

Bell continued

He took pictures of the bell with his cell phone and called the Counts. After he convinced them he was serious, Mike Counts then made a few phone calls to those with Phillips connections. Bowling got a call from Webb who lives in Borger. Although it wasn't in the job description of alumni president, Webb said he'd drive over that weekend to pick it up. In the meantime, Bowling **hooked** up the bell and trailer to his truck and took it back to his home. What was a big mystery was where had it been and what was it doing there?

Webb got in touch with the First Family of the Phillips Bell. Back in the 1970s, Pat Bush came up with the idea of a victory bell. As she said, 'Everyone had a victory bell but Phillips.' Pat solicited donations from businesses in Phillips and Borger. She bought the bell at an antique store. Phillips Petroleum Co. donated some materials. **Mike Young ('70)**, her brother, built the wagon. He put a metal Blackhawk caricature on the front with a No. 81 on its jersey, the number of his younger brother **Mark ('78)**. They presented it to the school at the football season's first pep rally in 1976. It was splashed on the pages of the Borger News Herald. 'That was about as big as it got in Phillips back then,' Mike Young said.

When the school closed and the houses left Phillips 22 years ago, Pat took the bell with her to Bunavista, a Borger neighborhood. It stayed there until 2000 when she sold her house. Not knowing what to do with the bell, she then gave it to the third of four sons, Layne Moffitt. He played for Phillips and now lives in Bushland.

'I called Layne and asked if he knew where the bell was,' Pat said. 'He said that he had it stored. I said, I don't think so.' No, Layne was sure he did. He had a trailer, a ladder, some tools, and that old bell in storage at W&H Trucking and Trailer on East 22nd Avenue. 'He said we got that booger out there. We got it stored.' Pat replied, 'If you do, what was it doing out on Pullman Road?'

Upon further investigation, Layne had been the victim of a theft. Most of his items were stolen. Apparently the **crooks** couldn't very well pawn

off a victory bell, so it's believed that they just dumped the thing out in the country. That's where it stayed until Bowling drove by. Now in the possession of the Alumni Association, Pat said, 'It found its way home, by **hook** or **crook**.' [in more ways than one, if you've noticed the bold type]'

What will become of the bell? One option is that the bell will make its way to the Heritage Center in Stinnett where most all of the Phillips memorabilia has found a home. It needs sand-blasting and cleaning up, and the clapper, which is missing, replaced. However, there is not enough room available in the Heritage Center to house the whole chariot wagon, but there is space to display the dismantled bell and hawk figurine. Another option (too premature to describe here), perhaps a better one, will allow for a more prominent display of the bell to the public at another site, and still keep the wagon, bell, and hawk all intact. This matter is to be discussed and decided by the Alumni Association Committee. Both options include refurbishing the victory bell.

Incidentally, Bowling received \$100 from the Alumni Association for his commendable efforts and concern.

David Quisenberry ('59)

Richard Kelly ('58)

Gary Glasgow ('59)



PHS

Future Homecoming Set

Be sure and mark down on your 2010 calendar the dates **July 9-10** for our HC next summer at which we will recognize and honor all of our exes who are members of the Classes of 1936 - 1949. These correspond to the venerable group who, at that time, will have surpassed the average life span of age 78. At the present, this distinguished age group adds up to nearly 500 people, although by next July this figure is naturally expected to diminish. It is anticipated that the Classes of '55, '60, '65, '70, '75, '80, and '85 will be planning special reunions for that weekend, with the Class of 1960 the featured 50-year reunion class.

PAC (Phillips Alumni Committee)



Sharon Flinn ('64)

Sharon Darnell ('65)

Janet Nail ('64)

BLACKHAWK SPIRIT

Edition 14

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phillipsblackhawks.com

September 2009

57th Homecoming Anniversary

One might naturally think that Homecoming, for those perennial attendees, would at some point be the same-ole, same-ole. It admittedly is in some respects, but for the most part as many can attest, it invariably hosts new faces, spawns new stories, and provides new surprises! Plus, the Phillips bond among former exes grows stronger each passing year, even among exes where an age disparity deterred them from knowing each other that well, or at all, back during their school days. This Homecoming was no exception as there were a little over a dozen first-timer exes. New tales arose about growing up in Phillips, and there were a couple of surprises, such as the announcement by **D.L. Malicoat ('59)** and **Virginia Pirtle ('63)** that they were getting married the next weekend. This little romantic tale all began at the last Homecoming where the couple met for the first time in many years. Although you've heard this before, it's nevertheless true, from the feedback we've received, that everyone had just as good a time - if not better - than at any prior Homecoming in recent years!

Lots went on that weekend outside the planned HC activities - the Class of 1959 had a cookout at **Karen Hood Carr's** home on Thursday plus a dinner at Dake's on Saturday evening. The Class of 1964 had dinner and program at the AmericInn Motel and at Ole Sutphens on two successive evenings. And the Class of '69 met at the Lake Meredith Harbor Clubhouse for dinner and a swim. For all the other exes who didn't have special class reunions, there was the mixer at Fairlanes Baptist Church gymnasium that went over really well - it was as big a turnout and successful as last year's Friday event!

As was the case again, there were many exes that hadn't come in a long time, especially from the '59 honor class. There were

fourteen exes recognized at the Saturday morning program, at least we're aware of, who came for the very first time since they were in high school... **Mary McKinnis ('59)**, **Wilson Garrett ('59)**, **Ann Willis ('59)**, **Charlotte Cranford ('59)**, **Elaine Elliott ('61)**, **Jerry Laney ('62)**, **Janet Nail ('64)**, **Beryl Phelps ('53)**, **Betty Dean ('54)**, **Mike Malone ('68)**, **Sammy Baner ('73)**, **Tammy McLaury ('79)**, **Lynn Gibson ('79)**, and **Kyle Lynch ('83)**. This year's featured 50-year reunion bunch was the Class of '59 who had 45 members present (see below)... fantastic! **Mildred Cole ('59)** of Brownfield was the winner of the special Blackhawk blanket drawing, awarded to someone attending their Big 5 0. Winner of the Blackhawk blanket, awarded to a dues-paying ex, was **Shirley Tucker ('53)** of Yoakum, Texas. This year, we also had a very nice, queen-sized, Blackhawk quilt especially made, which was raffled off. It was won by **Gene Kuhrt**, husband of **Jo Ann Hubbard Kuhrt ('48)** of Borger.

The 14th annual "Hawk of the Year" award went to **Marjo Hettick van Patten ('62)** of Bellbrook, Ohio, who was unable to make Homecoming. Marjo, who is the webmaster of the phillipsblackhawks.com online site, has probably dedicated several hours per day on most days over the past year updating/adding information and implementing new features, pictures, videos, software, etc. on the site. Recently she's added the 1960 and 1967 Cotton Bowl halftime highlights and an Achievements page. Her efforts have truly been a labor of love and well-deserving of the award. We encourage those of you who haven't visited the site to do so, where you will discover a wealth of information...and the rest of you, to submit to her any interesting pictures, anecdotes, current Email address, notable achievements, and especially bus stories...anything concerning Phillips.

Some of the other awards that were meted out to exes were: The three cash prize drawing awardees were as follows: \$100 - **Doyle Hughes ('39)**, \$75 - **Mike Aker ('68)**, and \$50 - **Mike Webb ('64)**. Don't know if anyone talked these three in buying his/her lunch or not...it evidently must be very hard to spend a new crisp bill that you've just won without having some quality time alone to savor it. Also receiving special recognition was **Caroline Alexander ('36)** who was presented a bouquet of flowers for being such a faithful attendee. *continued on next page*



INSIDE SPIRIT

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Anniversary...continued

Of course, being from the first graduating class, she was the oldest ex there. Some of the other early classes exes present were **Marcel Poulain ('37)**, **Clyde Edwards ('38)**, **Louise Glidewell Gunter ('40)**, and **Renda Jean Sharp Reeves ('40)**. As always, all the classes having special reunions ('59, '64, '69, and '79), and all former PHS teachers and office workers were asked to stand and be recognized. It was sure good again to see **Joe Hayes**, **Doug Adkins**, **Cozell Foster ('43)**, **Dick Jackson ('45)**, **LaNelle White**, and **Joel Lynch** in attendance.

Our main speaker this Homecoming was **Kyle Lynch ('83)** who is the head football coach at Canadian and, in case you haven't heard, has won back-to-back state championships in both Texas Class 2A and 1A football the previous two seasons. After being kidded about being his father Joel's clone, Kyle gracefully handled the compliment and delivered a very good, inspiring talk as he related his experiences about growing up in Phillips, and what it meant to be a Blackhawk. Even exes a generation or two his senior could identify with what he shared.

There was a major oversight committed at the program, and that was the failure to recognize the attendees who had received all-state honors in athletics or music (befitting of the words of the 1950's Eddie Fisher song, "Oh, my faux pas, to me it was so blunderful"). We realize that several probably came for that express purpose such as one family in particular...**Fred Baner ('65)**, who was a track star that won first in state in the 880 both his junior and senior years, **Judith Wendel Baner ('65)**, who, along with her sister **Jill Wendel Mandel ('69)**, won first-team all-state honors in volleyball. To these and the other all-staters present, please accept our sincerest apology. We intend to recognize our former all-staters for sure at next year's HC program. Incidentally, Fred donated several very handsome, wooden, Phillips Blackhawk, ballpoint pens that he crafted from a remnant of the old football stadium home bleachers. What a novel idea! Since we have only a limited number available, we haven't made a final decision yet, but we may have a raffle drawing for them at the next Homecoming in 2010. Who knows, you might have sat on one of these pens in your youth, if you get the point (gag!).



Joe Hayes



Class of 1959

First Ada Creel Scholarship Fund Now Fully Funded

Thanks to the continuing, generous contributions that have come in mainly since March, the first Ada Creel Scholarship now is a fully endowed scholarship (fund reached \$10,000 in May helped by a dollar-for-dollar matching contribution by her son **Morris Creel ('55)**). It has started furnishing a \$500 per semester scholarship at FPC like the other Ray Robbins, J.I Kimmins, Chesty Walker, Evelyn Hubbard, and Lee Johnson Scholarships. We are now focusing on raising \$5000 for the second planned scholarship in her name to which Morris will also donate matching funds. Once this scholarship eventuates, we will shift the Association's efforts to help fund a brand new endowment scholarship to be named the Williams Brothers Scholarship in a joint venture with the Williams' families.

This scholarship is the brainchild of, and being established by, the wives and children of the **Williams brothers, Bobby, Don, Clinton, Jimmie, and P.D.**, all of whom attended PHS between 1939 to 1951, and represented the school well with each brother making contributions on the Phillips Blackhawk football field. As quoted by a regional sports writer, "It's doubtful that any one family has given so much talent to a school as the Williams brothers did." All the boys received district and regional status in football while playing at Phillips, and Jimmie was the first all-state football player named from Phillips. All are deceased with the exception of P.D., who lives in Duncan, Oklahoma. Raised with strong personal and family values, along with hard work ethics, this family demonstrated these values not only on the football field, but in the classroom and work careers. They furthered their education by attending college on football scholarships. Bobby, Don, and Jimmie all played at Texas Tech, Clinton played at West Texas State, and P.D. played at Tyler Junior College. Business, farming, ranching, teaching, and coaching comprised the successful work careers of these five brothers.

So thank you very much again for your generosity... you may think you weren't donating all that much, but combined with others' donations, you can see what has been accomplished in 5 or 6 years since we began this grand endeavor (11 current endowment scholarships at FPC). Funding these scholarships is the best thing that we can do to (1) help another needy and deserving high school grad out and (2) to perpetuate the memory of PHS and its administrators, teachers, and exes.

Donations may be made at anytime of the year and sent to Phillips Alumni Assn/PO Box 1710/Borger TX 79008. The Phillips Alumni Association is easily now the leading scholarship benefactor to FPC.

Endowment Scholarship Donors (\$25 and Over)

Delton Waits ('62)
Tom Means ('48)
Betty Braden ('46)
Ralph Smith ('57)
Mary Hull ('59)
Carl Toland ('60)
Richard Kelly ('58)
Janice Jeanne ('49)
Mike Caddell ('60)
Larry Riggins ('56)
Patelly ('59)
Jackie Gray ('62)
"Tooter" Cook ('56)
John Evans ('39)
Frank Strech ('48)
Glenn Hopkins ('65)
Roy White ('60)
Marynell Love ('64)
Johnnie Garner ('62)
Mike Kimmins ('66)
Joan Chandler ('65)
Dick Robie ('70)
Charlotte O'Neill ('60)
Kirk Hunter ('65)
Lou Ann Winegar

Lavonna Paxton ('60)
Colleen Wilson ('54)
Vera Sledge ('48)
Robin Adkins ('75)
Joan Johnson ('59)
Joy Sweeney ('47)
Tommy Bullard ('59)
Jerry Fenley ('55)
Sam Holloman ('46)
Joyce Sweeney ('56)
John Williams ('51)
Dana Wright ('68)
James Verden ('59)
Joey Sutphen ('58)
H.F. Ritchie ('57)
Jeannie Doffer ('49)
Jerry Laney ('62)
Nancy Board ('51)
Cozell Foster ('43)
Marsha Rawlings ('65)
Erin Caufield ('73)
Clytee Armstrong ('43)
Bob Smith ('60)
Carolyn Weese ('59)
2009 Golf Tourney Players

Rex Young ('85)
Joe Hayes ('65) & Karla Caviness ('65)
Deanna Hatley ('56)
Maben Hill ('42)
Elaine Elliott ('61)
Penny Walker ('54)
Marvin Morris ('59)
Leon Glenn ('56)
Fred Baner ('65) & Judith Wendel ('65)
Milton Hoff ('58)
Pete Perry ('62)
Cathy Armstrong ('60)
Judy Lemons ('73)
Morris Creel ('55)
Mike Johnson ('61)
John Hill ('71)
Pat Abbananto ('61)
Judge Pewrly ('56)
Billy Baker ('56)
Freda Armstrong ('44)
Donald Smith ('50)
Jimmie Dean ('57) & Jeannelle Tucker ('58)
Jean Brakebill ('40)
Wayne Hall ('59)



Grapevine continued

His prognosis is pretty stark as he has been left paralyzed on his left side, and although he has regained his speech, he is not coherent much of the time. He has recently been transferred from hospice care and placed in a long-term care facility.

Frank Badeen, who owned and operated Cut-Rate Food Store in Phillips from 1954 until 1981, died at age 89 in Amarillo on September 1. His obituary/picture may be viewed at hutchinsoncountyhighlights.com.

Golf Tournament Results

The pleasant tournament weather we've been having the past two years did not show up this year. Old Mother Nature was unforgiving as a relentless wind along with a blistering 108-degree, record-high temperature affected the players' stamina and scores. The 9:00 am starting time was a small solace. Despite our numbers being down with only 65 golfers participating, it was another great, close golf scramble with a 3-way tie for first place - a tie-breaker having to be employed. This year a low team score of 57 won the Golf Scramble. Members of the winning foursome were **Robin Adkins ('75)**, **Gary Dillard ('83)**, **Mike Horton** (former PHS principal and spouse of **Kristi Rickard ('66)**), and Willard Brown (not an ex). Each player received \$50 in golf merchandise of their choosing. All the fun, fellowship, and profuse perspiration was topped off with ice tea and pizza after everyone played through. Some of you other exes should have come out to visit and help us eat the pizzas! By the way, a Diane Martin (not an ex) did make a rare hole-in-one. The Tourney was able to donate \$500 to the Alumni scholarship funds from the proceeds left over from the sponsorship donations and player fees.

Heritage Center Upgrades/ Donations for 2009

Danny Beebe ('73) - 1973 basketball letter jacket.

Kevin McClellan ('69) - Football traveling shirt.

Victor ('69) & Gordon ('71) Taylor - Their mother's (Alma Rogers Taylor) annuals, class ring.

Billy Reneau ('73) - His brothers Ron's, Danny's, and Richard's letter jackets.

Larry Duane Reed ('67) - 1957 season football roster ribbon.



Phillips High School Class of 1964
July 11, 2009

Grapevine This and That

We understand that **Mike Kimmins ('66)** was unable this year to attend HC as he was in the process of moving to Amarillo. Also heard that **Billy Don Briscoe ('62)** is moving from Odessa to Canyon sometime this fall.

A big thanks goes out to **Richard Kelly ('58)** and **Eugene Richmond** (husband of **Barbara Wilson ('56)** and one of the Five Bops) who the past several years have faithfully taken pictures at the Homecoming and have furnished several of the photos used in this edition and prior publications.

A crisis occurred a week or so after Homecoming to **Tracy Hogan ('55)**, who knows practically everyone who ever lived in Phillips, and vice-versa. Tracy underwent an emergency appendectomy here at the hospital in Borger, and sometime after the surgery, he suddenly suffered a blood clot that rushed to his heart. He had to be flown by helicopter to BSA Hospital in Amarillo where he came very close to dying. And all this happened while his wife Charlotte, who has had breast cancer, recently underwent a mastectomy. Tracy is home now and is fully recovered from his ordeal.

Another faithful Homecoming

attendee, **Tommy Railback ('63)**, after failing a routine stress test in early August, discovered that he had several blockages. He then underwent a 6-hour heart surgery as he had five bypasses performed. Because Tommy was active and in otherwise good physical condition, he is recovering very quickly. He had been going on 65-mile bicycle rides in preparation for going mountain climbing in the Tetons in early August, so a timely heart checkup possibly averted a major tragedy.

Eddie Kennedy ('67) suffered a massive stroke in mid-July while living in San Antonio. *continued on page 7*

Ex-Teachers In The News

"May 27, 2009...This was a very special day for a very special lady, **Erma Martindale Whittet**, who reached her 100th birthday!

A number of Phillips exes assembled in Muskogee, Oklahoma to honor Erma with a surprise birthday party. She walked into the room to hear 30 people cheering, "Happy Birthday!" Several exes from different classes were in attendance. The room was decorated with orange and black balloons, and blackboards with letters on the top, just as we had in our old classroom. Many brought old school days pictures and momentos for the occasion.

She knew almost everyone and expressed she was certainly surprised and overwhelmed. We brought our love and appreciation, and everyone agreed we received much more than we had given." By **Rinky Chivers Sanders ('56)**

For those of you who don't remember or didn't know Erma, she taught in the elementary school from 1942 to 1965. To the best of our knowledge, Erma Martindale Whittet, in reaching the century mark, has set a longevity record for former teachers and administrators (although we are not quite sure how old Gertie Mills was when she died). There have been at least a dozen or more who have lived up into their early to late nineties, who are now deceased. And there are a few living today who are in their early nineties.

One such lady is **Nora Sims**, age 94, who a couple of years ago moved from Fritch to a nursing home in Hill- boro, Texas. She recently was experiencing some tremors in her right arm and leg which now have disappeared. Thanks to very good physical therapy care, she is able once again to feed herself, and in back in July was able to walk about 120 feet in her walker. This is only part of a busy schedule of daily exercises. Nora now sports a short haircut which is much more bed friendly. Back when this writer was in school, Nora taught sixth grade.

And this leads us to a related section of sad news as we wish to inform you about a trio of recent deaths that occurred within three weeks of each other. **Ione Thompson**, former homemaking teacher at PHS from 1942 to 1968 (known as **Ione Bender** for her first ten or so years of tenure), passed away on July 16, 2009, in Amarillo at 99 years of age. Born in Edmond, Oklahoma, she and her family moved when she was two to Panhandle, Texas, where she graduated from high

school. After receiving her masters of education at OSU, she taught in Panhandle, Texas for 7 years, 1 year in Edmond, and then moved to Phillips where she taught for 27 years. In 1973 she moved to Amarillo where she lived ever since. Ione was a teacher, homemaker, a great cook, and an excellent seamstress. She was also a devoted wife and mother and "auntie" according to her family members.

Another former educator, **Mary Barton**, age 94, passed away on July 30, 2009, in Austin. Born in Waco, Texas, she obtained her Masters in Education from Southwest Texas State University. A lifelong teacher, she dedicated herself to her special education students at Phillips from 1949 to 1980. No disability or special need was too great for her compassionate heart and skills. Mary also faithfully served as a Sunday School teacher and volunteer at the First Methodist Church in Phillips, and later at St. Andrew Methodist Church in Borger.

On August 6, 2009, **Martha Noel**, age 91, died after a long, confining illness in the nursing center wing of Park Place Towers in Amarillo. Born in 1917 in Memphis, Texas, she graduated from TWU and received her masters degree in Colorado. She was an outstanding general science and biology teacher at PHS whose tenure spanned 40 years, 1943 - 1983, interrupted by a 2-year stint in the U.S. Navy Waves during WW II. Having lived in Amarillo since 1986, she loved to travel, to stay informed on current events, and was an avid stamp collector. **Loyd Lummus ('70)** said that **Joel Lynch** once told him that there are three things that are inevitable in life: (1) death, (2) taxes, and (3) Miss Noel's tests every Friday.



Kyle Lynch ('83) & Joel Lynch



The Tale and Trail of the Blackhawk Bell

For you "older" exes' information, during the last ten years of PHS's history, there was a Blackhawk victory bell at the high school that was used at the pep rallies and taken to the football games. After the

school closed, only a very few people knew what became of the bell and where all it has resided these past 22 years. As it has turned out, no one really knew where the bell actually was in recent weeks or that it was missing, and even more baffling, how it mysteriously showed up in late August, abandoned along the side of a country road outside Amarillo. And hereby hangs the tale of the Blackhawk bell, as reported in an article by the ubiquitous Jon Mark Beilue in the August 30th issue of the Amarillo Globe News and reprinted directly below.

"As **Mike Webb ('64)**, president of the Alumni Association of the late, great Phillips High School, put it, 'It just blew my mind!' Hey, his mind wasn't the only one blown. So was Robbie Bowling's and his stepfather Mike Counts'. Add the mind of **Pat Young Bush ('64)**, her son Layne Moffitt and her brother **Mike Young ('70)**. Throw in anyone else connected with the ghost town of Phillips and a long-forgotten school victory bell. It's all just bizarre! 'Let me tell you, it is very bizarre', said Bowling.

The bizarreness began on Aug. 17 when Bowling, 39, left his home out in the country near Pullman Road southeast of the city. He took a different way into Amarillo because of recent rains. It was a route he hadn't taken in at least two weeks. Bowling passed some odd object, partially in the ditch and partially on the road. He backed up his GMC truck to take a better look. It was a bell, a big old worn, orange-tinged bell on a trailer, abandoned like a baby on a doorstep. But on closer inspection, it was not just any bell.

'As soon as I read BLACKHAWKS on it and saw the colors, and being from the area, I knew exactly what it was,' Bowling said. What are the odds of a victory bell from a school that closed in 1987 sitting abandoned east of the city? Never mind that - what are the odds of the guy who found it, taking a different route into town, would have a working knowledge of the long-gone town because his stepfather's father, **Benny Counts ('55)**, graduated from Phillips and his stepfather Mike Counts had attended the early grades at Phillips? 'Had I not known anything about Phillips, I'd blown on by it and kept going,' said Bowling. 'Having family gone to school there and the history behind it, I figured that they'd want it back.'

continued on page 8

Who's Who List of Class Reunion Attendees



Class of '59 (50-Year Reunion - 45 attendees)

Robin Arthur	Dale Fortune	Mary McKinnis
Nancy Baker	Wilson Garrett	Marvin Morris
Bill Berry	Gary Glasgow	Vance Orr
Marsha Bruns	Wayne Hall	David Quisenberry
Tommy Bullard	Fuzz Haren	Jayne Sledge
Peaches Child	Karen Hood	Butch Speegle
Bobby Cochran	Mary Ellen Hull	Kayla Speegle
Mildred Cole	Linda Jackson	Joe Bob Trumbly
Margaret Coulter	Joan Johnson	James Verden
Charlotte Cranford	Pat Kelly	Billy Ward
Judy Creacy	Fay Deen Krejci	Carolyn Weese
Mike Dees	Don Laughery	Jimmy West
Marvin Demings	D.L. Malicoat	Ed Wheeler
Shari Dobkins	Patty Malone	Don Wilcox
Carolyn Fike	Jeanne McDonald	Ann Willis

Class of '64 (45-Year Reunion - 22 attendees)

Lynn Alexander	Jerry Jean Jones	Jerry Smyrl
Deanna Birch	Mary Joe Krejci	Robert Sprowls
Charlotte Cromer	Marynell Love	Wayne Talbert
Derryl DeShields	Don May	Bob Wakefield
Philip Erdmann	Harvey Morris	Mike Webb
Sharon Flinn	Janet Nail	Pat Young
Sharon Hudson	Jim Pumphery	
Larry Hunter	Jerrie Sissel	

Class of '69 (40-Year Reunion - 23 attendees)

Marion Adkins	Sandra Graves	Richard Storm
Dean Brain	Dianne Gray	Victor Taylor
Junior Bugg	John Harvey	Nikki Tisdale
Jerry Carpenter	Jim Hopkins	Jill Wendel
Carla Sue Casey	Sherry Lane	Ronnie Wood
Darla Caviness	Kevin McClellan	Harvey Wright
Lynn DeGeer	Mark Rhoten	Mike Zink
Carol Gohlke	Gayle Sewell	

Class of '79 (30-Year Reunion - 3 attendees)

Lynne Gipson	Darla Lynch	Tammy McLaury
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Town Still In Hearts As Phillips Pride Remains

An article, that appeared in Sunday's Amarillo Globe News the day after Homecoming (written by columnist Jon Mark Beilue), reflects back on how special it was growing up and attending school in Phillips. Most of the area exes probably got to read it back then, but for the benefit of the readership who either doesn't live in the area, or have access to the internet, the article is reproduced below, with some minor editing and amplification (this writer took this liberty since I was one of the two people interviewed).

"About 300 or so alumni registered and attended homecoming festivities again this weekend, even though there is no school or town to go home to. It's been officially gone for 22 years, but its idyllic life for longer than that.

The Baptist and Methodist churches were long ago razed. The park, Goodwin and Mitchell's, Jolly Drug, Strom's, Cut-Rate Grocery, the 66 Theater and the 66 Cleaners, the post office, all the stores...gone. Look hard enough and it's possible to find a few foundations where the company-owned homes once were. Even the streets are long gone, as well as any vestiges of them.

"It was a unique town," said Tommy Birch. "Just different in the best of ways. But that was something most of us didn't fully realize and appreciate until we were fully

grown."

The exceptional school, which got the best of the best, is the only thing still standing, as few can tell what it once was. The classrooms have been converted into office space. The football field, home to one of the Panhandle's perennial gridiron powers, is now used for storage.

Phillips, Texas, once had a magical ring to it. Now it's a ghost town, a memory of what was and what will never be again. The spirit of that "Leave It To Beaver" town collectively comes to life once a year from its graduates, who, along with its Heritage Center, are the only physical links to what for many was the time of their lives.

"Oh, I loved it!" said Louise Gunter of Amarillo. "It was so friendly. It was like one, big happy family." Louise, age 86, is a graduate of the Class of 1940. Her three sons are also Phillips graduates. She is a charter member of the organizing committee of the first official Phillips homecoming weekend in 1952, and she hasn't missed one in 57 years. She remembers that in those early days, "they had to pass the hat to get enough money to send out postcards to everyone, but we've had a homecoming ever since."

For 34 years, homecoming was much the same as at any school during the fall, capped off with the fall homecoming

football game and its half-time festivities. But when the town left on flatbed trailers in the mid-1980s, it was moved to the second weekend in July. This past weekend there was a golf tournament and gatherings in Borger and Lake Meredith, and at the WTHS cafeteria and Heritage Center in Stinnett.

"This is important to most of the exes," Tommy said, "especially to those who were there when the school spirit was really high."

The town, located just two miles northeast of Borger, came to be in 1926 with the construction of the Phillips Petroleum plant. The high school graduated its first class in 1936, two years before the townfolk voted to name the town after the company and its founder. It was a company town in every sense.

Unless a man was a merchant, teacher, or a preacher, he worked at the Phillips Refinery or the Philtex Plant. Men walked to work with hard hats and lunch pails. Kids knew when the school day was about over when they heard the shift whistle blow. When school was out for the summer with all its vacations, baseball, swimming, free shows, and other activities, every August eventually rolled around and marked the annual Phillips Free Fair which was held on the elementary school playground. Every kid looked forward to and relished that

special weekend event, but it also was an omen that a new school year was just around the corner.

The company owned and paid for almost all the utilities and taxes in the cookie-cutter houses. With very few exceptions, the frame houses were almost all the same. Tommy recalls, "When you went to someone's house you'd never been to before, you didn't have to ask where the bathroom was... you just knew. We were a classless society. Every family in Phillips had roughly the same income except possibly for the top plant supervisors. And their larger houses usually had basements! As kids, they seemed like mansions to us."

The company insisted on the best in its school. The taxes made to the school district made sure nothing was lacking in the classrooms, facilities, and athletic equipment. The teachers were excellent, and student self-motivation was generally the rule rather than the exception. Tommy, who graduated in 1961, commented that one-fourth of the near 60 boys in his senior class became engineers/scientists. And there were also several other classmates who became doctors, pharmacists, lawyers, and business men and women. Even more significant was the large number of those who, inspired by their teachers and coaches, became educators,

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Town continued

the most noble and yet thankless profession. Mr. Kimmins was always proud of the fact that a very large percentage of PHS graduates from each class went on to pursue college educations during his tenure as principal. Tommy also recalls that some of his early college courses in math and chemistry seemed to be a repeat, indicative of the quality high school education received.

Chesty Walker's football teams from 1939 to 1956 were legendary. His teams were 172-23-8. They won six regional crowns at a time when that was as far as the playoffs advanced. The 1954 team went 15-0 and won the 2A (now 3A) state title. The Blackhawks remained strong through the 1960s. The 1967 team, under Coach Jocko Harris, advanced to semifinals, where, in an ironic twist of two ships passing in the night, Phillips met Plano, now a Dallas suburb of 275,000 (with three of the largest high schools in the state). The late Mark Hatley, Green Bay Packers vice-president of operations, was a member of that team. Of course, in contrast, Phillips' enrollment steadily declined, and was soon to join the 1A ranks and eventually ceased to exist.

It was more than just football, they fielded excellent track and basketball teams. Several boys either won first or placed at the state track meet over the years. The 1956 and 1965 boys basketball teams were runners-up in the state finals. Olympian Jill Rankin Schneider, considered the area's top women's basketball player, led Phillips to the 1976 state title. The marching and concert bands, and the choirs would rival the football teams. The Phillips band played in the 1960 and 1967 Cotton Bowl games and parades. Louise remembers going to Bartlesville, Oklahoma, to play at Frank Phillips 66th birthday celebration in 1939.

But Shangri-La can't last forever. Society, business, and eventually Phillips Petroleum

management changed. Things began to wane in the late 1970s with automation and accompanying RIF's at the plants. The company, who eventually bought up all the land, offered money to the town's residents to move their houses so that the plants could expand, although safety was the main consideration. A huge explosion in January, 1980, rocked the town in more ways than one, and hastily set into motion the eventual evacuation of the town. The citizen's final stand was in 1985 when Phillips Petroleum and M&M Cattle Company sent eviction notices. Residents tried to negotiate with M&M, but Phillips bought them out, making it all but official. The last of the 470 houses had to be gone by December 31, 1986. The last graduating class was 1987.

For those area exes who watched houses leave on flatbed trailers for relocation in neighboring towns, it was a gradual, sad, and poignant process. For those who had left the area and then many years later had returned to homecoming, it was one tremendous shock to see what had become of home if you hadn't seen its gradual demise. For a few, it was too much to bear to even consider going to see the desolate ole home and town site.

But as alumni realize and reconfirm every July, "they" took the stores, churches, homes, and people out of Phillips long ago, but taking Phillips out of the people, that's almost impossible!



Deceased Exes Over Past Year

Jack Germany ('54-?)
Phyllis Patrick ('49-heart trouble)
Roger Little ('70-leukemia complications)
Carol Hooten ('63-?)
Bill Stevens ('36-?)
Floyd Jarnigan ('42-cancer/heart problem)
Juanita Davis ('49-Alzheimers)
Austin Benson ('37-?)
J.O. McClellan ('48-cancer)
Larry Dale Lamar ('66-?)
Henry Carter ('51-?)
Jimmy Heckathorn ('54-?)
Justin Beckham ('57-?)
Billy Kossey ('57-from a fall)
Sandra Phillips ('74-cancer)
Nancy McKee ('55-cancer)
Dale Rhyne ('57-lung & heart problems)
Berkeley Duggins ('52-?)
Sandra Paxton ('61-heart failure)
Aubrey Tisdale ('38-?)
Rose Brown ('71-breast cancer)
Clarence Hall ('43-?)
Lorene Hall ('43-?)
Randall Kourt ('61-lymph node cancer)
Harry Smith ('48-?)
Robert Gohlke ('75-heart attack)
Joyce Irwin ('42-?)
Bill Hickox ('59-lung cancer)
Joe Means ('46-lung disease)
Carol Storm ('78-?)
Bobby Ragsdale ('55-cancer)
Anita Glosson ('59-?)
Jerryl Dine Low ('60-cancer)
Mark Blankenship ('86-?)
David Carr ('60-?)
Madge Wilson ('37-Alzheimers)
Inez Carter ('37-?)
Keith White ('44-cancer)
Lloyd Slagle ('42-?)
Connie Hill ('69-?)
Paul Burney ('52-lung cancer)
Jane Sledge ('59-cancer)
Eliza Villa ('60-?)
Joe Tribble ('40-?)
Jack St. Clair ('44-?)
Doris Hammerschmidt ('42-Alzheimers)
Morris Payne ('46-cancer)

PHS Senior Ring Display Now Complete!

"What man of you, having a hundred sheep, if he lose one of them, doth not leave the ninety and nine in the wilderness, and go after that which was lost, until he finds it." (Luke 15:4)

That's right - great news!!! We did not give up on getting the elusive boy's 1936 PHS senior ring, the only ring missing for the last several years from the set of 103 rings that we have had (both a boy's and girl's ring for each of the 52 graduating classes, 1936-1987). This last month we spoke to the new director of the Hutchinson County Museum here in Borger, who agreed to give us the ring on indefinite loan for display at our Heritage Center. The band part of the ring was corroded away, but we had that missing fragment restored at a jeweler so that the ring is whole once again. The ring was donated to the Borger museum years ago by **Ralph Rountree of the '36 Class**, now deceased, before he knew about our senior ring project at our Heritage Center. The bottom line is that we now have the full complement of 104 senior rings on permanent display.