

Looking Back

What was it like to grow up in Northfield?

The 1950's and early '60s



Sunset Ridge School as I knew it.

- "Selling pencils and notebook paper at the school store across from Mrs. Doepel's third grade classroom. It's where I learned to make change."
- "Mr. C drilling us in bike safety in the school parking lot and giving us 'licenses' once we knew how to signal a right turn."
- "Getting sprung from class to go to a Cubs game in the spring with the rest of our school patrol. It was a reward for standing out in the snow to help the little kids cross Willow Road."
- "Buying Good Humors from Bud after school. My favorite was toasted almond."
- "Xerxes the gorilla at Brookfield Zoo."
- "Miss Dressler (Miss Driz) coaxing the entire eighth grade to learn the operetta Red River Valley for a community performance. Lucy Becker and Bruce Flett were supposed to kiss at the climax, but they just hugged."
- "Tuesday: soup day in the cafeteria. Chicken noodle soup with a PB&J sandwich on raisin bread."
- "Spending a Saturday at the bowling alley on Happ Road. It cost 35 cents a game which is why I know how to multiply by 35. (I can only go up to 35x3 because I never had enough energy or money to play more than three games.)"

While our Centennial team is off researching our next installment of Northfield's history, let's explore what it was like to grow up here over different decades.

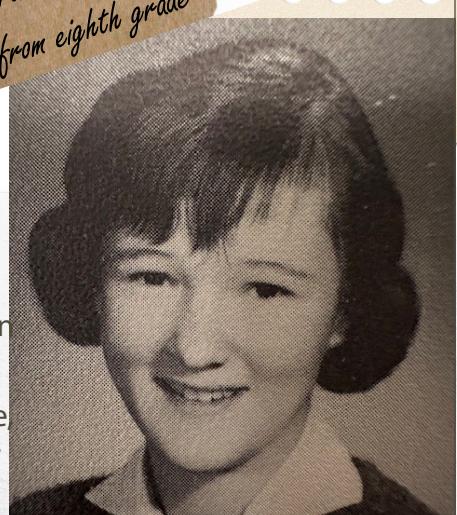
Our first guest editor is **Holly Wheeler Brady**, Sunset Ridge Class of 1961. Holly grew up on Pebblefork Lane. Today, she lives in Palo Alto, Calif. Holly ran Stanford's Professional Publishing Seminars for over 15 years, and just finished her first novel.

"Northfield? It was pretty nondescript," Holly recalls. "My whole world was Sunset Ridge School. I do remember Northfield's bowling alley, the Fix-It Shop, Bess Hardware and the new Convenience Store (a 7-Eleven) where Northfield Restaurant now stands. Oh, and there was a cornfield owned by Techny right behind our house that stretched out past Waukegan Road. Sometimes Mom would drive out there to buy fresh corn from a farm truck parked on the side of the road."

Here's a few more of Holly's memories:

- "Learning how to play the recorder in third grade. We all had to do it."
- "Learning to throw a pot in Mr. C's art class."

Graduating in 1961
from eighth grade



- "Mr. Brown heaving an eraser at the head of some goof-off in the back of math class."
- "Learning how to play 'crack-the-whip' on the ice-skating rink now known as Clarkson Park."
- "Making sure I had a Chandler's notebook for the first day of high school."
- "Mr. C's summer day camp. Swimming and 5-cent Dairy Queens."
- "The Up and Down staircases at New Trier."



This is second grade in 1955. I am the last kid in the second row from the right. I can still name every one of these kids.



My family, on Pebblefork Lane—(from left) my brother Stormy, then me, and my younger sister Meredi with our mom and pups.

- "The chick hatching at the Museum of Science and Industry."

- "Mr. Cook and his many assignments: bug collection, leaf collection, rock collection. When yet another kid brought in a rock for identification, Mr. Cook quipped, 'Take it for granite.'"



Me during a recent visit to Sunset Ridge School

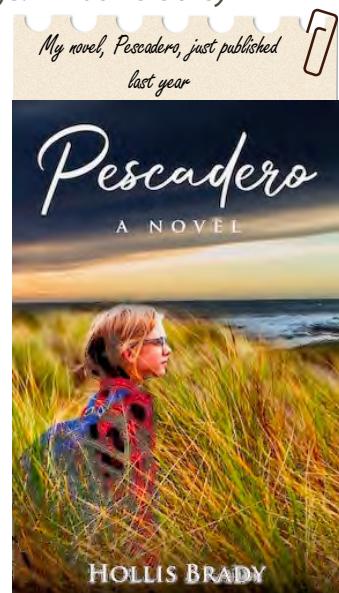
- "Learning to diagram a sentence in Mrs. Burgess's class."
- "The school fair at the end of the year. Oh, joy! Mr. C ran the pie-throwing booth, and he was often the one who got the pie in the face."
- "Carnations and a Sweet Sixteen bracelet for the birthday girl. Always organized by your best friend, who sprung for the bracelet and collected money from everybody else. Each silver disk cost 50 cents, engraving as 10 cents a letter. Pat was luckier than Melissa."
- "Freshman year at New Trier: Posture pictures for the girls, swimming in the nude for boys. What were they thinking?"
- "Madras blouses, circle pins and red Capezios.



Our Sunset Ridge class of 1961 at our most recent reunion—note Jim Clarkson in the middle.

- "The Christmas windows at Marshall Fields, followed by lunch under the tree in the Walnut Room. Cheese soup, Fields Special sandwich, and Frango mint pie. Turned our hearts into hockey pucks."

- "Fetal pig dissection—and that smell!!"
- "High school graduation in two shifts—afternoon and evening. Several hundred white dresses shipped into the North Shore for the occasion, all (hopefully) different."



Anyone you'd like to nominate to be interviewed for "Growing up in Northfield?" Visit the [Centennial website's Contact Us page](#) and let us know!