

Speech by Class President Leonard "Sam" H Ford IV
Brewer High Class of 1975 40th High School Reunion
The Lucerne Inn, Dedham, ME
Saturday, August 8, 2015

Good evening and welcome to the 40* anniversary celebration of the Brewer High School Class of 1975.

It is hard to believe that 40 years have passed since we left the hallowed halls of that venerable Institution. That certainly is a lot of water under the Old Bridge, the Middle Bridge and the New Bridge. And so I shall endeavor to bridge the gap from 1971 till now.

We entered Brewer High in the fall of 1971 to embark upon our freshman year. Many of the young men of our class received a preview in the form of football practice. Yes indeed, this is when I was introduced to the pugnacious vice-principal Dave Pierce, a former WWII tank commander with a steel plate in his head from battle injury. An auspicious beginning to say the least. I am sure we all have memorable stories pertaining to our introduction to Brewer High.

Our class was the child of the '70's, the last of the "Hippies," the end of "free love," drugs and rock-n-roll and we were damn well determined to get ours.

The mood of our country was not good coming on the end of the Vietnam War. To which we all grew up watching on the TV and probably knowing one or two vets that invariably tried to steer us away from the culture of war.

As we entered the fall of 1972 it found us as sophomores, a little more toughened than those tender Freshman that we had been, the halls of Brewer becoming more familiar and comfortable. The freedoms that we enjoyed such as going over to Carols restaurant, the A&P for a smoke or headed for the Harbor are not afforded this generation.

The fall of 1973 finds us moving to the Senior wing as juniors, targeting freshman & sophomores with our tom foolery, was paramount with any opportunity that presented itself. This class year also provided us talk of the possible end of the Vietnam War. This is the year that gave most of us the chance to take Drivers Ed. Mr. Beaulieu, Mr. Hopkins and others who took their lives in their own hands by helping us do so.

Now finally the fall of 1974 finds us as seniors, yes the top dogs of this venue we know as high school. At this point we don't even pick on the underclassmen anymore. We have far more important things to attend to: SAT's for college, signing up for possible inclusion into the military as the war had still not met its conclusion. Our football team handed Bangor a decisive defeat in that old classic matchup between our opposing cross river rival.

Most of us are driving now. The city is changing oh so rapidly. As we prepare to graduate one of the largest classes in school history, if not the largest, we get word that our boys are coming home from Southeast Asia, a fitting tribute to send us off.

The years that follow find us fully engaged in the life that our school intended us to have: college, jobs, children mixed with the vicissitudes of small town rural Maine life to which I am, and most of you, are grateful and joyous in having had such an opportunity to experience.

Now after 40 years we have watched our children enjoy and share similar experiences and prepare now for our grandchildren in their trials and tribulations. I say tribulations because as we have matured with much experience we do tend to view it that way.

So now I would like to invite our class officers; Julie Larson Stiles, Jan Willis and class marshal Jane Peasley, as well as Dr. Sandy Caron, who has been instrumental in carrying off this prestigious event, to join me here to toast this wonderful group of people.

Please stand and join us:

Tis no time for mirth and laughter on that cold grey dawn of the morning after, and should you rise and be found alive then here's to the Class of 1975.

Amen, and God bless and Lachim--

Thank you all.

-Sam