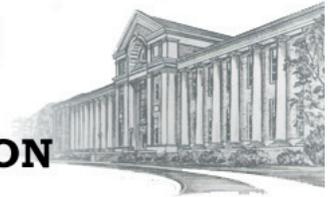




# THE WARRIOR ECHO

A Publication of The  
**FRESNO HIGH ALUMNI ASSOCIATION**



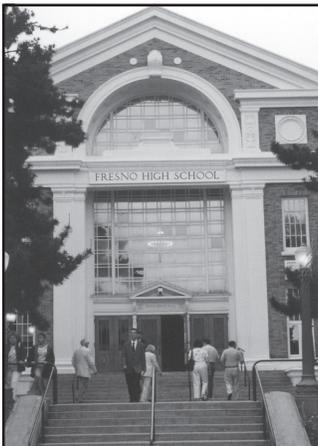
Volume 1

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This redesigned news-letter along with our smart comprehensive new website will highlight past, present and future endeavors and accomplishments of Fresno High School. You, too, can participate. Join the Alumni Association, send in your stories & photos for inclusion in the newsletter, and submit updated information to the website we'll tell you how in the pages of this newsletter.

Make plans to attend the All-Classes Alumni Dinner May 7, 2005. Dinner and mingling with new and old friends will take place on Echo Avenue when the street is closed to vehicular traffic. This event has grown every year since its inception.

We invite you to help celebrate a grand old school.



## Salvaging the Past For the Future

In 1971, when Dr. Peter Mehas, Fresno High School graduate class of '57 and at that time principal of Clovis High School, heard of the scheduled demolition of FHS's Palmer Hall, LeConte Hall and parts of Royce Hall due to failure to meet the Field Act that governs earthquake standards, he took action. Going before the Fresno Unified School District board, he

requested they reconsider the demolition.

It fell on deaf ears,  
said Mehas.

That's when a disappointed Mehas took matters into his own hands.

Mehas went to the FHS campus on a Friday, three days before the scheduled demolition where he took special notice of the distinctive friezes, decorative architectural panels designed into the buildings that were destined to be destroyed.

He asked the construction workers if he could have them. They replied they didn't have time to chisel them away before Monday's demolition. Mehas offered to buy the friezes but the offer didn't buy any more time.

Finally, Mehas asked if he could take them. The workers replied they could not authorize it because of liability...but that whatever he did when they weren't there was his own business.

Mehas borrowed a utility linesman's belt from a friend, and began the weekend task of salvaging the friezes. The work was time-consuming and the perch was precarious.

Where the friezes were, there was no platform,

confirmed Mehas. Mehas hung himself out a third-story window on Friday night about 5:30 p.m. and began hammering and chiseling around the concrete working on the four friezes until about 5:30 a.m. the following Monday. About halfway through the process, he was noticed.

One of the security guards, who happened to be a former student, came over.

I told him,

Quit gawking and get your ass over here and help.

Mehas kept the friezes in his mother's garage for 18 years before building them into his current northeast Fresno home in 1990. He had the friezes installed as custom inserts in his home, one above the fireplace, the other three above his front porch.

We always wonder why kids have no recollection of the past, but we tear everything down in the name of pro-gress.

The friezes are not the only pieces of FHS history that the current Superintendent of County Schools' has accumulated over the years. Mehas has more than 120 Owllet school

## Alumni Association

Fresno High School currently has a very active Alumni Association. Alumni and friends are invited to join the Association; your membership will help the Alumni provide needed support to the school so that it may continue to reflect the proud tradition, which began in 1886.

In the five years since it's inception, the alumni has been instrumental in getting the girls basketball court re-surfaced and improved the floors and bleachers in the gym. After the fire which occurred in October of 2000, the Alumni Association gave \$4,000 towards the renovation of the auditorium. It is also responsible for giving \$500 mini-grants to teachers to enrich and enhance their curriculum. Over the years, many scholarships have been handed out to those in need.

The largest function the Association presents is the annual all-alumni dinner. Last year on the fifth of May, the 1958 varsity baseball team was featured. Many of the team members went on to fantastic professional careers. **The 6<sup>th</sup> Annual All-Alumni Dinner is scheduled for Saturday, May 7, 2005**, at which time past principals of FHS will be honored. Keep your eye on the website for up-to-the minute information. Other funding raising events are in the planning stages. Check the website.

1958 All-Star  
Baseball Hon-  
orees



The Association has worked diligently in getting a website up and running. Take a look at the site [www.fresnohighalumni.com](http://www.fresnohighalumni.com). The web master is in the process of getting as much information about Fresno High on the site as possible. There are sections, by class year, of alumni who have been lost over the years, and those who are known to be deceased. You can view current events and many photos of days gone by. The site is evolving into a place where you can post memories and stories and help keep track of the many, many graduates of a high school that is coming around to the "School of Champions" it once was. The Association stands as a testament to the commitment of the great traditions of FHS by supporting students and staff.



Former FHS principals,  
Jeanne Contel, Art Miller

Send your name, address, telephone number, and year of graduation to FHS Alumni Association, P.O. Box 27516, Fresno, CA 93729 along with your donation. The following levels of contribution give you membership in the association, a semi-annual newsletter, a membership card, and the satisfaction of helping "The School of Champions."

Warrior level also confers a \$10 discount off the cost of the All-Alumni Dinner. The dinner is free to all "Chief" donors or above.

Current annual donation levels are:

Brave - \$25

Warrior - \$50

Chief - \$100 or more

A membership form is enclosed in this newsletter, or you can download the form from the website: [www.fresnohighalumni.com](http://www.fresnohighalumni.com).

Check out the opportunities to advertise your enterprise and help the Alumni at the same time. Ads on the website are available at this time as follows:

Purple/Gold: \$200 full banner

Gold: \$150 half banner

Purple: \$100 small size

If taken out now, you will be offered a second year at the same price.



—with  
the  
Snap,  
Ginger  
and  
Go  
that  
make  
them—

The  
Just  
Wright  
SHOE

Distinctly a Young Man's Shoe!

Just Wright shoes are held in high esteem by those young men who keep posted on the correct styles, and know on what materials Dame Fashion has set her stamp of approval.

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Ad display in the Fresno High School "Owl" dated January Nineteen Fourteen

## In the Days of the FHS Fraternities

from Gary Marsella, Ray Bradley, Ed Scarboro...

Some of us remember when there were sororities and fraternities at Fresno High during the 1940's. Though never officially sanctioned by the administration, the first men's fraternities were the Oxford and Cambridge. Some of us wanted to belong to a group but wanted to start our own group.

We gathered about 22-25 potential members, called ourselves DEX and met on Wednesday evenings at Neil Baird's meeting place over his garage. There was no initiation ceremony and we did not get involved with any hazing. We would have dinners at the Alhambra where Jack Pieroni's father worked. All of us would wear a coat and tie for the dinner. We did some crazy things like going over to visit the sorority meetings on Wednesdays after our meeting.

The Olive Inn was a favorite where a lady named Torchy was the waitress. Also dragging Fulton Street and going to La Barracca Club in Pine Dale to play pool and drink beer. The bartenders were Martin and Luther who told us to hide the beer in the rafters of the pool room if the authorities

showed up. Many smoked cigarettes and thought that they were tough

but mostly it was only for show. When the

DEX

club was getting started, Jack Mulkey met with some of the members and said he did not want the DEX to be a gang at FHS. I think that he was against our group but we rejected his advice. When one of the group entered the service he was required to list all organizations he belonged to. He listed the DEX fraternity. Several officers wanted more info because they had no record of such a group. FHS had no record of such a group either. It seems the issue died. They were probably looking for subversive



groups. There were never any drugs, no criminal activities and compared to the existing landscape, we were quite tame.

Two of the members have written and published books: Gary Marsella published *Please Don't Feed the Bears: Your Portfolio-Investment Strategies in an Uncertain Market*, covering his 40 years of experience with Morgan Stanley. Larry Huebner, who was a champion tennis player in high school, at UCLA, and later as a tennis professional has published *Whening Tennis: In Tennis, as in Life, Timing is Everything*.

*from Lloyd Evans...*

We used to meet each week, when school was in, above the garage at Neil Baird's home on Terrace. It was a great way to get out of the house on a week night. One Thanksgiving we decided to raise some money so raffled off a turkey. We sold tickets for 50 cents and thought we'd get in trouble but of course we did not after we put "donation" on the printed tickets.

Sometime during our senior year we had a big dinner at the Alhambra Restaurant owned by Orlando Pieroni. We all dressed up in suits and ties (I don't have any idea where I would have gotten a suit at that time). Our dinner was in a private room and I remember seeing a concealed door off this room into a room in the back where all types of cards and gambling took place. I remember two or three men went in and I caught a glimpse of the gambling going on. I was shaken up as I had never

### 2nd Annual "Dex" Dinner The Alhambra Inn - 1949

**Front Row:** Ray Bradley, Larry Huebner, Jim Wallace, Don Emery, Ed Scarboro, Don Smith, Lloyd Evans, Niel Baird.

**Back Row:** Jack Farrior, Gary Marsella, Lawrence Bolger, Allen Dick, Bob Wilkens, Jack Peroni, Don Withrow, Don Thuesen, Gene Egan, Mort Jacobs, Tom Caswell, Paul Easterbrook, Dwight Nielsen.

**Missing:** John Shelton.

seen anything like that.

As to the purpose of our club: it was strictly fraternal, a bunch of guys who liked each other. We didn't accomplish much no civic contribution, but it did produce a lasting bond on us all. Most of us have kept in contact over the years and continue to do so. Sadly, a few of us are gone but not forgotten.

*from Doug Scheid...*

Us "Cambridge Boys" would go to Luigi's after meetings and drink beer in the back room. When finished, we'd get in our cars and peel-out down Blackstone. On occasion Dick Smith, '53 class president, & I would drag-race down Blackstone. Where were the police back then? Things certainly were relaxed in those days. I has a '47 red Ford convertible and Dick a hot Mercury.

## PAGES FROM THE PAST

By Cathy  
Vernie  
Morison Rehart

I have been asked to write a column about Fresno High School history that will run in each issue of our alumni newsletter. I hope this will prove not only to be edifying, but enjoyable also.

Our school has a rich histo-

com-munity. Dirt streets, wooden side-walks, and frame buildings created a landscape that looked like the Dodge City of *Gun-smoke*. That wasn't the only similarity. When the village was only a month old, sixteen saloons and one dance hall were open for business. Families who lived at Millerton began moving to the new town on the valley floor. Others came also, but

near Tulare and M Streets. It was nicknamed the Pink School

because of the color it was painted.

By 1878, the city had grown so much that another school was needed. California's legislature authorized the school district to issue \$15,000 in bonds. The district hired contractors Frank and C.P. Peck to



ry one that provides an academic counterpoint to the Dodge City atmosphere of Fresno politics that existed until 1901. It may be argued that, in spite of the efforts of the reformers of the early 20th Century, city government has not changed that much, but that is not something that will be discussed here. This will be a place to look at the forces that caused our school to be established, and then to share stories from our school's past. Like all good stories, this one will begin at the beginning.

Fresno Station was established in April 1872, when the Central Pacific Railroad line reached a point that is today Tulare Street and the Union Pacific Rail line. The new town was a true Wild West

it wasn't until February of 1873 that anyone began to talk about opening a school for the eighty children who lived in Fresno. On February 5<sup>th</sup> of that year, a school district was formed, but the school bonds that were placed on the ballot failed to pass. Since there were no funds to build a school, a room over Booker's Store was rented and a teacher, Mary McKenzie, was hired. This became the one-room schoolhouse for the children of Fresno.

On August 29, 1874, a few months after Fresno became the seat of government for Fresno County, an election was held. As a result, the school district was reor-ganized and a school bond was finally passed. The vote was 48 to 2 to approve the \$4,000 that was used to construct Fresno's first school

design and build the new school. The site that was chosen was a small hill that, in 1872, the railroad had hoped would be the site for the Fresno County Courthouse. The citizens of the city asked for land at Mariposa and L Streets instead. Now the hill was the place for the Central School a white frame building that would become, next to the Courthouse, the most cherished building in the city.

Today, the Veteran's Memorial Auditorium is on this site. The new school opened in September 1879 and, by 1885, had reached its capacity of 400 students.

The citizens of Fresno had provided two schools for the young people of their city, But, a separate secondary school did not exist. The growing city needed such a facility

## JOHNNY RUSSELL

by JoAnn D'Ambrosio Woodward



At a time when every teenager was listening to Rock Around the Clock,

Blue Suede Shoes  
and  
The Stroll,

Johnny Russell, Fresno High class of 1958, was singing country music songs. Rock and roll music was almost the only music you heard on the radio and at the record stores, but Johnny had his own world that eventually would catapult him into becoming one of the most influential and successful country music performers of his time.

Johnny came to Fresno at the age of 11 from Sunflower County in Mississippi where he was born in 1940. He often appeared in assemblies during his years at FHS where he would present his favorite country music on his guitar and often would have the audience laughing wildly at his jokes. His most favorite phrase, Well, now, you just better not do that, was heard often through a huge grin, and put smiles on many faces.

Shortly after graduating from FHS, he recorded his first song, In a Mansion Stands My Love, which did not make it to any top ten lists, but it caught the attention of Chet Atkins who signed Jim Reeves to record the words written by Johnny. The song was the B-side of Reeve's He'll Have to Go.

The recording established

Johnny's reputation as a significant songwriter on the country music scene. Probably his most popular song was co-written with a member of the Buck Owens band and was a number-one hit on the country charts. Two years later, The Beatles recorded it and sold over 30 million copies...who could ever forget Act Naturally.

Although Johnny did not become a top recording artist, he was extremely influential as a writer. Some of the songs he wrote were:

Makin' Plans  
Dolly Parton,  
Got No reason Now for Going Home  
Gene Watson,  
Let's Fall to Pieces Together  
George Strait,  
You'll Be Back  
Statler Brothers and many more.  
The biggest recording he made was Rednecks, White Socks & Blue Ribbon Beer

in 1973 which finished in the top five.

He appeared on many TV shows, some of which were Hee Haw, Dinah Shore, Dean Martin Show, and almost



## WIN/LOSE

by Gary Becker

The resignation of Fresno High School football coach Ray Reyes, and the financial woes of the Fresno Unified School District have put the future of the FHS sports' programs in jeopardy.

Reyes, who guided his team to the school's first football championship season since 1971, cited health problems, stemming from coronary bypass surgery he underwent in August 2003, for his decision to retire.

Prior to coming to Fresno High, Reyes turned losing programs around at Parlier and Edison, but his two-year stint as the Warriors' head coach may have been the best effort of his career. His 2004 team posted the school's first winning season since 1977, and finished with a second place in the section finals. However, the elimination of all athletic and extracurricular programs at the city's high schools may be a real possibility unless the Fresno Unified School District can overcome a \$34.9 million shortfall.

As quoted in The Fresno Bee, Fresno High Principal Bob Reyes thinks athletics and extracurricular activities are absolutely essential to high school.

That's not to take away from the academics, but sometimes it's things like band, athletics, forensics that keep kids here and get them through the academic part until it finally clicks in and they decide they want to go to college. Kids who take part in any activity stand a better chance of graduating.

From The Owl, dated 1905

"In summing up the results of the football season of 1905-06, it cannot be said that our career has been glorious but we have held our own, which is something to be thankful for. Out of five games this season, we have won two, lost two and tied one game. The individual playing of the boys has been good. The chief trouble of the team was the lack of practice and poor teamwork."

## The Riddle of the Ring

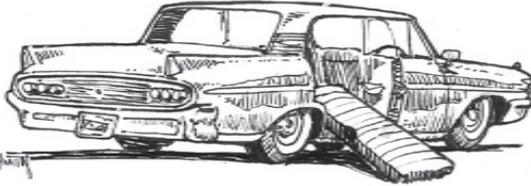
by Jack Fowler

When Jim Welman, class of '49, left Fresno High School, he probably forgot all about his class ring because he was by then on his way to the Korean Conflict. That was 54 years ago. But thanks to a bunch of (caring) or (great) guys, he at last has his ring back!

It seems Greg Hahn from Northern California bought a '51 Mercury, 4-door about ten years ago. He had it, driving it around, for about five years. He changed the motor to a Chevy 350, and all new 12-volt wiring. Then it was time for a new interior.

He pulled out the back seat to take it to the upholstery shop and found a class ring wedged under some padding under the floor carpeting. No one had discovered it in all those years. He cleaned up the ring, discovered the initials, and called The Fresno Bee. They could offer no help.

One day, on the website H.A.M.B., run by a bunch of car buffs, the question was asked what was the most interesting thing you ever found in a car that you were restor-



ing? Hahn wrote about the ring and submitted it to the website.

James Dooms, from Clovis West High School now living in Florida, picked up on the letter on the website. As he had grown up around FHS, he called and got hold of Laura Driver in the school library who contacted the FHS Alumni Association chairman, Jack Fowler. But there was

a problem: there was no name, just the initials, JSW, and there were two JSW males in the class of '49.

The next call was to Dianne Thuesen Heller for information on the initials. It had to be Jim Welman because the other JW had passed away. Several e-mails and telephone calls later and Jim finally had his ring back.

After he picked up the ring at the post office, everybody wanted to hear about where he had gotten it. In his words: The ring fits my wife's finger very nicely and she's delighted to get it. As I told her, 'It's now on the finger of the wife-of-my-life' we've been married 49 years now. Wow, did I make some points there!

## 70th Reunion

by Nancy Van Galder

The Fresno High School Class of 1934 reunion was held at the Shanghai Restaurant May 22, 2004, and a good response was observed. A few arrived after lunch was served they got lost, but hey, they remembered where they were supposed to be!

The photo was taken by my husband, Bob Van Galder, as I stand next to Edna Nelson, who was a classmate of my late mother. Many will remember Miss Nelson as a math teacher at Hamilton. Also pictured is Dudley St. John.

The Class of '34 was kind enough to invite me to their reunion to represent my mom who had recently passed away. My mother was always involved in reunion activities, just as she was so involved as a student at FHS. Following her death, among her personal papers, I found notes regarding the planning of the 70th reunion! She had so looked forward to the event.



I recently spoke to Peggy Cobb Goodpasture (class of '55). That class has selected October 14 and 15, 2005 for their 50th reunion. They have reserved Pardini's for the event. Seemed everyone loved Wolf Lakes where they had the last reunion, but felt it might be a little far to drive for the next one! I can see it now: bus-loads of walkers and wheelchairs dropping off class members at the 90th gathering. Here's hoping we all make our 90th!

## Fresno High Alumni Association

Chairman:  
Jack Fowler  
Co-Chairperson:  
Jackie Boyajian  
Treasurer:  
Bobbi LaFond  
Co-Treasurer:  
Lonna Torrico  
Database Chairman:  
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Dinner Chairperson:  
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Graphics:  
Jon Adams  
Members-at-Large:  
Elaine Sudjian  
Darlen Laval  
Dixie Hyberg  
Tom Boyajian  
Richard Hodge  
Barbara Thormann

The Alumni Association extends a special thank you to Dave Brase for his outstanding contributions to the design, set up, and ongoing efforts on behalf of the FHS Alumni Association website.

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Check the FHS Alumni Association website for re-union dates and reunion chairpersons of all participating classes.



FRESNO HIGH ALUMNI  
ASSOCIATION

MEMBERSHIP  
APPLICATION FORM

YOUR FHS CLASS YEAR \_\_\_\_\_

DATE \_\_\_\_\_

LAST NAME \_\_\_\_\_

MAIDEN NAME \_\_\_\_\_

FIRST NAME \_\_\_\_\_

FULL MIDDLE NAME \_\_\_\_\_

SPOUSE'S FULL NAME \_\_\_\_\_

ADDRESS \_\_\_\_\_

CITY \_\_\_\_\_ STATE \_\_\_\_\_ ZIP \_\_\_\_\_

PHONE ( \_\_\_\_ ) \_\_\_\_\_ - \_\_\_\_\_ BUSINESS ( \_\_\_\_ ) \_\_\_\_\_ - \_\_\_\_\_

EMAIL ADDRESS \_\_\_\_\_

Thank you for supporting the Fresno High Alumni Association with your yearly tax deductible membership donation. You are helping support the many projects at FHS.

- Brave: \$25.00
- Warrior: \$50.00 (Includes \$10.00 deduction on annual alumni dinner)
- Chief: \$100.00 (Includes FREE annual alumni dinner)

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ALL INFORMATION WILL BE HELD IN STRICT CONFIDENCE BY THE FHS ALUMNI ASSOCIATION. PLEASE TEAR OFF AND MAIL THIS FORM AND YOUR CHECK TO: FHS ALUMNI ASSOCIATION, P.O. BOX 27516, FRESNO, CA 93729-7156



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