

Historical Notes of the Pacific Grove High School Alumni Association

Our Alumni Association has enjoyed one of the longest, and most active histories in the state of California. What began as a way for a few students to stay connected has grown into a not for profit California corporation, supporting hundreds of members, thousands of dollars, and literally countless PG High students who have benefitted from our constant support. To truly understand how unique this group is you must first understand how it all began.

Pacific Grove High School became a reality in 1895 when the citizens of the City of Pacific Grove formed a school district. They passed a bond issue on June 18, 1896 to build the first high school in the entire Monterey County. Only two years later, in June of 1898, the first graduates, Ava *Kent* and Helen *Wood*, were awarded their high school diplomas. Upon graduation the desire to see their Alma Mater enhanced brought about the decision to create an Alumni Association, complete with constitution. One of their first orders of business was to assign the school official colors. Even then we were making our influence known! The ladies chose the red from Stanford University, and the gold from the University of California at Berkeley.

Through the following 29 years the group added members, amended the original constitution, refined committees, and began holding annual reunion dinners for all members. These annual dinners, officially begun in 1901, quickly became a favorite to participating members. Often official business was carried out, including the election of new officers, but the obvious appeal to enjoy fellowship was never lost. Unfortunately, as times changed and members moved on the Alumni Association drifted apart. The original purpose for the association was not as altruistic as the one today, and the goal of truly supporting the current students of the alumni's Alma Mater did not exist. We have no records of official business conducted after 1927.

The curtain remained drawn on this diamond in the rough until 1962, when two civic-minded PG graduates, Frank Lemos '37 and Elmarie *Hurlbert* Hylar Dyke '15, struck up a conversation outside Dyke's Grove Pharmacy on the corner of Forest and Lighthouse Avenues. The soda fountain inside was a popular hangout for high school students. The sight of these young people hit a chord, and the recognition to reactivate the Alumni Association was born. That diamond in the rough was about to get some much needed polishing!

Through a flurry of meetings which included several PG Alumni (including Gertrude "Gertie" Ernst '22, PGHS Secretary for 35 years) from many active Pagrovian families, a new vision was adopted for the reactivated Pacific Grove High School Alumni Association. Besides remaining faithful to the original intention of fellowship amongst Association members, a new goal of actively pursuing the support of the high school and her current students was created. The revised constitution revealed this in its Purpose statement, still held in force by the current Board of Directors, and members. "...The specific and principal purpose of the PGHSAA is to initiate, encourage, and conduct projects to benefit the Pacific Grove High School and its students... gatherings and events may be held as appropriate to further the goals of the PGHSAA and to raise the funds necessary to carry out the principal purpose of the Association." [Article 11, Section 1]. Suddenly annual reunion gatherings were not just an opportunity to rekindle past friendships and reminisce over shared experiences; but the greater goal of our Alma Mater and her students became a beacon for uniting in an effort to raise necessary support.

As years passed the effort to monetarily support the High School grew to involve the arduous task of incorporation, and recognition as a lawful not for profit [501©(3)] tax exempt organization. We received the title of Pacific Grove High School Alumni Association, Inc. in 1995, allowing our membership the privilege of tax deductible contributions. Our worthwhile cause remains foremost in our members' minds as evidenced by the many donations received each year. These monetary gifts, often given in memory of a passing PG Alum, create the backbone of our Associations' proud participation in scholarship distributions for use in higher education, and extra-curricular support for use in current high school activities. Also, through these contributions and the incredibly generous endowment by Don Harlan PGHS '42, we are able to sustain several yearly scholarships given in memory of key PG High Alumni who have exemplified our Pagrovian spirit and heritage.

Today, we produce a publication dispersed three to four times yearly, and aptly named after the original High School Newspaper, The Knockout II. In this newsletter note-worthy events, opportunities, and tidbits of membership information are passed along to all active members. The advancement of technology has made it possible for much of our membership to receive our publication via email, saving paper and postage costs. The PDF format is a breeze to view, and provides the member with the added bonus of beautiful color photos. Our membership Roster is another great resource, allowing alumni to stay in-touch and connected.

The all-volunteer Board of Directors serves tirelessly to make sure that each member is cared for personally. From its inception, our Association's unique desire to maintain fellowship with one another has brought people together from all walks of life. Seeking our members' opinions, and garnering their ideas for better ways to communicate, serve, and enjoy this vibrant organization is one of the many tangible efforts put forward by the Board.

We would be honored if you would consider adding your history to ours by joining with us in our goal. Membership provides you with an excellent venue for connectivity to past classmates. But is also provides your Alma Mater with the resources necessary to continue educating, and enriching the lives of the next generation.

By: Trisha *Muench* Randall PGHS 1992

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