



The Hope Farm / Greer School  
Alumni Association  
Newsletter



June 2013

Greetings to all! This is the third Greer School/Hope Farm Alumni Association Newsletter to be published and distributed by Tony Vaz and Peggy Mathewson Sparks, both former residents and students at Greer School, Hope Farm, NY. We hope that your summer is now in full swing and you are enjoying every minute of it.

**A Teacher's Wish**

Dear Tony,

Thank you for sending me the newsletter. I taught 4th grade (as a very green, untrained teacher) at Greer from 1964-66, and it seems that most of the people mentioned in the newsletter were before my time (surprisingly!).

But I have found some of my colleagues and students, which was a major blessing! Wish I could hear from more of the kids who were there in my classes.

Thank you so much for all your work.

I have written a chapter in my memoirs about my 2 years at Greer, and it was great fun to relive it. How I loved those kids!

You can send the newsletter to me by e-mail in the future.

Amy Abercrombie  
perkaber@ [redacted]

**Reunion Memories**

These are a few of my thoughts about Greer School.

The first reunion that I was aware of was the one we just had in 2012. My sister, Tecla, somehow located the information, so we went together. I live in the Gateway to the Poconos, so I am not far away.

The experience of the reunion was a lot for me to take in at once, but I enjoyed every minute that we were there.

I look forward to the next reunion so I can sit and talk to my classmates.

Attending the Reunion was like going home for me. I was there from the age of 8 to 12 - 1953 to 1957 - I believe. I was referred to as "Penny" at the time. Going back to visit created a sense of belonging. Being somewhat shy at that age, I did not understand how fortunate we really were to have a somewhat normal life - in a beautiful setting. Just looking at the surrounding trees and hills/mountains is breathtaking, but I didn't realize it at the time.

And to think of the friendships - for me, Charmi Neely and Diane Sievers, and the caring dedication of the staff members - teachers, house parents, etc...

We were blessed.

*Penelope Klyce*



Penny and Diane with Harry McCandless and Peter Leland

(Ed. note.: After a cursory glance at the Greer School web site (<http://greerschool.org/yearbooks.html>), it appears that Penny and Tecla attended Greer from 1955 to 1958.)

## Graduation 1963 Style

Although I have written about Greer's graduation traditions in a former Alumni Newsletter, I wanted to again mention graduation because this year marks a significant milestone for me and my classmates of the Class of 1963. On June 22, 2013, (a Saturday), it will be exactly 50 years ago since Roger Russoman,



Charmijean Neely, Albert Dilks, Patricia Jordan, Robert Jenkins, Diedre Greenway, Doug Skipworth, Pamela Lauricella, Michael Galioto, Diane Wagnon and I said our goodbyes to Greer. What was particularly significant about this graduation is that it was the last time a senior class would graduate from Greer's high school as subsequent graduations were from Millbrook High School. In a sense, June 22, 1963 was a commencement not only for the 11 graduating seniors, but at the same time, a commencement of a new beginning for the students of high school age who continued to live at Greer.

At that moment in time in June of 1963, I could not have even begin to imagine what life would be like even a year into the future---thinking ahead 50 years was an idea which was not even contemplated. Now, however, as I reflect back, it is a wholly different experience and feeling. During my mission in South Texas, I once asked my mission president how his first year as mission president had gone by as he attended to his duties and his response to me at that

time was, "in a flash!"

Ironically, that is the same thought which comes to my mind when I think as to how the past 50 years have passed by: "in a flash", It is amazing, isn't it? Looking ahead always seems as if it will be "forever-in-the-future", but looking back feels like as if it was, "just yesterday". Our dramatically changing perception of "time" is one of life's extraordinary experiences. I reflect upon my high school graduation with many warm and positive memories, and hope you have a similar feeling about your graduation.

John D. Hudnor, Class of 1963

## Leave Us Not Forget

### Class of 1953



Elizabeth Brown, William Hunt, Fred Trommsdorff, Karin Venitian, Harriet Evdox, Richard Devaux, Gary Reed, Helen Scala, and Virginia Hougasian.

### Class of 1943



Alva Otachi, Mary Cuevas, Gloria Moshier, William Burgess, Shirley Barrett, Fleata Gregory,

Klora Brewster, Virginia Sherwood, Doris Harris, William Zebrowski and Joe Kaiser.

### Financials

Thank you very much to all the recent contributors:

Paul Bassett	\$ 25.00
Edgar Sichel	\$ 25.00
Donald Berger	\$ 50.00
Karin Green	\$ 30.00
Donald Brown	\$ 25.00
Pamela Pequeno	\$100.00
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Alban Richey	\$ 25.00
Jim Anderson	\$100.00
Thomas King	\$ 50.00
Alice Austin	\$ 25.00
Delores Filer	\$ 50.00
Dean Miller	\$138.00 *
Jim Elliman	\$100.00
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Tom Stark	\$250.00
Stanley Austin	\$ 50.00
C.A. "Tony" Voight	\$ 25.00
Diane Cadima	\$ 50.00
Phyllis Campesi	\$ 10.00

\*300 first class stamps

With the recent contributions and the number of E-mail recipients who have declined their right to a hard copy, we now estimate that there will be sufficient funds remaining after our publication run next year to forward approximately \$1400.00, possibly more. These excess funds will be presented to Doug and Mitzi Berry for reunion activities and to the Hudnors for continued newsletter publication and distribution. This estimate will be further increased by additional declines to the hard copy mailings at the rate of \$0.63 per copy and any other contributions.

Thank you to all those of you that have declined your need for a hard copy and are able to make do with the electronic (PDF) version. Your cooperation is much appreciated.

Just to name a few:

Pamela Rogers Tooke, Robert Best, Nora Lea

Abel Hayden, Paul Bassett, Wistar and Bertie Wood, Gary and Cherri Abrahamsen Wood, David Abel, Darby Sievers Ortolano, Jim Elliman, Bob Tate, Sandy Hudnor, Chip Fowler, Larry Dent, Ed Sichel, George Sievers, Gretchen Van Blaricom, Edna Denise (Bricker) Foreman, Frank Cavallito, Susan Agnew Elter, George Nicolatos, Richard Hawkes, Pat Wolverton LoCasto, Peter Guild, Peter Puig, Emily Carlson Geissler, Stacey Groh, Rebecca Davis, Bill Beer, Charlotte Hough Stocek, Jim Anderson, Bernhard Orlamunder, George Hayes, Gayle Houser Fox, Guy Farrington, Glenn Fillman, Bill Winkert, Don Brown, Tecla Klyce Murphy, Bill Monza, John Stolting, Tom King, Karin Townsend Hargy, Diana Munzer, Charmi Neely-Mulvihill, Harold Kovac, Diane Sievers Cadima, Pam Pequeno, Penny Klyce, Pat Carpenter, Albert Borsodi, Jim Lucas, Harriet Mock Flanagan, Roger Russoman, Chris Doyle, Alan Odman, Izola Gallagher Fix, Herb Cuevas, Pedro Cruz, Armin Ali, George Fischer, Amy Abercrombie, Don Berger, Kevin Irwin (son of Stanley), and others whose names I may have misplaced.

It should be noted again that you will only stop receiving a hard copy if you request that stoppage. You can make that request in an e-mail to me at [tonyvaz@greerschool.org](mailto:tonyvaz@greerschool.org) or "snail" mailing to the return address on your hard copy envelope.

You also need to contact me at one of the e-addresses above or Peggy Sparks at [pegsparks59@](mailto:pegsparks59@) if you change your e-address or postal address. We have been getting four or five hard copies returned every issue. Sometimes the USPS provides a forwarding address, but they do not forward (go figure). You may not get your newsletter if you don't keep us advised of address changes.

### They Have Gone Ahead

Edna Partington Crawford died in August 2012

Robert Kemp Irwin died in January 2013

Stanley G. Irwin died in March 2013

Betty Chaumont Bernard died in March 2013

## Peggy on Emily Watson

Who was Emily Watson? No, no, not the actress who bears the same name. The Emily Watson I am referring to was a woman with gracious generosity. She gave massive amounts of money to Hope Farm. I cannot fathom in today's dollars how much money she contributed. Perhaps some of you mathematical wizards can calculate the dollars. Here is an excerpt from my book. The high school was built with her money. We all received our diplomas in the high school. I searched for a long time to find out all I could about this woman, her generosity was quiet and not of a boastful nature. However her relatives knew of her worth.

Emily A. Watson (1842-1924) and her sister Mary J. Walker (Mrs. Evan T. Walker) were the only children of Col. John Watson. He was in the tanyards business, processing animal hides into leather, in Prattsville, New York and was a member of the National Congress in Washington. He later moved to New York City and founded the noted leather house of Thorne, Watson, Course and Company. He retired in 1881 with a net worth of over 10 million dollars. When he died in 1891, he left both daughters large trust funds. Mary Walker died in July 1902, leaving most of her money to charitable institutions. Emily died in March 1924 and did the same. However her will was hotly contested by a multitude of relatives, and the New York Times recorded the legal battle. Miss Watson was one of the founders of the Orthopedic Hospital for Crippled Children in New York City and became dear friends with Dr. and Mrs. Hibbs; she left her country home in White Plains to Mrs. Hibbs in her will. She was a very generous woman, contributing towards many building projects for Hope Farm. In 1910 she gave **\$7,500.00** towards the completion of Marcy Cottage, in 1913 she donated **\$30,000.00** to build Crest Cottage; in 1916, she gave **\$63,000.00** for the new High School. Once again, in 1918 she donated **\$25,000.00** for a special school fund. Her generosity spilled all over the campus. The alumni planted a tree in memory of Miss Emily Watson, who had done so much for Hope Farm.



(Note: The tanyard business was lucrative in its day and many made fortunes from tanning the hides of animals. In my research the old word 'tanyard' was used for the place where skins were processed. Today the word is 'tannery'.)

The High School remains standing today. Thank you Miss Emily!

Peggy Mathewson Sparks, Class of 1959

## "Au Revoir"

from

### The Hope Farm Quarterly ~ July 1, 1929

After eight years of successful administration as principal of Hope Farm School, we regret to say "Au Revoir" to Miss Dorothea Stillman, who will make her departure shortly after Commencement Day, and enter the Potomac School on the Potomac River in Washington, next September, as principal of that school.

During the summer months, Miss Stillman will study in Columbia University and will visit Hope Farm off and on over the week-ends. As her school does not open until after ours, she will spend about a week in September with us.

The entire school and community is very sorry to see her go, but perhaps the High School will feel it most deeply, as both her work and "play" have been chiefly with the upper school. However we are all looking forward to her visits, and hope they will be many.

- Rosamond Kimber, 9<sup>th</sup> Grade.

*Fast forward to Fall, 1954:*

Mrs. Dorothea S. Humphrey joined the Greer School teaching staff as an English and French teacher. Some folks may have known that Mrs. Humphrey was the former Dorothea Stillman that left Hope Farm School in the summer of 1929 to take the job as principal of that other school in Washington, D.C. (not me at that time) She does not appear in any Greer School yearbooks after 1958, thereby giving an additional four years service on top of her original eight after a 25 year absence. Remarkable!

Believed to be born in 1889, it is feared she is no longer with us...duh!

It bears checking; Ancestry.Com anyone?