



# Greer School Alumni Newsletter

Summer 2009



Page 1

## Dear Alumni and Staff:

### The Power of Music

Fifty years ago, I received my first portable transistor radio and it came just in time for the summer of 1959. It was about the size of a 3-ring binder notebook and I carried *it* around everywhere: to the reservoir, to Camp Barbey and to Riis Park in New York City when the mother of fellow Greer student Tony Voight invited me to join Tony and some of his friends for a trip to the beach. Having that radio was so cool.

Today, I compare my first radio with the iPod that I currently use when I go running in the morning; it's half the size of a deck of cards and holds 100's of tunes. The contrast between these two eras is dramatic. And yet, there is a constant through all of this change, and that constant is the power of music.



Gathering in the hay – summer '61

Years ago I heard someone give a talk on the power of music to stir one's emotions and evoke very specific memories of scenes, people and events in our lives. At the time, I didn't give much thought to what the speaker said, but I have come to recognize that the speaker knew exactly what she was talking about and I find myself very moved at times when I am listening to music-and I am grateful for that.

Cherished memories of many of you are rekindled when I hear music from the 12 year era of 1950-1963 that I spent at Greer. That includes everything from the classical music that Greer's music teacher, Dorothy Schafenacker introduced to us in music class when I was in the 5<sup>th</sup> grade to the rock 'n roll music of the late 1950's.

In preparing an A/V power point program for our 2010 reunion, I invite you to send along the title and singer/group of a favorite song that may be included in the presentation. I would love to include a song that evokes a good memory of your Greer experience.

John Hudnor, Class of "63" and BYU "67"

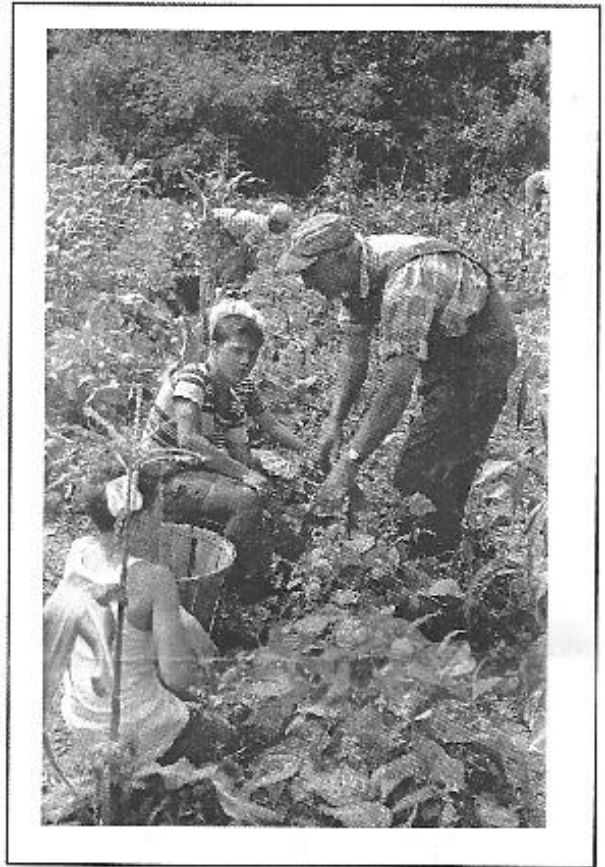
### Pam (Rogers) Tooke. 1958-1961

I had a good time touching base with friends from the past at the Reunion last September and was sorry that I couldn't stay for dinner. Looking forward to 2010. I bought Peggy's book and could not put it down until I had finished. I attended Greer from about 1958 until 1961. Memories that have stuck with me are:



A break in the corn husking 1950's

1. Unwrapping the Palmolive soap and putting it in the linen closet to dry out so it would last longer. (I still do that).
2. Making Peanut butter fudge when the peanut butter can was almost empty.
3. Washing the kitchen cupboard glass doors with newspaper and vinegar (don't do that anymore).
4. Waltzing with Mr. Percy. He set the standard for me on how men are supposed to lead on the dance floor.
5. Mrs. Percy when she was pregnant. It was first time I had ever been around an infant. I have very fond memories of the Percy's, they were very strict but fair.
6. Girlfriends: Charmi Neely, the Cummings sisters (Penny and Susie), Dede Greenway.
7. Friday night movies; how many times had I seen "Sergeant York"?
8. Mr. Olsen. Mrs. Freitag and Mr. Shattuck (such a cutie).
9. Thanksgiving and being served by the staff.
10. Serving the staff at Main house. I still remember to serve from the right and clear from the left. Is that where I learned *not* to put the fork on the napkin?
11. Staying up to watch TV specials on Saturday night...wow, in black and white at that.

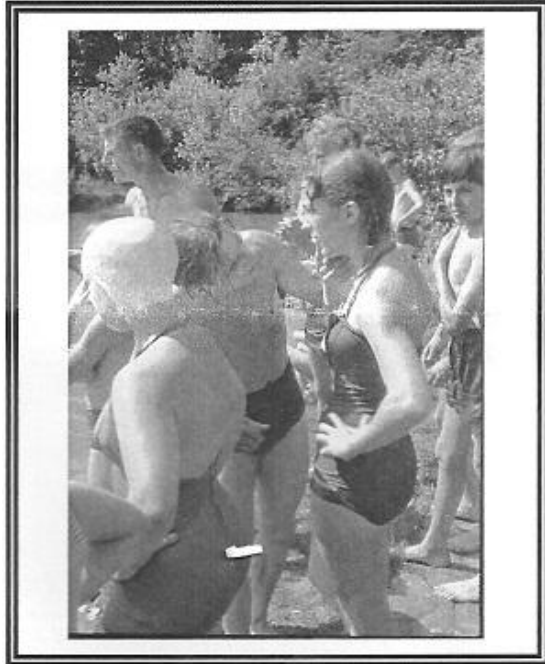


A reluctant picker 1951

### **Jim Elliman, Class of 1952**

As to life after Greer (52-54), I'll just leave the years blank until I joined the Marines for four years; then college and a BS in Economics, then grad school and an MBA. During the course of my thirty-five working years I was employed by the same company and became a corporate gypsy. They moved me from New York to Lynchburg, Va. to Columbus, Ohio to Indiana then back to Columbus, then to Connecticut, and finally back to Columbus for my final ten years. Being from New York, we wanted to come back East so we moved back to Connecticut where we currently reside. I had of course, no contact with the folks I knew at Greer as I didn't know how to get hold of them. With the advent of the Internet I began searching again and finally found the website and a couple of email addresses. Been married to my wife, Connie for forty years. My son and daughter in law and two grand-kids reside in Chicago. Amazingly, I've encapsulated my life into about ten sentences.

Of my childhood years, my years at Greer are the most positive and vivid. Isn't the old Greer property now a retirement community? Maybe I'll wind up back there!!



Swimming at the reservoir 1955

### **Glenn Fillman, Class of 1961**

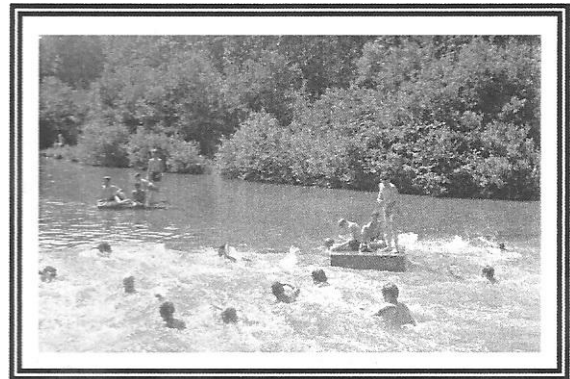
For those of us who have fond memories of Greer and appreciate the value it provided our families, your efforts to keep us informed and in touch are sincerely appreciated.

After Greer, I embarked on a teaching career (high school English) in upstate New York. Those were difficult years for men of our age with the war in Vietnam building up and because I was a teacher, I never was drafted.

Eventually, I left teaching and started a career in sales as I was a representative for book printing companies. I found that career to be very rewarding and enjoyed living in New York City. Eventually I moved to Michigan and continue to enjoy my work.

I have been blessed with two wonderful children (Andrew and Aliyah) and because I married fairly late, they are still very young and great to be with. In regard to Greer memories, I was recently gifted with a copy of Peggy Sparks book

on Greer and apparently, we were there at the height of its' development. I was last able to visit Greer at the 1980 reunion, and for many years after that was in touch with both Nick Anderson and Don Berger, visiting Don at his New York City restaurant.



Swimming at the reservoir (big side) 1955

### **Robert Kennedy, 1947-1957**

You remembered correctly, John that I was a big Yankee fan when I was at Greer, but I root for the Chicago White Sox these days as I live only a short distance away from their ballpark. I think that I liked the Yankees so much because in those days they demanded 110% from their players and fined even their biggest stars when those players failed to hustle in the field.

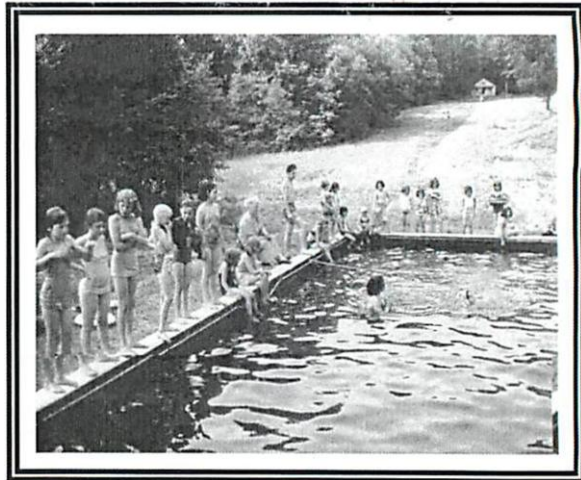


Off to camp Barbey 1950's

After leaving Greer I played on 3 inter-service champion baseball teams, but before I joined the Army I was offered contracts with a bunch of teams (as a defensive replacement, definitely not for my batting.) Unfortunately, the Yankee organization was not one of those teams and I wanted to be a chemical engineer, which paid



much better than Baseball teams in those days. After the Army service, I did sign with a baseball minor league team called the Rochester Red Wings who were owned by the St. Louis Cardinals. The Cardinals third baseman was Ken Boyer, so my chances of making that team were not good. Later, the Red Wings were sold to the Baltimore Orioles which wasn't any better for me because they had Brooks Robinson! At any rate, after being sold to the Orioles, I went to spring training and ruptured all the ligaments in my left knee on the third day that spring which proved to be the end of my baseball career.



Camp Pool 1950's

#### **From Ruthann Wickelman**

In the Autumn, 2008 issue of the Greer Alumni Newsletter, I recognized some of the Ledge girls. I taught 6<sup>th</sup> grade at Greer from 1949-1951, and I really enjoyed being at Greer. I shared responsibility of the Brownie troop with the business teacher at the time whose first name was Anne.

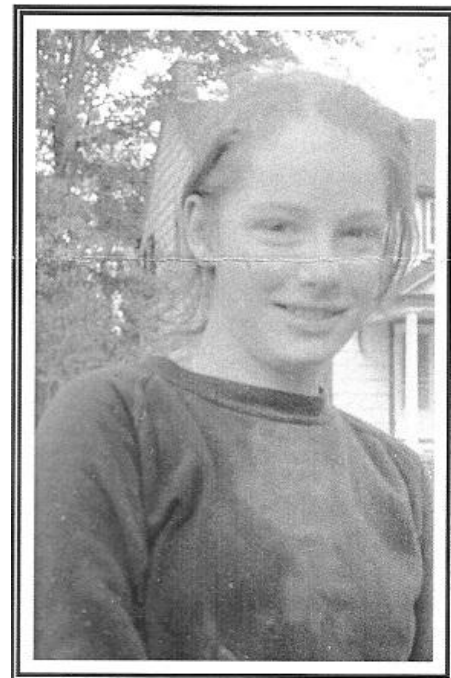
#### **From George Freer, 1951**

Your story about the Martin Play in the Winter, 2008 newsletter reminded me of the 1950 performance which I managed to spoil a bit. Being low man on the academic totem pole that year, I wasn't permitted to act in the play, but was given the job of operating the rheostat that controlled the stage lighting. All I had to do was turn it down a notch every ten minutes or so,

making a barely noticeable change in the light outside Martin's workshop. Instead, I became so mesmerized by the acting on the stage that when the line about the darkness was uttered, I had to crank the rheostat down about six or eight notches at once and make it "instant" dusk. That brought a laugh from the audience and a scolding from my English teacher Pauline Stock after the curtain fell. Never mind that I had seen the play five times before from 1945 to 1949 and should have known it by heart. But that was the hold that this play had on all of us.



Summer Sunbathers



Pam (Fernandez) Doty

### **Reginald Mabie, 1932-1939**

I appreciate all your work on the Newsletters. I attended "Hope Farm" from 1932 to 1939 and during that time, I spent 3 years in Marcy Cottage and 4 years at Gate House. I am now (a young) 83 years of age.



Alumni tea, Mrs. Freitag, Mr. Fink

### **Bob Irwin, 1930's**

I attended Greer during the 1930's and also at Greer were my brothers, Richard and Stanley. Richard passed away in 1999, but Stan lives in Connecticut. Muriel Bolognini mentioned being at Greer in 1936, but I do not remember her. In regards to the item in the Winter, 2008 newsletter posted by Georganne Clark Garbus, she said that her mother and aunt were at Greer during the time we were there, but she did not mention her Mother's or her Aunt's maiden names, so I don't know if I knew them.

### **Joan Harpell Caprariello, 1944-1952**

My father was a staff member at Greer as he was the head of the Greer Maintenance Department before he retired in the late 1950's and Vernon Ladeau took over for him.

### **John Rogers, 1930's**

Thank you for bringing us news of Hope Farm as it is always interesting for me to hear from other staff and alumni about our school and the upbringing that we received at Greer even when at my age of 84 I only know a few of them.

### **Walter Bell, 1968-1970**

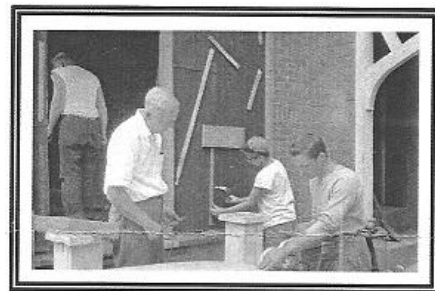
I really enjoy hearing about "**your**" Greer in the newsletters. By the time that I started as a 20 year old school teacher in the autumn of 1968, things at Greer were much different, but there were still some vestiges of the old Greer during the 1968-1969 school year. For example, there was the traditional faculty Christmas dinner at the McAlister House and a modest parade to the Greer cemetery on Memorial Day. By the next year, when the elementary school became part of the Union Free school district which was funded by the state, then a firewall between the school district and the Greer community as most of you knew it was gone forever.

Looking back at my experience at Greer which began over 40 years ago, I can say that I feel a great pride at having served there and have written a book and several short stories about my being a 20-year old teacher starting out at Greer.

I am president of "The Berkshire Writers Room" in Pittsfield, Massachusetts, a writer's group.

### **Harold Kovac, 1945-1949**

We have friends in the upstate Mohawk and Hudson valley area, having worked in the Capital District area and later in Rome, New York, at Griffiss AFB as an air traffic controller. I gave up winter in 1987 to seek warmer climes and if my memory is correct, summer is a great time to be in upstate New York as it lets me get away from the heat of Florida.



Summer construction of wigwam 1950

I wish that I had pictures of Greer, but mine are all stored between the ears. When I left Greer in 1949 (after my Sophomore year) I was quite happy to leave, but I still have many fond memories during my four years at Greer. I spent my time at Greer both at Daisy cottage and at Gate House. One memory was going to the creek west of the Daisy athletic field, my first introduction to skunk cabbage, jack-in-the-pulpit, salamanders—all neat things to an 11-12 year old.

I visited Greer in the late 1960's and was saddened to see that some of the buildings were gone. I suspect that the road from Greer to Verbank will have changed quite a bit in the nearly 40 years since I last went to visit Greer. I was sorry that I couldn't make the 2008 reunion, but I do plan to make the 2010 reunion.

### **Ron Cooper, 1952-1959**

Ron entered Greer in the first grade in 1952 and left at the end of the seventh grade in 1959. He then entered Fort Hamilton High School in Brooklyn, New York and after graduation in 1964, Ron began a 30 year career with New York Telephone. After ending his career with the telephone company, he moved to Phoenix, Arizona where he now works for the state of Arizona.

### **In Dear Memory Of:**

With sadness we say goodbye to four former Greer Students who passed away in 2008 and/or 2009. In addition, one faculty member who passed away in March of 2009.

The four former students were: **Edward George Charles Crump**, **Virginia Karibian**, **Sydney Mitchell** and **Judy Wallace**. The newsletter has published some of Ed's and Judy's memories of life at Greer in previous issues, and in an upcoming edition, we will include some other perspectives from Judy's memories while attending Millbrook high school.

Former faculty member, **Joseph Austin** passed away in March, 2009. He was on the Greer staff from 1959 to 1965 as a caseworker and Associate Director of Greer. Prior to His working

at Greer, he served in W W I I as a torpedo man on the Destroyer USS Melvin. He received a Purple Heart. After the war was over, he attended Michigan State University and received a degree in Social Work. Following his time at Greer, he served as the assistant director for the Clayton College for Boys in Denver, Colorado , Superintendent for the Myron Stratton Home in Colorado Springs, Colorado, and lie finished his career working in Special Education for the Aurora Public schools in Aurora, Colorado. I was fortunate to have had a very close relationship with Joe and Alice Austin ever since I left Greer and they had many wonderful and positive influences on many of us who knew him at Greer. **Joe** and Alice came to several of the reunions and continually spoke very highly of working with the students at Greer.



Construction of Bittersweet Garage – summer 1956