



LETTERS

Tweaking Hangout Memories

In the Spring 1996 issue of the *Sooner Magazine*, my letter, occasioned by a previous article in the magazine about an auction of the Town Tavern furnishings, recalled my memories of the early days of the Town Tavern. In that regard I am going to slightly tweak the comments of a couple of other old Normanites which appeared in the Spring 2011 issue in response to the excellent previous article about the old hangouts.

I well remember the Teepee, a hangout on University Blvd. which had a fire when, I believe, the Fishburns were running it, and which later became Rickner's. Maude Whistler owned all of the property around there and the Campus Corner at that time. Two of her sons, Rex and Don, I think, built the Oklahoma grocery at the southwest corner of Lahoma and Lindsay. That was very important to my sisters, June and Carol, and me, because from our house at 715 Parsons it was an easy run. From then on they got all of our banana caramel and Holloways business, depriving the far away Brown Owl of our trade.

When Ralph and Helena Geist moved the Town Tavern from Buchanan St. to the Varsity Corner in 1937, they brought the Theta Special (not Burger) with them. That was several years before WWII. As I recall, the Theta Special was a very popular hamburger which included lettuce, mayonnaise, and a special tomato sauce invented by Mr. or Mrs. Geist. Sorority girls were welcome in the Town Tavern and flocked there with their dates during intermissions of the upstairs dance halls in the neighborhood. I was a curb-hop there when the Tavern opened, and worked inside and made deliveries later in my career there. Later Mr. Geist opened at least two Taverns in Oklahoma City. I filled in at the one on Eastern when Franklin Roosevelt came to Oklahoma City. I also occasionally filled in as a waiter at the Monterey, which, I believe, was originally built by the the owner of the Copper Kettle (a Mr. Hill?) and at Mrs. Fishburn's Tea Room as well as on-call soda jerk at McCools Drug Store on Classen.

The Bruce Goff house at the corner of Brooks and Chautauqua was being built while I passed there daily on my way to classes at OU, and I thought that it was an expensive joke. I was about as far behind the times as Goff was ahead of the times. My wife, Lydia Spencer Evans, OU ba speech, 1943, and I, are still cover to cover readers of the *Sooner Magazine*.

*Robert R. (Bob) Evans, '43 bsc
Lawrence, Kansas*

The Scoop on the Theta Burger

Jack Shakely ("Letters," Spring 2011, *Sooner Magazine*) was correct that the Theta Burger originated at the Town Tavern.

I had the distinct privilege of visiting with Mr. and Mrs. Ralph Geist in their home in Oklahoma City after I had purchased the Tavern. He told me the Theta story. Seems even though the sorority girls weren't allowed there at some period in its long history, the Greek houses kept his telephone lines busy ordering, and some girl from the Theta house was unable to get the words out fast enough to suit him, and so he told her "let's just call that the Theta burger." He said that he had numerous requests to name a burger for the other houses but that he did not want to be bothered naming others.

I also learned from him that the original Theta sauce was the bar-b-que recipe from Delores' Restaurant—which he acquired from the owners when they were located in Florida, before they established the very popular one in Oklahoma City.

Another factoid the WWII folks might find interesting: He hired Navy wives during the war to keep the young sailors stationed here in line.

*Bette Maffucci
Norman, Oklahoma*

ALW Show a Game Changer

I just read the fabulous article about our recent Andrew Lloyd Webber production, written by Lynette Lobban, in the Spring 2011 *Sooner Magazine*. I am a proud colleague of Rick Zielinski and Rich Taylor. The ALW show was so very important for our students and for each of the colleges represented. It elevates our standards and our awareness of the

real world, artistically and in the "professional" sense. This production was a life experience for students and faculty. It is our hope that it is the first of many more.

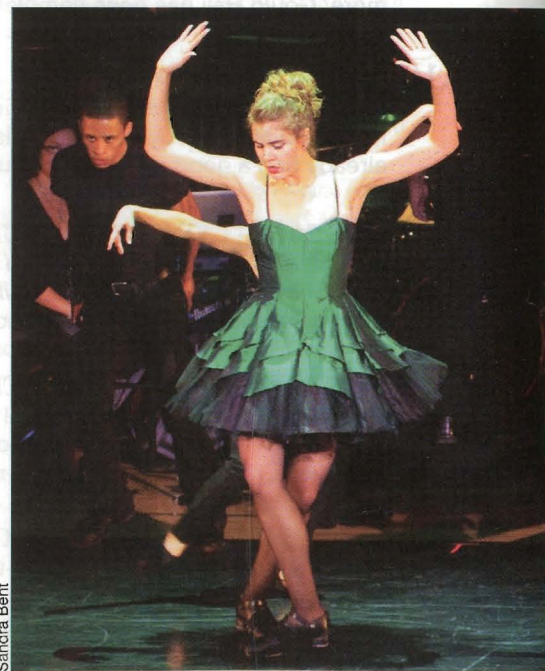
Please forward this to Ms. Lobban. Her article is one of the very best-written

"This production was a life experience for students and faculty. It is our hope that it is the first of many more."

arts-related articles I've ever read. Not only do I applaud her "take" on the whole enterprise, it was extremely well crafted.

Kudos to all.

*Karl Sievers, Professor
OU School of Music
Norman, Oklahoma*



OU's production of "The Music of Andrew Lloyd Webber" was simply fabulous.

Name Correction

My wife and I really enjoy "our" magazine. The article and all it contained in "The Music of Andrew Lloyd Webber" was good. However, you refer to Sarah

Brighton when she is Sarah Brightman.

Wish we were closer to enjoy the performing arts production. First class, I would say.

*Bill Hubbard, '66 eng
Seaford, Delaware*

The OU/Mayan Experiences

Thank you again for another wonderful *Sooner Magazine* for winter 2011. After reading your "Prologue" to alumni memories, so many of them came flooding back to me! How much I appreciate those unique, classy places, not only not forgotten but how much they completed our experiences at OU. Like Pat Benatar at the Boomer, Liberty D's, VZD's [in] OKC, as I still have my "Hoops" matchbox. It is true, "traditions are essential to a true hangout." Thank you for reminding me of that.

After I graduated from nursing school in '82, my boyfriend (now husband of 25 yrs.) and I took a trip to Cozumel and after two long days of convincing him, we went to see Chichen Itza. He was soon smitten like I was at this amazing civilization. We took *many* pictures of the many wonders of this place, some that have not been unearthed yet, the jaguar throne with the jade inlaid spots, climbing up those many steps. It is truly like nothing until you see it in person. We still to this day have been well read on the Mayan culture.

*Karen Mansour Barton, '79 ba, '82 bsn
David Barton, '79 ba
Richardson, Texas*

A Sea by Any Other Name

I loved my time at OU and usually read the *Sooner Magazine* with pride. I also sometimes have to defend my alma mater's academic standards to Michigianians who perceive the school as a possibly sub-standard remote outpost of civilization.

How can I continue to hold up my head since reading in the Winter edition that you think Mexico is located somewhere on the Mediterranean Sea? (photo caption p. 14)

Yours in hopes of higher editorial standards.

*Beverly Baker Folz, '56 journ
Portage, Michigan*

Memorial Day Musings at OU-Tulsa

By Harvey Blumenthal

What is now the University of Oklahoma School of Community Medicine opened in 1974, and I was invited to become the Vice-Head of Neurology and to steer neurological education. It was an honor and a labor of love to mentor the many students and residents who rotated through our Neurology Service at Saint Francis Hospital for almost 30 years, until I left private practice in December 2004.

I have continued to participate in the education of the young doctors in training, and it has been immensely satisfying and a privilege to be among the students and residents, young men and women who are eager to learn and who are committed to our healing profession.

It is not hyperbole to say that I am energized and uplifted every time I enter the Schusterman Center. I am proud to be part of something bigger than myself and to be embedded in the tradition and continuity of the University of Oklahoma College of Medicine.

These feelings are underscored every day when I look at the photographs that line the hallways of the Schusterman Center: photos of students in front of the first building on the OU campus in 1893; a 1920 photo of Lynn Riggs, very dapper in coat and tie, and wearing a homburg hat; Will Rogers with OU President William Bizzell at a 1911 visit to the Norman campus; and student nurses enjoying a Coke between classes in 1952.

But my favorite photo is labeled, "Nurse showing a new father his baby, University Hospital, 1941." We see the new father through the window of the nursery; the good-looking young man has dark, wavy hair, is wearing a coat and tie, and has an expression of wonder on his countenance as he gazes at his newborn child, safely cradled in the arms of a nurse wearing mask and gown.

This photo probably was taken shortly before Dec. 7, 1941, and I could not help but think there is a good chance this young fellow was one of the 10 million young Americans just like him who put their personal lives on hold while they served our country in World War II.



OU Western History Collections

A nurse shows a new father his baby at University Hospital in 1941.

Now, on Memorial Day, we wonder, did he race up Omaha Beach on D-Day? Did he serve on a gun mount on a battleship in the Pacific? Perhaps he was a bombardier in a B-17 and dropped a payload over Berlin. Did he come through the war unscathed? Was he able to complete his studies at OU? What was his life's work? Was his a happy marriage? Did he live out his years in Oklahoma?

And what of his child? Somehow, I hope it was a girl, and I hope her father was able to be there for her at a dads-and-daughters event in junior high, and to later give the bride away at her wedding. Born in 1941, at this writing, in 2010, she would be going on 69 years old, a grandma herself now.

What if, God forbid, in her later years, she developed breast cancer, ischemic heart disease or leukemia? Just think of all the wondrous therapeutic interventions we have available to help her, treatment that could not even be imagined in 1941.

And perhaps, or I would like to think, some of her doctors had been students under my tutelage at the OU College of Medicine.

Editor's Note: This Memorial Day essay by Harvey Blumenthal, M.D., was published originally in the Tulsa World on May 29, 2010. Blumenthal was in private practice in Tulsa from 1972-2004. He has been a volunteer faculty member at the University of Oklahoma College of Medicine since 1976 and continues to teach medical students and residents about neurology.