



After 39 years.....

By Alda Underwood-Hall DMD

Submitted by Jim and Gina Street of the Hampton Roads Recovery Society

It was the summer of 1970 and I was a student at Hampton Institute, now known as Hampton University. The Friends of Distinction were reminding us that we were “Going In Circles.” We tried our best to have all the “Hot Fun In the Summertime” that we could thanks to Sly and the Family Stone. I had just pledged Delta Sigma Theta that spring with Judi, Sonja, and Renee and we were in summer school, as were all the nursing majors. For no particular reason that I can recall, several of us went to Buckroe Beach for the day. It was that day that I lost my High School class ring. I don’t recall whether I had taken it off to avoid losing in the water or what, but I looked and looked and never found it.

There was a lot of history there for me, as I had grown up in the tidewater area and had gone first to Carver High School and graduated from Hampton High School there. As a kid, my family would go to Bayshore and spend the day picnicking, riding the ferris wheel and the bumper cars. Bayshore was the black side of the beach and Buckroe was the white side separated by a fence, the barrier that no one ever would consider breaching. It somehow never occurred to us to even think about going to Buckroe. It didn’t seem to be a problem for us as children that they were separate, with one exception- the only roller coaster was on the Buckroe side! Now that was a problem! No matter the facilities were nothing like Buckroe’s side, it just didn’t have a roller coaster! During the early 1960’s Bayshore was torn down and Buckroe was integrated. Eventually, Buckroe’s amusement park also took it’s leave, but the beach remained publicly accessible. In fact, it was at Bayshore when I was 5 years old, that I decided to just jump off the end of the pier where the appearance of my ponytails on the surface of the water lead to my rescue by my sister’s boyfriend! Such drama!

As a college student, we went to Bayshore Pavilion to “party”. There would be live music and we would party out there into the wee hours of the night. It was an old building that were the remnants of the bumper car pavilion of the amusement park which had long given way to beachfront homes and the “No public access” signs.

About 2 weeks ago, sitting at my desk attempting to clean up the 575 emails in my inbox, I happened across an email asking me to respond to a Facebook message from someone who said that may have found my class ring. “Found my class ring? Are you kidding?” was my first thought. My second thought was that this was a hoax of some kind, because I had not had the ring for nearly 40 years, and I knew where I had lost the ring. I had been at Buckroe Beach in the summer of 1970 as a college student and had somehow lost the ring, never to be seen again. Now you are trying to tell me that you have found my ring? Come on!

I decided to follow this for a little distance anyway just to see what may happen. I responded to the Facebook message from a woman who identified herself as Tina Street, indicating that her husband may have the lost ring. I did send her my telephone number and sure enough, she responded rather immediately. My phone rang on Thursday, October 18th and a gentleman indicated that his name was Jim Street and that his wife had contacted me on Facebook regarding a class ring. I thought, “Now is when he is going to ask me for my social security number.” Nope! Instead, he very deliberately informed me that he was a metal collector and that he indeed may have found my class ring. I was too dumbfounded to ask him, how he found it or how he knew it was mine or whatever. I just said, “What do I need to do to get it back? He said he needed to ask me a few questions. I thought once again, “Okay, here it comes, the request for my social security number along with my checking account number and the \$2000.00 I needed to deposit in the account or something crazy!”



That was diametrically opposite to what in fact took place! He asked me my middle name, the name of my high school and the year I graduated. When I gave him that information, he said, “Ma’am I have your class ring.” I still have a visceral response when I think of how I felt when he said those words to me. If the energy of that moment could have been harnessed, we could have lit up Atlanta for next 10 years. That is when the story began to take on a light of its own as we shared information.

Jim and Gina Street had moved to the peninsula from California about 2 months before and belong to an amateur metal collecting organization called the Hampton Roads Recovery Society and as a hobby, they detect and collect pieces of metal from beaches and the like. On September 21, 2009, Jim was out doing his thing at Buckroe Beach. Fortunately, that day the beach was being reworked using some kind of bulldozer thing turning over the sand every so many feet to “fluff it up” (for lack of a better term). His handy dandy metal detector thingy located this piece of metal and it was indeed a class ring. There began their mission to reconnect the ring with its owner.

They went to the Hampton library and found the 1968 yearbook from Hampton High School and found the person with “ADU” as their initials. I was the only ADU in that class. They found my name and then began the internet search through multiple search engines and social networks. Then, what do you know, I responded! I can’t tell you who was more excited, them or me! Neither of us could believe what had happened. They were going to send me the ring, but I told them that I would be on the peninsula in 2 weeks and I could get it when I got there. When I asked what I could do for them, they outright refused any money (even considering the price of gold these days). The fruit of their labor was to reunite me with my ring, a ring that had been buried at Buckroe Beach for 39 years.



On Saturday, October 24, 2009, Jim took the day off from his job expressly for the purpose of accommodating my availability. We had to tweak the time because Gina didn’t want to miss the “reunification.” We arranged to meet at the beach where the ring was lost and found and he would give me the ring. That is exactly what we did along with Gina and their lovely daughter Renee, and Barry (the president of the recovery society), and my friend Renee, who was likely with me when I lost the ring. On a windy Saturday afternoon, under a gorgeous setting sun on the shores of Hampton Roads, at the base of the lighthouse that has been there for more years even than the ring had been

lost, Jim ever so gently removed the ring from the cloth bag which had protected it after he had meticulously cleaned it up, and slipped



it back into its rightful place on my finger where it fit perfectly. The sum total of those 39 years seemed to be present in that moment. I told him that I felt like we were getting married!! (He took one step to the left!

Everybody else thought it was funny!) We took pictures and hugged and took more pictures and hugged

some more and promised to always remember each other. I certainly will! Thanks again Jim and Gina!!!

