



The Hope Farm / Greer School
Alumni Association
Newsletter



**Summer 2023
Volume 16 No. 3**

**A legacy of service.... Greer's Staff and...
You!**

Isn't it interesting how we appreciate and see things now that weren't at all apparent at the time they happened. For example, what is now very apparent is the "extra mile" that most of the Greer staff went in giving us extra opportunities to enhance our life at Greer in addition to performing the functions they were hired to do in the first place. All were hired either as houseparents, teachers, administrative staff, or support staff, **but it is what most did in addition to their primary function they were hired for** which sets them apart as very special people who helped us have the opportunity to further enjoy our Greer experience.

What follows is a list of the staff person and the extra duties that he/she performed:

Pauline Stock-Dance director, and theater; **Lois Heller**-Modern Dance; **Bette Thomas**-Girls' Athletic Association; **Daniel Simonds**-Assistant Football coach; guidance counseling; **Gloria Bruno**-Cooking club; **Mary Cuevas**-director, Christmas music show; **Gertrude Sutton**-knitting and gardening; **Mr/Mrs Mac**—took very young students into their home; **Norman Thompson**-assistant football coach; **Gwen Elliott**-taught Sunday school, sent birthday cards to the students; **Ruthann Wichelmann**-Brownies, assistant field hockey coach; **Ellinor Zishkau**-coached field hockey and supervised Greer's cheerleaders; **Paul Schultz**-Assistant boys' basketball coach; **Ellinor Hamilton**-Brownies, piano teacher; **Jack McHenry**- field hockey; **Grover Albers**-assistant boys' basketball coach; **Rebecca Button**-Glee Club; **Ruth Freitag**-Science Club; **Susan Van Tassell**—took class to her farm at the end of the school year for lots of fun and food, President's day

program in school auditorium; **Tom Percy**-explorers, driver's education, vocational jobs; **George Groh**- Prom; numerous construction works; **Mom Morton**-Cub Scouts; **Hap Collins**-Cub and Boy Scouts; **Carmen D'Arpino**-theater; **Herby Van Anden** and **Vernon Ladeau**-hay rides; **Loren Shirar**-Art club, fire pit repair and reconstruction and assistant football and boys' basketball coach; **Jim Hamilton**-Boy Scouts; **Dorothy Schafenacker**-piano lessons, piano for all plays, choir, Sr/Jr YPF; **Rev. Charles Speakman**-bike hikes and trip to New London, Connecticut; **Joe Fischer**-Boy Scouts, Friday night movies projectionist, Midgets' football and baseball teams; **Warren Olson**-YPF, Red and White, Echo magazine, houseparent relief; **Robert Packer**, YPF, Class ring advisor; **Mrs. Dewese**- cub scouts, camp Barbey volunteer; **Gerald Berry**, School Barber; **Mrs. Taylor**, girls' sports coach; **Philip Van Hook**, taught students to run and manage "The Wigwam".

My sources of information on the staff were from **yearbooks, the Red and White** school newspaper, and from **former students** expressing appreciation for specific extra duties performed by the staff. Did I miss anybody and **the extra-curricular** service they performed? I'll bet that I did! Let me know, O.K! **One more thing:** many of the teacher's and support staff would be assigned extra duties on weekends such as supervision at the movies, library, gym, school dances, etc. **What a great staff we had at Greer—a million thank you's are in order from all of us you served!**

John Hudnor – Class of '63

From Jim Elliman

I was at Greer in the early 1950's and Greer provided a true home environment which served

me well over the years. I also learned a lot about interpersonal relationships while at Greer.

After Greer, I spent four years in the Marine Corps which ended up being an excellent experience, and upon separation I went to college and then went to work for an insurance company and received my MBA degree and worked for this same company for 35 years. I have a few hobbies: golf, reading, and working on my four acres in Connecticut. I travel to South Jersey in spring, Cape Cod in summer and Vermont in the fall.

My wife and I have a son and two grandchildren—both of whom are college graduates.

My life has been a fun trip and I wouldn't trade it for anything—always moving forward. I am in my 80's and am "living- the- dream!"

From Bill Monza

I was in Daisy when the Fischer's left Greer. Mrs. Fischer was warm and kind. For me, Coach Fischer was a gentle giant. I don't remember them ever yelling at us, whether on the ball field or in the cottage, although they must have raised their voices at times, no? They were really good houseparents in the best sense of the phrase.

The one situation I do remember was when coach gathered a bunch of us on the athletic field one day. I was curious, but not frightened or afraid, because I trusted that he had our best interests at heart. That is when he told us that he and Mrs. Fischer were leaving Greer for another job. I cried right there on the ball field as tears came from deep within. In retrospect, I think coach was one of the best, if not the best, male role model I ever had. I think his son **Rick** feels the same about his Dad and I thank Rick for sharing his family's story with us.

From Gerald Guild

It was **Peter Guild** who attended Greer, and his brother Gerald shared some memories of Peter with us.

Peter had created his own bathtub business which he continued until he retired around 2,000. He met

Betty Mills in square dancing, and she was a widow with five adult daughters, and married her in 1996, and as it turned out, they were very good for each other. Peter was very active for several decades in **hospice work** as a volunteer and won many awards for his efforts. He also worked as a volunteer with **"Computers- for- the Blind"** that refurbished donated computers for them to help them through their challenges. As a person, Peter was a good listener who gave well-reasoned thoughtful answers back in exchange. In essence, I would describe Peter as a person who helped many others with sage advice as needed and did it gently.

Greer was a very good place for Peter, and he remembered it fondly, even though there were bumps in the road as he matured

It's good of you to keep the Greer School Alumni group going, and learning how Greer's former students lived their lives.

From Mark Speakman

My living at Greer is for me a significant/outstanding moment in memory and also as a turning point for me and set many benchmarks in how and why I have made many decisions about my life. Several staff set these benchmarks to guide me and have become fond memories... essential basics to learn, kindness, and patience. With every reunion, I have enjoyed making friendships that seemed difficult to form when I lived at Greer as I was the son of staff members at Greer.

For me, 13 experiences were the best. They included Friday night movies, walking to the swimming pond with other students, various work assignments and tree planting, learning math from Mr. Cronk, shop from Mr. Sewell, model railroading from Mr. Groh, scouting jamborees with Mr. Hamilton, biking trips for students with my Dad, Mrs. Packer patching me up on some occasions. There was also the first introduction in philosophy given to me by Paul Schultz and singing with Dorothy Schafenacker in the small room upstairs by the gymnasium. I still enjoy some of those songs

today and am passing on singing, piano, and guitar to my grandchildren because of her influence.

I am 76 now and in pretty good health, living in Oshawa, Canada—about 20 minutes north of Toronto- in a ranch style house on the side of a hill in a 1960's subdivision. My weeks are occupied with “honey do” lists and gardening. I also care for 2 grandchildren and introduce them to many things for 2 days each week, so life isn't dull.

My mom grew up in Canada without a father, and was educated as an early childhood educator, and helped set up nursery schools during WWII so mothers could work in factories. After the war she taught in colleges. She ran the “wigwam” while at Greer among other duties she had.

My dad became a top salesman for Lever Brothers, and later, during WWII joined the Canadian Air Force and taught many American and Canadian pilots to navigate across the Atlantic Ocean and deliver supplies to England. These were some of the first flights across the Atlantic Ocean, and proved these flights were possible.

From Bertie Wood, Greer Staff mid-1950's

My husband, Wistar Wood was serving his two years of required military service as a “conscientious objector” because as a good Quaker, he refused to serve in the military. He and I felt that Greer was a very satisfactory substitute for that, and we loved the girls we were the houseparents for. In short, serving at Greer was really a pleasure for us. Little things at Greer were very special for us; for example, I remember one evening when a student went out for a walk alone. She wasn't supposed to do that, so I went to meet her on the road, and we sat down on a bench and talked for a while. Then we came back together, and all was well with her. It was just a little thing, but very satisfying to be sure.

The “Final” Class Reunion

The class reunion on June 7, 2023, organized by **John and Sandy Hudnor** may end up being the last formal reunion held at the former campus of **Greer School, A Community for Children**. John and Sandy

have declared this one as their **Swan Song**. Further details of the reunion activities and any photos available will be published by John in the Autumn issue.

If someone desires to assume the responsibility of organizing class reunions in the future, please submit your contact information to **John Hudnor**. His contact information is listed on Page 4 below.

This was the 60th reunion of the Class of '63 and it was attended by a fair number of former students, family members, staff members, and other interested parties which included the following:

Jim and Barbara Anderson

Nick Anderson

Pat (Monza) Bertram

Katrina Boltja

Dolan Brammer

Leah Bender

Linda (Wilson) Cavanaugh

Cheryl (Montaine) Crawford

Glenn Fillman

George Fisher

Anne (Meyrowitz) Foster

Cherlyn (Gieringer) Luberto

Russell Golden

Lester Greene

Carole (Humber) Shloyda

Paul Hutchinson

Bob Ildefonso

Carolyn (Ladeau) Spagnola

Jim Mathewson and family

Jack Miller

Bill Monza

John Nicholas

continued on Page 4

Sad News

We learned of the passing of Angela Elaine “Angie” Oliver D’Ambrosio right after the mailing of the Spring issue. She was a member of the Class of ’60 but did not graduate from Greer due to leaving in 1958 along with brother Floyd, a year after brother Tom graduated from Greer. She was born on Sept 26, 1943 and died on April 8, 2023.



You can access her obituary here:

<https://www.legacy.com/us/obituaries/name/angela-oliver-d-ambrosio-obituary?id=52003039>

We also learned from his son Glenn, that Richard Hine “Rich” Hilsinger passed away in October of 2022 at 92. Rich was a member of the Class of ’47. He was pre-deceased by his brother Roderick “Rod” Hilsinger (Class of ’49) in 2000. He is survived by his ex-sister-in-law, Pat Dean Hilsinger (Class of ’50) and others, including Glenn.

You can access his obituary here:

<https://stevensmortuary.stevensfamilyfuneralhomes.com/altoona-pa-obituaries/richard-h-hilsinger/>

Greerschool.Org Web Site Update

The Spring 2023 issue, this issue, as well as earlier issues will be uploaded to the Newsletter page prior to the publication of this issue.

All recent reported passings have been registered on the In-Memoriam page on the web site.

That’s all for now.

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

Report any change of address (E-Mail or postal), contact me at tonyvaz@greerschool.org, or newsletter@greerschool.org (new),

Send newsworthy articles to:

John Hudnor - newsletter@greerschool.org

Sandy Hudnor - newsletter@greerschool.org

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

Reunion attendees list cont’d from above

Alan Odman

Floyd Oliver

Tom Oliver

Roger Russoman

Mark Speakman

Don and Karen (Townsend) Hargy

Tony and Jo Ann Vaz

Doug and Mitzi (Schaefer) Berry

Mrs. James Valentine Morton (Isabel)

John and Sandy Hudnor