



The Hope Farm / Greer School
Alumni Association
Newsletter



December 2013



**Season's Greetings Everyone
Many Happy Returns.**

This is the fifth of the newsletters to be published by Peggy Mathewson Sparks and Tony Vaz. We hope you are enjoying the on-coming winter and all the memories of Greer School and Hope Farm that it brings.



The Hope Farm Quarterly – January 1, 1930

Snow Memories

The ground is covered deep with snow.
The tiny flakelets come and go.
The trees bend in the wintry wind.
Their icy branches, long and thin.
A snow ball whizzes past my ear –
This is the coldest time of year.
Children with sleds and skates do run.
They play and play till the day is done.
And ere they are tucked in bed each night,
They watch from the window earth's blanket white.
They hear the passing sleigh bells ring
And wonder what tomorrow will bring.
At last when winter begins to die
And snows into brooklets go dashing by
New life buds forth from the cold ground
And the soft spring air bears enchanting sound.
The first spring robin has come to stay
King Winter is dead! – and Spring holds sway!

Mary Kane, 7th grade



Skating at the Res

Sadly, We Have Learned

Coach Joseph Fischer passed away in July 2013

Memories of Joe Fischer

Other than specific events in my life (birthdays, graduation, marriage), I do not remember most dates. However, there is one day at Greer I still remember after all of these years and this is May 4th, 1957. Each spring when the month of May begins, I vividly remember the day Coach Fischer took the Daisy Cottage boys down to the Polo Grounds in New York City to see the New York Giants baseball team play the Cincinnati Reds. I also remember the score of the game and who pitched for the Giants. While I am at a loss to explain why this day's events remain etched in my mind over 50 years later, I can say and feel that this day remains as a special memory of Coach Fischer, and was typical of the many positive things Joe Fischer and his wife Bea did for those of us who attended Greer between 1948-1957 when the Fischer's were on the staff at Greer.

All the staff at Greer had to wear several hats, but Joe Fischer wore as many hats as anyone. He was a teacher, coach of three sports, scoutmaster, recreation director, and along with his wife, Bea, house parents at Daisy Cottage.



More? How about coach of the Daisy midget football and baseball teams. Aquatics director each summer at the "res", and ran the movie projector each Friday night in the high school auditorium. My guess is Joe's two sons and some of you could recall other contributions made by Coach Fischer.

During his last year at Greer I was a 12 year old at Daisy and a person at this age does not appreciate all the time and effort that adults do

for them, but as I look back on it from today's perspective I cannot imagine how he found the time and energy to accomplish all of these tasks.

The famous artist, Andy Warhol once said that in everyone's life, we all have our "15 minutes" in the sun when we, as individuals, are recognized by others for doing something special. I feel Joe's 15 minutes would be coaching a very small school's football team for almost four years in a row without a defeat. However, I am not sure Joe would say that was his most important accomplishment as he had so many "15 minute" highlights throughout his life.

In retirement, Joe lived just north of where I worked and lived in New Hampshire, and years ago, I drove up to South Burlington, Vermont to see him one spring day. He took me out to lunch and we spent the day in his retirement home remembering Greer. He was in his mid-80's by then, but his enthusiasm for life and his great memories of Greer made for a great time for the both of us. Greer was blessed by both Joe and Bea's contributions to our lives. Thanks for the way you helped guide and mentor our lives: Bless you Joe and Bea Fischer.

John Hudnor, Greer (Class of 63)

Another Train Show – Another Reunion

The day after Thanksgiving, my wife and I traveled to Fort Meyers, Florida with an overnight stop in Lake City. We arrived in Fort Meyers on Saturday afternoon, checked into our motel and got cleaned up for an evening visit with a couple that I hadn't seen in 53 years. Gary and Cherri Abrahamsen Wood live across the Caloosahatchee River in Cape Coral. I had contacted Cherri before our trip to let her know we would be in town for the train show in Fort Meyers on Sunday. She graciously responded with an invitation to have dinner with them and catch up on lost time.

Cherri is an excellent cook of Chinese food. Not sure how much Gary contributed, but he helped with the translations. She made homemade Hot and Sour soup, Ma Yi Shang Shu (Ants Climbing A Tree), Jiaozi (Steamed Dumplings, which are

called Pot Stickers in California and maybe other places) and fried rice.

Since we didn't know much about Gary and Cherri's life style, we weren't sure what to bring as a house warming gift, so we brought a ginger bread house kit knowing that they had taken on the responsibility to raise two of their grandsons. Cherri reports that the ginger bread house has been completed and ready to eat.



We spent a few hours after dinner chatting with Gary and Cherri and just catching up.

Sunday, we attended the train show and were able to pick up a few Christmas presents for a grand-nephew who has gotten into model railroading. We then left for Orlando to pick up some orchid growing supplies on Monday before returning home. Sorry, Danny – catch you next trip.

Tony Vaz (Class of 61)

Contributions

As expected, contributions to the newsletter fund have fallen off as requested in the last newsletter. Any contributions for the newsletter, reunion or general benefit of the alumni association should be directed to Doug and Mitzi Berry [REDACTED].

The few donations that have been sent to the Mississippi or Minnesota addresses since have been forwarded to the Berrys at the address above. They are as follows:

Kenneth Albrecht	\$ 20.00
Patricia Jordan Picco	\$ 50.00
Roland Herwig	\$ 50.00
Pamela Stobbe Todd	\$ 25.00
Vera Lee Jones Coutant	\$125.00

Thank you all.

Additionally, thanks go out to the following for discontinuing their need for a hard copy of the newsletter:

Susie Murray Scott



Loren Shirar - A Model of Enthusiasm

Greer was very lucky to have the services of history and art teacher, Loren Shirar from 1958-1960. Loren was also the assistant football coach during these same two years he was at Greer.

It is easy to smile when I think of Loren because there are many positive things I remember about Loren, but the one quality which stands out in my mind is his enthusiasm. There is no doubt that in the teaching profession, enthusiasm goes a long way in determining how well your students will participate in the class you are teaching and more importantly, I know that Loren's enthusiasm was a huge influence on me. Even students who did not care for some of the teaching strategies I employed in my class would still give me credit for being enthusiastic, and I give much credit to Loren for being a great role model.

Loren was in charge of Greer's art club and each week during the fall season, the art club would make a colorful poster to support the boys and girls athletic teams. This poster was put in front of the entrance of the high school auditorium for all to see and was much appreciated. Although these posters might seem like a small thing to do, I remember them very well and appreciate Loren's efforts to promote enthusiasm and support of Greer's athletics.



Because we did not live day-to-day with our parents, we depended on our staff at Greer to do things such as what Loren did to enrich our lives. So thank you, Loren, for helping to make me and all the other Greer students better and more enthusiastic persons.

John Hudnor, Greer (Class of 63)

Ed. note: Loren also had a detail he was given along with a helper (yours truly). The job was to repair or rebuild the fire pits at each cottage that had fallen into some state of disrepair. It was my first experience in the "art" of masonry.



The Hope Farm Quarterly – January 1, 1929



"Where Love Is" – Annual Play Pleases

It is customary for us to have at least one play or pageant for Christmas. The one usually given, "Where Love Is", was held in the auditorium on December 20th.

The story, written by Tolstoi, deals with the life of a poor Russian cobbler. It was dramatized by Miss Helen Lyons, a former English teacher and is more of a pantomime.

The scene is laid in Martin's cellar. Martin, himself one of the poorest of men, has lost his wife and a child. His wife dies after having been sick for a few short weeks. From his wife, whom he had loved with all his soul, his affection is centered upon his child, Kapitan. A short time after the death of his wife, the boy follows and the heartbroken Russian peasant, left alone, begins to murmur and berate God for having robbed him of both wife and child.

The play itself is composed of three acts and is a story with a basis of love and reverence. The gospels are not difficult to understand as old Ivan, a snow shoveler, discovers when read by Martin. And love and comfort is not wanting in Martin as a beggar woman and then a little child find when taken under his wing.

The ending is the most beautiful part of the play. Martin falls asleep reading his beloved scriptures through which he has come to know that true happiness is only gained by helping others.

-- Fred DuBourg, 8th grade



Ed. note: Here's a challenge for everybody – Who played **Martin** in your Senior year?

Reminder from Peggy: I remind all those who bought my book, "Hope Farm/Greer School, Memoirs of Childhood" that in the back of the book is the entire play script for "**Where Love is, There God is Also**", by Leo Tolstoy. We always called it the 'Martin Play'. Also "**The Christmas Apple**" by Ruth Sawyer the story of the German clock-maker Hermann, which Dr. Randle Elliott read every Christmas in the chapel before vacation at our Pledge Service.



Excerpts From Peggy's Book

I recall the worst snow storm of my entire life on December 27, 1947. I was home for the Christmas holidays and very anxious to get back to my home away from home, Greer School. When I did return, I was overwhelmed at the sight of all that snow. Greer was a winter wonderland, the pine boughs sagging almost to the ground, the drifting snow all but burying the snow fences, the sides of roads banked high after the snowplows went through. All the paths we used were gone, under three or more feet of snow. Yet by the time school reopened, Greer was functioning like nothing had ever happened. A few of us at Daisy felt that this was a time for adventure in a new world. We braved the depth and cold, lasting out-doors until we were soaked to the waist, our hands and feet numb from the cold. Back inside we were scolded by Mr. and Mrs. Pratt, our house parents, for our foolhardiness and stupidity, but we were young and full of hell, we could have cared less what anyone thought.

-- Jack Edmonds, [1944-1948]
from January 1998 Alumni Newsletter

I recall a trip to City House for the 1947 Christmas vacation. That was an adventure! I don't remember how many buses drove from Greer to the city, but when they all arrived on 35th street, a major traffic jam occurred. There was so much commotion and excitement! We returned early from our vacation and Daisy was closed because so many of the kids were home on vacation. The Daisy boys were staying at Marcy Cottage. I got to know Mom Morton's gentle, but firm management style. She was nonstop action. If you stayed put for a few minutes, she came by. There were always questions and directions. There were no idle boys around Mom. I broke some rule and had to forgo dinner. I was concerned I would starve! After everyone had eaten, mom took me into the dining room and sat me down for a meal of bread and milk. I was allowed to add sugar and nobody watched! I don't know what the other kids had for dinner, but mine was fine, thank you.

-- Jim Mathewson, (Class of 54)
from October 1993, Alumni Newsletter



Reunion News

Information about the reunion follows and the registration form will be included as attachments to this newsletter in .DOC and .PDF formats and as a hard copy for snail mail.

Reunion Information

Check in time will be starting at 10:00 AM on Saturday, September 27, 2014. We will have coffee, tea and juice available for those of you who would like it.

Lunch will be at 12:00 pm, buffet style in the Auditorium. We will have an assortment of Cold Cuts and an assortment of breads, Tossed Salad, Potato Salad, Macaroni Salad, Fruit Salad, cookies, brownies and assorted beverages to drink.

Dinner will be at the Ramada Inn in Fishkill. This is the same hotel (used to be the Holiday Inn) that we have met at before. There will be a Cocktail Hour with hors d'oeuvres to begin at 6:00 pm. This is a cash bar and any drinks purchased will be your responsibility. Dinner will begin at 7:00 consisting of tossed green salad with house dressing, Pasta Salad, and Fresh Fruit Salad. Entrees will consist of Chicken Marsala, Roast Pork Loin and Vegetable Lasagna, Chef's choice of seasonal vegetable and starch. Dessert consists of assorted cakes, pies and cookies. Freshly brewed coffee and herbal tea will be available.

A block of rooms have been reserved for us. The group rate is \$129.00 plus 12.125% tax. Our Group Code is CGGSAA and the Group Name is Greer School Alumni Association. You must call and make your reservations. The number to call is: 845-896-6281.

We look forward to seeing you in September. Until then – stay safe!!

As Always,
Mitzi

Season's Greetings Everyone!
From Peggy and Tony and families

