

MESSAGE FROM FOUNDING CHAIRMAN, LYNN BOWLER, THE SOCIETY FOR THE PRESERVATION OF THE OLD OVERTON GYMNASIUM (SPOOG)

Moapa Valley High School opened its doors for education in a brown two story sculptured masonry building in September 1917. There were 28 students with two teachers and a principal. The first class graduated two years later with two students in 1919. The red brick "Old Gym" was added in 1938 as one of the many Federal Government's Public Works (WPA) Projects started to bring the country out of the Great Depression of the 1930's.

Through the years, the Old Gym became the center of community activity. It was the home of all high school and community athletic contests until the larger "New Gym" was built in 1964. In addition, it was the site of every community and school dance, as well as every dance review until its condemnation in 1990. Hundreds of students have fond memories of special activities held in the "Old Gym."

In 2001, after the "Old Gym" had been closed for ten years and fallen into disrepair, a group of citizens decided to renovate the historic old building that had served the community so well those many years. The group, consisting of Larry Moses, Lynn Bowler, Gary Batchelor, Kay Batchelor, Jon Turner, Ben Robison, Lance Robertson, Mary Lou Whitney, Joyce Jones, and Debbie Hardy organized a non-profit corporation for the purpose of raising funds and dealing with issues relevant to the renovation. It was their vision that the "Old Gym" had limitless possibilities in providing space for activities, a place where memories would once again be born, and reunions, formal dances, classes of all kinds, all forms of recreation as well as after school activities would once again fill the void left in the community by the loss of the "Old Gym."

Just as the project was getting underway, circumstances required that the Bachelors' and Jon Turner move away from the Moapa Valley, but the rest of the board stayed intact and, remaining actively involved, saw the project through to completion.

Over the following five years, almost \$900,000.00 was raised with result that can be seen today by visiting the "Old Gym." It has been beautifully restored beyond what any could have imagined. Its doors welcome all who wish to enjoy the richness of its history and the Board of Directors welcome all individuals in making use of its facilities.

As the first Chairman of this board, I want to express my thanks for all the help from this board, others in our community and all that is done to save our buildings and history. It is a pleasure for me to hand this beloved building over to the next Board of Directors and our community.

Lynn Bowler

Written in 2007 when the renovation was complete and the building held a GRAND OPENING

Q & A About SPOOG and Focus of The Old Overton Gym

Taken from OAG Application, Chris Green Author

Located: Moapa Valley Township APN 070-13-302-006

PROJECT SUMMARY:

Moapa Valley township is roughly 75 miles from Las Vegas and serves the unincorporated communities of Logandale, Overton, Overton Beach, and Stewarts Point. Among the many challenges of living geographically distant from a metropolitan area, Moapa Valley has few indoor facilities available for sport or large functions. Old Gym was a welcome sight for the youth and community of Overton, for the Clark County Parks Summer youth program offered a new AND air-conditioned space for their activities. Overton is notably the most densely populated community in Moapa Valley and also contains an increased numbers of low-income households and at risk families and children.

After years of renovation, Old Gym opened in April of 2006 and since, community members have filled our Old Gym with laughter, music and activity. The board of directors managed the facility with volunteers and soon found that it no longer met the needs of our building and community, and since hired a 16 hour per week manager.

While our community desires a new Community Recreation Center, it remains distant. The SPOOG Board continues to offer the Old Gym to the community as a perfect interim solution.

PROJECT DESCRIPTION:

The Old Gym was restored with Grants obtained from our State Historic Preservation Society and from our Board of County Commissioners. Old Gym opened their doors April of 2006 and have been operating completely on voluntary manpower, financial contributions and a small rental fee charged to the community for rent. It is now the responsibility of this Board to insure the facility remains in good repair, open and safe for Clark County School District, Clark County Recreation programs and the community in general to use. The board along with the supporting group of volunteers has logged over 2,400 hours to bring the business of Old Gym to this point. It became imperative for reaching the goals and vision of the Old Gym that a staff position to continue this work and be on site regular hours and whenever the building is in use and collect keys from current users of Old Gym. Old Gym Board continues to apply for County Outside Agency Grant and additional restoration funds through State Historical and Cultural departments.

SERVICE INITIATIVES:

Old Gym is first and foremost an overflow for local school and Clark County programs, and understand there is also a tremendous community need for a variety of indoor meeting space. Old Gym is located on the grounds of W.Mack Lyon Middle School, where our rural Overton community also has the only public swimming pool and also utilizes the campus grounds for outdoor community sports practices and games. Many days and evenings of the week the area is covered with a variety of activities. Old Gym is also right in the middle of the low-income and at risk families and is perfectly located for family and youth programs and a variety of public services. It is the mission of Old Gym to be able to fulfill a variety of public service needs and also expand and supplement the Clark County programs available, not compete with their services. The Board of Directors look forward to expanding the available family and youth programs to possibly include an after school homework club, Chess, Karate or comparable youth and teen leadership growth organization to attend and support the concentration of at risk families and youth in Moapa Valley.

The Old Gym remains a Clark County School District building and our lease agreement clearly states that school functions take precedence with the understanding that Clark County Parks and Recreation has an agreement enabling them to preferential treatment and to use the facilities also at no charge. The Old Gym enjoys a good working relationship with our valley schools and the staff of County Parks and Recreation and will continue to work together with our common goals in mind.

When CCSD and County programs are not using the facility, Old Gym makes available space for a fee with the goal of collecting revenue to keep the building in good repair and safe for all to use.

PREVIOUS ACCOMPLISHMENTS AND PROJECT IMPACT:

The volunteers and Board of Directors at the Old Gym are amazed at the volume of community activity at this treasured and restored building as Old Gym once again with laughter, music and fun. Through our doors have passed a variety of School and Community Sports games and practices; a wide variety of Family Events: weddings, parties, and reunions; Business or Club sessions: Moapa Valley Chamber of Commerce, Rotary Club of Moapa Valley, American Legion, Lins Market, Moapa Valley Water Company, Keller Williams Real Estate, and Avon; Health and Humanitarian Events: Red Cross Blood Drives, and American Cancer Society meetings; Community Enrichment Programs: Cub & Boy Scouts of America, Cinderella Pageants, Valley Orchestra, Community College programs and Political Caucus forums just to name a few. An estimated average monthly usage for Old Gym is 1,100 community members

NON PROFIT BUSINESS INFORMATION:

The Society for the Preservation of the Old Overton Gymnasium (SPOOG) :

Established: FEBUARY 2001

By Laws Adopted: APRIL 18th, 2001 Incorporated in State of Nevada: MAY 11th, 2001

THE HISTORICAL SIGNIFICANCE OF THE PROPERTY:

SOURCE: COMMISSION FOR CULTURAL AFFAIRS (CCA) FUNDING APPLICATION, DR. LARRY MOSES, AUTHOR

The Overton Gymnasium was built in 1938, and represents the Italian Renaissance Revival architectural style. Designed by Salt Lake City architect Miles M. Miller, the gymnasium was funded by the federal Works Progress Administration (WPA) program. The building retains a high degree of the important aspects of its integrity, especially in design, materials and workmanship. The building is on the National and State Historic Site Registers.

Built with Italian Renaissance Revival Style influence in a minimalist design format, it is representative of the historic context "Schoolhouse Architecture in Southern Nevada's Fifth Supervision District, 1870-1942" It is significant for its rare use of terra cotta and tented concrete brick. The Overton Gymnasium is illustrative of the School Support Building type in terms of its specialized use, which reflected the expanding education curriculum of the 1930's, and its functional design, which necessitated a larger physical structure with a large interior volume. The building is representative of the custom architecturally designed schoolhouse property as well.

School support buildings were important components of the expanding role of education that occurred beginning in the early 20th century. Their function and necessary large size often required designs and methods of construction quite different from traditional school buildings. Almost always designed by architects, and usually in the formal styles, the school support building became symbolic, not only of educational reform but also of community stature.

The Overton Gymnasium exemplifies the public architecture sponsored by the federal relief programs of the depression era. The federal government promoted subdued or minimal versions of the traditional styles associated with public buildings. Those styles are mostly

drawn from Italian Renaissance or classical examples. They also promoted the use of modern, fireproof materials, particularly concrete and steel. The design of the Overton Gymnasium that typify the Italian Renaissance Revival tradition are strict attention to symmetry at the principle facade, a division of the facade into three primary bays, and the classical detailing of the entry, pilasters and cornice. Other stylistic elements include low profile elevations and roof forms, and a sense of horizontally achieved through eave details and the first story cornice.