

Suggested Template for Organizing a Reunion

Connecting

The first step is **establishing contact with members of your group**. Here are some ways to do that:

- **Find an old photo**, preferably a group photo, and scan or digitize it.
- **Post** the photo on Facebook (or other Social Media) on your personal Timeline (assuming you have at least one or two of your group already amongst your group of Friends), along with a comment about a possible reunion.
- **Create a private group** on Facebook (or other Social Media) and begin **to invite friends** to the group. Encourage others to invite anyone else from your group, and ask them to **send you their email addresses** as well.
- Create a **distribution list** in your email contacts and add in people as you find them.
- See if you can find a couple of others who are willing to help spearhead the reunion.
- Have one person handle communications. Ask that person to search for lost members. Google searches, Linked-In and more **in-depth search tools** are helpful. This person could also be responsible for maintaining contact with the found ones via email and Social Media.

Planning

The next step is deciding how you want the reunion to be organized. One idea is to begin with a **casual “Meet and Greet”**, which could be followed by a more **structured time** involving some programming. The Board has decided to free up some accommodation for reunion groups that would like to meet for a weekend only, instead of having to book for an entire week. Those weekends are **June 29,30, July 1; and August 31, September 1 and 2, 2018**. Folks with limited time could gather for a portion of the weekend; others might want to extend their time together into the week immediately preceding or following those weekends. **Stays at the Centre will need to be booked as soon as registration opens in February to secure space for those attending the reunion.**

Some ideas about getting started:

- **Create a questionnaire** to send out beforehand. It can help shrink the time and distance since you were last together by giving people a sense of your lives in the interim. If the questionnaires are returned to the sender, they can be collated and re-distributed before the gathering, so everyone is a little better acquainted before seeing each other and doesn't have to repeat their life story over and over! (See the attached example for ideas – Appendix A).
- A **“Meet and Greet”** could be planned for the first gathering, likely a Friday afternoon and/or evening. Folks who have limited time could gather for this one-time event, and it can be a good start for those wishing to stay in community for a longer time.
- The **“Meet and Greet”** could be held at a centrally located home or private meeting space (community hall or private room in a restaurant or bar) or an available space at the Centre on one of the pre-designated 2018 weekends, as noted above.
- Ask members of your group to **dig out old photographs** of your time together and digitize them. Have one person put them into a **slide show** to play at the event. Add music relevant to the time period to really enhance your trip down memory lane.
- **Create a Trivia or Bingo game** of things that happened, nicknames for people, places that were important, favourite songs, sayings etc. for a bit of a mixer, to help break the ice! (see attached example which was used at a reunion for the Winter Session '78-'79 reunion last summer).

Another idea is to create a THEN and NOW chart, comparing political figures, pop culture, sports heroes, fashion trends and other iconic signposts of the past with corresponding ones from the present.

- **Nametags** are a good idea – people change over time! This is especially important if partners or family members will be attending. It's helpful if partners write their name, and underneath, write their partner's name in parentheses so everyone knows who is with whom.
- Gatherings are always easier over **food and refreshments**. Some people might have **allergies or dietary restrictions**. Potluck or charge for a provided meal. Don't forget plates, cutlery and napkins! It's important to check the **venue's rules about alcohol** before asking people to BYOB.
- Ask someone to take responsibility for taking **photos of the event**. Partners are a good option to take this on, as it gives them a purpose and doesn't distract participants from visiting.
- If **children** are present, you may wish to **organize some group games**, or plan for activities they can do on their own. Look into a **hired helper** if there will be a large group.
- If desired, you could ask for **donations or a set fee** to help offset costs and/or consider a donation to the Centre.
- If you are wanting to expand the event, you could have it morph into a **dance** with music and even clothing from the era.

If you plan to meet over the course of an **entire weekend or week**, some more serious organizing will be required. Members could either register for existing programs or submit a proposal for a self-lead week-long program. If the program will be open to people outside of your reunion group, it will need to be organized to fit into the parameters designed by the Naramata Board.

- Members could be invited to **offer some form of program** for the group...like a Winter Session Redux, for example. It could include **single sessions** of something that the group might have done in their original program, or some members might be interested in providing a **session or series of sessions in an area of their current interest or expertise**. Scheduling will require someone with specific skills in this area, especially if you plan to have people select which sessions they want to attend.
- If anyone is musical, planning **time for singing and chanting** helps build community.
- **Swimming and water sports** are always a good idea, but keep in mind there is no lifeguard on duty.
- **Visits** to wineries, stores and other **local attractions**, such as hiking the KVR or to the waterfall help support the village and build community.
- As meals are no longer provided at the Centre, participants will need to **organize meals** for themselves, either as individuals or as a community.
- **Accommodation** will need to be arranged. Some accommodations have kitchens. If **staying on site**, bookings will need to be coordinated by the Centre. Camping spots and a portion of the other accommodations will be made available to reunion groups on the pre-set weekends indicated above.
- **B and Bs and hotels** in the Valley book up quickly in the summer months. Giving notice well ahead of time of your plans will be essential if you have plans to stay off site.

Communicating

Once plans are firmed up, it's important to get the information out to everyone quickly. Send out emails and post in private groups on Social Media. It's important to respect confidentiality, so be sure to have permission to share email addresses or create a list in which members' addresses are not visible to the

group. If you are creating a week-long program, the Program Team of the Board will have to vet it and put it into their schedule. They usually publish the program schedule in January or February, so time is of the essence.

Remembering

One thing almost every group will need to deal with at a reunion event is the death of some participants. It's wise to solicit and share information about the passing of group members ahead of the gathering, and to find a way to honour their memory. Having a display of photos and lit candles is a simple non-threatening way to acknowledge their passing and keep them present.

Giving back

While holding your reunion event, you may want to consider ways to "give back" to the Centre for its role in your life as a community. Consider making a gift of your...

- **Treasure:** you might want to take advantage of the beautiful weather and scenery of the Valley and hold a **golf tournament**, with an entrance fee that can become a donation to the Centre and a prize package donated by members of your group. Or, you could ask members to donate items for a **silent auction** that could be held over the weekend or week of your reunion. Items could reflect the era, such as sand candles and pottery from the 70s, or tie-dye T-shirts or macramé from the 60s. You could create **prize packages of donated items** and sell tickets for them, with people depositing their tickets in the bucket for the prize they prefer. Or you could just ask members to make a **donation** directly.
- **Talent:** Consider offering a course, presentation or performance that others might enjoy during any of the weeks of program offered by the Centre. To keep things simple and congruent, you may be asked to charge a fee, but there is nothing stopping you from donating it back.
- **Time:** The Naramata Board is always looking for **volunteers to serve as members** or to volunteer some time to projects for the Centre. **If you like to garden, or clean or do handy work**, there is always something needing attention. Consider offering to help out at one of the "Hearts and Hands" events in the Spring and Fall, or during any time you are visiting the Centre.

Appendix A: Questionnaire

Winter Session Questionnaire

Provide answers for any and all of the questions that you wish to share. Those of us at the reunion will have an opportunity to talk together in person, but a compilation of all replies will be emailed to everyone, as well.

Name:

Address:

Email:

Phone:

1. Tell us about those with whom you share your life: (Partner? Children? Grandchildren? Friends? Pets? Significant community?)
2. Share something of what has kept you busy/engaged/inspired/employed over the years, and what you currently spend your days doing:
3. Share one or two of your fondest memories of Winter Session:
4. What did you do in the years immediately following Winter Session?
5. Have you remained in touch with any other participants? Whom?
6. Describe some of the ways Winter Session has had an impact on your life:
7. Has there been a time in your life that was particularly difficult? How did you get through that time?
8. Have you remained connected to Naramata since then? In what ways?
9. Is there anything else that you would want people to know about you or your experiences that hasn't been asked?
10. Would you be interested in attending another reunion gathering in the future? Explain:

If you would like, please attach a recent photo of yourself: (significant others, too!)

Appendix B: Game – Revise to make relevant to your year and memories

/ 39

Name: _____

39 Things You *Might* Remember about Winter Session After 39 Years!

1. How many participants were there in total? (not counting leaders) 30 33 36

2. How many people named Kathy/Cathy/Catherine were there? (including leaders)

3 4 5 6

3. Who was the youngest participant? _____

4. Who was the oldest participant? _____

5. Which participant came from the city farthest...

West? _____ City: _____

East? _____ City: _____

North? _____ City: _____

South? _____ City: _____

6. Which participant's roommate decided to drop out of Winter Session?

7. What were the three non-negotiable rules:

8. Which participant had dreams of being a stand-up comedian?

9. Name three participants who composed songs:

10. Name the head cook at Naramata at that time: _____

11. Name the two pets that shared our community:

cat: _____

dog: _____

12. Which day of the week coincidentally seemed to coincide with turmoil in the community?

13. Which week was led by a man named Dick Overman?

- a) Communication Skills
- c) Process Theology
- b) Politics and the Third World
- d) Death and dying

14. During Body Awareness/Human Sexuality week, participants were encouraged to try on another participant's _____ for a day.

15. Several participants painted a _____ during Winter Session. Name three of them:

16. For which of the following unusual injuries did Eric seek medical attention?

- a) A sliver in his buttock
- c) A needle through his toe
- b) A bean up his nostril
- d) A wasp sting on his ear

17. One frosty evening, two carloads of people visited Elaine in interesting attire. What were they wearing? _____

18. Over the course of our time together, we developed some common expressions. Fill in the missing words:

"Out of _____ grows _____!"

"What hurts the _____ hurts me!"

19. Chants and songs were a big part of our community time. Fill in the missing words:

Your space is my space
My space is your space,
I hear you saying,
This place is our place,
And I confess,
That I regress,
_____ is meeting all my needs!

Sung to the tune of: _____

Listen, listen, listen to my heart's _____, (x2)

I will never forget you, I will never _____ you. (x2)