



The Hope Farm / Greer School
Alumni Association
Newsletter



Winter / Holiday 2020
Volume 14 No. 1



Two Snowy Paths. Which will you take?

Promises to Keep---Greer and beyond and ---you!

In the **Autumn 2020 newsletter** we looked at the first of two poems by Robert Frost called, **"The Road Not Taken,"** and asked all of you to share with us how some of **"your roads not taken"** had a positive influence on your life. In this Holiday/Winter edition, we will look at the second Frost poem called, **"Stopping by Woods on a Snowy Evening"** and see how this other famous Frost poem may have impacted on your life.

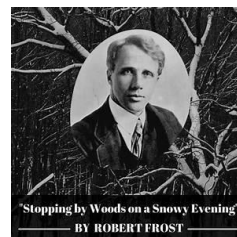
I first became aware of this poem when the final stanza appeared on the last page of the 1962 Greer yearbook, **"The Talisman."** Alumnus **John Nicholas** included that line with a beautiful black and white photograph of a Greer winter sunset that John had photographed. Below that picture and last stanza of the Frost poem, the class of 1962 seniors wrote:

"There is darkness in the problems we will have and loveliness in the times when everything will go well. There are promises to keep to our friends, our teachers, our families, and ourselves—promises to make use of what we have learned and to do the best we can with our lives." They concluded by saying, "There is a long journey to go into the future, and we have much to learn. There are..." **miles to go before we sleep."**

The Greer school class of 1962 gave us wise counsel, didn't they? Please feel free to share with all of us some of the joys of promises you have kept throughout your

Life so we can all enjoy reading about some of your most favorite promises kept and the resulting joy it has brought into your life.

Here is Frost's poem,



"Whose woods these are I think I know.
His house is in the village though.
He will not see me stopping here
To watch his woods, fill up with snow.
My little horse must think it queer
To stop without a farmhouse near
Between the woods and frozen lake
The darkest evening of the year.

He gives his harness bells a shake
To ask if there is some mistake.
The only other sound's the sweep
Of easy wind and downy flake.

The woods are lovely dark and deep,
But I have promises to keep,
And miles to go before I sleep,
And miles to go before I sleep."

This poem by Frost can have many meanings and interpretations. We would love to hear its' application to you in your life.

From Steven Pastis, creator of Pearls Before Swine



John Hudnor, Class of 1963

Gathering, September 2021

Although it was disappointing to have canceled the 2020 gathering because of the Covid-19 virus, we have set the next Greer Alumni get-together for Thursday, September 21st, 2021. It will be a luncheon at the Gate House and more information will be available in upcoming newsletters.

A phone call from Tom

This past summer I received a nice phone call from former Greer student, **Tom Tracy**. Tom attended



Greer along with his brother the late **Bill Tracy** from 1959-1962. Tom left Greer when his brother

graduated from Greer with the class of 1962 and finished his high school career in Connecticut. Tom then was in the Air Force from 1964-1968, and following his time in the Air Force, he began a 33 ½ year career in law enforcement, and afterwards finished up in another area of law enforcement for an additional 10 years.

He has been married for over 50 years and has 2 children and 8 grandchildren, and as he added, some great grandchildren. He currently lives in north Georgia and reported that he has survived 3 bouts with Cancer: **congratulations, Tom!** The staff at Greer who Tom remembers fondly are teachers



Ruth Freitag and **Warren Olsen**. One of his houseparents whom Tom spoke very well of was **Mrs. Hahn**, his houseparent at Rapallo.

More responses from the Autumn edition of the Frost poem, "The Road Not Taken."

Alumnus Tecla (Klyce) Murphy, Greer, 1950's writes:

Two paths lay before me.
The comfortable, well known, and not terribly complicated. The other? Wandering into the unknown without experience or guidance.



Like most Greer people, I came from an odd background and there was no hurry to connect and share my life with another. I thought better to walk alone. With a strong background in finance, the choice presented itself of taking that knowledge a step further. It would take little effort to become a stockbroker in the investment field—a couple of months of study, pass the exam and it would be mine. It was known territory, and path was clear and would be fairly easy to navigate—comfortable,

almost risk free. But alas, there was a fork in the road. I chose the road not taken. That handsome Marine swept me off my feet. There was indeed some hesitation, but I made the choice, and walked away from the familiar and comfortable. That unfamiliar road took me through many unknowns, crowded with uncertainty. It was rocky and strange at times, but it was also very rewarding. It was right. And the end? It is still not in sight.

From Amy Abercrombie, Greer staff, 1964-1966

When I landed a job teaching fourth grade in an isolated private school in upstate New York I had no idea what I was doing. I had majored in philosophy in college and had never wanted to teach. My father's mantra, "get your teaching credits!" was annoying and fell on deaf ears (until later). As a child I remember thinking how I would hate being a teacher, having to put in the long days that as a student I had to endure. Once was enough! But I was at a crossroads in my life.

At Greer, I was assigned a class of seven students, and I often thought it might have been easier if there had been thirty—then perhaps the students might not have felt so free to be totally informal, or exactly the opposite of what I had wanted. At first, I had a rough time, partly because I knew nothing about managing a classroom, and the students certainly did not seem to take me seriously.

Some of the faculty were older. One was **Mr. Clifford Cronk**, who was a little man with white hair, but that did not stop him from having absolute control over the junior high kids. I discovered that he'd say, "I'm going to bust your head through the wall!" and the kids must have believed him. His wife, **Mrs. Bess Cronk**, was the school secretary, and she taught me the names of the songbirds that came to a winter feeder I had set up outside the classroom, and my lifelong love for birds began. I remember **Mrs. Susan Van Tassell**, who taught 5th grade who was an excellent teacher who I wished I could emulate. **Mrs. Bertha Packer** was the school nurse and she once told me that her heart still skipped a beat when she heard her husband **Roberts'** footsteps coming home each day!

The school's dinner would arrive in a large stack of metal cans that fit together. The chef was a native German, nice and jocular—unless you were foolish enough to complain about the food!!! Dessert was nearly always pudding. But the worst meal was each day **after we had hot dogs** as he would grind up the hot dogs and make a spaghetti sauce from it, which was almost impossible to eat!

Some of the students I taught were: **Willie Powell, Sherman Lawson, Paulette Eypper, Christopher Daniels, Cecilia Birdex, Shirley Lawson, Rose Green**, a boy named **Bobby**, and another boy named **Vincent**. I bless those students for putting up with my inexperience, and I even named my first child Willie. I still often think of my two years at Greer, and I treasure those memories. After leaving Greer, I stayed in teaching and taught remedial reading and later did substitute teaching for many years. I remain grateful to Greer School for giving me a start, and for the opportunity to work with such marvelous kids. I am also heartened that our daughter Rebecca is now a public-school music teacher!

From Russell Golden, 1943-1957

Russell's first "**road not taken**" was when he came to Greer in 1943, he did not enter a cottage as most students did but spent his first 9 months with **Mrs. Mom "Mac" McKinley** at her home until the school year started in September.

Upon graduating from Greer, Russell's "roads not taken" were the many career's he had—many at the same time! He joined the Navy and went to Fire Control Tech school and served in the Navy for 4 years. He then married in 1962, and later his first daughter was



born on Valentine's day! He joined the Navy reserves as a second career and taught basic electricity and electronics one night a week. Next, he was a Naval reserve crew member of four Naval destroyers for 12 years. In that function, he was a command Career counselor, and commanded a unit of recruits during their first year

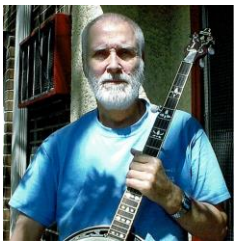


in the reserves. At the same time, he was in the naval reserves for 30 years, he worked for the New York City Transit authority as an electrical helper for over 30 years, and while working for the transit authority, he went to night school to become licensed in banking insurance and Real Estate.

In retirement, he served in library security and then started his own Real Estate Office. Last of all, when his mother-in-law went into a nursing home, Russell helped start the nursing home's family council office and oversaw this for 4 years. He has been married for 59 years with 2 children and 3 grandchildren. In sum, Russell wore many "hats" at the same time and managed them well— **"roads not taken"**! Congratulations Russell!

From Syd Nesbitt, Class of 1961

Syd writes that his **"roads not taken"** began when he moved to Minnesota in 1983. He writes that being a Midwesterner by birth (Ohio), and as a result, the pace of the Midwest seems to suit him.



There he discovered Bluegrass music, and now plays Dobro, Banjo, and Guitar, and reports that he is in a Country and a Blue Grass band. All gigs have been canceled during the pandemic, but he is hopeful

and optimistic about the future. Recently, he has gotten into RC flying as a new hobby. It is something I always wanted to try as a kid, and I can have fun and keep from crashing!

I have absorbed the Midwestern work-ethic and have been a handyman/caretaker for several years. After having lived everywhere, it is good to put down some roots.

Syd was sorry to hear of the passing of former Greer teacher **Warren Olsen**. Syd had visited him last year as Warren also lived in Minnesota and enjoyed this visit very much. Syd recounted enjoying his classes and reports that we got along very well.

1956-1957 Student Guidebook

In the previous autumn edition of the Greer School newsletter, I went over some of the

guidelines for cottage life. In this edition, I will go over the academic guidelines that appeared in the school guidebook. See if any memories come back to you from this aspect of life at Greer.

In the area of school clothing, girls were required to wear dresses or skirts and blouses to school with shoes –not sneakers! In addition, a sweater was not to be worn without a blouse and a sheer blouse may be worn only under a sweater or jacket.

For boys, they were told they must wear trousers and a sweater or suit jacket. With business shirts, a tie is required; with sports shirts it was not required. Neither turtleneck sweaters nor blue jeans are acceptable. **(By the time I started my teaching career in 1974 at a public school there were no such guidelines—students could wear pretty much whatever they wanted, but I am glad to have had dress standards at Greer, as I believe that dressing up leads to better performance at school.**

Academic guidelines—Honor roll students did not have to study in the cottage study area during study hall—they could study in another room as suggested by the houseparent. For juniors and seniors with satisfactory grades, they could go to other campus activities during study hall and go home on an occasional weekend.

The school day began at 8:05 and there would be a general assembly, a chapel service, or just going to one's homeroom. **(I remember Mr. DiArpino, our high school history teacher, giving lectures on "news of the week" with a poster of the world on a lectern with pictures of important events around the world" during these assembly times. I must confess that I usually had my mind on other things during these lectures, but that was my issue, not Mr. DiArpino's!)**

We would break for lunch at noon and then have afternoon classes from 1:30-3:00. (At the public school where I taught, we did have a cafeteria in the building, but only 20 minutes for lunch. To this day, I still remember one of my students saying to me in her exasperation because of such a short lunch period, "Mr. H, we inhale, not eat, our lunch!"—to be sure, an exaggeration by my student Karen, but not by much!)

Some extra-curricular activities (drama, glee club) were scheduled for Tuesday and Thursday evenings.

And last of all, Seniors were able to enter the high school building via the front door—that was a big deal, and something that I looked forward to when I became a senior!

In the spring, 2021 issue, we will publish our third installment of the 1956-57 student guidebook as we will go over the vocational guidelines for students at Greer.

Sent to Peggy by an alumnus of Greer School:

An anonymous piece:

T'was a month before Christmas, And all through the town,

People wore masks, that covered their frown.

The frown had begun way back in the Spring,

When a global pandemic. Changed everything.

They called it corona, but unlike the beer,
it didn't bring good times, it didn't bring cheer.

Contagious and deadly, this virus spread fast,

Like a wildfire that starts When it is fueled by gas.

Airplanes were grounded, Travel was banned.

Borders were closed across air, sea and land.

As the world entered lockdown to flatten the curve,

The economy halted, and folks lost their nerve.

From March to July, we rode the first wave,

People stayed home, they tried to behave.

When summer emerged, the lockdown was lifted.

But away from caution, many folks drifted.

Now it is December and cases are spiking.

Wave two has arrived, much to our disliking.

Frontline workers, Doctors and Nurses,
try to save people from riding in hearses.

This virus is awful, this COVID-19.

There isn't a cure but soon a vaccine!
Pfizer, Moderna, BioTech, Novavax,

AsraZenica, Sanofi, they have our backs

It's true that this year We've had sadness a plenty,
We'll never forget the year 2020.

And just 'round the corner - The holiday season,

But why be merry? Is there even a reason?
To decorate the house and put up the tree,

When no one will see it, No one but me?

But outside my window the snow gently falls,

And I think to myself, let us deck the halls!

So, I gather the ribbon, The garland and bows,

As I play those old carols, my happiness grows.

Christmas is not cancelled, and neither is hope.

If we lean on each other, I know we can cope

On Christmas the Zoom calls will be there to ease us

And join as we celebrate the birth of Jesus

Sad News

We have learned that Albert "Al" Louis Borsodi passed away on June 13 of this year. Cause of death is unknown currently. Al was 79 years old.

We have just heard that Albert "Al" Lloyd Dilks Jr. passed away recently. Al was a U.S. Navy veteran who served in Viet Nam as a Seabee Construction Electrician or CE. Al was 75 years old.

Greerschool.Org Web Site Update

This year has been especially hard on my computer in that I had a serious hard drive crash that caused me to lose most of the Greer School data I had.

Fortunately, most of website data was located on an older hard drive and is retrievable. What I regret losing the most was my E-mail contacts in my Outlook program and all my snail (postal) addresses in several files on my Desktop, which was eliminated.

Also, fortunately, John, Sandy, Peggy and Mitzi were able to save the day by providing their files that helped me cobble together new mailing address labels for the hard copies.

I am still working on getting my e-mail system (Outlook or other) and the current contact list completed so that I can send out the electronic versions, which some of them may get to read before you read the paper version. Time will tell, hopefully before Christmas Day.

Other than that, nothing else has been added to the website other than work on the In-Memorial page and I will be adding the rest of 2020's newsletters (including this one) to the Newsletter page, anon,

That is 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 – available from
tonyvaz@greerschool.org

Sandy Hudnor – available from
tonyvaz@greerschool.org

Peggy Sparks – available from
tonyvaz@greerschool.org

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



John and Sandy Hudnor

Doug and Mitzi Berry

Ron and Peggy Sparks

Tony and Jo Ann Vaz

