AN INFORMAL HISTORY OF VICTOR VALLEY COLLEGE

1960 - 1987

BY

ALEX RUDOFF and POLLY FITCH
INTRODUCTION

This informal history highlights some of the events of the past 26 years. The history contains extracts from the informal reminiscences that were written by Ms. Polly Fitch, and much of the early organizational material is taken from official board minutes and accreditation reports. This informal history reflects the work of hundreds of people who have contributed to Victor Valley College bringing it to its present eminence in higher education.
1960 was the year of decision for the people and students of the Victor Valley. Isolated from the main population center of San Bernardino by narrow roads and a one and a half hour driving time, the small residential population living in the Victor Valley decided it was time to act. The people felt the need to provide higher education program to the graduates of Victor Valley High School and for other students in surrounding areas served by the high school district. As early as 1950 a move to annex the Victor Valley High School District to the San Bernardino Valley Junior College district was discussed and rejected by a committee formed by the Victorville Chamber of Commerce, and the Board of Trustees of the Victor Valley Union High School District.

In 1956, prior to the establishment of the Victor Valley College District, San Bernardino Valley College offered to give extended day classes at George Air Force Base. These courses were continued on the base until 1958 when, by contract agreement with the Victor Valley Union High School District, classes for all valley residents were conducted in the evening at Victor Valley High School. As time went on a comparatively large enrollment developed for these classes.

In 1959 the Victor Valley Chamber of Commerce became interested in the development of a junior college program, and the high school district was encouraged to investigate the possibility of the establishment of a junior college district. Approval for the formation of a junior college district was given by the State Board of Education in September of 1959. On February 2, 1960 an election was held and the Victor Valley Junior College District was formed by a large and decisive vote.
ORGANIZATION OF THE VICTOR VALLEY COLLEGE DISTRICT

The first board of trustees organizational meeting took place on March 7, 1960. The meeting was called to order by the president of the Board of Trustees of the Victor Valley Union High School District, Mr. Oren C. Robertson. The other board members present were Mr. Henry M. Johnson, William B. Casebeer, Virgil Dilsaver, and John M. Sauer. Mr. Roy C. Hill, then County Superintendent of Schools, was present and he proceeded with administering the oath of office to the above-named persons who comprised the Board of Trustees of the newly formed junior college district. Mr. Oren C. Robertson was selected as the first president of the junior college board of trustees and Mr. Henry M. Johnson was elected the secretary of the board. The board then went on to elect Dr. Hyram W. Loutenscock as the first superintendent of the junior college district. A motion was passed by the board that the new junior college district was to be known as the Victor Valley Junior College District. After further discussion it was decided that the name junior should be dropped from the college title and changed to Victor Valley College. Further discussion at the first meeting centered on the possible location of the college. It was suggested that they start by offering the possibility of moving the junior college to a completely separate site, but it was felt that this was premature at the time.

At the second board meeting of the new community college district, held on April 19, 1960, a lengthy discussion concerning the initial location of the junior college, the selection of a site, and a review of the possible source of financing for the district. After reviewing some suggestions supplied by Consultant Dr. Hugh Price, Chief of the State Department of Education, Bureau of Junior College Education, it was felt by the board members that it would be desirable to eventually have a separate campus, but because of the small size of anticipated enrollment it would be best to start the junior college somewhere on the high school site, and conduct a majority of the classes on an extended day basis. The board then passed a motion to establish the initial campus on the Victor Valley High School site, and administration proceeded to develop plans to hold classes there. At the September 20,
meeting, agreements were signed between the college district and the high school. The high school district was to provide the necessary administrative support services and the use of the high school facilities to teach college classes. Classes were to be organized in two time blocks, one group going from 3-7pm and another series going from 7-10pm.

At the June 13, 1961 board meeting Ms. Geraldine Bergen was selected as the college librarian. The director, Mr. Fred Berger indicated to the board what classes would be part of the adult education program and what would be under the college program. The board also established graduation requirements for the degree in associate of arts and listed the subject requirements in physical education, English and Speech, U.S. History and government, health education and a recommendation to transfer students to follow the freshman and sophomore programs of the colleges they plan to attend.

At the July 11, 1961 board meeting a new election for the board of trustee had been held, and at that time Mr. Robert Graves joined the board. At this same meeting Dr. Hyram Loutensock announced that he was resigning as superintendent of the district to take a job in the Los Angeles area. The board accepted his letter of resignation and instituted a search for a new superintendent, and Mr. Harvey Irwin was chosen as superintendent for both the high school district and the new college district.
AN ANECGDOTAL HISTORY OF

VICTOR VALLEY COLLEGE

BY

P. Fitch

THE COLLEGE STARTS

In 1961, there was one high school in this part of the high desert, Victor Valley High School in Victorville. It was bulging with students and needed more classrooms. So, the blueprint was that the college would start on the high school campus, with administration in a new classroom building that would - when the college had its own campus - serve school classes.

College classes were to be from 3-10 p.m. in the high school classrooms. Faculty offices and a modest snack bar were part of the new building. Seeing all faculty every day was an enriching experience but finding privacy for conference with students was impossible; only slight partitions separated one office from another.

The classrooms were all over campus but all had two things in common: 1) a clock tied to the master clock, which made each clock click every minute. Students never forgot what time it was. 2) A "wetch box" over which announcements could be made or any class activity listened to. Some faculty became more than irate when late high school announcements interrupted their classes.

My late afternoon and evening classes were in the P.E. classroom adjacent to the gym. That room had two added distinctions: 1) the air vent connected to the men's locker room, which kept me up on all the latest obscenities 2) the swimming pool was right outside. I still vividly remember the challenge of keeping a speech class motivated while a swim coach was screaming "Getcher buttup!" right outside.

Someone recently mused "I wonder what the first faculty meeting was like?" I can partially answer that question. The meeting was in the small library which was also in the "administration building". Aside from mechanical details, two emphatic points were made. One was that many in the community worked hard to get the votes needed to start the college. No group worked as hard as the A.A.U.W. This point also included the fact that the community was promised the college would never go into debt; "pay-as-you-go" was a hard and fast rule. Thank heavens, it still is.

The second point was that generations of desert residents had gone to high school on that campus. We were to be as strict and tough as was necessary to make students up to college level work, even in the same old place. The two first-year students I still hear from assure me that I was terrifying to them in my attempt to deliver "college level" work.

The library has been mentioned. When its books started arriving, a problem was discovered at the joint h.s./college warehouse. Some worker there became a censor. He browsed through the Dictionary of American Slang and was so shocked by what he found that he raised local hell. The librarian discreetly kept the book out of sight for three years, shelving it openly only after the college moved to its own campus.
Community support in September of '61 was very encouraging. Keith Gunn, the high school principal, was marvelously warm and welcoming. He arranged a coffee and donuts meeting between high school and college faculty that sort of broke the ice—if it existed. Shortly after that, a reception occurred at the Kemper-Cambell Ranch that also helped the college staff to feel part of the community.

Continuing with her informal history of the college, Ms. Fitch describes the first year students who enrolled in September of 1961. They were almost all solidly June high school graduates. Mature or older students began enrolling in the college during the second year. Ms. Fitch indicated that Mr. Burt Wadsworth, Dean of Students, was very active in organizing college activities, setting up ASB Government, and other student process of education. She went on to say the VVC's first graduation was held at the Hesperia Country Club, where Mrs. Kemper Campbell was the first commencement speaker. The students had a steak dinner, following by the awarding of degrees. The next two to five years, similar type graduations were held at private locations, and all students dressed in their finest street clothes. The first faculty issue, according to Ms. Fitch, was over the question of academic regalia for graduation. Finally, by 1968, it was voted that the student and faculty would appear in caps and gowns.

COLLEGE SITE SELECTED

The board of trustee minutes of August 28, 1962 reveals that a resolution was passed in which the board and college district agreed to purchase a portion of the Kalin Ranch to be used as a separate junior college site. The original purchase price for the approximately 230 acres was $225,000 which did not include the wells or the concrete pipeline. An additional sum was allocated so that the final purchase price was $245,000 which covered the wells and pipeline. This resolution was approved in August of 1962, and the location, along Bear Valley Road was chosen because it was equally distant from the three large communities of Victorville, Hesperia and Apple Valley. The board indicated they would be working with the architect and superintendent, Mr. Harvey Irwin to develop a master plan for the college site. The
necessary state, community college and county officials were contacted and working with the college administrators and architect to do further planning for college buildings. One of the early agenda items that appeared throughout the first few years of the board minutes was the question of leasing of the alfalfa fields on the campus site, this land had been leased to farmers in the past. Over the next few years the board had a number of agenda items in which they discussed the leasing arrangements of the fields to various individuals and companies who wanted to continue growing alfalfa on the site.

As has occurred in recent history, the November 13 board minutes of 1962 reveal a detailed discussion on the problems of VVC going into a full schedule of intercollegiate athletics. They reviewed the problems and issues of tackle football and estimated that for the college to start the program - the cost would be about seven thousand dollars, and a study was undertaken at that time to review the role and importance of intercollegiate athletics at VVC.

The board minutes of May 19, 1964 revealed a resolution to spend the additional $2,000,000 of the $2,500,000 bond issue to build the college buildings that had been held on March 1962 and was passed by the local voters. The bond sale was authorized and bids were received.

The May 19, 1964 board of trustee minutes revealed that the college board approved the low bidder for the construction of the campus for the amount of $2,262,000 and the plans were put into operation to start building the permanent building on campus.

Returning to Ms. Fitch's informal history of the college, she describes the building of the original five building which were the administration, business, library, science and gym and by August of '65 when the initial construction had not been completed it was decided to go ahead anyway and begin moving into the buildings so classes could be held on the new campus site starting in Sept of 1965. All during the opening of the first semester of school at the college various types of workmen were coming in to complete portions of the building project and there were some real problems in construction of what was then called the women's gym because the use of
pre-stressed concrete structures and having the necessary equipment and cranes to put
it into place and the gym was not finished until November of '65. The gym was
further refined to be able to handle various types of student plays and programs.
The first play to appear in the gym was "All My Sons" in December of 1965, and "Guys
and Dolls" was the first on-campus musical which was presented in the gym in May of
1966. After the initial phase of construction the override tax was passed by the
voters of the Victor Valley which increased the tax rate to a sufficient dollar
amount to allow for additional buildings. During 1967 the music building was
completed and the art building was finished in 1970 and the aeronautics and
automotive shop buildings were also constructed in the spring of 1970, and some
additional storage buildings were established for maintenance on campus and a storage
shed for the drama and physical education.

Ms. Fitch goes on to discuss the early days of student life on campus where she
served as the ASB advisor and indicated there were such organizations as Associated
Women Students which held a number of membership teas and other activities for the
women and occasional dinner dances were held to celebrate the different school and
community holidays. These parties were held at places like the AV Inn, and Hesperia
Country Club. Further in her history (pg 4) she goes on and talks about changes in
student interest.

STUDENT INTERESTS CHANGED

Thank heaven, students are always changing and the mid-60's were no
exception. The teas, the finger sandwiches and the incense went away.
Dinner dances shrank to one or two a year. But, special interest clubs were
legion, bringing a need for an Inter-Club Council, whose job it was to
coordinate all club activities so they did not overlap and thus kill each
other. At one time, ICC had representatives from 18 clubs. They ranged
from Delta Psi Omega (a national, honorary dramatic fraternity) to Ski Club.

When football came to VVC, so did imported players, pep rallies and
homecomings. The cheerleaders became vital. (Soccer players did what they
could with no support organization and at one time beat UCLA to become
California State soccer champions.) Cheerleaders evolved to where ASB paid
their way to camps to learn how to lead cheers.
At the board meeting on February 14, 1961 the board finally passed the motion that the college should be named the Victor Valley Junior College, and this became the first formal name of the college. At this same meeting architect Howard Mordridge presented proposals for housing the junior college center at the high school site. They recommended taking over the present agricultural shop, the use of temporary bungalows, and modifying some new high school buildings that were then under construction. Mr. Fred Berger presented a tentative organization chart for the junior college which showed him as Director of the college and recommended the appointment of an assistant to be known as Dean of Students. They felt that at the time a Dean of Instruction would not be necessary while the college was so small. Also Mr. Berger had developed a brochure to be distributed among high school graduates to describe the programs of the new college. The estimates were that a hundred and fifty full-time students would be enrolled in the fall of 1961, along with the current part-time enrollment of 300 adults and another 400 students from the high school evening programs.

COURSES AND STAFF SELECTION

Mr. Berger indicated that approximately 15 staff members would be needed to service the students. At the February 14, 1961 meeting, the board discussed a list of tentative course offerings for the fall of 1961. It included English 1A and 1B, English 46A and B, Survey of English Literature, English 51, Reading for Comprehension, English 52, writing fundamentals, journalism, library science, and speech. Foreign languages included French, German, and Spanish. Social Science, anthropology, economics, introduction to education course, geography, history (Western Europe and U.S.), philosophy, political science, psychology and sociology. Division of Mathematics and Science - Engineering Drawing, courses in basic engineering, and the sciences, courses in anatomy, chemistry, geology, physics, physiology, and zoology. The mathematics program featured Mathematics 13A, elementary algebra, Mathematics C, Trigonometry, Mathematics D, Intermediate algebra, a
combination course including plain and analytical geometry, and calculus. In business education, a number of business courses involving elementary and advanced typing, retail merchandising, office methods and practices, business mathematics, tax courses, salesmanship, and an introduction to business course. The fine arts division included a survey of art history, life drawing, basic design and drawing, elementary and intermediate painting, two levels of ceramics, home economics, nutrition, clothing, family life education, and foods. In the music area classes in musicianship, elementary harmony, history and appreciation and choir. Vocational arts classes offerings included drafting, and electronics, machine shop, woodworking. In health and physical education, health education and a number of physical education classes, including tennis and fundamentals of badminton and golf.

At the March 14, 1961 board meeting the board reviewed the initial salary schedule for the college instructors and reviewed the teaching loads which was not too different from what it is today. They recommended loads of 15 semester hours for lecture class; 25 semester hours for lab classes; and 20 semester hours for lecture and lab combined assignments.

At the April 11, 1961 meeting the board of trustees selected a number of the initial teaching staff. Mr. J.D. Fenn for business and economics. A Mrs. Pattie Jo Fenn, Secretarial Training, Dr. Phillip Housman for History, Mr. Melvin Huden for Political Science and History, Dr. Laurence Davenport for Engineering and Electronics, Dr. Milt Schennum for Chemistry and Physics, Mr. Thomas Irwin for Biological Sciences, Ms. Marjory Robinson to teach English. A further review of the minutes indicated that Mr. Burton Wadsworth was hired as Dean of Students, at the same time that Polly W. Fitch was hired for Speech and English. Mr. Joel Caruthers was hired as physical education coach, Mr. James F. Chapman was hired for mathematics and engineering, and Dr. Milton G. Danielson was hired for counseling, philosophy and psychology. A number of part-time teachers were hired: among those were Mrs. Joanne Kroencke for home economics, and Ms. Molly Haines to teach art. Other instructors were hired at this May 9, 1961 meeting but are no longer with the college. At this same May
1960 board meeting, initial plans to establish a college center on the high school campus was reviewed with the firm of Smith, Powell, and Morgridge. Mr. Morgridge was eventually to become the major architect in planning the initial buildings for VVC. The board went on to review with the superintendent a number of basic administrative problems that needed to be resolved in such areas as ordering equipment, supplies, building construction, organization of curriculum, courses of study, development of college policies, a college catalog, various attendance, registration, and personnel forms, a faculty needs survey, hiring of initial faculty, and the development of various plans to put the college in operation so classes could begin in September of 1961. In reviewing some initial needs to start the college, Dr. Loutensock recommended that a director of the college be appointed and that specifications for the job should be developed. The Board of Trustees passed a recommendation that the director should be selected by February of 1961. At the same time it passed a motion to provide secretarial help and hire a librarian to organize the college library.

At the October 3, 1960 meeting the board approved the job description for Director of the junior college, listed the various qualifications needed for this position, and indicated that the person selected would begin their duties in February of 1961. The initial salary range for this position was to be between $10,500 and $11,400. The board took action on November 21st, 1960 meeting to start classes in the fall of 1961, and established a screening committee to review the applications. On December 26, 1960 the trustees of the college met and reviewed the applicants for the position. Mr. Fred Berger was elected as the Director of the college as of February 12, 1961. Mr. Berger, who had been the coordinator of the San Bernardino College programs, then became the first director of the college. Further action was taken at this same board meeting to request emergency funds for the Victor Valley College District. A total of $7,188.80 was requested for initial secretarial, clerical, and office expenses. They followed this by another resolution to request additional funds from San Bernardino County in the amount of $13,950 to help start college programs.
Perhaps football caused other events to be more casual. Perhaps it was coincidence. Whatever the cause, student activities moved toward sock hops and them dances for Halloween and Thanksgiving—all very casual—though costume events were popular.

In addition to talking about student life, Ms. Fitch gives a few interesting paragraphs about the effects of the weather on college life and college activities on page 5 of her informal history. She talks about the flooding of the Mojave River, and the fact that when the college campus was dedicated in Nov of 64 the dedication took place in 7" of snow which had been totally unpredictable, and then she talked later about the '69 flood and having to evacuate some of the buildings on lower campus. However the college was not washed away. Another comment about student life that Ms. Fitch describes on page 5 and 6 of her informal history, the evolution of Rams Day.

THE EVOLUTION OF RAMS DAY

Rams' Day was the idea of an ASB vice president who felt we had this unique lake on campus and should use it. (Lakes in the desert were not common at the time.) Elaborate rules stated that all rafts would be built the day before and would be stored on campus overnight.

Nasty rumors of sabotage floated about, so AMS, which had no raft, volunteered to guard them all overnight. So, I am probably one of the few people who had slept under the tree in front of the library, when there was a tree in front of the library.

Sleeping under the tree proved to be the least of our challenges. A late rumor had Barstow sinking all of the rafts that night. (Yes, even then, rumors were a constant.) So the male friend of an assistant AMS advisor showed up with a loaded .357 magnum and a firm determination to blow Barstow away. Barstow did not show; the Magnum carrier was defused and a modest raft race was held the next day. It was the only Rams' Day event.

By the next spring, raft race rules had become very complicated and rafts were planned months in advance. They still had to be built in the last 24 hours before the race but the plans could be made way ahead. They were. Business Club, AMS, Biology—about 15 clubs had extensive rafts planned. But, because of the 24-hour rule, they had to build all night.

Burt Medsworth, Dean of Students, saw the all-night activity coming and had the courage to accept it. He also patrolled all night to keep the situation under control. He succeeded, sort of. He drove his red Corvair from raft site to raft site and walked the area, seeing everything remained acceptable. As the night wore on, the problem that emerged was beer cans and empty gallon wine bottles kept appearing in the back of his Corvair when he returned to it.
John Wells and AMS also were there all night. About 2 a.m., an ugly group of about 10 from Barstow (Barstow really has a nasty reputation on this side of the desert) showed up. John asked for VVC I.D. and when they could show none, yelled them off campus. I can tell this because I too was there all night that night.

The sunrise was gorgeous but by raft race time at 11 a.m., raft race members were a bit unpumped and the race seemed somehow secondary the the raft building.

After that, Rams Day diversified into several events, which reduced the significance of the raft races. Concession booths were added. Several ASB meetings became alarmed by discussion of booths because, as commonly said, "booths" sound like "booze". Booze was no serious problem until the year of the Joshua Wind Fair, which replaced Rams Day, for one year.

Joshua Wind Fair was put together by the SOD, Sons of the Desert. They were members of a loose commune in south Victorville, a very knowing group who knew most people would hear SOD as SOB. The ASB gave them about $16,000 for the outdoor stage and all the acts they promised to bring. These included several early rock groups and a guitarist from San Francisco who had a big name at the time and turned out to be the most advanced load I ever saw.

Joshua Wind Fair went on the athletic field, from 11 a.m. to midnight. By 2 p.m. the rumor was that you could buy any illegal drug you could pay for under the bandstand. I didn't test the rumor's accuracy. But, it was obvious that a lot of mellow people were around.

When it was over, Burt and a few activities-loyal faculty members spent until 2 a.m. picking up wine and beer bottles. Isn't it ironic that hard drugs leave no litter?

After that, the number of clubs on campus declined and competition over Rams Day also declined. The Joshua Wind Fair did not cause this effect. It was just a benchmark of change. Rams Day used the whole campus so the lakeside focus was muted. Bike races, car rallies and many other activities were added but the general trend was decline.

One tug-of-war, a Rams Day activity, was made vivid by John Williams, our wonderful political science teacher for about eight years, until he died. John was big, black and superb. He came to Rams Day in a white t-shirt and white pants. He was at the end of one half of the war. His side was close to being pulled into the mud hole that was the sign of defeat. John stiffened and got serious. He slowly pulled the whole two teams his direction until his side won.

Now, Rams Day goes on and it includes raft races, but I suspect its time has passed. Students are so goal-oriented that none of their present needs are served by the late-May fling that originated 20 years ago.

Ms. Fitch goes on to discuss the further evolution of student government on campus during the late 60's and described some of the activities.
THE EVOLUTION OF STUDENT GOVERNMENT

As had been mentioned, the ASB has existed from year one and has done many things. Some years their sense of responsibility has been awesome and other times they have been frivolous. At no time have they lost their heads and been stupid; apathy is always their major enemy. The usual percentage of students active in the ASB is 5% of the total population.

Considering that, their positive impact is impressive. For example, one ASB Council got the Board to let them name the athletic field after Burt Trimble and to put a small plaque there saying so. Burt was a former ASB president who transferred to San Diego State and was killed by a landslide as he threw his girlfriend out of the slide's way.

Another ASB Council paid for the marquee sign. Subsequent councils didn't get organized to use it properly and even forgot they paid for it. Now, the maintenance staff puts on it messages supplied by the Community Services Office.

A final example of ASB contributions is the Child Development Center, which began in a house across Bear Valley Road from the campus. ASB had built up quite a financial reserve and - though I was not in on the details - believe ASB bought the house with the understanding that the district would staff and run it. There, it was a child care center only. When the center came on campus, it became the Child Development Center. Incidentally, remember the two World War II barracks used for storage by the Theatre Dept.? The two that seemed headed for Barstow in the flood? The Maintenance Dept. waved a magic wand I've never understood and turned those barracks into the present Child Development Center.

The ASB has been an active member of CCCSGA (California Community College Student Government Assn.) almost every year the college has functioned. That organization holds a statewide convention fall and spring semester every year and what a window they are for viewing the community colleges statewide.

My first experiences at these conventions included listening to Deans of Women compare notes on their Gestapo tactics for enforcing the dress code. One Dean boasted that she made all faculty use seating charts. The cleaning women were her spies. If hot pants were worn by a woman in seat 46, room 17, the Dean had the woman in her office in five minutes. Thes Deans also compared notes on vulgar dances that were not to be allowed. Santa Barbara was the first to report "The Dog" as a dance much too dirty to be tolerated.

By the late '60's these same Deans had other worries. They compared strategies for handling riots, for gauging how dangerous SNICK was and whether or not to let the BSU on campus. VVC kept its head, let the BSU form (though very tense about it), declared the free speech area as in front of the library and had no riot problems.

But by the mid-70's, half the community colleges didn't bother to come to the conventions, which were expensive. Local problems such as child care, medical insurance and legal advice for students kept local money at home.

for the current status of VVC and CCCSGA, ask Mike Davis.
Prerusal of the board minutes for the 60's and early 70's, as well of some of Ms. Fitch's comments showed the college was on a path of steady and modest growth and the campus was beginning to shape up. During 1968 a major change occurred in administration when Mr. Berger, who had served as the first director of the college and later was named college president, was forced to resign his position as president of the college after a great deal of community and college controversy because the Board felt that he was not properly administering the policies and programs they wished for YWC. Without going into too many details, the net result was that Mr. Berger resigned his position, and Mr. Burton Wadsworth who was then dean of students was appointed as acting president in 1968, and he continued in this position until his retirement in 1984. In 1972 when the college voted, due in part to state legislation, to split from the high school district, Mr. Wadsworth became the first superintendent/president of the college. Mr. William Alcorn from the hs district was hired as the dean of students to fill the position vacated by Mr. Wadsworth's promotion. During this late 60's period Mr. Gordon Blaisdale who had been hired as a science teacher at the college was promoted to part-time dean of instruction, which became a full-time position in 1971. In 1972 after the split from the high school district, Mr. James Hvildstad was hired to be the dean of business services at the college, and Mr. Nicholas Halisky to coordinate the George Air Force Base Outreach Program. In October of that year, Dr. Alex Rudoff was hired as dean of community services, with a major responsibility in the area of community relations, press releases and adult ed programs. The first 10 or 11 years of the college were periods of steady growth, building and establishment of most of the college's institutions and programs which in many cases have remained active and functioning to this day. As the years went by, additional staff members were added as programs grew, and by 1972 there were 60 full-time certificated staff people on board including teachers, librarians, and counselors.
The decade of the 70's could be described as the adolescent period of VVC. The college in Dec of 72 under Dr. Rudoff's direction started the first Rams Horn which was a newspaper about the college and contained the schedule for spring. The mailing list was developed through the use of the local phone book in cooperation with the data processing department, and the direct mail of schedules to all the homes and business in the community started during that year. This program has continued to the present. Also, in 1972/73 there was a broad expansion of classes in the adult education areas and in a number of introductory vocational areas, as well as a new community services program that featured a number of college sponsored events, such as film festivals, mojave desert seminars, faculty lecture series and a variety of other cultural experiences made available to the students and staff of the college, and to the people of the community.

In 1974 the college was planning to build a new student center when an offer was received from Boise Cascade asking VVC if it was interested in buying their reception building located on the Spring Valley Lake Parkway. Negotiations were entered into with Boise Cascade and the property was acquired for approximately $350,000. It required a similar amount of money to bring it up to field act standards. The student center was opened with a bookstore, counseling and registration services, and a restaurant program was instituted, headed by chef Dick Smith which provided meals for students and staff. The new restaurant program received a great deal of community and college support.

In 1975 the college formed a long-range planning committee in which a number of projects were recommended for plant and property growth for the coming years. The result was a recommendation to add additional facilities to the vocational buildings for agriculture, automotive and aeronautics on the lower campus. Also among these recommendations, was a request to build a large theatre or performing arts center. During this time period and over the next few years, an attempt was made to get a bond issue to build the theatre before the public which was turned down by the voters of the valley. However, in 1981 sufficient reserves were available. The college
then decided to build a new performing arts center adjacent to the lake for the cost of $2.3 million and the facility was finished in 1982.

VVC GETS A THEATRE

About 1966, VVC planned a theatre but the Board panicked at a $1 million price tag. (What do you mean, $1 million? We build the whole campus for $2.51) So, there were more years of frustration and of shows in the gym. The only good thing about that place was the tolerance of the P.E. department, though there was some adjusting on both sides. Football players had trouble understanding fully made up and costumed actors in the football locker room. Actors, even in leotards and tights, couldn't see the problem. They finally learned to avoid each other.

Around 1977, the administration said VVC would build a theatre. I didn't believe it. There were planning sessions and blueprints. Tom Miller became an acoustics specialist, the art department said the lobby was much too small for displays; Burt Wedsworth said the green room needed no bathrooms. I still didn't believe it.

Sometimes after that, a huge crane was on campus, lifting steel girders in place. Only then did I think maybe a theatre would happen. Sure enough, October 1981, it was done and moving in began. Delta Psi members helped move relevant materials from the gym, enduring much dust and mouse leavings in the face en route. Those Delta Psi members donated the makeup stools and storage cabinets to the Green Room and then, by mutual but unspoken agreement, went defunct.

Steve McDevitt spent what appeared to be 20-hour days unpacking, checking and mounting the new equipment. He and Eric had the building ready for the first performance in PAC: a symphony concert. In March the Music and Theatre departments did "South Pacific" and PAC was under way.

The decade of the 70's, as was noted earlier, saw the completion of the automotive, welding, and aeronautics facilities, and the establishment of an agriculture facility in 1972. In 1974 an exercise building was added near the gymnasium. In 1980 there was an addition to the vocational complex of offices and classrooms for homemaking and electronics, and the Allied Health building was completed in 1983. Other projects during this time period included a planned program of college-wide landscaping including waterfalls, ponds near the business building, grass planting throughout large parts of the campus, and the additional parking lots completed adjacent to the library and science building. A number of other changes occurred to beautify the campus under the direction of Mr. James Hvit listed and Mr. Wadsworth during the same
time period. The college continued to grow through the 70's until the passage of Proposition 13 in 1978 that required some readjustments of assignments and class schedules. The college administration and Board of Trustees took the position that full-time employees should not lose their position due to Prop 13. From this time on the college budget and finance picture has been subject to the changing actions of the Sacramento state legislature and the office of the governor. The administration at the college remained reasonably stable during this time period. In the mid-70's Mr. Blaisdale decided to retire. He was replaced by Dr. Greg Figgens as Dean of Instruction, and Dr. Charles Peterson was brought in as the vocational dean during the same time period. After Dr. Figgens left, Dr. Milton Danielson became Dean of Instruction. During the 70's and 80's the college was very active in grant acquisition. A number of NDEA title equipment grants were received as well as large college involvement in the use of CETA employment projects which provided a large number of workers to help with remodeling, painting and maintenance of campus facilities and grounds. In 1983 Dr. Virginia Holten of Riverside City College was selected as Dean of Instruction after Dr. Milton Danielson returned to the classroom. She served for two and a half years and left for a college presidency. As the staff continued to grow and the state passed collective bargaining laws, the faculty and classified staff organized their own union groups which lead to a formal bargaining process and labor contracts for both groups.

In 1984 Mr. Burt Wadsworth retired as Superintendent/President. After a national search, Dr. Howard Larsen from Riverside City College was appointed to replace Mr. Wadsworth. He served in this position for approximately a year and a half. During this time a major reorganization of the administrative jobs at the college was completed and a number of the deans became vice presidents and the personnel function was given to the Vice President of Administrative Services. After he left, Dr. Charles Chapman served as interim president for six months, and in the summer of 1986 Dr. Ruth Johnson from Wyoming was appointed as the third Superintendent/President of VVC.
During her first year of office Dr. Johnson became very involved in community activities and developed a number of committees to do long-range planning for the college. During her term, Dr. Dorothy Franke was hired as Vice President of Instructional Services and other changes were made in the administrative structure of the college. At the end of the school year 1986/87 Dr. Alex Rudoff retired from the college in his role as Vice President of Administrative Services/Personnel.

During the spring of 1986 a position was created for a Director of Small Business Administration and the college has been extending its role into the community to assist small businesses.

SUMMARY

In looking back at this brief history of VWC it seems the college has maintained the position of operating with a conservative financial budget and consistent administrative procedures. Because of these decisions there has been sufficient money allocated to continue the plant/property growth needed to meet the needs of the increased population. The college went from 500 full and part-time students in 1963 to over 5000 full and part-time students, and an additional 1500 adult education students by 1986. This has meant that the college has been able to effectively serve the needs and interest of the student body since it began its history over 26 years ago.

As a historian looking back over the history of VWC, a number of patterns emerge. From its very beginning the college has been designed to serve the higher educational needs of the citizens of the high desert. Throughout the years the college has been blessed with a strong board of trustees - men and women from professional and business fields of the valley who have made a real commitment in time and energy to monitor continuing and important growth of the college. The introduction of such programs in the mid-70's as Allied Health, Respiratory Therapy, the expansion of facilities for welding and other vocational programs, has given thousands of people in the valley an opportunity to learn job skills and trades and
develop a professional education allowing them to more successfully pursue their lives ambitions and roles. Throughout the period the college has had a strong professional staff of faculty, counselors, librarians and administrators who have in most cases worked cooperatively to develop programs and educational activities that met the needs of the community. The college from the beginning offered strong academic transfer classes and working together with the counseling department has attempted to maintain the transfer function that has allowed successful graduates to go on to complete their four year degrees. Since 1961 there are hundreds of doctors, teachers, social workers, and people in almost every known professional field who started their educational career at VVC. The willingness of the student, often at great personal sacrifice, to work towards earning college degrees and occupational certificates also reflects their commitment to take advantage of the programs and activities offered at the college.

The growth and development of the classified staff (secretaries, groundsmen, custodians, clerks and others who serve the staff) has always reflected a level of high professional standards, and the classified staff have made a strong contribution to the development of the college.

A college is a complex social and educational institution. It is often larger than its many parts. VVC will continue to serve the citizens of the valley and the community in years to come and looks back at its past history with joy and pride, and looks forward to the future and the changing needs of its citizens, students and community, and will continue to be an institution designed to serve all of the educational needs, and provide the services that make VVC a key component of life on the high desert.