

HOMETOWN REMINISCENCES
OF A COLLAPSING GYM,
RAINING BOTTLES OF BOOZE,
AND PEAT BOGS

By Dave Thomas, N.H.S. Class of '68

Here's a story. They were building the "new" high school. We were moved from Northfield Center to the new bldg. The office of the new High School was a classroom and the one across the hall was Mrs. Meutzel's 6th grade class that I was in. I was about 10 or 11. These were the only useable areas in the new school at the time. One day a noise "started." A big , huge, rumbling. We looked out the window to see the new gym come tumbling down. It had been framed by steelworkers, and they were still on it. They rode the bldg. down. That huge pile of steel just came down. I don't remember if anyone was killed....or hurt. I'm positive people were hurt.

Then, about the same year, the old Joslin Mfg. Co. on 82 had a Tavern next door. Across from Macedonia Park. One Sat eve the place caught on fire. It was a big fire, and destroyed everything just west and N of the rail overpass. It was in front of Watson Lumber. Well, there must've been a lot of booze in the basement. Everyone in town was in the park watching when the whole place just BLEW UP! It then started to rain bottles of booze. Some empty and broken, alot full. There were many, many drunk people that evening in the park. My Grandfather, OJ Thomas, and Alice Stefancin's Father used to walk down to that tavern on spring and summer days from Waters Dr. We were the first house on Waters Dr. Believe you me, there was nothing, and I mean nothing there.

I still can't figure out how the commons was built. That whole area was peat moss and quick sand. A very unstable area. We used to hunt back there, and had to be very careful. In fact the whole area is like that. There was a huge commercial peat bog in Northfield Center. My Dad used to buy it to burn in the fireplace in the winter

I can't begin to tell you how it made me feel to be remembered in my home town. I sat there in the cemetary one spring evening a few years ago, and when I saw my name I knew that I would always be a part of that community. I'm here because of my wife, and that's fine. But it was offered that I be put on a similar memorial here. This one is huge and cost millions. They raised money for 5 years. I declined, and said I'm already on the one I belong on. I live in the shadow of Mayo Clinic. Only 10 blocks away. I sincerely want to thank everyone, and the person or persons who remembered me.