

The Panther Den

How It Started

by Marvin Crim, WLWHS 1957



"It was a dark and stormy night."

I've always admired Snoopy's creative genius. I feel that same spark (I'm tryin' to think but nothin's happening) as I try to put this to words. Many have asked and few know how the Panther Den Online started . . . sooooo, here we go.

A home page? Why not? So many Internet providers allow free space for each subscriber to post their personal web page(s) online as part of their membership privileges. But a home page? Consisting of what? And putting a page online couldn't be easy . . . !!?

During the fall of 1998, I thought about the possibility of a "Panther Den" or something like it . . . already existing on the Internet. I felt I was experiencing the Internet as a latecomer . . . and that among other things . . . someone . . . somewhere . . . somehow . . . had developed a web site similar to a "Classmates" web site . . . just for Elwood, Indiana. I spent quite some time searching for such a web site and could find nothing. The choice was obvious for me. Why not use the "Panther Den" as a theme . . . and build an interest in letting other Internet users who grew up in and around Elwood . . . and anyone with an interest in Elwood . . . in using the "Panther Den" as a common channel for staying in touch and letting others know about what we were doing.

We . . . ??? I hadn't put a single page online yet. I had grown fond of Netscape Communicator and soon discovered Netscape Composer. It allows you to simply input your own text . . . insert images, sound files . . . and set the page attributes . . . without having to learn to write "html" tags. In the early months of 1999, I set about putting some ideas together along with a few files I'd found online. It wasn't long until I

had my "Panther Den" web page . . . ready to publish to the worldwide web? How on earth does anyone do that? This was looking to be more trouble than it must be worth. But a little searching found that AT&T, my Internet provider, offered a shortcut to publish their member's home pages to the Internet . . . and after a few miscues . . . I found I could access . . . from the Internet . . . my very own . . . one page . . . home page, the "Panther Den." The home page of today's "Panther Den" . . . <http://www.elwood.org/pantherden> (no longer valid) . . . closely resembles that very first page I posted online in April of 1999.

I knew Loretta (Jarvis) Dodd '56 worked at the Elwood Public Library and stopped her one day to mention my idea and what I had posted to the web. I gave her the address for my home page, mentioning that I used the Panther Den as a theme and maybe she'd find it interesting. I wanted her to take a look at it and let me know what she thought. On my next visit to the library, she had yet to take a look at it and I sensed a reluctance to give it serious consideration. Oh, well . . . maybe I could tinker with it over the next few weeks or so . . . and find someone . . . anyone . . . who might at least give it a look.

Well, something happened. I don't remember the exact details . . . but Loretta let me know . . . she had finally taken a look at that home page of mine . . . and you won't believe what she admitted to doing . . . I think she was in the Indiana Room at the library . . . and when she saw the suggestion to "Please stand . . . click [here](#) . . . and join in!" . . . well, she did exactly that. I think she'll tell you today that once she heard Elwood's Fight Song, she was hooked.

We soon added several who were in touch with Loretta along with some that I contacted inviting them to take a look at our "Panther Den." I found a couple of html tags I could use to enhance the web pages, added another couple of pages now and then . . . and opened a mail list that started with about with about 16 people.

It wasn't long until I heard from Teresa (Dickey) Hollowell '78 who had secured the domain for the Elwood web site. We discussed the possibility of the Panther Den placing its home page on the www.elwood.org web site to give it worldwide web access. It's worked extremely well for both of us and we're in the process of eventually moving the entire Panther Den to the Elwood site. Teresa's involvement helped us turn the corner.

The Panther Den is a work in progress.

Each of the pages was an idea simply published to the Internet and thus shared so easily with anyone who has access to a computer. There will soon be the need for new names and faces to step up and assist with the upkeep of this web site. The Hall Clock is a weekly column. The Megaphone is a monthly newsletter published online. And the mail list needs constant attention.

But now . . . anyone wanting a means of contacting and staying in touch with old classmates and friends, teachers, new acquaintances . . . and their old home town of Elwood, Indiana . . . can do that . . . the same way most of us always did . . . by gathering at the Panther Den. It has indeed . . . been my pleasure . . . !!!

Transport me . . . in the twinkling of an eye . . . to the [Lynx](#) page.