**Ed Zindel Remembers the Ponds Memorial Building**

**1/2/2019**

[**Ed Zindel**](https://www.facebook.com/profile.php?id=100006943442910&fref=gs&__tn__=%2CdC-R-R&eid=ARCSAgBC60Hn4jrBo_mqHIj3321KsPQVf2q-PvQlcwEF2P9_PX4zu0Uu85a0Q3r4wAy9V4NK5HCcZlba&hc_ref=ARTFORFkg4PMBA8EkrRzSlakawiop1kQ52k4jNSe-9JVb1QgYRUMAJ0uoJOPu26CtfM&dti=293810620794221&hc_location=group)

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The Ponds Memorial Building

My first visit to the Memorial Building was in 1955 at age eight. Jonas Salk’s polio vaccine had just become available, and every kid in Oakland lined up for the first of three injections. A curtain was set up near the stage, and a line of kids went across the room and out the door. From the line we could watch the nurse fix the syringe and pass it to the doctor, followed by the occasional sound of a wailing kid behind the curtain. This was a distinctly unpleasant experience for young kids who could neither comprehend the colossal benefit of this historic vaccine, nor understand why it had to be done with such haste.

In 1957, Mr. McRae held Oakland’s first wood shop classes in the basement of the Memorial Building. He was a very nice man and an incredible asset to both the students and the school. We built electrified pump lamps that looked like antique water pumps and gun racks, (Yup, gun racks), and I still have them today. We finished them with brushed orange shellac, and I remember Mr. McRae telling us that Mr. Casaleggio had stopped by and commented that the unfinished projects looked very professional, but after the finish was applied they were a bit sloppy.

Mr. McRae then repeated his finishing demonstration, and emphasized how important finishing was to the appearance of the final product. Shop classes at Ramapo were a very disappointing step down from Mr. McRae’s excellent classes where (incredibly) we were taught to safely use stationary power equipment at age 10-11. To Mr. McRae I attribute my lifelong love of fine woodworking. To Mr. Casaleggio, the extra care I have always taken when finishing my work.

We also used the basement for gym classes, where we learned to tumble on gym mats and drill and March. Additionally, we participated in calisthenics and learned to bowl on the two very nice maple duckpin alleys that were built along the south wall of the building. The duckpin balls were slightly larger than a softball with no finger holes, and 10 short squat pins were placed very close together at the end of the narrow alleys. Above and behind the pins were seats where pin spotters sat and waited to put downed pins back on their marks and return the balls. I loved both the bowling and the pin spotting and remember that strikes and spares were very easy to come by on those beautifully varnished old lanes.

We used the upstairs auditorium for evening dances called sock hops. The music came from an amplified 45 RPM turn table, and beverages and snacks were served on a folding table set up at the foot of the stage on the right side. I also recall that dance participation was fairly low, because many (including I) stood around and awkwardly watched as others danced the Boogie Woogie, Bunny Hop, and Bop. At one Halloween party I recall delicious unpasteurized, unfiltered apple cider and homemade donuts.

There was also a jail cell which had a sturdy wooden door with one small barred window located at the far end of the basement opposite the bowling alleys. This was where Police Chief Joe Woods once threw Oakland’s drunks and/or disorderly persons. When gym classes were held there, the end of the basement near the cell was kept dark, but some of us found it fascinating to visit the cell and peek through the window. Eventually the teacher would find us and chase us back.

In 1967-1968, I made my last trip to the Memorial Building which had then been converted to a library. Mrs Proskey and Mrs Adams worked there and one of them churned out blue and white copies for me (then called dittos) with a mimeograph machine.

My thanks to Kevin for mentioning the Ponds Memorial Building in his post which brought back such fond memories.

**Facebook Comments**

* [**Bob Bembridge**](https://www.facebook.com/bob.bembridge.3) Jonas Salk declined to patent his polio vaccine so it would be available to all children. Salk was a real hero, unlike so many lowlife professional athletes that people look up to.

**[Paula Storrer Nauss](https://www.facebook.com/paula.storrernauss)** I think we’re talking apples to oranges.. Jonas Salk, doctor, scientist : lowlife professional athletes? Can’t equate the two.

[**Leslie Valente**](https://www.facebook.com/leslie.valente) Thank you, Paula. I agree.

Top of Form

[**Amanda Howard**](https://www.facebook.com/profile.php?id=100011295786973) Ed Zindel-you have amazing recall!

[**Ellen Simonelli**](https://www.facebook.com/ellen.simonelli.5) Dear Ed: It is always a pleasure to read your memories....continue- please! Best regards- Ellen!

[**Kevin Heffernan**](https://www.facebook.com/profile.php?id=100009305999629)[https://static.xx.fbcdn.net/rsrc.php/v3/yZ/r/Mbz9o9urRmo.png](https://www.facebook.com/groups/293810620794221/badge_member_list/?badge_type=ADMIN) [Ed Zindel](https://www.facebook.com/profile.php?id=100006943442910&hc_location=ufi)...Thank you for an outstanding article. It very well articulates the evolving history of the Ponds Memorial Building over the years when it was first opened in 1936 and its importance to Oakland since and to the present day.

[](https://www.facebook.com/photo.php?fbid=2196258544027657&set=p.2196258544027657&type=3)

[**Arlene Theresa**](https://www.facebook.com/arlene.kaufman) Great, wonderful memories- thank you . I believe Dr. Canavan gave me my polio vaccine. I was so frightened.

[**Maureen Ryan Wisniewski**](https://www.facebook.com/mrwisniewski) Mine and all my siblings also!

[**Ed Zindel**](https://www.facebook.com/profile.php?id=100006943442910)[https://static.xx.fbcdn.net/rsrc.php/v3/yZ/r/Mbz9o9urRmo.png](https://www.facebook.com/groups/293810620794221/badge_member_list/?badge_type=ADMIN) I remember Canavan also and that the second shot seemed worse than the first.Top of Form

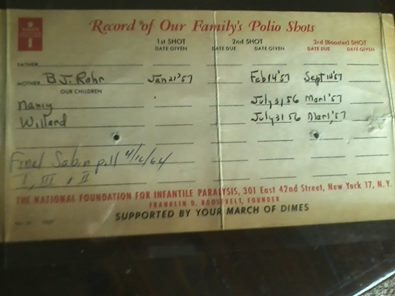
Bottom of Form

* [](https://www.facebook.com/janet.clarkricat)

[**Janet Clark Ricat**](https://www.facebook.com/janet.clarkricat) I remember big Christmas Bazaars being held in this building. As brownies, about 1957-8, we worked there towards badges. I don’t recall who ran these bazaars, but I do remember my mom making homemade candles to sell.

[**Arlene Theresa**](https://www.facebook.com/arlene.kaufman) I loved those bazars. Santa would be there and hand out colorful boxes of hard Christmas candisBottom of Form

[**Nancy Tintle**](https://www.facebook.com/nancy.tintle.52) [Ed Zindel](https://www.facebook.com/profile.php?id=100006943442910&hc_location=ufi), I was 8 at the end of WWII, at which time polio was prevelant. During summer in those years pubic swimming sites were closed (from time to time) due to concerns over polio contagin. One September our elementary school was quarenteen due t…[See More](https://www.facebook.com/groups/293810620794221/permalink/1242414512600489/)

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[**Paula Storrer Nauss**](https://www.facebook.com/paula.storrernauss) I too remember the polio shots at the Memorial Building. It was horrifying, but needed.

**[Alex Kuh](https://www.facebook.com/akkuhns)** And here we are in 2018, where anyone with an internet connection and time on their hands can tell people that vaccines are dangerous and can find a receptive audience.

[**Paula Storrer Nauss**](https://www.facebook.com/paula.storrernauss) [Alex Kuh](https://www.facebook.com/akkuhns?hc_location=ufi) could be dangerous I don’t know, but they sure did wipe out polio! That why we don’t need those dangerous polio vaccinations anymore.

[**Alex Kuh**](https://www.facebook.com/akkuhns) [Paula Storrer Nauss](https://www.facebook.com/paula.storrernauss?hc_location=ufi) that’s my point. Scientists knew that the polio vaccine worked and that it would make a major difference in public health. Today, there aren’t any kids getting crippled due to polio because people listened to scientists, and not random celebrities on the internet telling them that vaccines aren’t good for their childrenBottom of Form

[**Theresa Kilroy**](https://www.facebook.com/profile.php?id=100009210945224) My grandfather worked for a short time at Pines Church as a janitor when I went with him and had left over milk and cookies from Sunday school

[**Theresa Kilroy**](https://www.facebook.com/profile.php?id=100009210945224) It smelled of Pine Sol, so apprapot

[**Sue Douglass**](https://www.facebook.com/sue.douglass.716) I remember the bowling alley downstairs and the stage we used for shows for the brownies

[**Mark Shulman**](https://www.facebook.com/mark.shulman.5) Fascinating to say the least.

[**Liesa Learsch DeNardo**](https://www.facebook.com/liesa.learschdenardo) I remember getting the vaccine via sugar cubes. Not sure if this is a real memory or creative one.

[**Kerry Segel Reisinger**](https://www.facebook.com/kerry.segel) [Liesa Learsch DeNardo](https://www.facebook.com/liesa.learschdenardo?hc_location=ufi) I do too.

[**Liesa Learsch DeNardo**](https://www.facebook.com/liesa.learschdenardo) Glad to know im no totally loosing it. My memory is clearly not as good as the author of the original post.

[**Ellen Simonelli**](https://www.facebook.com/ellen.simonelli.5) [Liesa Learsch DeNardo](https://www.facebook.com/liesa.learschdenardo?hc_location=ufi) I did, too! From our school nurse - the wonderful Mrs. Oldenburg (sp?)!

[**Dave Barwick**](https://www.facebook.com/dave.barwick.39) The Sabin vaccine which came along a few years after the Salk was given on a sugar cube to entice kids to eat it.

[**Sue Proskey March**](https://www.facebook.com/sue.proskeymarch) [Ellen Simonelli](https://www.facebook.com/ellen.simonelli.5?hc_location=ufi) Mrs Oldenburg-an old family friend, and [Ed Zindel](https://www.facebook.com/profile.php?id=100006943442910&hc_location=ufi) mother in law!

[**Ellen Simonelli**](https://www.facebook.com/ellen.simonelli.5) [Sue Proskey March](https://www.facebook.com/sue.proskeymarch?hc_location=ufi) I know! Ed is an in law and friend of my family! 😀

[**Leslie Valente**](https://www.facebook.com/leslie.valente) Hi Sue, Ellen and I are Kirchners. My brother George is married to Ed’s sister Kathy. We grew up with whole family.

[**Sue Proskey March**](https://www.facebook.com/sue.proskeymarch) [Ellen Simonelli](https://www.facebook.com/ellen.simonelli.5?hc_location=ufi) I didn't realize Ed was your inlaw. and [Leslie Valente](https://www.facebook.com/leslie.valente?hc_location=ufi) I certainy remember your name-and how close friends Ed was with Walter. I have seen Ed and Elaine a few times in the past few years-always interesting conversation!

[**Paula Storrer Nauss**](https://www.facebook.com/paula.storrernauss) [Liesa Learsch DeNardo](https://www.facebook.com/liesa.learschdenardo?hc_location=ufi) you are correct. Those of us that got those horrid shots at Ponds Memorial were also given the polio vaccine on sugar cubes in school years later.

[**Ellen Simonelli**](https://www.facebook.com/ellen.simonelli.5) [Sue Proskey March](https://www.facebook.com/sue.proskeymarch?hc_location=ufi)😜

[**Ellen Simonelli**](https://www.facebook.com/ellen.simonelli.5) [Sue Proskey March](https://www.facebook.com/sue.proskeymarch?hc_location=ufi) 😀

[**Ann Hutcheson Scussell**](https://www.facebook.com/ascussell) I remember the sugar cubes. I think in Kindergarten or 1st grade( i was born in 1957) Mrs. Oldenburg was so kind as our school nurseTop of FormBottom of Form

[**Dave Barwick**](https://www.facebook.com/dave.barwick.39) For a time before the town got too big for it they held a christmes party in the Memorial Building for all the kids in town. It was secular so even Jewish kids came. There was a movie, treats, singing, and then Santa showed up with a present for each kid.

[**Leslie Valente**](https://www.facebook.com/leslie.valente) I remember that, tooTop of FormBottom of Form

[**Tim Yu**](https://www.facebook.com/tim.yu.5036) I remember playing one of the three wise men in our Christmas play there, I believe it was 3rd or 4th grade, around 1960. We had our Cub Scout pack meetings there...Pack 311. Larry Edelman’s dad was the pack leader. I can hear the floor boards creaking...thanks for the memories!

[**Sue Proskey March**](https://www.facebook.com/sue.proskeymarch) So-maybe someone remembers this-there was a play in the building. (which one? I don't remember) . My grandmother, Ethel, was still teaching 6th grade-so it was maybe 1960 ish, and I think sje came up with this idea. My father was asked if they could …[See More](https://www.facebook.com/groups/293810620794221/permalink/1242414512600489/)

[**Dave Barwick**](https://www.facebook.com/dave.barwick.39) Sue, your grandmother was my 6th grade teacher and the best teacher I ever had. Tough but caring, she made you learn and you learned a lot.

[**Leslie Valente**](https://www.facebook.com/leslie.valente) Mrs.Aeschbach????

[**Sue Proskey March**](https://www.facebook.com/sue.proskeymarch) [Leslie Valente](https://www.facebook.com/leslie.valente?hc_location=ufi) oh I remember her too-she was friends with my grandmother.

[**Sue Proskey March**](https://www.facebook.com/sue.proskeymarch) [Dave Barwick](https://www.facebook.com/dave.barwick.39?hc_location=ufi) how I wish all teachers would be like her-she really taught a LOT!

[**Leslie Valente**](https://www.facebook.com/leslie.valente) Sue Proskey March both my brothers and I had her for sixth grade. I was with her when it was first announced that JFK was assassinated. It was a boy named Teddy,whose last name I can’t remember, who ran in to the empty classroom in Valley School ( it was dismissal time) and told us. She admonished him not to tell tales. But a moment later we found out it was true.   
  
She was a truly great teacher.

[**Sue Proskey March**](https://www.facebook.com/sue.proskeymarch) [Leslie Valente](https://www.facebook.com/leslie.valente?hc_location=ufi) what a memory. I remember that day-and think I was in 2nd grade-everyone horrified, and nobody knew what was going to happen.

TopBottom of Form

[**Douglas Bagge**](https://www.facebook.com/douglas.bagge) [Ed Zindel](https://www.facebook.com/profile.php?id=100006943442910&hc_location=ufi), thank you for posting your entertaining reminiscences. I had fun memories of the Pond Memorial building as the public library. As a kid, I would ride there on my bicycle from the other end of town, and usually take a couple of laps around t…[See More](https://www.facebook.com/groups/293810620794221/permalink/1242414512600489/)

[**Herbert Meron**](https://www.facebook.com/herb.meron) [Douglas Bagge](https://www.facebook.com/douglas.bagge?hc_location=ufi) perfectly stayed Doug. That is exactly what I remembered of Mr. McRae! He was a gem and I learned so much from him! Sad that “Shop” as we called it is not such a part of schooling!

[**Douglas Bagge**](https://www.facebook.com/douglas.bagge) [Herbert Meron](https://www.facebook.com/herb.meron?hc_location=ufi) you lived around the corner from Heights. Was it because of shop class? For that matter, the second fire station was built on your corner. Was that because of shop class?

[**Herbert Meron**](https://www.facebook.com/herb.meron) [Douglas Bagge](https://www.facebook.com/douglas.bagge?hc_location=ufi) You’re funny?! I’m just remembering how I had learned so much. Never followed that trend. Yes, it was a good time to grow up in OaklandTop of F

Bottom of Form

[**Leslie Valente**](https://www.facebook.com/leslie.valente) I think that was my first visit. I remember too vividly my polio vaccine. Fairly certain I got my smallpox vaccination there, as well. In my thigh, not my arm. There used to be fairs in there, as well. I remember going home with goldfish! Definitely the mid fifties, Ed. So my first time may have been the same as yours. I know it was before kindergarten started...

[**Leslie Valente**](https://www.facebook.com/leslie.valente) And bird. But the bird died.

Top Bottom of Form

[**Theresa Kilroy**](https://www.facebook.com/profile.php?id=100009210945224) Yes that was the oral Sabin vaccine as opposed to the Salk injectable live virus after that. I know this as a nurse.Top of Form