

THE 1955 TROJAN Alumni PRINTS

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1950 Blizzard Bowl

Do you remember the "Great Blizzard" of 1950? I was in the eighth grade at Woodrow Wilson Elementary School that winter. The last week of November saw a blustery cold front all across Ohio and the Midwest that dumped large amounts of snow on the Portsmouth area.

Starting on Friday, November 24, Scioto County was hit with temperatures reaching in the low teens. After nearly two days of frigid temperatures, ice and snow began to terrorize the area.

According to the Portsmouth Times, virtually all roads were covered with ice. On top of that, a blanket of thick snow had fallen across the region. Although there were no accurate estimates, the newspaper reported that nearly 20 inches of snow fell in a period of three days.

"The area has been all but paralyzed by the blizzard," the Times reported. "The massive amount of snow has led to a significant shutdown of the city and county."

Because of the paralysis of transportation, most of the area's industries were at a stand still. Only a few departments at the steel plant and the Norfolk & Western Railway were in operation. All of the local schools, businesses, and government offices were shut down for several days.

The newspaper reported that at least three deaths were attributed to the blizzard. One man from Pike County died after freezing in his stalled car; another man died after his tractor slipped off an icy road and crushed him; and a third man died from a heart attack after shoveling snow and then attempting to separate two fighting dogs.

You might also remember that on Saturday, November 25, 1950, the Ohio State University football Buckeyes were scheduled to play against the University of Michigan Wolverines at Ohio Stadium in Columbus. This is remembered by many as "The Blizzard Bowl." By 10:00 a.m. that Saturday, the stadium looked like a scene from Admiral Bryd's Polar Expedition. More than 82,000 tickets had been sold, but only about 50,000 brave fans showed up. Not many stayed to the end.

The game was scheduled to start at 2:00 p.m. but it was 20 minutes late getting started due to the ground crew having great difficulty removing the tarpaulin, which had been left on the field until nearly noon. The snow-covered tarp, valued at \$3,000, was cut to shreds to facilitate removal. Boy Scouts, spectators, and game officials joined the ground crew which was forced to use a road grader with little success.

Meanwhile the rival athletic directors, Richard Larkins of OSU and Fritz Crisler of UM, debated what to do: cancel, postpone, or play. Since Larkins was the home boss, it was his decision. When he and Crisler were unable to contact the Big Ten Commissioner, Larkins said, "let's play." It would be a great day for second-guessers.

The first scoring play put Ohio State ahead 3 to 0. With wind, snow, sleet, and numb hands as handicaps, Vic Janowicz kicked a field goal from the 28-yard line. Shortly afterwards, also in the first period, Janowicz cleared a spot in the end zone in an effort to punt out, but the kick was blocked and rolled out-of-bounds for a safety.

Then the game-breaker occurred, a play that has caused over fifty years of discussion. With the ball in possession of the Buckeyes on their own 12-yard line and 40 seconds left to play in the half, Janowicz attempted to punt. The ball was blocked by Michigan and recovered by the Wolverines for a touchdown. The extra point was good.

Desperation passing occupied the second half, and neither team came close to scoring. The statistics defied reason. Michigan won without making a first down and gained only 27 yards on the ground. OSU gained 16. There were 45 punts, a Big Ten record. Janowicz kicked 21 times for a 32-yard average, but two blocked punts cost Ohio State 9 points. Final score: UM 9, OSU 3!

So the game that many said should not have been played was played, and the Buckeyes again lost to Michigan. OSU's coach, Wesley Fesler, who objected to starting the game in the first place, had failed to beat the Wolverines in four tries. He resigned as head coach on December 9, 1950.

Woody Hayes was hired to replace Fesler.

Blaine Bierley



Donna and Larry Boren with Judy Cramer Litteral at the Greenbrier Resort, White Sulphur Springs, WVA this past Christmas.

Pondering The Fate of Our High School Building

A discovery center, a performing arts center and theater, business offices, a youth center. Those are some of the suggestions from groups and individuals for use of the Portsmouth High School building after the student body and faculty moved across the street into a new high school now under construction.

The PHS Utilization Committee pored over proposals and listened as several presenters made their cases at a third and final public forum on the matter Tuesday night in the PHS cafeteria.

The Portsmouth City Board of Education is trying to decide what the public wants it to do with the 92-year-old building and find a project that would be feasible. The committee of community members will provide a recommendation to the board in a future board meeting.

In reading the proposals, one thing seemed certain: It will be sad to see the building leveled. When the cost of maintenance, insurance, utilities or renovations was discussed, along with various groups' funding resources and plans for sustainability, it seemed likely that will be the ultimate fate of the building. It was sad to see another school in the city district, Lincoln, leveled by bulldozers last year to make way for a new cancer center, said the Rev. Stanley Webster, a member of the committee. "It was painful for me to see Lincoln, once it closed with windows broken out, vandalized, graffiti painted all over," Webster said. "To see Portsmouth High School not what it was would be emotionally depressing on this community, and I personally would rather experience the pain of respectful demolition."

He said a monument to the school or a model of it placed in the new school could "better honor what's gone on here" than leaving the building stand and watching it slowly die from lack of maintenance.

Also to be considered is the cost of asbestos removal in ceiling and floor tiles if the building is used for some particular uses. Committee member Ralph Applegate said that could cost as much as \$1.4 million to \$1.8 million. The school was "grandfathered" in under the earlier codes covering asbestos, said committee member Skip Hickman, but a new owner of the building would answer to new codes.

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Email change

My email address has been changed from bhevergreen@aol.com to bhevergreen@wisptel.net.

Betty Bierley Hollings

Paid Your Dues Yet?

If you have not, please take a moment and send your \$5 to Gene Lucas.

Obit - Donald Boehm

Donna Boehm's (PHS Class of 1956) father, Donald, 89, died Sunday, January 25, at Southern Ohio Medical Center. A native of Portsmouth, he was born Nov. 8, 1914, to the late, Louis Boehm and Mae James Boehm. Don owned and operated Don's Market on Timmonds Avenue for 53-years and was part owner of Lake Margaret for several years. For many years, he was also an active participant in Portsmouth Little Theater.

A special word about Donald Boehm... I knew Don from when I was about eleven years old... that was when I began to explore my town on my hand-me-down Hawthorne bicycle.

I lived at 1227 McConnell Ave., Portsmouth, and my dear aunt and uncle, Bob and Hazel Cullen, lived at 1913 17th Street, directly across from the Mound Park tennis courts. The word avuncular means uncle-like, and has a pleasant connotation, as most uncles are sweet and kind to young kinfolk. Well, Bob Cullen epitomized that word and all its wonderful meanings. He was funny, generous, and a special friend to all his nieces and nephews, especially me. I became their yard-boy, and general all-around pest during those halcyon days of summer, during the forties and fifties.

I'd spend my days at Mound Park, and whenever I tired of flying June Bugs at the end of thread, or tired of the game of Mumbly Peg, and wanted a bottle of pop, or a cold drink of water,

I always knew I could count on my Aunt Hazel and Uncle Bob to provide.

During most of the years they lived on 17th Street, they were faithful customers of Don's Market. I can remember many days when Don would park his sleek sedan in their back garage driveway and come whistling up to the back door with a box load of groceries in his arms. Don was a tall, thin handsome man with thinning dark hair combed back on his head. He was always pleasant and wore a tie, in the fashion of the day, or at least a white business shirt, with grocer's white apron to below his knees.

Don's store was on the corner of 19th and Timmonds in those days; he later moved one block up to the corner of 20th and Timmonds. Don's was typical of small "corner groceries" of the day, and there were a lot of them in Portsmouth at that time. Now, all we have left in Portsmouth is one super market, after the closing of Foodland, and one "corner store", if you consider Goodwin's Market at Kinney's Lane and Offnere. Yes, we've got a Kroger Super Store, but it is so damned big, one hates to have to run in for a quick something to fix for evening supper.

I miss the corner grocery stores, and Don Boehm's death, just brings that fact home to me. In 1952 there were one hundred and fifty two (152) "Grocers and Meats-Retail" listed in the Portsmouth City Directory. A few of the names we all remember are: Adkins; Aeh; Arthur; Ashe;

Barr; Bond; Brady; Cobb; Cole; Coleman; Colvin; Covert; Curnutte; Daulton Brothers; Davisson; DeLotell; Dunn; Fields; France; Freytag; Gemperline; Herrmann; Horton; Knost; Literal; Massie; Mucha; Miller; Ramey; Schaefer; Schomburg; Schoonover; Semones; Slattery; Staker; Stephenson; Stewart; Stone; Vaughn; Vice; Watkins; Wedebrook; Wendelken; Williams.

I've had dreams about walking into Brady's Grocery, at Robinson and Clay Streets, and smelling the same sweet odors, and tasting the same sweet tastes. I had a dream once that Earl Wendelken's grocery at Grandview and Grant Streets, was still open, and he told me, "I hear you are interested in collecting arrowheads!" " And, when I replied "yes," he pulled a cigar box from under his counter, and gave it to me, crammed with perfect little bird points, and arrowheads of all kinds. Alas, it was only a dream, and a little incongruous at that. What a sweet old man, Earl Wendelken!

Did you ever lunch at Wedebrook's Market on Clay Street? He kept the best sausages simmering on his heating stove, and for a real cheap price, he'd slather up a piece of bread with mustard and make you a sandwich to remember.

I'm just glad I was able to spend an evening with Donna Boehm at the 2002 reunion of the classes of 1956-57, and was able to discuss our days when Don Boehm was in his prime of life.

Jim Kegley

Florida 2004 Picnic These were the people we were able to find and all except 2 did contact us to say they were coming for one reason or the other. The group was small but we had a great time. Our thanks to Lois who really worked (and cooked) beyond all reason to put this together. We are looking forward to the next one and perhaps more PHS people will attend.

Bill Hilderbrand, John Lee, Mary Thomas Hamilton, Vicki Hawley and sister Diana, Sue Gammon Morgan, John Stetzinger, Lou Ann Kerr Baker, Donna McFarland Harris, Bob and Nancy Otworth, Jerry Gillen, Connie Smith Enlow, Shirley Perry White, Tom DuPuy, John Pendleton, Jenny Lyon Salzman, Linda Boorman King, Larry Russell, Tom Dressler, John Hayes, Carolyn Spark Skelton, Nancy Witten Dancer, Jerry Chapman, Tom Armstrong, Homer Adams, Gaylord and Mary Ellen Kennedy, Michael Crager, Clarence Kline.



Shirley Perry White



John Stetzinger



Kneeling: Don Wallace ('54), Frank Hunter. Standing: Barbara Vogel Clark ('56), Carolyn Sparks Skelton, in back of her, Emogene Prise Grenville ('56), Ron Lowe and Norma Lyon Lowe, Lois Beck Wallace ('56), Sue Gammon Morgan ('56) (she insisted on standing in front for once in her life), Annette Crager (Mike's wife), Mike Crager, Shirley Perry White, John Stetzinger. Several spouses also were in attendance.



Michael Crager, Ron Lowe, Norma Lyon Lowe.



Frank Hunter, "Jean" Prise, Carolyn Sparks.



Clarence Kline (class of 47), "Jean" Prise, Barbara Vogel .

Industrial Arts

In both the seventh and eighth grades at Woodrow Wilson Elementary School in Portsmouth the boys were required to take Industrial Arts. Likewise, the girls were required to take Home Economics.

For the life of me, I cannot remember my Industrial Arts teachers' names. (Tolley? ed) In the seventh grade we had an older man who must have been nearing retirement age. He must have retired at the end of the 1949-1950 school year because we had a fresh, young teacher in 1950-1951 in the eighth grade.

I had mixed emotions about taking Industrial Arts. I didn't know much about tools and wasn't very handy around the house. I guess the fact that I hadn't had a father around since mine died when I was in the fifth grade put me at a disadvantage with many of the guys in my class.

Our Industrial Arts class was strictly wood-working for both years. The Wilson girls, by contrast, took sewing in the seventh grade and cooking in the eighth. Our classroom was in the basement on the south-east corner of the building, just down the hall from the large boys' restroom and the furnace room-where we sometimes were sent by our teachers to clean blackboard erasers.

The curriculum was somewhat structured. We started by learning the names and functions of all the tools in the shop. We practiced using things that I had never handled, like a carpenter's plane and a miter box. From then on, you developed your woodworking skills by working on individual projects-starting with very simple ones like a rabbit door stop or a broom holder. I remember that our seventh grade teacher was very big on sanding. Every project had to be sanded multiple times before it was approved for staining. Every article we made, it seemed, was stained mahogany. That was the only color stain available. I thought perhaps the Portsmouth School Board had purchased hundreds of gallons of mahogany stain at a bargain price. After staining, the project was shellacked. After shellacking, you had to smooth your masterpiece by thoroughly rubbing it down with steel wool. This process (shellack and steel wool) had to be done about three times before the teacher deemed it acceptably finished and ready for final evaluation.

As far as evaluation was concerned, the teacher was pretty tough. I can't remember any of my projects ever earning a higher grade than a "C"-probably a true testament to my real woodworking skills. Although, my mother always thought that my projects were "beautiful" when I brought them home. I even had the audacity to give her a "C" grade-little table I made for Christmas one year.

By the time we were in the eighth grade some of the more talented fellows had progressed to more advanced projects. I can still remember my astonishment when the teacher approved Ardee Master's proposal to build a row boat to use on the Ohio River for fishing. As I recall, the most advanced project I ever was allowed to make was a coat rack. It took me about three months to finish it. I stained it mahogany. I got a "C".

Blaine Bierley



Mary Ann Hamilton Mowery, Patty Conklin Newsome, Mary Thomas Hamilton and Gwen Mowery Johnson on their Caribbean cruise aboard the Carnival Cruise Lines "Inspiration" to Grand Cayman, Costa Maya, Cozumel and Belize this past November.

Woodshop

I still have a treasure chest that I made in the 8th grade at Grant. I lost the lid somewhere in one of my many moves since then but I still use the chest for tools in the garage. My wife has asked me many times why I don't throw it away but I can't bring myself to part with it. I worked the whole 8th grade on that box. I was also in Miss DuPuy's trig class, but I'm younger than Bogie so I was there the following year. We also used the "birthday thing" to have parties in her room every once in awhile, but the thing I remember most in her room was getting a group around her desk to ask questions about a problem, then opening the window in the back of the room and sharing a cigarette and blowing the smoke out the window. She pretended not to notice.

Tom Armstrong (PHS 1956)

Barbara Robinson

Wilson School

I was intrigued to read Jim Kegley's column in the January 1, 2004, issue of The Scioto Voice newspaper about Barbara Robinson, the children's book author who grew up in Portsmouth and graduated from PHS in 1944.

I checked her Web Site <http://usawrites4kids.drury.edu/authors/robinson/> and got some interesting information.

Probably her best remembered book is The Best Christmas Pageant Ever, which was produced as an ABC television program in 1983. I checked out her sequel, The Best School Year Ever (1994), at my local library and discovered that it is a fictional account about kids who attended Woodrow Wilson School! Since I went to Wilson for eight years (1943-1951) that really caught my interest.

My wife, Carolyn Rayburn Bierley (PHS-class of 1958), who is also a Wilson graduate, reminded me that Barbara Robinson's mother was Grace Webb, who taught at Wilson for many years. I believe she took the place of Helen Feeser when she retired. Carolyn had Mrs. Webb in the sixth grade.

The Best School Year Ever is very funny. It tells about the Herdman kids (Gladys, Ollie, Claude, Leroy, Imogene, and Ralph--just about one kid in every grade) who cause hilarious mayhem all the year around at Wilson.

What struck me as especially interesting about Mrs. Robinson's story were the names of the children. They seemed so familiar, so Portsmouth-sounding, like the real names of the kids we grew up with. See if some of these names don't take you back to Woodrow Wilson school: Junior Jacobs, Alice Wendleken, Albert Pelfrey, Louella McCluskey, Eugene Preston, Betty Lou Sampson, Bernice Potts, Kenneth Weaver, Bernadette Slocum, Lester Yeagle, Gloria Coburn, Maxine Cooper, Eloise Albright, Thelma Bradley, Lonnie Hutchison, Boyd Liggett, LaVerne Morgan, and Joanne Turner.

Blaine Bierley



Here is an architects rendering of the new bridge which will replace the US Grant.

PHS Building cont.

City Schools Superintendent Jan Broughton said the board, once the new building is open, cannot spend any money whatsoever in utilizing or maintaining the old building for educational purposes.

The board can, however, receive from the state 80 percent of the cost of razing the building. "We have not even asked the state for that, because we first wanted to see what options for the building can be found," Broughton said. "Our goal was to find a use for it, still is."

The project at issue includes the four-story main building, a one-story auxiliary built in 1940 and a one-story addition built in 1963. Together they cover 172,000 square feet of floor space. The cost of utilities and insurance last year was \$125,290, with just gas and electric bills accounting for about \$84,000 of that.

The most lengthy utilization proposal for the building presented Thursday came from James T. Hayes, artistic director of Unicorn Players Inc., and Lori Tipton, artistic director of Sciotoville Theater Project, both of Portsmouth. They spoke to the committee concerning their five-page proposal for a performing arts center/theater to be located in the building.

Performing arts companies would inhabit a large portion of the first floor of the building, claiming the auditorium, classroom space behind it, lobby area, bathrooms and office space, as well as the auxiliary building, which would serve as a scene shop.

The additional office spaces would be utilized by other nonprofit groups from throughout Portsmouth and Scioto County. They presented an estimated budget and expenses totaling \$90,000 a year, with box office revenue estimated at \$48,000. Stephanie Phillips, in a written proposal, suggested the building be used for office space. "The school system could make a lot of money by renting the classrooms to local businesses," she wrote.

Committee member Neal Hatcher said there is office space available in downtown Portsmouth, as well as in the Boneyfiddle Area, but it is not being rented.

*G. Sam Piatt,
Portsmouth Daily Times Staff Writer*



Surely, you all remember this guy. We haven't seen him in ages. It's Charles McKelvey!!!

Geezers Now

"Hey Dad," one of my kids asked the other day, "What was your favorite fast food when you were growing up?" "We didn't have fast food when I was growing up," I informed him. "All the food was slow." "C'mon, seriously. Where did you eat?" "It was a place called 'at home,' I explained. "Grandma cooked every day and when Grandpa got home from work, we sat down together at the dining room table, and if I didn't like what she put on my plate I was allowed to sit there until I did like it."

By this time, the kid was laughing so hard I was afraid he was going to suffer serious internal damage, so I didn't tell him the part about how I had to have permission to leave the table. But here are some other things I would have told him about my childhood if I figured his system could have handled it:

Some parents never owned their own house, wore Levis, set foot on a golf course, traveled out of the country or had a credit card. In their later years they had something called a revolving charge card. The card was good only at Sears Roebuck. Or maybe it was Sears and Roebuck. Either way, there is no Roebuck anymore. Maybe he died.

My parents never drove me to soccer practice. This was mostly because we never had heard of soccer. I had a bicycle that weighed probably 50 pounds, and only had one speed, (slow). We didn't have a television in our house until I was 11, but my grandparents had one before that. It was, of course, black and white, but they bought a piece of colored plastic to cover the screen. The top third was blue, like the sky, and the bottom third was green, like grass. The middle third was red. It was perfect for programs that had scenes of fire trucks riding across someone's lawn on a sunny day. Some people had a lens taped to the front of the TV to make the picture look larger.

I was 13 before I tasted my first pizza; it was called "pizza pie." When I bit into it, I burned the roof of my mouth and the cheese slid off, swung down, plastered itself against my chin and burned that, too. It's still the best pizza I ever had.

We didn't have a car until I was 15. Before that, the only car in our family was my grandfather's Ford. He called it a "machine."

I never had a telephone in my room. The only phone in the house was in the living room and it was on a party line. Before you could dial, you had to listen and make sure some people you didn't know weren't already using the line.

Pizzas were not delivered to our home. But milk was. All newspapers were delivered by boys, and all boys delivered newspapers. I delivered newspaper, six days a week. It cost 7 cents a paper, of which I got to keep 2 cents. I had to get up at 4 am every morning. On Saturday, had to collect the 42 cents from my customers. My favorite customers were the ones who gave me 50 cents and told me to keep the change. My least favorite customers were the ones who seemed to never be home on collection day.

Movie stars kissed with their mouths shut. At least, they did in the movies. Touching someone

else's tongue with yours was called French kissing and they didn't do that in movies. I don't know what they did in French movies. French movies were dirty and we weren't allowed to see them.

Memories from a friend: My Dad is cleaning out my grandmother's house (she died in December) and he brought me an old Royal Crown Cola bottle. In the bottle top was a stopper with a bunch of holes in it. I knew immediately what it was, but my daughter had no idea. She thought they had tried to make it a salt shaker or something. I knew it as the bottle that sat on the end of the ironing board to "sprinkle" clothes with because we didn't have steam irons. Man, I am old.

Bob Mohl's View of PHS

BTW, proposals for the PHS building ran the gamut from a large tourism-oriented Sports Hall of Fame incorporating the entire structure, to proposals for parts of the building such as a drop-in center for kids in the girl's gym with cheap movies on weekends and dinner theatre in the 1963 section (boys gym).

The proposal to use the first floor as home base for a repertory and touring company was quite well-worked-out, with the T&I building serving as a 'scene shop' for set construction. The Discovery Center proposed for the upper floors would feature programming modeled after the Center for Science and Industry (COSI) and would multi-task as a regional arts and sciences magnet school.

It was poignant to have the conscientious PHS news class there with a neat variety of proposals. Not long into the evening, when it became clear that the board's intention, no matter what was presented, was to tear the place down, the newsclass advisor nearly walked the kids out of the room, but kept them there for the experience of doing presentations before a group.

Sam Piatt's piece is nicely diplomatic. Doesn't include the loud aside the board president was heard to make at the close of the meeting, to the effect that "I'm glad all this talking is finally over so we can apply for the 80% demolition funds."

The presenter of the Repertory Theatre project who's been doing successful repertory and childrens' theatre for a generation, raved about the perfection of the auditorium-and even when it surfaced that the board was going to say no to everything, he suggested in desperation that the demolishers might make their money by peeling the classrooms away and letting the auditorium stay. Not a Portsmouth native, he's the widower of Marian Hartley who was PHS librarian when we were there; he moved here after she died.

A Note from Gene

I wanted to let everyone know that Bill Clifford had back surgery at Riverside Hospital in Columbus. The surgery was successful and he expects to return home by this weekend.

I sent the last issue of the newsletter to Lowell Barton and it was returned to me. He has evidently returned to Thailand but I do not have his address there. If anyone has the address or his e-mail address, please let me know.

I want to wish everyone well in this New Year.

Gene Lucas