



BOB COOPER | LT VIEW

Ian Devoglaer and Rachel Baird were crowned homecoming king and queen for Lake Travis High School Oct. 14. See page 14A for the rest of the homecoming court.

LTISD

School district celebrates 30 years with homecoming bash

BY DEVIN MONK
reporter@ltview.com

Lake Travis ISD is no stranger to adversity. The district keeps good company with success, too.

As the district celebrated its 30th anniversary Friday, contemporary administrators and students compared notes with their counterparts who help launch the district and discovered that, no matter the era, overcoming challenges has led to progress.

Early educators and students toured facilities, viewed memorabilia and attended Homecoming volleyball and football games before being recognized at the start of the

football team's game against Vista Ridge.

Frank Jennings, LTISD's first superintendent who fostered school spirit by playing the banjo, listened to the roar of the crowd as the Cavaliers took the field.

"That reaction is emblematic of the fulfillment of our dreams," said Jennings who flew from Arizona to attend the event. "I've not seen anything but smiles on the kids' faces since I've been here. That's what we tried to establish from the get-go."

The realization of the district's vision didn't happen overnight for Lake Travis.

The first public school district to form in Texas in 25 years faced an uphill battle even before it began with opposition to

See **30 YEARS**, Page 5A



DEVIN MONK | LT VIEW

ABOVE LEFT: DJ Flash, also known as Rob Yacktman, spins some time-stopping hooks on Lake Travis Middle School Gov Club's Homecoming float. ABOVE RIGHT: Lake Travis Cavaliers varsity football players trade pigskins for Pixy Stix as they toss out candy at LTISD's Homecoming parade. BELOW LEFT: Lake Travis's first superintendent Frank Jennings, center, starts off the district's 30th anniversary celebration Friday by reuniting with first right tackle Jim Nichols, left, and quarterback Greg Pollock. BELOW RIGHT: State, county and Lakeway and Bee Cave leaders recognized Lake Travis ISD's 30th anniversary at Friday's Homecoming game with former educators and students.



30 YEARS

Continued from Page 1A

its split from Dripping Springs ISD in 1981.

"In that situation, both districts wanted to get as much as they could to continue their education for their kids. It took enormous time and energy to talk and communicate and defend our points," said Jennings who credited attorney Dick Allison with brokering a fair deal.

Current district leaders said the interaction with their early predecessors gave them a deeper appreciation for what it took to found the district that began with 541 students and now serves more than 7,300 children.

"It's nice to remind yourself that this just didn't happen; there's a heritage, and there's a history of people who came before and set all this up," said Susan Bohn, LTISD interim superintendent and general counsel. "Growth was a huge challenge for them; it's a huge challenge for us right now but also an opportunity."

In 1981, the district was huge on potential but short on resources.

George Jackson, LTISD's first athletic director and football coach, said it took some determined parents to get the football program going at the cash-strapped district.

"We didn't play football here the first year. The school board wasn't real hot about playing the second year," said Jackson who follows the team from his home in Conroe. "Football was a bad word, so to speak."

He remembered how one school board member suggested that offensive and defensive football players could swap helmets when not playing in order to save money.

Despite criticism from some quarters within the district, Lake Travis bolted out to a 9-1 record in its first season while playing all of its games on the road.

Jackson boasted that Lake Travis ISD was the first district in Texas to implement the "No Pass, No Play" rule in 1982 before the state passed Ross Perot's plan in 1983.

"The state was talking about it, but they weren't doing it. So Lake Travis went ahead and implemented it before anyone else did," he said. "That second year, we had a lot of injuries and a lot of kids that flunked out. We went 2-6-1 and then 5-5."

Ann "Aggie" Hall, who served as Lake Travis Elementary School's first princi-

pal in the new district, recounted the fledgling district's early years when all grades were housed on one site at Kollmeyer Drive and Ranch Road 620 and Jackson would sound an airhorn to change classes.

Hall said students didn't drink from water fountains; they used water hoses. All 12 teachers would occasionally pool their quarters, pile in a school bus and drive to Rosie's for tamales after school.

The new district experienced growing pains as more students moved in and it began to plan for new campuses.

"There was always discussions about where the next school was going to go, and what we were going to call it and where were the boundary lines [going to be], but it was a happy place," she said.

Current principal Karen Miller-Kopp welcomed Hall as she toured the campus early Friday.

"You go in a school today, and you are just so impressed with all that's going on and all the technology and all the students are offered," Hall said. "I'd like to think I played a part in that. I had fun and I tried hard."

Although Lake Travis Elementary School is in a different building than when Hall served as principal, Miller-Kopp said she appreciated the opportunity to learn more about the school's origins.

"It was really neat to hear all the great stories about what was going on and see how we have evolved. I feel like our campus - although very large - still has that close camaraderie," Miller-Kopp said.

As former administrators and students toured Lake Travis High School on Friday before attending the varsity volleyball and football Homecoming games, they could be heard commenting about the

advances and privileges LTISD students enjoy today.

"Y'all had Bunsen burners? We had matches," one former student mused.

Another student remembered having a soft drink vending machine in the cafeteria for two months before it was removed.

Gary Briley, LTISD director for extra-curricular programs, took interest in seeing the visitors' reactions to the new school buildings that spawned photo-snapping sessions in the middle of the road.

"It was a jaw dropper [for them]," Briley said. "They were as proud and worked as hard as we do now; they just had different circumstances back then."

He empathized with the district's founders as he recalled his days as a coach who started out in 1978 when

they lugged field sprinkler hoses around by hand, painted lines on the fields and repaired fences and nets.

"They wore more hats than we wear nowadays. It took that to get the job done," he said.

But successful traditions don't warrant much tinkering.

"If it's not broken, you don't want to try to start fixing things," Briley said. "Everybody has got on board and worked in a positive direction. Positives breed positives."

The district's efforts to accommodate new students and maintain standout programs motivate him to keep plugging away to ensure a bright future for the district.

"This is such a good place, they may have to stuff me and put me in a hallway somewhere," he said. "I may never leave."