

It's ironic because, as I remember, those of us that absconded with the George Washington Jolly Green Giant were more interested in ropes and climbing and all things alpine; not necessarily school spirit. We had little interest in school sports. We were drawn toward the higher elevations west of Denver and found our excitement rock climbing in Eldorado Canyon or skiing off some peak near the Continental Divide. We had friends at other Denver high schools, and I think that we really viewed school spirit as anathema. Later, when Dr. Holland asked us why we thought it necessary to do such a thing, I recall using that stock adolescent phrase, "I don't know, it seemed like a good idea at the time." As I think about it now, I believe that same quip could just as easily have been used by our government to explain American involvement in Southeast Asia.

There were four of us who decided to take the Giant from his storage berth (somewhere near the GW auditorium). The plan was to keep him safely hidden before replacing him atop a high brick wall at school. The styrofoam statue weighed very little, but was rather awkward because of its size. I worked on Saturday with Gary Tippit, Tom Terrell, and Denver East's Bill Burgin to cut out eighteen footprints from sticky-back green paper. The next evening, we loaded some ropes, descending devices, and the Giant into a truck and drove up Alameda to George Washington. We had little trouble ascending the building and raising the Giant to the top of the wall. We anchored the eight-foot tall mascot at the edge of the wall and rappelled to the ground, placing the sticky footprints to appear as if the Giant had ascended the wall. We pulled our ropes down, gathered our equipment, then assembled at the truck, and drove to our homes. I think we all felt some odd sense of detached accomplishment. No big deal. That's how it was. However, we faced some administrative music that following Monday.

I haven't heard from, or of, Tom Terrell in more than thirty-five years. He was always interested in travel and cultural exploration. May he still be traveling. My dear friend Gary Tippit was killed in a methane explosion, while working in a deep shaft near Sheridan, Wyoming. He was twenty-three when he died. To this day I hold his memory, as I hold the memory of others who left my life before we could share in other adventures. Bill Burgin is an architect in Jamestown, Rhode Island. We stay in contact by e-mail and speak frequently on the telephone.

I have had my revenge for high school injustice, real or imagined. After thirty years of employment on many continents and in the most spectacular mountain ranges of the world, I find myself employed as a secondary teacher at Wood River High School in Hailey, Idaho. I am the ESL(English Second Language) Department Director and teach the newcomer Hispanohablantes and an occasional Russian or East Asian student my variety of English. I have a sixteen year old son, who attends the school where his dad teaches and a nifty loving wife.

Sometimes I reflect, and it seems as if I am a survivor. While life was uncertain when I was eighteen, I can't honestly say that it's any more certain today. The thing I can say, however, is that youth has tremendous resilience, strong confidence, and will. I see this every day in my son and in my students, and I am doing my best to learn from them in preparation for the future.

I'm sorry that I will not be at the 40th Reunion. I'll be shaking the kinks out of some saddle-weary joints and doing my best to stay dry in the north Mongolian rain.