

Bobcat *Alumni* Banner

Grand Blanc High School • 12500 South Holly Road • Grand Blanc, MI 48439

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The Alumni Newsletter of Grand Blanc High School



ALUMNI BANQUET 2011



The 2011 Alumni Banquet was held Homecoming weekend at the Brick Street Restaurant. Six Grand Blanc High School Alumni received the Distinguished Alumni Award for their lifelong accomplishments and the contributions to their local communities. The Distinguished Alums were joined by their families and friends for a memorable evening.



Jane Ward Brewer '66 reminisced about the wonderful teachers that she had growing up in the Grand Blanc Schools. Jane recently retired from the Board of Education after more than two decades of service. She was happy to have her children (GBHS grads) and grandchildren (future GBHS grads) with her to celebrate.



David Winton '72 was grateful for his time at GBHS, and especially thankful for the guidance of Music teacher Carolyn Mawby. This propelled him to the work he did later in life off-Broadway and in his local community theatre. David's family and friends had a mini-reunion in honor of his Distinguished Alumni award.



Peggy (Devendorf) Yates Gallinat, '69 said that her years at GBHS propelled her to the successful teacher and school administrator that she became. Peggy thought the teachers pushed her to think "out of the box" and never held her back. She recently retired from the Fenton Schools as Superintendent.



Ron Coriasso '75 acknowledged that his GBHS education helped propelled him towards being the doctor he is today. Ron was proud to share the award with his parents, siblings, and children in attendance.



Sandy McAllister '81 was honored to be selected for the Distinguished Alumni Award. She reminisced about the impact that many teachers had on her life as a student at Grand Blanc High School, and what a great experience those years became in preparing her for the career in research that she enjoys today.



Rob Paulsen '74 brought the house down with his song that had every country in the world in it. We all got a taste of why Rob is such a successful Hollywood voice actor. His love of Red Wing hockey has kept him connected to the Motor City and allowed him to play in many Hollywood charity events with other actors and hockey players. Rob was proud to say that he counts Gordie Howe as a friend. You can hear Rob's voice on the Disney Tinker Bell movies.



Rob, Sandy, David, Jane, Ron, Peggy



David, Sandy, Rob, Peggy, Jane, Ron



LOOKING FOR DISTINGUISHED ALUMNI

After reading about our Distinguished Alumni for 2011, maybe you know of someone who has excelled in their profession, or has made an impact on their local community. If you would like to nominate a GBHS Alum for the Distinguished Alumni Award, please send the nomination to:

GBHS Alumni
12500 Holly Road
Grand Blanc, MI 48439

Or via email : ccarmody@grandblancschools.org

Nominations need to arrive by June 1st. Please provide as many details as you can about why you are nominating the Alum you have chosen. It would also be helpful to have a contact (email or mail) to reach your nominee.



'65 - '7 REUNION HELD

By

Judy (Mathews) Paczkowski, Class of '70



September 23, 2011, was our latest reunion and we had a blast! It started with the Class of '70 and grew from there to include the classes of '65 thru '75. I am glad I chose to do it that way because of the lack of contacts I had for the Class of '70. I did all the work from Texas and traveled to Michigan to attend the reunion.

We had a great time with about 140 former classmates in attendance. The only means I had of contacting people was through social media; Classmates.com, Facebook, the GBHS Alumni Association website, and word of mouth. Still, a very small turnout when you consider each class had 500+ students. Maybe I will have better luck next time?

We were privileged to have Mrs. June (Burkett) Fusco in attendance. June came all the way from South Carolina to see her former Journalism students. Also stopping by was the always dashing former coach, Mr. Bob Burek.

I should never say never, as I just might do this again, BUT I will need your help. If you are interested in attending the next reunion, or know of somebody who might be, please email me at cudyjudy@aol.com. Many thanks to Judy Swickard-Elford for her help all the way from California, as well as a handful of others from GBHS. I couldn't have done it without you! Keep up the good work and contact me with names, emails, etc.

Hope to see you next time!



You're Never Alone in an Historic House

By Debbie (Van Kuren) Honea, GBHS Class of '79

When I purchased my historic log home in August, 1992, I never imagined how much it would influence my life.

I graduated from GBHS in 1979 and remembered the "Morgan Hoe" as a floral shop called the "Posey Post". In 1984 the building was left vacant and faced possible demolition or relocation to another site. Despite several attempts to secure its future, it was all but forgotten and started to rot away. Trees grew through its roof, critters found their home within the empty wall spaces, the logs began deteriorating, water lines broke and the basement flooded.

In the summer of 1992, while looking for a new home, I discovered this failing building was available for purchase. Even after being vacant for eight years, I saw a glimmer of hope in its hardwood floors, rustic logs, thick timbers, and felt the warm memories left behind by previous inhabitants. I even loved exploring the evidence of past renovations.

My passion for this historic building fueled a desire to find out more. I wanted to know who lived there, when and how it came to be. I became a Lifetime Member of the Grand Blanc Heritage Association and Clare Hatton was kind enough to supply me with some basic information. With some additional research, I began to put the puzzle pieces together and learned more of the history of my home.



History

The wood trim throughout the interior of the house and framing dates back to 1839. Structural timbers and roof purlins frame the walls and roof. They are made from round hand-hewn logs and were taken by Mr. Morgan from a barn on the Husted Farm formerly located south of Grand Blanc. The holes that once secured wooden loft ladders are evident along the vertical timbers.

This structure is believed to have been a training facility and a stage coach stopover for the Civil War soldiers taking the train out of Fenton. About 1934, the main building was moved to its current location by rolling logs down Saginaw Street. It had formerly been in Whigville, located at the NE corner of Hill Rd. and Saginaw Street. It was placed on a basement foundation and breezeway and field stone garage were later added.

In March of 1938, the log cabin was used as a tourist information booth. The Junior Chamber of Commerce directed the public to various factories, recreation parks, and other

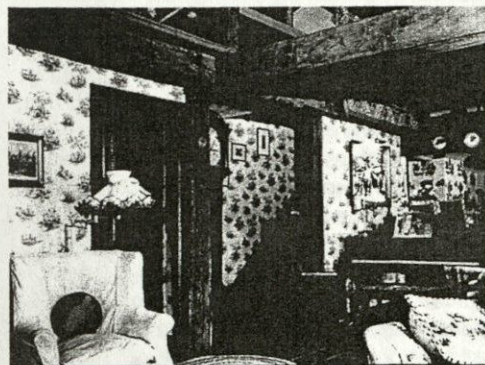
places of interest. The State Highway Department supplied road maps and put up signs.

A few months after purchasing the house, while attending a class reunion, my father, **Jack Van Kuren, GBHS Class of '57**, overheard someone talking about having sleep overs in the old, log house. His interest peaked, he introduced himself and told the woman that his daughter had just purchased the house and was in the process of renovations. She was thrilled and asked if she could stop by.

The next day **Suzette (Carpenter) Galloway, GBHS Class of '57**, greeted me at the front door with tears in her eyes and a big hug stating, "God bless your little pea-pickin' heart!"

I was an instant fan of this former resident! She never stopped crying the entire time she toured the house! She was so happy that the house had found someone to love it like she did. She shared stories of her childhood, their secret hiding place in the floor boards of her bedroom and how their dog used to roll up in front of a roaring fire in the stone fireplace.

Suzette filled in more of the missing pieces and explained that her brother, George, planted the four large pine trees that still stand majestically in the front



Interior of home with Frances Carpenter, circa 1960

yard. Her parents bought the house in 1950 from the Latrielle family and even Suzette's mother, Frances, didn't know how she would turn this dark and empty building into a real home. She soon came to love it and took extra care decorating the inside with various wallpapers and furniture. A brass and etched kerosene lamp was purchased and converted to electricity to be hung prominently in the main part of the house, where it remains to this day.

Mrs. Carpenter was inspired to collect antiques for display, as well as finding antique clothing that she provided to Grand Blanc High School for plays and presentations.

The yard was full of beautiful flowers and cherry trees planted by Mr. Carpenter. Every year family members devoured the homemade cherry pies, a treat for all the hard work! He took great pride in making sure the house was perfect for the many dinner and pre-prom parties throughout the Fifties. Ironically, the old cabin caught the eye of travelers who often stopped and asked for a tour, just as it had in 1938!

Uninvited Guests

It was soon after spending my first night in the house that strange noises began keeping me awake. Although I suspected they were of the supernatural type, one night I took a flashlight and shone it on a hole in the exterior wall where I heard most of the unfamiliar sound emanating from. I saw white and gray fur turning within the 10" wide wall space! The next day I had several live traps surrounding the house and a couple of days later caught my first opossum!

Shortly after that, I was on the second floor when I noticed what seemed to be a very big butterfly dipping and swooping. I completely freaked when I realized that it wasn't a butterfly. I can deal with most critters, but not bats! I'd never seen one before and was not aware of my complete and utter terror of the strange winged mice!

This was an emotion I really didn't expect to feel while living in an historic home! Suzette also remembers bats in the house. So, they've been around longer than I have.

We've also been invaded by a flying squirrel, woodchucks and 75,000 honey bees! I'm always amazed when I think that I live off Saginaw Street and not in the country surrounded by ten acres of woods!

The Future

The house continues to surprise me! It introduced me to new friends, is always the topic of conversations and has refueled my passion for architecture with a specific emphasis on local history and preservation. I continue to piece together the puzzle of its heritage.

Bats make their presence known from time to time. My husband, Chris, still refuses to kill them and when I run shrieking into the bedroom behind a slammed door he knows we have another one. He puts on his leather glove, waits for it to land and picks it up. He'll explain to the bat that he just isn't welcome in the house before he gently places it outside in the old pine tree by the front door. Bats cannot fly up easily from the ground, another bit of research I never expected to learn.

Suzette and I remain good friends. She lives in California with her husband but occasionally contacts me for an update on the progress of renovations and to hear the latest critter invasion story. In 2007, she surprised me with a beautiful scrapbook of her fondest childhood memories growing up in the log house.

We continue to share our home with uninvited guests, memories of the Carpenter family, and many other previous owners and its own history. It has taken some time to bring it back to life. We've re-chinked and stripped the exterior logs and applied new environmentally safe stain, remodeled the kitchen, replaced the heating system and continue to work room to room. Slowly, but surely, it will come together and, like the residents before, we will make it our own knowing that we're never alone in our historic house!



Frances Carpenter 1960

GOING TO SCHOOL IN GRAND BLANC DURING THE 1930'S - 1940'S

Part 1

By Joan (Batchelor) Fifer, Class of 1945



It was a very cold January, 1933, day when the six-year-olds walked hesitantly through the first-grade door. The future Class of 1945. Miss Mosier was the teacher and she took two students at a time and told each the first name of the other. But why January? There was no kindergarten. It was the Depression and kindergarten had been discontinued. Each class, though, was divided into A and B. If you didn't have your birthday in time to start in September, you could start in January, in a half-year class. This system lasted until about 1940, when a kindergarten teacher was hired, kindergarten was reestablished, and the half-year program gradually worked itself into a one-year system, i.e., students started in September and remained in that class until the following June.

First grade was devoted mostly to learning to read. At least twice a day we followed the adventures of DICK AND JANE, and their dog, Spot. We were divided into groups and chose the name we wanted to identify us. Probably, this grouping was done by ability. We read aloud, we read silently,

we had workbooks. We learned to add and subtract, by flash cards, contests of running to the blackboard to see which row could finish first, by drill, and by many paper and pencil problems. There was recess twice a day, and after lunch. Recess was outside and only in the very coldest, snowiest of weather did we remain in our classroom to play games. Our teachers were outside with us every time. Upon returning to our classroom, the wool mittens and scarves were placed on the radiators to dry and the smell of wet wool permeated the classroom. Our books were rented each semester. They were old, but in good condition considering the years of use that they had endured. The rental fee, as I recall, was 20 cents per book. Even at that price, there were some kids that could not afford to rent all the books for every subject. So we shared.

Every morning, in **every** class, all the students stood beside his chair or desk, saluted the flag and said THE PLEDGE of ALLEGIANCE. This was followed by the singing of, AMERICA. Milk count was taken and money collected. Both white and chocolate milk was four cents. The elementary students brought their lunch from home.

School buses played an important part of our school as we were one of the first consolidated schools in the State of Michigan. There were two bus runs-early bus and late bus. I do not know how each was designated, but know the kids riding early bus arrived early at school and left early in the afternoon, sometimes missing the last few pages of the story the teacher was reading to us. The late bus students

were the opposite. If it was decided that school was to close early (rarely) due to approaching blizzard, the early bus kids left early and the late bus kids were ready and waiting when their bus returned. The town kids stayed until regular dismissal time or whenever the entire school was told to go home.

Most of the students that lived in town walked home for lunch and back to school during a 40-minute period. We usually went directly to the playground to find our friends for the remaining few minutes of lunch break. At recess we played dodge ball, Red Rover, had snowball fights, and in the spring the girls jumped rope, played with jacks, and the boys had marbles they used for their games. Softball was popular for both boys and girls. There were also swings and teeter-totters to use. These games were not always teacher-organized, but done by the kids themselves. The morning and afternoon recesses we usually stayed with our own class, but the lunch recess had all grades so there was a large group of kids of all ages enjoying the freedom of a big playground behind the school building.

It was in third grade that I learned to spell. This was due to the fact that any missed word had to be written 10 times. If all were correct, you could get a book from the shelf and read. Third grade also meant stronger discipline. Once a week everyone in that class put our hands, palm up on the top of our desk. The teacher came around with a ruler and smacked each hand. Also, a couple times a week, one or two boys leaned over the teacher's desk chair and was paddled with a yardstick. Often, this yardstick broke and it was my embarrassing task to go to the office and ask for another one. There was a girl in our class by the name of Pauline. She lived near the viaduct and went home

every day for lunch. When she returned, she always had a wad of chewing gum that she was chomping on. Chewing gum was not permitted in that class. Within five minutes, the teacher sent Pauline to the blackboard to draw a large circle with chalk, put the gum in the middle of the circle, and her nose on the gum. Pauline stood like that for the remainder of the day. Multiplication tables were learned by drill, flash cards, races to the blackboard, lots of pencil and paper problems. During this year, it was decided that class size should become more evenly distributed. The half-year classes were considerably smaller. Probably it was the second semester when 10 students that were in 2B joined our 3A class. I believe there were a couple of other grades that were promoted in this same manner.

In fourth grade we learned the names of the oceans and the continents. For the test, we were given a map of the world (probably made on a mimeograph machine or ditto machine). We were to write the name of each ocean and continent in the correct place on the map. I got an E-my first E-and I was crushed! One of the continents had been misspelled. Nearly everyone received an E for misspelling or not capitalizing. We had penmanship, using pen and ink, at this level. Yes, real ink was in little bottles in the holes on the top of the desks. A music teacher came to our class a couple times a week and taught us songs. Most of the classrooms had a piano. We had art every week, but this was directed by the classroom teacher. In December we were busy making a Christmas present for both of our parents. Actually, these were quite nice and this year I found a table scarf I had made for my mother. Remarkably, the picture I had colored in each corner was still there. Good crayons!

The 1936 presidential election had Alf Landon running against President Roosevelt. He was going to be on the train that ran through Grand Blanc. The elementary students donned their coats and walked to the train station. The Pere Marquette came through and Alf Landon stood on the back of the last car and waved at us.

The first day in fifth grade, our teacher showed us the long, leather strap that was kept in her desk. I don't recall her using it. She also introduced us to the book, "Little House on the Prairie", which she read to us the last 15 minutes of the school day.

Holidays and birthdays were important and celebrated. On Halloween we wore costumes to school and had a party in the afternoon. There was always a Christmas program for the entire elementary school that was put on in the gymnasium. I remember being Mary one year and Doug Buckingham sang, "The First Noel". We had a Valentine box, which a few of the more artistic classmates decorated. For a week, this was in a visible place in the room and we brought Valentines to drop in. The day of the party we had cookies and someone was chosen 'mailman' to pull the Valentines out of the box and distribute to the designated person. For a child's birthday, cupcakes were usually provided in the afternoon by the child's mother. We sang and might have played a game or two.

The Parent Teacher Association (PTA) was an important part of the school and community. It met in the evening, once a month. Not only did parents and teachers confer about the progress of a child, the social implications were important also. Grandparents and preschoolers were welcome, too. There was a contest in the grade school, done by percentage, as to which class had the most parents in attendance. At the end of the school year, the class that had won the highest parents' attendance, received a book or picture that stayed in that particular room. Sometimes there were programs that each class presented. I remember reciting "The Gingham Dog and the Calico Cat" with Jim Tomblinson.

Sixth grade was on the third floor, where junior high and high school had their classes. We worked much more independently. We still had reading, arithmetic, penmanship, music, art, and geography. The general routine was much the same as in the lower grades, but we were more aware of the passing of classes when the bell rang, and the unusual smells that came from the chemistry lab.

At this point, I must admit that I had an added interest in school because my dad was the coach. "Batch," was responsible for football, basketball, and baseball. He also taught a full load of classes, except for ninth hour, which he used to get ready for the sport of that particular season.

To be continued next issue Part 2...



MESSAGE BOARD

Class of 1977:

A 35th Reunion will be held Saturday, July 28, from 4:00pm until 11:00pm, at The Jewel of Grand Blanc (formerly known as Grand Blanc Golf & Country Club) located at 5270 Perry Rd. The cost is \$40 per person, \$70 per couple.

Make checks payable to 'Grand Blanc Class of '77' and mail to Sandy (Skaff) Mamish, 6455 Carriage Hill Dr., Grand Blanc, MI, 48439 by July 1st.

Direct all inquiries to Lynda Shaw either on Facebook or email: gbclass77@yahoo.com

This is the "formal invitation", but if you know of someone who does not Facebook or email please let me know and I will create an invitation to mail to them. Hope you can make it!

Congratulations: To Mr. Jim Rule for having retired after more than sixty years of teaching!

