On September 24, 2012, Disability Services honored 25 university students at the Disability Services Scholarship Luncheon. The Marshall Access and Education Fund (MAEF) provided three students with scholarships of $1,100. The MAEF scholarships were awarded to Jacob Anderson, Emily Duffield and Susan Pederson. As mentioned previously, the MAEF scholarship funds have been donated by Marshall High School alumni and friends. 

The luncheon was held in Coffman Memorial Union’s Mississippi Room and was done quite elegantly. The students and their guests were welcomed by Gerald D. Rinehart, the university’s vice provost and dean of students. He was followed by Rickey Hall, the university’s assistant vice president, and Donna Johnson, the director of Disability Services.

Peggy Mann Rinehart, associate director of Disability Services, introduced the scholarship selection committee, the scholarships and the scholars. The student scholarship winners are a delightful group of young people. All of them are bright and capable students. Many are choosing careers that will make a difference in other people’s lives. All of them are rising above difficulties in their own lives.

MAEF was represented at the luncheon by Lois Maturi, Harvey Johnson and Tom Daly. The 25 students who were awarded Disability Services Scholarships received over $65,000 to help defray the cost of their educations.

TMD
Nevertheless, we did do a lot of skiing, sledding and tobogganing on Tower Hill. John Daly remembered riding big bobsleds that were run down the streets from up near Tower Hill in the years between 1910 and 1920. He said that there were several good runs that included going down Seymour Avenue, Orlin Avenue and Arthur Avenue. The bobsleds would carry as many as eight or ten people. The Seymour run included going down Franklin Avenue nearly to the old bridge. Everyone who rode down was expected to help pull the bobsleds back to the top again.

Winter on Tower Hill was often exciting and sometimes painful. Ken Holkestad remembers a boy who tried to ride his sled from the top of the hill right down toward University Avenue. About half way down, the boy’s sled hit the bare path and he flew off the sled and landed in a heap at the bottom of the hill. Ken helped the boy get on his sled and pulled him to his home on Orlin Avenue.

I remember watching a kid ride his sled head first into a tree, but he didn’t give up. A little while later, he went down the steep side toward Malcolm Avenue, shot out across the street and hit the curb on the opposite side. His sled stopped at the curb, but he flew across the boulevard and onto the sidewalk. I couldn’t watch anymore. I went home.

Many of us learned to play tennis on the courts at Tower Hill. Joan Hunter Pudvan lived at 100 Seymour Avenue “just about half a block from Tower Hill’s tennis courts.” Joan remembers that the courts were built in 1938, a W.P.A. project.

Joan said that she heard her mother say that W.P.A. workers “leaned on their shovels a lot.” Joan wondered why the men would do that. She and her brother watched the workers laying cement and smoothing it out. When they finished the courts, they pressed a W.P.A. insignia into a corner of the fresh cement with the date “1938.” Joan said that she never did see any of the men leaning on their shovels.

Joan remembered how a lot of neighborhood boys learned enough about tennis to be on Marshall High’s tennis teams. During the late thirties and early forties, Bill Hunter, Howie Wilcox, Fred Lang, Billy Smith, and Bill South all spent a lot of time playing tennis at Tower Hill. She also remembered, “Mr. Betlach and Mr. Smith, dressed in tennis whites, playing every weekend.”

One of the scariest stories about Tower Hill was told by Gary Twedt:

“On a hot day during summer vacation, my friend Jimmy Livingston and I noticed rain clouds which seemed to be headed our way. I don’t know who had the idea, but we both thought it would be nice to put on our swim suits and cool off on Tower Hill in the rain which would soon be upon us. We lived in a fourplex at 11 Orlin and Tower Hill was just on the other side of the school.

We suited up, headed for the tennis courts at the tower and watched the big, black clouds roll in. It wasn’t too long before we felt some cooling rain drops, but in a short time, we saw a hail stone bounce here and there. Then all hell broke loose. The hail was coming down hard and fast, bouncing off our unprotected heads. It hurt...”

Memories: Continued on page 4
Memories: Architects Plans from page 2

Frederick W. Cappelen, Designer-Engineer • 1913
Dedicated July 28, 1914
“Prospect Heights Tower”

Memories: Continued on page 4
like the dickens. We were dancing around and frantically looking for shelter, finally taking refuge under the bench at the other side of the tennis courts. But the wooden seat had large gaps between the boards and offered little protection. I found an old newspaper to hold over my head, but it soon disintegrated.

We found ourselves lying in about an inch of ice water...we cooled off alright...we were considerably cooler than a few minutes before. My teeth were chattering.

There was so much noise from the storm, we had to shout to hear each other. I thought the storm would never end and in a panic, we decided to run for home. Running on hailstones is really tough on the feet, too, not to mention the hail still pelting our heads and bodies. Wouldn’t you know, the minute we reached home, the storm was over. I look back on it now and have to chuckle, but at the time we saw no humor in the event.”

Tower Hill was also a place for picnics, for watching Fourth of July fireworks and for romance. Many young couples made their way to the benches at the top of the hill to gaze out over the city and into each other’s eyes. Quite a few proposals for marriage were made at Tower Hill including ones made by George and Jo Anderson, Art and Joyce Lundin, and Mike and Patty Daly.

In Prospect Park the high point of the community calendar is the Pratt Ice Cream Social. It was begun as a celebration of the end of the school year, but it continued even when the school was closed from 1982 to 2000.

The Ice Cream Social is held on the last Friday before Memorial Day. It includes ice cream and cake, food and entertainment, plant and craft sales, even belly dancing! But the highlight of the day is that it is the only day of the year that the Tower is open to the public. People can walk up the spiral staircase to the top of the tower and get a grand view of Minneapolis and St. Paul that is unmatched in the Twin Cities, a view to remember!

Parts of this article were taken from “Memories of Prospect Park” by Joan Hunter Pudvan and “Under the Witch’s Hat” by the Prospect Park History Committee.

A painting by Ken Holkestad, class of 1955. Ken learned a great deal about the skill of painting from Mr. John Socha, art instructor, Marshall High School.
Marshall Class of 1952 celebrated their 60th Anniversary Reunion on September 27, 2012

A buffet lunch was held at Jax Cafe’ on a beautiful Fall afternoon. More than 40 classmates and spouses had a great time recalling the good old days and bringing one-another up-to-date on life stories. Class President, Ed Galbraith gave us an appropriately brief greeting and shared his insights on the significance of our lifetime in the history of the universe. Our Class Homecoming King, Andy Janos and our Homecoming Queen, Betty Svac Anderson were both present (see photo) showing what great judgement the Class had 60 years ago. The royal couple remain very attractive representatives of the Class and displayed what good sports they were. –Reporter, Jim Daly, Class ‘52.

Marshall Classes of 1947 held their 65th Reunion

The Marshall Classes of 1947 held their 65th reunion on Wednesday, September 19, 2012 at Elsie’s in Northeast Minneapolis. The January and June graduating classes were represented with approximately 40 classmates; a total of 52 attended. They had a delicious sit-down meal in very comfortable surroundings at Elsie’s. A highlight was ‘stump your classmates’. Classmates were encouraged to share a strange or unique experience in writing prior to the reunion. These replies were read at the reunion and if no one guessed the author his or her name was placed in a bucket and a winner drawn for a prize of $65.

Marshall High School Class of 1958 to hold 55th

Our Reunion Planning Team announces their 55th Anniversary Reunion. The celebration/party is to be held the evening of August 28, 2013 at Jax Café, on University Avenue in Northeast Minneapolis. Scott Johnson and Nancy Bjergen Green will emcee the class interactions and frivolity. The reunion occurs during the Great Minnesota Get-Together: The State Fair, so plan for two great events while you are here. Place this on your calendar; ticket information will be available in March by contacting Larry Petersen, 651-483-1564 or petersen651@comcast.net.

Marshall Classes of 1967 held their 45th Reunion

The Marshall High School Class of 1967 held their 45th reunion on Friday, September 14, 2012, from 5 p.m. to midnight at Rose Vine Hall Banquet Center in Roseville. Approximately 60 people, including nearly 50 classmates, enjoyed good food, a cash bar, music from the 1960’s, the video from the 40th reunion and easy mingling and reacquainting with old friends.

In anticipation of the 45th reunion and a 50th reunion in 2017 tentatively scheduled for Saturday, August 26, 2017, we established a website exclusively for our class, www.marshallclassof67.org, so that classmates could view information about, and see who was planning to attend the 45th reunion, and also could see photos and the video from the 40th reunion festivities in 2007. The website is intended to be a continuing work in progress at least through 2017, so classmates may update their personal and contact information (with their desired level of privacy) and stay in touch with other classmates, in addition to reliving memories of the 40th and 45th reunions.

Editors note: Check out the class of ’67s website; it is awe inspiring. I repeat the web site below: www.marshallclassof67.org.

Marshall Classes of 1953

is considering a late luncheon on a Friday in late September (such as the 27th) to celebrate their sixtieth reunion. Class members’ input is appreciated as to suggestions and/or availability. Location is to be arranged. Please contact Jan Olsen OlsenJMS@comcast.com, Bob Daly bobdaly1953@yahoo.com, or Marlene Sommers sommerzap@yahoo.com with your thoughts.
Obituary: William Henninger lived, but never forgot atrocity

Seasoned in combat during World War II, William Henninger was a draw to younger soldiers when he served on the Army’s front lines in the Korean War. In the infamous 1950 Sunchon Tunnel Massacre, one of those younger GIs would save his life.

Henninger, a Twin Cities native who died April 1 at age 88, was deeply troubled by the atrocity and spent his life in friendship with other veterans.

“He lived with honor in his heart,” said his widow, Dorothy Henninger. “But he was great for helping anyone connected to the service.”

On Oct. 20, 1950, Henninger was one of more than 100 American prisoners led by North Korean guards out of a train tunnel in Sunchon. Starving from days of brutal captivity, the men were told they would be fed. Taken in groups of 30 or 40, they were instead lined up in a gully and shot.

Henninger and about 20 others escaped by playing dead. He later said he felt bullets going through his hair and clothes but wasn’t wounded. The body of a young GI from Minneapolis fell on top of him and covered him in blood.

Jim Yeager of Taylor, Ariz., escaped with Henninger and a handful of others after hiding under shocks of millet for a night. He said he’ll never forget how the dying men called out for their mothers in the shooting spree. He said he and Henninger “kind of leaned on each other” after the war and stayed in contact, particularly on the anniversary of the massacre. “I had Bill carry one of the wounded kids out of there,” Yeager said. “He was a real hero.”

Awarded the Bronze Star and Purple Heart, Henninger said in one postwar interview that he felt more like a survivor than a hero. He was a POW for 89 days, losing about half his body weight during the ordeal and returning to U.S. sol weighing less than 100 pounds. His wife said the starvation led to lifelong kidney and stomach problems.

Henninger searched most of his life, in vain, for the parents of the young soldier who fell on him during the massacre. He wanted to pay his respects and give the young man’s family a firsthand account of the horror.

In 2006, Henninger and Yeager attended the first organized reunion of Sunchon Tunnel survivors, in Branson, Mo. The war crime had received national attention in U.S. Senate hearings held by Sen. Joseph McCarthy.

One survivor testified that of 180 POWs there, only about 20 survived to rejoin U. S. troops. Yeager and Henninger led their small group to safety by climbing to high ground during daylight and spying a column of U.N. troops and trucks in the distance.

Henninger Continued on Page 7.
Returning to the United States, Henninger served for six months as a chauffeur for officers at Camp Roberts, Calif. before his enlistment ended, he served as a guard in Desert Rock, Nev., during the test firing of an atomic bomb. He saw the mushroom cloud and was exposed to radiation from the blast.

Henninger graduated in 1942 from John Marshall High School in Minneapolis and later lived in Hastings and worked for many years for the amusement park at St. Paul’s Como Zoo.

Dorothy said her husband would visit veterans in the hospital, play bugle at cemetery services and help fellow soldiers whenever needed. His groups included the Trench Rats, Fort Snelling Rifle Squad, Purple Heart Association, VFW and American Legion. “He went to a lot of meetings and he loved his comrades,” she said.

Henninger was buried April 10 at Fort Snelling National Cemetery.

Tony Kennedy 612-673-4213
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REMEMBERING MANY MORE CLASSMATES WHO HAVE PASSED—

George Abelseth, ’54, Sept 16, 2012
Gary R. Davidson ’42, June, 2012
Sophie Kozlowski ’42, July, 2011
Roger Mosiman ’42, Dec, 2011
Hildoris Severson Osborne ’42, Nov 1, 2012
Thurlow Shuler ’42, April 17, 2012
Donald Skiba ’42, Feb, 2012
Cherle Gibson Pedersen ’47, Sept 7, 2012
James Salovich ’47, Nov, 2012

LATEST ON RAZING OF MARSHALL BUILDING.

A news article in the November 30, 2012 STRIB states “David Jasper, owner of the University Technology Enterprise Center (UTEC) at 1313 S.E. 5th St., says the 90-year-old former John Marshall–University High School where he ran UTEC will be torn down and replaced with a 317-unit, mixed apartment/retail building in the Dinky-town neighborhood. Jasper is selling the building to Chicago-based developer GEM Realty Capital in a deal that will close next month...at age 75, Jasper says he is ready to retire. But probably the biggest factor was financial --- the building needed up to $7 million in upgrades to keep it viable.”

Subject: What makes a good teacher great?

A great teacher will: Witness his/her faith by demonstrating the kindness and love aspects of their faith, whatever that may be, without uttering a word. All faiths, and yes, even atheists can quietly demonstrate great, loving, kind, thoughtful actions that speak louder than words allowing the children in secondary schools/adults in colleges to sift through what they see in those actions and pronounce the teacher great. Knowledge of ones subject matter is imperative but without love and kindness, great delivery systems and knowledge of ones course will not, in and of themselves, result in a course material that is readily absorbed by the student.

OWL
HOW WE DRESSED IN 1955

During the decade of the 50’s Marshall High School students wore more casual attire than was worn the previous decades as evidenced by the following:

Everyday school-wear for the gals: Skirts were required; straight skirts were mid-calf in length or down to the ankle to be really cool; full skirts were mid-calf, sometime held out by starched crinolines.

Blouses and/or sweaters, demure in style were worn; sweaters were worn, sometimes buttoned in the back, or were worn over blouses or another sweater as a sweater set.
Shoes were baby dolls or saddles with anklets. Flats were worn with nylon hose held up with garter belts.
Bathing suits were one-piece
Winter coats were long, at least to mid-calf with Kickerinos for footwear.

No bikinis, no thongs, no panty hose, bras were padded with Kleenex.

Everyday school-wear for the guys: Slacks were grey flannels, cords, or khakis.
Shirts were button-down; sweaters (first choice – cashmere) were vee-neck or crew-neck worn over shirts or crew-neck tee shirts.
Shoes were saddles or white or dusty bucks worn with argyle socks.
Letter jackets were popular, sometimes car coats in winter, no head-gear

GAME-DAY WEAR FOR THE GALS:
Bermudas with knee-high socks, downhills or ranch pants and saddle shoes.
Cheerleaders wore their uniforms.

DRESS-UP FOR THE GALS:
Formals or dressy dresses, heels with nylons.

DRESS-UP FOR THE GUYS:
Suits, often grey flannel, colored button-down, pin, or tab-collar shirts; narrow ties and belts; lace shoes.

PRICES:
Eklunds advertised all-wool suits for $29.50.
Justers advertised flannel slacks for $12.95.
Thom McAn shoes were $7.45.

Pink and charcoal-grey were popular colors.
I purchased most of my clothing from Dayton's. My suit was from Justers.        RKH

See next page for ‘50s fashions scanned from the 1955 Cardinal yearbook.
We had a page left over by golly, so we filled it full of fad and folly!

They struck a pose in quilted clothes.

Page editors in "brief".

Mr. Winter sent poor weather, Marshallites stopped him with wool and leather.

To face the cold and stop the winds, we adopted crinolines.

Shoes, shoes, they drive us mad, but what can you do, they're the latest fad.
Mr. John Socha taught art at Marshall High for about 10 years (1951-1961). We didn’t know how fortunate we were to have a teacher of Socha’s caliber. He brought an unsurpassed level of training, art and life experiences day after day to the unsuspecting students of Marshall High. Socha had the gift of being a teacher and mentor while bringing us unheard-of concepts in art and design. Under Mr. Socha’s tutelage, ideas filled with color, shape, and form slowly unfolded as we matured and began to consider futures in a field that generated a mysterious attraction for many of us.

Born in 1913, Socha’s life until his death in 1988 was driven by an innate need to be creative in the arts, especially drawing, painting and 3-D design and sculpture. He attended the Minneapolis School of Art c.1929 and quickly established a positive reputation in all phases of study, concentrating on figure drawing, sculpture and painting. His classes were cut short by the Great Depression, which interrupted many lives, notably young artists. Almost penniless, Socha resorted to odd jobs such as delivering milk and hauling trash to help his family survive. About that time a government-funded project was launched for hundreds of thousands of people looking for work. He applied for a newly created WPA position (Works Projects Administration) requiring able artists to plan, lay out and paint large wall murals, many depicting historic moments in our country’s past. These projects were in public spaces both indoor and out – mostly buildings such as post offices, train stations, music halls, etc. Within a few months his reputation spread and he was chosen to work with a crew led by Diego Rivera, the noted Hispanic muralist.

By 1940-41, this country’s preoccupation was with the war effort. In 1942-43, Socha enlisted in the army to de-code documents and was promoted to captain with a special spin-off group from “Intelligence” to use his classic art knowledge to assist in tracing the whereabouts of hidden Nazi art storage facilities scattered from the Pyrenees to the Alps. After the war, Socha returned to civilian life and enrolled at the University of Minnesota on the GI Bill, working for a master’s degree in art history and art education. He graduated with honors in 1949-50 while maintaining an active career in art. Because of his reputation in watercolor painting, he was selling his work through galleries and dealers, mainly Twin Cities, Duluth, and Rochester.

Socha then applied for a new position in senior art education at Marshall, enabling him to work with young people while finding time to continue personal artistic activities.

I have memories of Mr. Socha’s impromptu lectures coming from the perspective that the basics of art and design trace their history back to the cave paintings of 30,000 years ago found in Lascaux, Spain and France. His principles of art and design were about line, color and contrast together with texture, shadow, perspective and center of interest. He did not consider white and black as colors; instead he...
wanted them treated as values of light or scales of grey between light and dark. He introduced us to the “color wheel phenomenon”. The three basic colors of red, yellow and blue; these colors can be adjusted with their complementary wheel opposites: green, purple and orange. Theoretically, all colors can be generated by combining the three basics in varying amounts. Woe to the student who used black or white pigment to effect true color!

Mr. Socha was able to send our imaginations to unimaginable places. He loved mythical scenes in watercolors – a shimmering lake by moonlight, exotic flora and fauna, an arched bridge leading into the distance via a serpentine path to a thatched cottage with abundant hollyhocks. Or a ruined castle far away in the mist surrounded by a moat with pet alligators. What teenager couldn’t embellish these fantastical scenes with trusty pens and India ink, using texture to create light and dark, emphasizing details leading to the center of interest. Socha loved spontaneity in a student’s work. His own spontaneity was evident in his own work, which he shared with us on many occasions.

For many of us, careers in art and design began there at Marshall High. Mr. Socha encouraged us to become managers of projects he solicited from various school groups looking for art work to help promote upcoming school events or artwork for the Judge school paper. We did posters, linoleum block cuts and cartoons. We were given basic requirements and materials needed plus access to the art room during most school hours and worked directly with the people requesting help. Not only did we receive inspiration and valuable experience in art reproduction techniques, Mr. Socha’s guidance and input resulted in a high level of proficiency and confidence in the more practical side of blending art with business – working with the customer to develop products tailored to their needs.

Our drawing skills were honed weekly when we arranged our tables around a podium and made a series of quick-gesture drawings with soft pencil or charcoal of fellow classmates. We set up and painted still-life scenes, sometimes taking several days. Some of these images made it into a yearly student art show organized by the Minneapolis Institute of Art, along with a few sculptures and other miscellaneous works.

We especially enjoyed doing “Plein Aire” (outdoor) sketching and painting in the spring. We all had our favorite spots around Dinkytown – the grain elevators by Van Cleve Park, the University by U-High Park, old houses and churches and, of course, the clear view of the skyline from the 15th and 4th Street bridges. Kyle Johnson shared memories of a special place under a Dinkytown bridge on a cement pad and retaining wall above the trains where he could safely observe ad be close to the subject matter. Dick Aaland’s pictures always included minute detail, providing us with interesting material to study. One of Dick’s Cityscapes detailed a small platoon of large black ants negotiating a winding path over a huge bridge beam with just a hint of the hazy skyline in the distance. This work captured Mr. Socha’s highest praise. I remember him squinting and adjusting his bifocals to study this intricate piece of work. A smile radiated from him as he declared, “it’s amazing - an interesting fantasy”, naming the work “Antimology”. From then on Dick’s fame spread and we dubbed him “Antman”.

We were a motley crew of art fledglings: Bob Lerfald (Lerf), Kenny Holkestad (Chief). Dave Shove was the in-house philosopher and itinerant artist whom those of us who went on to develop...
careers in the arts later consulted when applying for our ‘artist’s licenses’. Otto Lausten recently denied any connection to our crew (he was a print shop major), but he didn’t deny his “Moonman Otto” nickname. Some other artists included: Allen Kienitz, Jack Newman, Ron Andersen, Hugh Solberg, Romaine Johnson, the Lohn sisters, just to name a few. Then there was Vera Olsen (now Sohl), whose main interest was in depicting horses and related subjects. Socha had his eye on one of Vera’s pictures. He graded it with an A+ and a note suggesting it be taken to Walter Chapman’s (the principal, if you’ve forgotten) office. Vera hesitated, but with Socha’s encouragement, they went down to see him – he loved it! It was professionally framed and hung across from Chapman’s desk until he retired years later and Vera’s mom became the proud owner. Vera also produced a watercolor painting of Minnehaha Falls that was exhibited at Minneapolis Art Institute along with a redwood bird in flight mounted on a walnut base.

Meanwhile, Kyle’s sculpture of a granite head was completed and brought to the art room for some final finishing and mounting on a suitable base. He had worked on it for several weeks, chipping away with stone chisels and other tools provided by Mr. Socha. His studio was located in the boiler room, far enough from the art room so as to not disturb others. The piece was titled, “A Left Hook to the Jaw”.

Our last year was consumed with an urgency to complete everything before graduation.

Several projects I pursued included artwork for the yearbook, copper enameled jewelry, cufflinks, pins and earrings. I designed a miniature kiln from found objects, including a few coffee cans, asbestos and an electric element salvaged from a popcorn popper. This allowed me to work at home evenings and weekends. I sold a number of items through a small gift shop and did custom designs.

By senior high my grade-school buddy, Ken Holkestad, and I had become what might nowadays be termed ‘art nerds’ (along with a few others). We independently enrolled in separate correspondence courses. One featured local cartoonist Charles Schultz as an instructor. The other featured Norman Rockwell. I also subscribed to a course offered through the New York Metropolitan Museum geared for college and classical art aficionados (which I was not). Like Ken, I was bitten by the bug of hands-on-training from professionals in commercial art. Shortly after we completed our first correspondence assignments, we excitedly told Mr Socha what we’d done. His immediate reaction was disappointment and a lecture about how we should save our money and look into a “real” art school where we would get the kind of training necessary to prepare us for careers in art.

In some ways he was right, but it was not the whole picture. Ken quickly landed a position with General Mills where he eventually moved up the ladder to become a staff art director. He retired from that position 15 or 20 years ago. Kyle went from Marshall to the U of M to study architecture for two years. He learned of an opportunity at a small design studio and presented his art work and renderings to the design director and wife, Mrs. Paul Albitz, who taught Home Economics at Marshall! Kyle was soon using his skills designing interiors for hotels, restaurants and private homes. He became known for his versatility and trained eye for color, function and ergonomics. He was frequently called on to put his architectural and sculptural talents to work developing 3-D concepts in high end furnishings and storage. Kyle is retired but still keeps busy on the occasional special request projects – once a designer, always a designer.

As for me, after a few years working in various art positions, I heeded Mr Socha’s advice and attended art school. After graduating from Minneapolis School of Art with
a degree in Industrial Design, I worked for several different offices in art-related positions, but returned to graduate school to get a Master’s degree in art education. Just as I was about to sign the dotted line to teach in the ‘burbs’, I received an offer from 3M to work as an industrial designer. I accepted the position and never looked back. I retired over 15 years ago after earning several patents. My last 5 years were spent as a corporate inventor.

I think if John Martin Socha was here today, he would be proud of the students he taught and mentored during his teaching years. We were the lucky ones. We were in the right class at the right time. Thank you John, from all of us. CSA

Laughter is Good Medicine

The following, meant to be informative, appeared in Church bulletins:

“For those of you who have children and don’t know it, we have a nursery downstairs.”

“Irving Benson and Jessie Carter were married on October 24 in the church. So ends a friendship that began in their school days.”

“At the evening service tonight, the sermon topic will be “What is Hell?” Come early and listen to our choir practice.

“Low Self Esteem Support Group will meet Thursday at 7 p.m. Please use the back door.”

“The sermon this morning: ‘Jesus walks on the Water.’
“The sermon tonight: ‘Searching for Jesus.’ ”

A young son asked, “Is it true Dad, that in some parts of Africa a man doesn’t know his wife until he marries her?”

Dad replied, “That happens in every country, son.”

A man arrived home from work and was greeted at the door by his wife. “I have good news and bad news” She told him. “give me the good news first.” He said “The air bag works.”

It’s right to be contented with what you have but never with what you are.

A clean conscience is a soft pillow.

Peace is not the absence of conflict, but the ability to cope with it

Have a Great New Year wonderful Marshal/Marshal U friends.
Mercil Service Station History

My Father, David Mercil was born and raised in Crookston, Minnesota. When he graduated from high school about 1928 his whole family moved to Minneapolis so David could attend the University of Minnesota. I don’t know if there were student loans at that time, but he had to take part-time jobs to earn tuition money. His first job was flipping hamburgers at a joint right in the middle of the island formed by the confluence of the streets at Seven Corners.

At some point he moved up (?) to pumping gas at the Standard Oil Station on Walnut & Washington Avenues. It was a tiny little brick structure that was called a cracker box with just room enough for a desk with a stool and a coal stove. It had a restroom and a drive-over pit in the ground for servicing cars—pretty grim by today’s standards. David was enrolled in the School of Architecture at the University and jobs were precious during the Depression. You had better keep your nose clean because Standard Oil’s Main Office was not adverse to keeping track of their station dealer’s activities. Something alerted Standard Oil to the dealer running the station where David worked and he was relieved of his outlet.

In 1936 Standard Oil offered the outlet to David. Here he was being offered full time employment at the gas station and he did not know if he could get a job as an architect. He played it safe and chose to run the gas station; hiring extra help so he could finish school and get his degree.

In the late 1930s the cracker box was replaced by a very Art Deco inspired building with a curved theme. It had a curved front and rolled edges along the top facing the street. I always liked the very 30’s modern stream-lined theme. David was granted a deferment from service in WWII so he kept on operating the gas station during the war years by mostly running the place himself. When the war ended, rationing let up and all the Vets came home, including his brother, Alex. David hired his brother, which certainly was necessary considering the uptick in business.

About the Mid-50s Alex took a job at the U in the physical plant department and shortly after that I began helping out on Saturdays. I worked a little during my high school years and when I started college I worked nights and weekends part time for a buck an hour. After college I took other fulltime employment, but by 1960 I was working fulltime back at the Station with my Father. In 1961 my brother, Keith finished his college stint. David had a health issue and decided to bow out and let his two sons take over. By then the freeway was gobbling up southeast land for right of way, including our home and Dad moved out to Coon Lake in Anoka County.

Keith and I ran the single bay 30’s shop until 1973 when AMOCO erected a two bay and car wash facility. They were pushing car washes at that time to increase gas sales. AMOCO never thought our station moved as much gas volume as they wanted.

During the gas shortages of the late 1970’s and 80’s the suits on high at AMOCO sent us a notice in November of ’82 stating we had to vacate in 120 days because they had a purchaser lined up to eliminate our location. We said, “What, 120 days to make over our lives?” When we asked why they didn’t offer the property to us they acted surprised by our request. At that time gas companies were allocating gas by fixed amounts to each location. We were using up gas available for more favored locations. We really were not wanted anymore. It took a lot of lobbying and negotiating to both, purchase the property and have AMOCO supply us with product for three years, which they legally had to do.

At the end of forcing them to supply us with product, gas was again easily available. We parted ways with AMOCO and became an independent dealer for Phillips 66. Life was really good from then on. During the 80’s with no self-service options, we had two pump islands and employed as many as eight part-time students.

When Keith and I partnered up we moved from a tire repair and oil change operation to tune ups and maintenance repairs, as well as self-service gas. That formula worked until 2001, the year I retired, which was the same year our gas dispensing infrastructure was retired. Refitting our small location with state of the art equipment and a canopy over the pumps was not economically feasible.

Keith’s son, Darrin had worked with us from the early 80’s and took over running the Station after I left. He took the repair operation up a few steps by replacing major components like engines and transmissions. Keith continued to work for Darrin until the property was purchased this past summer by Opus Corporation. The U of M

Mercil: Continued on Page 15
for many years thought our corner should have a higher use and they are finally getting it.

When David Mercil operated the station it was known as Mercil Standard Service. Under Keith and my operation it was Mercil Bros. and under Darrin it was Mercil Campus Auto, but the family always referred to it as The Station. Opus is constructing a building which will house retail on the ground level with student housing on the remaining floors. They plan to call their building The Station, which seems fitting; but probably only to us. Running a business always has its trials and challenges, but to have it as such a huge part of our family for my entire life has been a very rewarding and unifying element for the Mercil Clan.

Arlan Mercil
Class of ‘54

Mercil’s Station–
Editor’s Note: Mercil’s Station was an icon on the U of MN campus. Next to White Castle, it was where I blew up (as in overinflated) my bicycle tire on my first bike. Mercil’s was always there for four generations of the Hayes family.

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In 1957 Otto Lausten aka Moon Man Otto, Ron Andersen, dubbed Howdy Doody, and Bob Lerfald, given the name “Leefoot” by our drill sargeant, entered the U.S. Army. Ron was chosen to be our Group Leader, keeping a stern eye on us as we sojournd to Ft. Chaffee Arkansas. Frequently loosing track of his “squad” he later purchased a hat with the urgent message “I’m their group leader, which way did they go?”

A Man’s mind is like his car. If it gets to knocking too much, he’d better have it overhauled or change it.
Watch for the January, 2013 issue of MUHS Alumni News

It will be posted on January 1, 2013 at: www.ds.umn.edu

In the lower right corner select “John Marshall Alumni Newsletter”.

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