the HERD

NUMBER FIFTY * SUNSET HIGH SCHOOL CLASSES OF '57 & 58 * SEPTEMBER 2007

CLASS OF 1958

SAVE THE DATE
50th CLASS REUNION

JUNE 20-21-22, 2008

MARRIOTT HOTEL
DFW AIRPORT

)

A full slate of activities await you, including a Friday Golf Tournament and evening Social, free day for most of Saturday to visit with old friends, tour Dallas / Oak Cliff or see the sights and shop. Saturday will be topped off with the Gala 50th Reunion Class Banquet in the Grand Ballroom of the Hotel. And Sunday morning there will be a special Breakfast at the hotel for those wishing to attend. Reasonable Hotel Room rates have been set aside for the Class of '58.

Registration Forms and additional information will appear in the January 2008 edition of "the HERD".

But, save the date now, June 20-22, 2008 !!! It's a once in a lifetime Event !!!

1958 class members should see a label below with info for the class directory. E-mail corrections to ed.cullum@tx.rr.com or mail to the HERD

Academic Excellence
at Sunset

***By* Khalid Ross, Head Basketball Coach at Sunset**

In the last academic year 2006-2007, Sunset High School was labeled one out of six academically acceptable High Schools in Dallas. As a matter of fact, Sunset High School was mere percentage points away from being an academically recognized school by the State Board of Education in Texas. In the past three years from 2003 to 2006, Sunset was labeled the most comprehensive High School. It was rated number one in Advanced Placement (AP) tests taken and passed. Sunset High School has produced 10 AP Scholars. Of these 10 scholars, four of the children were on an athletic team. One of the children, who passed the AP exam, passed 6 of the AP tests that he took. Now, as a junior in High School, he is on pace to pass 10 AP tests.

Currently, we are looking for more student-athletes like Mr. Vines. On our basketball team, we have five current athletes who are taking AP classes. We would like to encourage our student-athletes to continue striving for excellence. Since my student-athletes live in such depressed neighborhoods, some of them cannot afford to pay for AP tests...or S.A.T. tests for that matter. If these student-athletes are going to go to college, they must pass not just their AP exams, TAKS tests, but they must also pass the S.A.T. tests as well. Knowing that, the basketball program would love to assist these wonderful student-athletes with finances to help pay for their S.A.T., ACT, and AP exams. We plan to create tutoring sessions for our student-athletes using qualified teachers from our AP departments.

This is where we, the Sunset Basketball Program, are asking for your assistance. We are seeking donations of any amount to aid in our training of these young men to become responsible, and productive men. These children are OUR future. We CANNOT fail them. So, I as a coach and a father am reaching out to you, and asking for your help. Feel free to contact me at any time about granting our team a donation. We are extremely grateful for any assistance that you can give to us.

Sunset High School, 2120 W Jefferson, Dallas TX 75208
Office 972.502.1500 Cell 469.449.3591 khross@dallasisd.org

Jack Merrifield, Our 1870 Neighbor

by Jim Barnes

(originally written for the Stevens Park Estates Neighborhood Association's Summer 2007 newsletter—revised August 2007, reprinted here with permission)

The little cemetery at the southeast corner of Hampton and Jefferson is a well known Oak Cliff landmark. A granite tombstone marks the burial of John ("Jack") Merrifield. During the years when the Stevens family opened their farm (where our Stevens Park Estates neighborhood is located today) the Merrifields were their southern neighbors. At one time or another John Merrifield owned all the land in a rectangle one- half mile wide, starting from where the swing-sets in Annie L. Stevens Children's Park are today, running south 1½ miles to Clarendon.

Jack Merrifield arrived in Texas sometime around the end 1850, after free land in our vicinity had all been taken. One newspaper story from the 1920s asserts that he operated the first livery stable in the infant village of Dallas. In 1851 he bought the ½ square mile now occupied by Sunset High School, south of modern Davis, and he lived there the remainder of his life. In 1858, William and Mary Myers, the original claimants to the square mile including our neighborhood, lost the southwest ¼ of their "section" in debt foreclosure. Bouncing through probate and bankruptcy cases, title to the property was again auctioned in

Jack Merrifield

1868, where it sold for $5 (yes, 3 1/8 cents per acre). A year later the empty 160 acre tract was sold to Jack Merrifield for $400. So, Jack Merrifield was southern neighbor to John and Mary Stevens, when they bought their farm in 1870.

When the Stevens arrived here, John Merrifield was already seventy-seven years old. He had been born in Kentucky on the 29th of December 1792. His mother, Rachel Boone, was a first cousin once removed of Daniel Boone, the legendary frontiersman. During the War of 1812 John Merrifield served in the army of Andrew Jackson. He fought the Battle of New Orleans. His brother came to Texas during its Revolution and was killed at Goliad.

John had been married twice and had sired 13 children before he followed his older sons in their migration to North Texas. He was a farmer and a stockman. His second wife, Elizabeth, died here in 1869. John married a third time. Unlike the college-educated Stevens', John and Harriet Merrifield signed deeds simply with their "mark". John Merrifield suddenly "dropped dead" in front of his log cabin on the 21st of July 1873.

The Merrifield cabin was (evidently) located at the east edge of modern Hampton, just south of Wentworth. Today, standing in the parking lot between "Wash World" and "Hollywood Video", it's hard to imagine Jack Merrifield's cabin near the crest of the ridge -- long views extending west out across vast prairies.

The family recalls that Jack's cabin was already there when he bought the property, but that he had expanded it into a three room home for his family. It was torn down in 1938 and as late as 1963 the piled logs were reported rotting nearby.

The straight line of Hampton Road wasn't extended north from this hilltop for half a century after John Merrifield died. The north-south road the pioneers used fit more comfortably to the natural terrain. It can only be traced today in fragments of Plymouth Road and Tennant Street. This earlier County road was variously called "Cedar Hill Road", "Wheatland Road", and "Rush Chapel Road".

Rush Chapel was a small Methodist-Episcopal (South) church built on the southeast corner of modern Davis and Tennant. Both the Stevens and Merrifields were Methodists. The

position of Merrifield property and the alignment of the old road lead me to believe that the original tombstones of Merrifield Cemetery probably faced east. The cemetery was heavily vandalized in 1939 and my guess is that during its restoration, including the acquisition of the granite double headstone for "Jack" and his second wife Elizabeth, the orientation was reversed to face the new Hampton Road on the west.

Nobody really knows how many burials are in Merrifield Cemetery. There are rumors of graves covered by adjacent houses. It's nearly impossible to disprove any of the many yarns about this conspicuous landmark, but some are more "likely" than others. For many years the cemetery was tended by two elderly Merrifield descendants who lovingly cut weeds and placed flowers on the grave of "Richard" Merrifield. Unfortunately exhaustive modern genealogical research fails to find any family member with that name. Another tale is that a lone Indian warrior, killed in battle far away, was brought back to the Merrifield Cemetery for burial. There was almost no Indian warfare in Dallas County; though there is one report of a Settler scalping an Indian he had killed.

Another story reports burial of family slaves in a special section of the cemetery. Slavery was relatively rare in Dallas County, and John Merrifield held no slaves in the 1860 Census. The Merrifield family repeats a story that a traveler, James Smith, passing through on his way to California, was overcome by his tuberculosis, given shelter in the Merrifield's cabin until he died, and buried in their cemetery. Plausible-- yet my research couldn't confirm. But old newspaper accounts exactly corroborate at least part of perhaps the best old story. In 1868, twenty-three year old Benjamin Merrifield (John and Elizabeth's son) was traveling down a country road one December evening with a female companion when they passed a beautiful glade of trees. That would be "a nice place in which to be buried", he lightly remarked. Within a week, he was shot dead at Reunion in a fight over a girl, and his body was buried in the spot he had admired--our Merrifield Cemetery.

Sunset Alma Mater

I was honored to be a guest of the SHS Class of 1957 at the celebration of 50 years as Bison Alumni. It was a great event and I saw so many old friends. But, for me, the highlight was singing our Alma Mater. I thought about each word and phrase.

Glorious: We have an outstanding history of producing leaders. We have ties that span generations.

Victorious: We have produced winners in many fields, business, government, academic and athletic.

Undying Loyalty: I looked around the room and saw what that meant. People from all over the country united by loyalty to Sunset.

The Doo-Wop Oldies Quiz

1. When did "Little Suzie" finally wake up?

2. "Rock Around The Clock" was used in what movie?

3. What's missing? _____Baby; Earth_____; and _____On My Shoulder Love

4. "I found my thrill..." where?

5. "Please turn on your magic beam, _____ _____ bring me a dream"

6. For which label did Elvis Presley first record?

7. He asked, "Why's everybody always pickin' on me?" Who was he?

8. Bobby Darin's "Mack The Knife", the one with the knife, was named:

9. Name the song with "A-wop bop a-loo bop a-lop bam boom"?

10. Who is generally given credit for the term "Rock And Roll"?

11. The Everly Brothers are...

12. The Big Bopper's real name

13. In1959, Berry Gordy, Jr. started a small record company called...

14. Edd Brynes had a hit with "Kookie, Kookie, Lend Me Your Comb.".What was the TV show

Answers on page 8

Oak Cliff's Texas Theatre to open again in November

Big plans in store for W. Jefferson space

by Michael Granberry

It opened in the heart of Oak Cliff in 1931.

Lee Harvey Oswald forever etched its name in infamy by being arrested there in 1963, soon after authorities say he gunned down President Kennedy in downtown Dallas and then murdered a police officer blocks away.

But the Texas Theatre has launched a new and much happier chapter in its 76-year history when its legendary T-E-X-A-S sign, which was recently redone, will go back up over the theater's stucco entrance on West Jefferson.

And that's only the beginning, organizers say, with the years to come offering not only a handsomely restored theater but also a trigger for Oak Cliff redevelopment and a smaller but important new venue for Dallas Summer Musicals.

"There's an old saying," says Michael A. Jenkins, president and general manager of the Summer Musicals, "that things worth doing don't come easy. As one who subscribes to that theory, I would say that the Texas Theatre must be a worthwhile project, because it's been hard. But the future looks very bright."

After spending $1.6 million of federal grant money acquired by the city of Dallas, the Oak Cliff Foundation – which bought the theater six years ago – plans to unveil the redesigned Texas Theatre at the debut showing of a movie on the Kennedy assassination produced by the Public Broadcasting Service.

That will come in late November, around the 44th anniversary of the president's death.

Although the foundation still needs $400,000 to $500,000 to finish phase one of the restoration, which has already cost $3.6 million, it recently obtained approval for a loan, says foundation board member Ninette McDonald, that will allow it to meet its November deadline even if its fundraising goals fall short.

"We will go ahead and get the doors open," says Ms. McDonald, who grew up only blocks away.

Soon after the movie's screening, Mr. Jenkins says, Dallas Summer Musicals plans to launch a new chapter in its history by using the renovated theater as a springboard for new, small productions that will be taken on the road.

DSM Management, a nonprofit wing of the Summer Musicals, also books events at the Music Hall at Fair Park and the Majestic Theatre and will then have a third performing space in a theater with a current capacity of 666 seats.

He says the repairs, which began in earnest in 2002, have "moved along slowly but consistently, and what's been done is absolutely first-class.

The backstage dressing rooms, the air conditioning, the restrooms, the electrical system are all complete. All they really need to finish are the cosmetics of the seating, the interior painting and the carpeting."

Mr. Jenkins says the reopened theater will give Dallas Summer Musicals "a unique ability to tour small productions. They will be rehearsed at the Texas Theatre and then performed there on Friday nights, during Saturday matinees and evening performances and during Sunday matinees, four times per week."

Long after Lee Harvey Oswald entered the theater without buying a ticket and was arrested during a matinee of Audie Murphy's *War Is Hell*, the area around the theater has changed dramatically, and not for the better.

Mr. Jenkins and others hope a revitalized Texas Theatre will be a catalyst in fueling Oak Cliff redevelopment, making it a place where theatergoers throughout Dallas will want to go.

"It signifies the restoration of a rather remarkable place in history, but more important

from an economic standpoint, it means having a nice new venue for the arts," says Bob Stimson, president of the Oak Cliff Chamber of Commerce.

Monte Anderson, chairman of the board of the Oak Cliff Foundation, says the theater should only enhance the nearby Bishop Arts District, which already has a number of thriving restaurants and shops.

"I don't want to see the character of Jefferson Boulevard go away," he says, "but I'd like to see some new retailers mixed in with the character we have now."

Ms. McDonald notes that three attempts to revive the theater all failed. United Artists closed the Texas Theatre as a cinema house in 1989. A year later, the Texas Theatre Historical Society purchased the building. In 1993, Don Dubois, a former usher and sign changer at the theater, became its owner.

It re-emerged as a second-run movie house in 1995, but a fire later that year did significant damage. In 1996, businessman Pedro Villa bought the building and began showing Spanish-language movies and live shows, but that, too, failed to last.

The theater closed again in 1998 and was acquired by the Oak Cliff Foundation in 2001. Its timing, says Ms. McDonald, could not have been worse. Its fundraising efforts began just days before the 9/11 terrorist attacks, which made raising money all but impossible.

Carolyn Diane Doss (1958)

Born in Ranger, Texas March 30, 1940 and passed away in Dallas on June 28, 2007. Diane attended Sunset High School and UNT. She was preceded in death by her parents, Stewart and Volva Doss. She is survived by her beloved sister, Susan Doss and other family members. Graveside services were held at Ranger on July 14th.

Bryan Walker Wilmoth (1958)

We received an e-mail from Wendy Wilmoth, Bryan's daughter, advising us that Bryan passed away on August 30, 2007. He lived in Griffin, Georgia

Third Annual Sunset Lettermen & Friends Golf Tournament Benefiting The Sunset Fondation

Monday, October 29, 2007

Thorntree Country Club, 825 West Wintergreen, DeSoto, TX 75115

This is an outstanding course that has been used for PGA Qualifying Rounds and presents a unique golf experience for all skill levels.

RESPOND NOW!! TOURNAMENT SLOTS ARE LIMITED AND WILL BE FILLED ON A FIRST CHECK-FIRST REGISTERED BASIS!!

The event is an idea conceived by the 1955 reunion committee. It was such a success that a decision was made to make this an annual event to support graduating Sunset Students through the Sunset Foundation, Inc.

The 2005 and 2006 events contributed in excess of $10,000 each. Help make the 2007 event even more successful!

FORMAT: Four (4) people per team playing a Florida Scramble
TIME: 8:30 am Shotgun start
PRICE: $150 per person includes: cart, practice balls, and a lunch following play.

Guest(s) can join you for the buffet – cost $16/person. Please include with entry fee and list names on Registration Form.

If you cannot form a team, list your name and we will match you with someone close to your graduation year. Ladies Welcome!

Entry form available from ed.cullum@tx.rr.com or contact Jim Warwick at 281- 893 – 3450

Sign Makers Restore Historical Flying Red Horse

By Jennifer LeClaire

With more than two years of restoration, $650,000 in funding and the help of top architectural sign makers the illuminated revolving Pegasus atop the 29-story Magnolia Hotel building in Dallas is flying high once again nearly 70 years after its initial ascent to glory.

In 1934, the Magnolia Petroleum Company, predecessor to Mobil Oil, erected a large oil derrick on the roof of the city's first skyscraper, which was billed the tallest building south of Washington D.C. and west of the Mississippi. The derrick supported two 35-by-50-foot red neon signs that formed the image of a Pegasus, a mythological Flying Red Horse that was once the company's corporate logo and has since become a treasured landmark of the Texan city.

But by 1999 the Pegasus was dilapidated, pitted with rust, and unable to fly. The horses actually stopped revolving 25 years ago in 1974. Mobil moved their headquarters out of downtown and gave both the sign and building to the City of Dallas in 1977. The city eventually bolted down the Pegasus so that the rusted pieces would not fall off. Twenty-years later in 1997 the battered sign had become outdated and was shut off. But that is where this story begins.

Resurrecting a Legend

While the City of Dallas had all but given up on the glowing Pegasus, Denver-based developers had different ideas for the historic icon. Their plan was to purchase and restore the old office building to create a luxury hotel - The Magnolia -- and bring the flying horses back to their former glory for Dallas' Millennium Celebration in December 1999.

That is when Dallas-based architectural signage firm Casteel & Associates was called in to manage the project. Casteel, owner of the firm, said he declined the assignment when the project architects initially contacted him.

"I really did not want to get involved because of the type of job it was," he said. "But an architect friend of mine came back a second time and said they were having a hard time getting people willing to tackle the job."

In the end the challenge was too compelling for Casteel to refuse. "What made me change my mind was pressure," laughed Casteel. "But in all honesty, there were very few people who had the technical knowledge, the dedication to historical preservation and the tenacity to take a lot of people from a lot of different disciplines and pull everybody together to make the project come off."

Project members started talking about the restoration in late 1998. Work actually began in the spring of 1999 and was well underway by that summer. While the project met its goal of completion by December 31, 2000 Casteel continues to oversee work on the rotation system to this day.

Bringing Together Specialists for a Common Cause

The primary challenge for project members was the disassembly of the old horses and assembly of the new ones. But Casteel said that it was not just as simple as that. Experts from a variety of industries joined forces to overcome the obstacles of preserving the landmark.

"The project involved steelwork, coatings, and special paintings to make the old tower last," said Casteel. "It involved porcelain for the horses. The rotating system and power transmission systems required specialists. We had a couple of different engineers involved, as well as computer programmers."

The first thing project members did was to analyze the condition of the old horse, which appears to be one horse but is really two flat, porcelain-covered panels raised by metal scaffolding that is outlined in neon. The two red horses were located 14 feet apart and were designed to revolve when placed on the building.

The preservation plans actually called for the sign to be restored but Casteel said that the Pegasus was in such bad shape that the restoration efforts demanded new porcelain-covered aluminum panels and a new motor.

"They were almost 70-years-old," he said. "The porcelain had been chipped and cracked enough to where rust was a huge factor. We

recharged with doing the job in such a way that the new horse would last 75-100 years and so we could not actually leave the old horses up there."

What Goes up Must Come Down

In order to restore the legendary sign, it was removed from its home atop the Magnolia building in August of 1999 and completely rebuilt. The tower structure and the main superstructure, however, were fully restorable.

The first thing project members did was to raise a Phoenix Sky-horsed crane on the roof of the building with a helicopter to disassemble the horse and then reassemble it. Dallas-based Byrum Crane Service performed disassembly of the old horses and assembly of the new horses from 400-feet in the air.

Casteel said everything about this project was a technical challenge. "One of the challenges was that we were under very strict requirements from the City of Dallas Historic commission to restore things the way they were," he said. "We were not allowed do massive modernization."

"We could have gone in and done the job more quickly and less money had we gone in and done modernization but I very thoroughly understood that the goal was to have it look just like the old horse that was put up in 1934," he said.

Project leaders, for example, installed racing members and steel that actually served no structural purpose just so the sign would be exactly as it was in 1934.

"You can't tell the new one from the old one except for the fact that the faces are now red and not rusty," said Casteel. "We replaced every old piece with a new piece that was exactly the same as it was before."

American Porcelain Enamel Co. of Dallas created the 15-ton duplicate. The original Pegasus is on display in a shed at the Dallas Farmer's Market.

Mixing Historic Design with Modern Materials

Since the original tower was restorable, Casteel said it was left in place and covered with modern coatings to keep it from rusting. "The old paint actually had stood up pretty well," he said. "Unfortunately it had lead in it as most paint did from that period and we had to go through quite a remediation process to get rid of the lead."

Casteel also noted that there are some components of the mounting of the actual porcelain horses to the frame that are galvanized steal as opposed to prime steel that was used originally. This, too, was done to prevent rusting for the next 75-100 years.

Helping the Pegasus Revolve Once More

In addition to the relighting, the sign is revolving once again using new technology. The entire rotation system continues to be modernized and updated. Indeed, Casteel said work on the horse is continuing on long after December 31, 2000. For example, project members are still fine-tuning the motor system.

"There are still a few glitches. We've had some challenges in the rotation system within the electrical system," said Casteel. "We fought for a long time and just determined in the last few weeks that part of the problem - the big problem - was an insufficient ground for the computer controls and thus they were locking up regularly. We've made some changes to the control system and the rotation over the last year."
One modern feature is a technology-based system that will shut off the horse during high winds. said Casteel.

"It has air brakes, which it had before. But we eventually had to replace them because the old ones were not reparable," he said. "Now any time the wind blows above 20 mph the horse will turn itself off and the brakes will be applied. This was all done via a computer-controlled machine and that is probably the most modern part of it. We have basically a small weather station on the roof of the building that gives us wind speed and wind direction."

Casteel & Associates has worked on hundreds of custom signs in all shapes and sizes, but the restoration of the flying Pegasus was the most challenging.

"This was probably the most exciting project I've ever worked on, the most frustrating at times, but also the most fulfilling also," he said. "It was very neat to see the project come together."

the HERD #50
Post Office Box 941151
Plano, Texas 75094-1151

Address Service Requested

Doo-Wop Answers

1 The movie's over, it's 4 o'clock
2 Blackboard Jungle
3 Angel
4 Blueberry Hill
5 Mr. Sandman
6 Sun
7 Charlie Brown
8 Mac Heath
9 Tutti Fruitti
10 Alan Freed
11 Don and Phil
12 Jiles P. Richardson
13 Motown
14 77 Sunset Strip

If you had trouble with these, you are in trouble. We are supposed to remember everything from 50 years ago. It is yesterday that gives us trouble.

Letters To the EDDIEtor

Dear Bison faithful, for the first time since HERD number one, I have no letters to print. Please don't let this happen again. The letters are a big part of the magic that has sustained the HERD all these years. E-mail letters preferred but I can handle anything.

Historically, when I have needed something, I have asked and you have responded. I hope you will continue to support the HERD.

1958 class, let me know of any corrections that need to be made for the class directory. Check both labels.

Ed.cullum@tx.rr.com

Bison Fall Roundup

On **THURSDAY, OCTOBER 25th at 6:30 PM** we will meet in the banquet room at Dallas El Fenix on McKinney. Classes of '57 and '58 welcome members and guests from all Sunset classes for a fun evening of socializing and classic Mexican dining. There is no formal agenda; just great opportunity to visit with others from our high school days at Sunset. Come early to enjoy your favorite beverage and then order dinner from a special menu. Those who have attended know that these are meaningful as well as entertaining evenings to enjoy, reminisce and reconnect with friends from bygone days. Don't miss this one.... Mark your calendars now and join us!