

Remembering Haji....

To Haji's wife Judy and children, who I am sorry to say I never had the opportunity to meet, and to his brothers Bill and Donnie our deepest condolences on your and our loss. He was truly a unique and special person who the Class of '57, will miss dearly. I imagine the passing years served to help Haji mellow out some and I regret not taking the time to look him up to share old times. Since 1957 our paths did cross one more time in 2007 when he attended our 50th Class Reunion.

I checked the Class History in my 1957 WCS yearbooks I found no mention of when Haji joined our class however I do recall that his graduation was not confirmed until the very last day when he was allowed to retake and pass his typing test giving him the credits needed to earn his cap and gown. Researching further I discovered the first mention of him was our sophomore year in 1955. My memory does not recall the origin of his nickname "Haji" but I am sure some of his other friends will help us with that detail.



Looking back on my high school days at good old WCS, I cannot help but recall just how many of the stories I remember, the ones I always share with new friends, include Haji and his escapades, most of which involved cars (and Ice Trucks and one 1947 Buick with Dyna-flow Drive). I'd like to share one story and am asking our classmates to join in by recalling and sharing their favorite memory of Haji on the class webpage www.joanhigham.com

The memory I'd like to share took place our senior year and is about Haji setting the record for the fastest speed entering into the new high school driveway. To set the scene you may recall this would involve making a modest left hand turn or "y-turn" into the school driveway as we all typically did each day we drove to school from the village or after lunch returning to school from lunch at Hiron's Diner.

At the time Haji was driving a black 4 door 1939 Chevy with two steering wheel suicide knobs of course. To prepare for his record setting attempt he modified the Chevy by installing a 17" tire and rim on the right front passenger side and a 14" on the opposite giving the car a definite tilt which he hoped would give him an advantage taking the turn. Now he was fully prepared for his record setting run.

In order to obtain speed from his 6 cylinders buggy, he started at the intersection of Willow and headed due East on E Brutus Street. As he passed under the West Shore railroad bridge and with the school driveway coming into view his speedometer revealed he was pushing 58 MPH (where is "Officer Bob" when you need him???) he nudged the brake ever so slightly and steered to the left entering the driveway. The drainage dip at the entrance sent the Modified Chevy sky-ward. In '57 seat belts were not required so Haji remained seated and in control by firmly gripped the two steering knobs as the Chevy bounded over the right hand curb coming to rest with all four wheels in the grass. Beaming he exited the Chevy and reported a speed of 53 MPH claiming the unofficial speed record as his own....

Since then the driveway design has changed. It now forms an "L" with E. Brutus St. What I don't know is whether the design was changed to make the driveway safer or just maybe it was changed to protect my memories and Haji's record!!! I prefer to think the latter.



As you may know our class has been special in how we have remained close over all these years thanks mostly to a few classmates still living in the area and to our dedicated web-master Joan (Spier) Higham who I am asking to help me with our little walk down memory lane. Class of '57 I am giving you some homework. It is your turn.... send Joan your favorite memory of Haji Hiron, our very own and original "wild and crazy guy" who knew how to live and did live life to the fullest!!!

Bob Welch..... 9/5/2013