

South High School

ALUMNI TOOTER

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The Voice of the South High School Alumni Association

2009 HALL OF FAME INDUCTEES

Congratulations to the following alumni who will be inducted into the **South High School Hall of Fame**. A brunch will be held at the Livestock Exchange Building Ballroom on Saturday, **September 19** from 10 a.m. until noon. (Contact the Alumni office for ticket information.) Also, congratulations to the **South Omaha Boys & Girls Club** – recipient of the **2009 Community Hall of Fame Award**.



1960 – Jack R. Benedick, Sr., roamed Europe for three months and then worked in a slaughterhouse after graduating from SHS. He enrolled at UNO, joined the wrestling

team, and met his future wife, Nancy Rolle. After graduating with a Bachelor's degree in Sociology and Psychology, he married Nancy and joined the U.S. Army. After he completed basic training and advanced infantry training at Ft. Gordon, GA, he was selected for officer candidate school at Ft. Benning, GA. After graduation he attended jump school, and was assigned to Ft. Riley, KS. He was a member of the 9th Infantry Division for training and deployment in 1967. Jack returned home for 10 months, and then began his second tour in Vietnam, where he stepped on a land mine in April 1968, losing both legs below the knee. He was awarded the Silver Star (2), the Bronze Star with Valor; the Purple Heart (2), the Cross of Gallantry, the Army Commendation Medal (2) and the Legion of Merit. He recuperated in Denver where he took up skiing as part of the amputee rehabilitation program, and quickly became an accomplished racer. He returned to active military duty for 10 more years. Jack retired from the Army as a Major in 1978, and became increasingly involved in the US Disabled Ski Team, where he served as director. He eventually served as director on committees for International Paralympics and the

International Ski Federation, as well as the US Skiing and Snowboard Association. Jack and Nancy have two sons, Jack, Jr. and Michael, and five grandchildren. *Thank you for your service to our country and for your leadership in elevating disabled skiing to a competitive status.*

1971-George Dahir, (Dare) grew up in South Omaha in a neighborhood filled with family, including his parents, six siblings, three aunts, three uncles, two grandparents and 22 cousins. He knew the value of family early in his life and accredits much of his success to strong family values and to the inspirational schoolteachers that he had while growing up. George attended Lincoln Elementary School, Bancroft Jr. High and then SHS. He has also attended numerous music education classes in Las Vegas and Los Angeles. Accomplishing his dream of wanting to become a singer/songwriter has since brought George many honors, including special recognition at the Kennedy Center in Washington, D.C. for his contributions to music under his stage name, **George Dare**. He has since written, arranged and produced music for movie film scores, theme songs and jingles and has also toured the schools throughout the USA and Canada performing anti-drug and alcohol concerts for over two million students. George created the life saving fire safety song "Stop, Drop & Roll" which is taught to more than eight million students and senior citizens each year, and is also a national spokesperson for DARE (Drug Abuse Resistance Education). He has received numerous honors and awards for serving as a positive role model for the youth of America, as well as for his original compositions and Advertising Industry campaigns. George is a multi-talented award-winning performer, singer, songwriter, arranger and music producer. He



has also volunteered his considerable talents and enthusiasm to assist many charities, including creating theme songs for the Autism Association, Muscular Dystrophy Telethon and the Make-A-Wish Foundation. George has four grown children – George III, Christopher, Shane and Shontell, as well as 13 grandchildren. *Your outstanding talent, dedication and willingness to help others are very much appreciated and admired, and we thank you!*

1979-Jeff Koterba was in his parent's front yard in South Omaha in the summer of 1978 when he was struck by lightning and lived to tell about it. That might have foretold the influence he was to have on the world around him.



However, since that day he says he tries to avoid thunderstorms. In the fall of 1978, he landed his first job as a cartoonist drawing for his high school newspaper the SHS *Tooter*. After graduation, he studied art and journalism at the University of Nebraska at Omaha, and joined the *Omaha World-Herald* as a political cartoonist in 1989. Jeff's work appears regularly in the *Chicago Tribune* and has been in *The New York Times*, *USA Today*, *Newsweek* and *The Washington Post National Weekly Edition*. King Features Syndicate distributes his work internationally and it appears in *The Chicago Sun-Times*, *The Dallas Morning News*, and *The Atlanta Constitution*. His work has been seen on CNN and in Alexander Payne's film, *Election*. Koterba's work has also appeared in every annual edition of Best Editorial Page Cartoons of the Year for the past six years. The nationally recognized, award-winning cartoonist is a member of the National Cartoonists Society. Honors include the 1983 Mark of Excellence for college editorial cartooning from the Society of

Professional Journalists, the 1986 Best Editorial Page Cartoon from Suburban Newspapers of America, the 1997 Communication Award from the University of Nebraska at Omaha, second place in the 2000 National Headliner Awards sponsored by the Press Club of Atlantic City, being a finalist for Editorial Cartoonist of the Year in 2002, and the first place award for editorial cartooning in the 2009 Great Plains Journalism Competition. Koterba also was named a finalist in the competition's narrative story writing division. His book, *Jeff Koterba ... Back from the Drawing Board*, was published in 1995, and his memoir *INKLINGS* (regarding his growing up in South Omaha and becoming a cartoonist) will be published this fall. This multi-talented alumnus also illustrates articles and books, writes music, and plays the guitar, mandolin and bouzouki in various bands. His jump-blues and swing band, Prairie Cats, has performed at various locations including a music festival in Austin, Texas, the Derby in Hollywood and in New York City. A highlight of his New York City performance was performing at the Windows on the World in the World Trade Center during the summer of 2001. In 2008, the Prairie Cats were included on three Sony jazz compilations in Europe, including one compilation that was, for a time, the top-selling compilation in Poland. He has helped raise money for various charitable organizations and church groups in Omaha by performing with his band. Koterba is married to Stacey Badura-Koterba and has

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a son, Josh. Stacey is a director with Mary Kay Cosmetics and also does commercial voice work. Josh is a songwriter and musician whose music has been heard on MTV's Real World. Koterba's parents are Art and Helen Koterba--Art is also a graduate of Omaha South. *We are proud to have such a talented writer, cartoonist and musician we can claim as one of our own!*



1963-Howard Shinkle ran the South Omaha Airport as the Flight Line Manager at age 16, and received his pilot's license at 17. After graduation, Howard served in the U.S. Army for two years and in the Army Reserve National Guard for six years. He became General Manager for Cummins Diesel Engines in Sioux Falls, SD when he was 22 years old and later returned to Omaha to start Heavy Duty Parts, Inc., which he later sold. Next he became a manager at Christensen Equipment Company before becoming President and Founder of STATS Remanufacturing Plant from 1977 to 1990. STATS employed 110 people. After selling STATS in 1990 to a Fortune 500 company, he served as a consultant to manufacturers for marketing their products. He also served on the Distributor Advisory Council for Carlisle Corporation in Blackburg, VA and Truck Lite, Inc., in Jamestown, NY. He is presently semi-retired as an Independent Manufacturer's Representative for Tipton Agency/Performance Marketing. His outstanding business success is even more remarkable considering his early health problems -- polio at age nine, and later rheumatic fever, plus a heart attack at age 56. In spite of these obstacles, he has remained a life-long learner attending UNO; Augustana University in Sioux Falls,

SD; Marquette University in Milwaukee, WI; and many management and sales seminars. His most recent accomplishment was becoming a certified Scuba Diver so he could dive in Jamaica and St. Thomas. He also snow skis in the Rocky Mountains. He has been honored for his business success as Outstanding Salesman of the Year numerous times, and has received countless awards for his charitable activities from the Jaycees, the Omaha Softball League for starting Millard softball and serving as commissioner; spearheading or serving on many campaigns to raise funds for worthy organizations and associations -- some as a member of the Board and some as co-chair. He credits part of his strength and grit in overcoming adversity to his hardworking parents who raised him in the projects. *Thank you for all you have done to make life better for those less fortunate!*

1943-Rudy and 1945-Rita (Pawlowicz) Stoysich

are the founders of Stoysich House of Sausage at 2532 S. 24 Street, and 2502 S.130 Avenue in Omaha. Rudy joined the Marines after graduating from SHS, completed his training in San Diego, CA and at Guadalcanal in the Solomon Islands for the invasion of Guam. Soon after training, his unit left for the invasion of Guam, later receiving a Presidential Unit Citation for the part it played. After the unit recaptured Guam, training continued there for the Battle of Iwo Jima. They returned to Guam again after that battle to prepare for the invasion of Japan. When President Truman ordered the atomic bomb to be dropped, the war ended. Rudy and Rita were married 61 years ago, and in 1961 decided to go into the sausage and meat



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business. They worked side by side 24/7 most of their married lives, producing famous sausage produced only in South Omaha, internationally known for superlative quality and excellence. Over the years they have won many international, national and state awards for their sausage and deli products. They volunteered to travel abroad to Poland, Georgia, Albania, Russia, Bulgaria, Ukraine, Romania and Kazakhstan to teach the business of sausage making. Rita's recipes have been featured in national, state, regional and local publications. She has been voted "Best Cook Ever" by H.C.G. Group (Husband, Children and Grandchildren)! Rudy and Rita have made quite an impact locally also, with Rudy having served on the Packers Bank Board for 25 years, as a director of the Greater Omaha Chamber of Commerce for two years, and as President of the South Omaha Industrial Park for ten years. They have both been active members of St. Stanislaus Church. Besides numerous awards for their fine products, they have been honored by the Volunteer Overseas Cooperative (a State Department agency); the Spirit of America Award from the Grocers Association; the Golden Spike Award; and the *Midlands Business Journal* Small Business Award in 1989. Rudy was made an Admiral of the Great Navy of Nebraska in 1977. His other community contributions have included serving as President of the South Omaha Merchants Association, Commandant Marine Corp League; President of the Omaha Executives Association; President of Owl's Club; Board of Directors of the American Hungarian Society; member of the advisory board for Blue Cross/Blue Shield; Fourth Degree Knights of Columbus; member of South Omaha Eagles (50 years), American Legion, Disabled American Veterans, and Veterans of Foreign Wars. *Congratulations for your success and positive impact locally and internationally!*

Community Award Winner - South Omaha Boys & Girls Club. The South Omaha Boys & Girls Club Mammel Unit and SHS enjoy a wonderful and mutually beneficial partnership. Outreach Director



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Alberto "Beto" Gonzales has spent countless hours in the school since 2004. He delivers the national Street SMART curriculum twice a week at SHS. He also presents his award winning "Gangs 101" workshop for SHS and makes himself available to parents, teachers and students for individual and small group counseling. Additionally, the South Club has hosted fundraising events for the Latino Leaders group and has made its gym and back field available to many of SHS's sports teams including boys' soccer, boys' and girls' basketball, and the football team. Mr. Gonzales and South Unit Director, **Francisco "Paco" Fuentes-1977** will accept the award on behalf of the Club.

PACKER SPORTS GREATS WINNERS

The following outstanding athletes will be inducted into the **2009 Sports Greats Hall of Fame** at a banquet on October 28, 2009 at Anthony's Restaurant - 72nd and F

Streets at 6 p.m. Contact the Alumni Office for ticket information soon as this event is usually sold out. Cost is \$35 and it is a great time.

Lenard Glica-1946; Joe Smejkal-1946; Gil Dunne-1955; James Collin-1960; Dennis Loftus-1964; Bryan Skradis-1977; and the 1958 Intercity team golf champions. Congratulations to all!

DO YOU WANT TO RECEIVE FUTURE TOOTERS?

ALUMNI - WE REGRET THAT IF YOU DO NOT PAY YOUR MEMBERSHIP DUES (OR A TOOTER MAILING FEE) WITHIN 60 DAYS OF RECEIVING YOUR STATEMENT, YOUR NAME AND ADDRESS WILL BE REMOVED FROM OUR MAILING LISTS. (THIS EXCLUDES LIFETIME MEMBERS.) BILLING STATEMENTS WILL BE MAILED STARTING IN JANUARY, 2010.



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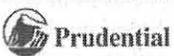


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I want to help underwrite the next **TOOTER** issue by placing an advertisement as follows:

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E-Mail Address _____

Camera-ready ad copy enclosed: Yes ___ No __, If no, will be mailed on _____ (date)

Amount enclosed: \$ _____ per ad for half page, fourth page or business card size payable to SHSAA.

Mail to Alumni Office - 5082 S.107 Street - Omaha, NE 68127. (Call 402/738-9493 with your questions.)

BOARD REPORT

by Judi Koubsky
Secretary



Your Board of Directors has met twice since our last **TOOTER**. We welcomed another new board member, **Jackie Mengler Dower-1961**. You'll learn more about her in our next issue. We awarded \$13,000 in scholarships to SHS seniors, and \$2,300 in teacher grants. We held our **Spaghetti Dinner, Bowling Tournament, Garage Sale, Poker Run, and Golf Tournament**. We helped select the **2009 Hall of Fame** winners, and are hard at work on our first ever \$50-a-plate major scholarship fundraiser dinner called "**Tie One On for Education**" scheduled 9-25-09 at the UNO Thompson Alumni Center. We hope you will send in your reservation for this outstanding event. This fundraiser is so named because we have been collecting signed ties and other items from celebrities such as movie stars, musicians, politicians, sports stars, and our own Warren Buffett to auction at the dinner. Details are on the reservation form which is in this **TOOTER**. We scheduled our **Bowling Tournament and Spaghetti Dinner** events on 3-27-10. Please volunteer for any of these activities and most of all attend the events! They are a lot of fun and support a good cause.

The **Collin Field Dedication** is scheduled for **Sunday, August 23**. The first football game will be played on **August 28** vs. Bryan High School. The Homecoming game is **October 23** vs. Creighton Prep. Hope to see you there.

Our additional office bay has been rented for showers, family reunions, card parties, birthday parties, etc., so book your party early. Come to see the space when you are in the neighborhood, but call first to be sure the office is open.



We always need your help when mailing **TOOTERS** to our approximately 23,000 alumni, so please call the office to leave your name and telephone number and you will be contacted when mailings are underway. Also, please contact the office to establish scholarship memorials for your classmates, help us with teacher grants, or provide other financial assistance needed by your school. Most of all send in your membership dues!

We will mail membership invoices each month starting in January 2010 until all alumni have been billed (except Life Members). Unfortunately, because of rising costs, if dues remain unpaid, and no postage payment is received, we will delete your name and address from our mailing list. **We urge you to send your check promptly when you receive your billing to avoid any interruption in receiving your mailings.** We are so grateful for your help, as are the students and teachers of SHS.

We'd like to publish news about you, so drop us a note with information we can share with your classmates and friends. Send us items for our Sports Corner also. Please continue to share your suggestions and encouragement with your Alumni Association. We need your help to continue serving your school.

Respectfully submitted,

Judi Limas Koubsky, Secretary



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SHS ALUMNI ASSOCIATION MISSION STATEMENT

Our mission is to:

- Organize, develop and build a dynamic group of Alumni.
- Promote the success of SHS, its students and faculty through a variety of events, projects and scholarships.

Our E-Mail address is oshaa@oshaa.omhcoxmail.com

Our Website address is omahasouthalumni.org

Cunningham later served as interim mayor of Omaha from November 1976 to June 1977.

1941-Lorry Gomez celebrated her 85th birthday with a celebration Mass at Our Lady of Guadalupe Catholic Church followed by a family gathering last May. *Happy Birthday!*

1941-Some classmates have expressed an interest in attending a 1941 class reunion. If anyone would like to chair this reunion, please call the Alumni Association at 402/738-9493.

1945-Audrey (Bailey) Rommel –

After graduation, Audrey attended Omaha

University for

two years on a scholarship, and then transferred to UNL for her last two years, earning a BA in Psychology. She ran into **Chuck Rommel-1945** on campus where he was a student earning his BS in Business following his discharge from the Navy. They were married the fall after their June 1949 graduation. After having two children and working in Omaha for several years, Chuck's company, Equifax (home office in Atlanta, GA), transferred them a number of times. They lived in Atlanta, GA three separate times, as well as in Philadelphia, Boston and Chagrin Falls, OH, near Cleveland. Having fallen in love with the Carolinas, they chose Pinehurst, NC as their retirement destination. They enjoy the weather, the ocean on one end and the mountains on the other, with the sandhills in between. Audrey's memories of SHS include 3,000 orderly students who did not leave campus at any time during the day since the halls were monitored. Only those with hall passes were allowed to roam. At lunch time there was a half hour of "free time" when students could dance in the gym or attend a short movie in another area. In a study hall of 500, you could hear a pin drop. Being a student at SHS was a little harder for Audrey with her father **Mr. C. H. Bailey**, teaching Math, and her great aunt **Ms. Josephine Copeland** teaching Latin. She especially remembers **Miss Ravene (sp?)**, her English teacher, and **Dr. Edward Kuncel** (blind History teacher) who both taught her life lessons in addition to their subject matter. Although they have



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been unable to attend class reunions, they have enjoyed the reports in the **TOOTER** and thank us for keeping track of everyone. *Thanks for the kind words and update!*

1950-Fred Holmquist passed along the questionnaire he answered for his class reunion:

Fill this out about YOUR SENIOR year of high school! The longer ago it was, the more fun the answers will be!!

1. Did you date someone from your school? **Yes**

2. Did you marry someone from your high school? **No**

3. Did you car pool to school?

NO - walked or ran the block from home

4. What kind of car did you have?

Didn't have one

5. What kind of car do you have now?

'97 Toyota Camry

How would YOU answer these questions? Bet most of us walked to school way back then – and not many of us had cars!

1950-Edward F. Kasun joined the U.S. Coast Guard after graduation, and retired in 1978. He served in Michigan, California, North Carolina, and two overseas tours. One tour he describes as a miserable year in Vietnam on two 82 ft. patrol boats in and around the Mekong Delta. After he retired, he returned to school for four years while working part-time for the San Joaquin County Sheriff's Department and an armored car company. He joined management in the armored car company and for four years ran three branches for them in Sacramento and Chico, CA and in Reno, NV. He then returned to the San Joaquin County Sheriff's Department. Following a heart attack which resulted in bypass surgery, he worked there for 15 more months, taking a medical retirement in 1999. He now lives in a small golf community near Stockton called Valley Springs, CA and plays golf at least weekly with his buddies from the cardiac rehab community. He last returned to Omaha in October 2005 to bury his sister, **Ann (Kasun) Fader-1945**. He doesn't know when he'll return, but enjoys keeping up with the news through the **TOOTER**. *Thanks for the update!*

1953-John Stella was honored by the City of Omaha on 1-27-09 for his work with baseball teams in South Omaha by naming

the field at Brown Park "**John Stella Field.**" People from his neighborhood and the baseball community felt this honor is appropriate because of his outstanding dedication to baseball while playing, coaching or as a fan. He started coaching SHS Legion Baseball in 1982, and continues as an assistant coach to SHS's baseball team, and as head coach of SHS Legion summer team. He recently received a National Award for 500 wins as a high school coach. John was featured as an **Outstanding Alumni** in our **Spring 2008 TOOTER** and was inducted into the **SHS Sports Greats Hall of Fame in 2003**. John and Steve Cavlovic are shown by the new sign. *Congratulations for receiving all these well-deserved honors, John!*



1953-Joe and Mary Ann (Straley) Weinert read about the theft and vandalism to 2009 College World Series tailgaters' shade tents and decided to give a \$250 check to the unofficial mayor of "flamingo-ville" so they could buy a couple of tents to replace the damaged ones. Mary Ann commented, "We don't believe in what those yahoos did... We're from South Omaha and this is how we do things!" *The OW-H picked up the story and we were proud to know our wonderful alumni came through in a bad situation to make things better. What a nice thing they did to change the impression of Omaha to our visitors. We salute you!*

1954-Jerry Chizek - served as the Labor Commissioner under Senator Jim Exon. He was the Nebraska Senator from District 31 for nine years. Just before moving to Minnesota he became the Executive Director of the Nebraska Sheriff Association and later became the Mayor of Longville, MN. He worked on many political campaigns in Nebraska and Minnesota and over the years has won many awards. At this time, he is the Government Consultant for the Leech Lake Bank of Ojibwe. *We thank you for the update!*

BROWN PARK NEWS

ANOTHER BROWN PARK MEMORY SHARED

By Lee Loth-1948

This group of neighborhood boys met in Brown Park daily to play baseball, football, or hike over the hill to the river. They organized games with other neighborhood groups or played against each other or older family members. This team won many games, but was soundly beaten by Omaha South Alumni and WWII vets at this **1946 Brown Park Thanksgiving Day Bowl game.**



Back row – L-R – **Gene Worell, Steve Marinkovich, Don Hunter and John Holst**

Front row – L-R – **Lee Loth, Joe Manus, Bob Legino, Bob Doherty, Emil Hermasky, Joe Faketty and Bill Smutny**

ALUMNotes

Please send us name, address and telephone number changes, as well as names and addresses of friends, family and classmates, who are not currently receiving the Alumni TOOTER. Be sure to include class year and maiden name where applicable. We need this information to keep our database updated. It costs us \$.83 for your new address each time one of you moves and do not notify us.

Also, please send ALL information updates, clothing orders, membership payments, donations, archival contributions, inquiries and all other correspondence to:

Dr. Richard Gulizia - SHS Alumni Association Office - 5082 S. 107 Street - Omaha, NE 68127 Or Call 402-738-9493

1937-Louise (Marino) Garofolo celebrated her 90th birthday with family and friends. An open house was held in her honor 5-18-09 at the Fountain View Senior Living Community.

1938-Eleanor (Reynolds) Leach writes, "Keep the Tooter coming. I enjoy them so much. You do a great job."

1939-Alice (Cecetka) Slovek donated reunion booklets from her 25th and 50th Class Reunions as well as a spoon/can opener which was given to attendees at their 25th

Reunion which reads "1939-64 25th Anniversary - Class Reunion 8-1-1964 – SHS Omaha, NE." She also donated a 1935 reunion booklet which belonged to **Robert Slovek**, her deceased husband, from his 50th Class Reunion. *Thank you Alice!*



1939-Frank J. G. Tourek was featured in the *OW-H* "The Greatest Generation" stories on 3-8-09. Frank graduated from Advanced Army Finance School and served as a finance officer during the war. He landed with invasion forces on Okinawa on 4-1-45 and stayed until the battle ended. His primary job was to pay the troops and settle claims, but his secondary job was food service. Right after the war ended, he served in Korea, opening a finance office there. He continued his duty with the reserve unit when he returned to the United States. He retired at age 62 as a Chief Warrant Officer W-4 after nearly 40 years of military service. Frank served as a second generation Tourek in the family printing business, Tourek Printing & Engraving Company. The company produces letterheads, envelopes, business cards, wedding invitations and other paper products. Frank retired as President and continues on the Board of Directors and of counsel to the 92-year old company. Updates regarding his grandson and pressroom manager are included in AlumNotes below. While at

SHS, Frank was on the Honor Roll and played tuba and string base, serving as band president for two years. *Thank you for your service to our country, and thank you for the update!*

1941-William Blessie donated a program from the Fourth Annual Round Up in December 1936. Bill states, "I am getting ready to head for Augusta, GA to watch the Masters Golf Tournament for 10 days - then come home to watch Nebraska's Red and White Game - then head out to some of the NASCAR races." *Thank you for the historical program for our archives.*

1941-Robert G. Cunningham was featured in the *OW-H* "The Greatest Generation" stories on March 23, 2009. He attended Omaha University (now UNO) and studied aeronautics so he could become a pilot and fulfill his childhood dream. His first flying lessons were at the Omaha airport. In 1942 Bob joined the Naval Cadets and continued his flying instruction at a base in Pascal, WA. He later trained in twin-engine aircraft and PBV seaplanes in Corpus Christi, TX. He transferred to the Marine Corps in 1943 and was an instructor at the Marine base at Cherry Point, NC. He also learned to fly the B-25, or Billy Mitchell bomber. His unit shipped overseas in 1944 to a small Pacific island called Emirau. His squadron (#413) flew bombing missions over its main target, the major Japanese base at Rabaul, New Guinea. His next duty station was at Mindanao in the Philippines, where his unit and many others were preparing for the invasion of the Japanese mainland. But the dropping of the atomic bomb on Japan ended the war. In the Philippines, he received orders to deliver a top secret satchel to a Russian officer in China. On that mission he had an unscheduled landing on Iwo Jima. Several miles out from the island he was told to turn back because of high winds. But fuel was low, and he had no choice but to land the plane with zero visibility and tremendous gales. After China, he flew to Guam, Hawaii and other islands before returning to San Francisco. He remained in the service until his discharge in July 1946.



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1955-Joseph and Mary (Fahey) Cabral celebrated their 50th Wedding Anniversary in May. They were married at St. Mary Catholic Church in Omaha in 1959. Joe and Mary were blessed during Mass at Our Lady of Guadalupe Catholic Church in New Orleans in May, and plan to travel to Mexico at a later date to continue their celebration. *Congratulations!*

1956-Clem Schuette, Nick Chiburis, Joey Algya, Bob Fitzsimons, Len Save, Pete Sorish, Harvey Harbin, Ray Wilson, Ray Soucher, Sam Amenta, Bob Johnston, Pat Casey and John Sousa held a reunion of U.S. Marine Corps Platoon 3019 on 8-21-08. They met at Horseman's Park and represented 14 of the original 23 classmates who joined the Marines that year. *We thank you all for your service to our country!*

1959-Edward Pechar attended Omaha University (now UNO) after graduating from SHS, receiving his Bachelor's degree in Speech Communication. He served in the Air Force and then earned a law degree at Salmon P. Chase College of Law near Cincinnati. He spent the last 40 years working in the liquor industry as a business executive. Today he is the owner and chairman of McCormick Distilling Company, Inc. in Weston, MO, with offices in Dallas. He was featured in a recent article appearing in the *University of Nebraska Foundation* newsletter for creating a \$1 million scholarship fund at UNO for students from low-income families who are not eligible for Pell Grants. The fund will provide full tuition awards annually. Ed comments that "Financial stress is a huge problem today and without scholarship assistance, many deserving students may not be able to attend college. I want to

make a difference." *The Omaha community salutes you and thanks you for your generosity!*

1961-Janet (Crofford) Katz retired after 17 years of service to Millard Public Schools as a reading teacher. She was honored by SHS friends at a retirement party celebrating her freedom to pursue the travel she so loves. *Congratulations, Janet!*



1961-John DeGeorge was featured in a 6-19-09 *Midlands Business Journal* article about his company, **DiGiorgio's Sportswear**. The company owners include his sons, Tim and Anthony. John started the company in his garage with a small heat press. They now have a storefront in Millard Plaza and handle orders from a single tee shirt to an order for \$50,000 for Ameristar Casino or anything in between. *Congratulations on your success, John!*

1963-Marlin Briscoe, the first black man to start as a quarterback in professional football, received a special honor from Congress on 2-8-09. He was recognized by Representative Lee Terry on the House floor as part of Black History Month. A Congressional Record was presented to Briscoe on 2-10-09 during a ceremony at Metropolitan Community College by Omaha-based John Beasley. *Congratulations, Marlin!*

1963-Nellie (Sudavicius) MacCallum was featured in a Mike Kelly column on 1-27-09. Her parents narrowly escaped their



northern European homeland as communist Russia took over. Nellie's family made it to a displaced persons' camp before coming to Omaha under church sponsorship in 1949.

Her parents worked in packinghouses, and later her dad became a railroad watchman. Nellie grew up in South Omaha and has worked in advertising and communications. She embraced her Lithuanian heritage and was named **Citizen of the Year** in Omaha's sister city Slaulial. This honor has been given to only two Lithuanians and Nellie was the first American to be so honored. Nellie was described as gregarious and dedicated, and was the catalyst that started the Sister City relationship with Slaulial. She also raised money to send 11 Native Americans from five tribes to sing and dance in Lithuania. Nellie said she thought of her parents as she was being cheered during the parade in the homeland they had to flee and it was a bittersweet moment. Nellie is also involved in the Shakespeare on the Green concerts as marketing director! *Congratulations!*

1966-Gary Witkovski donated South High **TOOTERS** and a Military Ball program from February 1966. *Thank you for thinking of the Alumni Association!*

1968-Cheryl (Sparano) Wild was honored at the YWCA "Tribute to Women" luncheon in June 2009 for her Professional Volunteer efforts. She was featured in *Gala*



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magazine's May/June 2009 issue as a cover story entitled "Wild About Volunteerism." The story chronicled many of her volunteer activities including teaching a class to inmates at the Douglas County Correctional Center, and fundraising for Madonna School, founding "Whole Woman's Day" for Christian women, Child Savings Institute and Omaha Community Playhouse. *Congratulations for receiving this outstanding honor!*

Editor's Note: Cheryl has been having some health problems lately. Friends can visit the <http://www.caringbridge.org/visit/cherylwild> website for updates or to send her a message. Our prayers are with her and her family for a quick return to her active life.

1968-Helene Elsasser received the 1967 United Way Student Volunteer of the Year award, and has been giving back to her community and SHS ever since. She served as historian for the Alumni Association Board, sold clothing, chaired sports and bowling events, and bartended for Packer Nights. She serves on the Alumni Association Board's Entertainment Committee and served on the Decades Dance Committee, and she sells raffle tickets at the annual Spaghetti Dinner event. Helene served on her 25th and 30th class reunion committees, and chaired the 40th reunion. She provided three \$1,000 scholarships to SHS students attending UNO, and a \$1,000 donation for the softball equipment shed at the H.P. Smith Girls' Softball Field. As a physical education teacher, various sports have been her life for over 40 years. She coordinated field days "in the hole" at Collin Field for former students at St. Agnes, Sts. Mary's and Guadalupe elementary schools. She ran her own business, Miss E's Gymnastics at Gilder School as an after-school program. Helene has coached 43 junior high or high school teams in gymnastics, volleyball, track, or swimming, with a high winning record. She is a part-time teacher at St. Matthews in Bellevue, and the coordinator of her own successful program "Team Players Make a Difference" with college athletes serving as mentors and as coaches in her gym classes. This unique program is the only one of its kind in the metro area. She is a substitute teacher for District 66 and Brownell Talbot, and is the Gymnastics Director at German-American Society. She is a career bartender for catering events and a sales marketing representative. Helene remains active in her community and the

South High School **ALUMNI TOOTER**

South High Alumni Association and was recently elected to our Board of Directors. *Again, welcome to the Board and thanks for all you do to help others, Helene!*

1969-Robin Gullie was featured in writer Janice Gilmore *OW-H* article on 2-3-09 as a true role model. She said that the newly retired Fire Chief Gullie was an Offutt legend. After four years in the Air Force, Gullie began his civil service career in 1973 as the first African American firefighter at Offutt. In 1987 he became the first African American chief of fire protection and crash/rescue with the 55th Civil Engineering Squadron. His goal was to be one of the best fire departments in the command. At his retirement party in November 2008, he received the Outstanding Civilian Career Service Award lauding his expertise, consistently high-level performance and unending dedication to duty. A prominently placed American flag was a testament to Gullie's career. Deputy Fire Chief Dave Elbin said "Chief Gullie has dedicated 38 years of his life defending the values and freedom for which it stands." *Again, congratulations and thank you for your many years of dedicated service!*

1969-Henry Schultz was featured in the 10-20-07 *OW-H* for being recognized as a member of the American Red Cross First Aid Team during the half time ceremonies at the Nebraska vs. Iowa State Football game on 9-29-07. He has been a volunteer for 35 years and a First Aid Team member for over 20 years, missing fewer than five Husker games during that time. He received an honorary game ball from Heisman Trophy winner/NU running back Johnny Rodgers and Valerie Callahan, the coach's wife. *Congratulations and thank you for keeping the Husker game attendees safe and well.*

1970-Duncan Murphy, President of Riekes Equipment Co., was elected president of the Material Handling Equipment Distributors Association. Throughout his 40 year career, Murphy has held several other offices for the Association. He received a BS in Political Science and Economics from Princeton University in Princeton, NJ. *Congratulations!*

1970-Rick Robinson was spotlighted in Mike Kelly's *OW-H* column after he came to the aid of an injured police officer on 3-30-07, when a drunken driver struck the police officer's cruiser pushing him into the

opposite lane, up an embankment and into a pole. Rick asked for the officer's handcuffs to make a citizen's arrest, and called for help on the cruiser's radio. He received a Citizen's Commendation Award from the Omaha Police Department for his able assistance. Robinson served 23 years in the Army Reserve including a nine-month stint in Operation Dessert Storm, and has worked part-time as a security officer in addition to serving as a veterinary research technician at the University of Nebraska Medical Center. *Congratulations for your heroism and thank you for helping the officer!*

1975-Thomas Hanus is the manager of the pressrooms at Tourek Printing & Engraving Company. *Congratulations!*

1977-Francisco "Paco" Fuentes, Unit Director for the South Omaha Boys & Girls Club (BGC), received the 2008 Herman S. Prescott Award for the Midwest Region of BGC of America. *Congratulations!*

1977-Tim Holland was inducted into the 2008 Boys & Girls Clubs of the Midlands (BGC) Alumni Hall of Fame. He currently serves as the Chairman of the Board of Directors of BGC. *Congratulations!*

1989- Matthew Morinelli is a fourth generation officer of Tourek Printing & Engraving Company, serving as Vice President of Computer Operations and Marketing. *We wish you continued success!*

YEARBOOKS WANTED

We have several SHS alumni who are looking for information in past yearbooks. The Alumni Association would appreciate any yearbook donations.



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WORLD WAR II VETERANS

These WWII Veterans and SHS alumni were included in the Honor Flight on 4-23 and 4-24-09 to the WWII Memorial in Washington, D.C. to thank them for their outstanding service to our country.

Governor Dave Heineman wrote that their "service in WWII has played an important role in the protection of our country and the American way of life for generations."

1943-Raymond (Ray) Vacek – US Navy – Armed Guard; Navy Gunner on Merchant Marine ships; two cargo ships and tanker (LST). Invasion of Leyte Gulf, ended up on Yokohama, Japan. Vacek resides in Plattsmouth, NE.



Pictured left to right in Washington are Wally Hopkins, Jack Cormaci and Bob Driml.

1943-Lewis (Wally) Hopkins – US Army Air Corps – Pilot with 434th Troop Carrier Group, 9th Air Force; flew a C-47 transport and a glider. England and France 1943-1945 during WWII. Wally resides in Omaha, NE. He attended the Heartland Honor Flight to Washington, D.C. to view the memorial on 4-23-09. See photo above.

1943-Jack Cormaci – US Navy – Anti-Aircraft Gunnery Instructor – Point Montara, CA during WWII. Jack resides in Omaha, NE. He attended the Heartland Honor Flight to Washington, D.C. to view the memorial on 4-23-09. See photo above.

1943-Robert Driml – US Navy – Boot camp at Farragut, ID; Yeoman School at San Diego, CA; Philippine Sea Frontier during WWII until discharge. He was recalled to active duty for Korean War. Bob resides in Omaha, NE. He attended the Heartland Honor Flight to Washington, D.C. to view the memorial on 4-23-09. See photo above.

1944-Arthur (Connie) Johnson – US Navy – South Pacific. Johnson resides in Omaha, NE.

Editor's Note: If you are a veteran and were included on another Honor Flight to Washington, D.C. please tell us about it so we can acknowledge your service to our country.

THE WORLD WAR II STORY OF THE MERCHANT MARINE (Of the 250,000 who served an estimated 1,800 came from Nebraska) By A. J. Wichita – 1947

One of America's best kept secrets is the story of the men and young boys who joined the United States Maritime Service - today known as American Merchant Marine Veterans. The amazing facts and exploits of these brave men should be preserved for posterity. They were the men who kept the supply lines in operation delivering food, guns, fuel and other desperately needed supplies for our European allies before the USA officially entered the war. And they continued supplying US forces when we entered the war after Pearl Harbor was bombed on 12-7-41. Without these vital supplies, the USA could never have won the war. President Roosevelt declared in September, 1944, "The American Merchant Marine have delivered the goods when and where needed in every theater of operations and across every ocean in the biggest, the most difficult and dangerous transportation job ever undertaken. As time goes on, there will be greater public understanding of our merchant fleet's record during this war."

Did you know that most of our merchant ships were not allowed to have armament to defend themselves during the early years of the war? Some enterprising seamen painted telephone poles gray to make them look like cannons in hopes of fooling submarine commanders. Did you wonder why Henry Kaiser made so many Liberty ships - over 2,700 of them? It was because the enemy was sinking our merchant ships faster than they could be built.

Were our merchant ships only torpedoed when they approached the European or South Pacific shores? No! Hundreds were sunk well within sight of our coastline! Our coastline was the front line of the war, believe it or not. Veterans called it our "Second Pearl Harbor" as several thousand men were lost when over 300 ships were torpedoed on our eastern shoreline. This operation started five weeks after Pearl Harbor and was called Paukensschlag by the German High Command. The average length of service for a Liberty ship was four trips and some were sunk on their first

trip! Since the rate at which our merchant ships were being sunk was so high, the government would not allow the news agencies to report the losses. They didn't want the Axis powers to know just how successful they were, and were concerned that the news would lower the morale in America.

The U. S. Government desperately needed men in the Maritime Service to keep these ships afloat and working, and they knew it would have been hard to find men and boys who would volunteer to serve where the fatality rate was higher than for any U.S. Military service including the Marine Corps. That was the reason that we in Nebraska never heard about our ships being sunk coming out of the harbors or that one out of every 26 serving in the Merchant Marine was killed or drowned.

Many of the Merchant Mariners, ranging in age from 15 to 76 years of age, had only a few weeks training before being sent to sea. The legal age was 16, but the need to fill a quota allowed 15 year olds to sign on board. Many of those men couldn't pass the physical requirements for military service, so joined the Merchant Marine to serve their country. For instance, men were allowed to serve with only one leg or one eye - as evidenced by Peter Falk of the "Colombo" TV detective series who had only one eye and served as a steward.

They were paid wages similar to those received by men in the military services, but the pay stopped the same day their ship was sunk. The articles they signed only allowed pay for the time they could perform shipboard duties. If they lived through the sinking and survived in a lifeboat, they were not compensated for that or for finding a way home. After the war seamen left on foreign shores whose ships were torpedoed paid their own way back in many cases. And they were considered civilians and were not repatriated as were military personnel.

Merchant seamen also had to pay for their own hospitalization for wartime injuries after the war. Very little has been said about the more than 600 merchant marine who became POWs - many dying from torture while others spent over three years in prison camps. Since they were not considered veterans, our government did not pay for their hospitalization or aid their families while they were trying to recover from their torture, sickness and mental trauma. Also, since they were not categorized as veterans by our government, these men were not awarded benefits under the origi-

nal GI. Bill of Rights of 1944. In 1988, 43 years after the war, the Merchant Mariners were finally recognized as veterans -- just as many were retiring from the work force, which was much too late for them to benefit from the original GI Bill. College, GI loans, employment and a variety of financial benefits would have been very valuable assets to returning merchant seamen, but back then they were passed over for job openings meant for veterans only.

Nebraska Senator Ben Nelson has introduced a bill (S-663) in the Senate called "Belated Thank you to the Merchant Mariners of World War II Act of 2009." The legislation process requires a majority of our Senators to sign on and time is running out. The remaining 10,000 Mariner veterans who answered the call are praying for quick enactment. The bill would not only provide a monthly cash benefit, but of utmost importance, would grant these men full, official recognition for their heroism and their vital role in making our WWII victory possible. These veterans, along with our present veterans returning from the Middle East, need to be shown that our country appreciates their gallant efforts.

We hope to hear from the Merchant Marine Veterans in Nebraska or their fami-

South High School **ALUMNI TOOTER**

lies and alert them of our efforts to secure recognition and compensation they were denied after their service to our country.

Contact Mr. Wichita at
605 Laguna Drive – Richardson, TX 75080
– phone 972-231-5464
– e-mail ajwichita@sbcglobal.net.

For further information about our pending legislation, please contact:

THE JUST COMPENSATION COMMITTEE

Telephone: (800) 545-4173
email: saaren@frontiernet.net

For other historical information, please check out the website www.usmm.org.

Thank you,
A.J. WICHITA
National President
American Merchant Marine Veterans
Former resident of 2629 Harrison St. -
Omaha NE
Grade School: Assumption Parish; High
School: South High School)

Editor's Note: Mr. Wichita would especially appreciate hearing the stories of Packers who served in the Merchant Marines so he

can publish your stories and send us copies that we can share with our readers.

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2009 POKER RUN

By Willie Nalley and Tim Campbell



The **Fifth Annual SHS Alumni Poker Run** held on Saturday, May 16 was a huge success. A crisp 47 degree morning did not stop the 60 participants from rolling into J-Birds in LaVista and signing up for an enjoyable day of riding. Hope you enjoy the photos.

This year's run was a short 120 miles into the beautiful Iowa hills. The run ended at Joe Banana's with the drawing of cards. With payouts and door prize drawings done quickly, and the shorter miles, everyone had a fun time visiting and telling stories of days past.



Congratulations to the 2009 Poker Run Winners - First Place \$200 - **Dalene Showalter**; Second Place \$100 - **Tom Adams**; Third Place \$ 75 - **Amanda DeBrie**

A special thank you to our sponsors and those who donated the great door prizes including: Anchor Inn, Big House Bar &

Grill, Big I's, Dillon Bros. Harley Davidson, Doc's Roadhouse, Hells Angels Nebraska, J-Bird's Food & Spirit, J.D.'s Circle Inn, Joe Banana's, Johnson Hardware, Miller Brands of Omaha, Nettie's Restaurant, Red Eye Tavern, and Sugar's Lounge.

Also, thank you to the SHS Alumni Association for the door prizes and for all the volunteers who helped make our event a success - raising more than \$1,000. Please remember to support the Alumni Association throughout the entire year.

We hope to see all of you at next year's Poker Run to benefit the SHS Scholarship Fund.



ALL BOW TO THE QUEENS OF SHS PROUD HISTORY!

Editor's Note: We had a marvelous response to our request for photos and will publish at least one class each issue until we have shared them all with you. We appreciate each of you for submitting your photos and memories.

1945 - May Fete Queens -

*Alice (Dolleck) Wehner - Popularity; Audrey (Bailey) Rommel - Achievement; ?

____ Athletics. (See AlumNotes for an update on Charles & Audrey Rommel) (If you know who the Queen of Athletics was for 1945, please let us know her name.!

* = deceased



MEMORIALS GIVEN

Memorials were given in honor and memory of:

William "Bill" Bidrowski-1952 from Frank "Fritz" Stanek and Alice (Vodicka) Stanek-1952

Barb Opocensky-from Dennis J. Koubsky-1961 and Judi (Clark) Koubsky-1961

Frank G. Mona, Sr. -1954 from Betty J. (Revers) Mona-1957 and family Walter Henni-1923 from Arline M. Henni-1951

Irene (Riha) Blohn-1942 from 12 Riha Families

Eva "Fern" (Mullin) Smith- 1939 from Karen Carter

Charles William Kafka-1939 from Greg Chapp-1975

Maxine (Neujahr) Lever-1952 from Lavonna (Neuhahr) O'Keefe-1953

Edward A. Swanson-1942 from Barb and Steve Seglin

Anna (Hampton) Vacek-1945 from Ray Vacek-1943

Helen Lubsen from Dennis J. Koubsky-1961 and Judi (Clark) Koubsky-1961

Judy (Baumgartner) Weinand-1956 from Robert M. Weinand, Sr.

Richard A. Slizinski-1965 from his sister Donna (Slizinski) Bowdish-1963

Edward Swanson-1942 from his wife Bette (Erca) Swanson-1946, Emil

Swanson-1950 and Jeraldine (Augustine) Swanson-1951, Joe Gunis-

1942, John Forrest and Luella (Swanson) Forrest-1947, A.J. Carrillo-1944,

Lawrence Routt-1945 and Marilyn Routt, William and Susan Laird, William and

Barbara Helwig, Barb and Steve Seglin, Jacqueline D. St. John,

Julie (Hoffman) Vesper-1975

John Yacio, Jr. from Judy (Sebron) Yacio-1960

Helen June Matya- from Dennis J. Koubsky-1961 and Judi (Clark) Koubsky-1961

Lucille (Baldwin) Lane-Coschka -1938 from her daughter Marilyn (Lane) Gillen-1966

Susanna Feiste from Ed Diehm-1965 and Julie (Riha) Diehm-1966

John Ward Hopp-1951 from his sister, Dora Dene Hopp Toma-1953

MEMORIAM PRAYER

Life is real, life is earnest
 And the grave is not its goal.
 Dust thou art to dust returnest,
 Was not spoken of the soul.

Author Unknown

IN MEMORIAM

NOTE: Our apologies - Joan (Klauschie) Jacobsen-1951 and Rachel Zendejas-1958 and Leonard Gau-1960 are not deceased. They are alive and well.

1929-Maurien (Walls) Christensen died 4-09.

1930-Charles "Darcy" Smola of Omaha died 10-05.

1931-Betty A. (Hannigan) Stackhouse of Omaha died 3-14-09.

1931-Frank Morin of Omaha died 4-2-09.

1931-Leo E. Pokorski of Wahoo, NE died 3-29-09 at the age of 95 plus.

1932-Edith (Ostrovich) Abrams died 6-09-09.

1932-June (Jelen) Kahre died 2-09.

1932-Kathleen (Konowski) Lux of Omaha, NE died.

1932-Melvin K. Hall of Omaha died 4-16-09.

1932-Catheryn (Riordan) Steuerwald of Rapid City, SD died.

1932-Hazel (Welch) Smith died 11-22-08.

1934-Margaret M. (Kanger) Peers of Omaha died 4-09.

1934-Paul T. Harvat of Omaha died 12-08.

1935-Naomi E. (Barrett) Nownes of Omaha died 6-09.

1935-Beryl (Vasey) Gill died.

1935-Bernard Opitz of Bellevue died 2-18-08. He was a former POW and was a Vice President of Mutual of Omaha.

1935-Lila M. (Batterton) Zbylut, a cherished mother, grandmother, and great-grandmother and a friend to everyone she ever met. She was a proud resident of South Omaha and graduate of SHS her entire life.

1936-Mary E. (Edith) Dunn died 5-09. She was a member of the Order of the Eastern Star and a 66-year member of the P.E.O. Daughters of the Nile.

1936-Arthur E. Helligso of Omaha died 3-26-09.

1936-Clifford Kirkner of Omaha died 4-09 from complications of Parkinson's disease. He was the owner of Kirkner Jewelry and Antiques. He served in the Army Air Forces during WWII as an airplane engine repair instructor. After the war, he learned watch making and opened a jewelry store in Ralston. In 1958, the Kirkner's bought Alvin Jewelry in South Omaha. Ten years later, they moved the store to its final location, 4806 S. 24th St., and added antiques. He retired in 2001.

1936-Donald LeRoy Armstrong of Ventura, CA died 2-27-09.

1936-Walleen V. Johnson died 4-23-09.

1936-Clayton Price of Omaha, NE died.

1936-Frank J. Scheibhofer of Omaha died 5-20-09.

1936-Benjamin A. Votava of Omaha died 3-30-09.

1937-Lucille (Barta) Binder of Omaha died 1-09.

1937-William Keating of Omaha died 1-23-09. He served in WWII in the last horse-drawn

Artillery Unit for the US Army and was a retired executive of Ford Motor Company. **1937-Edward A. Shukis** of Omaha died 2-09. He served in the Army Air Corps for five years during WWII in Europe and Africa. He met and married his wife of 62 years in San Severo, Foggia, Italy. He retired from the US Postal Service.

1938-Henry J. Bele of Omaha and Council Bluffs died 2-19-09. Henry grew up and spent most of his life in Omaha. He worked as a rate analyst for Northern Natural Gas Co.

1938-Lucille (Baldwin) Lane-Coschka of Omaha died 10-22-08 from colon cancer surgery complications.

1938-Dorothy E. Groves of Omaha died 5-22-09. Dorothy's was a life well lived, full of adventure, love, happiness, friends and family. She was an active member/leader in PEO, Daughters of the Nile, a 50-year member of the Dundee Presbyterian Church, and many bridge clubs.

1938-Winifred J. (Burke) Kunkel of Omaha died 5-2-09.

1938-John "Jack" Hermansky of Glendale, AZ died 6-29-08 after an extended illness. After graduation from SHS, he attended the University of Nebraska at Omaha and the University of Missouri. When WWII started, he joined the Army Air Force Air Transport Command. He flew 50 missions over the "Hump" from

India to China. After the war, Jack settled in California and owned his own advertising agency. He was preceded in death by his wife Marinell and will be missed by his five children, grandchildren and many friends.

1938-Evelyn Marie (Pettit) Osborn of Monrovia, CA died.

1939-Lorraine S. Brown (Swetala) of Omaha died 6-25-09.

1939-Robert Peter Grobeck age 87, died 4-8-09. He was born in 1921 in Omaha to Martin and Margrethe Knudsen Grobeck and was reared with his siblings, Bernice, Adele and Milton on the Grobeck Dairy Farm. After graduating from SHS, he attended Iowa State University. He later signed up as an aviation cadet for pilot training in 1942, and was called to active duty in early 1943. He flew C-47 and B-52 aircraft in New Guinea, the Philippines, and Okinawa. Bob was stationed in Tokyo prior to returning to Iowa State University in 1946 to finish his degree in Dairy Husbandry. True members of the greatest generation, Betty and Bob were married in 1944 and had four children, Jodie, Marcia, Debbie, and Jon. Bob's career with Sealtest Ice Cream and Kraft continued the rest of his life. The family moved to Richmond, VA in 1976. Bob continued to serve in the Air Force Reserve, retiring in 1962 as a Lt. Colonel with 20 years combined active and reserve service, including reactivation for the Korean Conflict in 1951. He married Brenda Coffman on 8-30-86. He was known for his quick wit, love of golf, and dedication to his family and friends.

1939-Charles William Kafka of Omaha died 2-09.

1939-Stanley Kotlarz of Omaha died 1-09. He was a US Army paratrooper for the 82nd Airborne. Stanley worked for the postal service for 37 years.

1939-Edward Kurmel died.

1939-Helen F. (Formanek) Matulka of Omaha died 1-09.

1939-Edward Novak of Bellevue died 1-21-09.

1939-Sylvia (Gamerl) Vilim of Omaha died 1-09.

1939-June R. (Wilkening) Newquist of Omaha died 12-08.

1939-Victor Russell Schiro died 5-24-09. He was a Fourth Degree member of the Knights of Columbus.

1939-Eleanor D. (Morrow) Skarka of Omaha died 4-24-09.

1939-Eva "Fern" (Mullin) Smith died 2-13-09 peacefully in her sleep. She was a member of the First Baptist Church for over 50 years. She was also a member and a Past Noble Grand of Rebecca Lodge #44 in Omaha, NE for over 60 years. Fern was employed at the University of Utah for over 26 years. She was registered with the Body Donor Program at the University of Utah Medical Center.

1940 Margaret (VanKat) Gember died 12-26-08.

1940-Blanche (Mensik) Novotny died 6-21-09. She earned many honors at SHS including being named the *Omaha World-Herald* Student of the Year. She was also one of the early attendees of Nebraska Girls State, but her parents could not afford college. Her future husband, Richard Novotny, came from a similar family situation. So Richard and Blanche, who celebrated their 66th wedding anniversary in May, worked hard to provide an education for their children. Blanche's primary focus was the rearing of her three girls. Once the daughters were grown, Blanche and friend Carol Montgomery founded and co-owned Custom Estate Sales, an estate liquidation service. Blanche became an expert in antiques, appraisals and merchandising. Before Blanche died, she saw her daughters graduate from college and pursue advanced degrees. She died at home after a long illness.

1940-Paul Rozmajzl of Portland, OR died 10-08.

1941-Bernard "Terp" Anthony Jarosik died.

1941-Robert E. Krakowski, Sr. of Minneapolis, MN died peacefully of natural causes on 6-5-08. Robert was a recipient of the Purple Heart while serving as an Army recon scout and a survivor of WWII, Battle of the Bulge and POW camps. He was a long-time employee of Western Electric.

1941-Geraldine "Gerry" Vasholz of Lincoln died 12-19-08. Gerry was the second recipient of the Governors Meritorious Award.

1942-Irene (Srakovich) Cummings died 4-16-09.

1942-Arthur L. Hanna of Omaha died 1-09.

1942-Irene (Riha) Blohn of Omaha died 2-28-09.

1942-Joe Cisler of Bellevue, NE died 2-22-09 after a long illness. He was a Navy veteran who served during WWII. After retiring from the Omaha Fire Department, he delivered packages for Brandeis for many years.

1942-Nellie (Groves) Nicholson died 3-09.

1942-George Ryck of Omaha died 1-09.

1942-Edward Henry Seifert, Sr. died 3-09. He served in the US Army during the Korean War Conflict.

1942-Rita (Sosnowski) Sobczak of Omaha died 2-16-09.

1942-Thomas J. Sturek of Omaha died 5-09.

1942-Edward Swanson died 4-5-09. He was a founding member of the Bellevue Little Theatre, and a lifetime member of the Theater Arts Guild. During WWII, he was a Pacific Theater B-29 bombardier in the Army Air Forces. After the war, he worked 27 years as an administrator for Mutual of Omaha. He was well known in community theater circles for his singing and acting. He is survived by his wife **Bette (Erca) Swanson-1946.**

1942-Margaret (Boyd) Tunnyhill died 5-1-09. She was a Sunday school teacher for over 50 years. Margaret was a member of the Order of Eastern Star, past Matron Adah Chapter and member of the Purple Heart.

1943-Charles J. Feder of Omaha died 5-09.

1943-Ferdinand "Ferd" G. Perez of Lakewood, CO died 11-21-08. He served as a Navy corpsman attached to the fifth Marines during WWII. He was a veteran of the Pacific Campaign at Saipan and Iwo Jima and was recalled to service during the Korean War. Ferd graduated from UNO in 1955 with a degree in journalism and agriculture and was a federal grain inspector for 25 years.

1943-Robert Small of Omaha died 2-8-09.

1943-Frank Zaloudek of Omaha died 1-09.

1944-Helen Ripley of Omaha died 5-16-09.

1944-William Thompson of Omaha, NE died.

1944-Robert F. Maruna of Omaha died 5-3-09.

1945-Donita Louise (Short) Griger of Omaha died 4-09.

1945-Helen J. Lange died 5-09.

1945-Virginia (Beachler) Zalovich of Omaha died 12-08.

1946-Bernard J. Goodman died.

1946-Richard E. Kovarik died 2-09

1946-Norma Jean (Schroeder) Meisinger died in 2007.

1946-Ann Marie (Vleck) Richt of Tucson, AZ died 2-09.

1946-George Saklar of Inglis, FL died 12-08 of leukemia and prostate cancer at age 81.

1946-Marcella M. (Hladky) Sobolik of Omaha died 2-09.

1947-Robert Loren Hansen of Mesa, AZ died 5-2-09. He was a member of the Pioneers of America.

1947-Carroll "Biff" Jones of Las Vegas, NV died 1-09.

1947-Marie (Petello) Simpson died 4-25-09.

1948-William R. Gewinner of Omaha died of complications due to Parkinson's disease.

1948-Joan R. (Hansen) McCracken Kaster of Omaha died 4-12-09.

1948-William "Bill" Mertz of Scottsboro, AL died 11-21-08. Kathy Mertz writes, "He enjoyed reading the *Tooter* and on our last trip to Omaha, we drove by the school and the old practice field - he did love SHS."

1948-Robert "Bob" Rodgers of Omaha died 5-4-09. He was a retired sportswriter in both Omaha and for the *NV Global Newspaper* in Las Vegas. Working for the *Omaha Star*, he wrote weekly sports round ups. Bob was the first black man to referee a varsity basketball game in Omaha in 1958 and he poured thousands of hours into his community. Working for the Near North YMCA, he organized recreation sports leagues. When he wasn't coaching youth baseball or softball, he was "courting" merchants to pay for shoes, hats or uniforms. Bob was a "father figure" to many and grew up in south and north Omaha. Every day in high school, he rode the streetcar to SHS, which cost a dime. He was a talented athlete and a seven-time varsity letter winner. Clarence Hill, who had known Rodgers for 70 years writes, "I never saw a person who didn't like him. Honest to God. That's something. He was special."

1948-Gerald "Fritz" Shields of Omaha died 2-13-09.

1949-Glen Anderson of Omaha died in 2005.

1949-Henry "Hank" Brust of Omaha died 2-6-09. Henry was a retired engineer at UPRR where he worked for 42 years. He was a member of the South Omaha Eagles and Mid-America Woodworkers.

1949-Victor Jirka of Omaha died 1-09.

He was the owner of Jirka Auto Services. **1949-Arthur Floyd Kelly** of Hill City, SD died 1-20-09 at his home. He worked for Union Carbide until his retirement in the Houston, TX area. He was an avid angler in the Gulf waters but decided to move to rural Hill City 18 years ago. He continued fishing, and reading. Because of his love for singing, he became a member of the

Black Hills Singers. He was in the Dakota Choral Union and performed in "Die Fledermaus" in Rapid City. Arthur and his wife Fabiola re-dedicated their marriage in July 1996. Arthur was a dedicated mason for 56 years. Family and friends will remember what a great host and cook he was when they visited his home known as the Green Parrot Inn.

1949-Gerald Frances Kersigo of Omaha died 5-09.

1949-Vernon Plambeck died 10-30-08.

1949-Walter S. Swierczek of Omaha died 12-26-08. He was a past president of the South Omaha Eagles and a member of the Legion and VFW. He will be missed by many and forgotten by few.

1950-Michael J. Krmpotic of Omaha died 3-25-09.

1951-Joann Cowden of Omaha died 1-09.

1951-John Ward Hopp of Omaha died 12-19-08. He retired from OPPD in 1994 after 45 years of service. John was a member of the Tangier Shrine, the Ralston Skeet Club and a 50-year member of the Ashland Trap Shoot Club.

1951-Leo Mitera, Jr. of Omaha died 1-09.

1951-Evelyn (Sheffield) Olson of Omaha died 2-09.

1952-Walter Babb of Omaha died 6-09.

1952-William "Bill" Bidrowski of Omaha died 1-09.

1952-David A. Downs, Sr. died 12-23-08 after a long battle against cancer.

1952-Maxine (Neujahr) Leaver of Omaha died 9-2-08 of pancreatic cancer.

1953-Shirley Ann (Lenz) Bogatz of Arkansas died 7-26-08 of brain cancer.

1953-Hartvig "Harv" Nels Jensen of Granada Hills, CA died 3-3-09. After graduation, Harv enlisted in the Army serving two years in Korea. Then he attended the University of Nebraska at Lincoln where he earned an undergraduate degree in Mechanical Engineering. Not content with his achievements, he earned his MBA in 1967 at USC. His time was spent most often in Hanscom Park ice skating and playing hockey. He had a deep love for the outdoors. If he wasn't skating, he was skiing in the mountains, target shooting in the desert or taking long walks. He enjoyed traveling and exploring new places. He also enjoyed the theatre, having conversations with good friends, and dancing — he always had so much fun doing the twist! It was while attending a dance that he met his future wife, Laila in 1985. His most rewarding career move was working in the oil industry where he wrote and managed construction contracts. Harv is survived by

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a loving family including four children and four grandchildren.

1954-Robert Burdick of Oklahoma City, OK died.

1954-Shirley (Olson) Vacek of Omaha died 6-5-08.

1954-Donald Waddell of Omaha died 9-3-08.

1955-Marvin Jourdan of Oakland, NE died 4-23-09 of heart failure.

1955-Fred R. Martincik of Omaha died 3-11-09.

1955-James Smutny of Omaha died 1-09.

1955-Joe Toledo died peacefully at home with family after a lengthy battle against cancer. He was inducted into the South High Sports Greats Hall of Fame in 2008.

1956-Deanna (Davis) Saldivar died 1-23-08 in San Jose, CA of complications from Alzheimer's disease and is buried in San Diego, CA.

1956-Raymond Wilson died 6-11-09.

1957-Ed Marecek died 12-08.

1957-John M. "Jack" McGinty of Bellevue died 4-09.

1958-Richard L. Kapple of Ohio, NE died 2-14-09.

1958-Robert D. Barrett of Bellevue died 3-09.

1958-Anthony W. "Tony" Campagna died 6-25-09

1958-Kathleen (O'Keefe) Matulevicz died 3-09.

1958-Michael Patrick Sporcie of Omaha died 3-18-09. He was a teacher at Marian High School for 39 years.

1959-Donald R. Baltush of Omaha died 12-08.

1959-Janyce K. (Van Cleve) Berzi of Rio Rancho, NM died 2-25-09.

1959-Judy (Virgin) Collins died 2-3-09 in her mountain home in Arkansas.

1959-Patricia (Mahaffey) Gwinn — died 5-09.

1959-Gerald Hammerly of Omaha died 6-11-09

1959-Danny Sigmund died.

1960-Frank F. Pospishil of Omaha died 2-10-09. Frank graduated magna cum laude and received his bachelor of art degree from UNO in 1964. In 1967, he received his law degree from Creighton University and was a former partner at Abrahams Kaslow & Cassman. He focused his practice on civil litigation, bankruptcy and administrative law matters. Frank attended Mary Our Queen Catholic Church where he was a trustee and served on the finance committee and parish council. Friends will remember his sense of humor and his ability to see all sides of the story.

1960-Ronald D. Carley of Exira, IA died 5-29-09.

1960-Marlene (Rose) Moore died 6-21-09.

1961-Gary Lee Berka of Omaha died 5-09.

1962-Robert Deuchler of Omaha died 12-22-08. He taught elementary school in the Omaha District for almost 25 years. He loved to fish and was very active in the food pantry ministry at the Church of the Resurrection.

1962-Joseph Novotny, Sr. of Omaha died 6-27-09. He retired from Kellogg's Company.

1962-Douglas John Robb, Sr. of Papillion died 2-09.

1962-William E. Wade TSGT USAF (Ret.) of Bellevue died 4-5-09.

1963-Patricia (Zoucha) Dixon of Omaha died 2-09.

1963-Jackie (Chullino) Lang of Loveland, CO died 12-31-08.

1964-Mary Jane Chalen died.

1964-Irene Gartigas died 3-08.

1964-Garald "Gary" Krawcyk of Towanda, IL died 6-18-09. He was a US Navy Veteran, having served his country for four years. Gary worked at State Farm Insurance, where he started as an agent in 1972 and retired as a bond underwriter in March 2009. He enjoyed fishing, and cherished his time with his grandchildren. He was also an Eagle Scout.

1965-Charles "Butch" Knapp of Omaha died 2-2-09. He will be missed greatly by his family and friends.

1965-Richard A. Slizinski of Papillion died 7-05. He was an E5 Sgt. in the Army and a veteran. He won the 2002 Charles Langgle Award for outstanding service to the Omaha Veterans Day Hospital.

1965-James Smith of Omaha died 2-09.

1966-Kim (Parker) Dinges died.

1967-Terri Lynn (Moore) Briley of Omaha died 4-13-09 after a long, hard battle against cancer. Terri married her best friend and soul mate, Chris D. Briley. They were married for 37 years and together had four children. Her passion was her family and grandchildren. She enjoyed camping with her family and riding on the back of her husband's Harley. Terri also loved her job as a charge nurse for Pulmonary Medicine where she considered the doctors, nurses and patients another family.

1967-Cathy (Spompinato) Kasada died 2-09.

1968-Louis D. Lesac of Omaha died of kidney failure 1-18-09.

SCHOOL NEWS

BOOKS NEEDED FOR SHS LITERACY LIBRARY

If you have classics, westerns, romances, novels or short stories you no longer need, you can help the South High Literacy Committee collect books for their library. Call **Lee Corbett** at 557-3651 or 731-5695 or e-mail her at lieselotte.corbett@ops.org and she will pick up bags or boxes full of your donated books. Otherwise, drop them at the Alumni Association office and we will arrange pick up when we collect a stack of books.

Liz Hoff, a junior at SHS who plays basketball for the Nebraska Red Dawgs, a wheelchair basketball team that competes in places such as Denver and Minneapolis, was featured in an *OW-H* article on 2-14-09 as a good role model for her peers. Liz, who has cerebral palsy, is multi-talented as she also appeared in "Rythmology" (a blend of Blue Man Group, Stomp and Barrage) which was presented 3-26, 3-27 and 3-28-09 at SHS. She said she enjoys both the athletic competition and the acting. *Congratulations and best of luck in the future!*

WELCOME NEW FOOTBALL COACH FRED DOSCHER

Born in Patchogue, Long Island in NY, (a lovely riverfront village about 55 miles east of Manhattan) Coach Doscher graduated from Patchogue-Medford High School in 1990. He earned degrees in Physical Education/Health and Coaching from Oklahoma State University in 1996, and his Masters in Curriculum and Instructional Technology in 2005 from Peru State. He also met his wife, Joan, a 1995 graduate from Schuyler, Nebraska at Creighton University while they were on spring break. They have two children – John, age 4, and Lily, age 1.

He began his soccer coaching career in Stillwater, OK; and served as assistant basketball coach for 7th and 8th grade girls at

Gutherie Public Schools where he was a substitute teacher. He moved to Schuyler in 1997 and was the head Soccer Coach for the boys for 12 years, the assistant Football coach for six years, and the head Football Coach for six years. The Schuyler Warriors reached football playoffs for only the second time in 22 years in 2007 with a 4-6 record. The 2008 District Championship team had a 9-2 record! He was selected to serve as an Assistant Shrine Bowl coach in July, 2009 for the North with two Schuyler players on the field.

Coach said he was excited to move to SHS because of the opportunity to build a successful football program for the school. Besides this challenge, he enjoys the urban environment and the myriad of activities our city offers. In addition to his coaching duties, he will head the Physical Education Department, teach weight lifting and serve the administration. His philosophy of teaching and coaching is to provide an environment which makes it fun for the students and provides them skills to ensure healthy lives in the future.

His hobbies are golf, indoor soccer and weightlifting. He believes in physical fitness and plans to pass on this belief to the students of SHS.

We look forward to watching our Packers play on the new stadium field this upcoming year with Coach Doscher leading them. *Welcome!*

CONGRATULATIONS CLASS OF 2009 SHSAA SCHOLARSHIP WINNERS!

Rebecca Kalskett - Fern Watanable Business Scholarship; **Sara Magnotta** - Fern Watanable Scholarship; **Molly Frederickson** - Dave Powell Scholarship; **Nicholas Sempek** - Mudra Family Scholarship; **Jordan Love** - Judith



1968-Edward H. Sykora, Sr. of Omaha died 5-25-09. He was a proud member of the International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers Union, Local #22.

1968-Yvonne B. (Kiminsky) Zuroske of Omaha died 6-09.

1969-John Kinsella of Carter Lake died 4-1-09.

1970-David R. Mlnarik - died 4-09.

1972-Paul Douglas Gardner of Plattsmouth, NE died 1-09. Paul died peacefully at home surrounded by family. His death was due to injuries from a vehicle accident that occurred 4-7-07. He had a distinguished and enjoyable career with First Data Resources where he worked as a Systems Analyst from 1987-2008.

1973-Patricia Lynn Miller of Omaha died 6-24-09.

1975-James "Jim" Benedict Beam died 3-16-09.

1977-Brian Belik died suddenly 8-1-08 of a brain aneurism. He enjoyed reading the **Tooter** and was proud of SHS.

1982-Michael Clark died 3-09.

1982-Ernest "Ernie" C. Storm of Omaha died 2-09.

1983-David J. Sanders of Sarasota, FL died 4-12-09 as a result of an automobile accident.

1984-Laura Pierce was slain on 1-3-09 during a robbery of the convenience store at 33rd and G Streets where she worked. Her pastor described her as gentle and kind, and another friend said she had a great big, forgiving heart.

1991-Ronald J. Andersen, Jr. of Omaha died 12-08.

1992-Michael Lopez of Omaha died 11-15-08.

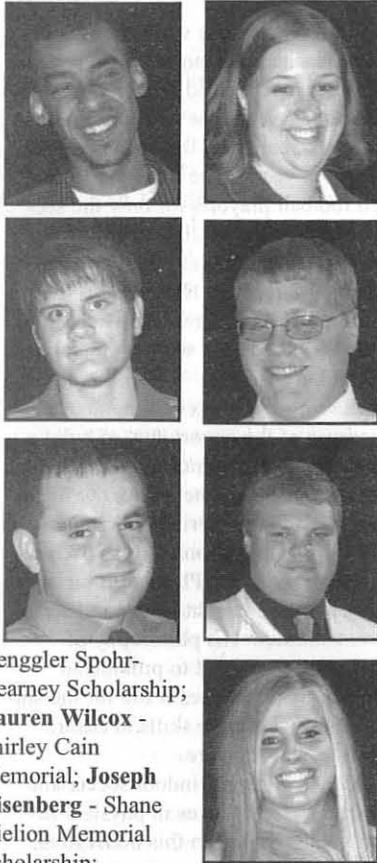
2003-Tomeeka Jenkins of Omaha died unexpectedly 12-22-08.

IN MEMORIAM FRIENDS OF SHS

Helen Alice Lubsen was featured in our last issue as she celebrated her 100th birthday. We send our condolences on the death of his mother in March 2009 to **Bob Lubsen-1959** and family.

F.E. "Fritz" Stanek was a friend to SHS and all of South Omaha. He served on the Omaha Public School Board for nearly 34 years and was a passionate defender of the schools. He went to Assumption Grade School with his future wife **Alice Vodicka Stanek-1952** and they were married for 54 years. He died of non-Hodgkin's lymphoma at age 74 and will be missed by the entire community.

Lawrence Fagan of Omaha died 4-26-09.



Hengglor Spohr-Kearney Scholarship; **Lauren Wilcox** - Shirley Cain Memorial; **Joseph Risenberg** - Shane Kielion Memorial Scholarship; **Savannah Peters** - South High Alumni Association Scholarship; **Zack Wilcox** - South High Alumni Association Scholarship; **Araceli Reyna Padilla** - South High Centennial Scholarship; **Candice Greenhagen** - South High Centennial Scholarship; **Amber Mulligan** - Roy Smith/SHS Alumni Scholarship (Softball Girl).

SHS STUDENTS VISIT THE BIG APPLE

By **Dave Weisser** – 1998 – South High Magnet School Drama Department

On 5-27-09 a group of 23 South High Magnet students and five chaperones departed from Omaha to visit New York City. The trip was part of the unique magnet offerings for Arts and Information Technology students. Attendees represented students involved in dance, visual arts, theatre, vocal and instrumental music, film, and information technology. While in New York City, the students experienced all the city had to offer, including its many museums, landmarks such as the Statue of Liberty and the Empire State Building, as well as Broadway performances. As a special treat, the group was joined by SHS

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alum **Betty Volenec-1965**, who gave them a personal tour of southern Manhattan. Everyone had a wonderful time, and it was truly one of the many opportunities unique to students at South High Magnet School. This trip was supported in part by the SHS Alumni Association, and all of the students and staff who attended send a heartfelt “thank you” for your support of the magnet programs, their students, and staff at South High!



Students were **Brandon Baratta, Andy Cervantes, Jennifer Cruz, J.J. Ferguson, Alek Fisher, Jared Flanagan, Jaris Garcia, Jerry Geho, Lisa Gerdes, Trisha Gurnett, Gaby Hernandez, Mayra Jacobo, Brock Johnson, Natalie Kammerer, Grace Diaz, Emily Martinez, Michelle Martinez, Matt DaSilva, Francesca Perotta, Allison Smith, Billy Smock, Ashli Underwood, Shay Valentine**. Chaperones were **Joshua Austin, Jennifer Brown, Charnella Mims and David Weisser**

RETIRED TEACHER UPDATES

By **Joanne Placek Sokalsky**

Roland Heinrichs – Music teacher at SHS from 1954 to 1984 - turned 86 this May. *Happy Birthday!*

Betty Norton – Assistant Principal and Counselor in the 1980s – and **Jay Ball** – SHS Football Coach until 2007, were married 11-28-08. Betty is now retired and works at Huntington’s Learning Center. Jay is now the football coach at Central High School.

Gary Caldwell – Social Studies teacher at SHS in the 1960s. He moved to TAC to become Social Studies Supervisor for OPS. He died 2-17-09 at age 74.

Mary Ann Knappenberger – Paraprofessional in Business Department, died 4-4-09. She retired a few years prior to her death.

OTHER RETIRED TEACHER NEWS

Willis Brown-writes, “I was a teacher and football coach at SHS from 1951-1960. I moved to San Jose, CA in 1960 and was a high school teacher and counselor until I retired in 1991. I still have a home in Omaha where I spend the fall. I enjoy the **TOOTER.**”

Barbara Sorenson Moshier – Business Education-English teacher in the late 1950s at SHS - moved to Indianapolis after marrying Fred Moshier fifty years ago. They have two married sons, Jeff (an architect), and Scott (Health Information Company), and two grandsons. Barb worked 27 years for the Carmel Schools in several administrative capacities and retired five years ago. She was coordinator of a student exchange program with Osaka, a sister city in Japan, and has traveled to that country 14 times. Barb and Fred have both faced some health problems over the years, but moved to a home they love where their front door opens upon the golf course.



**RETIRED TEACHER SPOTLIGHT
– FEATURE STORIES****MS. JOANNE (PLACEK) SOKALSKY**

By **Judy Sebron Yacio**

Joanne was at SHS so long that alumni readily accept her as one of us, and she is often invited to attend alumni gatherings. She began her 44-year teaching jour-



ney as a business teacher after graduating with a BS degree from Omaha University (now UNO) with majors in Spanish and Business.

She fondly recalls student teaching at SHS in September 1957 “with the fabulous **Alice Giitter**.” She said that student teaching was supposed to be only one daily class period, but she had such a marvelous experience that she arranged her college classes so she could spend the entire day at SHS. During her second semester of student teaching, she was assigned to Central High. As soon as her one class period was finished at Central, she hurried to spend the remainder of the day at SHS, essentially giving her an entire year of student teaching with Packer students. Upon graduating, she was offered a position as a Spanish teacher at Benson, but she was adamant about teaching at SHS since she had grown up in South Omaha, a place she describes as having a “diverse, cultural population.”

A Spanish teaching position at SHS did not exist in 1958, but she readily accepted **Principal Richard Krebs**’ offer to teach shorthand, typing and office training her first year. During her planning periods, however, she worked with **Ms. Giitter** in the Spanish classes. During Joanne’s second year, she blissfully accepted the opportunity to replace **Dr. Jean Bressler** who had moved from Spanish into English. She remained as a Packer Spanish teacher until June 2001. Even with her Spanish duties, she was willing to fill in with shorthand, typing and office training classes or English as needed but she concedes that Spanish has always been her first and true love.

Former student **Jackie (Schultz) Casper** lovingly offers that Joanne is well deserving of the Alice Buffet Outstanding Teacher Award she earned in 1992. Jackie describes her as a “kind, compassionate, thoughtful lady who served as my mentor when I attended UNO.” “My minor was in

Spanish,” Jackie explains, “and she (Joanne) would meet with me during the day or after school” to serve as a mentor. Jackie adds she had “the honor of having Joanne as a teacher during her student teaching semester under **Ms. Giitter** and again when she became a full-time Spanish teacher.”

This writer was also a former student during Joanne’s student teaching days, and fondly recalls her enthusiasm for her teaching profession. Joanne became a friend who attended my wedding several years after I graduated from SHS. She always had a pleasant smile and made learning enjoyable.

During her 44-year career, Joanne served as a cooperative teacher to at least 36 teachers. Her most interesting student teacher was the first one who was assigned to her when she began her third year of teaching. While the gentleman had requested **Alice Giitter** “because everyone wanted **Ms. Giitter**,” **Dr. Krebs** assigned him to **Joanne Placek**. She recalls that she “did not dare voice any objections to **Dr. Krebs** about how inadequate an experience this would be for the student teacher.” Joanne explains that “for some unexplained reason, known only to God and **Dr. Krebs**,” **Anthony Sokalsky** thus became her first student teacher. She remembers him as a very formal gentleman who fluently spoke eight languages and read and understood four others. He was from Europe and had spent World War II fleeing from the Nazis and Russians. He was in a displaced persons’ camp and spent the post war years on a construction crew in Austria repairing St. Stephan’s Cathedral and the opera house in Vienna, two of his many assignments. She describes **Anthony**’s time as her student teacher as one “of dismay” and said her stress level soared to new highs and remained there throughout the semester. If you caught the student teacher’s last name, you will realize that he became Joanne’s husband as they began dating and were married in 1972. She said **Anthony** shared with her later that he decided “to go with the flow and not request a change” and decided to stick it out with her as his cooperating teacher. They often saw each other at professional conferences and foreign language meetings and finally decided to get married.

After his graduation, **Anthony** was hired by Bellevue Public Schools where he taught Spanish, German and World History until his death in 1984. After **Anthony**, student teachers became the norm for her. At

one time, she said six student teachers were teaching at SHS and several others were in other positions in Omaha Public Schools.

From 1959-1962, before she was married, Joanne spent 12 weeks each summer living with a family in Saltillo, Coahuila Mexico where she earned her Master of Arts Degree. She said she felt that she “had died and gone to Heaven” and that except for the very stressful work of writing a thesis and defending it orally in Spanish in front of a panel of professionals, “this experience was without parallel.” She recollects the joy of learning an entirely different culture and lifestyle. She also smiles when she remembers trying unsuccessfully to introduce some U.S. customs to her Spanish friends. Whenever she saw soda on a menu, she thought that meant “ice cream soda.” However, whenever she ordered a soda, she received a bottle of “pop.” She finally explained to the Hispanic people that a soda was both pop and ice cream. The next time she ordered a soda, she received a bottle of pop and a dish of ice cream. Obviously her Spanish servers never quite understood that the ice cream was supposed to be placed inside the glass with the pop. Another time she said that on her “mamacita’s” birthday, she and the other students living in the house decided to take the host family out to dinner at a lovely restaurant. “Mamacita cried for hours because to her that meant we didn’t enjoy her cooking,” Joanne said.

In 1966, Joanne received a National Defense Educational Act Scholarship to study at the University of Salamanca, Spain. She describes this as a response to the Russians putting Sputnik into orbit in 1957 and the U.S. finding that “our people here in the USA were woefully lacking in knowledge of foreign languages,” so the government sent American students abroad to study. Former student **Betty Ganem Widoe** recalls that Joanne “made Barcelona come to life for me, and it is still on my ‘bucket list’ to visit because of her.”

In 1971, Joanne and **Dr. Helia Pico** began a chapter of the National Spanish Honor Society at South which continues to this day. Joanne says she “is extremely proud” of this organization. At the Spring 2008 initiation, five former members of the Society are currently teaching at SHS and are sponsors and/or supporters of the group.

In addition to the coveted Alice Buffet award, she has garnered several other honors including the American GI Forum, a Star Award from the Nebraska Foreign Language Teachers Association, and several

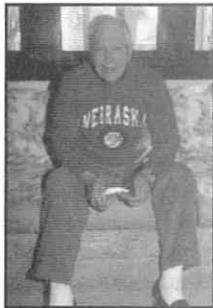
entries in *Who's Who Among American Teachers*. *Who's Who* recipients are nominated by former students. She readily adds that her "biggest awards are to see former students make good in their lives, whichever direction this may take."

In addition to teaching, Joanne said her church activities have always been especially important to her. She served as secretary of her Parish Council for 12 years and has taught Sunday School classes and prepared young people to make their First Communion. Upon retirement in 2001, she and three other teachers organized the retired female staff members to enjoy two yearly luncheon meetings. Male teachers had organized such a group for many years. Eventually, the two groups decided to meet together in April and October to "keep current on each others' lives." Never one to be idle, Joanne is currently a member of the Omaha Education Association, Nebraska State Education Association, and National Education Association in addition to serving as secretary of Kappa Kappa Iota, a professional teachers' group. Retirement allows her to "enjoy doing what I want, when I want, and for as long as I want." Students who were blessed to have this dedicated teacher and friend come into their lives all want her to do just that: enjoy life to the fullest.

MR. DALE MARCUM

By Judy Sebron Yacio

When former students still describe a teacher as "the best" 50 years later, one realizes that a special bond was forged between teacher and student(s). Both **Jim Melsa-1956** and **Jack Benedick-1960** readily describe Dale Marcum as one who had a most favorable impact on their lives. Jim, who is in the SHS Hall of Fame and was the Dean of the College of Engineering and professor of electrical and computer engineering at Iowa State University, remembers his sophomore year. He said, "I was in speech class and was scared 'spitless' to stand in front of the class and give a talk." He credits Dale Marcum and the SHS debate program with transforming him into a confident, articulate public speaker. Jim adds that this skill has been of "immense value in my careers as a university educator, educational admin-



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istrator and corporate executive." He also credits Dale with helping him see both sides of an argument and how to advance one's position. He said that "without question, Dale Marcum had a transformative effect on my life." Jack echoes such accolades as he describes his "fondest memories of SHS to include some of the great teachers we had. Dale Marcum is certainly one of them, if not the best." Jack had Dale as a teacher in his college prep advanced history class and describes Dale as "a great teacher." Jack said when the class was studying World War II, Dale wore some of his ribbons and posed as a guest speaker. He describes Dale as "always available to talk to you about anything. As a counselor, he was invaluable in his advice about further schooling and the future. He will always be my favorite teacher from high school."

Dale returns favorable comments on both former students. He shares that "**James Melsa** was a good debater of mine. I wrote to him to congratulate him when he was inducted into the SHS Hall of Fame." As for **Jack**, Dale recalls that he was in his special history class for bright students. Jack went on to serve in Vietnam and had both legs blown off by a mine. He lauds Jack for learning to ski and being very instrumental in initiating sporting events around the world for physically handicapped athletes. So the special bond with these two and other students remains strong in Dale Marcum's life.

Dale's high school academic career started at SHS in 1939. He and wife **Maxine (Hines) Marcum** attended SHS at the same time (1939-1943). Dale recalls that with 4,000 students, they never met. Their first encounter was when he was on discharge leave from the Navy after WWII at the Chermont Ballroom in March, 1946. Their marriage has produced four additional Packer alumni: **Mark, Scott and Kirk Marcum and Christine (Marcum) Burkman**. Dale proudly states, "All four of our children were provided with good educations at SHS." All four have been upstanding contributing citizens to their community. Mark served in the Navy during Vietnam and is now retired from the U.S. Postal Service. Kirk has been a practicing dentist for 30 years, while Scott and Christine were educators.

Dale earned his Bachelor's and Master's degrees from Omaha University in 1950 and 1953. He embarked on his teaching career in Iowa and after three years arrived at SHS. He was a history teacher and also

taught debate as a Packer instructor. He then became a counselor and subsequently the director of guidance at SHS. He served SHS students from 1953-1969. He said his reason for leaving SHS was due to "disillusionment with the modular scheduling program that was introduced at Burke and SHS as an experiment in 1967." Both schools later dropped the program. Dale then began a two-year stint serving as a student personnel counselor working with problem students throughout OPS. He joined the "new" Bryan High School staff as director of guidance in 1971.

When asked about special memories of South Omaha, he recalls that in 1939 when he was 15, he got a job driving hogs at the stockyards for \$5 a week. He adds that money was scarce at his house during the Depression years and he wanted to keep his job. His mother went to see SHS Principal Ralph Marrs to ask if he would allow Dale to arrange his schedule to attend classes after 10:30 a.m. Dale's stockyard job was from 5 to 10 a.m. Mr. Marrs consented allowing Dale to work that schedule for 3 ½ years until graduation in March 1943. (South was on the quarter system at the time.)

Dale recalls that his classmates were kind enough to elect him vice-president of the senior class and "the teachers were generous enough to select me to be the boys' speaker at graduation. At that time SHS had a girl and a boy try out to become speakers at graduation." He thinks SHS still uses that system as one of his sons was the boy speaker in 1972. A highlight of his Packer teaching days occurred after Sputnik (when the USSR beat the USA into space). He explains that our country was putting emphasis on identifying bright students to become engineers and scientists. He continues, "**Dr. Richard Krebs**, Principal, and I attended a week-long conference at the University of Colorado for the purpose of identifying bright youngsters. Dr. Krebs permitted me to identify brilliant students and schedule them into one of my American history classes for juniors. I'm sure all those students were smarter than me, but I thoroughly enjoyed working with them. A number of students from that class eventually became engineers, doctors and lawyers."

Dale maintained an active role in the Omaha Education Association and counseling organization. When he retired in 1988, he joined forces with former Packer teacher **George Wildrick** to form the first OEA retirement organization and served on its

board for many years. He now participates in the semi-annual lunches in the spring and fall every year for retired SHS teachers but admits "that since I left SHS 39 years ago, some of the more recent retirees are strangers to me."

As for a career in teaching, he says it is still "an honorable profession but not easy with the cultural decline" in our country. His daughter Christine was a teacher until she started to rear her family. His son Scott retired from Benson High School two years ago after serving as a teacher and head wrestling coach. Just possibly there are future **TOOTER** articles about the impact the younger Marcums have had on their former students' lives?

BEHIND THE SCENES

By Helene Elsasser-1968

What do these 13 SOBs and SOGs Alumni Packers have in common? They are all co-workers with the best part-time job for entertainment venues at the Qwest/Civic Auditorium. These alumni (retirees, semi-retirees or still working) have good old-fashioned South O work ethics. They share memories of the decades. The Packer lineup includes Cramer Galloway-1956; Janice (Vasek) Hanna-1957; Ike Pane-1957; Eileen (Sempac) Crinklaw-1957; Don Pecha-1962; Bev (DeCarlo) Hazuka-1963; Lonnie Bernth-1963; Sherry (Stewart) Pecha-1964; Sheri (Bright) Mosley-1964; Carol (Matula) Whitney-1964; Jack "John" Monzingo-1967; Helene Elsasser-1968; Angelo Perry-1958 and Jim Bayley-1973.

Another Recipe from the SHS Kitchen
CHICKEN FRICASSEE

- 3 cups cooked chicken**
- 1/2 cup onion, chopped**
- 1-1/4 lbs. cooked carrots**
- 1/8 cup pimentos, chopped**
- 1 cup peas**

Chicken gravy:

- 1-1/4 cups butter**
- 1 quart water**
- 1-1/4 cups flour**
- 1 quart milk**
- 1-1/2 tablespoons chicken base**
- 1/4 teaspoon thyme**

Dice or cut chicken and place in layers in 9 x 13 pan. Layer peas, carrots, onions and pimentos over chicken. Prepare chicken gravy. Add to chicken mixture, mixing gently. Warm in slow 250 degree oven for no longer than 30 minutes. Serve over whipped potatoes or rice. Serves 16.

SLOPPY JOE'S JITNEY LUNCH RECIPE FOUND!

In our last issue we asked for the Sloppy Joe Recipe served at the jitney lunches. **Marilyn (Lane) Gillen-1966** kindly sent the recipe from the Lefler Methodist Church Cookbook, where she enjoyed jitney lunches of Sloppy Joes. They walked to the church since there was not enough room in Madison School to accommodate all the grades at the same time. **Ruth Kozel** is listed as submitting the recipe to the cookbook committee.

- 22 lbs. ground beef**
- 16 (one lb.) cans of red kidney beans (drained and mashed)**
- 3 qts. Ketchup**
- One 46 oz. can of tomato juice**
- One (#2-1/2 cans) of tomato paste**
- 1-1/2 teaspoon of mustard**
- 2 teaspoons of chili powder**
- 4 tablespoons of Worcestershire sauce**
- 3 lbs. of onion - diced**
- Salt and pepper and a few sprinkles of sugar**

Sauté ground beef and onions. Then combine all ingredients in a large heavy kettle. Simmer about one hour. More seasonings may be added. Serves approximately 250.

SPORTS CORNER

Send us your news (and pictures if possible) about your hole in one, perfect bowling game, the mountain you climbed, the race you won, etc., so we can share your success with your school alumni!

GOLF

Steve Cavlovic-1950 had a hole in one on Friday, 6-19-09 at Shoreline with a 135 yard drive on the 12th hole using a 9-iron. Witnesses were Dave VanMetre, Tony Fucinaro and Andy Hunter. *Congratulations Steve!*



Marge Collin- 1961 won the Women's Golf Association's Handicap Tournament. Marge led a field of 120 women golfers in the two-day event played on the Isabella and Cortez Golf Courses on 6-4 and 6-11-09 in Hot Springs Village AK. *Congratulations!*

BOWLING



Frank Koubsky-1957 bowled the bowlers dream game, a 300, on 3-31-09 at Mockingbird Lanes in Omaha in the Thursday Seniors League. *Congratulations, Frank!*

ALUMNI BOWLING TOURNAMENT WINNERS

Men With Averages - Rich Ghyra - 1st game 230; Tom Gomez - 2nd game 280; Tyler Cary - 3rd game 267; Ryan Frank - series high 675.

Men Without Averages - Barnes Chandler, Jr. - 1st game 222; Steve Hofscheir - 2nd game 198, 3rd game 214; series high 589.

Women With Averages - Joan Welsh - 1st game 191; 2nd game 153; 3rd game 156; series high 500. See photo to the right.

Women Without Averages - Kathy Brown - 1st game 138; Reah Dalton - 2nd game 189 and high series 446; Nancy Voboril 3rd game 129.

Congratulations to all!



**Ed "Sonny" Svoboda, Alumni 1958 and Greg Spevak, Alumni 1965
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**Again Featuring Two Great Bands
 Ed "Sonny" Svoboda's Red Ravens
 from 1 to 2; 3 to 4 & 5 to 6**

**Greg Spevak's 9 Piece Orchestra
 from 2 to 3; 4 to 5 & 6 to 7**

**Food & Beverages will be available for Purchase
 ADMISSION:\$7 Per Person – Children Are Free**

2009 CALENDAR OF EVENTS

9-19-09 Hall of Fame Brunch at the Livestock Exchange at 10 a.m. Tickets must be purchased through the Alumni office, call 402-738-9493. Cost \$25.

9-25-09 "Tie One On for Education" Scholarship Fundraiser – see reservation form in this TOOTER for silent auction and dinner at The Thompson Center, UNO Alumni House located at 67th & Dodge Street. Cost \$50.

10-10-09 Board of Directors Meeting - 9:30 A.M. Alumni Association Office.

10-23-09 Homecoming Football Game - Omaha South vs Creighton Prep at Collin Field at 7 PM. Complimentary ticket in this TOOTER.

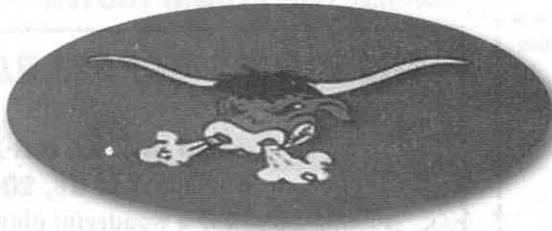
10-28-09 Packer Greats Sports Hall of Fame – at Anthony's. See registration form in this TOOTER. \$35 ticket – contact the Alumni Association.

12-12-09 6th Annual SHS Craft Show – 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. at South High School

3-27-10 Fifteenth Annual SHSAA Bowling Shoot-out at Mockingbird Lanes. More information and registration form in the Spring 2010 TOOTER.

3-27-10 Fifteenth Annual SHSAA Spaghetti Dinner at Sokol Hall South Omaha. More information in the Spring 2010 TOOTER.

ALL ALUMNI ARE WELCOME AND ENCOURAGED TO ATTEND ANY AND ALL OF THESE ACTIVITIES. PLEASE NOTE SOME OF THE EVENTS REQUIRE TICKETS AND/OR RESERVATIONS IN ADVANCE. PLEASE CALL THE ALUMNI OFFICE – 402/738-9493 IF YOU PLAN TO ATTEND A BOARD MEETING OR IF YOU HAVE QUESTIONS ABOUT ANY OF THESE EVENTS.



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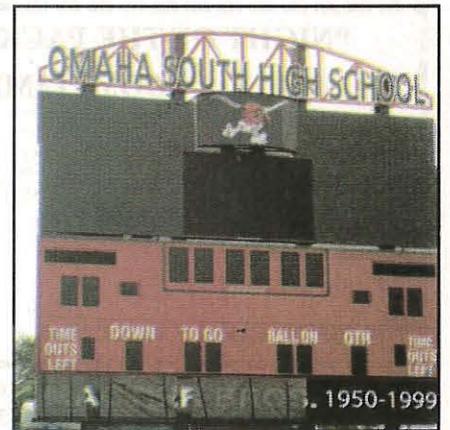
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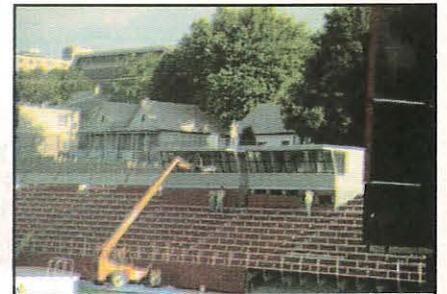
2009 GOLF TOURNAMENT IN FULL SWING



THE PACKER SCOREBOARD IS SET IN PLACE



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