

# U.S. Coast Guard Academy Class of '53 Newsletter

March 2004

*About this Newsletter: The Class of '53 Newsletter is published "whenever we get around to it." Its purpose is to keep members of our class informed about our classmates' lives and activities and to provide some tid-bits of trivia and information.*

*Because not all our classmates are members of the Alumni Association, and not all of our classmates have e-mail, and the deadline for articles for our class notes section in The Bulletin is almost two months before it's published, there will be duplications and gaps in what is included here, what is sent by e-mail or "snail mail", and what appears in The Bulletin.*

*Send items for The Bulletin and this Newsletter to: Wee Smith, 19 Coachman Pike, Ledyard, CT 06339 -- Tel/FAX 860-464-8425 or e-mail to jdsbridge@aol.com.*

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## In Memoriam Graeme Mann

Nov. 4, 1931 - March 7, 2004

Graeme was hospitalized for pneumonia on February 9th, and on February 14th, a bronchoscopy disclosed that he also had lung cancer. He died while still in the hospital on March 7th. His remains were cremated and a memorial service was held for him at the Stratham Community Church. His burial will be in Arlington National Cemetery in Arlington, VA at 9:00 a.m., Wednesday, March 31st. A reception will follow at the Fort Myer Officers Club.

Graeme is survived by his wife of 49 years, **Barbara**, two sons, Gary and Wilson, a daughter, Emily and two granddaughters.

**Bill Lehr**, in his remarks at Graeme's memorial service described Graeme as "a multi-dimensional man" who enjoyed life and who had many different interests. [Bill's complete remarks about Graeme follow.]

Graeme had a distinguished 27-year Coast Guard career as a naval engineer which included being the only member of our class to be "deep selected" for Captain.

In 1980 Graeme elected to retire from active duty and he and Barbara settled in Stratham, a town in southeast New Hampshire. There they operated a thriving antique business from their barn and both of them became active volunteers in Stratham.

Graeme served as a member of the Stratham Volunteer Fire Department for more than 20 years; he was elected and served as a Stratham selectman for two terms (1988 to 1994); and he served as President of the Stratham Historical Society for many years. Barbara is the society's current President.

Graeme's memorial service began at the Stratham Fire House with a procession led by Engine No. 1, which conveyed the urn holding Graeme's ashes and a flag which had flown over the fire house. Graeme's fellow volunteer fire fighters led the procession,

marching in front of Engine No. 1. Members of the Fire Department brought the urn and flag into the church. During the service Graeme's brother, Carl, Bill Lehr, Graeme and Barbara's son, Wilson and several close friends offered words of remembrance. Graeme's and Barbara's son Gary wrote the attached poem for the service. At the end of the service a "Final Call" in memory of Graeme was struck by the fire department on a walkie-talkie, a fire siren sounded from outside the church, and the firemen saluted and removed the urn and folded flag from the church.

The service was beautiful and emotional. These classmates attended it: **Ken and Eve Barrett, Peter Erwin, Dave Howland, Jim and LaVerne Irwin, Bill Lehr, Wee and Jane Smith and Ray Stevens.** Gary and Sara Houtsma '38 and Len Pichini '62 also attended.

In lieu of flowers, memorial donations may be made to the Stratham Volunteer Fire Department, 10 Bunker Hill Ave., Stratham, NH 03885 or the USCGA Alumni Association, Class of '53 Endowment, 47 Mohegan Ave., New London, CT 06320.

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## Bill Lehr's remarks

Graeme Mann was my friend for over 50 years. It was not the kind of friendship where we saw each other on a regular basis. We weren't often stationed in the same place. But he was a friend in the best sense. He enjoyed life and we had some great times together. He could be serious when necessary and was willing to listen and give straight forward, no BS, comments. I never heard him bad mouth anyone. If he had problems with someone he kept them to himself. Graeme left no doubt about his feelings for his family. His love and concern for them were a fundamental part of his life.

Graeme was a multi-dimensional man who enjoyed life and had many different interests. First it was the Coast Guard, then antiques, and after retirement the volunteer fire department and local government. Along with all that, he found time to take up golf, cut his own fire wood; and, volunteer for many special committees that served our Coast Guard Academy class. In all these he could be counted upon to do the hard work needed to get a job done. And he would get the best possible results without fanfare or attention to himself.

I'll give you an example: Last fall for our 50th reunion at the Coast Guard Academy, Graeme summarized his 27 year career in a couple of sentences. Among the missing details was his three year stint in post graduate school at M.I.T. While at M.I.T. Graeme and Bill Markle undertook a project to determine what was causing excess wear on reduction gears and bearings as well as loss of shaft seals among other things. This may sound esoteric but these were costly problems. They made great progress in understanding the technical issues and they proposed a new way of installing line shafting. Several years later we were able to put the results to a practical test. Graeme redesigned the shaft supports in the icebreaker WESTWIND and I was able to install the changes. The "fix" worked exactly as

(Continued on the reverse)

planned. I was also able to use the technique on my 82' patrol boats in Viet Nam. Later on, a version of Graeme's design and installation technique was included in a USN Design Data Sheet for use on Navy ships.

I first met Graeme, and our friendship started, during "Swab Summer" 1949. I don't know how it happened but we found out we were both fans of Dave Garroway. Long before Garroway started the *TODAY* Show, he was a late night disc jockey on a station in Chicago. Both Graeme and I had spent time listening to Garroway broadcast jazz music in the middle of the night -- Graeme in Englewood, NJ and me in Milwaukee.

Our mutual interest in music continued for many years. Every time one of us would be in the other's town -- if we could get together -- we'd spend an evening listening to music, telling sea stories and discussing things of interest. And, have a few beers of course. It was during such an evening of beer and music, when Graeme was CO of the R&D Center in Groton, CT, that I got wind of his and Barbara's avocation -- the Antique business. Graeme asked me to help him pick up an old cabinet that they had shown at a local antique show. After driving to what looked like a shopping center parking lot we loaded this monstrous, old, very well used, wooden cabinet - and took it home. The thing weighed a ton. But I knew antiqueing was in his blood. Anyone who would go out in the middle of the night to pick up an old, beat up cabinet had to love what he was doing. And, he and Barbara did - for over 20 years.

To use an old fashioned phrase - "He was a straight up guy". He was a good man whose word was truly his bond. He also was sensitive to those around him. For example: My mother is approaching 90 and lives in the Masonic home in Dousman, WI. A short while ago she mentioned she had received a note from Graeme - which impressed her. In particular she said he was as thoughtful as ever. When I asked what she meant, she recalled a kindness from 1953.

In 1953 I got married for the first time to a girl from New York City. My parents were the only family from Milwaukee who were able to attend. Cal Crouch, Paul Roberts and Graeme were there as my best man and groomsmen. With St. Anne's church and the reception hall filled with local well wishers, my mother was sitting off to the side. Sensing a problem, Graeme went up to her and asked, "Hey Mom, what's the matter?" She said, "I told him I was feeling a little blue and alone." To which Graeme replied, "Don't worry I'll stay with you until this is over" and he did. She said Graeme made her feel better and she had never forgotten how much that meant to her.

Graeme did have a good heart - and made all feel better for knowing him.

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**A poem written by Gary Mann,  
Graeme's and Barbara's son  
on March 8, 2004**  
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*This was printed in the program for Graeme's  
memorial service at the Stratham Community Church.*

The ship is rising. Morning tide's come,  
and I must sail.  
I want to sit and talk of where my heart is from  
from not my ale  
You see I'll miss you, and I am afraid  
in winds and strong gale  
But your memories are fast to me with strength  
my hand will not fail.

I remember the time - I stood near a tree near a stream  
I thought then how I'd feel without you  
I tried to roll the rock and break the stream  
But it was too heavy so  
I handled a large stone  
And hurled it to the water  
With a great splash  
it went to the bottom  
And I wept.  
You see I'll miss you and I am afraid.

You are a part of me in everything I do -  
I need for you to talk to me  
Of all the tales through which you've grown  
Of the little people who live in trees,  
But a compass do they own.  
And it amazed you and I agree  
Even though little, and little people alone -  
Even in darkness their tiny eyes see  
The paths which worn through time have shown  
Ways assured - after work when little known  
Men till morn are free.

But what will it mean when I leave?  
Was it really time before, or moments at all?  
Do I run like hell, to stop to grieve  
Over something I know but can't recall?  
I think of penniless days in riches  
Climbing up ladders - only to fall  
From heights to the bottoms of ditches  
And mope around, unable to bawl  
Until grasping ahold of one of the hitches  
Rising above and feeling tall;  
Noticing how the wounds are in stiches.

I wish you luck as you go on your travels  
With the sailing good; lines and sails  
That never unravel.  
With hearty cheer and wishing wells  
I am so happy we had each other  
We should be happy about ourselves.

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**"Misc. Bits and Pieces"**

*Some News about our classmates and friends  
(Listed in alphabetical order)*

**Betsy Anderson Wolfe's** new e-mail address is *betsyw@verizon.net*.

On December 21st, **Barbara Bates**, accompanied by her son, Scott and his wife Lisa flew to Tokyo and spent almost two weeks in Japan with her son Skip. Barbara said, "we had a wonderful time and were happy that Santa could find us over there!"

**Dick and Donna Littlefield's** correct e-mail address is *compmgmt1@aol.com*.

As far as **Harry Oldford** is concerned, after the Lupron shots, the 125 radiations, and 67 Palladium 103 seeds implanted in late February his prostate cancer has been killed off. And on March 16th he became part bionic with a new left knee.

Thanks to **Drury Williford** we've heard from **Bill Plummer**. After our reunion Drury tracked Bill down since they both were originally from Tennessee. Bill's now retired living in Coral Gables, FL with a "floating vacation home" in Key Largo, FL His address is 6365 SW 145th St., Coral Gables, FL 33158-1833. More about Bill in our next Class of '53 Newsletter.

**Bob and Mimi Schmidt** visited **Roger and Shirley Bascom** in Venice, FL on February 20th and 21st. Their accommodations were in the nearby house belonging to **Diane and Ralph Hill**.

**Ted and Mary Frances Smith's** new e-mail address is *terrafirma@earthlink.net*. On March 31st they will be flying to Brussels and a Lowlands river boat tour.

On March 10th, **Wade Smith** made his 4 month visit to the cardiologist and told him that he was feeling well, no pains. His doctor checked him over and felt everything was "a-ok but scheduled Wade for a stress test the next day. It showed there was an abnormality and two days later he had an angiogram that showed his right coronary artery was 95% blocked. Two days after that an angioplastic was performed and a stent inserted. *Wade said this is why they call this the "silent killer", no symptoms until you have a massive heart attack.* On the night before his angioplastic, **Ralph and Diane Hill** were surprise visitors. They were on their way to Florida in their RV and just stopped for the night in Lafayette, LA. Wade said, "we talked about old times and this lifted my spirits."

See the reverse for a photo and description of **Drury and Shirley Williford's** ultralight airplane which they built last year. Drury says it has a ten gallon fuel tank and burns between three and four gallons per hour. He normally cruises between 52-62 mph with the top end of the cruising speed around 80. "However, I have never been there", Drury said.

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**George Carlin's Views on Aging**

*(Sent by Wade Smith)*

Do you realize that the only time in our lives when we like to get old is when we're kids? If you're less than 10 years old, you're so excited about aging that you think in fractions.

"How old are you?" "I'm four and a half!" You're never thirty six and a half. You're four and a half, going on five!

That's the key.

You get into your teens, now they can't hold you back. You jump to the next number, or even a few ahead.

"How old are you?" "I'm gonna be 16!" You could be 13, but hey, you're going to be 16! And then the greatest day of your life, you become 12. Even the words sound like a ceremony . . . YOU BECOME 21. YESSSS!!!

But then you turn 30. Oooohh, what happened there? Makes you sound like bad milk. He TURNED; we had to throw him out. There's no fun now, you're just a sour-dumpling. What's wrong? What changed?

You BECOME 21, you TURN 30, then you're PUSHING 40.

Whoa! Put on the brakes, it's all slipping away. Before you know it, you REACH 50 . . . and your dreams are gone.

But wait!!! You MAKE it to 60. You didn't think you would!

So you BECOME 21, TURN 30, PUSH 40, REACH 50 and MAKE it to 60.

You've built up so much speed that you HIT 70! After that it's a day-to-day thing; you HIT Wednesday!

You get into your 80s and every day is a complete cycle; you HIT lunch; you TURN 4:30; you REACH bedtime.

And it doesn't end there. Into the 90s, you start going backwards. I was JUST 92."

Then a strange thing happens. If you make it over 100, you become a little kid again. "I'm 100 and a half!"

May you all make it to a healthy 100 and a half!"

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**HOW TO STAY YOUNG**

1. Throw out nonessential numbers. This includes age, weight and height. Let the doctors worry about them. That is why you pay them.

2. Keep only cheerful friends. The grouches pull you down.

3. Enjoy the simple things.

4. Laugh often, long and loud. Laugh until you gasp for breath.

5. Surround yourself with what you love, whether it's family, pets, keepsakes, music, plants, hobbies, whatever. Your home is your refuge.

6. Don't take guilt trips. Take a trip to the mall, even to the next county; to a foreign country but NOT to where the guilt is.

7. Tell the people that you love that you love them, at every opportunity.

AND ALWAYS REMEMBER: *Life is not measured by the number of breaths we take but by the moments that take our breath away!*

What is EAA? ... Why should I join? ... How can



## homebuilt aircraft

**Challenger II**  
**Drury F. Williford, Jr.**  
**EAA#: 680798**  
**Reedsville, WV**  
**Ultralight**

members only
member benefits
join / renew
e-hot line
chapters
airventure osbkosh
events calendar
pilot services
careers @ eaa
cool pics/videos
aviation education
kid stuff
quick shopping
press releases
volunteers
advertising opportunities
about eaa



Wife and co-builder Shirley A. Williford

Date Building Began: December 8, 2001

Date Building Completed: May 22, 2003

Approximate Number of Man-Hours in Building Aircraft: 860

Interesting Features: 3-blade Powerfin Propeller; Rotax 503 dc engine; and electric start and fuel pump

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