

Bobcat Alumni Banner

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

The Alumni Newsletter of Grand Blanc High School

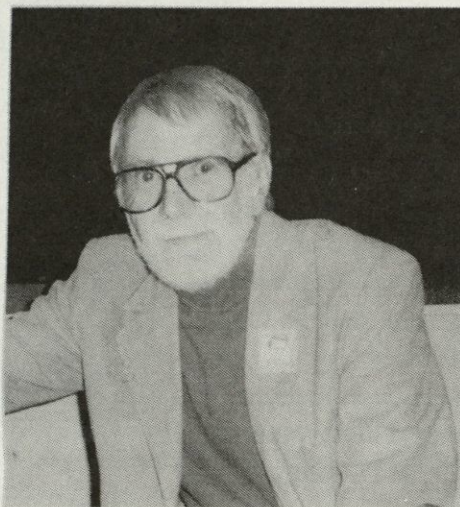
Update on Jim Rule, Former Teacher at GBHS

Submitted by John Schlaud, Class of 1952

Jim Rule, who began teaching at Grand Blanc in 1951, retired in 1992 after forty-two years of dedication. During that time he taught Mathematics and Economics.

Jim and his wife, Phyllis, have three children who graduated from Grand Blanc. They now have three grandchildren, two of which are attending Grand Blanc, and one who has graduated from Grand Blanc and is now attending college.

Jim and Phyllis still live in the Grand Blanc area where Jim is currently teaching Mathematics at Mott Community College in Flint. Jim is very meticulous with his push



lawnmower and his lawn resembles a golf course. Jim also tries to walk his dog daily.

A Message from the President

*Charlie Carmody
Alumni President, '80*



We hope you enjoy the Spring Alumni Banner! Your Board of Directors assembled this edition for your reading pleasure. We have so many items of interest for GBHS grads - you can find us online at www.grand-blanc.k12.mi.us or phone/fax at 810-591-7378.

Our monthly meetings are held on Wednesdays - check out our website for our next meeting date and time. Our Homecoming 2003 is scheduled for Friday, October 10th vs. Owosso - hope you can join us. If you like receiving this Alumni Banner, please consider donating to the Alumni Association to help us defray our costs.

Once again-thanks for your support of your Alumni Association.

Distinguished Alumni Award

The Alumni Association is sponsoring its first annual Distinguished Alumni Awards. We are looking to honor Grand Blanc High School graduates that have excelled in their career or profession, made a significant contribution to their local community, or made an impact on the lives of others.

Tell us about it!!! We would like you to submit the names and accomplishments of those alumni that you think meet the qualifications above. It would be helpful if you have a current address and phone to contact the alum you submit.

Nominations are due by June 1st, 2003. Your Alumni Board of Directors along with the Superintendent of Schools, Dr. Gary Lipe, and GBHS Principal, Dr. Michael Newton will help select our first class of Distinguished Alumni. We will keep all nominations

submitted on file for future consideration.

The Distinguished Alumni will be introduced at this year's Homecoming Football game on Friday, October 10th, and honored at the Distinguished Alumni Awards banquet on Saturday, October 11th. More information will be in our late summer Alumni Banner concerning the banquet, and how you can make your reservations to join us for a memorable evening. In addition, a picture of each inductee will be placed in the Distinguished Alumni Hall, located in the front entrance atrium at GBHS. Please send your nominations to:

GBHS Alumni - Distinguished Alumni Award
12500 Holly Road
Grand Blanc, MI 48439

Doran Tower Follow-Up

Submitted by Brenda (Peterman) Debus, Class of '57

We had a good response to the picture of Doran Tower that ran in the August issue of the Alumni Banner. I received calls from all over Michigan, and some from outside of our state.

The Doran Tower was built in memory of Mildred Doran who perished in 1927 when her bi-plane was lost in the Pacific Ocean during a race from Oakland, California to Hawaii. Her brother, a Probate Judge in Genesee County, had the tower built at the corner of Maple Road and S. Saginaw. There was a landing strip across the street, where the Victor-George Chrysler-Jeep Dealership is now located. The building served as "The Three Sister's Gift Shop" for many years.

A few astute readers even remembered when the building had windmill blades attached. I was told that the blades were removed in the late forties or early fifties.

If any of you wish to share your thoughts about the Doran Tower for future publication, please jot them down and send them to me at: Brenda Debus, 2069 Ala, Burton, MI 48519-1201.



Doran Tower



Mildred Doran, Circa 1926

Passing of Two Long Time Teachers

Grand Blanc High School lost two of its teaching institutions with the recent passing of Mr. Robert Tartoni and Mr. Joseph Pitock. Mr. Tartoni taught mathematics until his death in January. He was a game supervisor in the athletic department, and a friend to all who knew him. Mr. Tartoni will be missed for his caring and concern for all the students of Grand Blanc High School. His wife Sally continues to teach at GBHS.

Retired baseball coach and physical education teacher Mr. Pitock passed away in February. Coach Pitock coached the baseball team for 40 seasons, and the baseball field is named in his honor. Mr. Pitock still followed Bobcat athletics in his retirement, often attending football and baseball games. His wife Donna continues to reside in Grand Blanc.

Lesson #1 - Wear Flowers In Your Hair

Her name was Mary Pickett. A wife, mother, sister, aunt, grandmother, friend and a teacher. She was a teacher of education, but more important a teacher of life. From the time you met her, you knew exactly how she felt about everything including you. She made no bones about the things she didn't exactly see eye to eye with you on, and usually by the time she was done with you, with her subliminal persuasion, her point of view was the way you saw it too. Her handwriting was a true work of art. A gentle, soft spoken, sometimes outspoken voice of reason. Her honesty made you think. She knew a lot of people and a lot about the people she knew. She had nothing to hide and hid nothing from anyone. And when she wanted to talk (which was most of the time) you had better be ready to listen. The emptiness that you feel with her gone comes along with a fullness of life that she so greatly loved and filled us all with. I loved to say her name and see how many people would respond - "Oh! You know Mary Pickett, too!" and they would go on with how they knew her and where they knew her from and so many would include a something special that she may have left them with - like a black and blue mark



from where she had nudged you so many times. I like to think, and only because I have one, that very few people among us were considered special enough to receive one of her poems. She so loved to write them. Yes, she taught us all in her own special way and so many times, we didn't even know she was doing it. She taught us to be kind, thoughtful, grateful, humble, to work hard for our goals. It was important to be true to ourselves and that it doesn't matter as much what others think of us as what we think of ourselves. She taught us to wear flowers in our hair.

Our lives seem empty here without you,
Grand lady Mary Pickett who,
Always saw sunshine through the darkness
And showed us ways to forget the blues.
It was your lessons, that taught so many
Things that never could be found in books,
Life is precious and we should be glad in it,
It lies before us...take time to look.
When we see fields of flowers growing
We will know why they bloom so fair
They're hoping that they will be the one
That's chosen to be worn in your hair.
We know that you are now in comfort
So look down on us, once in a while
There are so many who will be thinking of you
Yes, it's all the people who you made smile.

Grand Blanc's Very Own 'Santa Claus'

By Jerry Wolfgang, Class of 1969

Since December 1993, Dale VanKuren, a Grand Blanc alumnus from the Class of 1980, has raised nearly \$100,000 in an annual "Toys For Tots" fundraiser. "There is a lot of hate in this world," Dale remarks, "and it is great to be able to do something nice for the children."

Dale, who played on the Varsity baseball team his high school years, said he thought a long time about what he could do for charity. Then an idea hit him. "Do something that you're good at!" Dale says he finally came upon, "And running is something I enjoy doing."

Dale says that he decided on an event where he and a few of his friends would run through his Grand Blanc neighborhood while donors contribute toys or money. What began as a dream has become an annual event, with loving assistance and support provided by his wife, Helen, and other family members and friends. "We raised more than \$14,000 last year," Dale beams with pride, "and, in fact, we've already started collecting toys for next Christmas from people that made donations after the holidays."

Except for his three-year enlistment in the Army

shortly after graduation, Dale has lived in the Grand Blanc area most of his life. He grew up in a house on Hill Road, near Belsay Road, and now lives off Maple Road near S. Saginaw St.

Dale fondly recalls his high school days, when he would hang out at Stefan's Pizza, or drive around Grand Blanc listening to America, Boston, and The Beatles, on his 8-track tape deck. After school, Dale worked part-time at the Elk's Golf Club on Maple Road. He is currently employed by the City of Flint as a Greenskeeper for Swartz Creek Municipal Golf Course.

"I'm glad I went to Grand Blanc schools," Dale smiles, "I've always been able to say that with pride." He remembers his favorite teachers at that time were Mr. Joe Pitock, his baseball coach who recently passed away, and Mrs. Sally Tartoni. Dale proudly tells about his nephew, Kevin MacDonald, a sophomore at Grand Blanc High School. "Last year, as a freshman, Kevin pitched for the Varsity baseball team," Dale brags.

Dale VanKuren can be contacted online at daletoysfortots@aol.com.

... Past Proms ...



1947 J-Hop - Front row: Ruth Schumacher, Dwaine Polzin, Velma Twiss, Bob Finelly



1949 Senior Prom



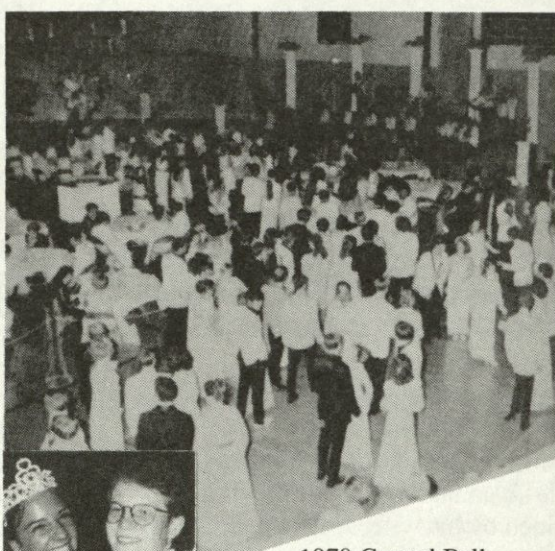
1952 Senior Prom

Front row: Rosemary Davisson, Ron Winton, Gretta Portz, Jerry Walton

*The Class of 1952
of Grand Blanc High School
presents the
"SENIOR PROM"
on May, the seventeenth
Nineteen hundred and fifty-two
from nine to one
Howard Bush and His Orchestra
Semi-formal*



1963 Junior-Senior Prom - Dennis Neilson & Len Pickett crown Howard Gillespie and Barb Bedore



1970 Crystal Ball



1970 Betsy Oates
& Mike Pierce



1999 Prom Queen & King
Candice Carbajal and Jesse Nance

Dad's Graduation Day

By Jerry Wolfgang, *Class of 1969*

On Friday morning, August 23, I sat beside my father, Lyle Wolfgang, studying his 75-year young face for any hint that he might be aware of the hoax being played upon him. I was confident that my mother and I had successfully perpetrated our elaborate scheme to get him to leave his home in Traverse City and visit Grand Blanc for the day.



Lyle, with wife, Ruth

Lyle had been told that his son would be receiving an award from the Grand Blanc Alumni Association. He had no idea that he would be receiving his diploma. So he sat patiently, half-listening to the many speakers, during the Opening Day Convocation, his wife, Ruth, my mother and co-conspirator, sitting on his other side. He was completely unaware of our scheme.

Included in the audience were Lyle's sister, Ernestine (Wolfgang) Hempel, Class of '55, and brother, Barry Wolfgang, Class of '59, and their spouses. Richard Misener, Lyle's brother-in-law, also in on the secret, had journeyed with Lyle from Traverse City. Richard's adult children, with their families, joined us in what became an impromptu family reunion. Lyle sat proud, perhaps slightly bored at times, patiently waiting for me to finally be presented with my award.

"Leave no child behind," Superintendent Gary Lipe began in his final remarks as he encouraged the many teachers to examine their consciences regarding their own personal efforts to assist all students. "Leave no child behind," Lipe continued as he discussed, "...the benefits of our democratic society, with its capitalist system, that has provided a standard of living undreamed of a generation ago. It has also provided us with personal freedom that is the envy of the world."

"Leave no child behind," Lipe elaborated, "though I know it is easy to forget what we enjoy here today is the result of personal sacrifice of men like our grandfathers, fathers, and uncles...sacrifice which was unlike anything most of us can imagine making today. Many of these men left in the middle of their high school years to go off to war because their country was threatened. And many of them never returned. Many others, who did return, had to make a living and found they could not return to finish high school." My father was sitting straighter now, prouder, reflecting on how Dr. Lipe's remarks sounded familiar to his own life's story. "Well," Gary Lipe concluded, "today, in Grand Blanc, we are going to begin our quest to Leave No Child Behind by catching up one of those who left Grand Blanc High School when he turned 17 to join the Navy in World War II. Mr. Lyle Wolfgang would you please step forward to receive your diploma and our appreciation for the legacy which you and your brothers in arms have left us."

Lyle sat motionless for several seconds as Dr. Lipe's words echoed through his thoughts. He slowly turned to look at me, a look of bewilderment on his face. "Go on Dad," I encouraged him,

"we did this for you." My father slowly stood, his legs shaking, and carefully made his way to the corner of the stage where Dr. Michael Newton, principal of Grand Blanc High School, and Mr. Russell Kirksey, president of Grand Blanc Board of Education, presented him with his belated diploma from the Class of 1945.

The auditorium erupted in applause as the entire audience of teachers and Grand Blanc Community School employees, along with Lyle's family and friends, rose to give him a standing ovation. It is hard to imagine that at an age when most boys' thoughts were about which girl to take to the dance after the game, Lyle chose to leave school and enlist in the Navy. He was assigned to the USS Louisville, a heavy cruiser, and fought in many battles during the campaign in the South Pacific. His ship was struck three times by Japanese kamikaze pilots.

While home on leave in February, 1945, Lyle married Ruth Misener, who attended Bendle. He returned to Grand Blanc, upon his discharge, in December of that same year. Too busy supporting his new family to worry about completing his education; Lyle began working at the Grand Blanc Cement Plant. Three years later, in 1948, Lyle was hired at the Buick complex in Flint where he worked until his retirement in 1982.

Raised in Grand Blanc, Lyle continued to live in the area until 1984 when his wife, Ruth, retired from GM's Fisher Body-Coldwater Road factory. They now spend summers at their home in the Traverse City area, and winters in Harlingen, Texas. They enjoy fishing, golfing, traveling, and volunteering.

Lyle and Ruth are both active in the Harlingen community where Lyle drives a shuttle bus for Valley Baptist Hospital and Ruth works as an Administrative Assistant at the Ronald McDonald House. They also have both participated in gleaning farmers' fields for local charities and removing litter and debris from local roads.

During my youth I was persistently nagged about the importance of obtaining an education. Being a typical teenager, I shrugged off most of the unsolicited paternal advice I received. Looking back, I realize that having completed high school did enhance both my military and GM-UAW careers. However, I never fully realized the significance of having graduated until listening to the thunderous applause and feeling the tears of pride trickle from my eyes as I watched my father receive his diploma.

Lyle was able to obtain his diploma through a program called "Operation Recognition" that was adopted by Michigan through Public Act 181 of 2001. The Public Act authorizes school boards across the state to award diplomas to WWII veterans who left school for the military. If you, or someone you know, may qualify for this benefit, please contact Dr. Newton's secretary, Margo McGinnis at (810) 591-6638.



Lyle Wolfgang
1943

Class Notes

Class of 1936 - Ruth (Ackerman) Wadsworth tells us that she passed the Doran Tower every day riding the school bus from Whigville.

Class of 1953 - A reunion is being planned; contact Phyllis at (810) 694-6571, or Lola at (810) 735-7974. Need information regarding Joanne Carter, George Clark, Luella Crane, Jim Jones, Virginia Nichols, Jack Puderbach, and Carol Threlkeld. Contact Lola Manner, 11503 S. Linden Rd., Linden, MI 48451.

Class of 1955 - 'Dar' Allen says, "The Ag Boys" used to send things up the flag pole or to the roof of the school!"

Class of 1958 - Gordon Bennet wants to know when the Class of 1958 will have its 45th reunion.

Class of 1966 - Anna Jean (Eastman) Troyer sends a message to Carol Mascio: "Call me in Florida, (941) 953-5637".

Class of 1973 - Pamela (Heos) Zarvas, (517) 337-1387, asks, "What's happening with our reunion plans for this summer?"

Class of 1978 - A reunion is planned for July 19 at Holy Family Parish Center. Names and addresses still needed.
E-mail: gbhs1978class@aol.com, or write to: GBHS 1978 Class Reunion, 11643 S. Saginaw St., Grand Blanc, MI 48439. Or contact Phil Sperla at (810) 658-9341.

Class of 1983 - Katy (Dach) Lavender asks, "Where are you, Rhonda Wright?"

Class of 1983 - Names and Addresses needed for a possible reunion. Contact Tracy at (810) 397-6162.

Non-Profit Org.
U.S. Postage
PAID
Permit No. 10
Grand Blanc, MI 48439

Grand Blanc High School
12500 Holly Rd.
Grand Blanc, MI 48439