

CLEVELAND HIGH SCHOOL ALUMNI NEWS



Volume 5, Issue 1

July 1999

**CLEVELAND
HIGH SCHOOL
ALUMNI ASSOCIATION**
P.O. Box 50294
Bellevue, WA 98015-5294

OFFICERS

President
Elaine (Seibert)
Comerford '45
(425) 746-6789

Vice President
Alison Sing '64
(425) 742-1782

Secretary
JoAnn Victor Smith '56
(425) 487-3952
e-mail: kesmitty@aol.com

Treasurer
Terence Wong '58
e-mail: tlwong@tlwong.com

BOARD MEMBERS

Paul Barden '54
(206) 824-1979
fax: (206) 824-0411

Edward Boprey '45
(206) 282-1810

Vera M.Chan-Pool '91
(206) 722-4330
e-mail: VEMchan@aol.com
newsletter editor

Richard "Whitey" King '44
(425) 746-9261

Loretta (Seibert) Scott '48
(206) 363-6131

Louise Steggall '67
(206) 243-5744



**The deadline is Sept. 25
for the fall
CHSAA newsletter.**

Cleveland High School
5511 15th Ave. S.
Seattle, WA 98108
(206) 768-3670
Principal — Ted Howard
Historian — Georgia Kumor

Future of Cleveland Memorial Forest uncertain

Survey solicits alumni's input

By Elaine (Seibert) Comerford '45

At the annual Cleveland High School Alumni Association meeting in January 1999, members voted to conduct a survey pertaining to the Cleveland High School Memorial Forest and the pending lawsuit against the Seattle School District. Byron Coney '47 filed the lawsuit on behalf of alumni seeking to transfer the title from the school district to a nonprofit, educational foundation that would be responsible for the forest's management and preservation.

The forest, off Issaquah-Fall City Road, consists of 131 acres of second-growth timber, including Sitka spruce, Douglas fir and western red cedar. Inviting trails cut through the lush vegetation, and a salmon-spawning stream is located there. This beautiful memorial to fallen classmates serves as a striking contrast to the horrific war that inspired its origin.

Because many are unfamiliar with the forest and its history, the following information — gleaned from newspaper articles, Seattle School District archival records, correspondence and first-person accounts — is provided.

A living memorial

At the height of World War II, in the early 1940s, Cleveland students sought a way to memorialize classmates who had died in service to our country. To that end, they contributed more than \$500 — including gifts from the graduating classes of 1943 and 1944 — to purchase some land.

At a county tax auction in July 1944, vice principal Ray Imus bid on a quarter-section of logged-off land east of Issaquah. No one bid against Imus when it was learned that a memorial forest would be created to commemorate Cleveland students killed in the war.

Thus, the land was acquired for \$300 and

the deed was issued to principal Kenneth Selby. He subsequently granted the property to the Seattle School District by quit claim in December 1944.

Forest projects

For a time, students continued to contribute to the Memorial Forest fund, as Forestry Club members, teachers and students traveled there with their axes, shovels and other tools. They cleared trails and old logging roads, installed fences, mapped the site and planted thousands of seedlings donated by the Snoqualmie National Forest and other organizations.

During the following years, however, the forest was rarely visited or even mentioned to Cleveland students, according to many alumni.

That changed in 1967, when federal funds became available through the Project Interchange Program, which was designed to help potential dropouts and disadvantaged, young men. The program alternated school time with work days at the forest and paid the participants for their work.

Project supervisor Dick Case '49 directed a number of projects. All of the buildings — including the A-frame (designed by Cleveland architectural-drawing students), the storage shed, the two-room house and the covered pavilion containing the large fire pit — were constructed between 1968 and 1970, using mostly donated and "scrounged" materials. An old, double portable was moved to the site, plumbed and converted to restrooms.

A septic system was installed, the well was drilled, bridges were built and the parking lot and driveway were cleared. When Project Interchange ended and the funding expired, work at the forest ceased.

Metal-shop students made a large, bronze plaque bearing the names of the 29 Cleveland

► See FOREST. next page

Forest's ownership to be decided in court

► FOREST, from previous page

students killed in World War II, which was affixed to a huge rock at the end of a 1,000-yard trail.

Finally, in April 1971, the forest was formally dedicated as a living memorial to those who had died for their country.

During the '70s and '80s, Tony Nogales '47, the school district's field-trip coordinator, encouraged the teachers' use of the forest as an educational resource. He provided a comprehensive guide to the woodland, yet the forest continued to be under-utilized.

Nogales often expressed frustration at his inability to persuade the district to provide free transportation to the forest since chartered buses represented a significant expense.

Rumors and concerns

Over the years it was rumored that the school district might sell the forest, whose worth had grown to an estimated \$15 million or more.

In 1994, newspaper articles quoted school officials who had suggested that a challenge course there could produce revenue through rental to outside groups. Some alumni from the '40s and '50s became alarmed that the character of the memorial could be changed or that a school-district shortfall might result in the forest being sold.

In the early '90s, some Cleveland staff members claimed that the forest was virtually inaccessible to them; they urged a visiting alum to unite the alumni to do something about the rumored threats and the forest's deterioration.

Concerned alumni were galvanized into action. They gathered and exchanged forest data and met to consider ways to ensure its future. Some spent days at the Seattle School District's archives scrutinizing old papers and copying pertinent information.

It became apparent that a larger organization would be more effective, and thus, the Cleveland High School Alumni Association was formed in 1995. The charter members, all aging alumni, shared a heartfelt need to preserve and protect the forest as a living memorial to the Cleveland students who died during World War II and those who later died in the Korean and Vietnam conflicts.

A few years ago, Tom Hudson '60, an

environmental-studies instructor at Garfield High School, started taking his classes to the forest as part of a survival course and to study plant life. They made some needed repairs, but the extent of the neglect and the dilapidated buildings required more extensive work and materials.

In 1995 — responding to the request of school-board members Linda Harris and Ellen Roe — City Councilmember Sue Donaldson and County Councilmember Larry Phillips helped to procure \$150,000 in federal, county and city grants. The funds were used to restore basic facilities such as the pavilion, restrooms and trails and to develop a forest curriculum.

A dozen alumni, as well as city and county representatives, attended the May 1995 meeting of a Seattle School District committee to discuss the forest. At the meeting, attorney Byron Coney proposed transferring the title to a trust — the Cleveland Memorial Forest Foundation — to ensure its preservation as a permanent memorial. Although his proposal invited school-district participation, they rejected it.

Shortly after, Coney filed a lawsuit on behalf of several alumni from the 1940s to quiet title, or settle the question of management and control through the courts. In 1995 and again in 1997, the courts denied the school district's attempts to have the lawsuit dismissed.

The case is scheduled for trial in December 1999; Coney continues to provide pro bono services for the plaintiffs.

The question of ownership

Forest management is currently under the jurisdiction of the school district through an oversight committee comprised of representatives from the school board, staff, local government, students and the alumni association.

If the plaintiffs win the lawsuit and title to the forest is transferred to a nonprofit foundation, representatives from forestry, business and higher education — as well as the school district and the alumni association — would all have a voice in its management and its preservation as a memorial. If the school district wins, it would be free to determine the forest's future; its preservation as a memorial in perpetuity would be uncertain.

In 1996 the alumni association was

awarded the Knoll Lumber Co.'s 1997 model home, which would have replaced the unsafe caretaker's cottage at the forest. Because of the deadline, the financial contingencies involved and the alumni association's limited treasury, Coney suggested to the school district's legal counsel that both sides work together on the project "without prejudice" since it would benefit the forest. When the school district's lawyer refused the proposal, the board regretfully declined the award.

King County's proposal

The forest is bordered by two King County parks: Duthie Hill to the east, and Fall City to the west. In 1995 the county proposed that the school district enter into a joint-use agreement with it to operate and coordinate maintenance of the three sites. The county recommended that "...Fall City Park should serve as an extension of and buffer for the Cleveland Memorial Forest...." It also proposed to "...maximize public benefit by coordinated stewardship and use of the three sites...."

Although the agreement is presently on hold, some alumni are concerned that the forest ultimately might be absorbed by the county's park system: They fear its sensitive ecosystem would not survive the pressures of use by the general public.

An environmental resource

Tom Hudson has provided teacher workshops in forest ecology the last two years and continues to supervise repair work at the forest, involving students, parents, teachers and alumni. The restoration work and training sessions have encouraged an increasing number of elementary- and middle-school teachers to take classes there on field trips.

This August a group of Cleveland students and staff, led by teachers Blanca Linder and Karen Haggard, will camp there as part of a three-day summer program of forest studies and survival skills. To encourage increased use of the forest by Cleveland, the alumni association contributed \$1,000 toward the program's expenses.



Please take a few minutes to complete the survey on the next page and mail it to the address given there.

please cut along line

Memorial Forest survey

Please return this survey to:
Cleveland Memorial Forest Survey
12620 S.E. 59th St.
Bellevue, WA 98006

- 1) As a student at Cleveland High School, were you aware of the Memorial Forest and its origin?
 Yes No Class of 19 ____
- 2) As a student at Cleveland High School, did you ever visit or work at the forest?
 Yes No
- 3) Does the future of the forest (i.e. who owns and manages it) concern you?
 Yes No
- 4) Since the attorney is providing his services free of charge, do you think the Cleveland High School Alumni Association should contribute to the clerical and mailing costs associated with the lawsuit?
 Yes No
- 5) Do you want additional information about:
 Forest Lawsuit County's joint-use proposal
 If so, include your name, address and phone number.
- 6) Comments? Please include them on a separate sheet of paper.

please cut along line

1999 Dues & Donations

To help with costs (including newsletters to more than 8,000 alums and former teachers — and growing), we ask you to join the Cleveland High School Alumni Association. Dues are \$5 a year.

Make checks payable to:
CLEVELAND HIGH SCHOOL ALUMNI ASSOCIATION, P.O. BOX 50294, BELLEVUE, WA 98015-5294

_____ PAYMENT OF 1999 MEMBERSHIP DUES AT \$5 EACH (PER YEAR).....	\$ _____
_____ DONATION TOWARD CHS SCHOLARSHIP FUND.....	\$ _____
_____ DONATION TOWARD CHS ALUMNI ASSOCIATION.....	\$ _____
_____ DONATION TOWARD CHSAA EAGLE 100 CLUB..... <small>(The alumni association is not affiliated with the school's football program.)</small>	\$ _____
TOTAL CHECK ENCLOSED...	\$ _____

FIRST, (MAIDEN), LAST NAME _____

SPOUSE _____

ADDRESS (CITY, STATE, ZIP CODE) _____

PHONE NO. () _____ YEAR OF GRADUATION/ATTENDANCE _____

E-MAIL _____ I AM INTERESTED IN SERVING ON THE CHSAA BOARD

❖ Reunions ❖

Class of '49

(Classes of '48-'52 are invited.)

Wednesday, Sept. 15

Newcastle Golf Club

1 to 5 p.m.

\$45 per person

Luncheon, entertainment

Contacts:

Don Isaacson (360) 321-4903

Don Mustello (206) 932-2010

Joel Rindal (425) 746-1871

Gerl Elefson (360) 435-2424

Class of '54

Saturday, Aug. 21

Seattle Design Center Atrium

5701 Sixth Ave. S.

7 p.m.

Drinks and hors d'oeuvres

\$50 per couple

Sunday, Aug. 22

Renton Lions Club Park

Hamburgers, hot dogs, soda

and games; potluck dessert

Contacts:

Richard Ranta (425) 747-6500

Len Fugelstad (206) 283-4948

Class of '56

(Classes of '55 and '57 invited.)

Sunday, Aug. 22

Woodland Park Shelter No. 7

N. 59th St. and Aurora Ave. N.

11 a.m.

Potluck picnic, 2 p.m.

Bring utensils, beverages

Contact:

JoAnn (Victor) Smith,

(425) 487-3952,

or e-mail Kesmitty@aol.com

Class of '57

Saturday, Aug. 14

Tukwila Community Center

12424 42nd Ave. S.

3 p.m.

\$39.60/person; \$75/couple

Contact:

Bernie Moskowitz

(206) 772-6285

Class of '79

Friday, Sept. 10

(Alumni's families invited.)

TLC Skating Center in Kent

Saturday, Sept. 11

Latitude 47 on Lake Union

1232 Westlake Ave. N.

\$40/person; \$80/couple

Contacts:

Jill Hashimoto (206) 628-2111

Ernie Dolan (425) 487-9484,

Ext. 103,

or e-mail ernied@captura.com

❖ Memorials ❖

The following individuals have made contributions to the Cleveland High School Alumni Association to provide scholarships and financial assistance to deserving Cleveland students:

In memory of Herbert (Toby) Holm

From Nellie Stensen Holm '34

In memory of Art Furtwangler '41

From Christine Huber Grubescic '36

In memory of Norma Jean Sims Kroon '56

From Ellen Sims Wankowski '52

In memory of Carol Tarp Nist '35

From Gene Nist

In memory of Palmer Smith '37

From Clarence Smith '39

In memory of Richard Oertli

From Margie Wallrof McGinnis

In honor of Betty (Young) Robinson & Bill Robinson's

50th wedding anniversary

From Mary (Jylha) Stuard and Margaret (Jylha) Berre

The alumni association is looking for a technician willing to develop and maintain — or teach someone else to maintain — a web site for the association. To volunteer, contact any of the officers.

CLEVELAND HIGH SCHOOL ALUMNI ASSOCIATION

A nonprofit organization, Washington and United States 501(c)(3), founded for the exclusive purpose of: (1) preserving the Cleveland Memorial Forest as a memorial in perpetuity to those Cleveland students who gave their lives in the service of the USA, (2) supporting the educational uses in forestry, ecology, botany and environmental studies of the forest, and (3) supporting and assisting the students and staff of Cleveland High School in Seattle, Wash., in their educational endeavors.

Any individual who has attended Grover Cleveland Junior or Senior High School is entitled to be a member of the alumni association.

CLEVELAND HIGH SCHOOL
ALUMNI ASSOCIATION
P.O. Box 50294
Bellevue, WA 98015-5294

**Bulk Rate
U.S. Postage
PAID
Permit No. 6842
Seattle, WA**

Please help us to keep the database current by sending a post office change-of-address form or contact the alumni secretary when you move. In order to protect privacy the list of memberships will not be distributed to anyone unless it is used specifically for the purposes of class reunions or other such gatherings.

In the next issue:

- Eagle 100 Club members
- CHSAA scholarship recipients
- Summer forest program