



# Huskies Trails

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The Official Newsletter of the Reno High School Alumni Association

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## PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Dear Fellow Alumni:

The following is a brief review of my annual report presented to the Board of Trustees at our October meeting.

This past year has been another busy and successful one thanks to all the Board members and volunteers who have contributed so much of their time. Our accomplishments have been—for the most part—positive.

In January, the Principal of Reno High School became an ex-officio non-voting member of the Board of Trustees.

Also in January, the Board voted to give four \$1,000 scholarships to four deserving graduating students. I was pleased to be able to attend the convocation ceremony in May to present the awards.

In April, the Board approved plans for monthly luncheons to be held for RHS Alumni at the Gold 'N Silver. The luncheons have not been very successful. Whether we continue them or not is still to be decided. We'd like some input from our Alumni.

Much of this past year has been spent in community involvement. Relations with Reno High School—its faculty, staff, and students have been great! One of the highlights for some of us when we were asked to judge the Homecoming floats and to participate in some of the pre-game festivities.

By sending you this fourth newsletter, we have accomplished another of the goals we set for this year. Keeping you informed is important to us. You may notice a difference in some of the format. We welcome your suggestions and comments for future editions.

The museum shows continued progress. New systems with our artifacts have been implemented. We're looking forward to moving ahead with our plans to help next year's reunion classes. Did you know that the 25-year class and the 50-year class always have a display case all of their own for the whole year?

As evidenced by the continued use of the building—not only by the High School, but by other organizations in the community, we know we're making progress in our efforts to let people know we're here! Hopefully, the increased exposure will bring us new members!

In April, our building was successfully used for Freshmen Orientation. Four hundred and sixty-three students came through. Also in April, the head of the RHS Math Department hosted a meeting here for other District Math teachers. Reunion classes held meetings here all spring preparing for their reunions. Six of those groups

held “coffee hours” here during the actual reunion. It was great exposure for our Museum and resulted in some new memberships. Reno High’s Dan Halcomb continues to bring his Journalism classes in. So do Mr. Ochs and Mr. Clark. They brought in four of their History classes for a “scavenger hunt” It was so successful that Mrs. Rudolph brought in her three Freshman English classes for the same thing. In June and July, the Washoe County Vice Principals used the building for their negotiations team. Scenic Nevada came in on several occasions for special meetings.

I could continue on with more evidences of our exposure. I’ve drawn your attention to some of it because all of this can’t happen without the help of our volunteers and Board Members. That’s why we’re always looking for additional help. Four of our members –Karl Breckenridge, Neal Cobb, Alex Kanwetz, and Cal Pettengill--resigned in October to seek other pursuits. We are seeking qualified people to help us. Are you one of those special people?? If so, please contact us.

Meanwhile, Happy Holidays to all of you.

Betty Jo Baker, President  
Reno High Alumni Association

P.S. DON’T FORGET THE 4<sup>TH</sup> TRIENNIAL ALL ALUMNI PICNIC TO BE HELD ON SUNDAY, AUGUST 17, 2008. MARK IT ON YOUR CALENDARS!! MORE ON THIS TO FOLLOW IN THE COMING MONTHS.

## **4th Triennial All-Alumni Picnic**

# **2008**

**For all alumni, teachers, administrators and staff**

**At Reno High School**

**August 17, 2008**

**11:00 am until 5:00 pm**

**For information, call 825-2586 or go to our  
website @ [www.renohighalum.com](http://www.renohighalum.com)**

# LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Editor  
RHS Alumni Newsletter

Dear Sir:

I loved the recent article on the Huskiettes. But, oh, how it rekindled the fires of teenage angst for some of us who got the big boot from Mrs. A. Back then, it meant everything to don those red and blue wool skirts. I knew my chances were over when the drill leader said, "Right face!" and my body went left. It must have been my destiny to be in a world without drills.

Here in Port Townsend WA, four RHS graduates - Cameron Samuels (1954), Sonja Olson (1957), Betsy Ankers (1959), and Cameron's visiting sister, Gail Samuels (1951) - banded together to reflect on how we've moved on from the unattainable world of the red and blue wool. Gail, Cameron, and Betsy all had close friends who became Huskiettes; my younger sister became part of the group as well. This was bittersweet for all four of us. One of us even tried out twice! That's how important it was to our RHS teenage psyches. But, we've grown and we've learned (thank goodness) that not being a Huskiette wasn't the end of the world.

All of us have encountered joy and sorrow in our lives; now, we are all successful, happy, and more or less well-adjusted! We became stronger women for making it through that rejection experience. However, for fun, we did form a chapter of the RHS Huskiette Reject Club (note our buttons in the picture). Anyone out there interested in joining? No fees, no dues. One just needs the memory of that darn teenage angst!

Any other Huskiette stories out there? If you want to share, please contact Sonja Olson Schoenleber, 1023 Tyler Street, Port Townsend WA 98368, [sonjas64@msn.com](mailto:sonjas64@msn.com); Cameron Samuels McPherson, 745 Oak Street, Port Townsend WA 98368, [mcp@olympus.net](mailto:mcp@olympus.net); Betsy Ankers Pendergast, 530 Roosevelt, Port Townsend WA 98368, [betsyp@cablespeed.com](mailto:betsyp@cablespeed.com); Gail Samuels, 912 D Avenue, Coronado CA 92118, [g.samuels@earthlink.net](mailto:g.samuels@earthlink.net). Or maybe it's easier to contact the RHS Alumni Newsletter. Have fun!

Sincerely,  
Sonja, Cameron, Betsy, Gail  
Charter Members – RHS Huskiette Reject Club



## Ron Savitt on Reno Back Then

I was in and out of all types of stores in Reno and Sparks with deliveries from about the age of 12 on. Some have more meaning such as the Lander Street grocery near Mt. Rose School where I gorged myself on candy and all the things that I did not have at home. The big chain was Sewell's and the drug chain was Hale's both were locally owned as well as Eagle Thrifty. On California Avenue I recall Ramos Drug across from another drugstore and down the street from the California Market. I can recall when Virginia Street was two - lane and only partially paved to Moana Lane.

I was a fan of movies and went as often as possible; the major theatres were the Crest on Second between Sierra and Virginia, The Granada on First on the river bank and the Majestic further down on First near Center Street. My favorite was the Tower Theatre on South Virginia on the other side of the street and down from the County Court House; they showed kids movies on Saturday the mornings and with some skill one could sit in the men's room and wait for the afternoon's performance--a confession!

I had a newspaper route on Sundays along Arlington up to California Street and when there was a chance I sometimes sold newspapers at the Catholic cathedral downtown; the tips there were very good around the holiday season and sure was better than hauling that wagon up the hill and through the snow. My earnings about \$2.50 were deposited in a school savings account which when I cashed it in 1953 had nearly \$1,000. Once I was in high school my Dad had me check in the paperboys on Sunday mornings; Sierra News Co. was at 143 West 3rd Street. When I was finished around 2pm and I would ride my bike out to West Fourth Street to buy donuts at the Spudnut Shop. They closed at 3 so a dozen went for 86 cents in the last hour before they closed.

My Dad's business was very demanding, seven days with the newspapers and those from San Francisco came in at all hours--in current terms it was really 24/7. When the Korean War began it was difficult to find people so I worked all Saturday night putting stuffing the Examiners and then road on the trucks until about 5 a. m. As you guess my social life was very limited but it was a family business. My parents, immigrants from Poland, worked hard and it all taught me lots and gave me the drive to do something else. But it provided me with money for my university education. My Mother was an active participant; our family life was different but in contrast to modern families we ate 3 meals a day together.

Only later did I realize that was I grew up with adults and not many people of my own age. As my Grandmother said, "everything happens for the best" which I revised to "you make the best of everything that happens!"

I spent a great deal of time as a youth in downtown Reno, not a street person in modern jargon, but as part of the work I was doing for my family business. We distributed magazines, books and newspapers in Reno and my Father had me involved. It was not an all year job though from junior high--Billingshurst--through my junior year at high school I worked a lot of weekends during the school year as well as during the summer. We would get the San Francisco Examiner early edition, first by Greyhound and then toward the end from the airport. My Dad's mission was service and always wanted his papers on the various news-stands as early as possible. The competitor, the distributor of the Chronicle, was always at our heels. The area I knew best in the 1950s and forward was from Sierra Street east to Lake Street and from Commercial Row to the Riverside Hotel. When the papers were still coming by bus we parked our truck in the alley between Harold's Club and the Arch Drug. The alley was supposedly paved with gold but it always looked and was dirty, perhaps filthy. I was given 50 papers and went across Virginia Street to Southworth's news-stand which was on the corner of the alley and delivered 15 or so; then I went down Virginia, crossing at Second Street to Hale's Drugs on the corner, down to the Mapes and eventually on to the Riverside Hotel. At the same time my Dad went to the Golden Hotel, the site of Harrah's, over to the Lake Street Drug on the corner of Second and Lake, across from the Mizpah Hotel. I understand that burned down several years ago with a number of deaths.

Even as a teenager I was kept off Lake Street; drugs, prostitution and drunks. By the way the Southworth's owned a tobacco distributor and were very involved in Reno politics and owned most of the hotel news-stands as well. There are all kinds of stories about them but then there are libel and slander laws as well. The alley is where I learned about life; once my Dad let me give money to "rubby" as they were known then and then had me follow him into the drugstore where he bought more booze. It is where I saw my a fatal assault in which a drunk much like in the western movies broke the end of whiskey bottle off and shoved the jagged end into a woman he was with! It still haunts though with the level of violence everywhere now it does not seem as horrifying now as then. I suppose with TV most 10 year olds see hundreds of killing a year but this was up close and real!

I have strong memories of Second Street at Sierra; on the northeast corner was the Wigwam Coffee Shop, owned by the Lerude family. At one time to the right was a barbershop where as a child I got my first haircut sitting in a chair in the window that looked like a horse and of course I screamed to no avail. Then there was the Crest Theater; they had the best movies but would not let anyone bring in popcorn from the Payless Drugs across the street! It was always a battle. Down towards Virginia Street was Hatton's men's store-where if my memory serves me where Bill and Ellen Johnston's father was manager. Virginia Street was nothing like it is today, of course; the Mapes Hotel dominated. Along the east side, between Second and First streets, was a stationary store, some women's stores and the First National Bank of Nevada. Across the street was one of the great number of drug stores--Hilps and then further down R. Herz and Brothers, the jewelers, who I just learned are closing after more than a century in business. Across from the Mapes was a fancy men's store called Manerds, I believe. I always loved the clothes in there as they were not Reno, if you know what I mean. By the time I had the money, my tastes had changed greatly although when Ann and I got married my Mother bought her a suit there. She could still get into it after 27 years!

Center and Second was dominated by Club Cal Neva; it was the only gambling casino of the time that let under 21s into their cafe. It was my Dad's favorite and a two-egg breakfast with bacon and toast was 99 cents! One of the waitresses took pity on us as we seemed scruffy or something and always delivered two orders of bacon. Though Jewish, bacon has always been my favorite meat. Down on Center Street was the home of the Gazette and Journal; for a long time we distributed those as well but that is another story. Sierra Street had Sears, J. C. Penny's and the western store owned by the Parkers; Charles was one of our class-mates. On the other side was a small French restaurant, my first taste of anything but American food, called the 116 Club. I am not certain of the ownership but I believe Eleanor Bonnefant's parents were involved or at least they were there often. Of course, the building along the river was Grey Reid Wright and Company; it always kept on getting flooded and eventually moved north on Virginia Street where I believe Circus Circus is located.

What always struck me about downtown Reno were all of the drug stores in this four square block area; there were two Hales, Second and Sierra and Second and Virginia, another independent that was later brought into the chain at Second and Center; Hilps on Virginia, Arch Drug that ran between the alley paved with gold and commercial row. I liked the one at Second and Virginia because one of the first self-serve coke machines in Reno was there; often the clerk let me have a cup free--nothing sinister about it although that would probably not be the case today. My most lasting memory of people was Kermit, I never knew his last name. He was blinded in Germany in the war and ran the news-stand in the main post office. He always amazed me knowing when I showed; he knew my footsteps, always cheerful, and very successful. I am certain some people took advantage of him but he wanted to and did make it on his own.

High school was an important period for me even though I did not participate in everything. Blythe Bulmer, Richard Woods, Tom Summers and Ivan Slotto opened my eyes to world that I had never considered and one which I wanted to explore. There were just all those people, places and things out there that have and continue to keep me exploring. Over the past 50 years I have visited Reno infrequently, My Dad died 26 years ago at 84 and my Mother in 2004 on her way to 101! As I think it, about much of who I am came from my 18 years there.

William A. Harrigan  
Class of 1938

My first year at Reno High School as a sophomore, the upper class folks—particularly the Seniors—displayed the magnitude of their importance in the picking order of the student body. Our class soon found out that any transgressions by us lower classmen were summarily and promptly dealt with. Minor infractions were punished by several upper classmates hoisting a lower classmate onto the spout of the drinking fountain – resulting in a thoroughly soaked seat! A bit of compassion existed since we were only hoisted on the designated boys’ fountain on the north side of the main entry of the school, and not the girls’ drinking fountain located on the south side of the building.

It was traditional for only Seniors and Juniors to perch on the wide Study Hall steps, and it became a major infraction if a Sophomore was caught sitting on those steps. Punishment was severe! We would be escorted out of the front door to the location of a large handpump which provided a flow of very cold water. The procedure that followed consisted of being secured by the arms and legs by the upperclass “bully” boys and thrust under the pump. No interference by the Faculty was ever known to occur, and the victims were left to cope as best they could. Soaked or not, you were required to report to class!

I do not recall any hazing of the Sophomore girls, but I am sure they had some type of punishment dealt out by the upper class ladies!

NOTE: This is the second article in a series of stories from William A. Harrigan. More to follow in the coming months.



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### History Quiz

1. When did Tholl Fence start business ?
2. What year was the first scramble system tried in Reno ?
3. Seen about town caricatures were drawn by who ?
4. Boots & Butler, located at 119 Sierra Street, was what type store ?
5. What was Savage & Son’s corporate logo ?
6. What year and month was the major explosion in Reno ?
7. What is the name of Reno’s second public high school ?
8. What year did the second public high school open ?
9. What two animal statues graced the entry landing of the newly built California building ?
10. What year were they removed and why ?

NOTE: THE MONTHLY FRIDAY LUNCHEONS HELD AT THE GOLD'N SILVER CAFÉ HAVE BEEN CANCELLED UNTIL FURTHER NOTICE.

### Answers to History Quiz

1. 1912
2. 1954
3. Lew Hymers
4. Saddlery and leather goods (Saddlery spelling 1950 phone book)
5. Drawing of a savage and his son (spears and all)
6. February, 1957
7. Wooster High
8. September, 1962 (there was no senior class in 1963. The first graduating class was in 1964.)
9. Two bears
10. They were removed after Nevada's Transcontinental Highway Exposition that was held from June 25 to August 1, 1927. They belonged to the state of California.



P.O. Box 5807  
Reno, NV 89513

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Correspondence: P.O. BOX 5807, Reno, NV 89503  
Telephone: 775-825-2586  
Website: [www.renohighalum.com](http://www.renohighalum.com)  
Email : [rhsaa@renohighalum.com](mailto:rhsaa@renohighalum.com)

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P.O. Box 5807  
Reno, NV 89513