

“Stay Sweet” and other well wishes from Jr. High

I went to Junior High School at the now defunct Park View Elementary in Huntington Beach. I recently pulled out my old yearbooks and found I was drawn more to all the inscriptions and signatures of my friends, than to who was voted “Class Flirt.”

While reading them, the thing that popped out at me was the call for me to “Stay Sweet.” This was written over and over again– “Suzanne, stay sweet. See you at the beach.” So, either my friends thought I was in dire danger or crossing over to utter wickedness or it was just a filler comment like “Have a rad summer,” which also habitually appears.



(Click on images to get a better look.)

Yep, Chip did say I was the prettiest girl in 7th grade but, I found out later, mine wasn't the only yearbook where he made this claim.

Paul Frank Sunich, of Paul Frank...you know...the monkey...yes... you've got it, wanted me to have a “rad summer,” which I think he truly meant.

I started to wonder what kids who weren't from California wrote in their yearbooks if they didn't have a beach to reunite on in the summer. My husband is from rural New York. I asked him, he said, “We didn't get to have yearbooks.” Hmmm, I think this is just another installment in his never-ending quest to prove his childhood was worse than mine...

Some of the comments were touching and sweet, reading them now, I wish I would have known more about what was going on behind the Varneys of my Van-tennis-shoe-wearing

contemporaries. In some of them, little stories peek through and remind me how important even the most fleeting relationship can be when you are young.



*** side note** the references to not seeing me anymore comes from the decision we had to make as 8th graders—Ocean View High School or Marina. Our graduating class split in two directions****

This is me, wings and all, in 7th grade. I cringe at the thought of what I might have written in yearbooks and what words I butchered with my marginal spelling.



Written for my column at The Orange County Register. [Click here](#) to get there.