



L·V·H·S·A·A

Las Vegas High School Alumni Association

“GT” GEORGE THOMAS APFEL (Class of 1971)

Born in Buffalo, New York, the first ten years of my life I admired and was awed by the rich history of that region—an affection carried with me out west. As Feature Editor of the school paper the Desert Breeze, I wrote many articles on the history of Las Vegas and Las Vegas High School, and recognized the school’s history pre-dated the 1930 Main Building on 7th and Bridger. As the result of my research, in October 1969 the school celebrated it’s “60th” birthday in recognition of its earlier roots. Patty Haack has since discovered much more about the history of the school, which actually goes back to the Old Las Vegas Fort. Still, one can use “1909” as one anniversary date, as this is when the first bond issue was approved to build a combination grade and- high school which originally was named “Clark County High School.”

Many long hours were spent working on the Desert Breeze in the little closet we called the “Breeze Room” in Frazier Hall, and one of the luxuries enjoyed was having the radio playing, always tuned to KENO Radio 1460. Every Friday night the station aired a recap of the local high school sports scene; hosted by Howard Hill, “KENO Sports Closeup” often would get each school’s Sports Editor to comment on their teams. It was the thrill of a lifetime for this high school student, hearing my voice on the radio, and even though it took Hill most of the year to finally pronounce my last name correctly, I was hooked—I had to get on the radio. With the help of Jerri Amblad’s husband Bob, also a teacher who worked part-time at KORK-AM radio, I participated in perhaps the first broadcasting independent study program ever offered by the CCSD. With Bob’s books and experience as a guide I studied for and passed the Third Class FCC License exam and received hands-on experience running a radio station.

Having experience and a license helped to get a paying job in radio in the early 1970’s, first at an automated beautiful music station in Henderson—part time work at KLVM FM 94.1 helped pay the way through college at UNLV. In 1973 it was the first time opening a microphone “live” at KLAV-AM 1230. I dropped the last name that nobody could pronounce and in just three years “George Thomas” became Program Director while still attending college--and the student became the teacher as I mentored UNLV students as interns.

The most famous of these was former All-American and soon-to-be Oakland Raider Quarterback David Humm. In 1976 David had his first time in front of the microphone as he picked up the last few college credits needed for his degree. I'll never forget the time I received an irate phone call from his teacher Dr. Albert Johns, "You're exploiting him and he's supposed to be learning!" (We made David the host of a daily sports program.) David has retired from the NFL and is battling MS but is still doing radio

and commentary from a studio our engineering staff built for him in his home—so while we did take advantage of the NFL quarterback he did benefit from it down the road. David's little brother Tom is our boss at CBS radio.

David wasn't the only 'famous' person I was lucky to work with early in my broadcasting career, I produced and co-hosted a weekly jazz program on KLAV with legendary jazz bassist Monk Montgomery—we closed our very first program with a saying I came up with on the spur of the moment, and "Think Jazz" became the slogan for the Las Vegas Jazz Society. Our lineup of guests included Joe Pass, Dizzy Gillespie, Oscar Peterson, Count Basie, and more--one of our shows is in the Smithsonian Museum. As producer of the Joe Delaney show I met Steve Allen, Don Rickles, Shecky Green, Cork Proctor, and many others.

I moved over to the FM band in the late 70's as that side of the dial exploded in popularity and worked for KENO-FM (it was called K-92 back then.) Through the 80's you could hear "GT" or "George Thomas" all over the dial: KLUC-FM 98.5, KUDO-FM 93.1, KITT-FM 96.3, and I spent the second half of the 80's working at this city's most popular Adult Contemporary station: "Klassy 100" (KMZQ-FM 100.5) Like the WKRP theme song, "up and down the dial" I went, in the 1990's I became Program Director of 93.1 FM "The Key." "The Key" was bought by country powerhouse KFM and the last time I hosted a daily radio program as a DJ was honkin' the howdy hits on "Hit Kickin' Country Y-93."

All through my broadcasting career I've worn many hats, hosting a music program playin' the hits and fixing the equipment which allows you to hear them. In the mid 1990's I saw the writing on the wall with computers replacing human bodies in studios all over the world, and packed away my headphones to become a full-time engineer, which I continue to do today. Going from hits to bits, I now build and maintain the computers that made many radio people obsolete, but I've never lost that bug to get behind the microphone. In 2003-2004 I was the morning show host on "Lite 100.5," and I still do voice-over work with commercials, promos, and public service announcements around the country—like the one I wrote and produced for the "Wildcat Reunion." You may even hear my voice on phone systems of some of the Strip Hotels, "thank for you waiting, your call is very important to us..."

I still have a great passion for history and the city where I was born—Buffalo. My heart goes out for the underdog, and I've become actively involved with volunteer groups helping that much maligned city make a comeback. I also am a very avid genealogy researcher, and was just appointed Erie County Coordinator for the U.S. GenWeb project. Never one to shy from the spotlight, I also am a contributing writer for Buffalo Rising Online. My son now gets to enjoy the rewards (and perils!) of parenthood as he's married with a son and two daughters who are just growing up way too quickly! It's good that he spent all that time watching and helping me fix and build stuff as he's become quite good at it himself.

These biographies are based on research and could contain discrepancies.

If there are any excerpts you feel should be changed please feel free to contact me at Dave@lvhsaa.com

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