

There were 923 seniors in my high school graduation class in James Monroe High School in the Bronx in June 1959. Among them were some seven close friends whom I had grown up with. At Bronx Science, at about the same time, two more of my close friends graduated.

We had learned together. We had joined forces and created a softball team (the Jets, with accompanying jackets which we ordered personalized and paid for. Depending on the season, various combinations of us played street hockey, touch football, gym and schoolyard basketball, a game called pitching in, another called punchball. We studied together and played board games, such as "Go to the Head of the Class," together as well as poker. We flipped and tossed baseball cards. We discussed and argued about favorite Major League baseball teams and the Knicks and the Rangers, and occasionally went to their games.

And then came high school graduation --- for me, on the stage of Monroe, the second largest stage in New York, only surpassed in size by Radio City Music Hall. After that, each of us went his separate way, off to college or wherever. And we rarely if ever saw each other again.

I've since Googled friends and found out how some of their lives went --- successful careers in the sciences or law enforcement and retirements or successful marriages or divorces or disbarment for embezzling a client's funds. But I haven't gotten together with any of these once-close friends since about 1968. I miss them. I regret that we didn't stay in touch. I miss the camaraderie. It's too often the case that the high school graduation, the commencement of the rest of one's life, is also the end of beautiful friendships (to paraphrase a line from the movie "Casablanca").