

School Board Member Lou Panizzon's Speech

Welcome to all. I have been asked to make some comments about the history of this school /community athletic site and to mention some of the names and events that make it a special place.

Since 1914 this venue has been a place where Carpinterians from all walks of life, young and old, male and female, spectators, and participants have come together to celebrate as a community some of the best things in life – good sportsmanship, camaraderie, competition, strength, good health and just plain fun.

The layout of the school has stayed very much the way it is today. Originally the school site was bounded by the Old Coast Highway, now Carpinteria Avenue, to the north, Oak Avenue and Palm Avenue ran along its Eastern and Western borders respectively. Eighth Street has always been its Southern flank.

The first Russell Cup Track and Field Meet was held here in 1914. The 69th edition of the Russell Cup in 1988 was the last meet held at this site.

The facility saw major work done in 1929 when a new quarter-mile track was built. I am told that they did not have enough space for the 220 yard dash, which was run on a straight away, so they brought in dirt to extend the track out to Palm Avenue. In 1929, Graham Hollister of Cate School won the Russell Cup 220 yard dash in a meet record time of 21.2 seconds. For your information, the winning time in the 1928 Olympic 200 meters was 21.8 seconds. In 1949 when the track was surveyed for reconstruction, it was discovered that a five foot drop existed from the start to the finish of the 220 and his record was dropped.

The first Carpinteria High School Warrior football team came to be in 1928 because of the leadership of the high school principal, Jesse M. Hawley. Nelson "Tuffy" Treloar scored the first touchdown for the '28 Warriors. On May 14, 1930 the football field was named Hawley Field in honor of the school Principal. Here today to help celebrate this occasion is the last remaining member of the first team, Tom Ota. Other members of the team included Francis "Fritz" Hebel, who was shot down over Pearl Harbor on December 7, 1941 becoming one of the first casualties of the war, Dennison

Baylor who later became principal of CHS and the first Principal of Dos Pueblos High School. The team manager was Robert Rockwell, the first Carpinteria High Harvard University graduate. He later became the first President of College of the Canyons located in Canyon Country.

Some consider the 1930s as the “Golden Age of Warrior Athletics.” One of the best was Hall of Famer Jim Peterson, winner of 10 varsity letters and the state’s best pole vaulter, was killed in Belgium in 1944, Walt Kendrick, Dale Schuyler, CIF Champion in the 1320 in 1934, Ralph Woods, State Champ in the 880 yd run in 1935 and Philip Bates, Phil Olds, Southern California Baseball Palyer of the year in 1938, and Peter Franco, CIF Champion in the 1320 in 1936. Peter’s submarine, the USS Seawolf, with a crew of 102, was lost at sea on October 3, 1944.

On November 4, 1949 Carpinteria High School played its first night game on newly renovated Memorial Field (defeated Nordhoff H.S. 20 to 0). The new field was constructed through the efforts of volunteers, one of which was Tom’s brother Kenji Ota, and the sponsorship of the Veterans of Foreign Wars Post No. 5656 and the Howland Shaw Russell Post No. 62 of the American Legion. Here today is Joe Wullbrant, another of those volunteers who did structural welding on the light poles. The field was dedicated on Memorial Day May 30, 1950 as a living Memorial to those who gave their lives in the service of their country. Lester Kohler, retired Carpinteria Unified School employee, was part of the solemn ceremony. The Carpinteria Athletic Boosters Club under the leadership of Fred Lemere in 1977 new lights went up on the same poles that Joe worked on. Later a new set of bleachers through the efforts of Rich Medel. On November 6, 1998 the Field was officially closed with a brief but moving ceremony.

The Russell Cup and this facility, in its different configurations, saw six USA Olympians show case their talent. Clarence “Bud Houser of Oxnard (Gold Medals in SP and Discus in 1924 and the Discus in 1928, Nick Carter of Lompoc and longtime Track coach at UCSB, Mike Larrabee of Ventura (Gold Medals in 1964 in the 400 m relay and the open 400 ms.) and Dave Laut of Santa Clara High School in 1984 with a Bronze Medal in the SP. Frank Wykoff, who competed in the 1928, 1932, and 1936 Olympics and was the Principal of Main School in the 1940’s ran in exhibition races. Twenty eight athletes who competed in this facility in the RC became state champions in track and field, including Carpinteria High Athletes Ralph

Wood, 1935 -880 yard run; Tom Grewe, 1982 -1600 meters and Coley Candaele, 1990 -1600 meters.

Since Memorial Field hosted the CIF Track and Field quarterfinals in 1951, '53, '54, '58 and '61 and the semi-finals in 1952 and '54 many more unnamed Olympians and State Champs ran, jumped and threw on these grounds.

Mayor Gregg Carty ran on the track and is still listed in the Warrior Red book for the 8th best time in the 400 meters and the 12th best time in the 800 meter run,

One of the major events that drew a large and enthusiastic crowd was the Warriors football team's first CIF Championship. The night of December 12, 1975 provided the home town fans with great excitement and what is good about small town sports. The fans stormed the field and took down the goals posts, a large portion of which ended up in the Palms Hotel. I think Lester Kohler still has a larger piece of the goals, which I am sure you can still get a piece of at a reasonable price.

This setting has been used for rugby scrums, football, track and field, P.E. classes, graduation ceremonies, night soft ball, baseball games, youth sports of every type, soccer, circuses, the Lion Club Carnival, and many a New Year's Day touch football game. As I said at the start, it is a special place that has just been plain fun for so many.

We are here today to celebrate the opening of this multi-use facility that will provide joy and healthy competition for many years to come. Let us never forget for whom these play areas were originally dedicated and for what reasons. Let us give thanks and appreciation to all those who helped this facility to become a reality.