



LAS VEGAS HIGH SCHOOL CLASS OF 1953



‘CAT’ TRACKS - Special Issue

February 2016

Sharing Memories of Our Times Together and Remembering Those Who Have Passed On

Dear Classmates and Fellow Alumni:

I got started on this material as a result of “Lair on the Air” written by my dear friend and classmate, Hank Rilling. I thought a follow piece on the history of the Lair itself would be something worthwhile. But once I got started I said to myself you can’t really talk about the Lair without talking about LVHS. From thinking about LVHS, I said you can’t really talk about LVHS without talking about Las Vegas itself, the Clark County and then Nevada itself. Because they are all linked together. So I started to gather material and quickly found myself drowning in information. I didn’t want to write a book, so what you find here is a condensed history of everything. On the following page you find a Table of Contents which begins with Nevada and ends with the Lair, then memories of Alumni who attended LVHS from 1946 to 1956, our “golden years” of living in Vegas. And finally additional photos and information.

Many thanks to all who participated in sharing memories and helping to gather material. Particular thanks to Patty Haack, LVHS Alumni Association, for the history of LVHS and getting material from yearbooks I didn’t have; Hank Rilling for reading over drafts of this piece and suggesting clarifications and improvements, and to Stan Clifton who provided photos for the ‘47 and ‘48 Lair yearbook pages (all done on his cell phone).

Hope you enjoy this effort.

Once a Wildcat, Always a Wildcat!

George Wilkinson, ‘53



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NEVADA

In the Beginning...

Geologic events formed the state's Basin and Range topography, the "Nevada Basin" physiographic region, and the central Nevada desert (e.g., the recession of the Pleistocene Lake Lahontan changed the Humboldt Rivercourse), and Great Basin. The Paiute, Shoshone, Washoe, and Walapai tribes had inhabited Nevada for millennia before Euro-Americans arrived in the 18th century.

Exploration, New Spain, and Mexico...

Francisco Garcés was the first European in the area, Nevada was annexed as a part of the Spanish Empire in the northwestern territory of New Spain. Administratively, the area of Nevada was part of the Commandancy General of the Provincias Internas in the Viceroyalty of New Spain. Nevada became a part of Alta California (*Upper California*) province in 1804 when the Californias were split. With the Mexican War of Independence won in 1821, the province of Alta California became a territory - not a state - of Mexico, due to the small population. In later years, a desire for increased autonomy led to several attempts by the Alta Californians to gain independence from Mexico. Jedediah Smith entered the Las Vegas Valley in 1827, and Peter Skene Ogden traveled the Humboldt River in 1828. As a result of the Mexican-American War and the Treaty of Guadalupe-Hidalgo, Mexico permanently lost Alta California in 1848. The new areas acquired by the United States continued to be administered as territories. As part of the Mexican Cession (1848) and the subsequent California Gold Rush that used Emigrant Trails through the area, the state's area evolved first as part of the Utah Territory, then the Nevada Territory (March 2, 1861; named for the Sierra Nevada).

Territory...

Nevada became part of the United States with the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo with Mexico in 1848. Mexico had never established any control in Nevada, but American mountain men were in Washoe (the early name for Nevada) as early as 1827. A permanent American presence began in 1851 when the Mormons set up way stations en route to the California gold fields. In the absence of any governmental authority, some 50 Mormons and non-Mormon prospectors and cattle ranchers drew up the "Washoe code" to deal with land claims; its coverage eventually covered other governmental issues. There still was no federal presence in the area so religious tensions worsened and petitions of complaint went to Washington. Non-Mormons sought annexation to California. Utah Territory countered this by incorporating the area as a county. When Federal troops were sent to Utah in 1857, the Mormons left Washoe. The non-Mormons took over and launched a move for separate territorial status.

The early 1860s saw the end of an Indian war, the great Comstock mining boom of 1859 in Virginia City and the coming of the Civil War. The provisional territorial government led to the creation of Nevada Territory by Congress in 1861. The pragmatic attempts to establish workable frontier institutions had failed and the paternalistic territorial system was welcomed.

Statehood...

Statehood came in 1864 following a Carson City convention (July 4-28) and a public vote on September 7 (the population of 6,857 in 1860 increased to 42,941 in 1870), although Nevada had far fewer than the 60,000 people usually required.

The University of Nevada was founded in Elko in 1874 and moved to Reno in 1885 (extension classes began at Las Vegas in 1951).

Source: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/History_of_Nevada

Clark County

Trying to find a history per se for Clark County was really frustrating and nothing comprehensive was available on the Internet. However, in my searches I did find a timeline in the celebration of the 100th “birthday” of Clark County. What follows are selections from that timeline that I think you’ll find interesting. At the bottom of the page is the internet site should you want to see the whole timeline.

1848 Area now encompassed by Clark County becomes part of the United States, New Mexico Territory. **6/14/1855** William Bringham and a group of men arrive to found the Mormon mission, now known as the Old Fort, at Las Vegas. They leave less than two years later and return to Utah. **10/31/1864** Nevada becomes a state during the Civil War. Area now encompassed by Clark County is not part of original state of Nevada but is part of Arizona Territory. **12/22/1865** Area encompassed by Clark County becomes counties of Pah-Ute and Mojave, Arizona Territory. **5/4/1866** U.S. Congress passes a bill allowing Nevada to extend southern border into Arizona Territory, covering territory to point where Colorado River meets California Border. **10/1/1867** Not recognizing the Nevada State Legislature’s right to the land, Arizona Territory moves capital of Pah-Ute County to St. Thomas from Callville. **1/17/1867** Nevada State legislature votes to extend southern border, taking in today’s Clark County. Arizona Territorial Legislature finally dissolves Pah-Ute county, part of today’s Clark County. **1886** First permanent settlement at Goodsprings, Nevada. A mining boom in the early 1900s led to a period of prosperity, including a large hotel. Hotel owner George Fayle was a County Commissioner.

1904 Helen Stewart sells her Las Vegas Ranch property to Montana Senator William Andrews Clark for the San Pedro, Los Angeles and Salt Lake Railroad. J. T. McWilliams lays out his Original Las Vegas Townsite on the other side of the tracks. **5/15/1905** The town of Las Vegas begins with the auction of lots in Clark’s Las Vegas Townsite. **8/19/08** County Division Committee formed in Las Vegas to promote the idea of dividing Lincoln County in half. Civic leaders donate to a war chest to pay for lobbying efforts. **7/1/1909** Clark County comes into existence by splitting Lincoln County. Las Vegas is named the County seat, defeating Searchlight. **1910** Clark County population is 3,321, according to the U.S. Census. **10/10/1914** First permanent Clark County Courthouse completed, surrounded by a public park.

1930 Population of Clark County is 8,532. State Highway department begins paving Boulder Highway. **1931** Clark County Indigent Hospital is founded, the predecessor of today’s University Medical Center. **3/31/1931** Nevada State Legislature legalizes gaming. The first license in Clark County goes to Mamie Stocker. The first purpose-built casino, the Meadows, is built by Frank, Louis, and Tony Cornero. The Pair-O-Dice Club opens three miles south of Las Vegas on the Los Angeles Highway, today’s Strip. Guy McAfee buys it and calls it The 91 Club. In 1941 it is incorporated into the Last Frontier. **8/1/1931** Railroad Pass Casino opens. **3/2/1933** Western Air Express Field, formerly owned by Peter A. “Pop” Simon, is dedicated. **9/30/1935** Franklin D. Roosevelt dedicates Lake Mead and Boulder Dam, dropping the Hoover name. The name is changed back to Hoover Dam in 1947. **1936** The City of Las Vegas opens a summer camp for children in Lee Canyon, on land donated by J.T. McWilliams, and built by the WPA. Now owned by Clark County, it is listed on the National Register.

1940 Population of Clark County is 16,414. **3/15/1941** Western Air Express field (which was located north of North Las Vegas) is purchased by the City of Las Vegas and dedicated as McCarran Airport. It is turned over to the Army Air Corps for use as a Flexible Gunnery School (later becoming Nellis Air Force Base) with the runways shared by commercial flights. **4/3/1941** Thomas Hull opens the El Rancho Vegas, first hotel/casino on the Strip. **9/3/1941** McNeil Construction is awarded the contract to build the Basic Magnesium plant. This was the beginning of today’s Henderson. **12/7/1941** Sky Haven Airport is opened. It is today’s North Las Vegas Air Terminal. **1/16/1942** Carole Lombard is killed in a plane crash on Mt. Potosi during a bond rally tour. Her husband, Clark Gable, waits for news of her fate at the Goodsprings Saloon. **7/1/1942** Blue Diamondville post office opens, changing to Blue Diamond on December 1, 1942. **7/3/1942** Pittman post office, a Boulder Highway community, opens. Henderson absorbs it when Henderson becomes a city in 1953, but Pittman is retained as a post office name until 5/25/1974, when it becomes a station of Henderson. **10/30/1942** Last Frontier Hotel and Casino opens on the Strip. Its name is changed to the New Frontier on 4/4/1955, and to the Frontier in 1967. In 1966, its sign is the tallest in the world, 184 feet. **5/16/1946** North Las Vegas is incorporated. **12/25/1946** The Flamingo, conceived by Billy Wilkerson and taken over by Benjamin “Bugsy” Siegel opens. It closes shortly after to reopen successfully in March. Siegel is murdered shortly after. **12/18/1948** Alamo Airport, five miles south of Las Vegas, is dedicated as McCarran Field, the new airport for Clark County. It is today McCarran International Airport.

1950 Population of Clark County 48,289. **5/20/1950** The Las Vegas Air Force Base is renamed Nellis Air Force Base for William Nellis, a P-47 pilot killed during the battle of the Bulge on 12/27/1944, who grew up in Searchlight and Las Vegas (he was a LVHS graduate, class of 1937). **1/27/1951** First atomic bomb tests take place at the Nevada Test site. **1951** Paradise Township is created, which prevents the City of Las Vegas from annexing the Strip. **12/2/1952** The Sahara Hotel opens, replacing the Club Bingo. Later that month the Sands opens, today the site of the Venetian.

4/16/1953 City of Henderson incorporates. **7/22/1953** KLAS, first local television station, begins operation. **7/1/1954** The Las

Vegas Valley Water District begins operations. 4/20/1955 The Riviera opens with Liberace headlining. It is the first high-rise hotel on the strip, at 9-stories and 291 rooms. 4/23/1956 Elvis Presley plays his first Las Vegas show at the New Frontier Hotel. He bombs. 1957 Maude Frazier Hall opens as the first building on the new Nevada Southern University campus. 4/4/1957 Tropicana opens. Today it is one of the few original hotels remaining on the Strip. 7/2/1958 Stardust opens. Tony Cornero, who planned his dream casino, didn't live to see it built as he died playing craps at the Desert Inn on July 31, 1955. It opened with 1,032 rooms, a world record then. 1959 The "Welcome to Fabulous Las Vegas" sign is erected, designed by Betty Willis (LVHS class 1941).

1960 Clark County population is 127,016. 1/4/1960 Boulder City incorporates. Robert N. Broadbent serves as first Mayor. 1964 Nancy and Slim Kidwell create Kidwell Field, now Calnevari. 1966 Don Laughlin opens Riverside Casino in what will become Laughlin. 11/27/1966 Howard Hughes arrives in Las Vegas on a special train. He soon buys his first property, the Desert Inn, where he has been staying on the top floor, after being threatened with eviction.

1970 Clark County population is 273,288.

2000 Clark County population is 1,375,765.

<http://www.clarkcountynv.gov/parks/Documents/centennial/history-timeline.pdf>

The Clark County School District

The Clark County School District began in 1956 when the Nevada Legislature mandated consolidation of all state school districts into 17 county school districts. This change meant that 14 separate school districts in Clark County would become part of the new Clark County School District.

R. Guild Gray stated before a Board of School Trustees meeting on February 1, 1956 that the district would be larger than political subdivision in the state of Nevada. R. Guild Gray, who was superintendent at the time of the former Clark County School Dist. No. 2, believed the district would be larger than the state highway department with 1,300 employees and an annual budget of \$7,250,000.

Prior to 1956, each of the individual school districts in the county ran independent of each other, serving their respective cities and/or CDPs. When the district began in 1956, enrollment was just over 20,000 and Clark County had about 103,000 residents. The district would continue to face challenges in the coming years. Funding was its biggest challenge and had been for many years as it contends with explosive population growth.

The Clark County School District, as of 2014, is the fifth-largest school district in the United States. It serves all of Clark County, Nevada, including the cities of Las Vegas, Henderson, North Las Vegas, Boulder City, and Mesquite; as well as the census-designated places of Laughlin, Blue Diamond, Logandale, Bunkerville, Goodsprings, Indian Springs, Mount Charleston, Moapa, Searchlight, and Sandy Valley. The district is divided into seven regions and, in addition to the general schools, it also operates 25 alternative schools and programs. The district has limited involvement with charter schools and, with the exception of providing some bus service, does not have any involvement with the private schools in the county.

(Editor's Note: I realized that when I was going over the dates for the establishment of the CCSD that I was the first graduate of LVHS to be elected to the Board in 1964 and then again in 1968. In my first term I was chosen as Clerk and then President in my second term. That was a great experience.)

Las Vegas

1829-1905: origins A trade caravan of 60 men led by the Mexican merchant Antonio Armijo was charged with establishing a trade route to Los Angeles. Las Vegas was named by Mexicans in the Antonio Armijo party. By following the Pike and Smith routes through a tributary of the Colorado River they came upon the Las Vegas Valley described by Smith as the best point to re-supply before going onto California. The travelers named the area “Las Vegas” which is Spanish for “The Meadows”. John C. Frémont traveled into the Las Vegas Valley on May 3, 1844, while it was still part of Mexico. He was appointed by President John Tyler to lead a group of scientists, scouts, and spies for the United States Army Corps of Engineers who were preparing for a possible war with Mexico. Upon arriving in the valley they made camp at the Las Vegas Springs, establishing a clandestine fort there. A war with Mexico did occur, resulting in the region becoming United States territory. The fort was used in later years by travellers, mountain men, hunters, and traders seeking shelter, but was never permanently inhabited. In 1855, William Bringhurst led a group of 29 Mormon missionaries from Utah to the Las Vegas Valley. The missionaries built a 150-square-foot adobe fort near a creek and used flood irrigation to water their crops, a process still used at the park. However, because of tensions rising between leaders of the small Mormon community, the summer heat and difficulty growing crops, the missionaries returned to Utah in 1857, abandoning the fort. For the next few years the area remained unoccupied by Americans except for travelers and traders. Then the U.S. Army, in an attempt to deceive Confederate spies active in southern California in 1864, falsely publicized that it reclaimed the fort and had renamed it Fort Baker, briefly recalling the area to national attention. After the end of the war in 1865, Octavius Gass, with a commission from the federal government, did re-occupy the fort. The Paiute nation had declined in numbers and negotiated a new treaty with the United States, ceding the area around the fort to the United States in return for relocation and supplies of food and farming equipment. Consequently, Gass started irrigating the old fields and renamed the area ‘Las Vegas Rancho.’ Gass made wine at his ranch and Las Vegas became known as the best stop on the Old Spanish Trail. In 1881, because of mismanagement and intrigue with a Mormon syndicate, Gass lost his ranch to Archibald Stewart to pay off a lien Stewart had on the property. In 1884, Archibald’s wife, Helen J. Stewart became the Las Vegas Postmaster. The property (increased to 1,800 acres -- 730 hectares), stayed with the family (despite Archibald Stewart’s murder in July 1884) until it was purchased in 1902 by the San Pedro, Los Angeles, and Salt Lake Railroad, then being built across southern Nevada. The railroad was a project of Montana Senator William Andrews Clark. Clark enlisted Utah’s U.S. Senator and mining magnate Thomas Kearns to ensure the line’s completion through Utah to Las Vegas. The State Land Act of 1885 offered land at \$1.25 per acre (\$3.09/hectare). Clark and Kearns promoted the area to American farmers who quickly expanded the farming plots of the areas. Not until 1895 did the first large-scale migration of Mormons begin in the area, at long last fulfilling Brigham Young’s early dream. Through wells and arid irrigation, agriculture became the primary industry for the next 20 years and in return for his development, the farmers named the area Clark County in honor of the railroad tycoon and Senator.

1905-1929: birth, growth and crisis By the early 20th century, water from wells was piped into the town, providing both a reliable source of fresh water and the means for additional growth. The increased availability of water in the area allowed Las Vegas to become a water stop, first for wagon trains and later railroads, on the trail between Los Angeles, California, and points east such as Albuquerque, New Mexico. The San Pedro, Los Angeles & Salt Lake Railroad was completed in 1905, linking Salt Lake City to southern California. U.S. Senator William Andrews Clark was the majority owner of the railroad, which was a corporation based in Utah. Among its original incorporators were Utah’s U.S. Senator Thomas Kearns and his business partner David Keith. Kearns, one of the richest and most powerful men in Utah, and Keith were the owners of Utah’s Silver King Coalition Mine, several mines in Nevada and The Salt Lake Tribune newspaper. Kearns and Keith helped Clark ensure the success of the new railroad across Utah and into Nevada to California. Curiously, for a time there were two towns named Las Vegas. The east-side of Las Vegas (which encompassed the modern Main Street and Las Vegas Boulevard) was owned by Clark, and the west-side Las Vegas (which encompassed the area north of modern-day Bonanza Road) was owned by J.T. McWilliams, who was hired by the Stewart family during the sale of the Las Vegas Rancho and bought available land west of the ranch. It was from their property that Las Vegas took form. Clark subsequently built another railroad branching off from Las Vegas to the boomtown of Bullfrog called the Las Vegas and Tonopah Railroad. With the revenue coming down both railways that intersected there, the area of Las Vegas was quickly growing. On May 15, 1905, Las Vegas officially was founded as a city, when 110 acres (45 ha), in what would later become downtown, were auctioned to ready buyers. Las Vegas was the driving force in the creation of Clark County, Nevada in 1909 and the city was incorporated in 1911 as a part of the county. St. Joan of Arc Catholic Church near 4th and Bridger in downtown was founded in 1910.

The first mayor of Las Vegas was Peter Buol who served from 1911-1913. Shortly after the city's incorporation, the State of Nevada reluctantly became the last western state to outlaw gaming. This occurred at midnight, October 1, 1910, when a strict anti-gambling law became effective in Nevada. It even forbade the western custom of flipping a coin for the price of a drink. Nonetheless, Las Vegas had a diversified economy and a stable and prosperous business community, and therefore continued to grow until 1917. In that year, a combination of economic influences and the redirection of resources by the federal government in support of the war effort forced the Las Vegas and Tonopah Railroad to declare bankruptcy. Although William Clark sold the remains of the company to the Union Pacific Railroad, a nationwide strike in 1922 left Las Vegas in a desperate state.

1930-1941: Hoover Dam and the first casinos On July 3, 1930, President Herbert Hoover signed the appropriation bill for the Boulder Dam. The dam was later renamed the Hoover Dam during the Truman administration. Work started on the dam in 1931 and Las Vegas' population swelled from around 5,000 citizens to 25,000, with most of the newcomers looking for a job building the dam. However, the demographic of the work force consisting of males from across the country with no attachment to the area created a market for large scale entertainment. A combination of local Las Vegas business owners, Mormon financiers, and Mafia crime lords helped develop the casinos and showgirl theaters to entertain the largely male dam construction workers. Despite the influx of known crime figures, the local business community tried to cast Las Vegas in a respectable light when the Secretary of the Interior Ray Lyman Wilbur visited in 1929 to inspect the dam site. However a subordinate was found with alcohol on his breath (this was during the time of Prohibition) after a visit to Block 16 in Las Vegas. The government ultimately decided that a federal-controlled town, Boulder City, would be erected for the dam workers. Realizing that gambling would be profitable for local business, the Nevada state legislature legalized gambling at the local level in 1931. Las Vegas, with a small but already well-established illegal gambling industry, was poised to begin its rise as the gaming capital of the world. The county issued the first gambling license in 1931 to the Northern Club, and soon other casinos were licensed on Fremont Street like the Las Vegas Club and the Apache Hotel. Fremont Street became the first paved street in Las Vegas and received the city's first traffic light in 1931. In reply, the federal government restricted movement of the dam workers to Las Vegas. Smuggling and circuitous routes then were developed. In 1934, to curtail these activities and the resulting growth of criminal figures in the gambling industry, the city's leading figures purged gambling dens and started an effort to stem the flow of workers from the dam. This only emboldened some dam workers who still contrived to visit Las Vegas. A celebration of this era has become known as Hellsdorado Days. Although the suppression efforts resulted in declines at gambling venues and resulted in a business downturn, the city was recharged, literally, when the dam was completed in 1935. In 1937, Southern Nevada Power became the first utility to supply power from the dam, and Las Vegas was its first customer. Electricity flowed into Las Vegas and Fremont Street became known as Glitter Gulch due to the many bright lights powered by electricity from Hoover Dam. Meanwhile, although the dam worker population disappeared, Hoover Dam and its reservoir, Lake Mead, turned into tourist attractions on their own and the need for additional higher class hotels became clear. In 1940, U.S. Route 95 was finally extended south into Las Vegas, giving the city two major access roads. Also in 1940 Las Vegas's first permanent radio station, KENO, began broadcasting replacing the niche occupied earlier by transient broadcasters.

1941-1945: war years On January 25, 1941 the U.S. Army established a flexible gunnery school for the United States Army Air Corps in Las Vegas. Mayor John L. Russell signed over land to the U.S. Army Quartermaster Corps for this development. The gunnery school later would become Nellis Air Force Base. The U.S. Army was not pleased with the legal prostitution in Las Vegas and in 1942 forced Las Vegas to outlaw the practice, putting Block 16, the local red light district permanently out of business. On April 3, 1941, hotel owner Thomas Hull opened the El Rancho Vegas. It was the first resort on what would become the Las Vegas Strip. The hotel gained much of its fame from the gourmet buffet that it offered. On October 30, 1942, R. E. Griffith rebuilt on the site of a nightclub called Pair-O-Dice, that first opened in 1930, and renamed it Hotel Last Frontier. A few more resorts were built on and around Fremont Street but the next hotel on the Strip publicly demonstrated the influence of organized crime on Las Vegas. Although ethnic organized crime figures had been involved in some of the operations at the hotels, the Mafia bosses never owned or controlled the hotels and clubs which remained monopolized by hard-bitten local Las Vegas families who were unwilling to cede ground to the crime bosses and proved strong enough to push back. This changed in post-war Las Vegas when Jewish gangster Bugsy Siegel, with help from friend and fellow mob boss Meyer Lansky poured money through Mormon owned banks for cover of legitimacy and built The Flamingo in 1946.

1946-1955: postwar boom The Flamingo initially lost money and Siegel died in a hail of gunfire in Beverly Hills, California in the summer of 1947. Additionally, local police and Clark County Sheriff deputies were notorious for their

heavy-handed tactics toward mobsters who “grew too big for their pants.” However, many mobsters saw the potential that gambling offered in Las Vegas. From 1952 to 1957, through money and institutional lending provided by the Teamsters Union and some Mormon bankers they built the Sahara, the Sands, the New Frontier, the Royal Nevada, the Showboat, The Riviera, The Fremont, Binion’s Horseshoe (which was the Apache Hotel), and finally The Tropicana. Owned and operated by a joint combination of Mormon elders who provided political and business legitimacy and people involved with organized crime who provided unreported income and street muscle, such as Meyer Lansky, these crime hotels became regarded as the epitome of gambling entertainment. Even with the general knowledge that some of the owners of these casino resorts had dubious backgrounds, by 1954, over 8 million people were visiting Las Vegas yearly pumping \$200 million into casinos. Gambling was no longer the only attraction; the biggest stars of films and music like Frank Sinatra, Dean Martin, Andy Williams, Liberace, Bing Crosby, Carol Channing, and others performed in intimate settings. After coming to see these stars, the tourists would resume gambling, and then eat at the gourmet buffets that have become a staple of the casino industry. However, the confluence of various marginal and/or suspected groups such as Jews, Sicilians, and Mormons into the gambling enterprises in Las Vegas and the subsequent cornering of the gambling market in the city by these groups sparked a two-year investigation by Senator Estes Kefauver and his Senate Special Committee to Investigate Crime in Interstate Commerce in 1950–51. The hearing concluded that organized crime money was incontrovertibly tied to the Las Vegas casinos and was becoming the controlling interest in the city thereby earning for the groups vast amounts of income which was strengthening their influence in the country. This led to a proposal by the Senate to institute federal gambling control. Only through the power and influence of Nevada’s Senator Pat McCarran did the proposal die in committee.

Along with their connections in Hollywood and New York City, these interests in Las Vegas were able to use publicity provided by these media capitals to steer the rapid growth of tourism into Las Vegas thereby dooming Galveston, Texas; Hot Springs, Arkansas; and other illegal gaming centers around the nation. Nevada’s legal gaming as well as the paradoxical increased scrutiny by local and federal law enforcement in these other locales during the 1950s made their demise inevitable.

Atomic testing While the Strip was booming, the U.S. Atomic Energy Commission on January 27, 1951 detonated the first of over a hundred atmospheric explosions at the Nevada Test Site. These atmospheric tests would continue until enactment of the Partial Test Ban Treaty in 1963 when the tests moved underground. The last test explosion was in 1992. Despite the dangers and risks, greatly underestimated at the time, of radiation exposure from the fallout, Las Vegas advertised the explosions as another tourist attraction and offered Atomic Cocktails in Sky Rooms that offered a great view of the mushroom clouds.

The influx of government employees for the Atomic Energy Commission and from the Mormon-controlled Bank of Las Vegas spearheaded by E. Parry Thomas during those years funded the growing boom in casinos. But Las Vegas was doing more than growing casinos. In 1948, McCarran Field was established for commercial air traffic. In 1957 the University of Nevada, Las Vegas was first established, initially as a branch of the University of Nevada, Reno and becoming independent in 1969. In 1959 the Clark County Commission built the Las Vegas Convention Center, which would become a vital part of the area’s economy. A new utility company, Southwest Gas expanded into Las Vegas in 1954.

HISTORY OF LAS VEGAS HIGH SCHOOL

Most people believe that the first school in Las Vegas was held in a tent in 1905. In reality, the first school was held in the old Las Vegas Mormon Fort in 1855. There were never more than three upper-grade students since they were involved in the day-to-day farming activities. The first teacher was Elijah Fuller. He earned \$3 a quarter. The school was abandoned in February, 1857 when the missionaries were called back to Salt Lake City.

Because funds originally set aside for a school were used to build a jail, a tent was set-up under the cottonwoods near the Las Vegas Creek north of town for 17 primary and secondary students, and used for the **1904-1905** school year.

During the summer of 1905, the tent was converted to a courthouse, so the old Salt Lake Hotel was purchased for \$150, moved to the southwest corner of 2nd and Lewis, and remodeled at a cost of \$550. School opened October 2, **1905** with 64 students and 2 teachers. There were 114 students by the end of November. The 40' x 50' wooden building had two rooms, was heated with a pot-bellied stove, had a patch board ceiling and walls covered with cloth and paper. The school year ended early, on March 30, **1906** due to "lack of funds".



In **1909**, due to overcrowding, the nine high school students attended school at the Methodist Church at 3rd & Bridger. Parents were charged \$5 per student.

After Clark County was created (when it was split off from Lincoln County on July 1, 1909) funding was not available, so in April, **1910**, a \$30,000 bond was approved for a combined grammar and high school. The new school would be built on land bordered by Bridger, 4th and 5th Streets, just north of Lewis.

In anticipation of the new school building, the wooden building was sold to E. W. Griffin in an auction in June, 1910. However, before the new school was completed, and shortly after the addition of a bell and belfry (for which the students raised money), the wooden school building burned down on October 29, **1910**. Many people believed the fire was intentionally set.



All classes were moved to the Sunday school classrooms at the Methodist Church and a nearby boarding house for the remainder of the **1910-1911** school year. Due to overcrowding, half-day sessions with morning and afternoon classes, had to be held. There were 9 high school students. School closed early in May, **1911** due to "unsatisfactory places" that school had to be held due to delays in completion of the new school.

The cornerstone for the new **Clark County School** (later called the **Las Vegas School**) was laid as part of the Independence Day celebration on July 4, **1910**. Delayed until wooden steps were replaced with concrete steps, the new two-story school opened on September 11, **1911**. It was an 8-room building of concrete construction, designed in Mission architecture with a metal roof (fires were a constant concern). It was just south of Bridger, on the east side of the 4th Street. The main entrance was on 4th Street. The first two weeks were spent in review because books shipped from Reno were late arriving. There were 17 high school students. It accommodated all grades, with the high school students housed in the south wing until 1917.



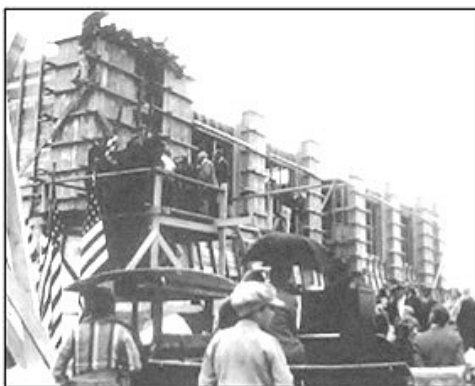
In the fall of **1912** the **Clark County High School** was established in separate rooms of the grammar school and opened with 3 teachers. The first high school graduates were in **1913** (Winona Earl, Olive lake, Leland Ronnow and Herbert Squires). Commencement was held on May 30 in the second floor auditorium of the Clark County School. In **1914** and **1915** there were 6 graduates, and in **1916** there were 7 graduates.



In **1916**, plans were started for a separate high school near the northeast corner of 4th and Clark streets. The Clark County High School (later renamed Las Vegas High School) was completed in December, **1917** at a cost of \$45,000. The building, with the entrance on 4th Street dignified with four concrete columns, included a gymnasium and auditorium. Students moved in on December 17, **1917**. There was no school during October & November, **1918** due to a flu epidemic.

In the **1920-1921** school-year there was a faculty of 6, there were 12 graduates, scarlet and black were chosen as the school colors, and the first yearbook, called "Pah-Rah-Wah-Na" (the Paiute Indian phrase for "Rainbow") was published. In

1922 the Manual Arts Building was built, and there were 6 graduates. In **1923** there were 10 graduates. In **1927**, Maude Frazier became Las Vegas Superintendent of Schools and Principal of Las Vegas High School, the first girls' volley ball team was formed, and the school was enlarged to almost twice its original size, with a new gym, additional classrooms and a new auditorium on 4th Street. Landscaping with shrubs and trees was added for the first time. In the fall, the first football team was formed under the guidance of coach Frank Butcher. The first football game ever played in Las Vegas was on Thanksgiving Day, November 24, **1927**. LVHS beat Panaca 13-12.



In **1928**, with the start of construction of Boulder Dam, the name of the yearbook was changed to "Boulder Echo" and a \$5 award was given to the student that named it. There were 24 graduates. Plans were started for a new high school, designed for a student body capacity of 500, at 7th and Bridger. Many resisted, saying it would be "too far out of town" and would never be filled! There were 29 graduates in **1929**, and 32 in **1930** - the largest class in the history of Las Vegas.

The new Las Vegas High School at 7th & Bridger, built at a cost of \$350,000 in the Art Deco style, opened in the fall of **1930** and was dedicated on November 2. The original high school on 4th Street became part of the grammar school. That year the Honor Club was formed, the Desert Breeze newspaper was started, and Frank Butcher, Head of Athletics, died in a gasoline fire



at the age of 26. In **1931**, Butcher Field was named in his honor and the Boulder Echo was dedicated to him. In **1932**, 15 issues of the Desert Breeze were published, and there were 75 graduates.

The Great Depression swept across the country and the unemployed converged on Las Vegas, hoping for jobs on the Boulder Dam project. In **1933**, Boulder City became a reality and 165 high school students were bused to Las Vegas. LVHS enrollment jumped to 473 students and the "Wildcat" mascot was born. There were 100 graduates in **1934**, and the Desert Breeze was expanded to two pages.



On May 24, **1934**, the original Las Vegas High School, which had become part of the Las Vegas Grammar School, burned down. Wooden buildings with slanted tent-type canvas roofs and no windows, built on "skids" so they could be pulled into place, were placed just north of the burned-out school and used for the 6th, 7th & 8th grades in **1934** and **1935** until the new 5th Street School was opened in **1936**.

In **1935** there were 775 students enrolled in Las Vegas High (in the school built for 500), and in **1936** there were 69 graduates. In **1937**, there were 91 graduates and Bill Nellis graduated. He was shot down over Luxembourg 4 years later and was memorialized by the

naming of Nellis Air Force Base.

In **1941** Dougan's Café (on the northwest corner of 7th and Bridger, later known as the "Kick-Off") opened and became a favorite gathering place for students.



In **1943** yearbook photos were taken in groups to conserve paper during the war years, and **1944** saw the first decline in school enrollment due to the draft and enlistments. There were 107 graduates in **1945**. In **1946**, Maude Frazier retired after 19 years of service, the Annex Building and band room were added, George Early Harris became Principal, Walter V. Long became Vice Principal, and the Wildcat Lair was established at 4th and Stewart. In **1947** construction was started on Frazier Hall, the School Administration Building was added, Evelyn Stuckey formed the Pep Cat Drill Team and the marching band was organized. In **1949** Frazier Hall was completed,



bleachers were added to Butcher Field, the Boulder Echo was renamed "Wildcat Echo" (because Boulder Dam was renamed Hoover Dam that same year). The Rhythmettes were formed, and over 1000 students were enrolled.

The first performance of the Rhythmettes was held in **1950**. The senior boys formed the "Figuerettes", and the first Rhythmette Revue was presented in **1951**. In **1952**, the Rhythmettes performed at the Hollywood Bowl, 200 girls tried out for 6 Rhythmette openings, bond issues were launched for a new auditorium and additional vocational shop space, and there were 228 graduates. In **1954**, Butcher Field was enlarged, the new auditorium opened on the corner of 9th & Clark, there were 1820 students enrolled (in a school then built for 1500) and there were **283** graduates. In **1955** the Rhythmettes traveled to New York City and

appeared on the Ed Sullivan TV show, there were over 1900 students enrolled, and there were 387 graduates. In **1956** the University of Nevada, Southern Division, shared space at LVHS, and there were 403 graduates, the largest graduating class in LVHS history and the last graduating class in Las Vegas where all seniors were in only one high school. Rancho High School opened in **1953**, and Gorman High School opened in **1954**; however, neither had Seniors until **1957**. The Sir Herkimer Bone tradition for the annual football game with rival Rancho High started in **1957**. In **1958** the Wildcat Lair closed.



In **1960** the Rhythmettes and LVHS Band appeared in the half-time production at a Ram's game in the Los Angeles Coliseum. That year also saw the last Freshman class at LVHS (the class of 1963) when Junior High Schools came into existence. By **1961**, everything at LVHS was getting bigger – including the Wildcat Echo and the Desert Breeze. Post Hall, named after Dennis James Post, a student that died of cancer in **1959**, was opened. The Student Senate increased to 55 members and they continued the tradition of providing Thanksgiving baskets for needy families. In **1964**, the Rhythmettes went to the Big Apple to represent Nevada at the New York World's Fair. In **1966**, Principal Walter V. Long retired after 28 years at LVHS, along with long-time teachers Joseph Thiriot, Eldon Larson, Gwendolyn Woolley and Warren Portenier. The Rhythmettes were disbanded in **1967** due to Evelyn Stuckey's health. In **1968** the student body adopted a foster child, hoping the program would become a tradition. The same year Soccer was introduced for the first time and many grads were bound to Vietnam. In **1969** the band took honors at the California Music Festival and the Student Body sponsored a Vietnamese orphan.

In **1970** the Desert Breeze acquired a new headline machine and for the first time, subscriptions were sold (for \$1.50). Evelyn Stuckey's Flag Twirlers began in **1971**, the new Student Union building opened, and the football team was the smallest and lightest, but beat Western for the first time! In **1972** more and more boys had long hair. In **1973** long, straight hair became vogue for the girls along with long floor-sweeping "granny dress" skirts, and the Flag Twirlers became the new Rhythmettes, once again led by Evelyn Stuckey. In **1976**, LVHS was budgeted for 2500 students, Freshman were back for the first time since 1960, and a new group called Spectrum appeared on the campus. Sir Herk's bone was returned to LVHS in 1977 after 4 years. Coach and Assistant Principal Harry Paille retired in **1979** after 30 years at LVHS, and the girls' basketball team won the first State Championship in LVHS history. By the **1979-1980** school year, LVHS was the smallest public high school in Las Vegas, with only 1200 students enrolled. Population had moved to suburban areas and downtown was rapidly becoming mostly commercial.

Rhythmette founder Evelyn Stuckey died in April of **1980**. In **1981**, the Wildcats kept Sir Herk's bone for the 5th straight year. In **1982** the Gymnastics Team was formed and performed at football and basketball halftimes. In **1984**, the first Golden Graduation ceremony was held for the class of 1934. In **1986**, the main building and gymnasium were placed on the National Register of Historic Places, and in **1987**, Governor Richard Bryan (LVHS Class of 1955) signed a bill preserving LVHS as an historic landmark. In **1988** the auditorium was renovated, and the Men's Bowling Team was ranked #1 in the nation. In **1991**, the surrounding neighborhood, bordered by Bridger to Gass and 6th to 9th Streets, was also placed on the National Register of Historic Places. In **1992**, the LVHS marching band performed at an UNLV rally for Presidential candidate Bill Clinton in October. Many students were already being bused in from the East, so they were rezoned to a new school, designated as Winchester High School, being built at East Sahara and Hollywood, near Sunrise Mountain. It was renamed "Las Vegas High School", carrying on their image of excellence, pride and commitment, and embracing the historic legacy that is Las Vegas High School. Our "old" Las Vegas High School became the "Las Vegas Academy of International Studies, Performing & Visual Arts" in the fall of **1993**. The LVHS class of **1993** was the last class to graduate from the 7th Street campus.

A NEW ERA BEGINS . . .

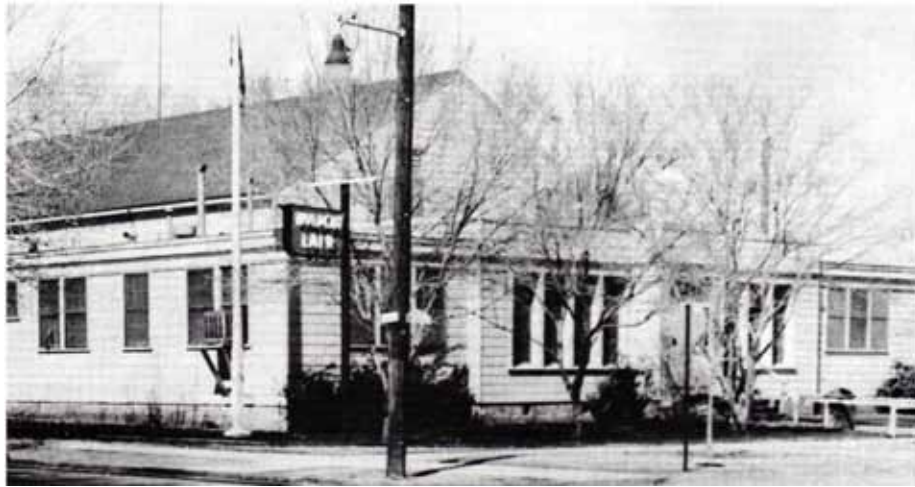
In the fall of **1993**, the new Las Vegas High School opened at 6500 E. Sahara. The class of **1994** was the first graduating class at the new campus, with 307 graduates.

The new campus on East Sahara is close to 10 miles from the 7th Street campus, compared to the previous jump of a few blocks. The new location at the eastern edge of Sahara Avenue mirrored the extreme growth of the Las Vegas Valley. The previous site is in good hands as it continues to serve high school students as a public, magnet high school dedicated to the performing and visual arts.

Symbols of tradition, including the Wildcat mascot, Sir Herkimer's Bone, and the school colors of red and black have now guided a new generation forward. Athletic achievements and records that were destined to never be matched have now been expanded upon.

Written in 2013 by Patty Haack, Class of 1956, with help from LVHSAA Historian Joe Thomson. Sources: Las Vegas Age Newspapers 1910-1917, Las Vegas High School - Its People - Its Impact, published in 1992, a compilation of articles in the Las Vegas Sun Magazine from April-November, 1980, Chapter Seven of "Young Las Vegas, 1905-1931" published in the Las Vegas Review Journal on April 10, 2005, LVHS yearbooks, "Education in the Neon Shadow" by the Clark County School District and interviews with numerous LVHS alumni.

Wildcat Lair



It was really great to be a teenager growing up in Las Vegas. In addition to the regular opportunities & activities that high school presents, we had the resort hotels and big name entertainers that we could enjoy after the Prom. We could, in the late '40s and early '50s, make the midnight show with our dates and friends, and order a "Shirley Temple" (non-alcoholic) without a cover charge or minimum.

But one of the most unique things we had was the Wildcat Lair. During World War II it was a USO building for the service members at Nellis Air Force base, but then it was turned over to the city and became a teen club. Its' board of directors were elected teenagers under the direction of a city paid recreation director. In the case of the LVHS Class of '53, it was Camille's mother, Jeanne Roberts. (1951-1958)

An entertainer and dance instructor herself, Jeanne had continued the remarkable custom of inviting the star performers from the Strip down to 'the Lair' between their dinner and midnight shows for our intermission entertainment during our dances Friday night after the football or basketball games. Even the rival teams were invited to the Lair. Depending on the high school schedule, sometimes the dances were on Saturday.

Our dances, with a live orchestra every week, were only part of the activities. There were fashion shows, Best Dressed prizes, Policeman's Ball, Christmas Ball, Winter Carnival (with snow trucked in from Mt. Charleston), New Year's Eve Dance, Girl Reverse Dance, hay rides, benefit drives, and ballet, square dance, dramatics, & photography lessons.

The building had a large dance hall with a stage, and side rooms for ping pong, pool tables, and arts and crafts. The entrance area featured a snack bar, and there were tennis courts with night lighting outside.

Some of the entertainers who performed at the Wildcat Lair were: Ray Anthony, Tony Martin, Ginny Simms, Rochester, Frances Langford, Frankie Laine, Benny Goodman, Tennessee Ernie, Dick Haymes, Dick Cantino, Kay Starr, Arthur Lee Simkins, Mills Brothers, Jackie Robinson, Liberace, Patti Page, Vic Damone, Pat O'Brian, The Weavers, Morey Amsterdam, Xavier Cugat & Abbie Lane, Jimmy Durante, Peggy Lee, Rosemary Clooney, and Mel Torme.

Big stars didn't act like today's celebrities back then. Many were happy to come to the Saturday radio show "Lair on the Air" on Saturday afternoon. A public service of station KENO, the show was entirely produced by teens. The guests from the Strip were interviewed and we played their hit records. Other times there were teen performances, and news of school and other teen activities and sports.

(Editor's Note: The above was written by Hank Rilling in his piece "Lair on the Air." I couldn't do better so don't be surprised when you see it again on page 29)

The Wildcat Lair *(through the years)*

Taken from the pages of the Wildcat Echo 1947-1956

1947

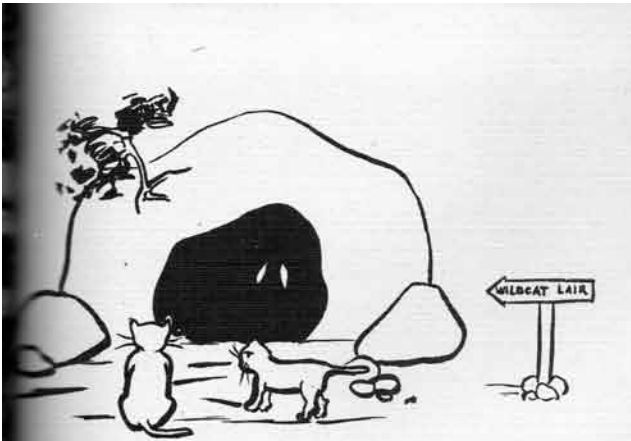


The newest addition and attraction for the students of Las Vegas High is the Wildcat Lair. The Lair is run by the Teen-Agers with the help of Eileen Abbott and Bob Johnston. The Lair has proved to be a popular meeting place among the Vegas students and even to those from nearby towns.

Every night something of interest can be found. Club meetings, plays, wrestling, dancing, and ping-pong make up the regular schedule.

Once a week the Teen-Agers have their own radio program which is sponsored, put on, and participated in by the Teen-Agers. On Saturday night there is a dance with a band. Many school clubs put on their dances and affairs at the Lair. In order to belong to the Lair, a Wildcat Lair card must be owned.

The students are very happy and proud to have such a wonderful place to meet.



Swing Your Partner!

Big Time Gamblers!

Bottoms Up!

1948



WILDCAT LAIR

An integral part of the life of every Las Vegas High School student is the Wildcat Lair. The regular weekly dances, the fountain, the ping-pong room, and the general friendly atmosphere of the Lair have so impressed themselves on the lives of the students that never will any of them forget the fun, companionship, and leisure hours developed there.

Miss Abbott ---"Eileen" --- assisted this year by Mr. Caskey and Mr. Hall, has accomplished that which no one thought could be accomplished in the way of teen-age recreation. Without her and the Lair, Las Vegas High would not be the same, revered place we will always remember.



Miss Eileen Abbott



Mr. Hall and Mr. Cakey



THE LAIR



DANCE NIGHT



TED LEWIS, EILEEN AND YOU



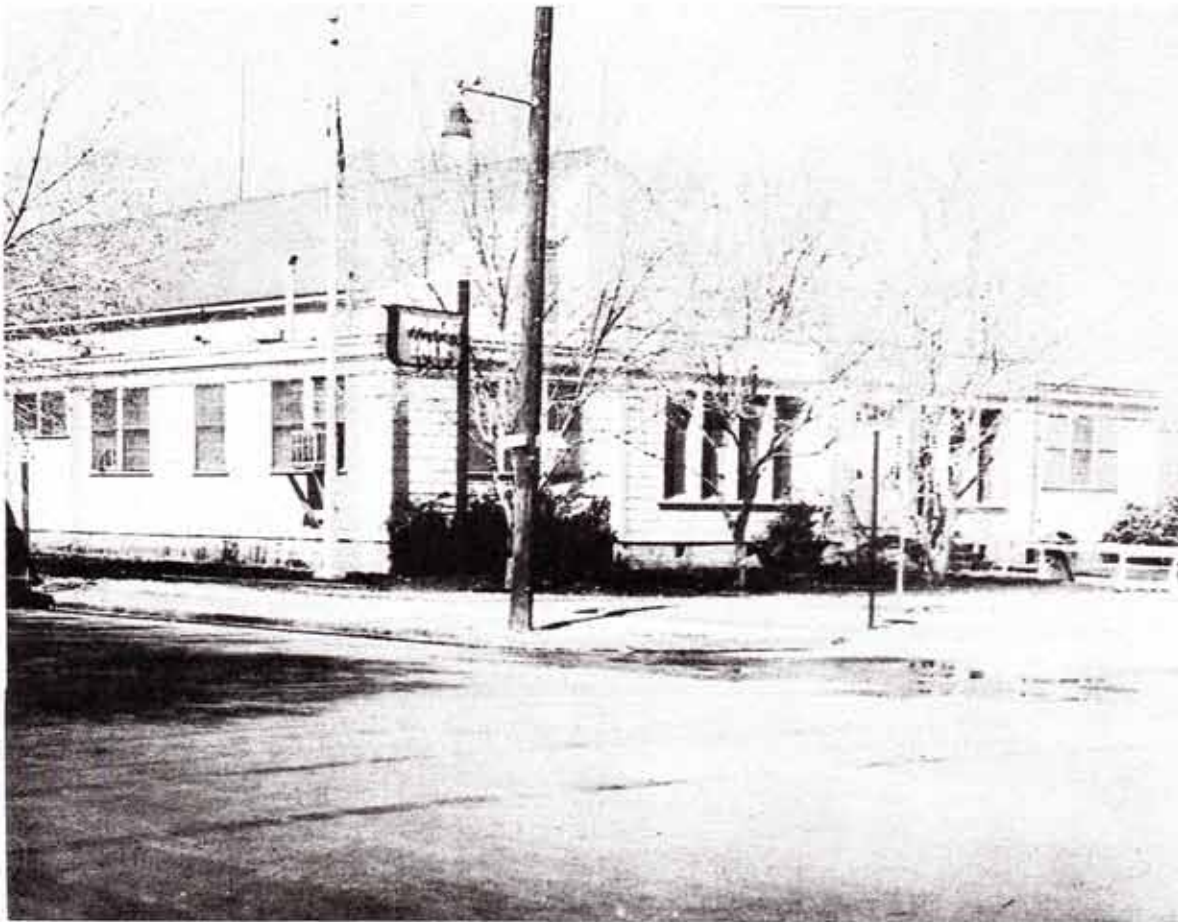
HAVE A COKE



THE CHAMPS

1949

WILDCAT LAIR

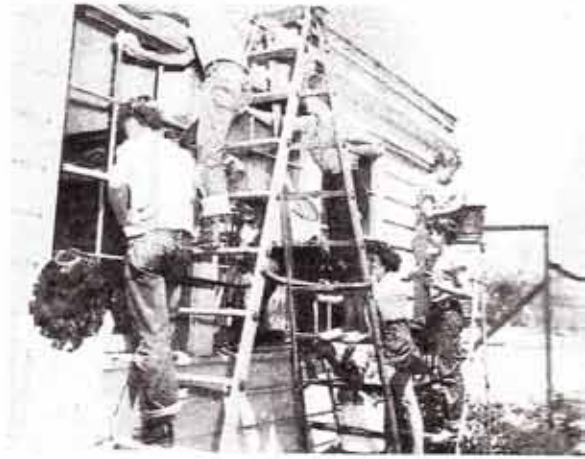


MERLE BUNKER
Director

Another full year of activities was sponsored by the Wildcat Lair under the supervision of Merle Bunker and Lou Anton, who replaced Robert Hall in January.

The dances every weekend were the main points of interest as entertainment was provided by such stars as Tony Martin, Ginny Simms, Rochester, Frances Langford, Frankie Laine, and Benny Goodman. These dances were supplemented by bowling and ping-pong tournaments and a weekly radio program, "Lair on the Air." A student group known as the Board of Directors was responsible for the success and variety of the activities.





1950



MERLE BUNKER
Director

Wildcat Lair



CLARK GAMMELL
President

Las Vegas is proud to boast one of the finest teenage centers in the United States, and the students of L. V. H. S. make this club their main headquarters for recreational activities other than provided by the school. After the games, after school club meetings, the "Lair" is the place to go to meet all friends or enjoy refreshments from the soda and snack bar.

Dances with orchestras are held every week at this popular center of activity, and during sports tournaments, visiting teams are welcomed with a warm handshake. Other recreational facilities located there are tennis courts, ping-pong tables, checkers and chess games, and dancing class free of charge to the students.

The Lair also sponsors a radio program weekly in which students direct and appear on the show; and during the year the club sponsors many worthwhile benefit drives.

Wildcat Lair Board of Directors



GARY BUNKER, LEE EDWARDS, JEANNINE McCOLL, PEGGY ALLEN, JENNY LOU McAFERTY, DIANE CRANDALL, CLARK GAMMELL, ROBERTA GORDON, BETTY CUMMINGS, JEAN MATSON, BARBARA PROFFIT, DON ROWAN, RALPH STEPHENS, JIM PICO.

1951



HENRY RILLING
President



OFFICERS

Left to right—

JOYCE AUSTIN

EARLENE WHITT

Secretary-Treasurer

Vice-President

Meeting place . . . where town's teens congregate every night except Sunday . . . to dance . . . play ping-pong . . . checkers . . . cards . . . or eat at snack bar . . . Lair's other activities include . . . camera club . . . drama guild . . . free dancing . . . hay rides . . .

weekly radio program . . . "Lair On the Air" . . . operated entirely by students . . . Friday nights feature big name entertainers, such as: Kay Starr . . . Arthur Lee Simpkins . . . scene of Girls' Club annual reverse dance . . . and selection of Policeman's Ball Queen . . . Lair staged winter carnival . . . Charleston snow was hauled in . . . to make snowmen . . . everyone skated and ate . . . annual Lair Christmas dance . . . highlight of teen social season . . . Johnson's fashion show . . . displayed talents of younger set . . . Lair is ruled . . . by Lair Board of Directors . . . whose motto is . . . "to serve town's teens well."

First Row, left to right—PAT TANEY, DONNA FISHER, JOYCE AUSTIN, EARLENE WHITT, JACKIE BELL.

Second Row—MRS. ROBERTS, GEORGE EVANS, HENRY RILLING, KEN GRAGSON, JACK MILLIGAN, BOB GENOCHIO.



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LAIR



Boys model their attire in Fall Fashion Show.



Guest star, Tennessee Ernie, crowns Christmas Ball Queen, Barbara Merrill.



Girls strut their styles for evening in Fall Fashion Show.



Annual Girls' Reverse Dance held spotlight in November.



Policeman's Ball Queen participants. Mary Jane Arnold won honor.

A C T I V I T I E S



Teenagers greet guest entertainer, Lena Horne.



Christmas Holidays brought Winter Carnival and snow hauled into Las Vegas

1952



DIANE CRANDALL
President

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Officers—
LEW FORMASTER, PAUL DES VAUX, Sergeant-at-Arms; BARBARA BINION, Secretary; TONY MALONE, Publicity Director; GARY BUNKER, Treasurer.



The Wildcat Lair, teenage center of Las Vegas, has been the main headquarters for recreational activities for Las Vegas High School students. During the week the Lair offers many recreational activities such as tennis, ping-pong, checkers, chess games, orchestra and juke box dances on week-ends. During sports seasons the visiting teams are welcomed with a dance and entertainment. The Lair also features a library, art and craft room, and snack bar for the teenagers.

Sponsoring a radio program every week under student direction and presentation, they feature school personalities and the guest stars for the coming dances. The Lair functions with a president and board of directors that are chosen at the first of the school year. They are advised by the City Recreation Director Bob Genochio, and by Mrs. Jeannie Roberts, who is the Lair's official director.



Fourth Row, left to right:—Gail Adams, Dan Tondevoid, Pete Hess, Lew Foremaster, Jerry Ballinger, Gary Bunker.
Third Row:—David Wanderer, Buzzy Holst, Sam Ward, Paul Des Vaux, Henry Rilling.
First Row:—Tony Malone, Jim Pico, Barbara Binion, Sylvia Brickner, Sherrie Dunbar, Bob Genochio, superintendent of recreation.

Activities



Kay Starr gets a laugh out of M. C.

The activities of the Lair this year were concerned mostly with the appearances of guest stars such as Kay Starr, Pat O'Brien, Mills Bros., Vic Damone, The Weavers, Tony Martin, Mel Torme, Dick Cantino, and many others. The teenage center also featured a fashion show, a weekly radio show, and special interest groups in square dancing, dramatics and photography.



Dick Cantino awes Lair crowd.

The Annual Girl Reverse Dance held at the Lair every year was another feature attraction, being one of the biggest events of the winter season. A semi-formal, reverse date sponsored by the Girls' Club was another feature. Another is the Homecoming Dance sponsored by the Varsity Club, which featured the Football Queen and her attendants.

The Lair is always open to any organization for use for the teenagers.



Claudia Kahre just stepped out of Vogue.



Sonny Handly and Carol Coniglio at the Lair Christmas dance.



G. R. proves big success.



"Lair On the Air" broadcasts.

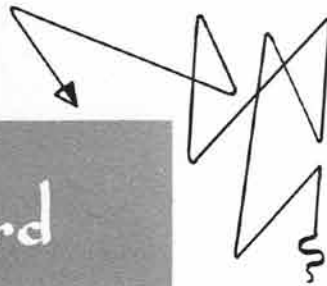
1953

Chuck Johnston
Lair Board President



Jeanne Roberts, Lair director, and Sheril Knight, "Lair On The Air" announcer, plan a Saturday program.

lair board



Wildcat Lair . . . always open to teenagers . . . for dancing . . . games . . . food . . . headed by the Lair Board of Directors who set prices . . . decorate . . . rent to organizations . . . Senior Mixer . . . Fall fashion show . . . Christmas Ball . . . New Year's Eve Dance . . . Police Men's Ball . . . queen selection . . . "Lair On the Air" informs students of activities . . . visited by Mills Brothers . . . Frankie Laine . . . Jackie Robinson . . . plans for new Lair.

WILDCAT LAIR BOARD, Left to right: Chuck Johnston, Pat Taney, Donna Fisher, Verstellen Eberle, Dorothy Ross, Camille Roberts, Ken Gragson, Sharon Marshall, Barbara Potter.



1954



Left to right, Seated: Pat Taney, Versiellen Eberle, Sharon Christian, Terry Jeffers, Pat Gray;
Standing: Ken Gragson, Sharon Marshall.



Representing the student body, the Lair Board, with Jeannie Roberts as advisor, plans the activities at the Wildcat Lair. Friday night dances, the annual fashion show, the Policemens' Ball Queen contest, New Year's Eve Dance, and various sports keep the students' leisure time well occupied.

Saturday afternoon radio listeners receive teen-age news through "Lair on the Air."



Pat Taney
President





LAIR ACTIVITIES

1. The Racketeers, newly formed club sponsored by the Lair.
2. The band tunes up — "Let's Dance!!"
3. Lucky Jimmy, escorts lovely models for the fashion show.
4. "The Pause That Refreshes" at the snack bar.
5. "Oh Sweet Mama, tree top tall"
6. Sybil Jones, reigning beauty of the Policemen's Ball is pictured with last year's queen, Bonnie Gay Jolley.
7. Looks like Jeannie Roberts, Lair Director, is winning.





Versiellen Eberle
President



Officers, Left to Right: Miriam O'Donnell, Secretary; Jeanne Roberts, director; Jack Brooks, vice-president; Versie Eberle, president.

Composed of members from three high schools . . . Las Vegas . . . Gorman . . . and Rancho . . . who plan fun-filled activities for their student bodies . . . Friday night dances . . . New Year's Eve Dance . . . solicited money for polio campaign . . . by painting a "line of dimes" . . . on both sides of Fremont Street.



Lair Council, Left to Right: Joanne Clark, Marjorie Gibson, Pat Taney, Jack Brooks, Miriam O'Donnell, Janet Bond, Versie Eberle, Sheila Crowe, Terry Jeffers, Kay Bollig, Nancy Johnston, Larry Looney, Danny Churchfield.



lair board

Joking and laughing, the Lair council waits for Versie, their president. She is in Mr. Long's office asking him if she can announce over the P.A. that the Lair Cards can be picked up at the office. She has to hurry back to arrange for the dance after the game. The dance has been announced several times on the special radio program, "Lair on the Air"; everything must be just right.



Versiellen Eberle
President



Left to right: Ray Embry, Judy McGuire, Paul Huffey, Joan Wagner, Howard Oren, Bonnie Guthrie, Marcia Leigon.

Wildcat Lair on the Air

It was really great to be a teenager growing up in Las Vegas. In addition to the regular opportunities & activities that high school presents, we had the resort hotels and big name entertainers that we could enjoy after the Prom. We could, in the late '40s and early '50s, make the midnight show with our dates & friends, and order a "Shirley Temple" (non-alcoholic) without a cover charge or minimum.

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Return with us now to those thrilling days of yesteryear, when out of the past come the sweet songs our times, in a nostalgic "Lair on the Air."

Since the way we listen to music has changed dramatically since we listened to "Lair on the Air", the format of this program will be different. I hope to accommodate those who may wish to put it on an MP3 player, burn a disk, or put it on their pad/tablet or smart phone. It's been hard to keep up with the revolution since the 12 inch records (78s), then the 45 smaller disks, wire recorders, tape decks, cassettes, walkmans, MP3, and now smartphones that play MP3's and even videos.

Our tastes in music has no doubt changed too, so playing the big hits of those stars who came to the Lair may not be the best for this program. The web has made it easy to look up and listen to tunes of particular interest, find their lyrics, writer/composer, artist, hit parade chart, or history. Examples are:

<http://www.reelclassics.com/Movies/Casablanca/astimegoesby-lyrics.htm>

<http://www.1959bhsmustangs.com/videojukebox.htm>

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/September_Song

So you can be your own disc jockey now, with your favorite tunes and playlists. Dish Cable TV offers tons of music (like channel 6071 which is SiriusXM that comes with a trial in new cars as SXM71; "Siriusly Sinatra").

Maybe your first memory of the Wildcat Lair would be the fun you had doing the "Bunny Hop". Unfortunately if you google it, you will find the following:

From [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bunny_hop_\(dance\)](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bunny_hop_(dance))

"The bunny hop is a novelty dance that was created at Balboa High School in San Francisco in 1952. It is a social mixer dance, sometimes also referred to as a "party" or "dance party" dance."

But you will remember doing it earlier than 1952. Maybe that is because Ray Anthony and his band came to the Lair earlier. The Hop was always led by our classmate Dean Hill, who died this year at the age of 82.

Commentary follows with the songs to click on:

1. **"Sunny Side of the Street"** by Manhattan Transfer. As a teenager in LV, you may or may not have told your parents you had to stay up late to do homework, and then listened to the late night request radio show 'Plattis Platter Party'. You could call in a request to station KENO any time of the day, to be played on the show. George Plattis told me that half of his audience were teenagers, even though his show started at 10pm. He only used the first 4 bars of this as his theme song before he started talking. "For BP from a secret admirer." Barbara Proffit was a cheerleader and one of the first elected to the Lair board of directors. She always had time & a smile for everyone.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MSV8POSrAkM>

2. **"Boy from Ipanema"** by Rosemary Clooney & Diana Krall. Rosemary Clooney was my 1st interview on "Lair on the Air". She walked across the highway from the Stardust where she was staying & performing, to the radio station KENO which was adjacent to the grounds of the El Rancho Vegas. She put us all at ease in her pedal pushers and hair done up in a bandana. Her big hit at that time was "Come on na My House," but our selection here shows how she kept contemporary over the years by pairing with current entertainers like Diana Krall. You can skip the ads.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FoLtg9ygiI0>

3. **"I've Got the World on a String"** by Tony Bennett & Diana Krall. Another entertainer who kept current. Recently he did a PBS special with Lady Gaga, and continues to sing our old favorites.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=yKChLK6cPr0h>

4. **"My Kind of Town"** Tony Bennett & Frank Sinatra duet. Another classic.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Orqgv9LCsvE>

5. **"The Way You Look Tonight."** Typical Sinatra.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=lgab2Vuz2Nk>

6. **"Creep"**. A spoof on Frank Sinatra & Tony Bennett by an Australian who calls himself Frank Bennett. You'd have to have skied in Queenstown New Zealand to know how popular and funny his 2 albums (over 20 songs) really are.

http://www.last.fm/music/Frank+Bennett/_/Creep

7. **"Fascinatin' Rhythm"** by Mel Torme. Another Gershwin song introduced by Fred Astaire before we were born. Torme came to the Lair, and to "Lair on the Air" where we played this song prior to interviewing him. This was about the same time as my future wife performed a musical of the same name at Poly High School in Long Beach CA. Song is about a tune that sticks in your head.

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=O2eUF3sPL_w

8. **"I Love You Porgy"** by Frances Faye who rocked the place at the Thunderbird Lounge. Some of us remember her at the Last Frontier Lounge earlier, where she walked her 3 poodles on the lawn next to the Wedding Chapel during her breaks. Here she pairs with Mel Torme. Couldn't be performed today.

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WvNFD9Lzj_k

9. **"Perfidia"**. Another Frances Faye rendition, with her world famous bongo player Jack Constanza. Many strip entertainers came by her lounge acts during their breaks between their shows.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2cMx2iV2Z9A>

10. **"Poinciana"** by the Four Freshmen. An unusual way to present 2 groups. The Original group and the New group. The Original group looks like they are at the Lair. Maybe that's Myrna, Mary Jane, Barbara Profit, & Barbara Deer (in the letter sweater) sitting there.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8Z9JsMTSHqk>

11. "I Remember You" Some of the poetry of our time was written in the grooves of the records we bought and to which we listened. They played the songs of our generation.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6eV0Yu3JZ4E>

12. "Graduation Days" Also Four Freshmen. Don't get misty on me now. Under the albums—Tracks—click on line 3:04.

<http://www.last.fm/search?q=four+freshmen%2C+graduation>

13. "Embrace Me" (Medley) by Louie Prima & Keely Smith. Went from Lounge Acts to showroom performers during our high school years. Bought a home in Las Vegas and became famous. Had many record albums.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=roheaHSBrRU>

14. "Old Black Magic" Typical Louie & Keeley. You can skip the ad if you're not a skier.

http://my.mail.ru/mail/yu_or/video/105/144.html

15. "I'm In the Mood for Love." We used to watch them thru the arches in the hall near the bathrooms at the Thunderbird Lounge after big dance nights. Sam Butera & the Witnesses were part of their lively show. You have to pick the '57 2:07 version.

<https://search.yahoo.com/yhs/search?p=louie+prima+%26+Keely+smith&ei=UTF-8&hspar=mozilla&hsimp=yhs-002>

16. "That's Love." Steve Lawrence & Eydie Gorme. Many appearances on the Strip. This is from different shows.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Axtt9ftjh4s>

17. "Thru the Years." Steve & Eydie play just for us sentimentalists.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=RQtmYukplkU>

18. "Sunrise, Sunset." Steve & Eydie. Powerful lyrics. Get a tissue.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FjEQmm1g-2c>

19. "September Song" June Christy, Four Freshmen, and Stan Kenton's orchestra finale in concert.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9tv5MtcgaqQ>

I hope you enjoyed "The Lair on the Air" again in your 80's.

Best Wishes,

Hank Rilling

P.S. There are a lot of our class of '53 whose mates are gone or you are caregivers to one who is infirm. As a special treat, you can download, watch & listen to Tony Bennett's 85th Birthday Concert at the Palladium in London (it's 58 minutes long) or in '91 at the Prince Edward Theatre (44 minutes long). They are tributes to the lyrics of our age:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2Pib8MCZ8RE>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=E5IjP6GXBIo>

If you want to convert any of the songs to mp3s go to: <http://www.youtube-mp3.org/> then save the download to any file on your computer.

(Editor's Note: The links to the songs may not work due to the copying into the software used in this publication. If that is the case, merely copy the site and paste it into your browser and that should make the connection.

Memories

Ardie Ban Colburn, '47: Favorite memories were spending the summer at Warm Springs Ranch, Twin Lakes, Old Ranch, Vegas Wash or even El Rancho, swimming or soaking up the sun. My mother even built stairs to go up roof of our garage for sunbathing but it was waaaay too hot. Going to the Round Up was always a must! Almost every evening was spent at the Wildcat Lair (my home away from home), playing ping pong or dancing. I had a 12 o'clock curfew but I never had to worry because there were plenty of offers for a ride home. (See photo section for photos submitted by Ardie)



Elsie Shaver Perske, '49: What a great project! Unfortunately a December 30th deadline will be impossible for me, although I have great memories of LVHS and the Lair. We moved to Vegas in 1944 and lived on S. 8th just a block from the school. My sister, Lois, graduated in 1946 and I in '49. Mother later taught there, Lois taught briefly there and I also taught there. Unfortunately my sister passed away after Thanksgiving and we will be going to Henderson next weekend for her funeral. Because of that and the Christmas Holidays I just cannot dig up the pictures and the memories in time. Incidentally, Mother, Marienne Shaver, was among those very instrumental in getting the Lair project off the ground. Best wishes on your project!!!

John Lundquist, '49: Thanks to Hank for putting this together (Lair on the Air) and sending it to us. Of course one of the high lights was always the dances, the social life was also very important. In 49 there was no drugs in school that I knew of and although there was some alcohol outside the lair [by non students] because of the guard there wasn't any inside.

I can tell that he is a music lover, when the instruments didn't drown out the vocalist. I too am an admirer of music but only as a listener because I have no talent other than enjoyment.

My sister in-law was from your class, Martha Goodman, and my wife Billye is also from the class of 49. We will soon have our 65th anniversary. Thank you again for sending Lair on the Air, we enjoyed it very much.

Stan Clifton, '50: Thank you for the info about the Lair. I graduated in '50 and went to Woodbury College in LA. My folks moved from Las Vegas in '53 so it was many years before I returned. But I have great memories of the Lair. I think it was '48 when I had a band that played at the Lair. We weren't very good and only played there once or twice. The kids always had something else to do so it was tough to get enough players. One night the LVHS Band teacher (Horace Reid) even filled in. There was a story about us in a magazine - I think the name of it was FRIENDS - and it might have been published by General Motors. There was a picture of me playing my alto Sax. My Dad drove a bus for Vegas Transit and my Mother worked at Brimmies Stationery store on Fremont.



Gail Adams Hardy, '51: As a Las Vegas native I attended the only grade and high school Vegas had. I started my Freshman year at LVHS in 1948 and graduated in 1951 as the last graduation class with only those students who started there. Rancho High didn't have a senior class yet. We loved the old building and ran up and down the end and center stairways many times each day to classes in the basement, first and second floors. On most days we sat outside on the front steps to eat lunch and visit. We could run across the street to the little store for candy or even sandwiches.



My senior year I was editor of the yearbook and as we had very few on the staff and it being a very time consuming job including weekends I was given a key to the building back door and the Journalism and Desert Breeze room in the basement. It didn't take long to figure out the key was a master key to all the rooms. I won't name the cohorts but there were three of us who shared the mischief gene and delighted in erasing blackboards, switching books, and many other nefarious deeds to numerous to mention. Since we were honor club members and very active in school activities etc we were not suspects.

Our Principal was George Early Harris and the Vice Principal was Walter Long. Mr. Long was in charge of behavior and meted out punishment with an extremely long lecture which pointed out what good citizenship was and how important it was to study and be good citizens. He had a very large sign behind his desk which many of us memo-

rized as we had to look at it often. The sign read "WHEN THE ONE GREAT SCORER COMES TO WRITE AGAINST YOUR NAME HE WRITES NOT THAT YOU WON OR LOST BUT HOW YOU PLAYED THE GAME." I will never forget it as I read it often enough during many lectures by dear Walter. When dutifully listening to one of his lectures one day my eye caught his waste paper basket along the side of his desk. I spied a barely crumpled piece of paper which had some purple goo on it and what looked like printing. I finally recognized it as the copy machine backing paper which had the purple ozalid goo on it. My folks had a copy machine at their business and I had watched my dad copy some flyers. When you ran the paper through the machine it had a drum and the master sheet had the ozalid. It somehow allowed the master to make copies. When you ran off the papers you needed you pulled the back off the master which had the purple goo and the printing of the original somehow but it was in reverse like holding a page up to a mirror. Wow. My mind was in overdrive. The teachers ran off the tests on this machine and that meant the original ozalid part was in Mr. Long's waste paper basket and the biology test was coming up on the following Friday. The three of us met Wednesday and Thursday evenings after dinner and with my key opened Mr. Long's office door and checked his basket. On Thursday night, low and behold there was the biology test backing. It was kind of web and sticky but we managed to get it down to the Journalism room. We locked the door and spread the sheet out and spent what seemed like of forever reading the words backwards and writing them down frontwards, We each wrote down the questions and headed for home to look up the answers. I didn't get to sleep until after midnight and I was so intent on the project I was nearly finished before it dawned on me I knew the answers. So much for our lives as burglars! We loved LVHS and were proud Wildcats. Please do not forget to mention Merle Bunker, who was the Director at the Lair for quite some time and was loved by all.

Toni Jolley King, '52: I'm so excited about your project. But I have so many great memories you could probably fill 3 books! I imagine a lot of us will duplicate.



I loved growing up In Las Vegas. I didn't want to graduate from LVHS. I tell everyone how much fun it was growing up in LV. I moved there in 1944 when I was 10. We lived in Huntridge which was brand new & went to John S Park school in pre fab buildings. If the boys stamped on the floor too hard they'd make a hole. We had no Jr. high schools so we went K thru 8th grade then graduated to LVHS. I think John S Park & the 5th Street Grammar School were the only schools that went thru 8th grade. There were also Mayfair & North 9thStreet schools but they only went to 5th grade.

Back in those early days we only had the El Rancho Vegas & the Last Frontier hotels on the strip & they were like luxury motels with the swim pools in the front. And remember Club Bingo with their darling big lit up Bingo card on top? I think it eventually became the Thunderbird Hotel. And In The early 50s Frontier Village was built next to the Last Frontier & was a fun place to go. My class of 1952 held our Junior Prom there. Remember Helldorado Days in May? And the parades? And Helldorado Village on Main & Bonanza cause Bonanza ended at Main. That was our once a year carnival for four days. Remember when we only had an overpass over the railroad tracks on Bonanza & on Charleston Blvd we had to wait for trains cause there was no overpass. Of course Charleston only went to the County Hospital.

Remember when Boulder Dam (which I still call it & my grandchildren never know what I'm talking about) became Hoover Dam & we were so smart alecky and wondered if Boulder City would become Hooverville. We only had 3 movie theatres downtown --- the El Portal, the Fremont & the Palace. Also the Huntridge way east on Charleston & the Mayfair way east on Fremont.

Ronzone's was our big department store & us girls got the material for our Prom dresses there for our Mothers to make. The sales lady there knew us all & would tell us which material our different friends bought. Fun fun small town.

In those days the 2 strip hotels had family BBQs during Helldorado & other fun things. And LVHS----sitting on the front steps. In the winter boys would drive up to Mt Charleston & load their car trunks with snow & arrive at school just as we were getting out & we'd have snowball fights on the front steps. When I moved there in 1944 there was a huge snowfall & snow was on the ground several days. School was out for a whole week. Really cool. I'd come from Salt Lake City where it snowed all winter & couldn't believe they'd let us out of school just because it snowed. Many years later I found out that they let us out of school because kids were bussed in from Jean, Blue Diamond & maybe even Pahrump & the busses couldn't get thru cause there were no snowplows.

And remember when the Atomic Bomb was tested & it would wake you up really early in the morning shaking the house & rattling the Windows. Like an earthquake but we didn't know what those were. When they started testing them around 8 or 9 am we'd drive out the Reno hi way a little way, get behind a sand dune & wait. I can't remember if we heard it first or saw it first or felt it first. But we sure saw the mushroom cloud. Then we'd be late for school & tell Mr Long we were experiencing history being made. He never went for that & we'd all get unexcused absences.

Then there was the Wildcat Lair! What lucky teenagers we were. I think we paid 25 cents to get in & had live music most every weekend. That was THE place to go. And most of the stars from the strip hotels would come perform for us between their first & second shows. We saw them all. I even remember when Rosemary Clooney came to the Round Up drive in where we all hung out & singing & no one knew who she was. The Round Up was another fun place. Isn't the Stratosphere there now?

We'd go to the strip hotels after the Prom for the 2nd show & have dinner & our pictures taken. I think by then we also had the Flamingo, Desert Inn, Thunderbird, Sahara hotels & maybe even the Sands & Riviera. We all thought we were so cool in our Prom clothes while the tourists politely smiled at us kids. Back then there was dancing before & after the show so we'd all dance. Then the chorus girls danced then an opening act & finally the big star. It's hard to remember them all. There were so many. The boys always wanted to see sultry Peggy Lee.

The whole town came to our football games cause LVHS was the only high school. When we went to college we had to go away cause there was no UNLV. And when there was finally a small college it was called Nevada Southern & the sports teams were the Rebels cause they rebelled from Reno! Then the name was changed to UNLV. I always thought they were copying UCLA.

We used to cruise Fremont St from 5th street to the railroad station, turn around & come back to 5th which is now Las Vegas Blvd but will always be 5th St to us old timers. There were always bums sleeping on the big grass area at the railroad station which is now the Union Plaza Hotel.

I tell people that I lived on 8th St & Las Vegas Blvd was 5th St. My friend, Judy Frehner, lived on 3rd St which is now Casino Center Dr. We both lived between Oakey Blvd & Charleston Blvd. Oakey was almost the end of town. The strip was beyond it. The Frehners had a milk cow in their front yard. Now it's practically the middle of town. Oh for the good ole days!! I remember when Oakey got paved because I drove my Dad's new Chevy with white walls down it & got tar all over the white walls & he made me clean them. Yuk!!

When the Flamingo Hotel was built, we used to go out there to go up & down in the elevator. It was a big deal--an elevator!! We never had escalators till I married & moved away. We had # please telephones until 1953 or 1954 & TV didn't arrive until 1953 when my father, Rube Jolley, started KLAS-TV. He was the major stockholder & got the ball rolling but he sold out before we could've become millionaires! I loved growing up in Las Vegas. It was so fun & small. We could walk everywhere & I remember walking down Charleston Blvd to 8th St with a few girlfriends & we were cheerleading & cars would honk & wave as they passed. And at nite if we were just driving around we'd drive out to Jean & turn around or drive out to Boulder Dam & turn around & drive home. Something to do. Las Vegas was all by itself not like cities now that run into each other. Henderson was about 20 or so miles away back then. I had a boyfriend out there & he'd hitch hike in to see me then my Dad would let me drive him home. When I went off to college, kids would ask us if we lived behind a casino or if we actually had schools & churches in Las Vegas. We were always sticking up for Las Vegas, we loved our town. Not everyone worked in the gambling industry. None of my close friends fathers did including my father. We saw Liberace before he was flamboyant, saw Red Skelton, Edgar Bergen & Charley McCarthy & Mortimer Snerd, Patti Page & I can't remember others but someone else will.

This is such a good idea, George. Thank you. It's made me cry remembering all the great times & great friends from 70 years ago. I love "going home" but it isn't home anymore. It's too big & different. But in my heart it will always be "home". My brother is still there so I go visit. I remember your father & Scoop Garside. I was the Desert Breeze editor & he was our printer & was so sweet & helpful. Thanks again George. My phone # is 760-413-6918 & address is 69411 Ramon Rd #1213 Cathedral City, Ca. 92234

John Holland, '53: One of the things I remember is one Friday night Max Baer was on the stage doing something and he reached down into the audience and lifted Barbara Profit up onto the stage. The crowd roared and I can't recall what happened next.



Bob Beville, '53: I have a 1946 Clark County plat map of Las Vegas given to me by Bill Ciliac. At that time, the street boundaries were primarily San Francisco (now Sahara Ave) to the south, Bruce Street to the east, College to the north and Main Street to the west. Growing up in Las Vegas was one of the most enjoyable experiences I ever had. Prior to 1946, I lived on Bruce Street, near the corner of Bruce and Fremont Street. Our house was behind the Clark Inn Motel. In 1943, we moved to a new home in the Mayfair sub-division (at that time there were two other sub-divisions: Biltmore and Huntridge). The summers were hot but we had swamp coolers so it was ok. We ran around town with no shoes or shirt on all summer long. They even let us go into movie theaters dressed that way. Doug Rather also lived there as well and he had a horse his folks kept in the back yard. Doug used to take us for rides in the desert across the street from his house. Doug lived on Spencer street and I lived on 17th street. Other kids that lived in Mayfair that you should remember were; Earl Evans , Bill Barrett, Leon Stevenson, Evan Cronister, Joann Bradshaw, Reynold Jones, Harry Mangrum, Walter Eagle, Barbara Potter Fabb, Roger and Ralph Adams, Richard Bunker, Dick Tinch, Dickie Portnier (father was a teacher) and Larry Dawson.



Saturdays at the movies were a big thing. Theaters most frequented were: Vegas Theater, Huntridge Theater and the El Portal theater. On Saturdays they had a double feature, 10 cartoons and a serial (Batman, Durango Kid, etc.). Most of the kids had a cowboy hero, such as the Lone Ranger, Roy Rogers, Hop Along Cassidy, etc. My hero, strangely enough, was Spike Jones. I had all his 78 records and I drove my folks nuts playing them. Once, my father made arrangements with the Flamingo Hotel to allow me to attend Spike's dinner show. After the show, I was allowed to go back stage for a photo of the two of us together. That was my prize possession.



In those days a ticket to get into the movies was 25 cents. That was all my paper route and lawn mowing salary would handle.

Going to the movies during the summer is not all that we did. We spent a lot of time building forts in the desert. Out of all the forts we saw, Clark Hoffman and his brother Craig build the best one. It was so deep it had bunk beds in it. Swimming was also on our list. I am sure most classmates remember the Twin Lakes pool, the Municipal Pool (now Dulla Center), and the Old Ranch Pool (Mormon Fort).

A few years went by and before you knew it, it was 1951 and I had my first car. It was a 20 year old 1931 Model A Ford Coupe. It was painted Red when I got it because it was owned by Ted Wiens who owned a Texaco Gas Station on the corner of Fremont and 5th Streets. I was used as a "push car " at the Midget dirt track races at the Last Frontier Sportsdrome located behind the Las Frontier Hotel. That car served me well all through high school. Taking dates to the Wildcat Lair on Friday nights after the ball games and "cruising" Sills Drive In .



And who could forget the out of town trips we took? Like the bus trip to Reno to attend the Boys State Conference or the trip to Hollywood to support the Rythemettes during their performance at the Hollywood Bowl in 1952. It was there I had my first (and last) experience at hocking something for money. I ran out of spending money because things were more expensive than expected, so I sold my sweater to Hank Rilling to get enough money to survive. You will never believe this, but Hank returned the same sweater to me this December, 63 years later. It is still in great shape, after traveling all over the world. Hank wrote a little story about the history behind the sweater. I shall keep them forever.

Life was good growing up in Las Vegas

Camille Roberts Ortiz, '53: "What can I say about the Lair that hasn't already been said? It was one of the highlights of my high school days. We could hardly wait for those Friday night dances. And those stars from the hotels would appear right before my eyes! I use to hang out there because my mother was the director. Lots of things to do. As a matter of fact, I learned how to play ping pong quite well. It was good clean fun and it was the Lair."



Joseph Free, '53: As the new kid fresh from the country my frosh year was wonderful because of the Lair. Playing ping pong or pool or checkers - it was all great. The entertainment by all the big stars was wonderful and since it was virtually free, everybody could come. I was especially impressed that when competing teams came to town for

a game, their crowd came and joined the dance with rest of us. A great institution then and a model for what could still be done to help young people avoid some of the bad stuff they get caught in.

Marion Hall Catron, '53: loved the Lair and the wonderful times we had.....smart of town and hotels to support it and keep us out of more trouble than we were. When I relate my high school days, no one can believe it. Just a moment in time that we were lucky to be in. Now I find it fascinating to see who of us has achieved this age and would I have figured they would be the same ones if I had to pick them in 1953.



John Honeycutt, 53: I remember seeing Teresa Brewer and the Firehouse Five plus two at the Wildcat lair and one of the funniest groups, Spike Jones. We saw them many times. What wonderful memories! I have included several pictures, not the best quality after more than 50 years.



The first picture is me singing in the Las Vegas Talent show over radio station KRAM. The second one is me taken by the Thunderbird hotel pool in 1953.

Two additional pictures will be found in Photo section on page 43. These include a picture of the inside cover of the program for the Las Vegas Little Theater production of Life with Father in 1949. Archie Twitchel was Father and he was a pilot for Bonanza Airlines. He flew us up to Tonopah to put on the performance. A short time later he was a test pilot for Lockheed when he had engine failure and crashed.

All the way down he described how he was trying to find a crash site that would not hurt anyone on the ground. He finally crashed into a school yard avoiding the neighborhood. Barbara Knudson later became movie star. The three kids in the play were myself, Jerry Kerns and Bob McGarvie. Jeanne and Claire Roberts were also in it. The second picture is of Boy Scout Troop 62 prior to "taking over the city". On the bottom row are myself and Jim Marshall.

Catherine Blackman Hammelrath, '53: The Lair ... gosh, where would we have gone after football and basketball games? Every Friday/Saturday night? All summer long? I remember the great live music ... great folks who also played the Strip hotels ... Spike Jones really stood out!!! One Friday night Phyllis Bradley and I decided to play tennis on the courts by the Lair. We were unaware that there was an event inside (dance as usual). We asked a girl heading in why she was there and her reply cracked us up: "Well! It IS Fridaynight!" That is how important the Lair was to the town youth!



LVHS? Mr. "MouseHouse" Millhouse (the typing teacher, a tiny tyrant) was so upset at Lou Foremaster that Lou decided to leave class via the window. I have since studied those windows ... it was a fair leap! Everyone was scared of Mateel Volker ... what a great teacher she was. Ullis Newton and summer geometry with Ann Love. Ms. Newton was a kind and patient soul. Mr. George, a great counselor, so kind. Mr. Knapp, great teacher, good man (sorry Pete, up there above). Paul Gardner's English class ... quiet and laid back. He was interested in all his students' progress and opinions. Mr. Harris ... our principal ... always available, always calm. Mr. Millhouse was still subbing at LVHS in 1982 when I returned there as a teacher. He was quite changed from his suit and tie days ... long hair, very hippy! And everyone smoked ... in the quad! I was very happy to see all that go ... so messy!!

Band trips to Ely where we froze, to Reno when the rain came down and we never got to play ... the Truckee also flooded. We ended up stopping in Beatty and they wanted us to play for them ... so we set up in the back of the Exchange Club (now sadly a hardware store!!!) and played quite a nice little concert. We were quite late getting home and the parking lot at LVHS was full of upset parents!!! We had a great time though, and all of Beatty turned out ... at 10 at night they got dressed and came on down to hear us! What an honor.

After a football game I found that someone had switched the sparkplug wires on my Dad's Jeep Station Wagon, and I could not get it to run! I had NO idea what had happened to it! Fortunately, my father did and fixed it right up. That was quite a learning experience that stayed with me to this day ... I learned a lot more about cars from friends over the years.

Swimming at Lorenzi's in the summer. That is the greatest pool and water I ever swam in, bar none. What a fabulous place that was!! When Dula first opened I used to go there in the summer ... Louise Davis and I were pretty regular there, but Lorenzi's was always the best.

Helldorado! In 6th, 7th, and 8th grades I got to ride my beloved horse in the children's parade. The high school band

always marched in all three parades, then we whooped it up at the Helldorado Village afterwards. It was such a great celebration. 20-mule teams, beautiful horses decked out in silver arraignment, jumping over the horse apples, etc. as we marched! The band did EVERY parade every year ... there were a lot of them back then. The ole screamer Larry Cross was VERY angry with me because I rode the Rotary Club float in the beauty parade in 9th grade. I best remember him screaming at us in rehearsal and breaking his batons by slamming them on his music stand.

Frosty Cahlan and bunch pulling up in front of school one noon in big black cars, wearing black overcoats, carrying violin cases ... after having just visited a local bank! I think they got a bit of discipline for that stunt ... but I still think it was classic! We all laughed a lot.

Daytime lunch at Sill's Drive In. Night time was the Round Up until it fell out of favor and Sill's was it day and night! Is it just me, or was the food really good back then? Bob Baskin owned the Round Up, then took over the café at the El Cortez for a time. We used to walk there for lunch also.

The mysterious Sunrise Mountain (actually, Frenchman's Mountain!) How great it was that Mr. and Mrs. Graham put on a night time picnic up there for a bunch of us and let us satisfy our curiosity in a supervised situation. They set us straight! Great folks.

Walking over to Sylvia Brickner's house for lunch. We walked in the street mostly since Huntridge had no sidewalks! We did all this in one hour and were back in time to sit on the steps before the bell rang.

Dragging Fremont Street, looping through the Union Depot, out Main Street to the Round-up, back up 5th Street to Fremont and repeat, all evening. Driving to the Dam on summer nights, now that was a beautiful drive and beautiful place.

My senior year I apprenticed with Ruby White at Ruby's Flower Shop on Fremont Street. She, and her daughter Evelyn, (Tommy Jordan's mom) were super nice people. Every day I had to walk down Fremont to 1st Street, go north to the Ace Bar, and deliver a corsage to Ann Wells, who owned the bar. I was terrified to walk up 1st Street the first couple of times. After that I realized I was perfectly safe and the Ace was close and I was certainly safe in there!

My father did the books for Ann and her husband. Her husband died sadly too young. Shortly after, my mother was doing the entries in the books one day and Ann had written on the one page, "You went away and left me today." My mother was reduced to tears by that line. I always remembered it and knew Ann only by that until I had to deliver her daily corsage from an admirer who did not have a chance with her. He persevered long after I left the flower shop. Ann finally sold the Ace and moved to Ash Meadows to run the bar up there and the brothel. Las Vegas was always an interesting town!

There was Colonel Bob Russell, who had something to do with management at the Apache Hotel. He was a butt pincher ... I was a child and I remember my mother avoiding him like the plague when we had to go in there! He dressed western, had white hair, beard, and mustache, garrulous old coot.

After graduation I attended Dana McKay Business School. We had the stock car races out behind the Last Frontier back then and we attended those regularly. One night a car lost a tire and it came flying into the stands. We scattered like flies! Except for Dennis Ward ... the girl with him froze in fear and he stopped to shove her and the tire caught his tibia keeping the tire from going under the bleacher seat thus totally tearing up his leg. Dennis spent a long time bed ridden, in the hospital, doing surgery, etc. He lived right across the street from me and I can tell you he went through hell. I can still see the huge ulcers he had on that leg from infection and the cast rubbing.

Speaking of Dana McKay, she was also the librarian at LVHS. She established and ran the business school later in the day. She was the BEST English teacher I ever had. I took typing, business English, and Speed Writing (a simpler shorthand than Gregg). I was in fact doing my homework when that tire flew into the stands.

Junior Prom or Senior Ball, cannot remember which, with Bill Allen. It rained like mad that night. The gym was very pretty. We had a great time. He was such a lovely guy.

Rhythmette Review ... They were such spectacular events. Evelyn Stuckey was an incredible woman. All the girls who were on the team were spectacular also. Did you all know that Ms. Stuckey died at her desk at LVHS? A colleague

found her. It was truly her home.

George, I am sure I could dredge up more but I have to get busy with other things around here now. You are a saint to do this and have to read all the stuff you will get. Hope I did a reasonably decent job for you. HUG HUG! Catherine

Barbara Callaway Sikes-Jones '53: Having lived in Las Vegas from the time right after I was born and growing up there, going to 5th Street Grammar school and then LVHS I have lots of good memories of that time. We first lived behind where the El Cortez is now. I remember sitting under a huge fig tree playing in my sandbox with George Ball when we heard a parade going down Fremont Street so we took off after it. Walked all the way down Fremont to the old Union Pacific RR Depot. My mother was watching the parade from her dentist's office on the second floor of a business building about half way downtown and about had a conniption when she saw her 4 year old daughter walking down the sidewalk when she thought she was safe at home. She left the dentist's office and ran after us but didn't catch up until we were at the depot. Boy did I get a lecture all the way home and then again when my father came home but I didn't get spanked, so I did it a few more times before we moved over to 616 So. 8th St where my folks lived until my mother sold the house to a group of lawyers, but she lived there for 55 years. My Grandpa Callaway stayed with us whenever he was in town. He was an engineer on the RR so that was quite often and I loved it because he would bring home cream puffs for breakfast! He lived in LV before it was a town. They lived in a tent house on the west side of what was later the town. I thought it funny that my grandma had a maid while living in a tent. Before I was a teenager we rented a cabin in Deer Creek every summer to get away from the heat in town. Kenny Olive's folks had a cabin up there too, but it was wiped out by an avalanche. So we got to go through the wreckage left behind and furnish our super tree house with it. We kept our food in a wooden box in the creek to keep it cold since there was no refrigeration then and we couldn't get ice delivered up there but whenever it hailed we got to make ice cream in the old bucket type ice cream maker. I would crank it until it got too hard and then my older cousin Buddy would take over while I sat on the churn to hold it still. We used a two man saw to cut firewood and thought it was fun. We would have pinecone fights with the neighbors and catch chipmunks just so we could let them loose. I remember Gretchen Harris and I started a library, but we didn't get very many people borrowing the books, so gave it up. Waaaaaay back then the Harris's had solar heat and hot water. We played under it's glass in their attic.

When you Huntridge kids moved into "our" school we thought you didn't belong there, but look at what all we would have missed without you. Take what you want from this George and I hope it does you some good. I know it probably isn't what you are after, but it is some of my fondest memories along with going to Isabel Worthen's neighborhood to Play King of the Mountain, or just jacks or jump rope. I had a magical childhood when I look back on it. Especially the way things are now a days.

Henry "Lucky" Rilling, '53: Soliciting memories of the Wildcat Lair for a special issue of "Cat Tracks is a wonderful (and appreciated) venture. A recent NOVA on PBS-TV, which was based on scientific evidence, pointed out that bringing up memories actually expands the brain with extra channels into our synaptic gaps. The up or down side of it (depending on your outlook) is that each memory is relived and actually changes. My view is that they improve and become golden memories.



In our golden years it is appropriate that we look back and feel good about having lived in what many have called "The best of the last, and the last of the best." It is not by accident that TV shows like "Happy Days" and movies like "Bye Bye Birdie" and "Grease" are held up to be the greatest times to be a teenager. The most restored cars that get the greatest attention are those models from the 50's.

So return with us now to those thrilling days of yesteryear when out of the past come photos and memories of our days at the Wildcat Lair. A 'once in America' teen club with live orchestras every weekend, and Broadway and Strip Entertainers during the orchestra's break time. Maybe we were more fortunate than being just once on Dick Clark's "American Bandstand" (the dream of most teens back then), for we had the Lair every week—all week—for our activities.

So have a happy time in your reverie, and get out the scrap books, and thank God for our times, and say a prayer for those that didn't make it from the 50's into our state of Grace.

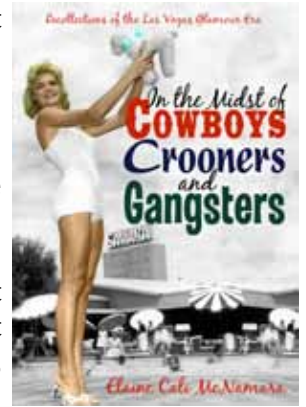
Bob Brown, '54: I have seen both versions. Great stuff! I especially enjoyed the 4 Freshmen clips..I still have every recording they ever made, LOL! I remember "discovering" them in 1953 driving down Fremont in my '32 Ford Road-

ster which had a tube radio!

I remember breaking into the LVHS gym building in the middle of summer in order to have some of our famous "pickup" basketball games. We never got caught!

Elaine "Cali" McNamara, '54: I arrived in Las Vegas with my family in my senior year at LVHS....so my time at the Lair was limited.....however, I was in Summer Stock under the direction of "Hoppy" in a play titled "Bargain Rack" ...played opposite Bob Price (a former State Legislator....he never attended LVHS).

I was in the Helldorado parades for 2 years representing the Joe W. Brown's Horseshoe Club....1st year as "Eve in the Garden of Eden" (winning the Sweepstakes) and 2nd years as "Alice in Wonderland"...1956 & 1957. I had a modeling career working at H. B. Burnett's Dress Shop in various hotels, designer fashion shows, print, etc. Remembering Fremont Street as the center of activity,...dept. stores, cafes, attorneys offices, Downtown Fremont has disappeared.....Ronzones Dept. Store, El Portal, Melody Lane, Garehimes, Woolworths, Penneys, Sears to name a few. The most famous sign was the Pioneer Club's "Howdy Pardner". I wrote a book about my life as a fashion model and what Las Vegas was like.....entitled "In the Midst of Cowboys, Crooners and Gangsters" with a cover photo of me at the Sahara Hotel pool as Miss Wool....holding a lamb. Photographed by the Las Vegas Press.



Gay Fisher Barfield, '54: FIRST, this attachment (Lair on the Air) is an absolute TREASURE! What an amazing gift to us all, and what effort and love it took to create it, Hank! AND A GOOD MEMORY!!! MUCH gratitude, and memories that pour back from those times.



As for follow-up that you are requesting, George, I have some limits unfortunately. One of the saddest memories I have is that when I went away to UC Berkeley, in 1954, all my LVHS yearbooks, photo albums, cheerleading outfits, etc. were left in storage in a big trunk in Las Vegas on a lot way out in the desert that we owned at the time. Probably some giant hotel now sits on that lot! I think my father sold the lot for \$200 or so back then, which was big money then, and ALL THOSE TREASURES WERE LOST when the storage was thrown away I imagine. That has been a big sorrow for me over the years, as you might imagine, as my high school years and friendships meant a lot to me, and my memory thins here and there.

So I have very little in the way of photos from that time. I think Annie Love and Shirley Osmon sent me some fun old photos in the last couple of years, and Sharon Rather an old cut up yearbook from 1953 perhaps? but that is about it. I could send something from whatever I find.

The first memories that come up re the Lair itself are these that follow: Let's be honest, I say to myself and to us all. Because so many of the parents of our classmates were involved at the few big hotels as owners, king-pins of one sort or another there, the famous entertainers you mentioned probably actually HAD to say yes to come to the Lair between the 8 pm and the 11 pm shows, to entertain the bosses kids! Even if you were world famous, you probably did not want to risk saying no to these particular hotel owners, especially those connected to the mob! Which of course we never said aloud, but we all knew. And from which mobs even. So again, how did we young kids get all that priceless entertainment at the Lair, along with our ring-side seats at the hotels for birthdays, proms, etc, with Sinatra and the rest (as we passed in front of the people standing in long lines, with their glares!), if it was not for these powerful parents and their "juice?" J. But the joy and sense of wonder and awe that we had such a place to gather safely, with such immense privilege as the rather spoiled teenagers we were, remains with me to this day.

At the Lair itself, I remember how much we all loved to jitter-bug, and the innocent JOY of the music! And thinking who were the best dancers, hoping we would be asked to dance by them; or hiding in the girls' bathroom if we had not been, which I did many a time. I recall teaching my brother Ben at home how to dance, and how good he became at it, while I ended up leading so many poor guys forever after that! I do to this day. So I loved it when the 60s arrived with all its free-form dancing J! I see our gathering in clusters together among the girls around the edges of the dance-floor, and the guys among themselves, each waiting for certain people to arrive through the front door, disappointed if they did not come that Friday night; then merging shyly, scared, excited to be asked to dance by so and so. The different "crowds", the boundaries between them and us, the inevitable and painful status issues involved; even

fight outside the Lair. There are some embarrassed memories of our elitism, racism, classism, cliques, etc., which bubble up here too, all of which I was a part, I am certain, as an insider, and now regret deeply. Overall, I want to thank you so much for bringing the best of this all back to us in the music you have gathered for us, and the shared memories of each of us, which I will look forward to reading. With aloha and gratitude and hugs, stay well and thriving.

Noreen Callihan, '55: I got to go to "The Lair" only once. We lived 4 miles from the Lair. Kay Starr was scheduled to be the feature one night, and I was a huge fan. Dad would not approve my going until Mom volunteered to accompany me. (Now



I realize, with several children of my own, how brave she was to attend a high school dance in which she knew no one save me and had no official capacity to hide behind.) I tried to be invisible in the crowd, but felt awkward and out of place. Ditto for Mom as she stood against a wall. Ms. Starr was late. Mom felt the need for a calming cigarette. She went quietly out one of the side doors to sneak a smoke. Kids milled around and began gathering at the front of the stage as it got later and later. Finally - a female figure entered from the shadows.

"It's her. She's here!" There were shouts of greeting amidst enthusiastic applause. And then, "Oh, who's that?" I was embarrassed when I realized who had just come in. Mom ducked her head and found a corner in which to hide. Time passed excruciatingly slow. Ms. Starr did appear, did apologize for being late, did deliver a great show for which she did get a rousing round of applause. Mom and I did not say a word on the drive home.

Judy Burke Keck, '55: The ultimate memory of LVHS history/Vegas History is my brother Carey Burke/55. He is a walking encyclopedia of every one, every event, every person, every street, every alley, etc.,etc. He has written a book



on it. Carey doesn't have a computer, but he can be reached at 878-4350. I am his sister Judy, and we both graduated from LVHS in 1955,(not twins) Mother made him re-do sixth grade so he could attend the new Catholic School, St. Joseph at 13th and Bridger, it was the first Catholic school in Vegas, and we went to class with the Binion Kids, Miriam O'Donnell Pemberton, Bob Diero, Patricia Bennett, and I can't remember the rest.

We had a fabulous time, all of the stars came to visit the Lair, Danny Thomas, Liberace, and tons more. We didn't go right into Catholic High School because they hadn't built one yet. Bishop Gorman High didn't come until several years later. I'm so proud of LVHS grads, just our group turned out Senators, Governors, Scientists, Government Executives, Doctors, Lawyers, ad infinitum. (Pretty sharp group).

Good luck in your endeavor, I remember dancing my socks off at the Lair. What a good time, no booze, no dope, no stupidity. Just clean fun.

Ellen Kimball, '56: What a great article (Lair on the Air). Yes, it should be preserved somewhere. The Lair, small town Las Vegas, and the 50's were very unique! Glad I had the opportunity to be there.

James Brown, '56: I do have a memory of the Lair I won't forget, the night Chuck Stanley threw a hand full of pennies on the stage while Kay Starr was singing. I believe that was the last time any entertainers from the Strip ever came to the Lair. And yes, Chuck really screwed up, he almost got severely pounded that night.



Carla Christine Crittenden (Kerr), '56: I don't have any pictures, but I do remember the Lair vividly. I believe it was 1953 and Kay Starr came in from the hotel on the Vegas Strip and entertained us. It was a great show



and I remember hearing afterwards that she had been pregnant at the time and had miscarried. I felt so sad for her. Another time that same year, The Mills Brothers came to entertain and what a show it was. We were so fortunate to have such a venue for the stars to entertain us in and just the fact that they were so willing to do so was incredible. But, of course, that was a different time and I can't imagine this happening now with so many chasing the almighty dollar. Don't know if this is of any use, but this is what I remember.

Although I lived in a dysfunctional family, only a mother who was rarely at home, along with my little sister, I really loved living in Las Vegas. I worked part time at the Fremont Theatre on Fremont Street as an usher. I was able to get wherever I needed to go via the bus line. I belonged to several organizations at LVHS and was very involved in them.

Geraldene (Geri) Bushnell Waite '56: I wish I could help you. I remember the Lair very well. I know that I don't have any pictures and I wasn't able to go to the Lair as often as I would have liked. Good luck, I'm anxious to see what you come up with.



Paul Havas, '56: Just as a footnote my father, Teddy Havas and his friend, Robert Dulla, sponsored certain Amateur Boxing Matches in the '50s.

Jack Abbott, '57: This is a photo taken at McCarran Airport June 1957. We just graduated class of 57. We were about to board a TWA Constellation headed for San Francisco then down to Monterey California then by bus to Ft. Ord to begin eight weeks of Infantry Basic Training. We all took advantage of a special U.S. Army program if you were between 17 and 18 1/2 you commit to an 8 yr obligation which included 6 months Active Duty and the rest in the Reserves. This avoided being drafted for two years. Left to right: Richard Placak, Harvey Leavitt, Jack Abbott, Lyle Lowe, Ronnie Montoro, Jim Farabi and John McDonald.



Darrell G. Woofter '57: Thank you for all of the wonderful work that you are completing, on keeping the "Oldies But Goodies" as popular now, as they were in the 50's. Yes, I make it a point, each day, to play some of your selections. If only, I had a little more background and electronics experience, I would make some copies, on CDs, and share them with other classmates and friends. I attended LVHS two years, from Fall of 1953, to the spring, 1955, but, I had to transfer to Rancho High School, and graduated there, in 1957. Again, thank you for sharing all of these "gifts" with me. Please continue to keep me on your email list. Okay?

and last entry is?

George Wilkinson, '53: When I put together stuff like this that calls for memories, I always go last. That's because my memory sucks and I hope that after I read what everyone writes something will happen in my old gray matter that will help me remember things. I say "me too" for all the memories shared as once read, I remember most of them. We'd like to play pranks on other kids in school (and some times the teachers) like the time that several of us threatened to throw Don Rasmussen out of the window of Mrs Riggs English class. He got even later by filling up my '49 Ford convertible with leaves! Making stink bombs in chemistry. Don and



I also rode our bikes (before we got access to cars) from Vegas to Lake Mead and back. All the athletic events and dancing at the Lair after the games. The bonfire pep rallies that were held behind the main bldg the night before football games. Going to the Sunday Hunt breakfasts at the Last Frontier after church (seemed like the whole town was there). Playing basketball was the big thing for me, Kittens, JV, then Varsity and going on to help win the Nevada State Championship (which I think may have been the first State basketball championship won by LVHS). Cruising main street, hanging out at Sills and the Roundup Drive-ins. Great fun was had in Mr. Thiriot's drama class and in the plays we put on. All the girls that I had crushes on, but was too hesitant to ask out...I still can't remember who knitted the dice that I hung on the rear view mirror of my convertible or who I took to the Junior Prom or Senior Ball...I know I went!

Photos and Miscellaneous Information

During the course of my research I ran across a number of photos of the places in Las Vegas that we would all be familiar with in the 50s but alas most of them are no longer around. So I thought I put some of them here to help feed out nostalgic memories of those good time we had growing up in Vegas in those “good old days.” I’ve also included the photos sent in by respondents you read about in the Memories section. These were either too many or to large to include with their written material. There are also clippings submitted with no memories provided.

In addition I discovered a biographic page on Maude Frazier. I found it extremely interesting and thought you would find it so as well. She was quite a woman and laid the foundations for LVHS that we all enjoyed. So that’s what’s below.

Maude Frazier



The challenge of new experiences motivated Maude Frazier. It led her to attend college over her father’s objections. It brought her west as a young woman to teach in small Nevada towns. It motivated her to seek greater responsibilities as an educator, school supervisor, and a state legislator. Frazier looked at the wide and empty spaces in Nevada and saw opportunities to expand education for southern Nevadans.

Frazier , born in 1881, grew up in a farming family in rural Wisconsin and taught in a mining camp in the state. But in 1906, stories of teaching opportunities in the West led her to a job in Genoa, Nevada, teaching in a two-room schoolhouse and to other small schools across the state. Her diverse experiences served as her best reference for the position of Deputy State Superintendent of Schools in 1921. She said of her selection over several competitors, “I was well aware that when a woman takes over work done by a man, she has to do it better, has more of it to do, and usually for less pay.” Her region comprised about one-third of the state and had few developed roads. Frazier recruited and supervised teachers for the remote schools. She coordinated sixty-three different school districts and helped them develop school budgets and revenues.

The challenges of school financing and enormous growth were part of Frazier’s next job as Las Vegas Superintendent of Schools. From 1927 until leaving the job in 1946, Frazier took the lead to build new schools, secure public funds, and promote the idea of revenue equalization for children in the southern part of the state. Frustrated with the obstacles she witnessed, Frazier ran for the State Assembly and won her second campaign in 1950. She served twelve years during which time she shepherded legislation that reorganized the fragmented state school system and raised attention to the need for a junior college in southern Nevada. She secured state funds and matched them with private donations to build the first buildings. The school, later renamed the University of Nevada, Las Vegas, honored her by naming its first building after her.

Frazier continued to break new trails right up to her death. At the age of 81, Governor Grant Sawyer appointed her interim lieutenant governor in 1962, the highest state-level position ever held by a woman in Nevada. She passed away in 1963.

<http://wrinunlv.org/research/our-history-profiles-of-nevada-women/maude-frazier/>

from Ardie Ban Colburn



Ardie Ban at mother's ranch



Ardie and Elaine Alldredge proudly wearing the biggest shirts we could buy

from Bob Beville



at Boy's State 1952

from Cali McNamara's book



Cali with Joe Thiriot at his 100th birthday celebration



Jackie Thebo at Lake Mead



David Williams and Earl Nelson at Mt. Charleston

from John Honeycutt

Las Vegas Boy Scouts

Show here are members of Las Vegas Boy Scout troops shortly before they scattered to various parts of the city this week to 'take over' city and county offices as part of their national anniversary celebration. The picture shows them at the fire station where they were informed each as to the position he was to fill for that day. Left to right, front row: Max Miller, Billy Dodge, John Honeycutt, Bill Swift, and Jim Marshall; middle row, left to right, were Harry Block, Melvin Chastain, Glen Anderson, Eddie Fayle, Charles Lee and Jerry Hoggard; in top row, left to right, Edward Davis, Pete Klein, Wallace Holtz, Walter Eagle, Don James, Marc Quillen and Kent Davis. (Review-Journal Photo).

SECOND SEASON . . . SEVENTH MAJOR PRODUCTION
THE LAS VEGAS LITTLE THEATER
 PRESENTS
 CLARENCE DAY'S
LIFE WITH FATHER
MADE INTO A PLAY BY HOWARD LINDSAY AND EVESSELL CROWE
 STAGED BY RANKIN MANSFIELD

The Days as You Meet Them:	
VINNIE	BEBE HASELTINE
CLARENCE	RICHARD LOWE
JOHN	JOHN HONEYCUTT
WHITNEY	JERRY KERNS
HARLAN	BOB McOARVIE
FATHER	ARCHIE TWITCHELL

The Household:	
ANNIE	MARILYN GEIBEL
DELIA	RUTH CRAWFORD
MARGARET	HARRIET A. TALLACKSON
NORA	BARBARA KNUDSON
MAGGIE	BETTY WILKINS

The Others:	
CORA	JEANNE ROBERTS
MARY	CLAIRE ROBERTS
REV. DR. LLOYD	E. F. BARNEY
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from Gretchen Harris Payne '53



ENTRANCES LAIR DEVOTEES - Gordon MacRay, with his hands extended, sings a song for members of the Wildcat Lair who visited El Rancho Vegas to invite the popular singer to the youth center to sing tonight. From left to right are shown Don James, Gretchen Harris, MacRae, Edwin Farnsworth and Lew Foremaster. Kneeling from left to right, Roberta Dorton and Gwen McCowan.

HARMONICA RASCALS - The Rascals, currently appearing at Hotel El Rancho Vegas, show teenagers at the Wildcat Lair the different type of harmonicas used in their act. The entertainers put on a shown for teenagers at the Lair. Top row, left to right, Dave Doucette, Johnny Pulco and Pat Magquis. Bottom row, Skippey More, Carol Dattge (teenager), Gene DeMase, Gretchen Harris (teenager).

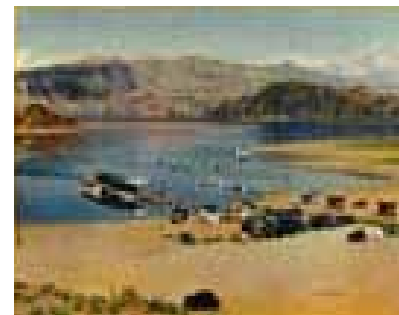
from George Wilkinson

CHAMPIONS of the 1953 high school basketball tournament here this weekend were the Las Vegas Wildcats, who concluded a successful season with an outstanding record. Coached by Pat Diskin, the Wildcats included: Back row, left to right - Donnell Hooker, Kent Huntsman, Earl Evans, Chuck Handley, Dick Pribble. Front row - George Wilkinson, Overton Curtis, Rod Reber, George Ball, Jerry Conger.

SPORTS
Ty Cobb, Journal Sports Editor.....Phone 3-4121
Reno, Nev., Mar. 22, 1953, NEVADA STATE JOURNAL.



Skiing at Mt. Charleston



Boat landing at Vegas Wash, Lake Mead

A reminder of what the Old West was like. Some of us worked there, we held dances at the Silver Slipper, or we went there and just enjoyed the stores and activities in the Village.





Old Mermaid swimming pool, just off Fremont and N. 5th St.



Gas station on the strip in the 50s



The old train station



Fremont Street in 1956



Atomic bomb testing and Helldorado Days!

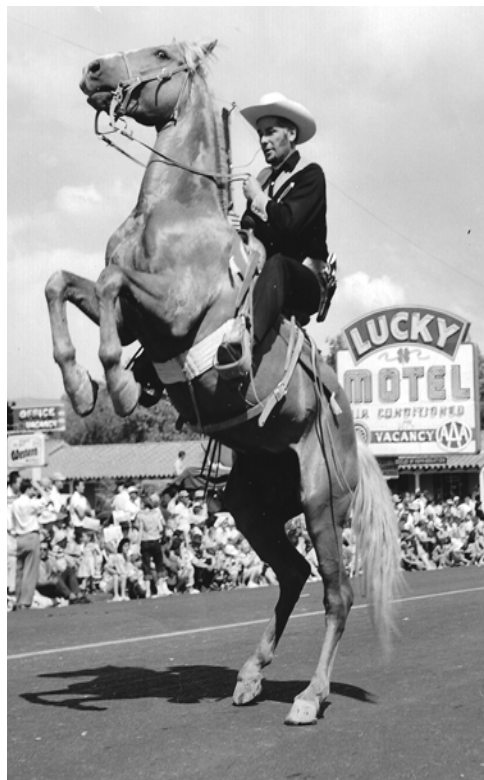




These two drive-ins were the social hubs for us during the 50s. I loved to get hash browns and brown gravy at the Round Up.



Cowboy actor Mike Steele in front of the Lucky Motel on East Fremont at the 1957 Helldorado Parade.



Another Helldorado Parade (date unknown) as it passes the El Cortez Hotel. Boy those were great times.



That's All Folks. Hope you enjoyed it.