

From the 1952 Mar-Ken School Yearbook

(Page before Mrs. M. Ethel Bessire's photo)

To Mrs. Bessire and Kent we, the Seniors, sincerely dedicate this annual which is a small token representing our appreciation for the knowledge we have received. Your undying guidance and assistance has made it possible for us, as individuals "to know the noblest pleasure, the joy of understanding, and to love wisdom as to live according to its dictates, a life of simplicity, independence, magnanimity and trust."

M. Ethel Bessire, President and Director  
Wm. Kent Bessire, Secretary, Treasurer, and Co-Director

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**SCHOOL ACTIVITIES**

SOPHOMORE SPRING DINNER – A Pot’s Eye View . . .

As I was disturbed early on the morning of March 2<sup>nd</sup> and set upon the stove to boil, I learned that it was the day the tenth grade was putting on their Spring Dinner.

From Morning till evening I was pushed and banged and scrubbed till I shone like a mirror. Morning was rather slow compared to the rest of the day. But as two o’clock neared many people began to rush around the kitchen. I soon heard many strange voices and I figured guests had begun to arrive. Soon my lid was taken off and my contents slowly disappeared. The aroma of the food was delicious.

As the afternoon passed on I heard and saw the guests as they enjoyed their dinner and visit. Seven O’clock came and the kitchen became unusually quiet. Soon I was taken off the stove and once again I was washed. But when I was pushed into my place in the cupboard among my friends I realized the dinner was over. As I sat in my place and recalled the day, I soon heard voices again - - - the students were discussing the success of their dinner. Being very happy to have been a help in their success, I settled down to wait for the next time I would be of service to the Students of Mar-Ken.

THE COUNTY FAIR - - -

It was the latter part of September when Mar-Ken went to its first activity, the traditional trip to the County Fair. Even though we had a day without school we were late in leaving on a foggy morning. We arrived only to find some of our party missing. After locating everyone we parked and started on our tour of the interesting buildings, followed by a Mar-Ken standby – food. Then off for more sight-seeing and then the mid-way rides which left everyone breathless and moneyless. The day ended too quickly and all went home to relax and remember a wonderful day.

## A DAY AT THE BEACH \*\*

Tuesday, February 26<sup>th</sup> Mar-Ken went to one of its many beach picnics at Paradise Cove Beach.

Although the weather wasn't too good, Mar-Ken had planned a picnic at the beach and like the U.S. Mail "Neither sleet nor snow" nor a little gray sky could keep us from going.

We were all tired the next day from our races and games on the beach but boy! That picnic was fun.

## PICNIC

Planning a picnic is quite an event – first the place has to be chosen, then what we are going to eat, and then where the food is going to come from. After the food has been taken care of, transportation has to be figured out. This takes quite a while and by the time we get started everyone is starving.

We finally arrive at the chosen spot and after hiking around a while we eat – not that we were hungry or anything. After stuffing ourselves we slowly arise, put away the extra food and take out for something to do. There never seems to be a shortage of things to do, and by the time we are finished, we're hungry again. So – off to eat up the extra food, which doesn't take long. After this chore we usually sit around and recover until time to leave.

Getting away is another project which usually goes off smoothly – everyone is too tired to revolt. By the time we get to school everyone is almost asleep but we manage to get home and to bed. The next day everyone is tired but all ready to plan the next picnic when the whole project is started all over again.

## MAR-KEN GOES TO THE "DRUNKARD"

(Since 1933 "Hilarious Record RUN" "THE DRUNKARD" Theatre Mart, Hollywood.)

One of the schools many activities was the "DRUNKARD." This event took place Tuesday, February 19.

Fifty-two people attended the affair, approximately forty two were students.

The rest of the group was parents and friends.

After the play was the Olio, during which Mar-Ken was introduced – we were supposedly celebrating the latest victory of “the ladies soft-ball team’, of course we weren’t.

We seemed to enjoy the evening, at least, we sang the loudest, swayed the most, and laughed the hardest of any of the onlookers.

We all received our gay ninety mustaches, a tradition at the “Drunkard,” and plodded into the cars to end a unique and unforgettable evening.

### MAR-KEN GOES TO THE SNOW

On March 28<sup>th</sup> a group of about 25 Mar-Kenites went to Wrightwood on a snow trip. After a few delays we were on our way. It was a wonderful trip up there until we stopped at the lodge for the key to our lodge. Mrs. Bessire’s car loaded with kids just decided it should have a rest. Finally we got her going and we started toward the lodge. As soon as the cars were unloaded we decided we should take a look around before dinner. When we got back our reception committee (Tucker and Mrs. Bessire) told us dinner was ready. We ate until we couldn’t walk, played charades, and then to bed.

The next morning we got up and ate a big breakfast prepared by the boys. Then off for the toboggan slide with everyone good and covered with snow. Then back and tired to eat again.

A snow fight was next on the agenda after lunch, the girls against the boys, guess who won? A drenched group back to the house for dry clothes and a good hot meal. After dinner another evening of charades and then a very sleepy bunch off to bed.

The next day; eat then snow fights, then more eating then some tobogganing until everyone was good and tired and more than ready to settle down to guess what, another meal! We had a wonderful Sunday dinner and were all soon packed into the various cars ready for the drive home. All of us were pretty tired but I’m sure we’re all looking forward to our next trip to the snow with the rest of the Mar-Kenites.

### RAMONA PAGEANT

Early on the morning of Saturday, April 19<sup>th</sup>, a caravan of cars started from Mar-Ken for a memorable day at the Ramona Pageant. We started out prepared for a heat wave but as the weather had not heard of our plans, we shivered through the day.

After a picnic lunch at the Hemet Park our bunch of “kiddies” played on the swings and slides until time for the Pageant.

This year was the silver anniversary, and Governor Warren presented medals to the members of the cast which had been with the association for the quarter-century.

The play itself was “superb” in its natural setting. The contrast of the gay life at the Hacienda to the impoverished life of Ramona at her Indian hut was vividly portrayed. After the last peals of the old ranch bell had died away we drove back to the Mission Inn at Riverside for a Turkey Dinner. We looked through the Curio Shop, taking special notice of their large and unique collection of bells.

We’ll never forget the story of “Ramona” for it was a part of the colorful history that forged our state - - California.

#### SANS SOUCI CELEBRITY CLUB

One of the many Mar-Ken activities that are enjoyed by the student body is the biannual visit to the meeting of the SANS SOUCI CELEBRITY CLUB, a philanthropic group of well known people. The meeting was held in the Embassy Room at the Ambassador Hotel. We were privileged to meet and hear many very famous personages of our section of the country and many from all over the world. Our hostess, Dame Mable Stoner Clark and her club members have been doing a great work for underprivileged people and it was our honor to donate one hundred dollars toward their continuance of charity.

#### BOX SOCIAL

On a sunny day in early spring all the girls at Mar-Ken were rushing around cooking food and fixing boxes – then getting dressed when finally the time came for the BOX SOCIAL to begin.

All the boxes were placed on a table and were they pretty? Then we started a game of charades, the seniors picked three teams and the riot started.

By this time everyone was so hungry that the boxes had to be auctioned off and quickly eaten. Then to watch “Anthony Adverse”, eat again, and then home to dream of our wonderful time.

## WESTERN PARTY

Weell, it were acoming on toward six o'clock and the fun was about to commence. All the cow-pokes ambled out toward the old corral in some purty smart get-ups (right from Texas, I reckon). Then they all astarted to dance until they was plumb tuckered out and had to stop for some refreshments, boy! They was shore good.

After every body et their fill they all hustled to the bunk-house for a real western style movie – wow – was it a hum-dinger, exciting too – and I'm sure glad it ended the way it did. Had me kinda worried there for a spell. After that were over everybody went back to the big corral fur some more fun, dancing, games and prizes for the best get-ups – one for the best male and one for the best female critter. Wal, by this time it was nigh on to midnight and all fired tired but mighty happy the members of the Mar-Ken Outfit lit out fer home.

## THROUGH THE PORTALS OF THE WORLD

As we stepped through the portals of International House, we felt as if we had stepped into all the countries of the world at once. Graceful Orientals, Blond Norwegians, promenaded by in their native costumes; and our nostrils were immediately stimulated by the aroma of exotic dishes from all the tales of the earth.

First, of course, as on any Mar-Ken schedule, came the food. We selected our courses from culinary achievements of the Scandinavian, Oriental, and Continental worlds. Japanese kababs, Danish pastry, salad de France, Russian tea, and coleslaw from Germany were but a few of the dishes we enjoyed.

The second item on our agenda was visiting the many exhibits, including those of Iceland, France, Korea, and India. There we saw excellent examples of the native skills, such as weaving, metal work, painting, and other fine arts.

Presently, as the crowd gathered in the patio, Dr. Chookalingo of India, began introducing the program of folk dances and songs. Gay Cossacks, sedate Latvians, and beautiful Spanish Senioritas, in their varied costumes twirled and turned to their native music.

After the program the Mar-Kenites invaded Mexico and Italy, carrying off spumoni and chocolate de Mexico as their best loved treasures.

The trip ended with a feeling of achievement in understanding our neighbors of the world.

## VIVA MEXICO

On a bright, sunny Saturday afternoon, December 16<sup>th</sup>, 6 representatives of Mar-Ken School started on their journey to Mexico City. The travelers were Mrs. Bessire, Kent Bessire, D'Ann Brigandi, Carmen Scarpitta, Larry Feldman, and Johnny Ramsey.

On the first day we traveled to Tucson, Arizona – and the following evening arrived at D'Ann's uncle's ranch in New Mexico where we had a terrific time. The next day saw us go through El Paso – then to Juarez and into Mexico itself. After a short time in the customs office we were off into Majestic Mexico, through Chihuahua and our first night's stop in a little village – Ciudad Camargo at the Hotel Vaca.

The next day we passed through quite a bit of desert country and stopped in Durango that night. After making arrangements for staying at the Hotel Casa Blanca, we visited a few of the churches for which Mexico is justly famous. In one of them, an extremely ornate white and gold church, we saw a group of young girls singing to the accompaniment of tambourines.

The next day saw us arrive at Guadalajara after a beautiful drive through magnificent country. Everyone was hungry as usual, so we were directed to one of the most beautiful restaurants we had ever seen – the famous Copa de Leche, where we had some delicious fresh fruit, bananas, pineapple, and papaya. We hired a guide for the next day and it found us touring the whole city, spending some time at the Governors Palace to look at the famous Orozco murals, then to the Cathedral which was breath-taking in its magnificence – then through some of the city's very lovely residential areas, both old and new. Then to the famous glass factory where we saw the men heat and shape the red hot glass by hand – it looked like the middle of Hell with the great furnace in the center and the men running around working the hot glass. From there we went to Tlaquepaque where some of Mexico's pottery is made. We watched an Indian make a bowl out of black clay. After a few purchases we went to another village close by where they specialize in fine weaving. It was there that Larry bought a beautiful blanket with a picture of the war god in the center.

The next day we reluctantly left Guadalajara and started for Uruapan and the famous volcano, Paracutin. On the way we passed by the lovely Lake Chapala, a great resort center surrounded by great meadows and papaya groves. We took the hazardous trip to the volcano itself by taxi and horseback –and believe me it was an unforgettable experience. Everything for miles around blackened and covered with ash and the terrific noise and glare made by the volcano kept us speechless for quite a while. Uruapan is a center of lacquer ware and we all made a few purchases.

The following day we left this exciting spot and started on toward Mexico City. On the way we passed by or many times stopped over at everything that seemed interesting. To mention just a few; we saw the famous Lake Patzcuaro with its butterfly nets, we stopped over in the colonial city of Morelia, with its fabulous palaces, magnificent Cathedral and outstanding market place which we visited at night by the light of candles and oil lamps. The next morning saw us in Mexico City – to us a great surprise, it is a city of three million with a wealth of colonial and modern architecture. It is impossible to recount all the things we did in the seven days we spent in and around Mexico City but just a few were; saw the magnificent Palace of Fine Arts, visited the Baroque wonder – Tepotzlan, shopped in the wonderful modern shops, visited the Pedregal where they are building everything in modern architecture even the colossal new University, floated through picturesque Xocimolco, attended and enjoyed the bull fights. In other words we saw everything possible in the time we had. Oh yes we even traveled out of the city to see the famous Pyramids with their ancient sculpture.

After this enjoyable time we left Mexico City for Cuernavaca, Taxco, and Acapulco. We found Cuernavaca to be one of the most beautiful towns we had ever seen – Taxco was extremely interesting and picturesque, it is situated on the side of a mountain and has been untouched (by Government order) since 1750. Johnny, Carmen, Kent, D'Ann, and Mrs. Bessire all made some wonderful buys here in the terrific shops. We also had the luck to see the Christmas night celebration here – with its pinadas, fireworks and all. The Church in Taxco has the most wonderful towers of any of the churches we saw in Mexico and when night finally came for us we went to sleep with the shouts of people from the plaza in our ears, the sound of firecrackers not able to keep us awake – but we will always remember Taxco with a little extra warmth and affection.

The time came much too soon that we had to leave Mexico City for home. This we did reluctantly but the trip home was aw inspiring in its own way. The country we passed through (by way of Laredo) was entirely different than any we had seen – extremes of mountains and then deep dense tropics with dripping water and vultures – and alligator infested rivers.

We all returned to the United States with a wonderful memory of the magnificent trip – one which was educational, inexpensive (Viva Pesos), and extremely enjoyable. In fact plans are afoot to repeat the whole journey this next Christmas vacation which will be again extended to the 21 days that we so thoroughly enjoyed on our Mexican Holiday.

## TEST TIME

There comes this certain period  
About four times a year,  
That every student here at school  
Has learned to dread and fear.

Fingernails are bitten low  
In mad last-minute toil,  
While many frantic students burn  
The famous midnight oil.

At last the fatal moment comes  
When brains turn inside out  
You stagger out of class convinced  
You've flunked without a doubt.

Of course there's Orientation,  
Or do you like Man and "Civ"?  
In either case when your finally through  
You don't expect to live.

And Kent asks in Geometry  
When's a circle a square?  
Or why does a rhombus have four sides?  
As if you ever care.

Oh, those hours of waiting  
Wondering if you'll pass  
You pace the floor and tear your hair  
Worrying 'bout your class.

But when the grades are finally out  
You start to breath once more  
So happy that you've finally won  
That ceaseless students war.

## SUMMER SCHOOL

“Oh boys! Up Boys! Time for breakfast.” Mr. B’s calm sweet voice awoke the boys encountering the first day of Summer School at Mar-Ken. Then from upstairs, “Girls, Girls, breakfast is ready.” Then roll call at the breakfast table, Barry Wilson, D’Ann Brigandi, Bob Ihrig, Marlene Hess, Mike Hennagin, Sandy Hanauer, Ric Conroy, Frank Kesling, Betty Byers, Dave Burnett, Lee Adams, Jack Pavone, Peter Darby, Bernie McGovern, Eve Fleitman, and Gary Newton. Breakfast finished. Now off to school.

And so Summer School and a long list of experiences began. It was great to play a fast game of tennis, then take a dip in D’Ann’s pool. Along comes Friday night and our anxiety to see our traditional Friday Movie at the Sherman. I can picture them now; Trio, Dark Victory, King Solomon’s Mines, and a host of others. The following night brings our weekly dance, and then to finish the week we held a Sunday Dinner for our parents.

Besides these regular activities we took interesting side trips to the Hollywood Bowl to hear the Gershwin Concert, to the Huntington Galleries, to see Tales of Hoffman, and to enjoy a day at the beach. Some of the students offered other entertaining activities; D’Ann had a swimming party followed by a luncheon, Barry offered a swim and barbecue, Marlene gave the use of her lake with the usual good food, and Peter invited us to be his guests at a recital given by the famous “King’s Men.”

Believe it or not, studying was worked into this schedule and actually was the major activity. With the help of Mrs. Bessire, Kent, Mrs. Davis, Carmen, and Frank classes were held.

Along comes Thursday and we are off to go Horse Back riding, followed by milk and cookies which were eaten standing up.

I am sure we all recall our trip to Palos Verdes, which was supplemented by a mountain top picnic and a visit to the famous glass wayside chapel.

All these things combined gave us an exciting six weeks of Summer School which we shall never forget – And the last Friday of Summer School consisted of sorting clothes and “so long until September.”

## CHINESE CULTURAL SOCIETY

The students of Mar-Ken have had the pleasure of attending several of the Chinese Cultural Society meetings, held at one of the restaurants in China town. These meetings are always preceded by a delicious Chinese dinner. A few of the braver students eat with chopsticks while the less brave stick to the occidental fork and knife. After dinner Mrs. Chan, the chairman of the program committee introduces all the distinguished guests who are in attendance. Usually there are quite a few Chinese students who attend each meeting. There is always a guest speaker who talks on some pertinent subject about the conditions in the Orient or how we can improve our relationship with them. Some meetings there is a musical program of Chinese entertainers which we all enjoy very much. The meeting includes a general get together of people of all races which we find very beneficial to our understanding of other people. Our students always leave for home with a wider knowledge and understanding of the Orient and its many and varied peoples.

## SENIORS

“Come, fill the cup, and in  
the fire of Spring  
The winter garment of Repentance  
fling:  
The Bird of Time has but a  
little way  
To fly – and lo! The bird is on the Wing

## SENIOR DITCH DAY

An important Senior tradition, Ditch Day, was one of the nicest activities of the year. The day was beautiful and Jack Pavone started out the day right when we went bicycling by falling off his bike and getting thoroughly dirty. We were all pretty tired when it came time for lunch and we were sure hungry.

We started off the lunch by having salad at Sandy Hanauer’s House. The main course was eaten at D’Ann Brigandi’s. By this time we were pretty full but still wanting desert we went to Marlene Hess’s house, where we had a Danish Delight. From here we hurried over the hills to see “The Greatest Show On Earth” -- then back to the Hacienda for a wonderful dinner and dance --- then home for a very tired bunch of Seniors.

## NATIONAL HONOR SOCIETY TEA

On Sunday afternoon, April 20<sup>th</sup>, Mar-Ken's Chapter of the National Honor Society sponsored a tea. The purpose of the affair was to raise money for the purchase of books to be added to the Honor Society section of the school library.

The afternoon's entertainment was a very fine musical program featuring students and alumnae of Mar-Ken. The program was opened by Avid Burnett with a piano solo. Other entertainers included singer Marion Oles and violinists Cathy Perry and Betty Byers. Barbara Allen Terrie, an alumna, closed the program with a piano solo. Following this, Mike Hennagin, president of the National Honor Society chapter at Mar-Ken, introduced Mrs. Bessire, who in turn introduced the Senior class. Those Seniors present were D'Ann Brigandi and Sandy Hanauer, members of the National Honor Society, Larry Feldman, Barry Wilson, Walter White, Marlene Hess, George Gasselin, Betty Byers and Pat Porter. Then the guests retired to the dining room for refreshments. Thus bringing to a close a delightful afternoon with the National Honor Society.

## NATIONAL HONOR SOCIETY

The National Honor Society of Washington, D.C. as represented in its Mar-Ken Chapter is the highest of the many honor societies in the program of the school. There are four basic requirements for membership --- scholarship, character, leadership and service. Next in importance comes the Sigma Gamma Lambda, whose requirements are the same as the Honor Society itself with the exception of the 87.5 scholastic record that is required for the National Society. The Sigma allows the member to have an average of 80. Under both divisions there are junior societies, open to students who are in the Tenth grade or below.

In February, three new members were initiated into the National Honor Society in an impressive candlelight ceremony. Those inducted were Mike Hennagin, President, D'Ann Brigandi, and Sandy Hanauer. The program was conducted by Frank Kesling, past president of Mar-Ken's National Honor Society Chapter, and now a student at the University of California at Berkeley. Speakers for this very special occasion included Mrs. Bessire and four Alumnae members of the Society; Carmen Scarpitta, Sophomore at University of Southern California, Joel Davis, Sophomore at Occidental College, Ted Donaldsen, Junior at University of Southern California, and Ralph Freeto, Junior at University of California at Los Angeles.

## SENIOR'S FAREWELL

Mar-Ken's the place to go  
Mar-Ken we love you so  
Mrs. "B" and Kent and all the rest  
With spacious rooms and lovely grounds  
Our school days with joy abound  
Our school is certainly the best

Algebra, geometry  
Civics and history  
A student's work is never done  
Then there are activities  
So with all this work you see  
Still we have a goodly share of fun

School books, homework  
We're filled with them all day  
But these studies  
Will in future years help us on our way

When to college we proceed  
We'll have all the tools we need  
For an education that's tops  
Its great to study through  
Our high school years with you  
We'll love you all our lives - MAR-KEN!