

GRAPEVINE HISTORICAL SOCIETY

# On The Vine

DEDICATED TO PRESERVING GRAPEVINE HISTORY

## The Fourteen Stars

Have you ever noticed or wondered why our City Hall has 14 stars on its facade? I asked our fellow Grapevine Historical Society member and recently awarded Lifetime Member, Paul "PW" McCallum, and got an explanation:

"The top row of seven stars represent the Mayor and the six City Council Members, the second row of seven stars represent the Chairman and the six members of the Planning and Zoning Commission appointed at large by the City Council. Commission members appointed are representatives of the citizens of Grapevine. This display signifies the dedication of Grapevine's leadership to serve all the citizens of Grapevine by fairly and equally representing them after being duly elected by those citizens.

The importance and duty to service by which the Mayor and each Council Member serve are symbolized by each star representing their place on the Council. As part of the City Hall's facade, these stars serve as a reminder to all those who serve and all those by whom they are elected that the seat of Grapevine's government serves for the people and by the people."

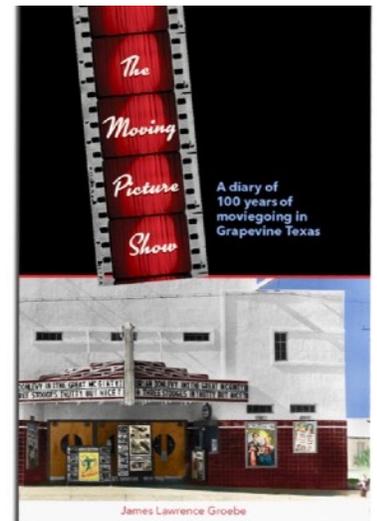


## History of Grapevine's Movie Theaters

After hundreds of hours of research, writing, and production, Grapevine Historical Society member Larry Groebe has completed publication of his book "The Moving Picture Show: A Diary of 100 Years of Moviegoing in Grapevine Texas." Those who heard Larry's GHS talk last fall about the history of Grapevine's theaters know that our beloved Palace is just one story among many - a local cinematic history that goes back to the very first flickering images screened in 1901. Along the way, there were traveling picture shows, adapted storefronts, three different Palace theaters, the world's largest movie megaplex, dreamers, schemers, and giant corporations.

As Grapevine grew, the moving picture show faced a century of challenges: radio, television, wars, and even the highway system. The story of where we went to the movies, who showed them, how we watched and what we saw is filled with drama, comedy, suspense, and a happy ending, featuring a cast of thousands - the town of Grapevine.

180+ pages of history we never knew before, abundantly illustrated with scores of newspaper clippings, ads, and photos. With retailers closed everywhere, you can buy it online. See details at <https://genericradio.com/movingpictureshow> Larry Groebe is a media historian, member of the Grapevine Historical Society, and former curator of the National Museum of Communications.





## May Events

At this time all May Events are cancelled.

## Gary Forrest Blagg

1940 - 2020

***Gary died in Grapevine on April 2, 2020. The family will announce a celebration of life at a later date. Below is a tribute to Gary written in the Fort Worth Star-Telegram in 2002:***

We were sitting in the French bakery on Main Street one recent afternoon drinking coffee and doing what you do on a lazy afternoon in Grapevine. Gary Blagg and I were gossiping about what everyone else in town was doing when Gary began talking about himself.

"You know, I'm getting inducted into the Grapevine High School Hall of Fame," he said excitedly. "You?" I asked.

"Yeah, can you believe that?" The honor stems from his service to the community. After graduating from Grapevine High in 1958, Gary never went to college. Heck, he barely made it through high school. But if high school is supposed to prepare you for a successful career in business and for volunteer service to your community, then Gary Blagg is an honor student. He excelled at both. "Can you believe it?" he asked between sips of his coffee. "Take an old country boy who sells tires and put him in the hall of fame?"

Gary Blagg's love affair with his hometown is one more Grapevine success story. Exactly 50 years ago, the townsfolk did something wonderful for him, and he never forgot. He has spent the last half-century trying to repay them.

*(continued on page 3)*

## Covid-19 A Teenager's Perspective

The life of a teenager can be tumultuous, but it depends on whom you ask. What seems like the end of the world to us, may seem frivolous to an adult. Except in this case, where it may actually be the end of the world, at least as we used to know it a month ago.

We thought we were going on spring break and all were so excited: the last break before summer. We were almost free. As it turned out, that would be the last school day of the year. I'm lucky enough to be a junior, but for many seniors, that day will go out as their last day of high school period, the final year events they've looked forward to for 12 years now all canceled.

Kids my age have always had technology. We've always had social media and adults usually see us as on it way too much, instead of active in the real world, but now, social media is as real as we can get. The shift to online school may seem easy for us to others; we're already online all the time already aren't we? But it seems the opposite is true. Where technology acted as an escape before it has now become a prison. It is our only safe contact to our friends and the outside world, but many of us end up stuck on it hours upon hours during the day just wishing we could be able to see our friends again or even go to school.

I am lucky enough to be able to completely stay home because my employer at my part-time job guaranteed to us pay even if we chose not to come in for several weeks. Unfortunately, even I will have to return to work on May 4 to continue getting paid. I've had the opportunity to stay home, but many of my peers are forced to go to their jobs that have been considered essential by the state. Minimum wage jobs that teenagers have always stereotypically held, the same ones that others look down upon as "not real jobs" are now the ones staying open to keep communities running and are some families' only current income.

A person's years as a teenager are supposed to help form their life and always have in the past, but this generation now might not be able to do that. This virus has taken away a part of our last years as kids, and we'll never get them back.

Aislyn Gaddis

Grapevine Historical Society Journalism Intern

In 1952, his grandmother's house on Smith Street was destroyed in a fire. Two years before, when Gary was 10, his father had died. The family had no place else to live. But the townsfolk rallied around them. Neighbors donated cows, pigs, chickens and bales of cotton and hay along with clothing and food. They found the family a new place to stay and held fund-raisers and auctions that raised \$5,000. Gary never forgot.

After he and his wife, Wanda, opened their tire store on Main Street in 1986, Gary tried to put back as much into the city as he took out. He served on every board imaginable and donated to most charities. Gov. George W. Bush appointed him to serve on a state board that developed licensing standards for tradesmen. But his deepest affection was saved for the Grapevine-Colleyville school district, especially his alma mater.

For years, he has visited his high school and given his stay-in-school speech to the students, but he is a little different. Gary puts a ponytail wig atop his bald head and starts singing rap music, which gets the attention of the teen-agers. Gary tells them, "My body is 62, but my brain is 16."

You get a hint at what a poor student this future hall-of-famer was when you read Gary's 1958 yearbook. Superintendent W.F. Cannon wrote the following: "To hot-rodder, actor, lover, executive, office-boy and student (using the word loosely). You are gradually gaining control of yourself. Try hard to make us proud of you. You can if you so desire. Mr. Cannon."

The superintendent was being charitable. After our coffee session, I started asking around town about Gary. His nickname in high school was Poo Doo, which is what his grandfather called him. Poo Doo was the right kind of name. Gary was a chubby little guy who wore glasses with thick black frames.

"Gary was always having problems with the girls," remembers his cousin, Sue Franks of Southlake. "Once, two football players told him that when girls said no, they didn't mean no. They said, 'Just take her to the lake and remember what we said.' The next time we all saw Gary after that, his glasses were all taped up, and he had a black eye. He said, 'I don't think those football players told me the truth.' Franks takes credit for helping Gary through school. She told me, "I wrote every theme he ever turned in. If he turned something in, I wrote it."

During his senior year, Gary climbed the Grapevine water tower in the middle of the night with his best friend, Rafael Ward, and painted "Seniors '58." But when it came time to come down, Gary froze and wouldn't go down the ladder. The Fire Department and the police were there, helping, but he didn't make it down until sunup.

His friend, future Grapevine Fire Chief Billy Powers, supposedly taught Gary how to drive, but when I asked Powers about it, he denied it, saying, "No! Nobody could teach him how to drive as bad and as fast as he does." At 62, Gary is still Grapevine's best-known street racer. He drives a 1993 Chevrolet 454SS pickup, which is now on its fourth engine. When I asked Gary how many traffic tickets he has received, he replied, "I could not count them. But 1999 was my worst year. I got 22."

"Twenty-two?!" I asked.

"Yeah, but I got deferred adjudication. I've been on deferred adjudication in five different cities at the same time. They don't talk to each other." He added, "If I get some kid at a red light and blow him away, I'm in hog heaven."

I had heard that Gary surprised Kevin Singer, the Grapevine-Colleyville superintendent, with an unexpected trip to hog heaven. Singer told me, "He asked me to go meet him for lunch one day, and he said, 'I'll pick you up at the administration building and we'll go together.' He picked me up in his big truck, and at a traffic light, he kinda gunned it a little bit." Gary confirmed the story. "I looked over at Dr. Singer. His eyes were big and round like silver dollars. I don't think Dr. Singer will ride with me anymore." Singer said, "It doesn't disqualify him in my mind for the hall of fame. He's a good supporter of the district. But next time, I'll drive."

At his induction ceremony Friday, Gary thanked Cannon for inspiring him, Powers for teaching him to drive, Ward for helping him climb down the water tower and Franks for writing his school papers. He saved special thanks for his wife, whom he said he has been married to for "39 years, 7 months and 18 days."

Then in front of several hundred people in the school library, he looked over at Wanda and shouted triumphantly, "We made it!" You just knew that old superintendent Cannon would be proud. Dave Lieber



***Grapevine has taken advantage of the shutdown of events and businesses by taking on a level of infrastructure improvements never seen before. Streets and sidewalks, that would have been almost idle anyway, are the main targets of the construction surge. It will still be a while but when we can return to public life; in many ways, we will have a new city waiting for us.***

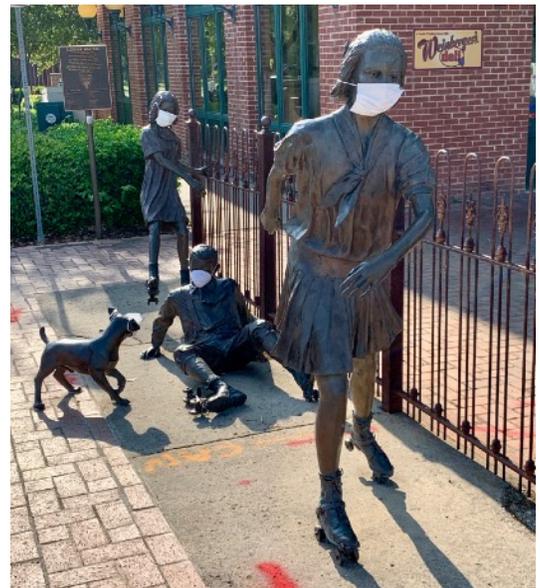
  


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 Stay vigilant,  
 Stay the course,  
 Grapevine.  
 Mayor William D. Tate  



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*“If you’re going through hell, keep going”*  
Winston Churchill

*“Aliens probably drive past Earth and lock their doors”*  
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