

Dear Fellow Alumni



February 1999

We do hope that you are all having a good winter. After a nice December we paid for it in January with cold weather and a lot of ice. My sloping and long drive was a problem. We, much to our dislike, must inform you of some deaths that have occurred. From Pat Dallas and Lydia Moody we heard that Alton Bauchmann had died March 4, 1998. We heard from Peggy (Mathewson) Sparks that her father had died on January 1, 1999. He had taken many of the pictures we rescued when Greer closed its doors. We also heard from Diana Munzer that her brother Peter had died September 24, 1998. We did have a letter returned to us that Robert Johnson died on September 24, 1998. I do hope that is all the bad news for this time. At this writing we have six reservations for the alumni reunion. We do hope that a lot more reservations will be forth coming or we will have to cancel the affair. About 80 people have sent in their dues at this date. A telephone call from Jack Rolston on Friday February 5, 1999 informed us of the death of Ted Trommsdorff, donations may be made to the Goshen Community Church, Goshen, NH 03752. Fred's address is [REDACTED], Goshen NH 03753

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From: **Rita (Playfair) Bourne**, [REDACTED] Olton, Solihull, England B92 [REDACTED]-  
phone 0121-[REDACTED]; email ritabee74 [REDACTED]

I have been living in middle England for the past 25 years. I am married now and have to boys 10 & 12.

We are about 20 miles from Shakespeare's home in Stratford on Avon. If anyone wishes to visit, stay over, or just want advice, they are more than welcome to phone, write, or email me. I particularly wish to contact Ken Harris if you know his whereabouts but would love to hear from anyone who would like to write. (We had Ken's address but last year the letter came back saying he had moved.)

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From: **William McKinley**, [REDACTED] Chillicothe, OH 45601

Your December edition of the "Alumni News" generated a nostalgic response. Memories **of that quiet, gentle place and the time are especially pertinent at Christmas time.** The "Where Love is" message, be it presented in recitation or an annual play, along with the communal Christmas tree and the caroling are a joy to recall. However, the most moving, memorable moment of my Hope Farm Christmas recollections is Rose DeCaro's lyric presentation of "Oh Holy Night" from the balcony of the darkened, hushed school auditorium.

If she is still with us, I want her to know, that this magical experience remains with me into my 82<sup>nd</sup> years. My love and good wishes to all those who share the Hope Farm/Greer experience. (On the 20<sup>th</sup> of December I gave a copy of Bill's letter to Rose and when I saw Mrs. Fink I asked her what she remembered from the play and it was the same as Bill's-- Jim Morton)

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From: **George Freer**, [REDACTED] Clifton NJ 07011

One of the big traditions at Greer was the annual performance of the "Martin Play" just before most of us went on our Christmas vacations. The players were usually the students who ranked highest academically and, in as much as it took me three years just to graduate from the 11<sup>th</sup> grade that left me out. So when I finally got to be a senior in 1950, Mrs. Stock recommended me for background lights, using the off-stage rheostat.

It worked well for awhile but despite having seen the play five times before I eventually got caught up in the drama and neglected my duties. Then came the line, "Look, its growing darker outside," and in panic, I quickly cranked the rheostat down 6 or 7 notches and indeed it did get dark.

The whole audience laughed at my faux pas, ending my show business career before it even got started.

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From: **Donald Brown,** [REDACTED] Pitman, NJ 08071

While attending Greer, I didn't fully appreciate the fine education or the really good faculty and staff that contributed to so much of my life. The academic program, with its Latin, Math, Science, History and English requirements had a classical curriculum which prepared me well for my college and graduate work. Because of the pragmatic skills obtained from working on the farm and around the school, I have been able to remodel several homes, construct small building, and repair almost everything around the house. My athletic experience taught me the value of teamwork and persistence, which has enriched every aspect of my life. Although I was a rather shy teenager, the socialization on all levels at Greer, raise my self-esteem and prepared me well for interacting with other people especially on a personal level.

Even though Randle kicked me out during my senior year, I have only good memories of Greer, and I appreciate the efforts that Janet, Tony and you are doing to kept he spirit alive.

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From: **Herbert Blownstine,** [REDACTED] Webster NY 14580

I'm retired from Real Estate business. Mary and I are fine; married 55 years December 27, 1998

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From: **Linda (Wilson) Cavanaugh,** [REDACTED] Cornwall Bridge, CT 06754

Married with 2 children, think about Greer frequently, Mom Mac, Mrs. Andrews, the Percy's, and the Shays with Thomasina.

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From: **Russell Golden,** [REDACTED] Oakdale, NY 11769

I opened a real estate office in Lindenhurst, NY. I also retired from the NYTA 5 years and the USNR 7 years ago. I am married for 37 years and have a son and a daughter. Both are married. Son has a 5 year old son and my daughter has a 10 year old son.

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From: **Pat (Dean) Hilsinger,** [REDACTED] Philadelphia PA 19116

Visitor Norma Clayton said it well in the letter you reproduced in your newsletter. Greer was such a "serene setting" for my high school years. I always feel I am "going home" when I come back for a reunion and I bless all of you who keep the reunions going. I am still working for the US EPA in Philly. My mom passed away in April 1997 and that was a real loss. She was a regular visitor to Greer while I was there and attended reunions for as long as she could. My four kids are happy and healthy.

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From: **Mary (Cuevas) Krawczyk,** [REDACTED] Phoenix AZ 85009

I volunteer my time at a school that my daughter attended. I do the attendance; call the parents to find out why their children are not in school. One day the kid has every disease known to man the next day the kid is in school looking very healthy.

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From: **James Lucas,** [REDACTED] Arlington TX 76012

I retired in 1971 as an Air Force officer & retired again in 1990 from Fort Worth ISD. I play in a big band (14 pieces and a singer) and am also a part time Deputy Sheriff for Tarrant County, TX., working as a court bailiff. I like to camp out in the state park.

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From **Peggy (Mathewson) Sparks**

Greer was a special place for me, in my past and memories, I loved the woods, the peace and contentment I felt when I was there. The traditions: the pledge tree and the laundry basket we decorated and filled with food for the Salvation Army at Thanksgiving.

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From: **Viola (Farley) Stiles**, [REDACTED] Georgetown, TX 78628

Living at a Sun City Development and enjoying life. Remember so many good things about Greer especially at this time of year.

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From: **Robert Tate**, [REDACTED] Vernon, CT 06066

15 years as Director of Benefits at University of Connecticut, 29 years as Financial Planner (self employed). Winding down somewhat and plan to retire in approx. 4 to 5 years.

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From: **Pamela (Stobbe) Todd**, [REDACTED] Scio NY 14880

So glad I had 6 years at Greer (family). Just retired and having a ball. Have 2 sons and grand children, live in the southern tier of New York.

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From: **Ruth Ann Wichelman**, [REDACTED] Chatham NJ 07928

Greer was a wonderful place to start my teaching career. The kids were wonderful. I enjoyed teaching Sunday school and having a Brownie troop shared by Ann Watson. Thanksgiving was a great holiday around the tables.

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From: **Raul Gandara**, [REDACTED] S Ponte Verde Beach, FL 32082

I believe my years at Greer made a new life for me. My values and ideals were formulated at Greer. Mrs. Morton had a profound influence on me that lasted all my life. She was a very special "Mom" to me.

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From: **Paul Bassett**, [REDACTED] Centerville VA 2120-1744

Christmas reminds me of Mr. Fink hot on my tail on my way to Gate with 'our tree' saying, "I didn't plant 10,000 trees last year for you to knock down and haul 'em away like that. If you wanted a tree, I'd of planted one for you. Now, take that axe back to the shop and sharpen it so the next guy can use it." Yes Sir, Mr. Fink, you had a way to teach from our foolish, young deeds, to realize that 'bend your back' is still something we live with today.

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From" **Frank Braynard** [REDACTED] Sea Cliff, NY 11579

Thanks for your newsletter about Greer School. As a former teacher I will never forget Greer (Hope Farm), or Gate House and all the rest. Don Thompson, another teacher at Greer while I was there, moved to Sea Cliff, and has been a neighbor for over 50 years. Ward Bell, whose job I took when I went to Greer, is another old Hope Farm and Sea Cliff friend. His father and my father were both neighbors in Sea Cliff for many years. I have just had a new book out, my 37th. I would love to have someone buy a copy (\$20.00 is the price) and give it to the library at Greer. It is a sketchbook and is called "Sketching in Ireland, Scotland and England." The book is 176 pages and has a hard cover. You might possibly remember that I did a lot of sketching at Greer.

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Just a quick update for all of you regarding the change at The Fountains: McAllister House has been totally converted to an Assisted Living Facility. There

are 5 small apartments in the house and a large living room and dining room area (with kitchen attached) downstairs. The dining area includes the fireplace. An elevator has been installed so residents can come downstairs with a minimum of inconvenience. It is really nice, and it is such a comfort to know that the house is being used for such a good purpose.

The Fire House has been converted into 3 apartments, of which, the largest is located on the whole top floor of the building. The 2 smaller ones downstairs are really nice.

The Auditorium has been totally redone and looks elegant. When you all come home for the reunion in August, I think you will be pleased with the changes. It is really nice to see Hope Farm continue----even though the name and the pole are not the same. It continues to be a "home" for those who need it.

We are hoping to hear from you soon with your response to the reunion - and looking forward to seeing you all in August.

*As Always, Jim & Isabel, Doug & Mitzi*



Dear Fellow Alumni

Spring 1999

As winter comes to a close I look back at the weather we have had in the past few years and I always wonder how we managed to put all the boards on the Rapallo Pond for the hockey rink and how they stayed there all winter. When the hockey season was over the boards were taken back to the old blacksmith shop and stored and the ice was cut for refrigeration in all locations for the summer and fall months. The weather has changed since those days, as each winter now, the boards would be on the bottom of the pool.

We are looking forward to seeing you all in August and we URGE you to PLEASE write to us about yourselves so we can include them in the letter.

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From: **Rose (McLain) Fuhrman,** [REDACTED] New Oxford, PA 17350

Hi to you alumni out there, especially the ones who graduated in '60. I only spent 3 years at Greer as a student, but probably the best years of my life. I loved my years there and graduated in 1960 and married Charles Berry the day after I graduated.

I have 4 children and 5 grandchildren. Mrs. Fink is the god mother of my first child, Pamela Berry.

Thank you Charlie, for getting me on the alumni mailing list. I am looking forward to the reunion in August.

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From: **John Rogers,** [REDACTED] Bloomfield Hills, MI 48304

I enjoy receiving and reading the Hope Farm – Greer Alumni news that you prepare.

Because my time at Hope Farm was limited to the period of 1931 to June 1941 and my memory of names is growing dimmer, many of the names mentioned I never knew or perhaps only met for a short time. Nonetheless, whether we were together or not, we all shared the same experiences and memories of schooling, summer camp and the Martin Play as someone mentioned in your recent letter, or sleigh riding from Main House down the hill to Gate House; the walks to Verbank; working the soil with Gabe DeCaro; getting behind a one horse plow or tiller, picking the beans, tomatoes, rhubarb, corn, etc; then canning them, and above all, the camaraderie of KIDS, all in the same boat.

During my time, and I am sure it was so before I came and after I left, all of us went out for every sport, went to every dance and movie, marched together to the cemetery on Memorial day, went to church every Sunday, walked to school together (I was at Gate House), ate together, studied together. When one does this for any length of time; in my case 10 years, it is little wonder we take a joy in learning of schoolmates from years ago that shared a common bond of experiences.

I graduated in 1941, found myself in the Army Air Corps in 1942, as an aerial gunner. Upon discharge in early 1946, luckily, the GI Bill enabled me to attend college. Later, after 5 years of business (selling insurance), I went to law school, graduated from the University of Michigan law school in 1957 and have been practicing law in this area every since in my own firm.

Oddly, as one gets older, old memories come more into focus, I am about to be 75 in a few months: yet details of certain football games we played, particularly those we unexpectedly won, lyrics of hymns we sang in church many times, prayers we recited from the Episcopal Prayer Book Sunday after Sunday, the Martin Play we put on year after year, while I was there; the dedication of the teachers and house parents, (your mother was great while I was at Marcy).

All the remembrances (and many more) come into focus, fondly remembered, and have served as a great support for me as I am sure for others of our classmates. I am thankful of my background as Hope Farm, Greer, for the people like your mother and Mrs. Fink who helped us put ourselves together and for the many kind memories, particularly those readers mentioned in your newsletter.

My sister Dorothy, my brother Douglas, and I came to Hope Farm in 1931. Doug graduated in 1940, Dorothy left before graduating. Doug died in 1976 while living in Philadelphia with his family. He had 7 children, all of who graduated from college, 3 of

who are lawyers, 3 have MBS, and all are in business. Dorothy lives in Palm Desert, California and is now a widow. I have 2 children, Ann Mari and Susan who make me proud.

I end where I began, thanking you for your newsletter; and if any Hope Farm – Greer people are ever in the Detroit area, I would love to take them to dinner and share their company and experiences and memories of Greer.

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From: **Mima Lindquist** [REDACTED] Venice FL 34285-2210

I was at Greer, January 1950 through June 1951 for half the 7<sup>th</sup> grade and summer camp and the entire 8<sup>th</sup> grade while my mother recovered for a long and serious illness. I keep in touch with my first best friend, Pam (Stobbe) Todd.

I returned to my family for 4 years of high school at Babylon, LI and 3 years RN program at Maryview in Virginia. Mother of 2 and grandmother of 3 and now my husband Al and I have retired to Venice, Florida. Was your mother one of the housemothers? (Answer is yes, at Marcy----Jim Morton)

The 18 months at Greer were wonderful, what a blessing. The kids older and younger were like one big family to me. Staff too. I became very interested in sports and love it. Academics too!

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From: **Agnes Davenport**, [REDACTED] West Palm Beach FL 33425

A quick note to let you know that I am planning to attend the Greer reunion August, 1999 with Robert Cooper from California and my companion, Marvin Kraker from Florida.

Bob & I are looking forward to seeing our Greer friends and hope they many will respond to you so that we will be able to forward with this reunion. Life so short and we cannot afford to put things off. I heard from Barbara Derrey that she will be attending also. Hope all is well with you and your families. Looking forward to seeing you this summer.

Enclosed is my dues check.

Love, Agnes (Slewick) Davenport

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From: **Ward Bell**, [REDACTED] NY---teacher 1938-1942

I get a real charge whenever your newsletter arrives. It brings back fond memories of my 3 ½ years of teaching there (1938-42), when the name change occurred. Back then, I had an old family camera with which I took numerous photos that I have saved and to which I often refer to with the title “Greer Years.”

Fortunately, I put in names and years to help my fond memories of those times and I remembered the great students, staff, and faculty of those times. Your letters revive valued memories. Sometime in the future, I plan to send you that book. In this letter I will send you a list of names that I remember from those happy times.

My first year teaching in Highland, NY right across the Hudson River, they had no athletic coach and I, as a sports fan, became the unprepared coach of football, basketball, and baseball!! After an undistinguished football schedule, I was making up the basketball calendar and my boss suggests that I contact Hope Farm School, “Somewhere east of Poughkeepsie.” With no more address than that, I wrote and received a reply from Jack Heifner about a home- to-home couple of games. When I arrived at Hope Farm and my team went onto the auditorium floor, who should be the referee, but Mr. Bertram Fink, who had been my brother’s pal in college. We enjoyed the game and then Hope Farm came to Highland and we went ahead and planned two baseball games for that spring. When they came to our home game, Mr. Heifner mentioned the fact that Mr. Bertram was leaving to go into advanced studies at Columbia University in New York City. So I asked the question, “Do you think they might consider me for that job?” A couple of weeks later I stopped at Hope Farm was interviewed by Mr. Behrends and got the job. What good fortune for me because the next year, I met the great kids, staff and faculty I was to work with for the next 3 ½ years.

Jim I enjoyed your visit with me when you & Wayne Holton came down to Long Island. I hear from Wayne, Mrs. Fink and Eldred Ross at Christmas. A few years ago I had a letter from Ed Crump and have had others from Mary Cuevas Krawczyk, Helen Wehenkel Belehrad, & Violet Smalec Byszynski. I see Shirley Austin Fertig, Mr. Braynard, and Mr. Thompson around town, here in Sea Cliff. Last week, I had a strange phone call from Ernie Zarakovitis Byron about some promotion in which he is involved. Greer/Hope Farm meant a great deal to me when I was there and I have appreciated the people even more and more in the years of teaching and retirement that have followed. All my memories have been strengthened by your chatty newsletter.

May I offer one suggestion which sound so much like a history teacher? I wish those who write to you would give the dates when they were at the school and what year they graduated. I have a yearbook from 1941 and Helen Belehrad sent me a copy of the words from the school song for which I had composed the words and tune and Mr. Ross translated into musical notes.

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From: **Karin Green,** [REDACTED] Holden, MA 01520 ---'43-53

Sorry I've taken so long to send in my dues. I meant to send them in December but ended up filing the letter away so I'm pleased that you reminded those of us who are delinquent in your February letter.

There were some nice thought expressed the February letter about life at Greer, but some sad news as well. I had known about Teddy, but not about Peter Munzer and the others. Since our last reunion, too many of our alumni have passed on. I don't like getting old. Mentally, I'm, still 16 and ready to drive into Millbrook for the coffee and pie that we all enjoyed so much due to your willingness to drive us to the coffee shop. Gosh, we thought we were so grown-up.

Bill and I visit with Gwen every summer-or try to. Since the visit is always too short and Bill usually has chores he likes to do for Gwen, we don't get over to see you. But, as soon as we hit Amenia, on goes the tape deck and songs from the forties and fifties fill the car a great feeling go nostalgia takes over. My aunt left me many, many records from that period and Bill has taped much of the music so we enjoy listening to the oldies on our trips. I remember Saturday mornings at Greer when the chores had to be done—on went the phonograph and on went the radio to hear the countdown of the most popular pieces for the week. Sometimes I think we spent more time dancing around than working, but then that couldn't have been true since so much was expected of us on Saturday mornings. Going back every summer is like returning home —there is spiritual nourishment that takes place for me and I'm grateful to have a reason to return every summer. I feel fortunate to have experienced such a rich childhood with wonderful memories and good friends. Last Memorial Day weekend, Betty Brown Lucas and Inge Rothenberg visited, and we spent a full 3 days sightseeing and talking incessantly. We've another reunion; planned in Holden this spring and intend to ensure that we get together every year. We shared too much not to continue the close friendship that we developed at Greer.

As for comments of my current life, I've been happily married for 42 years. After having raised 5 children, I returned to the workplace for 18 years and retired 3 years ago from my position as Director of Compensation and Benefits at the University of Massachusetts Medical Center. Since my husband is a professor at Holy Cross College we've benefited fro his sabbatical leaves and lived 2 years in England and have traveled extensively throughout Europe. My life has been satisfying and full and I believe my Greer experience gave me the opportunity to achieve what I have achieved.

My thanks to you both for keeping the Greer spirit alive. We owe a lot to you and the Berry's. I'm looking forward to seeing you in August.

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Dear All-

A quick update to what is happened here at The Fountains (Greer). We have been approved to build an Assisted Living wing. It will have 34 apartments in it and will be a 2-story structure that will be attached to the main building. We are in hopes

of breaking ground for this wing in May. It is truly a good feeling to have the security that was given to us when we were here continued for the seniors who now live on campus.

I plan to put out a letter to the residents here at the Fountains and tell them of the reunion and the fact that many of you will be here on campus. I know from past experience, that they will want to visit with you, as they have expressed a sincere desire to know about "what it was like when----."

We look forward to seeing you all in August. Please remember to send in your reservations so we can be sure to have proper count to give the restaurant.

As Always,

*Jim & Isabel, Doug & Mitzi*



Dear Fellow Alumni



October 1999

We were happy to see so many of you the weekend of August 7<sup>th</sup>. The turnout was very good and we were pleased with the results. I wish to thank you all for the very nice Tiffany bowl that was sent by you to me.

As many of you know we also had a power outage in September and a lot of rain. We are very happy to get the rain as it was a very dry summer. Glad we are high enough not to get the flooding as some of you had.

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From: **Bob Hougasian**, September 1, 1999— [REDACTED] Chesapeake VA 23322

On Aug 7<sup>th</sup> I attended my 2<sup>nd</sup> Greer/Hope Farm reunion. Who would I see? Will I recognize folks that I should know? Will there be enough time to visit with everyone? Anticipation of my 2<sup>nd</sup> reunion was just as keen as the first I attended in '96. Driving north from my home in southeastern Virginia, I was able to stop and visit with family members I hadn't seen in years, a definite plus, and a very good way to start. On Saturday I was pleasantly surprised to find that both of my sisters, Helen and Virginia would be coming with me. All in all, the 3 of us were able to spend a full day and a half together. That was a first in our adult lives and we thoroughly enjoyed out time together.

By the time we arrived on the grounds, there were already several groups of people outside the school building. The joyful sound of people happily recognizing each other and exchanging greeting was everywhere. It was the same inside as we struggled to squeeze our way to sign in. My first view inside was a large crowd of people; long lost friends visiting and trying to catch up in minutes, the years in between. There were many that obviously live close enough to each other to visit regularly, just as joyfully engage in conversation. I was almost blinded by the flash of all those teeth. SMILES, big, Big, HUGE, HAPPY SMILES. I could also feel my cheeks automatically bumping into my earlobes. I believe that scene defined the reunion; for me; a large crowd of people so very happy to be together for another brief moment in time. What is there about the youthful years that give them the peculiarity of being able to make memories that live forever?

Fortunately the happier memories lay on the surface, bobbing around like ducks on a pond. It was easy to see, there were lots and lots of us that were happy to be in that place on that Saturday. Thanks you for all the work, planning on rushing around that made is so successful. The company was exceptional and the food selection was large and it was all delicious. I must admit, I never had a problem, with my appetite while living in Dutchess County –Except liver; it took 30-40 years before I developed a taste for it. Thanks goodness we had “Rags” the mascot at Marcy Cottage. I would cut my piece into smaller ones then slip them under the table, one at a time to Rags. He always looked rounder & took a longer nap after a liver dinner. I guess I wasn't the only one doing it. Keep in mind, if we didn't finish our meal that plate would most likely be in front of us at the next meal. Good old Rags, but here I am chasing rabbits, back to 1999.

Whoever was responsible for providing all those copies of various photos that were there for the taking, thank you! As usual there was so much going on at one time I must have missed at least half of it.

Soon after lunch came “the walk about.” It's a special part of the reunion I look forward to. Permit me to pause here to thank the owners, administrator, and residents of The Fountains at Millbrook. My sincere thanks for allowing us to meet have a luncheon and walk the grounds. As for my part, being on the grounds has an almost spiritual meaning Breathing that air, walking that ground, and see again that told familiar and incredible landscape. The unthinkable is there were times I took all of this for granted. What an exhilarating experience it is for me to be on those grounds again. The “Hougasian's” went about a hundred yards down the old county road to view the McKinley and ‘Cronk homes. They were certainly solidly built to still look so good after all these years. Then, on to Ledge. That must be the only cottage on the old school grounds that could evoke such warm memories of youthful adventure, not only for the older girls, but for the older boys as well!! On approaching Ledge, I spotted Bob Cooper coming down the fire escape. Somehow it all seemed so nature. That, boy and girls, is what déjà' vu really expresses. (My apologies to the mature Bob). After a tour of Ledge, we stopped at the cemetery and paid our respects. We thought back, remembering the solemn Memorial

Day march and the sonorous beat of the bass drum leading us there. The circle of staff and student around the cross; the prayer and minute of silence, and the inevitable, the student who fainted. We walked through the grass and discovered part of the foundation of Crest, then took that very special walk to the Chapel of the Child. What an anchor that structure is; thank God it stands, and stands so well.

Time was running out. We left the ground to check-in at the Motel and get ready for the evening events. There was so much more we wanted to re-discover. Time is not only a healer, but on occasions, a tyrant.

The social hour, for which I was 30 minutes late, seemed like a mad jumble. It was a noisy, exciting, happy jumble. The word to describe the banquet can only be “outstanding”: the food, delicious and well prepared—the hall, spacious and comfortable, the service, excellent. Those smiles were still everywhere. Our table was probably the only one that had some empty seats. This turned out to be a big plus. I’m not talking about having extra desserts either. Judy Wallace brought over some of her wedding party and we had an interesting and enjoyable visit with them. I hope they had enough time to eat considering all the questions we asked. My wish for Judy and her husband that their marriage is as solid, long lasting and a place of joy, as the Chapel of the Child in which they were married.

I’m sorry I didn’t see Mrs. Fink. I know some were going over to visit her, we decided we wouldn’t overwhelm her with too large a crowd. I knew she was among us in her heart even if she wasn’t up to traveling. We really do love you, Mrs. Fink.

I can’t think of a better choice for speaker than Fred. What a voice; deep, rich resonant. I’ve worn out my thesaurus searching for the words that adequately describe his speaking ability. The best I can do is this: When he speaks, that voice commands as much attention (and shushing) as the bass drum did on Memorial Day. Bravo Fred. Whoever had the idea to callout everyone’s name, having each person stand, deserves a medal. Not only is each person recognized, which is always welcome, but those of us who haven’t been regular attendee’s, had the opportunity to put a name and a face together. There were 3 more members I had the chance to say hello to as a result of this idea.

Could I say the reunion was well planned & organized? Yes, I could, but that would be true. The reunion was far, far better than that. Often, when someone does something and does it exceptionally well, the thing they do appears to be so easy. That’s an illusion. I’m certain many hours and a lot of dedicated work went into the planning this event. Coordinating the program, scouting the facilities, making arrangements for a wide variety of needs such as: the number of rooms needed, to how many rolls to order for the luncheon. There were no doubt, countless other details to consider that many of us wouldn’t think of. Not to mention putting out the Newsletters, the email messaging, making sure everyone knew about it well enough in advance to respond. I could say it was well planned and (well) organized, but I won’t. The reunion from my perspective was planned with a love and a passion for the fellowship of former Greer/Hope Farm residents’ sand it was executed flawlessly. It’s difficult for me to sit here at home and try to guess the many hours of hard, dedicated work and the commitment it took, In order that we all would have an easy trouble free and thoroughly enjoyable event. I’m so glad recognition was given to that small group of organizers during the banquet. What certainly is obvious to me, I, my sisters and everyone else seemed to enjoy being at the reunion and had a wonderful time. Simple words are usually the best.....here are mine.  
THANK YOU.

Sunday morning, we had breakfast at the motel, said good-bye to the few that were there, got in the car, and journeyed back to our respective lives.

Till we meet again, **Bob Hougasian**

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From; **Peggy Sparks**, [REDACTED] Rochester, MN 55904

Going “home” to Greer was better than I thought it would be and seeing people from my school days we so exciting. Ron loved the country side of Greer and now knows why I talk about it so much.

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From: **William Beer,** [REDACTED] Atlanta GA 30360

Thanks so much to you and the people who helped to make the reunion. Such a wonderful one. It was. Thanks so much.

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From: **Joan (Harpell) Caprariello,** [REDACTED] Port Washington, NY 11050

Just a note to thank you and Isabel, Doug and Mitzi for the wonderful reunion.

Everything was perfect. Even the weather was great. It was especially nice to be on the Greer campus again. It holds many special memories for me because for my parents and me, it was our home. I can't believe how beautiful "our" house looks!

You all did a really great job on putting this reunion together. The food was excellent, both at Greer and the Holiday Inn. Many thanks again for a wonderful reunion.

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From: **John Hudnor,** [REDACTED] Lebanon, NH 03766

I wanted to write this note to thank you for all the work that was put into the reunion.

Everyone that I had a chance to talk with was very glad to be at the reunion and loved the planning of events.

1. The luncheon had the atmosphere of a Thanksgiving dinner as it was in the auditorium.
2. The opportunity to walk the campus and talk to others about good times.
3. The professionalism and courtesy of the staff of the Holiday Inn, to say nothing of the good food.

These 3 things and opportunities would not have happened without a lot of quiet hard work beforehand; I appreciate your efforts on behalf of all of us.

I was especially impressed with the turnout of about 180!! Those numbers really match the turnout of the first reunion. I feel this high number reflects the enthusiasm generated for the success of past reunions.

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From: **Charles & Doris Berry**

I would like to thank you for what turned out to be a splendid reunion. Everything was so well organized. The food was great and there was plenty of it. The atmosphere was great. As I sat looking around it sure looked to me that everyone was having a wonderful time. You sure had everything planned out well and it sure showed up that way. This, of course, was my first time ever to be here. Charles and I have only been married for 8 months. I truly enjoyed it and so did Charles.

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From: **Karin (Venetian) Green,** [REDACTED] Holden MA 01520

You did it again!! You put on a wonderful reunion that we all enjoyed so much. You make it appear so casual and easy but I can appreciate eh planning a work that go into your efforts. It was nice seeing new faces—Lee Arvidson, Harriet Evdox, Virginia & Helen Hougasian, Peggy Mathewson & Bob Cooper to name just a few. I know all Greer Alumni echo my hearty thanks to you & the Berry's for keeping us together.

The summer is over & the rains are finally falling but a little too late to revitalize the gardens. Dutchess County didn't appear to be as dry as the rest of New England. Aside from the weather it has been a summer I would choose not to repeat. Bill's broken hip in May, my mother's stroke and heart attack in July and my mother -in-laws' stroke just last week have left me a little the worst for wear. Fortunately, they are all mending well.

Again, I'm grateful for the opportunity to see my old classmates and friends at least every 3 years and thanks for making it possible. Enjoy the beautiful fall season and keep well.

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As parting note to all of you, Doug and I thank you all for the lovely candy dish that arrived at our home after the reunion. It graces my dining room table, and daily reminds me that you all appreciate & enjoy the reunions. We are looking forward to the next one already-who says, "You can't get home?" We certainly have proved that you can!

As Always,

*Jim & Isabel, Doug & Mitzi*



Mr. and Mrs. Doug Berry  
[REDACTED]  
Dover Plains, NY 12522

James Morton  
[REDACTED]  
Millbrook, NY 12545

December, 1999

Dear Fellow Alumni,

We do wish each and every one of you a happy holiday and were glad so many of you came to YOUR reunion. Please note the above addresses. We now have 911 & although we are at the same house the address is different. Those of you who did not get the October Newsletter the reasoning for it is that you have not paid your dues. Bob Hougasian wrote a nice article on the reunion and we are sorry that you missed it.

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From: **Helen C Fink**, [REDACTED] Hyde Park NY 12538

I am sorry that I was not able to attend the reunion last August. However at this time I wish to extend my best wishes to you all for a "Merry Christmas & a Happy New Year." I do hope that this note finds you all happy and well and that you all may enjoy YOUR holiday.

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From: **Donald Charles**, [REDACTED] Mt Pleasant SC 29464

Someone, I don't remember who, once said that we never know how good something is until it's gone. I think that's the way it is with many of us that spent any appreciable amount of time at Greer, and with times changing so rapidly and moral values and education apparently being severely eroded, it seems truer now than ever.

I remember my arrival at Greer as though it was yesterday, although it's over 59 years ago! To me those stone gates were very impressive – if not slightly intimidating. My world up until them had encompassed a 50 miles radius around my home town of Southampton, LI, so a trip of almost 200 miles was quite an excursion. There was that initial feeling of bewilderment, and abandonment, even though my foster parents were very good to me. The year I entered Greer, 1944, found us in the throes of World War II, that most terrible of global conflicts, and my mother and father followed the war jobs from one city to another, as my father was awarded major government supervisory jobs at shipyards that built destroyers and minesweepers. It was decided that if I was ever to get a complete education and avoid the emotional trauma that might come with continual uprooting, I had to be in one place and stay there. Greer turned out to be that place. While it wasn't to be the case with me, I am reminded of a television discussion between a joint American/British group, wherein one panelist remarked that they, the British, had the only civilized approach to child rearing and education. "We simply send Imogene away, and by away, we mean to India at age 5 and bring her back at age 25." Hmm...I wonder if that's what my foster parents really did have in mind. Only kidding – actually, my foster parents gave me a lot of TLC throughout their long and happy lives.

I went first to the main administration building, where I met Mrs. Fink – a lady as close to being a saint as it's possible to get. She loved the entire student body and fought fiercely over many years to obtain the best of everything for both student and staff, yet her patience was legend, though severely tried on many occasions. From there I went to Rapallo Cottage, which would be my home for the next 5 years. There I met some of my housemates and was introduced to Mrs. Jensen, one half of the houseparent team of Peter & Irene Jensen. The Jensen's were Danish, very nice and had 3 sons and strikingly pretty daughter, Isa. Isa lived at Rapallo with her parents, but we only saw 'my three sons when they came to visit with their parents on a few rare occasions.

Since I had arrived in late August and had a week or so before school began I had a chance to observe what a wonderful gardener Mrs. Jensen was. The flower beds in a sort formal garden alongside Rapallo were a riot of colors, the results of her tender loving care. One spring, Mrs. Jensen handed me a bag full of flower seeds and told me I was going to be responsible for designing the garden that year. It was great fun and good training in flower bed layout, and we had beautiful flowers right through to the first frost.

School started and that delicious late summer-early autumn haze hung in the air. I met Mr. Fink, school principal and shop teacher, a wonderful patient and fatherly man, and

the other entire exceptional teachers that I would frustrate so terribly in my years of just “sliding along” academically. I was continually reminded that I had plenty of intelligence but was just too lazy to use it. Being endowed with a large streak of rebelliousness and seemingly forever trying to extricate myself for one or another behavior situation didn’t matter much, either. Ah, well...story of my life, but that’s another book, another chapter. It took a while, but I slowly began to settle into the routine that would be my life until graduation in 1949.

There are so many memories that come flooding back when I think of Greer, most of them wonderful, some not so, but almost all of them worth keeping, many as lessons I how to live. There were so many new faces and names to remember.

We were fortunate to have a staff of administrators, teachers, and houseparents that really cared about us. It comes as no surprise that many staff members who came to Greer thinking of staying a couple years, found the atmosphere so magical they made the school their permanent home and were always there for us when we needed them, on any level, personal, academic, or emotional. They were our ever-ready fonts of knowledge, compassion and understanding. Classes were small and every student was able to receive one-on-one assistance with his or her studies, if needed. When I tell people that my graduating class consisted of 14 students, the gasp and say – “Mine was 250, or 500 or 750” etc. I find these figures mind-boggling, but the world was, a little smaller then, in fact, a lot smaller.

With the onset of winter, I experienced my first Thanksgiving at Greer and it was unique. It was a tradition for the staff members and Board of Directors to serve the students that day and the school auditorium was set up with rows of long tables decorated with pumpkins, gourds, orange streamers, and cutouts of pilgrims (where were the Indians?)

After we finished stuffing ourselves we went on a hike to work off all that food and the staff and board members had to do the cleanup, pots, pans utensils, tables, everything. But hey- it was only once a year. They never complained. Another event that took place on Thanksgiving and which I wish schools all over the country would emulate was the donation by grades of food baskets for the poor, and they were blessed in the Chapel of the Child and picked up by the Salvation Army for distribution to needy families.

As Christmas vacation time rolled around on the evening before we all went our separate ways, there was the reading in the Chapel of a story about a little old clock maker, and his simple gift of an apple, which the Christ Child reached for from his mother’s arms, ignoring the elegant and expensive gifts brought by others. Then followed the residents of each cottage gathering around the tree set up at the front of the chapel, hanging their individual pledges as high up as they could and sing a carol. It was all so simple and beautiful, as was the Chapel itself, and for me it embodied the true spirit of Christmas, without all the hoopla and commercialism that has truly ruined what ought to be a beautiful and spiritual occasion.

Over the 5 years that I spent at Greer, I carried the cross, sang in the choir, polished the alter brass, and rang the bell, not all at the same time, of course. I was eventually baptized there. I loved singing in the choir, Classical music; singing and art were my great loves. I was also in the Greer School Glee Club, led by the wonderful Damaris Warner who was the .....singer with a beautiful voice.

When the war ended in 1945, a number of Greer’s students that had valiantly joined the armed forces to fight for our country (lying about their ages, as they did across the nation) returned to school, and we cheered them and gave them our admiration and gratitude. Sadly, there were also those that did not come back and we mourned them and gave them our respect – they would never be forgotten. I remember drawing “pin-up” girls in India ink on the backs of khaki Air Force bomber jackets that were shipped to Greer as war surplus and were warm and comfortable. I was surprised to see an example of my artistic efforts, still in mint condition, at one of the reunions a number of years back.

During the school year, there were the Friday night movies, Saturday night dances (to the records of the Big Band leaders), and other special events visits to Bennett Junior College for their plays, recitals, and lectures: Sunday afternoon passes to Verbank or Millbrook. Our Glee Club gave a concert at Bennett Junior College, and we were thrilled to be asked. Bennett was a beautiful school where girls from only the wealthiest of families could afford to go.

In the summer we spent a couple weeks at Camp Barbey, presided over by Mrs. “Moms” McKinley, where we did our summer jobs during the day, worked in the dining hall from time to time and in the evenings had a songfest, put on shadow plays in the ‘Rec’ hall (which had a trunk full of costumes like an old Vaudeville theater), banged on an old upright piano, and in general had a good time. We also swam in a pool that always seemed to be filled with ice water. Bill McKinley, who was in charge of transportation, was big, kindly man with a grip that could break every bone in your hand! Thank goodness he never chose to squeeze quite that hard. We worked in the garden and the cannery, putting up all the canned good we’d need throughout the winter. Picking strawberries was fun. We probably ate more that we every put in the baskets, and Mr. Fink, keeping watch with a stern but benevolent eye, would say “Alright boys, that’s enough eating – put some in the baskets.”

Of course the school had its share of delicious on-campus scandals, (what private school doesn’t?) causing a great deal of tongue-wagging, mostly among the student. The staff was wise and remained ‘mum’ thereby not adding fuel to the fire. Inasmuch as the school was relatively sequestered, it was nice to know that human foibles could still surface from time to time. The again that may have been the very reason they did pop up.

I learned many years later that Greer had the largest campus of any private school in the country, 1500 acres! That’s a lot of land, all a beautiful rolling countryside, lushly green and included a good size farm, an apple orchard and a summer camp. The student cottages were roomy, friendly house. I loved Rapallo with its stately white columned porch and ivy covered brick and an added attraction was the swimming pool right behind it. Back beyond that were rolling hills and woods, and the farm. Then there was Daisy, made entirely of fieldstone, where all the boys ate. Down by the main gate there was Gate House – white and elegant. (What a clever name, wonder who thought of it?) And lets’ not forget the other cottages, Ledge, Crest, Marcy, and Plum. Each had its own particular charm. I was truly sickened when I saw Rapallo’ burned ruins while visiting Greer in 1979; it was as though a piece of me had been ripped away.

I managed to get through my five years at Greer relatively unscathed, and in the process it’s possible I may have learned something. (No fainting, please.) I was sort of the unofficial school artist, so I got to do some decorating and posters and even the sets for a couple of the school plays (very primitive I assure you, definitely not Broadway caliber!) There were also the aforementioned bomber jackets. Also the margins of my entire school notebook, unfortunately, or fortunately perhaps, not saved for posterity.

When Greer celebrated its 40<sup>th</sup> Anniversary the famous and beloved correspondent, Lowell Thomas was our featured speaker at the ceremony, and lucky me got to meet him personally when I showed him where to park his car. That was quite a thrill for a 15 year old. I was a member of the Glee Club then, and as part of the celebration we presented the “Ballad for Americans,” a work for soloist, chorus and orchestra, our orchestra being a piano, and which had been made famous by the great Negro baritone, Paul Robeson. I also had the honor of meeting William L. Shirer, another famous correspondent and lecturer and author of “Berlin Diary” and “The Rise and Fall of the Third Reich”, at a summer lecture series given at Bennett Junior College, where I was lucky enough to be allowed to attend several cultural events.

One summer I was given an off –campus summer job assignment at a rather highbrow country club near Tannersville, NY. That was great fun. I was a lowly dishwasher at the Bear & Fox Inn, which had a beautiful dining room with elegant food and service. I got to meet a few celebrities there also. Among them were Gladys Swarthout, a leading mezzo-soprano with the Metropolitan Opera, actress Joan Fontaine, and had brief glimpse of Charlie Chaplin! It was not uncommon to peek through the glass porthole in the dining room door and catch sight of one or more famous personalities seated at a table engaged in conversation and dressed to the nines. Those were the days when people dressed for dinner. It was also very chic for us kitchen worker and waiter to be ferried to the movies in Tannersville on Saturday night in a big, beautiful 7 passenger Packard limousine! Not too shabby.

I may have digressed somewhat, but I relate all this because, like most of us I had those teenage dreams of someday making my mark in the world, albeit in somewhat esoteric endeavors. It was my intention to be an opera singer, artist/designer, or an actor. Needless to say, none of these came to pass, although I devoted 8 years to voice training, piano opera workshop and other musically related studies, 2 ½ years of that at the now defunct

New Your College of Music in New York City. Had I applied as much effort toward attaining one of these goals as I did toward just 'sliding through life', I have no doubt, I could have succeeded. But that's all water under the bridge, or to toss it off flippantly, quoting the French; "C'est la vie", or more appropriately, 'C'est moi'.

In any event, by some miracle or perhaps the staff's burning desire to finally be rid of me, I graduated in 1949. I was too young and naïve then to appreciate how fortunate I was. Let's face it - many of us couldn't wait to get out of the classroom "Hooray! Freedom!" was the thought on most everyone's mind, none of us really bothering to worry about any of the trial and tribulations that might await us outside the gates of Greer. Looking back on it now I realize that I had had a good fortune to be placed in an environment that today would be the envy of many, many children.

All of us that remember Greer with nostalgia and genuine fondness were sorry to see the school close, taking with it a fine academic stand and a set of values that we are now hard pressed to find in today's world.

As I said at the beginning of this 'novel', we never know how good something is until it's gone. Greer School and our youth my no longer exist in the physical sense in our hearts and minds it can never die; it was that 'home away from home', and for some, the only real home they ever knew, where we were molded into possibly worthwhile creatures with values that we have hopefully used for ourselves and passed on to others.

In the intervening years since leaving Greer, my life has been varied and interesting with the usual share of ups and downs – fortunately more ups. I've met a number of famous people, traveled fairly extensively, done some regional theater acting, some singing here and there, and spent the last 20 working years, with AT&T. So all in all, it's been an enjoyable trip through time, with more to come, waiting in the wings. And hasn't this been a wild century to ride out?

I am now retired and living outside of Charleston, South Carolina (although I'll never be a true Southerner.) I would be delighted to hear from anyone who might care to contact me: Don Charles, [REDACTED] Mt Pleasant, SC 29464. (843) [REDACTED]: Class of 1949. Which I am told has been referred to as the "Genius Class." As Polly Stock would say: "WELL...!!

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We wish you all a great holiday—And a new year full of health, happiness and sunshine.

As Always,

*Mitzi*      *Jim*  
*Doug*      *Isabel*