

# Bobcat Alumni Banner

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

The Alumni Newsletter of Grand Blanc High School

## Movie Memories

By E. Wayne McDaniel, GBHS Class of '58

We were the kids that grew up without television. Most of us were well into Junior and Senior High before TV became a primary source of home entertainment, but we had something better. Actually we had several things that were preferable to staying glued to the "Boob Tube" for hours on end.

First, there was radio. Not the shallow, newsy, transistorized musical boxes of today. Our huge, beautiful, vacuum-tube radios poured out entertainment of the best kind, the sort you had to use your imagination on. The Shadow, Amos 'n Andy, Jack Benny.....but that's another story in itself, isn't it?

We also "played out" constantly. From the time we got home from school, stuffed down a sandwich and hit the door we played outdoors until forced against our wills to come home. We played every sport you can imagine and even made up a few of our own. Hockey was played on the big pond using elderberry limbs for sticks and an empty soup can pounded into the shape of a puck. Some kids even had skates. We played lots of "real" games, and a few imaginary ones too. Some of the games were more than a little bit "dumb". For instance, a couple dozen of us would roll down cousin Ed's Hill over and over again. You won this game by being the last one able to stand and not throw up. Kids came from great distances to play this game. There were countless other competitions, Red Rover, Dodge Ball, Eenie-einie-over, Tag, Hide-and-Seek.....but that's yet another subject for a future story.

"The Movies" is our subject and they were a huge part of nearly every kid's life during the 40s and 50s.



1958 Saturday Matinee

First there were the theaters themselves. They were the hubs of our social lives and we seldom missed a chance to "go to the movies". The theater we attended most often was right in Grand Blanc, the Centre. It's been mentioned in the Banner before but we will never forget it and can't say enough about the impact it had on our young lives.

Many of us seem to remember that, as small children, we enjoyed the weekend stage shows as much or more than what played up on the screen. The stage shows were primarily country and western in nature, something that particularly appealed to my father's southern roots. Local talent shows were also popular and occasionally a larger talent stopped by.

As we "grew up", theatres became the place where romance bloomed. I sampled my first "real" kiss while snuggled down in the seats of the Centre, hoping to escape the ever-watchful eyes of Cecil Weishuhn.

(Continued on page 2)



## Movie Memories *(Continued from page 1)*

Cecil was a father figure and mentor to many of us as we grew up in Grand Blanc. He was a super guy and one of the most pleasant men, both in looks and acts that you could ever hope to meet. He was also a former prizefighter who started a golden gloves program for Grand Blanc boys. The gym was in an old barn behind the big farmhouse next to the theatre, which housed the Weishuhn family. Cecil taught boxing and values to the staccato tune of a speed bag.

In addition to the Centre, there were several other movie houses that also bring back memories. The stately and magical Capitol and Palace were two "upscale" movie houses, boasting such enchantments as tiny parapets, back lighting and layer after layer of heavy curtains, which were always drawn back to start the show. It was here that, as a tiny kid, I saw "Snow White" and tightly clutched my mother's hand when the evil witch appeared. Later, Elvis stole my girlfriend's heart when I took her to see his movie debut in "Love Me Tender".

The Rialto, State, and Burton were just a few of the others we attended. The Burton drew my brother and I back week after week with its serial "cliff-hangers", usually westerns and always thrilling.

There was even a no-name movie, a precursor to the drive-ins. I hadn't thought of this experience for decades until Sandy Burgess Sarver, Class of '58, reminded me. If memory serves, it sat in a vacant field at the corner of Hill and Fenton Roads, across from Fletcher's Market. Everyone parked where they could find a spot, spread a blanket, shared a picnic, fought off mosquitoes and enjoyed the show. I sometimes walked the couple of miles to get there, but then Gail Couch Burgess, Class of '58, remembers walking many miles to get to the Centre, and with her numerous brothers hiding in the dark to jump out and terrorize her at every opportunity.

Then, a little later on, there were the Drive-ins themselves. There were several of those, but it was the good old US-23 that drew most Grand Blanc kids. Some of the alumni who wrote to me on this subject even remembered some of the movies that played there; most didn't. Judy Atkins Keyser, Class of '57, like many of us, has golden memories of the place, which had little to do with the films. We won't share those remembrances here.

I worked there for several years during my high school years. The Warringtons, Louie and Dianne ran the place and lived in an apartment built right into the base of the screen.

I well remember the night the great Lash Larue showed up for a live intermission show, whip, horse and all.

After the movie, we generally gravitated to the drive-in restaurant of our choice to cruise around and around to see who else was there. On rare occasions we even pulled up and ordered something. Grand Blanc kids usually headed towards Johnson's Drive-in near "the point", but some of us went off toward Flint and the "other drive-in" known as Dad's and later the Varsity.

Movies still play a big part in many people's lives today and kids still clamor to go, but there's a difference. Unless "Harry Potter" is playing, they go, then come home and forget the movie in favor of X-Men, Dragon ball-Z, or other Anime heroes. We lived the movies we saw. Most families were still recovering from the "Great Depression" and the movies offered escapism from lives that had few of the creature comforts and luxuries that kids enjoy today.

Many experts claimed that TV would sound the death knell for movies but experts are often wrong. Movies are alive and well and may they remain a part of our lives forever.

## A Message from the President

*Charlie Carmody '80*

*President, Alumni Association*



We hope you enjoy our Fall edition of the Alumni Banner. Your Board of Directors has assembled the Banner for your enjoyment. You can reach us online at [www.grand-blanc.k12.mi.us](http://www.grand-blanc.k12.mi.us) or phone/fax (810) 591-7378.

Our monthly meetings are held in Room 234 at GBHS - check our website for upcoming meeting dates and times. Our 67th Homecoming will be held this year on Friday, October 10th vs. Owosso. We hope you can join us. Also, on Saturday, October 11th, the Alumni Association will host its first Distinguished Alumni Awards at Woodfield Country Club. You are welcome to join us for a wonderful evening. *(Ed. Note: See more details in related article on page 3).*

If you like receiving the Alumni Banner, please consider donating to the Alumni Association to help defray our costs. We continue to use any excess donations to complete our Alumni Hall project - the framing and hanging of a composite picture of each graduating class from GBHS.

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



## Alumni Association Thanks

Once again the Grand Blanc Educational Foundation has helped us financially backing our Alumni Association. The Foundation raises funds by holding the Annual Duck Race during the Grand Blanc Summer Festival, donations from individuals, and through its Annual Auction and Dinner. The auction, scheduled during this school year, will be held on April 30th at Genesys. More information will be available in the Spring edition of the Alumni Banner, or at the Foundation link through the Grand Blanc schools website.

Funds from the Foundation not only benefit the Alumni Association, but they are distributed throughout the Grand Blanc Community Schools to enhance the education of our future Bobcats.

## Final Memories of Doran Tower

Submitted by **Brenda (Peterman) Debus**, *Class of 1957*

The following article are recollections of two Alumni Banner readers regarding the Doran Tower, a windmill-like structure that stood for many years at the southeast corner of S. Saginaw and Maple Roads.



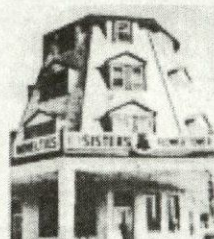
Doran Tower's namesake, Mildred Doran, was a 1924 graduate of Flint's Central High School. Mildred completed her studies at Michigan State University and became a fifth grade teacher in Caro, Michigan. Tragically, Miss Doran perished in 1927 in an airplane crash while participating in the Dole Air Race from Oakland, California to Honolulu, Hawaii.

Florence (Garrison) Lovell, of Deming, New Mexico, GBHS Class of 1943, sent a letter in early May telling about a classmate who lived in the Doran Tower. Florence recalls that her girlfriend's odd shaped bedroom was located on the third floor and that the stairs went around the edge of the room. Florence also writes that she was very sad upon her return to Grand Blanc to see that the "landmark" she remembered through the '30s had been torn down.

Florence's sister, Pauline (Garrison) Gebo, Class of 1942, who also lives in Deming, NM, wrote a letter as well with additional information regarding the Doran Tower. Pauline wrote that in 1934-35 there was a gas station and gift shop at



Florence  
(Garrison)  
Lovell  
GB Class  
of 1943



Doran  
Tower  
(without  
windmill  
blades)

## Distinguished Alumni Awards

The Alumni Association is proud to honor the following Grand Blanc High School graduates for their selection as Distinguished Alumni: **Frank Blessing**, *Class of 1937*; **Doug Blom**, *Class of 1958*; **Bob Burek**, *Class of 1958*; **Theresa Cook**, *Class of 1978*; **James Hill**, *Class of 1932*; and **Steven Smale**, *Class of 1948*. Each of our honorees has made a significant contribution to their local community, excelled in their career, or profession, and made an impact on the lives of others.

All GBHS alumni, family, and friends are invited to join us for the first annual Alumni Awards Banquet on Saturday, October 11th, at Woodfield Country Club. The cost is \$25 per person and reservations must be made by October 1st through the Central Administration Office behind Perry School, or by telephoning (810) 591-6014 for more details. We will have a social hour starting at 6 p.m., with dinner at 7 p.m. Our program will begin at 8 p.m.

We hope you can join us for this annual gathering of GBHS alums and to honor our former classmates.

that location. She also remembers a sleepover, with her little sister, Florence, and that there were two little girls living there at the time. Pauline says that the second floor of the building was the living quarters, which included the living room, dining room, and kitchen.

Unfortunately, Pauline doesn't recall the names of the girls who lived at the Tower, but does remember that the DelDuca family lived in the area. I visited the 'DelDuca Welding and Service' shop on Dort Highway and spoke with Don DelDuca, GBHS Class of 1951. Don said he never went upstairs at the Doran Tower, but does remember when a restaurant was in the Doran Tower. "They served a gosh awful good apple strudel", Don recalls with a smile, "and large portions, too!"

This concludes the reminiscences of the Doran Tower. I hope your journey down Memory Lane was a pleasant one.



Mildred Doran,  
Senior Picture,  
Flint Central  
High School,  
1924





## Reunion Updates . . .

1983 Graduates of GBHS and Holy Family

**Class of 1973:** A reunion will be held on October 25th. For more info please contact Sharon and Mike Martin at 810-653-0605 or send e-mail to [sargesdm@aol.com](mailto:sargesdm@aol.com)

**Class of 1983:** A reunion is being planned for October 10th. You can find out more details at [www.classreunionsplus.com](http://www.classreunionsplus.com)

**Class of 1984:** A reunion is scheduled to take place August 7th, 2004. Contact Tammi (VanGilder) James at [TammiJames@aol.com](mailto:TammiJames@aol.com)

**Class of 1982, 1983, 1984, 1985, and 1986:** All GB Grads are invited to the Class of 1984's pre-reunion Alumni party on August 6, 2004, at Sharkey's, located at the Southmoor Golf Club on Dort Hwy. There will be a tent party with a band for all to enjoy.

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