



# LETTERS

## Loyal to Sooner City

I'm sorry I did not receive the *Sooner Magazine* with the Sooner City article. The pictures [I am enclosing] are from Winter-Spring 1954 when I had a single pre-fab while in grad school...Pictures 1 and 2 are of the living room from the dining area. Picture 2 shows a bit of the bedroom to the left. Picture 3 is from that north/south street at the corner of the east/west street. I was on whatever street was the west boundary running north/south. I don't remember the number of the east/west street.

These prefabs were wonderful accommodations. The design was absolutely efficient, fully furnished. I can't remember the cost or whether it was monthly or [by] semester. Had to be cheap as I was living on a teaching assistant wage.

*John Stott, '50 ba  
Modesto, California*

## Redefining "Formal"

I was delighted to see the photo in the upper right hand corner page 3—postwar Sooner residents ["Letters," Fall 2007].

You bet we dressed "formally" when we went visiting friends in Sooner City. We wore our best pair of clean blue jeans just for such occasions.

My wife [Pearl] and I were residents of Sooner City—C-32—1948-1950 and loved every moment of it.

*Irv Trachtenberg, '50 journ  
Portland, Oregon*

## A Print Appeal

In reading my Winter 2008 issue of *Sooner Magazine*, I noticed in the "Letters" section that an alum had requested a print of the Centennial Mum Garden pictured in the Fall 2007 issue. I was disappointed to read that prints aren't available! It is a beautiful picture, and it made me homesick both for OU and for Oklahoma. I told my mother about the picture, and I promised to send it on to her so that she could enjoy it too, but in the end I decided to keep it for myself.

I would love to buy a copy of the print, and I think that OU could sell many copies of it to other Sooner alums too. The beauty of the mum garden, plus 100 years of statehood, make the print really special, and it is something that should be made available for sale.

Could you please forward my requests on to the proper authorities at OU so that perhaps they will consider issuing this in print and/or poster size in the future?

*Pam Landers, '81 bba  
Sherwood, Oregon*

## Missing a Wedding Ring?

I attended the 2001 OU national championship game in Miami. After the game, at Coach Stoops' private party, I found a wedding ring but was unable to find the owner. When I went to this year's University of Kansas game at the Orange Bowl, I was reminded of that ring I found years ago and still had.

Is there any chance you or one of your readers might have heard about this lost ring? I would like to get this ring back to its owner. Anyone who can identify this ring can contact me online at [davidredxcross@aol.com](mailto:davidredxcross@aol.com).

*David Cross  
Kansas City, Missouri*

## Calling KUVY

As I poured over the informative as well as entertaining article, "KGOU at 25" (Winter 2008), I pictured myself in a day and time when my hair was much darker and my body much lighter and the student owned and operated radio station at the University of Oklahoma I worked for had the call letters KUVY. Radio-speech professor Dr. Ansel Resler was our faculty sponsor and most of our staff were either speech, radio-speech or drama majors, who did everything from sell advertising to serving as disc jockeys for radio programs whose range was so narrow our friends often had to park their cars on the oval in front of Kauffman Hall in order to hear us dedicate songs to them!

After reading Susan Grossman's obviously well-researched article, I wondered at the fact that KUVY was not mentioned until I began to ask my many OU graduate friends if they remembered our won-

derful little radio station, which had a twenty-year run on the OU campus – and to a man and woman, every last one of them denied ever having heard those call letters!

So, thanks for the memories, KUVY, even if I do seem to be the only living person who has them!

*Molly Levite Griffis, '60 ba  
Norman, Oklahoma*

## More about the Pe-Et Elm Tree

*Sooner Magazine* readers concerned about the fate of the Pe-Et Elm, which was planted by OU's first president, David Ross Boyd, at the turn of the 20th century ["Postscript: Creating the Pe-Et Clock," Fall 2007], might be interested to learn the latest development in that ongoing story.

A sapling tree grown from cuttings of the Pe-Et Elm was planted on the OU campus this spring. Current and former members of Pe-Et joined President and Mrs. David Boren in the replanting ceremony on the North Oval in front of Carnegie Building.

The Pe-Et Elm, which was situated in front of Evans Hall for more than a century, was officially named by the Board of Regents in September 1936 in honor of the Pe-Et society. When the administration building, the predecessor to Evans Hall, was under construction, it was members of Pe-Et who preserved the tree by keeping it from being cut down to make way for construction progress.

After becoming increasingly weak and diseased, the Pe-Et Elm was removed in 2006. Prior to its removal, cuttings were taken from the tree and cultivated by Steve Bieberich of Sunshine Nursery and Arboretum in Clinton, Oklahoma, with the help of Allen King and Brandon Brookins in OU's landscape department. The seedling is now mature enough to be planted permanently on the North Oval near the location of the original elm.

And yes, Pe-Et members, the acrylic paperweights containing a chip from the tree are still on track to be mailed to you this summer.

*Blake Rambo, '05 bba, '08 mba  
Press Secretary to the President  
University of Oklahoma  
Norman, Oklahoma*

## OU's Medal of Honor Recipients

As OU alumnus John Martin Meek pursues the upgrading of Brig. Gen. Kenneth Taylor's Distinguished Service Cross to the Medal of Honor ["A Hero's Story," Winter 2008], *Sooner Magazine* readers might like to know about the University of Oklahoma's recipients of that prized commendation. These three World War II heroes are featured in an OU Western History Collections exhibit in Monnet Hall; their exploits are detailed below.

*John R. Lovett, '79 history,  
'85 m.lib.info studies*

*Interim Curator  
OU Western History Collections*



Maj. John Lucien Smith



Lt. Col. Leon R. Vance



Lt. Richard M. McCool Jr.

**Maj. John Lucien Smith**, OU Class of 1936 and a native of Lexington, began his career in the U.S. Marine Corps as an artillery officer, later transferring to Marine Aviation. At the age of 27, he was placed in command of fighting squadron VMF 223. Flying Grumman F4F Wildcats, he led his squadron to Guadalcanal in the South Pacific's Solomon Islands on August 20, 1942. The arrival of his fighters and Dauntless dive bombers provided the Marine ground forces with badly needed air support as they battled the Japanese for control of the island and the important air field located there. Smith and his fellow Marine flyers fought daily air battles against larger numbers of Japanese aircraft. On one combat sortie, Smith shot down two Japanese planes in less than two minutes. By the end of August 1942, Smith had downed five more to become an "ace." At one point in the air campaign, Smith's squadron was reduced to only five operational Wildcats. Along with Smith's fighter squadron, the other pilots of the dive bombers and torpedo bombers who provided air support to the Marine ground forces became known as the "Cactus Air Force." The commander of the U.S. fleet in the Pacific, Adm. Chester Nimitz, came to Guadalcanal to decorate Major Smith with the Navy Cross for his bravery. On October 9, 1942, Smith's exhausted, depleted squadron was replaced. Major Smith

shot down 19 Japanese aircraft during the battle for Guadalcanal, and after returning to the United States, he received the Medal of Honor from President Franklin D. Roosevelt in a White House ceremony. He achieved the rank of colonel before retiring from the Marines. He died in 1972 and is buried in Arlington National Cemetery.

**Lt. Col. Leon R. Vance**, a native of Enid, attended the University of Oklahoma for two years before receiving an appointment to the United States Military Academy at West Point. On June 5, 1944, the day before D-Day, Vance was the command pilot for a bomber mission over Wimeraux, France. Vance's B-24 bomber was hit by flak, killing the pilot. Several of the crew, including Vance, were badly injured. Vance took control, completed the mission, and thinking that another wounded crewman had been unable to jump from the plane, piloted the crippled B-24 back to the English coast, crash landing it into the water. A bomb stuck in the bomb-bay exploded when the plane hit, throwing Vance clear of the plane; he was picked up an hour later by air-sea rescue. After spending time in an English hospital, Vance was returning to the United States on a hospital aircraft, which was lost somewhere between Iceland and Newfoundland. His wife, Georgette Drury Vance, received his Medal of Honor. Vance Air Force

Base in Enid is named in his honor and memory.

**Lt. Richard M. McCool Jr.**, Class of 1941, and a native of Tishomingo, was 19 years old when he graduated from the University of Oklahoma and received an appointment to the United States Naval Academy. After graduating early from the Naval Academy, McCool was given command of U.S.S. LCS 122 (Landing Craft Support Ship), an amphibious craft with a crew of 70. By June 1945 his ship was off the coast of Okinawa when he directed it to the aid of a destroyer that had been hit by a Japanese kamikaze, rescuing its survivors. The following day a kamikaze crashed into McCool's LSC causing extensive damage. McCool, suffering chest wounds and burns, was knocked unconscious. When he came to, the LSC's conning tower was aflame. McCool managed to reach the main deck where he rallied his crew to fight the fire that threatened to engulf the ship. When it was reported that several men were trapped in the burning deckhouse, he went in to rescue them, carrying one to safety on his back despite his own injuries. He then continued to command his ship until the fire was under control. On December 18, 1945, McCool received the Medal of Honor from President Harry S. Truman. He ended his 30-year naval career as a captain. McCool died in March 2008.