

Wish Me Good Luck

By Dennis Payton Knight

I pulled out the yearbooks covering my four years at Laramie High this afternoon, hoping for enough nostalgia to fill a five-hundred-word essay. I leafed through them, recalling the faces of kids I knew in the classrooms, along corridors, by lockers, at the stadium, in the gym, at the movies, and at the car-hop joint on East Grand. A few of the kids I'd known since kindergarten, and many I went to Catholic school with.

There are signatures in my annuals from kids in upper grades deigning to honor me as an underling. Autographs from upper and under classes consistently wish me good luck, over and over, to such an extent it seems they figured I was really going to need it.

A doofus named Larry made his mark in my annual of 1960, my junior year, writing "Roses are red, violets are blue. Every time it rains, I think of you. Drip! Drip! Drip!" Then he, too, went and wished me good luck.

Contrary to Larry's observation, many of the inscriptions say I am swell, or was then, and none that say I am a lost cause, except, again, for all those suggesting I go out and find some good luck to get me through life.

Only the annuals for my first three years have been autographed, however. I didn't get autographs when I was a senior because I didn't even get an annual until fifty-years later, after our reunion. It was because of a snafu: not enough copies were ordered and so members of the journalism department that produced the yearbook didn't get copies. When I rued this at the reunion, a classmate sent me a brand-new copy, original edition. Where she got it, I'm not sure, but it hadn't been autographed, so I figure the person who outlived it either had no friends or didn't want the pages sullied by adolescents writing "drip, drip, drip."

That LHS yearbook for 1961, my senior year, like all others, has the requisite popularity honors and most-likely-to pronouncements. There is the cutest couple award, awards for most poised girl and boy, the funniest girl and boy, and a dozen other such pairings, all the way up to the boy and girl most-likely-to-succeed. I wasn't one of any of those, but if they had a category for most-likely-to-need-good-luck, I guess I would have been a shoe-in.

So here is the deal: I'm taking that unadulterated copy of the 1961 Plainsman Yearbook to my next reunion and I'll ask people to please immature themselves back to their adolescence of 56 years ago, and adulterate it up for me real good. They can scribble diagonally in the corners, they can drip-drip-drip, they can tell me I'm swell until I'm completely swollen up, and they can wish me good luck 'til kingdom come.

"Remember the girl from the city, remember the girl from the town, remember the girl who ruined your book, by signing it upside down."