

President's Circle DVH Comments 10/24/09
(Revised after event.)

Hello Everyone! Welcome to this 2009 President's Circle Dinner. It is wonderful to see you all tonight and I hope you all have a wonderful time here and at the show.

For 40 years, College of the Canyons has created the future that we have today. It is up to all of us to create the future that we want for tomorrow. And, that's why you're here –to help us do that!

As you all know, I am very happy to brag about this college – its faculty, staff and accomplishments until the cows come home, but we have places to go tonight, and we must move along.

Speaking of cows...

Forty years ago – in 1969 – the world was a very different place. So was Santa Clarita.

Forty years was a long time ago for all of us – in fact, there are some in the audience tonight who, I'm sure, weren't even alive in 1969! So let me refresh your memories on the way things were back then:

From a worldwide and national perspective, the year was a momentous one. Remember:

- Neal Armstrong and Edwin Aldrin became the first humans to **set foot on the moon**;
- **Sesame Street** debuted on the National Educational Television (NET) network;
- **Richard Nixon** became the 37th President of the U.S.;
- The **Boeing 747** flew for the first time;
- The **first ATM in the U.S.** was installed in Rockville Centre, New York;
- The movie "**Butch Cassidy and the Sundance Kid**" starring Paul Newman and Robert Redford was released as was that iconic biker movie, "**Easy Rider**," with Peter Fonda, Dennis Hopper and Jack Nicholson;
- The **Beatles "Abbey Road"** album was released worldwide;
- The miracle **New York Mets won the baseball World Series**;
- The first message was sent over the **ARPANET, the forerunner of the Internet**;
- The **first Wendy's restaurant** opened in Columbus, Ohio;
- The **first GAP store** opened in San Francisco, CA;
- The **average annual income was just \$8,550**;

- **Gasoline cost 35 cents** a gallon;
- 400,000 people gathered on a farm in upstate New York for three days of music, mud and mind-altering substances remembered today as "**Woodstock.**"
- And the **Vietnam War** continued.....

The Santa Clarita Valley looked a lot different in 1969 from what it looks like today, and the differences in the local landscape show just how far the whole area has come in 40 years. Back then:

- Residents marveled at the abundance of new fast food restaurants opening on **Lyons Avenue: Kentucky Fried Chicken, Taco Bell, and Jack in the Box** came on the scene. But, there was still no place to buy a bagel!
- **Downtown Newhall** was the established commercial center, featuring car dealerships, a supermarket, a bank and many other merchants that have since relocated.
- **Fine dining** options included the **Backwoods Inn** on Sierra Highway, the **Big Oaks Lodge** up Bouquet Canyon, and **Tip's** on Lyons Avenue.
- Other popular eateries included the venerable **Saugus Café, The Way Station, the Bamboo Café, and a Santa Clarita mainstay: Chi-Chi's Pizza.**
- After dinner, residents could catch a **movie** at the old **Mustang Drive-in** on Soledad, which had a double Clint Eastwood first-run bill of "The Good, The Bad and The Ugly" and "Hang 'em High."
- The **weather in 1969** was particularly dramatic. One storm system brought **18 inches of rain in 10 days**, and another added 6 more inches just days later.
- The **Hell's Angels** roared into town – **to film a men's suit commercial.**
- New **shopping** opportunities were becoming available in the Santa Clarita Valley. There wasn't a mall back then, but we had the **Sprouse Reitz dime store** at Market and San Fernando, and a **Sear's catalog shop** on Lyons Avenue.
- For **groceries**, people shopped at **Dillenbeck's** on Sierra Highway, and **Phil's Country Cousins** on Lyons, plus the **new Old Orchard Shopping Center on Lyons with a Safeway.**
- Lowe's and Home Depot weren't built yet. Just **Newhall Hardware** on San Fernando Road.
- Curiously, **there were no bookstores** at all in town.

Despite the dreary literary landscape, in 1969, signs of progress and change were evident all over town:

- **McBean Parkway opened for traffic**, and the first Valencia neighborhoods were being established.
- Homes sold in “Old Orchard I” and “Old Orchard II” for **\$25,000**, and the first houses in Valencia Hills became available.
- The **Friendly Valley** retirement community was under construction.
- **New housing tracts** were also sprouting up in **Saugus and Canyon Country**, leading to a population explosion.
- Two of the area’s **largest employers** were **Bermite** and **Flare Northern**, **both munitions companies** that no longer do business in Santa Clarita. There was nothing on the west side of the I-5 freeway, except more cows. There was **no** Westridge, **no** Stevenson Ranch, **no** WalMart, **no** Outback Steakhouse, **no** Claim Jumper.
- **Magic Mountain** was just in the planning stages.
- The old Highway 99 was steadily being circumvented by a major north-south freeway, **Interstate 5**, which would cut a swath through the Santa Clarita Valley, as would the 14 Freeway.
- The valley got its **first Department of Motor Vehicles office**, and residents rejoiced that they no longer had to drive all the way into San Fernando to renew licenses or register cars.
- Following California voters’ approval to bring state water south, construction was moving forward on a major **new State Water Project lake in Castaic**.
- **Canyon High School** opened, as did **Bowman High**, and the school board was busy debating whether sex-education classes should be taught.
- Ground was broken for the new **County Civic Center on Valencia Boulevard**, which is home to the **Valencia Library**, **Sheriff’s station**, and court buildings.
- There was **no Rockwell Canyon Road**.
- The neighborhoods of the **Summit and Woodlands didn’t exist**.
- To the south, **CalArts was under construction**.
- Just like today, there was a lot of building going on, and a once sleepy community was beginning to awaken.

And this campus?

- Well, the **Newhall Land and Farming Company owned the property** where we are sitting tonight and, yes, they grazed their vast herds of cattle here. We have uncovered some photos of “happy California cows” enjoying this area the hills that were once here, although whether they ever participated in a California Cheese commercial, we’ll never

know!

- Not unlike today, this area also was home to its fair share of wild creatures including cougars, bears, rabbits, hawks, lizards and, of course, rattlesnakes. In fact, locals called this area “**Rattlesnake Gulch**” for many years.
- The fledgling college district managed to purchase this 153.4 acres for **\$10,000 per acre** – which Tom Lee constantly reminds me was well below market value at the time. Newhall land even returned 10 percent of the purchase price as a donation to the new college.
- The **first classes were held at Hart High School in the evenings** after high school let out for the day, and the basketball team practiced in the Hart gym at 5 a.m.
- **Administrative offices** for the college were located on **Arch Street**, a strip-mall storefront just over the railroad track near San Fernando Road.
- The college organized its **first-year schedule** around the **quarter system** with the winter quarter starting January 7, 1970 and the spring quarter commencing April 8, 1970. There was no summer quarter.
- The **29 majors and 150 classes taught, by 31 full-time faculty**, were comprehensive for such a new institution.
- So we flash forward to today.
- While time has passed at a predictable rate for 40 years, there is a phenomenon -- a unique wrinkle in time -- that applies to College of the Canyons. More ideas sprout, more things get done, more buildings are designed and constructed, more money is raised, more partnerships are forged, more creativity occurs, more problems are solved, and more opportunities are exploited at College of the Canyons than at any other place I know of – given the same amount of time.

When I think about this phenomenon, I recall what Andy Warhol had to say about time: “They say that time changes things, but you actually have to change them yourself.”

For 40-years on this spot, time has been moving forward – slowly - if you count the individual seconds in each day – or recklessly fast – if you think back about everything that has been accomplished over the 40 years since College of the Canyons came into existence!

I am reminded of the Reverend Jesse Jackson’s thoughts about time. He said, “Time is neutral and does not change things. With courage and initiative, leaders change things.”

This college has been blessed with great leadership, great faculty, and community partners since the initial seeds for it were planted in 1967, through its first classes in 1969 and throughout the amazing 40 years that have brought us to the present. As time moved undeniably forward, outstanding leadership, insightful vision, clear and effective planning, great local need and an appreciative population changed things.

And those changes have been dramatic.

As we sit here tonight in the center of a beautifully quiet campus, it is hard to believe that this busy college:

- Serves 25,000 students each semester;
- Makes 109 degree and certificate programs available to students;
- Employs more than 506 full-time faculty and staff;
- Utilizes more than 2,500 networked computers every day through 51 computer labs;
- Will graduate more than 1000 each spring and transfer nearly 50 percent of our students to 4-year colleges and universities;
- Trains future nurses, firefighters and law enforcement personnel;
- Is home to the fantastic Santa Clarita Performing Arts Center;
- Operates and maintains a beautiful, well-used library that is about to be expanded;
- Has a one-of-a-kind, state-of-the-art, University Center where Santa Clarita Valley residents can earn bachelor's, master's and doctoral degrees without ever leaving the confines of our Valley;
- Hosts world-class art exhibits in its Gallery;
- Has a spectacular sports stadium with a professional Field Turf surface, two gymnasiums, a pool, a fitness center, and new tennis courts;
- Serves students on two outstanding campuses – our 154-acre property where we sit tonight and our 70-acre facility in Canyon Country;
- Operates two Child Development Centers located, one on each campus;
- Has been recognized – regionally, statewide and nationally - for our innovative and relevant programs. In the last year, several programs were honored:
 - ✓ our Institute of Teaching and Learning program,
 - ✓ our Service Learning program,
 - ✓ our Professional Development programs,
 - ✓ our intercollegiate sports programs,
 - ✓ our basic skills programs,
 - ✓ our Small Business Development programs,
 - ✓ and much more;
- Achieved the full six-year accreditation and received an astonishing 12 commendations from the college accrediting commission!

At the start, we have played an important role in the positive economic development of the Santa Clarita Valley and how what we do -- on a daily basis -- is key to helping the community in general and local businesses in particular. We provide employees with needed skill sets and training to keep businesses competitive. We are the place where the recently unemployed turn to get the education they need to get back on their feet and where thousands of people are turning for the education and skills they'll need to succeed in an uncertain future.

What I believe very strongly – and you've all heard me say this – is that in today's environment, we need to work together, to forge new and stronger partnerships, to focus on common goals, to identify possibilities and to roll up our collective sleeves to do whatever we can to create the future we want to have.

So what does my crystal ball say about the future?

Here are a few of the things I muse about:

- I believe that community colleges are the “graduate schools” of the future. While I don't think that the need for master's and doctoral degrees will go away completely, I sense that the workplace; the rapidly-increasing evolution of technology; the constant need to learn specific, immediate-need and perhaps short-lived skills; the narrowing in scope and function of computer and software applications; the shorter life-spans of companies based on the increasing speed of product obsolescence; will require places like community colleges to train and educate increasingly larger segments of our population on a repeat basis. We are already seeing, in our current economy, the return of people with graduate degrees to community college campuses to gain the “nuts-and-bolts skills” they need in order to get or maintain jobs, and I see that trend increasing.
- In this regard, I don't think we'll need to “sell” specialized training to future populations (sorry marketing department!), because the workplaces of the future will dictate what skills people will need to have. It is simple. If someone wants a job in the future, they will need to gain specific training to get that job. And that training will come from places like College of the Canyons.
- I see a future where constant “change” will define the global workplace and society in general. We will all have to accommodate change by being a whole lot more flexible than we generally are today. Leaders of the future will need to embrace the idea of fewer and fewer “constants” when it comes to running institutions and successful leaders will be identified by their ability to “react” effectively and quickly to a rapidly-changing corporate and political landscapes. Change will also create a new business and corporate paradigm: one in which “tried and true methodologies” will necessarily give way to a much more dynamic environment where “form is more likely to follow function” than the other way around.
- Getting a little more “down-to-earth” in my predictions, I see a world where community colleges will be recognized by state funding gurus for the key services they provide. This is good. Unfortunately, I also see a prolonged period in which state funding of community colleges will continue to fall dramatically short of the needs of our communities. I see colleges like this one:

- ✓ seeking and achieving diversification of its funding streams to include more grants from multiple sources;
- ✓ developing more synergy and partnerships with businesses to stretch our dollars while we provide critical training;
- ✓ intelligently and passionately pursuing more donations, more scholarships, more endowments, more legacy gifts, more opportunities to receive “private” support of our college than ever before.

- I also see a distinct advantage for College of the Canyons as it competes for its share of “shrinking” resources. For forty years, we have proven that our legacy of innovation, creativity, responsiveness, responsibility and forward thinking sets us apart from other colleges and other entities that are competing for the same resources. I am confident that this advantage will be a tremendous asset for College of the Canyons and, frankly, look forward to our success as we press forward in competitively seeking funds.
- The products, industries and resulting workplace skills of the future will continue to evolve – demanding changes in what we teach and how we teach it. There is no doubt that the future is bright for innovations in renewable energy; wind power; “green” technologies; natural resource management and conservation; “clean,” environmentally sensitive manufacturing; mini-micro computer advances; nanotechnology advancements in both engineering and biotechnology fronts; advancements in medicine and medical research. The list goes on and on, but you get the idea. Community Colleges will be on the forefront of providing the training, education and skills for future generations to be competitive in these fields.

The future that I see for College of the Canyons and all community colleges is exciting! I personally refuse to get swept up in the state’s current economic situation, nor do I have any intention of slacking off on moving this college aggressively forward.

As I was driving down California 395 in August with some women friends from COC,, we noticed a sign along the side of the road near a small town. It said in very bold letters: “We refuse to participate in the recession.”

This simple phrase tickled my funny bone and made me think. Although I know that the current economic woes have put some people out of work, have resulted in the tragedy of home foreclosures and personal bankruptcies, and have impacted the viability of some of our businesses – and I am sad about those cases – I admired the spunk, the tenacity and the never-give-up message that that roadside sign expressed. I think we should all adopt it, embrace it, and use it as a source of motivation to overcome whatever obstacles are in our way – now and in the future.

I’m sure that most everyone here is familiar with the phrase, “May you live in interesting times.” It has been attributed both as an ancient Chinese curse and as a Chinese proverb. No one really knows where it actually originated, although researchers at Yale University can’t find any reference to it in Chinese history or literature. Nonetheless, there is at least one additional part to the phrase that I find very interesting. It is, “May you find what you are looking for.”

If you combine the two - "May you live in interesting times and find what you are looking for" – I think it simply defines where we all are today. We are experiencing challenges and, as Andy Warhol observed, it is up to us to define and find what we are looking for.

Together, all of us have the capacity and the need to create our future. As I look out on the crowd this evening, I see individuals who have made the commitment to help shape the future of this college and this valley. Your support of the many programs of the College of the Canyons Foundation – from the various "Friends" groups, to scholarships, endowments, to athletics and academics, to the University Center and other important programs – ultimately touches lives and creates a positive future for many students who would otherwise not have the opportunity for a solid education. Your financial and volunteer support, particularly in these challenging times, makes a huge difference.

I thank you for your past support of our programs and for whatever you are able to do in the future.

As business and community leaders, I again invite you to sit down together and develop new, imaginative and productive partnerships so we can weather the times we are going through now as well as lay a solid foundation for the future.

You all know the passion with which I believe the following: If you can imagine it, you can become it. If you can dream it, you can do it. Together, we can build on the past 40 years of excellence and move boldly, confidently and intelligently into an unknown, but exciting future.

Before I conclude, I do have one final observation about 1969, the Age of Aquarius, hippies, flower power, flower children, the love generation, the generation gap, and all of those things that defined 1969. And, that is about your outfits tonight.

Tie-dye is fun, colorful, daring and particularly appropriate attire for the show we will be heading off to in the next few minutes. But if anyone gets carried away in the spirit of 1969 after you leave the performance of "Hair" and get arrested by the local Sheriffs, don't call us. We don't know you!

Enjoy the show everyone!

