



The Hope Farm / Greer School
Alumni Association
Newsletter



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Duke, you...and Greer

Sandy and I became the parents of Duke, a “Golden Doodle” puppy in November of 2019. I am 77 years old and he’s the first dog I’ve ever had in my entire life. As a result of Duke’s coming into my life, I am beginning to understand why people become so emotionally attached to their pets. Sandy and I continually give him our attention and talk to him in a positive and loving manner by telling him how special he is to us. While he cannot express his feelings in our language, he wants to constantly be near us (especially at mealtimes!), and his wagging tail indicates his joy at being a part of our family.



Having Duke as part of our life is an experience, I am so happy to be a part of, and I am thankful for Sandy’s encouragement for us in owning Duke so I could learn and enjoy the joys of pet ownership. Sandy had dogs in her family as she grew up, so she already knows the joys of pet ownership. Duke’s unconditional love has taught me that such a love is possible, and his dependence on us has shown me how trusting Duke can be and at the same time, our responsibility to not take advantage of his commitment to us. In short, we both love our special doggie.

How about you? Please consider sharing with the rest of us some of the joys that have come into your life as a result of owning a pet. Also, do you

remember any of the pets at Greer during the time you were at Greer? I remember that staff members **George Groh** had a dog named “Jiggs”, and **Warren Olsen** had dogs named “Hep” and her son **Snuffy**, but other than those dogs, my memory does not recall any others. I think a few students were allowed to have dogs—they were fortunate.

Ed. Note: Her full name was Hepsibah, which in Hebrew, means "my delight is in her".

Unfinished letters

In the summer issue of the Alumni Newsletter, **Roger Russoman** and **Cheryl Montaigne Crawford** sent in letters that we were short of space to finish. I will finish their letters in this issue.

From Roger Russoman, Class of 1963

Roger and his wife have traveled widely in the United States visiting such places as: Grand Canyon (including a mule ride down to the bottom of the canyon), Arches National Park, Carlsbad Caverns, Lake Powell, Navajo Canyon, and Canyonlands national park to name a few.



Roger mentioned other places in the United States and Europe that he would still like to visit. He has also seen the Dodgers play in Dodger stadium in California and attending the Daytona 500 auto race. He has ridden in a professionally driven NASCAR race car and a NHRA dragster.

The future? In addition to listing several places overseas to visit, he wants to go to visit Death Valley during the summer season to experience 125-degree heat!!!! **We would all like to hear how that was, Roger!**

From Cheryl Montaigne Crawford Greer, 1952-1957

I was 5 when I came to Greer in 1952 and stayed to 1957. I was then taken to another children's home in Yonkers, New York, called "Andrus Children's Home". I was fortunate because both places had great staff members and they made me the person who I am today.

Some of the great times in my life that I had at Greer were for starters, The Martin Play. I had the privilege of being asked to be in the play as one of the kids that ran past the window and asked for my father's boots.

George Fisher mentioned the train ride. I took the train by myself on several occasions from Poughkeepsie, New York, and always hoped the conductor wouldn't forget me. I was 6 or 7 the first time I did that, and then my mother would meet me in Grand Central Station. I was very scared when I got off the train that I would not see her, but she always was there. I personally don't think I could put my child on a train now by herself, but for me back in the 1950's it always worked out. Those were gentler times.

I have been in Austin, Texas since 1989, and it has certainly changed my adult life. I have my real estate Broker's license and have been practicing real estate since 1995. I have been thinking of writing a book about my experiences in Real Estate—the people I have met, the things that have happened are unbelievable. In 2011, I had the fun experience to be chosen for "Sell the House extreme"—it was the very first episode of WATCH SELLTHIS HOUSE: EXTREME SEASON 1 EPISODE 1. I keep thinking I will retire, but the housing market here has been unbelievable. You wouldn't believe the companies and people that keep moving here—It is all very exciting.



From Susan (Keith) Sorrentino, Greer 1960-1976

My mom and dad were houseparents from 1960-1968 at three different cottages. After finishing

high school in 1964, I worked at Greer as an administrative assistant from 1964-1976.

Here are some of the wonderful times I remember:

Halloween: The old barn near where **Herby Van Anden** and his family lived. Using an old press to make delicious apple cider and then bobbing for apples.

Thanksgiving: the beautiful meal served in the school auditorium. I enjoyed helping to decorate and prepare the cups that held candy and peanuts. The food baskets that were filled for those in need and presented down front in the chapel.

Christmas: The delightful and inspiring Christmas Service at the Chapel with each cottage singing their own carol. Decorating the cottages was also fun.

Other fun memories were sledding down main house hill; what a ride that was; Camp Barbey: How cold the swimming pool water was; Lover's Lane, so beautiful in the autumn season. Ringing the bell at Daisy on the front porch to call all in for the evening meal; in order to buy my class ring, I worked at Daisy serving meals and cleaning the dishes and containers for the food truck after the meal; **Connie the cook's** delicious Swiss Steak—wish I had the recipe! Watching football games and practices from my parents Daisy apartment living room window—and some of the most beautiful spectacular sunsets I have ever seen from that same apartment.

Susan's memories to be continued in the next issue.

Here is a wonderful memory from a member of the class of 1954 who asked to remain anonymous!

I believe it was 1951, and I had just moved up to Rapallo. Saturday afternoons were free time most of the year. That meant a bunch of boys 15-18 had time and energy—mischievous was bound to happen. On a particular Saturday a couple of guys took it on themselves to jack up our houseparent, **Mr. Tupper's** fluid drive DeSoto and put blocks under the rear axle so that the tires did not quite touch the driveway in front of the music room outside of

Rapallo. We called it the music room because there was an upright piano there. The poor piano didn't get much attention, only **Clarke Moffitt** played it from time to time. He had taught himself "Winter Wonderland" and that was it, over and over!

That Saturday was a gloomy day and its dark afternoon proved to be my undoing. The current cleverness in the house was to ring the dinner bell that was mounted to the wall at the foot of the stairs by the dining room and then run like hades. Mr. Tupper would come looking for the person who rang the bell, but the perpetrator would be long gone. I thought I would have a go at it, and I rang it very hard. Unfortunately, Mr. Tupper saw me, and he hustled me out of the front door, climbed in his car with me and started the car—put it in gear and hit the gas pedal. He didn't go anywhere at first, so he gunned it very hard, and the tires finally got a little grip. The car took off down the narrow road between the trees and looked like it would not make it—it did.

On Monday morning before school, I was told to report to **Mrs. Helen Fink**. I was quaking in my shoes. There was no yelling as Mrs. Fink could make her point very quietly. I was suspended from school classes until further notice and was told to report to **Mr. George Groh** for work assignments.

Mr. Groh had experience dealing with real hard criminals in New York City as he had been a detective for 25 years before coming to Greer, so I was no challenge. I was assigned to do repairs to the Daisy cottage coal bins. It was hard work and I started around 8:30. Around 10:00am, he came to see if I was still working and brought me some water. Other than a break for lunch, I worked until 4:30 when he told me to end for the day. I was to start again at 8:00 the next day.

Tuesday was more of the same. At 1:30 that afternoon Mr. Groh came to talk to me. He told me I should not be a follower as it had, and would, in the future get me in trouble. He knew I wasn't the only one raising Cain but was the one that got caught. I should add that this was not really a conversation, but rather a short lecture done in Mr. Groh's style. I went back to work and had completed the repairs to the coal bins just before

4:30. As I walked out of the coal bins, Mr. Groh was standing there. I guess he knew when I would finish the job. I could return to class the next day.

I respected Mr. Groh and I got the message. We were friends from that day forward.

Dorm life at Greer

The cottages were not perfect, were they? Here are some recent reflections on dorm life. At gatehouse **Robert Ildefonso** remembered that the windows were leaky, and the radiators were useless. He had a corner cubicle in big dorm which as I recall, he says, had a northern exposure so when the wind howled it was cold. **Tony Vaz** reported that Gate House was much older than Rapallo. I do not remember Rapallo being drafty or cold during the winter. I also don't remember air conditioning in the summer, but then he adds, there wasn't a lot of air conditioning in those days, especially that far north. **George Sievers** remembers living in an open cubicle with **Fenton Keenan** across from him. **Mark Parlieros** lived in a single cubicle to the east. George remembers him waking up under a layer of snow several times. The windows were leaky. **Peggy Matthewson** said, air conditioning—ha, ha! She also remembers how musty the basements were and the lizards that lived in Crest basement.

Do any of you remember the physical characteristics of your cottage—either good or bad? Let us know.

Annual gathering of the Greer School Alumni

The following information was previously sent to all our alumni with Internet/Email contact addresses and presumably snail mailed to former staff members without Internet access. It is repeated here for the benefit of recipients of the hard copy newsletter that are also without Internet access, but the time is short and needs to be acted upon promptly if you wish to attend the function.

The **Greer School Alumni Association** cordially invites you to join us for a fun alumnus gathering on Wednesday, September 22, and Thursday, September 23, 2021. We will meet in a huge tent

right across the road from Gate House (which is being renovated). The tent has flaps on the side in case of rain.

The alumni association is providing food (pizza and subs), and drinks (soda, juices, coffee, etc.). If pizza/subs are not part of your diet, there are many places in Millbrook where you can get takeout before coming to our luncheon. Because the alumni association is providing food and drinks, it is VERY, VERY important you notify me if you are planning to attend **or** thinking of planning to attend so we can make sure there is enough food and drinks for all. I can be reached via:



tonyvaz@greerschool.org

Schedule of Events

Wednesday, September 22nd

Noon--Meet at Gate House and go to lunch at a nearby eatery.

1:30-4:00pm-- Decorate and prepare for Thursday's gathering

4:00pm-- Eat together at a nearby eatery

Thursday, September 23rd

8:00am--Breakfast at tent (coffee, juices, water, do-nuts, bagels etc.)

Noon--Luncheon (socialize, Alumni Association meeting, other)

5:00pm--Eat at local eatery

Friday, September 24th

8:00am--Meet at Millbrook Diner for breakfast

- At this point, the Fountains at Millbrook has asked us to not go into the high school building as their residents may face a risk from the pandemic. That may change when we arrive in September—the director will let us know, and I will give you the word when you arrive.

Sad News

We have learned from his son Douglas of the passing of Kasper Gotfred Knutsen on 2/13/21. He was 99 years old. He served in the WWII U.S. Navy aboard the USS Hornet carrying Jimmy Doolittle and his Raiders. He would have made it to 100 years old on 9/10/21.

We have also been advised of the death of Rosalie L. "Sue" Dennis, Class of 1959 on April 15, 2018. It was noted that her sister Rebecca "Becky" Lovett McNeil, Class of 1960 was "late", but no further details at this time.

Bonnie Brancato Butcher has informed us of the passing of her father Frank Louis "Hap" Brancato on July 17, 2021 and her uncle Phillip Edward "Buddy" Brancato died in 2011. Both were students at Greer that did not graduate there because of military service, USN and USMC, resp.

Janet Murphy let us know that her father, Thomas Murphy passed away 12/31/19. He was a Greer staff Member in the late 1970's.

Greerschool.Org Web Site Update

The Spring and Summer 2021 issue and this issue will be uploaded to the Newsletter page prior to the publication of this issue.

That's all for now.

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

In addition to reporting any change of address to Peggy Sparks, you can contact me at tonyvaz@greerschool.org

Send newsworthy articles to:

John Hudnor - \

Sandy Hudnor - > tonyvaz@greerschool.org

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or "snail mail" them to the return address on your hard copy issue.