



The Hope Farm / Greer School
Alumni Association
Newsletter



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Life's changes and.....traditions

I remember reading an article some years ago in which the writer was stressing how we are all faced with the continual change of cultural, social, economic, and political conditions. He concluded that, in fact, **the only constant in our lives is change: an oxymoron to be sure!** However, he went on to say that in the midst of all the on-going changes we all have to deal with, when we yearn for stability, we fall back on our families and traditions! How true this appears to be. Yearly traditions are always going to be a part of our lives.

All of you have established your own and your family traditions since leaving Greer. In terms of what so many of you have said that you remember about life at Greer, the vast majority of you have told me it's the traditions of Greer which you remember most about the time you spent at Greer. The traditions at Greer did give us a sense of constancy and stability. The Greer traditions I remember most fondly are the **Thanksgiving and Christmas traditions.**

In this newsletter I would like to share some of my memories of the Thanksgiving Day traditions as Thanksgiving was my favorite Greer tradition. During the years I was in elementary school, I vividly recall that each class would choose two members to go with the teacher to Millbrook and shop for the food which would fill our class's basket. Two other class members would be chosen to carry that basket up to the altar in front of the Chapel-of-the-Child on the Sunday before Thanksgiving service. To be one of those four students chosen from each class was a big deal! On

the day after the church service, we would gather in school auditorium and a member of the Salvation Army would address the entire student body and express thanks for the baskets which each of the classes made up for the poor of the Poughkeepsie area.

On Thanksgiving Day, we all dressed up before going to our classroom in the school and then waited in our classroom for the announcement that it was your classes turn to move to the high school auditorium in preparation for the meal which was to be served by the staff at Greer (another big deal)! Later, Dr. Elliott would remind us to write a thank you note to the alumnus who had paid for our meal. After a huge dinner, there were afternoon activities such as a hike to the ravine



Thanksgiving for me was even more enjoyable once I got to the 11th and 12th grade. During those years, Thanksgiving Day began with breakfast at either Gate House or Ledge with the girls, followed by a flag football game on the boy's field to work up a Thanksgiving Day appetite for our big meal later on. At noon it was watching the first quarter of the Detroit Lions vs. Green Bay Packers football

game (it was always the Lions vs. Packers in those days), before heading up to school just before 1:00pm for the festivities. You had the opportunity to sit with your girlfriend during the meal and then spend the afternoon hanging out in the library, the gym, or at Gate or Ledge. In the evening there was a program in the auditorium to conclude the day's festivities.

In summary, the wonderful tradition of Thanksgiving was a indeed a constant for me and these warm memories are still etched in my mind's eye even though it has been over 50 years since my last Greer Thanksgiving celebration. I am grateful for Greer's administration that made this day so special.

Alumni Profiles

Don Berger, Class of 1961

Don was a student at Greer from 1956 until his graduation in 1961. Don was very active in athletics as he played all three sports throughout his high school career: this included the Sportsmanship award in his Sophomore year. He also won Greer's vocational award twice during his high school career. I might add that Don's favorite saying in high school was **Carpe Diem**, and his success in the restaurant business is a testimonial to his having followed through on his philosophy.



Following his graduation from Greer in 1961, Don went to the Thompson Academy in Massachusetts for a year before enrolling in the Air Force Academy. He finished his college education at the University of Missouri @ Kansas City majoring in advertising and Marketing. He went into the restaurant business as a career beginning as a manager and eventually buying his own restaurant in New York City and running it very successfully over the ensuing years.

Don is married with three children and at the present time, two grandchildren. Some of his leisure time interests are racing sailboats and reading. Writing books is a current interest.

In reflecting back on his Greer days, Don remembers Memorial Day as one of his favorite days, and he states that **Ruth Freitag** was a wonderful teacher. He stated that he enjoyed her positive attitude.



George Freer, Class of 1951

George attended Greer from 1945 to 1951. While at Greer, George participated in Football and baseball as a junior and senior, and played basketball in his junior year at Greer.

After graduating from Greer in 1951 he joined the United States Air Force and remained in the Air Force until 1955. Once he left the service, he became a Camp Counselor at Camp Barbey for the summer of "55" and then became a landscaper for a short period of time. He then spent the next 25 years working for the Singer Sewing Machine company.



George married and has two children and one grandchild. His special interests today include music, gardening, and playing the lottery.

In looking back and reflecting about Greer, he remembers Mrs. Freitag as a very good and interesting teacher. He also has a very fond memory of the Martin Play.

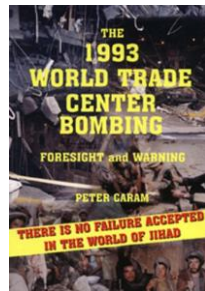
Peter Caram, Class of 1965

Peter attended both Greer and Millbrook High School and he graduated from Millbrook in 1965. While in high school, Peter playing basketball for all four years and was captain of the team during his senior year. He served on the student council during his junior year and was in the Martin Play when he was a senior.



Peter joined the Air Force after high school and his time in the service included a tour of duty in Vietnam during 1966-1967. Following his time in the Air Force, he began a career in law enforcement which spanned 25 years. He was a Port Authority, New York police officer and later, he was promoted to being a detective Sergeant working in intelligence. He also attended John Jay College and taught criminal justice and counter-terrorism at Rutgers University in New Jersey and taught in three other community colleges.

Peter is married and has two children and one granddaughter. In his leisure time, he enjoys golfing, hunting, and visiting Doug and Mitzi Berry who he has been visiting each year for the past 47 years. Peter also wrote a book on the 1993 bombing of the World Trade Center.



In reflecting on his days at Greer, Peter said it was a pleasant experience. He fondly remembers staff member Howard Sanders who he says took Peter under his wing and became a father figure to him.

Doug Berry

Doug attended Greer from 1953 to 1960 and then finished his schooling at another school.

After finishing school, Doug worked for the Arlington School District in Poughkeepsie for 33 years. After finishing up at Arlington, he worked for the Fountains-at-Millbrook on the Greer campus for 11 years before retiring. Some of the staff at Greer who Doug especially enjoyed were **Vern Ladeau, Herby Van Anden, and Tom Percy.**

Through the years, Doug's leisure time interests included hunting, fishing, and collecting coins.

He married former Greer student Janet (Mitzi) Schaefer, and they have lived in the area as they raised their family.

In the future, Doug stated he would love to travel out west and visit California and Alaska.

Margaret Louise Mathewson, Class of 1959 aka Peggy Sparks

Peggy was at Greer from 1947-1959, and in my interview with her, she answered the following questions:

1. How did Greer prepare you for your career and what did you enjoy most in your career? By the way, raising children is a very valid and positive career.

I wanted to go into nursing, but I was as dumb as a rock when it came to Math. Therefore I never even considered going to college. However as ironic as it was, my first job when I left Greer was as a bookkeeper for the power company & I balanced the books just fine. Greer did not prepare me for my career in the computer field; computers were not available for home use at that time. When I was hired at IBM, I took continuing classes which they offered free. Raising children really was not a subject taught at Greer, but learning to get along with 30 sisters did come in handy!



2. As you look back at Greer, what are some of the events, traditions, etc that were most memorable to you? Tell us what you especially enjoyed about the ones you liked.

All of the traditions; Camp Barbey, Thanksgiving, Pledge Tree, Martin Play, have been long lasting for me. But there were other traditions



which were more valuable for my life. Little things, like stacking the dishes at the head of the table & being served was something that stayed with me when we raised our children.

Saying grace before a meal. Stripping the bedding every Friday was a tradition that stuck with me, doing heavy housework also was done on Friday,

sort of a way to discipline myself so I would allow myself lazy time on weekends. Also I always made liver on Monday & fish on Friday.

3. What individual during your time at Greer was most influential in/on your life?

There were three; Marie McKinley, Bertha Packer, Helen Fink were the strong women in my life. I often visited Mom Mac in her home & she always welcomed me. I enjoyed watching her cook for the kids she had in her home who were too young for Plum Cottage. Bertha taught me how to keep my home free of germs & it kept my kids healthy. I learned hospital rules on bed making (making hospital corners), laundry folding; making use of the small space & sterilizing those nasty needles. She taught me how impossible it was to see bacteria. Clorox became an important product raising kids especially when they got childhood diseases. She taught me basic Red Cross training. She had strict rules when it came to taking care of sick people. And she had a dry sense of humor which many never saw. Helen was an example or rules; but she knew how to laugh & let her hair down, I don't think I have ever known a person with such patience. Being sent to Mrs. Fink's office was not something you wanted to set as a goal. Sitting on those cold marble steps in the hallway waiting to go into her office was surely part of the punishment.

These three women were people you could depend on; they did not give up when tense situations, poor attitudes or broken feelings happened. They persevered better than most. The ones who could not cope with raising so many children didn't stay around very long.

Regrets: I do wish I had had the opportunity work with George Groh. I could have learned so much from him especially when we remodeled our home. But in those days, girls were not allowed to operate tools; I think it scared the guys too much!!! In time I did learn how to run them all!

4. What are some current interests and hobbies you now enjoy in your retirement years?

My hobbies were furniture stripping, needlework, knitting, walking 3 miles a day, trimming our many trees, painting the rooms of our house, ripping out walls, remodeling, bike riding, golfing. But that has changed dramatically now that both of us have medical issues. Now I spend time doing in home therapy & on the computer compiling family genealogy & researching subjects of interest. I enjoy writing & belong to the Berkshire Writers Room in Massachusetts. I submit stories or poems from time to time, watching BBC on TV is so much better than American shows. I am the neighborhood Block Captain. Spending time with my grandkids, having them stay over in the kids room is fun; we do art/craft projects, play board games, bake cookies & they help weed my flower gardens of which I have way too many! Keeping in touch with alumni, family & friends via the Internet is very important to me.

5. What's on your bucket list?

I don't need a bucket list.

6. Tell us about your spouse and children and grandchildren--how many of each?

My husband, Ron, is an Air Force veteran, also retired from IBM as a Safety Engineer. I am retired from IBM as an IS Specialist where I helped IBMers with problems they had with their computers at work & offshore sites. I am now antiquated, technology changes so quickly. My job changed every day, with problem solving and creating new 'tools' for our employees to use their pc's more efficiently.

We have 2 boys & 2 girls, 5 grandsons & 4 granddaughters.

7. Anything else you may want to add.

I miss traveling so very much. However as I learned at Greer, a person has to grow up & realize you can't have everything you want, just because you want it.

REUNION NEWS

Through the years so many of you have spoken so fondly of the Thanksgiving traditions at Greer as being a favorite of yours that we have decided the theme for the next reunion on October 22, 2016 will be "**Thanksgiving-in-October.**" To that end we will have a thanksgiving meal at 1:00pm in the afternoon in the high school auditorium with all of the traditional thanksgiving fixings, and we will develop our afternoon program around the theme of Thanksgiving. We hope you will look forward to this renewal of a special Greer tradition and encourage any suggestions you might have to enhance the enjoyment of this special reunion. We choose to do the reunion in October rather than on the regular Thanksgiving holiday because most of us have our own family gatherings during the actual Thanksgiving week.

Sandy and I were doing some brainstorming about next October's reunion. With the theme of "A Greer Thanksgiving in October", we thought we would contact a local charity, church and/or organization in the Greer area and invite all of us to bring on can and/or box of food to the reunion and then with that food, donate it on behalf of the Greer School Alumni Association. Of course, we will make it clear to the alumni that they do not have to bring any food, but that by doing so, it will be like the baskets that each grade used to prepare the week before Thanksgiving and then a person from the Salvation Army used to come and receive the baskets in our school auditorium on the Monday of Thanksgiving week. My guess is that most of us would be happy to bring one item of food and participate in this act of service. What do you think of this idea? Any other ideas of what we could do for this Thanksgiving program next fall?

Let us know of any suggestions you have to make this a very special day at Greer.

Miscellaneous

1. Former student Armin Ali (class of 1965) has written a book called, "**I want to be a Federal Special Agent**". Armin was kind enough to send me a copy and it is a good read. For any person looking

to start a career in the Federal Government, his book contains all of the pros and cons of each position in the Federal Special agent's departments. Congratulations, Armin!

2. I received a very nice note from former Greer student, **Victor Cholewicki, (Attended Greer 1954-1958)**. Victor lives in Washington, D.C., and told me he has kept in touch with former Greer student, **Dag (Murry) Buxell** (Greer class of 1960) over the years and that Dag is living in Caracas, Venezuela. He also mentioned remembering **Tony Voight, John Nicholas, Glen Fillman, and Tony Vaz** as being a very promising group of Greer underclassmen who he thought would make Greer a very productive and harmonious place to live at. He concluded by saying, " ... it seems I was correct." Victor hopes to make next year's reunion, and it will be great to see him.

3. Last of all was a nice note from former Greer staff child, **Suzanne (Keith) Sorrentino**. Suzanne mentioned having returned for a visit to Greer last May and having especially enjoyed visits with **Veronica (Ladeau) Lilley and Doug and Mitzi Berry**. Suzanne has fond memories of Greer and she worked at Greer for fourteen years after having finished her schooling. She had an office at Gate House and worked with former staff members **Don Law and Harold Wesdenhoff**. She also said that she had the blessing to be the last person to live at Daisy: she had rooms on all three floors at Daisy. Her parents **Gwen and Bernard Keith** were houseparents at Daisy, Rapallo, and Dyson cottages.

4. Sandy and I have made another DVD of slides about Greer life from 1949-1954. These slides are narrated by former staff member **Jim Morton**, and I hope to show them at the October reunion.

Newsletter Changes

As promised, the wordy version of changes is not being printed again. Those changes were included in the last four issues of the newsletter and needed to be put to bed. They can be reviewed on the Greerschool.Org web site in the **Newsletters – Hudnor2** section. The following remains for the benefit of those who just joined us.

Mitzi and Doug will maintain the Alumni bank account set up long ago in the Bank of Millbrook. All forms of payment should be sent to them, whether it is “dues”, newsletter subscriptions, reunion funds or donations. **Note** that Mitzi may not be able to deposit your check immediately due to various reasons. Please be patient. Checks or money orders should be made out to **Greer/Hope Farm Alumni Association**. Please do not send cash.

The correct address is available by contacting tonyvaz@greerschool.org

Bonus: If your contribution is \$100.00 or more (cumulative since 2012 or as a lump sum), you will be added to the “Century Club”, which will entitle you to receive a full color hard copy, unless you opt out of its receipt.

Missing-in Action

There were no returns (yet) of the last newsletter in either electronic or hard copy formats, so there is nothing further to report on this subject.

Greerschool.Org Web Site Update

Have you checked the on-line newsletter pages lately? There are new entries on the **Hudnor1** page and the Fall 2015 issue is now available on **Hudnor2**, as well as this one. The Spring 2016 issue will be available soon.

In-Memoriam

We received notice that Jack W. DeWaal passed away on Sept. 28, 2015. Jack was in the Class of 1950. He was 83 years old and a U.S. Navy veteran.

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 the same address for forwarding to John Hudnor, Sandy Hudnor or Peggy Sparks or “snail mail” them to the return address on your hard copy envelope.

