

“Small Town Living” 68th Annual Gathering

Hamlin Ex-Students Alumni Homecoming 2022

September 9 & 10

Please note these are the scheduled events as of this newsletter composition time (mid-July). Please continue to check our **web page: hamlinexstudents.com** and our **Facebook group: “Hamlin Ex-Students”** for updates or additions as time elapses. You may also call and leave us a message with your name and phone number so we can get back with you: (325) 576-2325.

Stay up-to-date with our school: <https://hamlincollegiate.com/> or **GOHAMLIN.com**

Come to town early on Friday and before the parade on Saturday to shop and visit with our businesses. **Memorial Windows:** west 200 block of South Central Avenue in the alcove of the former McDonald’s Dept. Store. Sadly, we will be adding some 30+ new photos of recently deceased alumni/educators to the windows. These windows will also be lighted at night for your viewing.

High School and Alumni Queen/King Windows: 319 South Central Avenue at Bell’s Home and Auto storefront. These windows will also be lighted at night for your viewing.

Friday, September 9

Registration / Voting / Meal Ticket sales from **9 a.m. – noon / 1 p.m. – 3:30 p.m.** in The Book Nook, 245 S. Central Avenue. **Alumni Registration \$10 / Friday meal tickets \$12/\$8**

Friday Meal: Note NEW times 5:00 p.m. – 6:45 p.m., Hamlin High School Cafeteria, 450 S. W. Avenue F. Meal: Fried fish, hush puppies, fries, slaw, beans, cookie, and beverage – catered and sponsored by The Hamlin Lion’s Club. Meal tickets may be purchased at the door, along with continued Alumni Registration / Voting. **Meal Tickets: \$12; age 10 and under, \$8.**

Homecoming Football Game: 7:00 p.m. – Hamlin Piper Stadium. Hamlin Pied Pipers vs. Crosbyton Chiefs. Special half-time activities will take place recognizing and crowning Hamlin High School’s queen/king nominees/winners, along with the Ex-Students nominees / winners from the classes of 1962, 1972, 1982, 1992, and 2002. Tickets for reserved seating for the game may be purchased by contacting Sheila Maberry at (325) 576-3624. Tickets will also be available at the ticket window prior and during game time.

Post-Game Fellowship and Reception for all Alumni in the Foyer of “Piper Court”, located just behind Hamlin High School. Many of you have not seen the interior of our playing gym, so this will give you an opportunity to see more of our school’s fine facilities.

Saturday, September 10: PARADE followed by our inaugural “SATURDAY IN THE PARK”:

Homecoming Parade begins at **10:30 a.m.** in downtown Hamlin. **Parade Grand Marshall will be 1951 HHS graduate, renowned athlete, and football coaching great, W.T. Stapler.** Parade route begins on the far south end of S.W. Avenue F to West Lake Drive, turning east towards downtown and headed south on S. Central Avenue, making a U-turn at S. W. 5th Street, coming back north through the downtown district, and back west on West Lake Drive, finally turning south on S. W. Avenue E, with all floats going into the Hamlin City Park south

entrance and being parked along the California Creek bank for adjudication for additional monies as selected by all attendees coming to the City Park as the “People’s Choice Award” for “Best Overall” float.

Note new meal times and location: 11:15 a.m. – 2 p.m. at the **Hamlin City Park**. Come join your fellow alumni and the Hamlin community **with your lawn chairs** for a **donation only contribution meal to our Ex-Students Alumni Association** consisting of your choice of either grilled hamburgers or hot dogs with all of the trimmings, condiments, chips, and a drink. **Included in the post-parade event: professional alumni musical entertainment, vendors, and activities in the Hamlin City Park. Casual wear, please. We really need a strong showing of alumni for the post-parade gathering this year as we consider whether or not to continue this noon meal gathering due to a large decline in the noon meal attendance over the past years.**

Small town living; we’ve all experienced it for a moment in time or a lifetime. Many have chosen to remain in small towns, defined as an incorporated community with less than 5,000 residents, while others found their livelihoods and more opportunities in the big towns or cities. Hamlin’s top population per the 1960 census was 3,791, so in her 100+ year lifespan, she has always remained a small town made up of tough and resilient folks.

There is currently trending on Facebook a little blurb that begins with “I grew up in Hamlin, TX.” followed by a few paragraphs listing the things we experienced that we either positively contributed to or were influenced by in our growing-up years. Most of us can remember the walk-in movie theater, along with the drive-in theater, in addition to other activities including: the portable skating rink that would come to town; the city swimming pool; the Jaycee’s miniature golf course in the park; fun times in the pool hall; the scouting activities for boys and girls; the lighted go-cart race track just north of town; the local rodeos; making the ‘drag’; meeting the passing trains for a chance at some free bubblegum; the annual Jaycee carnival; the annual BCD tennis tournament; the FFA community volleyball tourneys; summer VBS at all of the churches, along with the city-wide revivals in the football stadium; the 4th of July day-long activities in the park closing out with a musical program and fireworks show in the evening; knowing almost everyone in town; having the opportunity for summer or holiday jobs; riding bicycles with the neighborhood gang; front yard football or baseball; Little League baseball games with the Yankees, Giants, Braves, and Cardinals; having plenty of shopping opportunities with the many hometown merchants; and, grabbing a burger or meal at the Limit Café, Lee’s Drive-In and Café, Jordan’s, The Bluebonnet, The City Café, and The Piper. The list could go on forever for whatever time period you spent here in Hamlin. One alumni remarked that she likened her tenure here in Hamlin as living in “Camelot time.” Sadly today, our young people have none or very little of the community activities or venues we once experienced; we must do better.

Unita Blackwell once penned: “To make a small town achieve its potential, you need everybody. When a blind person carries a crippled person who can see, both of them get where they’re going.” A June 1989 magazine, *The Electric Times*, had an article titled: “Hamlin – A Town That Stays Ahead.” The opening paragraph reads as follows: “If there is any town among the agri-oil economy of West Texas which has that little extra ingredient of personal pride, it is Hamlin.” Perhaps there was no greater showing of community pride as in the Hamlin attendance numbers at the 2019 State Football Playoff when the Pipers faced the Mart Panthers! Although the community has changed in many ways, Hamlin still thrives with various industries in the downtown district that have consumed many of the former retail buildings, along with filling the warehouses at the former Cotton Compress with additional industries and businesses. Our school system has set the bar high for the continuing education of our students. The downtown district is currently undergoing a rehab/restoration push with work by local volunteers, and more new businesses are coming to town, along with the excitement of an active oil boom just south and north of town with hopes that it could be heading Hamlin’s way.

As many of you may be aware, the old hymn “Precious Memories” was composed just outside of Hamlin by resident, John B. F. Wright, in an autumn midnight in 1923 following the loss of his baby son in 1922. The third verse and chorus sums up our “small town living” theme: “In the stillness of the midnight, Echoes from the past I hear, Old-time singing, gladness bringing, From that lovely land somewhere. Precious mem’ries, how they linger, How they ever flood my soul; In the stillness of the midnight, Precious, sacred scenes unfold.”

