

# Once a Knight, Always a Knight

#6 • April 2007

## *Knight Lore : Interesting facts about our history*

- As Downey entered its second year in September 1952, Mrs. Ruth Ferguson, school librarian, noted that over 1,000 books had been added to the library over the summer. While most of those were fiction, two series of reference materials also were added: the 50-volume Harvard Classics and the Chronicles of America, the latter published by the Yale University Press and recommended for background material on American history. Besides inviting and encouraging students to use the library for quiet study, reference work and free reading, the library staff also offered for-credit classes to students interested in library work.
- As Downey grew in 1952 with the addition of the junior year, ten rooms of new furniture--including teachers' desks of a new design--were ordered to fill out the classrooms, a new social studies wing [today's 70 wing between Coffee Road and the main hall] was under construction, and three bungalows were added to the campus. First aid and drivers' education were taught in one, one was used for a print shop, and the third was designated for P.E. instruction. Also, many new courses were added to the existing curricula, including American literature, modern literature, remedial composition, second year journalism, public speaking, dramatics, advanced algebra, American history, shorthand, vocational bookkeeping, retailing, chemistry, general shop, printing, general auto mechanics, electricity, auto mechanics (two-hour block for juniors), wood shop (two-hour block for juniors), figure drawing, applied art, homemaking, tailoring, third year foreign language courses, and junior year ag.
- For the first few years, Room 56 served as the choir room.
- A sample of '50's humor from the *Knights' Herald*: "It seems Mrs. Inez Lemmon, home ec teacher, has a dog which



Girls' Drill Team (1954)

she named Heinz, but not because he is a German Shepherd. As a matter of fact she had such a time trying to find out just what breed or breeds the dog was that she named him that because it was decided he consisted of 57 varieties.”

- The forerunner of what later became the Downey Student Senate appeared first in September 1952. Because the student body officers wished to hear the voice of the entire student body, they arranged for students to represent each advisory period. From advisories that contained both males and females and had over 20 enrolled, one male and one female representative were selected. When the advisory was all male or female, two members were selected--both male or both female, as appropriate--and when the advisory had less than 20, only one person was chosen. Representatives attended weekly meetings, learned information about student body affairs, shared those ideas with their advisories, elicited student response, then met together to discuss and decide on the issues.
- The Downey PTA sponsored a rummage sale in 1952 to benefit the student body. Contributions were accepted in Room 3 and at Sanders Appliance on McHenry Avenue. In addition, students attending the first dance of the year--“Rummage Rumba,” held after the Modesto High football game--received a 70% reduction in the price of admission (15 cents instead of 50 cents) if they contributed rummage and pre-purchased their tickets. The rummage sale, held in downtown Modesto, netted \$400, with the rummage left over being given to the Salvation Army.
- Four new assistant yell leaders were added that same year at the end of the first month of school. A system was established to include the assistants in yell routines at athletic events.
- The Downey cafeteria opened for the first time on October 22, 1952, serving *a la carte* lunches during both lunch periods. The menu featured a selection of salads, sandwiches, hot dishes and desserts, and the cafeteria manager was investigating the possibility of offering a plate lunch which might be less expensive. A junior art student, Nancy Young, created drawings for the panels in the cafeteria windows, making pixie figures relating to sports and other campus activities. The cafeteria interior was decorated in a blue and white color scheme.
- The Downey chapter of the California Scholarship Federation was organized in 1952 after being a branch of the Modesto High chapter in 1951. Asineth Mellis, Dorothy Shuler and Hazel Gotshall were co-advisors, and Larry Stewart was elected president by the club’s charter members.



Ed Kidwell grinding valves in  
Advanced Auto Mechanics (1966-7)



Barry Smith delivering funeral oration  
for Percy Panther (1969-70)

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## *Knight Lore: Whatever happened to. . .?*

- **Craig Howard**, '77, lives in Sacramento and teaches Theatre Arts at Sheldon High School's ARTSwork Academy. He is proud to be part of the internationally recognized program that has performed twice at the International Fringe Festival in Edinburgh, Scotland and has been awarded many times at the Sacramento Elly Awards. Craig was honored by the California Educational Theatre Association as its "New Theatre Teacher" in 2000. A CSU Stanislaus alumnus with a B.A. in Accounting, he worked on his MFA in Musical Theatre at UC Irvine. After a short career as an accountant with Dunker and Aced, CPAs, in Modesto, Craig pursued a career as an actor/singer/dancer in theme parks, cruise ships, and regional, summer stock, and off off (way off) Broadway theatre. After leaving New York, he found himself back in Modesto, where he guest directed several Downey drama and music productions with his friends and mentors, Karen Lotko and Polly Vasché. Craig still pursues his love of the stage by performing locally every chance he gets.
- **Lisa Metge-Egan**, '79, serves as Visiting Lecturer in English at Brown University in Providence, RI; her husband is a colleague in the same department. A 1984 graduate of San Francisco State University, she earned certification in Teaching, College Composition and Reading from SFSU in 1987 and an M.A. in English Literature from SFSU in 1994. Lisa has a wide variety of research interests, one of the most recent being multimedia proofreading instruction, has co-authored two editions of *Sentence-Combining Workbook*, and has been a member of the Rhode Island Adult Education Standards Team. She lectured in composition and mentored graduate students at SFSU for eight years and led adult education, literacy and welfare-to-work programs for five years. While at Downey, Lisa was the first Knight female swimmer to final at a section meet, doing so in the 50-100 freestyle.
- **Brad Brink**, '83, a second-grade teacher at Carroll Fowler Elementary School in Ceres, dons his San Francisco Giants uniform every year during Career Day on campus and speaks to students about his experiences as a major league pitcher and about them keeping focused on their education. A first-round draft pick from USC in 1986, he played for the Philadelphia Phillies, was traded to the Giants in the mid-1990s, and retired as a player with the Oakland Athletics in 1986 after his third shoulder surgery. After his active playing career ended, Brad worked for several years for a high-powered agency as a sports agent, representing Giants players Matt Williams and Will Clark. Eventually, however, he became passionate about teaching, having enjoyed visiting schools as an active player and reading to and speaking with students, so he returned to Southern California and Chapman University to earn his teaching credential. Brad has been featured in the *Modesto Bee's* "Class Acts" column, loves the challenge of working with kids who may not like to be in school, and is open to eventually coaching a high school baseball team.
- **Debra Beard Turner**, '82, met her future husband, Charles, while attending CSU Stanislaus and studying for a degree in English Literature. Hired by Compass Maps, Inc., of Modesto in 1985 as a publishing intern, she has worked for the firm for 22 years and is currently employed as its Marketing Director. The mother of two sons, Debra spends her spare time working on political campaigns and with local non-profits, raising money for student scholarships. She is Past President of both Sunrise Soroptimist of Modesto and the regional district of the International Association of Printing House Craftsmen, serves on the boards of the Waterford Historical Society and Waterford Heritage Day Committee, and belongs to the Waterford High School Booster Club.



Craig Howard



Lisa Metge-Egan



Brad Brink



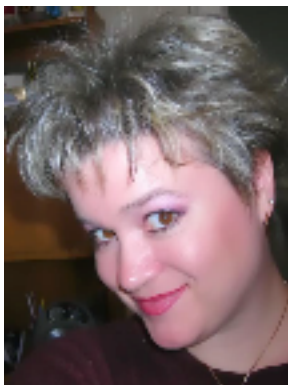
Debra Turner

- Jeff Moorad**, '73, one of the most recognizable names in professional sports, brought over 20 years of sports management experience to baseball's Arizona Diamondbacks when he was approved by the Office of the Commissioner as a General Partner of that franchise in August 2004. He earned an A.A. degree from Modesto Junior College in 1976, where he served as Student Body President, a B.A. in Political Science in 1978 from UCLA, then his J.D. from the Villanova University School of Law in 1981. The founder and former President and CEO of Moorad Sports Management, Jeff began specializing in athlete representation, specifically Major League Baseball, two years later and quickly earned a reputation as both a knowledgeable and a respected negotiator for players such as Will Clark and Matt Williams. For eighteen years, beginning in 1985, he partnered with Leigh Steinberg to form one of the most dynamic twosomes in the history of sports representation, negotiating over \$3 billion in athlete contracts for major league baseball and football stars, including Steve Young and Troy Aikman, and representing more than 40 first-round selections from baseball's annual First Player Draft. Jeff also guided Moorad Sports Management into a variety of sports ventures, publishing projects and charitable community projects. While sports representation occupied the majority of his professional time, it also led to work in the entertainment field: he has consulted and appeared in major motion picture projects involving sports. Jeff was the baseball technical consultant for the Universal motion picture *For Love of the Game* and had a cameo appearance in the movie, and he and former partner Steinberg both appeared in and served as technical consultants to director Cameron Crowe in the 1996 Oscar-winning picture *Jerry Maguire*. He and his wife, Jan, have three sons and now divide their time, residing both in Arizona's Valley of the Sun and Newport Beach, CA.
- DeAna Beekman Solioz**, '85, travelled to the southern part of Switzerland immediately following high school graduation to live for one year with her exchange student's family in Sierre. (In 1983 DeAna and her family had hosted Christian Zufferey, an AFS student from the French-speaking part of Switzerland.) It was there that she met Christian's cousin, André, the love of her life and future husband, and brought him back with her to Modesto the following year. DeAna went to Modesto Junior College for two years, earned her A.A. degree, then continued on at CSU Stanislaus for two more years to complete her Bachelor of Arts in Music Education. After a year of substitute teaching she became pregnant and moved to Crans-Montana, Switzerland, in 1991 with André to take over management of three restaurants located on the ski slopes. While André ran the restaurants, which employed a combined staff of sixteen, DeAna began directing a church choir but also became pregnant two more times. In 1996 the family moved to Nendaz to run an upscale restaurant, returning to Sierre two years later to manage a pub/café/restaurant. They live above it to this day, and their three sons, ages 15, 13 and 11, are doing very well, along with their beloved Boston Terrier. DeAna retired from directing her Catholic church choir in 2005, but is singing with a local choir and helping the director by directing separate rehearsals and masses. She also works down in the restaurant serving customers, and is very, very happy--and loving life immensely!
- K. Dirk Bondy**, '83, is President of Seneca Structural Engineering, Inc. in Laguna Hills. A practicing engineer since 1989, he earned a B.S. in Architectural Engineering from Cal Poly, San Luis Obispo, and an M.S. in Structural Engineering from UC Berkeley, and is an expert in post-tensioned and reinforced concrete, steel, seismic design and seismic retrofit. Dirk worked for a large structural engineering firm in Orange County for over seven years before starting his own company ten years ago. In 2001 he also formed a contracting company specializing in the retrofit of old buildings and using external post-tensioning. Dirk has been an instructor at UC Irvine and Cal Poly, Pomona, teaching courses on pre-stressed concrete design, steel design, structural design and seismic design, and also has been published in numerous journals and conference proceedings. He is registered as a Civil and Structural Engineer in California, Nevada and Hawaii, belongs to the Post-Tensioning Institute, is an associate member of the American Concrete Institute's Prestressed Concrete Subcommittee, and is a former board director of the Structural Engineers Association of Southern California. Married since 1992, and proud father of three beautiful three children, Dirk manages his older son's Little League team and helps coach his younger son's Little League team.
- Paula Zagaris Leffler**, '74, is Vice President and Chief Financial Officer of family-run Real Estate in Modesto and President of Liberty Property Management, a division of PMZ. She earned her B.A. in Economics at UC Berkeley, is an M.B.A. graduate of CSU Stanislaus, and has over 25 years' experience in real estate and financial administrative management. Paula is a new member of the CSU Stanislaus Foundation Board of Directors and was recently elected Treasurer of the Memorial Hospital Foundation. Married to fellow Golden Bear Duke Leffler, who is in charge of PMZ's commercial real estate sales, she has an array of personal interests, including traveling, skiing, cooking, reading, enjoying family, and playing with her demanding Jack Russell Terrier.

You can play an important role in helping us provide updated news about Downey alumni. If you have kept in touch with fellow classmates or other TDHS grads, just let us know how to contact them, preferably via e-mail--we'll do the rest! Send the information to <[jbvasche@gmail.com](mailto:jbvasche@gmail.com)>. Thanks in advance for your help.



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