Cleveland Memorial Forest celebrates 60th anniversary

By Don Duncan '43

W hen students and alumni gather at the Cleveland Memorial Forest for this year's Memorial Day observance at 11 a.m. Friday, May 28, there will be special significance in the event. This year marks the 60th anniversary of the forest's existence as a living memorial to those Cleveland alums who paid the ultimate price in this nation's wars — from World War II through today's war on terror.

The No. 60 had special meaning for those who grew up before or during World War II. Back then, "going like 60," was to drive at true break-neck speed, and those who lived to be 60 were expected to adopt a rocking chair and shawl, like Whistler's mother.

So happy 60th birthday, Cleveland Memorial Forest!

T here will be no tests, but here's a brief history lesson. Back in 1943, when our nation was fighting wars across the Atlantic and Pacific oceans, Cleveland's Class of '43 collected money for the traditional senior-class gift to the school. But it couldn't decide what to spend it on.

The following year's class ('44) would have no such problem. After collecting money for its own gift, it was suggested that the money from the Classes of '43 and '44 be combined to purchase a "living memorial" to those alumni dying on the battlefields of World War II.

Then-Cleveland High School vice principal Ray K. Imus showed up at the county courthouse for a property auction with a check for $300 in his pocket. He bid on a 131-acre tract just north of the little town of Issaquah. Speculators who might have entered the bidding and raised the price far beyond Imus' means graciously declined to bid.

Cleveland had its land. It also had a dream: to develop the forest into a nature preserve the school could share with students throughout the Seattle area.

Alas, reality intruded on the dream. One year after acquiring the property, principal Kenneth Selby decided that managing a large piece of timberland was more than one school could handle. He signed the property over to the Seattle School District.

The marriage between school and school district was what, before the 1900s, would have been called "a marriage of convenience." And the school district's attitude toward the forest could best be described as "benign neglect."

But, in truth, Cleveland's students and faculty didn't do much better. Most of the trail-clearing and repair of the forest's portable buildings over the years was done by Garfield High School students under the direction of science teacher Tom Hudson '60.

Time, weather and vandalism took their toll. And while trail-clearing was nice, it hardly matched the greater lessons that could be taught in a 131-acre classroom that had a creek wandering through its thick stands of hemlock, alder and fir.

Alumni were finally galvanized into action in the early 1990s, when rumors circulated that the school district might consider selling off the Memorial Forest, whose land and timber were now worth millions of dollars. Although the school board insisted it had no intention of selling the forest, skeptical alumni rallied to "save our forest."

In a show of good faith, the school district rededicated the forest in August 1995 as an Environmental Education Center. The effort was spearheaded by school-board president Linda Harris and school-board member Ellen Roe. The rededication was the first event attended by the school district's dynamic new superintendent, John Sanford.

Thanks to a $155,000 Urban Resources grant from the U.S. Department of Agriculture, the

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Cleveland spirit remains strong in ever-changing Forest

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school district, in '95, also began restoring some of the forest's dilapidated facilities. Still, the sole user of the forest that year was not Cleveland High School students, but those from Hudson's Garfield High School science classes.

With alumni showing renewed interest in both the forest and their old school, the dormant Alumni Association was reactivated in 1996, with Don Clifford '44 as president.

One of Clifford's major goals was to obtain on-site housing for a forest caretaker. He also saw establishment of an Oversight Committee to work with the school board toward improving the forest's facilities while Cleveland's interests.

The following year saw Cleveland hit the jackpot. It observed its 70th birthday with a day-long party that included a re-creation of the famous "Walk Up the Hill" from Georgetown by students and faculty (in 1927), a moving flag ceremony, chat rooms throughout the school and a standing-room only assembly.

The latter featured the Kings of Swing, a still-active swing band started at Cleveland in the mid-40s, and appearances by Superintendent Stanford, former middle-weight boxing champion Al Hostak and members of the Johnny Cherberg-coached football team that won the city championship in 1937.

Also in 1997, Don Case '48, who succeeded Clifford as the Alumni Association president, worked with Clifford to institute an alumni-student memorial observance trek to the forest.

Thanks to school-board member Ellen Roe, district buses transported students and alumni to the forest. A highlight of each trek is a walk to the Memorial Rock, whose plaques contain the names of Cleveland's war dead. The plaques have been updated each year by alumni Roy and Lois Allen Olson. Roy passed away this past year.

When it appeared the trek might be abandoned a few years ago, Alison Sing '64, the Alumni Association's current president, made sure it would live on.

At the 2002 Memorial Day Trek, family and friends of James Rohlatter, a member of the '37 football team, presented a memorial flagpole to the forest. Attending were several members of the Rohlatter and Cherberg families, the '37 football team and retired Chief Les Koehler, a Navy veteran who has been a prisoner of war with Rohlatter. Koehler came from New York to attend the dedication ceremony.

The flag was special, too, having been obtained by U.S. Sen. Patty Murray after being flown over the Capitol. It was presented to Rohlatter's widow, Karlyne Miller Rohlatter '46, by a Veteran of Foreign Wars Honor Guard member.

"Taps" were sounded by Bernie Moskowitz '57.

Cleveland has been far from forgotten by the school district in recent years. In 1998, when Linda Harris was awarded $30,000 by Safeco in recognition of her efforts on behalf of the school district, Harris earmarked the money for Cleveland's Memorial Forest, to be administered through the Oversight Committee.

Just last year, Don Case, as treasurer of the Oversight Committee, spent the last of the Safeco money — along with a $3,000 donation by the Alumni Association — to refurbish the caretaker's cabin in time for the 2003 Memorial Day Trek.

Tim Steedman, on-site caretaker since 2003, is a graduate of Garfield High School, where he was president of the Science Club and active in Boy Scout Explorer Post 84. He is currently a student at Bellevue Community College and lives full time at the forest.

Over the years, the forest has received the support of three school board presidents — Harris, Roe and Barbara Schaad-Lampire — all of whom have served on the Oversight Committee. Largely through Schaad-Lampire's efforts, $250,000 has been earmarked for the forest from the Seattle School District's 2004 bond issue.

Top priority items now are a new lodge to replace the open-air meeting site that burned down several years ago, restrooms and a permanent caretakers building. And, of course, ongoing trail work, as this winter's wind and ice storms toppled an estimated 200 trees.

A lot of changes have occurred at the Memorial Forest in the last six decades. "Little" Issaquah is now a prime example of suburban sprawl. A King County park abuts the forest. And a canopy of the second-growth evergreens blows out the sun on all but the sunniest days.

This year's Trek chairman is Pat Coluccio '47. It promises to be a special event — from the opening prayer to the final note of "Taps" echoing through your very own forest.
2004 Contributions

To help with costs (including newsletters to more than 8,000 alumni and former teachers — and growing), we ask you to join the Cleveland High School Alumni Association. A suggested donation of $5 per year is requested.

Make checks payable to CLEVELAND HIGH SCHOOL ALUMNI ASSOCIATION, P.O. BOX 94004, SEATTLE, WA 98124-9404

☐ SUGGESTED DONATION OF $5 EACH FOR MAILINGS $ ____________

☐ DONATION TOWARD CHS ALUMNI ASSOCIATION (check appropriate box and indicate amount)

☐ MEMORIAL FOREST FUND $ ____________

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MEMBER NO. 1 [FIRST, (MAIDEN), LAST] ________________________________ CLASS ____________

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PHONE NO. ( ) ________________ E-MAIL ___________________________________

☐ I AM INTERESTED IN SERVING ON A CHSAA COMMITTEE (indicate committee) ___________________________________

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In remembrance

The Cleveland High School Alumni Association remembers our fellow alumni who have passed away.

2003

Irma Tarp Guidi ’28
Enrico Galliano ’32
Margaret Schuehle Smith ’33
Edward A. Frangello ’35
Harold Pavone ’37
Bayne Lamb ’38
Murdock Blakesley ’39
Frances Wilson ’39
Barbara Jean Hilliker ’41
Virginia Williams Orcutt ’42
Rudy Corwin ’43
Jean Gilbertson ’44
Mary Jean Haugen Cook ’46
Gordon E. McKay ’46
Shirley Douglas Raggio ’46
Martha A.P. Roberts Wiley ’47
Charlene Geisert ’49
Don Mustello ’49
Norman “Mickey” McKay ’52
Al Reid ’53
Phyllis A. Walker Danson ’56
Charles Illes ’57
Thomas Kubota ’57

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Honorariums

In honor of George Fullenwider ’65 from Stella Frank Drayer ’51 and Teresa Fullenwider, for the Scholarship and Memorial Forest funds.

In memory of Al Ferrier ’49 from Loretta Holmes Ferrier Ward

In memory of Patricia Robinson Roberts ’43 from Carol Robinson Martin ’48 and Marion Robinson Martin ’44 for the Cleveland Memorial Funds.

In memory of Tom Kubota ’57 from Ed Haarmann ’57 and Kay Phillips Haarmann ’57.

In memory of Ellis and Virginia (Bert) Roscoe ’38 from Kazuko (Kumi) Bill ’38.

In memory of Roy Olson ’45 from Margaret Jolicoire Bert ’45, for the Scholarship, Memorial Forest and general funds.

In honor of George Weidum from Catherine Keersmaeker Weidum ’40, for their 60th anniversary.
CLEVELAND HIGH SCHOOL
ALUMNI ASSOCIATION
P.O. Box 94004
Seattle, WA 98124-9404

A nonprofit organization, Washington and
United States 501(c)(3), founded for the
exclusive purposes 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 United
States of America, (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 purposes.

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

Please help us to keep the database
current by sending a post office change-of-address form or contact the membership
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.

UPCOMING events

MAY
22 CHSAA annual meeting/board elections, 10 a.m.-noon
@ CHS (send board nominations to Tracy Case Arnold,
teach82@hmsmail.com)
28 Memorial Day observance @ Cleveland Memorial Forest,
Issaquah, 11 a.m.-2 p.m.
Bus transportation from CHS available
Contact: Pat Coluccio, (253) 852-4229 or
p.coluccio@comcast.net

JUNE
5 CHSAA board retreat, 10 a.m.-3 p.m. @ Fort Lewis Golf
Course

AUGUST
6 CHSAA Golf Scramble, 1-9 p.m. @ Fort Lewis Golf Course
Contact: John Christiansen, (360) 493-1440 or
jleeg@attbi.com
14 Class of 1964 reunion
Museum of Flight, 9404 E. Marginal Way S., Seattle
Free admission, 5-6 p.m.
Catered dinner, 7 p.m. ($60/person by June 15;
$80/person thereafter)
Contact: John Christiansen, (360) 493-1440 or
jleeg@attbi.com or Mimi (Scott) Iwami, (206) 328-0688
or m.iwami@juno.com
■ Beacon Hill Grade School all-years reunion
Contact: Jane Anderson Evanoff, (206) 232-3646 or
Pat Coluccio, (253) 852-4229 or p.coluccio@comcast.net

SEPTEMBER
11 Class of 1954 reunion
Glen Acres Golf & Country Club, Burien
No-host bar, 5:30 p.m.; surf & turf dinner, 6:30 p.m.
($35/person)
Contact: John & Mary Lou (Zarkades) Barton,
(425) 432-9592 or burgart1@worldnet.att.net

OCTOBER
2 CHSAA board meeting, 10 a.m.-noon @ CHS
15 Deadline for submissions to CHSAA fall newsletter
Contact: Vera Chan-Pool ’91, VC@emcham@comcast.net

NOVEMBER
11 Veterans Day observance @ Cleveland Memorial Forest,
Issaquah, 11 a.m.-2 p.m. (details forthcoming)
20 CHSAA board meeting, 10 a.m. @ CHS

DECEMBER
15 Deadline for submissions to CHSAA winter newsletter
Contact: Vera Chan-Pool ’91, VC@emcham@comcast.net

OPEN
■ Classes of 1930s reunion
Contact: JoAnn Smith, (425) 487-3952 or
chsaag56@comcast.com
■ Class of 1955 reunion
Contact: Betty Stewart, via Classmates.com e-mail
■ Class of 1984 reunion
Contact: Dottie Chin, (206) 940-2686 or d5172@yahoo.com