



The Hope Farm / Greer School
Alumni Association
Newsletter



Spring 2017
Volume 10 No. 2

Navy Seal Training and.....You

A wonderful commencement address was given by Admiral William McRaven a few years ago at the University of Texas which he entitled, "Ten Life lessons from Navy Seal Training." The address was so well received that when McRaven finished his commencement address, he received a spontaneous standing ovation from the students. Here are a few of his life's lessons which, I believe, apply directly to our experiences at Greer.



His first lesson learned was on the importance of making your bed well each day as part of his Seal training. At first he could not see the importance of having to make you bed well, but he learned that if you make your bed well, it will give you a small sense of pride at the beginning of the day and it will encourage you to do another task and then another. By the end of the day, one task completed will have turned into many tasks completed and making the bed will also reinforce the fact that little things in life matter; if one does the **little things correctly**, one is more likely to do **the big things correctly**. He further stated that when you have a tough day, when you get home and see a well-made bed, you can at

least feel good about completing at least one good task. Thus, I am grateful that one of the cottage requirements each day at Greer was to make our beds. It did, in fact, lead to our completing other tasks each day at Greer.

Another lesson learned was to **not** fear the Circuses! Each day the Seal candidates were challenged with multiple and tough physical events designed to test one's limits. If you did not meet the daily standard, you were invited to a "**circus**."

A "**circus**" was two hours of additional calisthenics designed to wear you down, break your spirit, and force you to quit. A circus meant for that day you didn't measure up. It meant more fatigue, and more fatigue meant the following day would be more difficult—and more circuses were likely. At some time during Seal training, everyone—everyone—made the circus list. Yet, McRaven adds, an interesting thing happened to those who were constantly on the list. Over time, those candidates who were frequently on the circuses list grew stronger and stronger. The pain of the circuses built inner strength----built physical resiliency.'

Life, says McRaven, is filled with circuses. You will fail. You will likely fail often. It will be painful. It will be discouraging. At times it will test you to your very core. But, if you

want to change the world, don't be afraid of the circuses.

At Greer we did not have to deal with the physical hardships of Seal training. However, most of us came from one parent families, and there were many unanswered questions we all wondered about during our growing up years which could be very trying. For the most part, we all hung in there despite confusions about our lives concerning family issues, and this forged a mental resiliency within all of us. Along the way, some of the Greer staff proved to be very understanding and supportive of our individual challenges. For that, I am grateful.

Finally, in Seal training, McRaven pointed out that there was a bell in the middle of the compound for all candidates to see. All you have to do to quit Seal training was to ring the bell. Ring the bell and you no longer have to wake up at 5 o'clock. Ring the bell and you no longer have to do the freezing cold swims, the running, the obstacle courses, and you no longer have to endure the hardships of training. **Just ring the bell!** But....., if you want to change the world, don't ever, ever, ever ring the bell.

We did not ring the bell at Greer, did we? We endured (and I would submit, thrived) at Greer and have continued to do so throughout our lives. In so many ways, we made it through Seal training, and are better persons for it.



Congratulations Greer Alumni!

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

We Get Mail

The Greer Alumni Association was so pleased to hear from many of you during the Holiday season.

Al Dilks and his wife Jane reported having taken a wonderful cruise this past year to the Scandinavian countries and St. Petersburg, Russia.

Roland Herwig and his wife Cary also did lots of traveling to Tennessee, Virginia, and some small villages in upstate New York and New England. In addition, this past June



they had a very interesting evening as sellers for the "Prix de West" silent auction at the Cowboy Hall of Fame. Cary continues to write novels and

short stories.

Pat (Jordan) Picco reported that the Highland, New York food pantry was extremely grateful for the Thanksgiving donation of the Greer School Alumni Association. On a personal note, I appreciated Pat's compliment about my wife Sandy. Pat said that Sandy was almost a Greer student in her own right for all the work she does for the association—she quietly works in the background, never getting much of the thanks, that I am sure that many people are unaware of all you do. Thanks, Pat for the recognition of Sandy's efforts for our Association—and I would add that other spouses of Greer Alumni also have quietly worked on these reunions in the background.

Armin Ali said that he especially enjoyed spending two nights at Gate House during the reunion weekend after having left Gate 50 years ago after his high school graduation, and, he added seeing his good friend, and classmate, **Calvin Cain**.

Pam (Rogers) Tooke and husband Michael are enjoying life in their home in Santa Paula, California after living in Connecticut for the past fourteen years. One highlight this past year was a trip to Louisville, Kentucky for an all MG car event that included over 800 MG's from the 1920's to current day cars drawing attendees from as far away as Australia. Michael is the Editor of the MGA magazine! Perhaps a visit to Cuba for Mike and Pam is in store for 2017. See more about Pam in **Alumni Profiles**.



Karen (Townsend) Hargy reported that she was sorry to have missed the reunion, but was busy working on her new winter home in Washington, North Carolina. She and husband Don have joined the local Senior Citizens Center walking group and reports putting in many miles. Their summer home is in Wolfeboro, New Hampshire. Sounds like they are both enjoying the best of two worlds.

Bob Jenkins especially enjoyed seeing so many former Alumni at the reunion. He said it was terrific hearing about some of those "wild goings on" at Gate House in the two years after he graduated in 1963—he was sorry to have missed out on the fun.

Vera lee (Jones) Coutant again said how enjoyable the reunion was. Right after the reunion, she and her family members saw

an unusual Sailing ship on the Hudson River. It was an educational charter, and Vera Lee talked to some of the crew members when the ship docked. She reports the crew was very friendly and expressed her desire to sail on this ship as part of her reunion activities in 2018.



Charmi (Neely) Mulvihill was sad that she was unable to attend the reunion, but reported a very positive experience on the Monday before Christmas as she told the "**Martin Play**" story to her Buddhist Sanga community in Virginia.

Elizabeth Rivera said that she and her sister thoroughly enjoyed the reunion. A trip to Panama City* in late December was on her docket, and we hope Liz's trip went very well. (Ed. note: * Florida or the country?)

John Nicholas said that these reunions are wonderful times to see old friends and the people you grew up with.

Syd Nesbitt reported that his work schedule prevented him from coming to our reunion, but was very glad to have received some pictures of the



reunion from classmate **Anne (Meyrowitz) Foster**. He said many former students looked differently (very true, and understandable), but said that **Bob Jenkins** and **Nick Anderson** have aged very gracefully!!!

Susie (Murray) Scott was glad to hear all about the reunion and looks forward to trying to come in 2018.

Former staff member, **Dorothy (Schafenacker) McMuntry** reports that she is recovering from leg and back pain—and is happy about this recovery. She especially enjoys the Alumni newsletter, and we wish her a continued recovery.



Tony Vaz sent a very funny holiday greeting card that said: **“Christmas is canceled—apparently you told Santa you’ve been good—and he died laughing.”** Great card Tony!! Tony and his wife Jo Ann continue to help keep our Alumni Association alive as do **Mitzi and Doug Berry** and **Jim and Barbara Anderson**. We are very grateful.

Other Alumni who sent greetings were: **Pam (Pequeno) Williams, Hildi (Walton) Plunkett, Jack Miller, Russell Golden, Linda (Wilson) Cavanaugh, Stan Austin, Mike Ennis, Jim Anderson, Harry McCandless, Doug and Mitzi Berry** and former staff members **Alice Austin, and Ken and Mary Lynn**. The Lynns spend their winters in Florida with family and continue to spend summers in Fishkill, New York.

Many thanks to all of you for your greetings and best wishes for our Alumni Association.

Reunion News

We are moving ahead on our **“Memorial Day Celebration”** in **May of 2018**. We will keep you updated as soon as we can confirm which weekend in May which will be available for our Alumni gathering. We look forward to seeing you again next

spring. A walk to the cemetery, a short memorial service at the cemetery, an outdoor picnic on the boy’s field, swimming at “Res” (just kidding), and an evening dinner in the high school auditorium are all part of the plans.

(Ed. note: It would be great to see this Ringo Starr wannabe do an encore and see the guy in white pants make an entrance.)



Alumni Profiles

Pam (Rogers) Tooke

Pam attended Greer from 1958-1961 and was one of my classmates. She graduated from high school in 1963, and attended the University of Cincinnati for a year. She eventually worked in the retail business and loved working in a California department store called "Robinson". She continued working in retail and especially said that "Bridal Register" work was fun for her.

Pam is married with 2 children, 4 grandchildren, and a great-grandchild. Her leisure interests include volunteer work in a thrift shop, which she especially enjoyed, and traveling to such countries as Germany, England, and France. Her positive memories of Greer included church at the Chapel-of-the-child, Thanksgiving at Greer, and the Martin Play. She fondly remembers **Tom and Cindy Percy**, her house parents at Crest, saying they were great houseparents and examples for her. She also mentioned art teacher **Loren Shirar** as a very nice man.

Billie Phillips

Billie attended Greer from 1959 to 1963. He then left Greer and graduated from another high school in 1970, and then went to Nassau Community College and later, finished his degree at SUNY. He then spent eighteen years in the restaurant business and later worked in a bank in sales and business development.

Billie is married and has one son. In his free time, he enjoys golfing and watching football. In reflecting on his Greer days, Billie said his fourth grade teacher, **Tom Shay** was a very nice man who made me laugh a lot. He also had a positive relationship with one of Greer's relief house parents, **Hap Collins**. He was the relief when Billie was in Marcy Cottage and Billie remembers that he took a genuine interest in the boys at Marcy.

Tecla Klyce Murphy

Tecla attended Greer from 1956-1959, and after she finished her high school career elsewhere, she went to several colleges, finishing up as a history major at Vermont College. She married and while her three children were in school, she stayed at home to raise them. She is currently the grandmother of eight grandchildren. Along the way, she owned a bookstore in Michigan for 5 years, and currently is the publisher and editor for a Senior Citizens magazine. She has been doing this for 7 years.

In her leisure time, Tecla enjoys tennis, writing children's books, and traveling across the United States. In reflecting on her Greer days, she cited going on walks

with her boyfriend on Sunday afternoons as a wonderful memory. She liked her science teacher, **Mrs. Freitag**, who she said was firm but subtle. She also has a good memory of the **Percy's**, who were her house parents. One of her bucket list items is sitting under a beautiful tree and reading because her current life is still too busy for her to do this activity.

Penelope "Penny" Klyce

Penny was at Greer for her junior high school years (5th through 8th grades). In 1962 she graduated from Manchester High School in Manchester-by-the-Sea and then attended Salem State College in Massachusetts. She has had many vocations in her career which included: teaching business education in high school for 1 year; secretary for the director of the energy lab at Massachusetts Institute of Technology for 2.5 years; at M&M/Mars, Inc. for 18 years in several positions; a substitute teacher for 6 years and then worked for a Veterinarian.

Penny has 3 daughters, 7 grandchildren, and 2 great-grandchildren.

Her leisure time activities include quilting and reading and she loves her two dogs. In looking back at Greer, she appreciated the steadiness of the routines of Greer and said it was what a normal lifestyle should be. She remembers fondly Greer's music teacher, Dorothy Schafenacker. Penny wrote a hymn and Dorothy put it to music for her.

Andy Sewell

Andy attended Greer from 1960-1962. His parents, Calvin and Dorcus Sewell were on

the Greer staff during his time at Greer. Calvin was the shop teacher at Greer, and both of them were house parents at Daisy cottage. After leaving Greer, Andy graduated from Litchfield, Connecticut high school in 1969. He then attended the University of Connecticut. Later he settled in to a career as a builder of boats in Maine and then for twenty years in Massachusetts. After moving back to Connecticut, he became a Carpenter, and is a "jack-of-all-trades" in his chosen profession. Today, he continues to do Carpentry work of all sorts.

In reflecting back at his time at Greer, Andy mentioned the main thing he remembered was that his parents remembered their associations with the Greer students very positively and spoke often of their time at Greer.

Charmi Neely Mulvihill

Charmi attended Greer from 1953-1963. During her high school career at Greer she was very active as she was the Class Secretary for all four years, and she also served in the student council for several of those years. In her junior year, she won the Herbert Bender Loyalty award which was awarded for the student who instilled a sense of loyalty to Greer.

Following graduation from Greer in 1963, she worked for General Electric and then came back to Greer to be a house parent from 1965-1968. In 1968 she began her college career at New Paltz, and received a degree in English. She later received her Master's degree. Following her education, she taught at SUNY and Marist colleges. In addition to teaching, she became a

counselor, and worked with people with disabilities. This led her to the University of Wisconsin where she earned a degree in marriage and family counseling. She later went into private practice and this includes mediation work.

Charmi is married and in her leisure time, she enjoys reading (especially history), writing, and hiking with her dog. Charmi's memories of Greer are, like most of us, centered on the holidays of Thanksgiving, the Martin play, and the Candlelight service. Some of the staff who had a strong influence on her was the **Percy's, Warren Olsen, and Gwen Elliott.**

Greerschool.Org Web Site Update

I have managed to upload all the recent newsletters to the web site and will upload the Winter 2016 issue as soon as this one has been put to bed. The following deaths we have learned about have been entered on the In-Memoriam page:

Sadly, we have learned that James Robert "Bob" Kennedy passed away in July of last year. Bob was in the Class of 1957.

Brunhilda "Hilda" Flak Walker passed away last November. Hilda would have been in the Class of 1957, but left Greer after her Junior year.

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 { addresses available on request

Peggy Sparks

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