

*The following are emails received from former students and staff, during the 2006 100<sup>th</sup> Year celebration. They have significant details about life within the walls of Laurel.*

### **The Old Laurel on Laurel Street**

I attended Laurel School, first - sixth in the 1950's, as did my sister. I certainly do have many fond memories. I'm a teacher in the district - at Blevins for the past 26 years.

Susan Tavener-Berry

My age is 74 years. I know I went to Laurel but cannot recall which years. I believe it was in 1937 - 1938 - 1939 and/or 1940. I now live in Bellingham, WA and may return to Fort Collins next year.

Russell L. Mattison (now Osborn)

In September 1928, I started 5<sup>th</sup> grade at Laurel School. I also attended 6<sup>th</sup> grade there. I have many memories of Laurel. When we were out on the playground, the janitor would come out with a hand bell to signal time to go in. We lined up in front of the school and marched in to music from a Victrola on the landing.

Martha Thompson Scohy

I am really looking forward to the upcoming celebration! I attended Laurel from 1962 - 64 for Kindergarten and 1<sup>st</sup> grade, then they changed it to a track system, so we were sent to Remington for 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> grades, then back to Laurel from 1966 - 1969. I lived one block away on Whedbee Street. I have very vivid memories of the teachers, styles of clothing, games we played, songs we sang at school programs and even the food! You mentioned that I should teach the 4<sup>th</sup> grade students something that I used to do at recess. You mean I should focus on tether-ball and 4-square as opposed to, oh, say, playing kissing tag or smoking in the bathroom? (and GETTING CAUGHT!) I'm sure I could do that. Who in 4<sup>th</sup> grade should I talk to? Can I at least mention the creative way we would hide our broccoli in our milk cartons, so we could have seconds on spaghetti?

Claudia (Stevens) Rouge

One exciting thing I have to share with you is that I just recently ran into an old classmate of mine in Denver whose mother was my first-grade teacher at Laurel School and taught there in the 40's and 50's! She is 97, living in a nursing home in North Dakota, and apparently still can communicate reasonably well for her age. His name is Dewey Smith. His mother went by both Markham and Smith while teaching. What a coincidence! Talk to you later.

Dick Kerns

I am a Laurel Elementary School alumnus and would love to participate in the 100<sup>th</sup> birthday celebration. My family came to Fort Collins in 1946, when I was four years old. I attended Kindergarten at Laurel 1947-48, and First Grade the following year.

My wife of 42 years, Cathy (McKellar) Hutchinson, was in that same Kindergarten class. In fact, in our kindergarten class photograph, we are actually standing next to each other!

I grew up in Fort Collins, graduated from Fort Collins High School in 1960, got married in the middle of getting a degree at CSU and entered the US Air Force in 1966. After 33 years of living in different parts of the world, I retired, and Cathy and I returned to Fort Collins in 1999. In fact, we moved into her family home on Whedbee Street (where she was living when she attended Kindergarten etc.), a home filled with memories.

After settling into our retirement, we got concerned about Fort Collins and got into politics. I was elected mayor of Fort Collins in April 2005.

Doug Hutchinson

My folks just told me about the article you had in Tuesday's paper & I went on the internet to read your article. I went to Laurel from 1955 thru 1959 and now live in Colorado Springs. The teacher that I really remember from those years was Mrs. Bennett (think that was her name). I just loved her. She broke her arm during the year I had her & I would go to the cafeteria and get her lunch for her - I loved doing that!! I became a teacher and taught for 30 years her in the Springs. I taught what was

Home Ec and is now Consumer & Family Science and retired in 2001. Will be fun hearing all the old stories about Laurel. We lived just down the street at 606 Peterson.

Susan Seitz Jones

My name is Phyllis (Hill) Stroh. I attended Laurel School from 1941 through 1947, all 6 grades. Since my family lived only 2 blocks away, I walked to Laurel as did my two younger sisters.

I remember the names of all my teachers and have some vivid memories of the school, friends, playground, events, the little store across the street, etc. Wow, what a long time ago!

I can at least contribute some memories from that period of time. For example, every Friday during WW11, most of us took a dime to school to buy stamps for war bonds. My first-grade teacher, a redhead named Miss Sherman, joined the WACS the year after she was my teacher.

I am so pleased that Laurel has remained an important part of PSD.

Phyllis Stroh

A friend who lives in Fort Collins, Earl Reinkensmyer, sent me the article about Laurel Elementary School's 100<sup>th</sup> birthday next year. It brought back so many good memories, and I would like to receive information about the celebration, so I can plan to attend next September.

I attended third, fourth and fifth grades in the 330 E. Laurel Street building from 1953 - 1956. My teachers were Mrs. Fonkin (3<sup>rd</sup>), Mrs. Bennet (4<sup>th</sup>) and Miss Ford (5<sup>th</sup>). All were excellent teachers. In addition to classroom activities, we had P. E. (ball games outside and dancing inside), plays and choral or dance programs, performed on the wide steps between floors, in the large hallways or in one of the classrooms. Chairs would be set up for parents to watch. I remember cloak rooms for our coats and a basement room where students who were bused could eat their sack lunches. My Brownie troop also met there.

My brother Larry Skold, now deceased, attended first and second grades at Laurel, but I don't remember his teachers' names. We lived across the street in the next block at 405 East Laurel Street, so we could always see the school building, and we often played in the school yard. Just across the street was a penny candy store where I bought many wax lips and teeth, bottles of sweet syrup candy, as well as bubble gum, jawbreakers and fireballs.

I can picture many classmate friends but have forgotten most of their names. It would be great fun to meet up with some of them next year.

Here are some memories that might help:

Decade: 1950's

Dress code; Girls always wore skirts or dresses - no pants except snow pants - ugh! I think boys could wear jeans, no shorts! Coats and boots were hung in the "cloak room" adjacent to each classroom.

Recess always had lively games of Jacks in warm weather & kickball. Girls played with Ginny dolls, precursors of Barbies.

Most students walked home for lunch but "bus" students from the country brought their lunches and ate in the basement because there was no cafeteria. Milk could be purchased however.

P. E. during bad weather included Square Dancing and was held in one of the "vacant" classrooms, which was also used as a music room for chorus practice.

In 5<sup>th</sup> grade we assembled a group to perform the Mexican Hat Dance at a city-wide variety show at the High School. I think we got 3<sup>rd</sup> prize!

School plays were fun - I was in "A Christmas Carol" one year but I don't remember what part I played! We performed in a classroom or out in the middle of the big hall upstairs, I think.

Choral performances, especially at Christmas, were done on the big wide staircase between the first and second floors.

In Third grade we learned fractions in math, and I don't really remember what else besides spelling, reading, etc.

Fourth grade was not memorable - I remember the classroom upstairs and Mrs. Bennett and not much else. Maybe that's the year we learned to write cursive.

Fifth grade we were the "senior class" because 6<sup>th</sup> graders were in Junior High in 1955. Miss Ford was widely feared as a task master, but I got along fine with her. That year we learned to write with pens - Schaeffer Fountain pens and ink. We also learned decimals and worked pretty darn hard at everything.

That's about it!

Karen (Skold) Tow, Champaign , Illinois

My Mother-in -Law taught Kindergarten at Laurel-Harris for many years. Her name was Margaret Ray. Previous students still comment about what a wonderful teacher she was.

Debra Ray

I am so delighted to know that Laurel School will have a big birthday party when it turns 100! First, thanks to all of you who care enough to make it happen!! My name is Linda Lesser White, and I had the joy of attending Laurel Elementary School from about 1955 to 1961. Thanks so much for caring about Laurel School and Fort Collins, before it became the crowded congested city it is today...sorry to have to say it, but it's true. Just ask a native... Thanks.

Linda Lesser White

I was an attendee of Laurel Elementary for grades 4 - 6. (That would have been 1965 - 1968.)I have memories of my classrooms on the second level, Miss Tavelli shared that level with Mr. Bagley and another teacher. Lower level were the rest rooms, janitors' room (it was dark and smelled of cleaning supplies), and Mrs. Wheeler's 4<sup>th</sup> grade room and Mrs. Brown and someone else...my memory is aging too :)! I remember that I was in my 6<sup>th</sup> grade class when we received the information that President Kennedy

was shot. We had to walk to the cafeteria which was a small metal building on the east side of the stone building. There was a little grocery store across Laurel Street that we would go to after school to purchase our penny candy. The playground was on the west side of the building. On the west side of the property was the building that housed Gateway (for handicapped students). We would go there and volunteer (which I did) from time to time. Tether ball, four-square and hopscotch were some of the recess activities. Ok, my memory is exhausted! Can't give you any more history than that! Hope it helps.

Diane (Moreng) Johnson

I was doing some research on Laurel School and Lisa Daggat shared that a Robert Achziger had called her and is interested in the celebration. She has probably already shared this information with you.

Robert graduated in 1957. His father, Fred was school maintenance at Laurel and the family lived in the basement. His parents and several other relatives are buried in Fort Collins. He now lives in Huntington Beach, California.

Peggy McGough

I had to think of what Wayne must have told you to call me in the middle of the festivities. I want to assure you that there are no hard feelings, there are so many details that it is impossible to cover everything. In addition to experiencing the first kiss of my life, I had a great time at Laurel and was planning on telling about how Mrs. Bauder would come every so often and about her school concert in the Spring and how Mrs. Olander was a traveling PE teacher, and we learned how to square dance and two step and how valuable those skills are even today. I also wanted to emphasize the changing role of women. We got to wear pants once a year, to celebrate College Days (now Homecoming weekend) and how much dresses restricted girls' activities on the playground. Also, we never saw a pregnant teacher let alone ever see them eat, drink, or go to the bathroom. We bought our candy from the store across the street but were never allowed to eat it or chew gum in the classroom, and then there was the murder that took place two doors down. I would never tell the kids about that - it still creeps me out!

Joan Day

