



The Hope Farm / Greer School  
Alumni Association  
Newsletter



Fall 2016  
Volume 9 No. 4

**In memory of . . . Phyllis**

Five years ago in the 2011 Fall edition of the alumni newsletter, my editorial letter was focused on the reasons why my junior year in 1961 was my favorite time at Greer. There were four main reasons as to why; everything was just right during that special year, and thus, it is with much sadness that I learned of the passing of my best friend in high school, Phyllis Pequeno Gue this past February, as she was one of those reasons why that year was so special to me. Phyllis was the first



steady girlfriend that I was honored to have. This picture taken of her one Sunday afternoon in the Greer library was always my favorite as I can still "see"

and "feel" of her charm and charisma that comes through for me 55+ years later.

Phyllis' son, Victor told me that she worked as an accountant, and did quite well in her profession, and she owned her own business for a period of time. Her interests outside of her career were reading and writing: she would have loved to be an author. Another dream was to open her own coffee shop. Victor said she described exactly what she would do and how she would build it. Lastly, was her love of animals. One of her most precious childhood and adult memories was her ability to make animals talk and it was almost as if she could read their mind and know exactly what they were thinking. Most of all however, was her ability as a mother to be a wonderful caregiver with a heart so big it could be felt by everyone around her. Her bond with her three children was very special.

Being my friend sure made it easier to deal with the challenges all of us faced during our high school growing up years: it was a special friendship never to be forgotten. I look forward to renewing that friendship with Phyllis, and with all of you, as we pass from here to there. We who knew you will see you again, soon enough.

John Hudnor, Greer "63" and "BYU" 67

**Reunion Update**

This is just a reminder for you to send in your registration form and a check for \$30.00 to cover the cost of the "Thanksgiving" meal in October. Please make the check payable to "John Hudnor" so I can send the money to the Fountains, and pay for your meal. We are looking forward to seeing you at our tremendous gathering in October. If you have any questions, call me at [redacted] or e-mail to [redacted]. Sandy and I will be moving from our current address in Cowpens, SC on September 18<sup>th</sup>, permanently. If you haven't sent your check to me by now and are planning to do so before the October 10th cutoff date, please mail it to me at the following address:

**John Hudnor c/o Paul  
(No longer valid)  
Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania 15205**

**We get letters**

From Kerry Bell

I was 8 years old entering Greer in 1959, and my Sister, Chris, was 7 (ed. note: goes by Kristin these days). While at Greer I was allowed to work on the farm right from the start because I had come from a farm in New Jersey. Because of my age, I had to have constant supervision with the chores (mainly helping with the milking) I did at Greer's farm. The

first day that I helped milk cows, I wore my barn clothes to school and did not get a good reception because of the smell. I quickly learned to go back to Marcy to change my clothes before school!!! I also enjoyed riding in the old Chevy pick-up truck on Saturday mornings delivering the milk.

Eventually I got involved with **Hap Collins** as a member of the Cub Scouts and later, the Boy Scouts. I also helped to operate the old movie projectors during the Friday night movies night in the high school auditorium. A big part of my job was to space the carbon rods just right for the light to illuminate the movie properly. One year I was fortunate enough to win the "best behaved student" while I lived at Daisy. I do value my memories at Greer and often think of the walk through the pine tree forest to the reservoir (full of leeches), and having "buddy" swimming checks.

I now live on a small Avocado ranch in southern California. It is the closest thing I can get to my farming roots. We have 7 acres of avocado groves, two horses, two geese, and one rescue dog. We have a wonderful view on top of a 1400 foot high mountain looking over a valley.

## Alumni Profiles

This letter from Darryl Hannon; Class of 60 will serve as a two-part Alumni Profile due to its length:

In a recent newsletter John wrote about life changing events. I felt challenged to share what Greer means to me; I don't know that at the time (or even later) I recognized the experience as "life changing", but in retrospect it was certainly "life forming". That's most likely just a semantic quibble.

John, Peggy, Tony, Doug, Mitzi: thanks to all of you for helping to remind me just how great an influence was exerted by the Greer 'experience' on the person I was to become; thanks too to the staff and teachers, the other "unfortunate victims", the role models, all the people who just by their living example showed a young person, disadvantaged by woeful and unfathomable experiences, how to reconstruct his life and get on with the business of living, learning, and growing up in 1950's America.

I have to say something about the web site, the newsletters, and the association. I've spent literally hours enjoying the photo albums, the yearbooks, the reunions, and of course the newsletters. All I can say is bravo! Please, please, keep it up. I know it can at times seem to be a thankless job, but believe me you all have a diehard fan boy right here. All those things are very important to me as I contemplate the next leg of my life's journey and I appreciate the effort you all put forth to make them happen.

I was born in Mountainside Hospital in Glen Ridge, New Jersey. The story I was told is that the maternity section was in the part of the hospital that was just over the town line, otherwise I would have been born in the next township. I always assumed that was Montclair, where my mother lived in a second floor apartment with her father and her sister, but who knows? Current maps don't bear the story out; maybe I got it wrong, but the hospital does sit close to the border between two towns.

My mother was the youngest of three children. They grew up in Hackettstown, New Jersey, but I never knew my maternal grandmother. The children all grew up to careers in health care in the Metropolitan NY area.

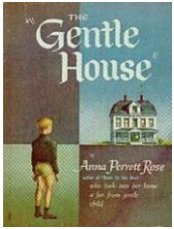
After I started school, my mother moved from the Montclair apartment, and we lived, usually in very humble circumstances, in various towns in Essex County, NJ, as well as in Brooklyn when she worked at Maimonides Hospital.

I was baptized at the Episcopal Church in Montclair. My wife, Lynn and I were living in New York (Staten Island) when daughter Tracey was born, and she was baptized at the same church. Tom and Cynthia Percy came down from Greer to be Tracey's godparents.

For my first few years I lived in that second floor apartment with my mother, my aunt, and my grandfather. Just down the street lived my great-aunt Anna. My grandfather had come to America from England with his brother,



Arthur just before the turn of the 20th century. Anna became a well known author ("Room For One More" [the movie starred Cary Grant] and "The Gentle House"), while her husband, Arthur was a merchant seaman in the Pacific and my grandfather Robert was a rate clerk for the Erie Lackawanna Railroad. I never met Arthur, and met



Aunt Anna only a couple of times, long after the events she related in her books were just memories.

My father was in the Merchant Marine (or perhaps the U.S. Navy; (I never cared enough to track him down and get the full story) during the Second World War, and chose never to return to New Jersey when the war was over. I think he was born in Rhode Island, but his side of the family was never, except for his sister (my Aunt Helen), very big in my life. Helen said she had never heard from him, so apparently it wasn't just my mother and me that he abandoned. According to the Social Security Death Index, he died in Florida in 1986. My mother died in 2004 in Neptune, New Jersey. I have little memory of those early years, and absolutely no memory of my father. There were probably a whole mess of paternal cousins and other relatives in various places, but I never knew any of them, although every now and again my mother would mention one of them in passing.

It was when I was old enough to begin school that the fun began. Because my mother was a nurse, she couldn't deal with a school age youngster, and I had bounced from foster home to foster home every year since I was old enough to attend school; impermanence was what I was used to, and fat, dumb and naïve, I didn't know any better. My father had sailed off into the Pacific during World War II and decided there was no point in coming back to his wife and child.

Things were tough. And then, Glory Hallelujah! Miracle of miracles. My mother decided to ship me off to Greer in 1954. Of course I didn't realize it at the time, but as that chubby little ten-year old walked dejectedly into Daisy, suddenly everything was right with the world. The years I spent at Greer gave me the wonderful gifts of stability, relative

constancy, and "belongingfulness" (I know that's not a real word, but it expresses how I feel) that were missing from my family life.

I suppose I should recite the standard litany of people, traditions, experiences, etc, etc, but I won't. Please consider it a given that I was culturally and personally enriched by all those things, particularly the people, and miracle of miracles, turned out OK (although I still tend to regret missing out on the sex, drugs, and rock & roll of the '60's and '70's. Oh, well.). I tend to be wordy anyway, and if I get started, I'll probably not be able to stop.

There is one tradition that I don't recall being mentioned, though; the annual Mite Box service (was that at the end of Lent?). I was always struck by the concept (the poor giving to the poorer) behind the Mite Boxes and still am, just as the concept behind the Thanksgiving food baskets has stuck with me.

After graduating (just barely) from Greer, I worked for an insurance company for a couple of years (started out in the mail room and worked my way up to the print shop. Don't ya just love it?). Continuing family 'problems' prompted a return to Greer, where by some magic I ended up as 'houseparent' at Rapallo. The draft was metaphorically breathing down my neck, and, since I really didn't want to go to Vietnam, I followed the 'other' Bob Jenkins and enlisted in the U.S. Coast Guard. The concept of saving lives while satisfying my national service obligation and serving my nation and the community appealed to me.

After boot camp at Cape May, NJ, where they grabbed me for the drill team since I was tall and skinny, (read: no traditional "boot" training, learning how to do tricks with rifles, special barracks, trips to parades, etc.) I was sent to the Coast Guard Air Station at Floyd Bennett Field in Brooklyn. Once I had done the obligatory mess cooking (KP for you Army types), interminable floor buffing, O'darkthirty Detex clock punching, and painting anything that didn't move, the powers



that were encouraged me to apply to any tech school that the Coast Guard offered.

Since I knew how to type (thank you, Helene Robertson), I applied for Yeoman (clerk typist) school in Groton, Connecticut, where the Coast Guard Training Center was located. After successfully completing their course of instruction, I was transferred to the CG Group office at Sandy Hook, NJ. I think it was at Sandy Hook that I came to realize that I liked what I was doing and wanted to keep at it. The 'boss' was a person who believed above all else that his highest calling was to support the people who worked for him. (Sound familiar? Lessons and 'instincts' learned at Greer from the Finks, doing the "right things" from the Percys, trust from Vern Ladeau, constancy from George Groh, oh so many others, bubbled into my subconscious). Long story short, any time an extra hand was needed anywhere, I filled in, and grew and prospered. I did stints on the lightship, the switchboard/radio, a lighthouse, a patrol cutter; you name it, in addition to my paperwork shuffling responsibilities in the office.

These things were all "desirable difficulties". Back then, the Coast Guard was a lot leaner and meaner than it is today; often the complement was so tight that the absence of one person could put a unit out of action. Recognizing that I had things pretty good, I was uncomplaining about helping out wherever I was needed. No one seemed to care that I was "unqualified" for most of the jobs I filled. Needless to say, the 'boss' supported me, too.

At any rate, as the Group Yeoman, I opened all the mail, and one day an instruction from CG Headquarters arrived announcing the new Coast Guard Aviation Cadet program open to enlisted people like me. Well, this sounded like a really good opportunity. Assuming I could successfully navigate all the tests, the CG would send me to flight training and commission me too. Such a deal!

Little did I know? I had been, to be generous, an indifferent student in High School. I put this down to the "fact" that in the spring of my sixth grade year, 'they' promoted me to the seventh grade. "Puer est agricola". That's all I can remember from

seventh grade Latin (ed. note: **Mrs. Fox**, take note). To be blunt, I was lost trying to do a whole school year in just a couple of months, and to this day don't know how 'they' expected me to catch up, whether it was Latin or Science or Math. I got discouraged and lazy, and unfortunately stayed that way. I did manage to accumulate enough points to graduate, but I was no ball of fire. It certainly wasn't that any teacher wasn't up to the job; I learned much from all of them, and particularly from Ruth Freitag, Warren Olsen, and the other teachers. But I particularly remember the life lessons I learned from all the people that made Greer work: Chef Keuler, Jimmy Morton, farmer Vernon Ladeau, jack-of-all-trades George Groh, oh so many other mentors and role models.

But now I was much more motivated than I had been at Greer, and the SATs, the college level GEDs, the Aviation Qualification Test (that one was particularly heavy on spatial relationships, as well as scholastic aptitude), not to mention all the other tests and physical exams, were merely stepping stones, not obstacles, to be taken enroute to my goal: acceptance into the AVCAD Program. At some point I had decided to make a career of the Coast Guard; I liked what I was doing, and if I could do it as a pilot and an officer I'd much prefer that to a long relationship with that floor buffer.

The day finally came, and I packed all my stuff into my VW and drove off to Pensacola to learn to fly, all about aerodynamics, navigation, weather, survival swimming, escape and evasion (Vietnam era, remember?) and a bazillion other things. That was the start of my twenty plus years as a Coast Guard search and rescue pilot. I'll not bore you with a longwinded account of where I served over the years or what I did, but it's enough to say that my original motivation proved accurate and satisfying. It is hard to describe the feeling one gets when landing an injured offshore driller or half drowned shrimper at a hospital landing pad or hoisting survivors from a ship in distress. Even seemingly unrelated Mickey Mouse BS served to support the



Coast Guard's lifesaving mission, and I'm very happy at how it all turned out.

I can only say that the Greer experience had much to do with the type of person I turned out to be and the decisions I made along the way.

...to be continued in the next issue

## Alumni Profiles cont.

### Bill Monza

Bill attended Greer from 1950 to 1959 and after leaving Greer, he graduated from Yorktown, New York high school in 1962. He attended college on



and off, but eventually graduated from Hofstra University with a major in history. Some of the other things Bill has done was serving in

the country of Columbia with the Peace Corps, and working with a veterinarian helping with farmers and ranchers. Later he worked as a houseparent for two years and he then worked in the public schools as a special educator in the building trades. Bill has had many wonderful and varied working experiences.

Bill enjoys biking and in the past, has cycled all around the mid western states. He also enjoys meditation and during the last 10 years has taken up golfing and now works at a golf course. Two staff members at Greer who he has very fond memories of are Daisy house parent, **Helen Maddox** and **Joe Fischer**, who he said was a very nice guy and a gentle giant.

### Linda (Wilson) Cavanaugh; Class of '61

Linda attended Greer from 1958 to her graduation in 1961 at Greer. She received training as a nurse and has worked in Connecticut hospitals as well as in the Tucson, Arizona medical center. Currently, she works in a Day Care Center. She is married with two children and one grandchild. In her leisure time, Linda says she especially enjoys reading lots of books.

Looking back at her days at Greer, she loved the Martin Play, Thanksgiving, and Memorial Day celebrations. Two faculty members who were good influences on her were English teacher,



**Warren Olsen and Mom Mac.** Linda worked with Mom Mac, and said she could talk about anything she wanted to with Mrs. Mac and

not be judgmental of her.

Things she would like to do in the future include going to Hawaii and the Canadian Rockies.

### Robert (Ilde) Ildefonso; Class of '60

Robert (who everybody called "Ilde") attended Greer from 1950-1960 and while in high school at Greer, he participated in all three men's sports for all of his four years. In addition, he was in the drama club for all four years and won the Sportsmanship award in his junior year and Albrecht award in his senior year.

After graduation in 1960, he attended a post graduate program at Thompson Academy in Massachusetts where he continued to play football for former Greer coach, **Jack Maddox.**



He then attended Central Missouri State College and finished his degree from St. Francis College in New York City. Later, he earned a masters degree from Fordham University in New York City. Next for Ilde was two years in the Army and this included a tour of duty in Vietnam where he was a Military Police dog handler and worked with members of the Army of the Republic of South Vietnam.

After leaving the service he worked as a carpenter in New York City for his uncle and then became a security worker for a Bank which was followed by being their director of global security.

He is married and he and his wife have an adopted daughter from China. His leisure interests include golf and traveling. In this interest, he has been to several places in the United States, as well as in Europe and Asia. In looking back at his Greer



experience, Ilde said that **Warren Olsen** was his favorite teacher and Coach **Jack Maddox** taught him the work ethic. He also enjoyed being a Resident Assistant house parent at Daisy cottage.

### An Adventure Story by Darryl Hannon

#### Three Sheets To The Wind

As a teenager, one year I worked in the dairy barn, doing anything that the herdsman didn't want to do. A mainstay of my usefulness to him was cleaning out the manure trough. The trough led to the outside of the barn where the spreader was parked under the discharge chute.



My job was to use a pitchfork to remove all 'deposits' from each cow's stall and spread new clean straw, but it apparently hadn't occurred to



the herdsman that as a normal red-blooded American teen I was desperately hoping that I'd get to drive the stuff away. I also cleaned each cow's

udder before the herdsman hooked up the milking machine.

Finally the day came when the herdsman casually said, "Why don't you take the spreader down to the field next to the sandbank and get rid of that load". Well, needless to say, I jumped aboard the Allis-Chalmers and triumphantly drove my load of manure down the lane and onto the road towards the designated field.



Arriving at the field, I engaged the machinery and proceeded majestically across the field, the manure flying high into the air thanks to the rotating paddles, and turned around when I reached the tree line at the end. After just a few yards, I became unpleasantly aware of a shower of brown clumps of "stuff".

I learned a valuable life-lesson that day. NEVER spread manure downwind.

### Greerschool.Org Web Site Update

**Sad news:** We received notification that Phyllis Margaret Pequeno Gue passed away in February of this year (previously reported above). She was born in 1947 and was a graduate of Millbrook High School in 1965. Her name has been added to the In-Memoriam page on the web site.

It's been a lazy summer for me and I haven't done much of anything on the web site. Sorry! I hope to have some additional albums and old newsletters uploaded in the near future. I will admit that I have three model railroad shows that I have to prepare for or attend in the next two months. You can see where my priorities lie.

That's all for now.

Tony Vaz – Webmaster Greerschool.Org  
Greer Class of '61 (Honorary)

Report any change of address to me at [tonyvaz@greerschool.org](mailto:tonyvaz@greerschool.org).

Send newsworthy articles or letters to John Hudnor, Sandy Hudnor or Peggy Sparks (addresses available on request) or "snail mail" them to the return address on your hard copy envelope.