*
Lynn Sheets Kostbade, Class of 1966*Vice-President*
Debra Broker Opolski, Class of 1970*Treasurer*
Tracy Estabrook McCullough, Class of 1978..... *Secretary*

AT-LARGE MEMBERS

Craig Osika, *Dean of Students, Hobart High School*, Class of 1998
Beth Scott Barney, Class of 1970
Debbie Scharbach Vega, Class of 1971

MISSION STATEMENT

The mission of the Hobart High School Alumni Association is to develop and maintain a close relationship between Hobart High School, its constituents, and its alumni for their mutual benefit. The Association is committed to, and involved in, the support and well-being of Hobart High School and its alumni.

OUR GOALS

- To assist Hobart High School in communication with its alumni
- To convey to Hobart High School the views, attitudes, and needs of the alumni in seeking to preserve, advocate, and promote alumni interests
- To strengthen alumni activities and programs
- To support educational programs through teacher grants and student scholarships

Class Reunion Roundup

Here is the current list of upcoming class and all-class reunions, listed in order of occurrence. If your class is having a reunion, send the information to us at info@hobartalumni.org, and we will publicize it on our website and in our newsletter! More information can be found on the [HHS Alumni Association website](#).

CLASS OF 1976 45th YEAR REUNION (September 17-18, 2021)

The HHS Class of 1976 will hold its 45th year reunion at Glen Mock's on Saturday, September 18, 2021, at 6:00 pm. On Friday the 17th, there will be a golf outing at 11:00 am at River Pointe Country Club in Hobart and there is a Brickie home football game that evening. For more information, text or call Glen Mock at 219-670-1393, or email him at glenmock@comcast.net.

CLASS OF 1970 50th REUNION (September 25, 2021)

The HHS Class of 1970 will hold its 50th (now 51st) on Saturday, September 25, 2021, at St. Mary Orthodox Center, 8600 Grand Blvd., Merrillville, IN 46410. Ticket cost is \$45 per person, \$80 per couple. Contact Beth Barney at: bethbarney1103@gmail.com for more information.

CLASS OF 1966 55th YEAR REUNION (October 2, 2021)

The HHS Class of 1966 is hosting its 55th year reunion on Saturday, October 2, from 6-9 pm at the Paragon Restaurant in Hobart. Pizza, salad, breadsticks and wings. No charge. Come and join friends. Questions? Email Lynn Sheets Kostbade, b2uptite410@comcast.net.

CLASS OF 1971 50th REUNION (October 9, 2021)

The Hobart High School class of 1971 will host our 50-year reunion on October 9, 2021 at Gino's Banquets, 1967 E. 37th Ave., Hobart, IN. Registration begins at 5 p.m., social hour at 5:30 and a family style dinner at 6:30. Tickets are \$40 for single or \$75/couple. Make check payable to HHS Class of 1971 and mail to: Sheila Ellis 2694 Walnut St., Portage, IN, 46368.

CLASS OF 1972 50th REUNION (August 6, 2022)

The Class of 1972 will hold its 50th year reunion on Saturday, August 6, 2022, at Gino's Banquet Hall in Hobart. For more information, contact: Celeste Wiseman Ux at celestegrubbs@hotmail.com.

REGULAR CLASS GET-TOGETHERS:

If your class is meeting regularly these days, please email info@hobartalumni.org with the details. Email paul@hobartalumni.org with the details.

Class of 1970: The Class of 1970 is meeting for breakfast at 10:00 am on the third Saturday of the month at the Paragon Restaurant.

Recent Obituaries
(since our July 2021 newsletter;
in PDF form, these are links to each classmate's In Memory page)

SEPTEMBER 2021:

[Donald \(Don\) Potrebic, Class of 1957](#)

[Larry Cary, Class of 1969](#)

AUGUST 2021:

[Judy Bjerkness Hannigan, Class of 1959](#)

[Jerry Hicks \(Teacher\)](#)

[John McLaughlin, Jr., Class of 1996](#)

[Robert \(Bob\) Lowry, Class of 1975](#)

[Brian Krasoczka, Class of 1975](#)

[Virginia Mayes Hedger, Class of 1958](#)

[Thomas \(Tom\) Kurth, Class of 1954](#)

JULY 2021:

[Anna Guth Villafane, Class of 1968](#)

[Rose Ann Luby Bockhorn, Class of 1959](#)

[Barbara Rosta Gross, Class of 1963](#)

[William \(Bill\) Trapp, Class of 1978](#)

[Melvyn Kaczmarek, Teacher](#)

[Judy Wall Hevel, Teacher](#)

[Stanley \(Stas'\) Jarosz III, Class of 2012](#)

JUNE 2021:

[Dale Schavey, Class of 1954](#)

OLDER OBITUARIES RECENTLY RECEIVED

JANUARY 2021:

[Stephen \(Steve\) Rees, Class of 1969](#)

[Warren Thomas \(Tom\) Billeaux, Class of 1943](#)

DECEMBER 2020:

[Bruce Walsh, Class of 1967](#)

[James \(Jim\) Worthington, Class of 1966](#)

JUNE 2020:

[Jean Paxton, Class of 1974](#)

MAY 2015:

[James "Tex" Roberts, Class of 1959](#)

FEBRUARY 2015:

[Sharon Luby O'Rourke, Class of 1962](#)



Membership Application Hobart High School Alumni Association, Inc.

Membership is \$10 per year per person, or \$100 per person for a Life Membership
(proceeds go towards student scholarships and teacher grants)

Check one: New member ____ Renewal ____

Check one: 1-year membership (\$10) ____ Lifetime membership (\$100) ____

First Name _____

Last Name (in high school) _____

Married Last Name _____

Your class graduating year at HHS _____

(Renewing members only need to fill out the following if anything has changed)

Street Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Email address _____

Home phone _____

Cell phone _____

Work phone _____

"Once a Brickie, Always a Brickie!"
Thank you for your support!

Make your check out to: HHS Alumni Association

Mail to: HHSAA, P.O. Box 68, Hobart, IN 46342

Our website is: www.hobartalumni.org