

Kirk -  
Congrats to you +  
Jackie ☺  
Wee

U.S. Coast Guard Academy  
Class of '53 Newsletter  
January 2002

*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.*

*Unfortunately, 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 JDSBRIDGE@AOL.COM.*

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**Jim Kearney**  
(November 22, 2001)

**Harriette Sponholz**  
(December 10, 2001)

**Billie Hiteshew**  
(December 29, 2001)

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**Jim Kearney's** long battle with Chronic Obstructive Pulmonary Disease (COPD) ended on Thanksgiving afternoon when he died at home after having Thanksgiving Dinner with **Pat**, his wife of 48 years, their daughter, Robin, son Jimmy, and grandson Tommy.

**Bill Clark, Jim Conrad, Jim Grabb, Bill King, Bill and Betty Ruth Lehr and Ted and Collette Wojnar** along with many members of **Pat's** and **Jim's** families and friends attended a memorial service held for **Jim** on Saturday, December 1st in Portsmouth, VA. **Pat** said that **Ted** did a beautiful job of speaking about **Jim** at the service.

When we were cadets, **Jim**, as one of the older members of our class, would often say "Boy, when I was your age ..." as he lorded his "wisdom comes with age" over our heads. Most of us accepted his advice probably because he looked so much more "ancient" than we did.

**Jim's** love for our class was genuine. He and **Ernie Rowland** conceived and designed the class ring memorial that we placed at the Academy in 1974, (it has our side of our Academy ring cast in bronze, mounted on a granite frustum of a pyramid and is alongside the walkway between Yeaton Hall and Billard Hall). Unfortunately, **Jim's** health problems prevented him from ever seeing it in place. And his health also prevented him from attending a '53 mini-reunion that we held in Annapolis in 1995, but he sent each of the attendees a plaster of paris replica of the Academy ring that's on our memorial. Throughout his long battle with COPD, **Jim** never lost his great sense of humor and whenever he was asked how he was doing, he'd usually say "O.K." and then tell some humorous incident about it. He always was more concerned about how our other classmates were doing with their health problems rather than dwelling on his own health problems. **Jim** was a great friend and classmate. His quick wit and sage advice will be sorely missed!

As if **Pat** did not already have enough grief to deal with from **Jim's** death, her mother, who was 90 years old back on September 11th, died on December 10th. She had suffered a stroke on Thanksgiving morning and subsequently had surgery for a gangrous gall bladder.

**Pat** can be contacted at 3205 Pineridge Dr., Chesapeake, VA 23321 (Tel. 757-484-8679 or e-mail: [jkear23204@aol.com](mailto:jkear23204@aol.com)).

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**Fred Sponholz's** wife, **Harriette** passed away after a ten year battle with cancer. During that period she had two pulmonary embolisms and eight major surgeries, all the radiation and chemo she could stand and finally on August 11th she went into home hospice. Her last days were very stressful but she finally passed while in her sleep during the afternoon on Monday, December 10th. **Harriette's** remains were cremated and she will be interred in a private ceremony in the Columbarium at Arlington National Cemetery in Washington. **Fred** said **Harriette** had wanted to make it to see their daughter, **Cassandra**, have her first child and she did. On **Fred's** and **Harriette's** wedding anniversary (29 October), **Cassandra** had a son.

**Fred** plans to stay in Ohio "since my daughter is here and besides I almost understand this part of the country". He can be reached at 2045 Marks Rd., Valley City, OH 44280, Tel. 330-225-1115, e-mail [Frehar@aol.com](mailto:Frehar@aol.com).

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**Jim Hiteshew's** wife, **Billie** passed away at 3:00 a.m., Saturday December 29th in Wilson, NC. It was Jim's and Billie's 48th Wedding Anniversary. She had been in a coma since Thanksgiving Day. During that period **Harry Oldford** did an outstanding job of keeping our classmates informed with frequent e-mail SITREPS.

Jim and Billie had been together since grade school and every day while Jim was at the Academy he received a letter from Billie. They endured more than their share of family tragedies over the years, including Jim's six years as a POW in North Vietnam and the loss of their only son, Michael.

**Ed and Becky Daniels** attended Billie's funeral which was held Dec. 31 in Goldsboro, NC.

On January 8th, Jim sent the following e-mail to our class: "To CGA '53: Susan (my daughter) and I thank you for your cards, prayers, phone calls and concerns over the past several weeks. It meant so much to us to know that you were in our corner, pulling for us, and although we lost the fight, I'm sure Billie knew how much you deeply cared. The bond that holds CGA '53 together is a wonderful camaraderie and your being there was a tremendous source of comfort. Thanks again! Jim"

Jim can be reached at 5296 North Rt. 117, Pikeville, NC 27863 Tel. 919-242-4982, e-mail: JimHiteshew@compuserve.com

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**Coming Events**

(Details will be passed separately)

May 28th-30th, 2002: 9th Annual Jay Flanagan-Wee Smith Men's Invitational Golf Tournament, Pawcatuck, CT  
Oct. 6th - 10th, 2002: Class of '53 "Forty Niner" Mini-Reunion Reno and Lake Tahoe, NV  
Oct. 1st - 5th, 2003: Class of '53 Fiftieth Reunion, New London, CT

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*"Bits and Pieces" of news of other classmates: (in alphabetical order).*

**Deane and Carol Andrews** will be spending their summers in W. Swanton, VT where they bought a small house on the lake there. He said, "We can't stand the summers in Dallas anymore!"

**Roger and Shirley Bascom** had very full year in 2001 and plan more of the same for 2002. They think that they fit the pattern of most retirees - "not enough time to do all the things they want to do and wonder how they ever found the time to work a job into the schedule". Their 2001 travels included an 11-day cruise from Athens to Barcelona; a trip to the west coast for the burial of his brother at sea just outside the Golden Gate bridge and then a trip up the coast to Bellingham, WA; attending our '53 mini-reunion in Lincoln, NH followed by a special guided tour of Bar Harbor, ME by **Dave and Nancy Howland**. Their 2002 plans include a tour of outback Costa Rica.

Does anyone have a current address for **Ken Boehner**? Our last letter to him in Livingston, TX was returned.

On November 28th, **Mike and Kaye Boggs'** daughter, Katie, had a son, Jackson *Boggs* Fredericks.

**Bill and Romy Bruinsma** spent Christmas in Germany visiting her family.

It was great to find **Bill Burke**. Actually, he found us! He's now retired and living in Palm Bay, FL. His mailing address is P.O. Box 2922, Melbourne, FL 32902, Tel. 321-956-9590, e-mail WEMBURKE@cs.com. Bill said he had been "married, divorced, no kids, no grandkids either, and been in love more times than Elizabeth Taylor." His life since the Academy included: "spent time in Korea, Japan, Mexico, California, Hawaii, New York City, Washington, DC, Albany, NY, Florida Keys ... got my BA at UC Berkeley, studied Japanese in Japan, did graduate work at U. of Hawaii in languages ... mastered-after-a fashion Japanese, Spanish, Italian ... worked as a railroad brakeman, an infantry sergeant in Korea, an English teacher in Japan, a Director of the NY Office of Statistical Coordination in Albany, a generalist researcher in DC, an editor here and there, a PC teacher in Mexico and NYC, a logistician, a real estate broker, an accountant, etc., (at this point the memory mercifully blurs)". In Hawaii he saw **Lee Coleman**, **Ed Farmer** ("Ed was dancing with swords and flaming torches"), and **Tom Fennell**. He said his main hobbies have included "tennis, long-distance swimming, small-boat sailing, jogging, fitness, foreign languages, the anthropology of American singles bars, wine, women and song, Zen, reading, and satirical writing. And I have spent much time just thinking beautiful thoughts! (My "ex" claimed I spent most of my time doing this.) And when I remember to, I throw a good brace and two-block my necktie". Bill added, "My time at the Academy was not all in vain -- I met the skipper of a freighter last year who didn't know the difference between a flashing light and an occulting one. And I got an A grade once for writing an essay on how to land a lifeboat through heavy surf".

**Jim and LaVerne Irwin** celebrated Christmas and New Year's with almost their entire family in Tempe, AZ.

**Joe and Moira Kelly's** new e-mail address is *jmkelly6@cox.net*.

**Dick Kott's** bladder cancer has been gone for more than a year now. He had "a little heart event" that put him in cardiac intensive care for a couple of days, but no catherization was required, just more medication. His biggest pain now is arthritis in his neck and shoulders.

**Bill and Dixie Linn** have moved from Los Altos, Calif. to Elk Ridge, Utah (a small bedroom community about 60 miles southwest of Salt Lake City). Their new address is 3 N. Mahogany Way, Elk Ridge, UT 84651, Tel. 801-423-4130, e-mail: *cwillinn@worldnet.att.net*. One of their sons lives two blocks away.

**Gerry Lipsett** made quite a stir in Cohasset, MA where he lives. He had converted his boat trailer to a flatbed trailer so he could transport an outhouse (that's right, an outhouse!) made from old barn boards in Gettysburg, PA and deliver it to a friend who lives in Cohasset.

**Dick Littlefield's** new e-mail address is *compmgmt1@aol.com*.

The year ended with some happy events for **Roger and Juanita Madson**. They were able to move back into their home the day before Thanksgiving after a three month restoration from water damage which occurred while they were in Ireland. And, on December 8th, their youngest son and his wife held a surprise 45th anniversary party for them. Their other two sons and families, Juanita's sister and her husband from Ontario, and six couples from their church were all part of the surprise.

**Bill Markle** continues his battle with pancreatic cancer, and is now staying with his daughter, (Cathy Carlson), at P.O. Box 394, Sidney, NE 69162, Tel. 308-254-2139. He can be reached via e-mail at *Carlsonfamily@Hamilton.net*.

In October, **Bud and Betsy Ann Mathieu** spent a wonderful week with their son Charles ('82) visiting a number of Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints' religious historical sites, Niagara Falls, and M.I.T. (where Bud spent 36 months in post-graduate training). They showed Charles the apartment they lived in when he was born, and the place where they moved for the majority of their time there. They told Charles how they had left him behind when they moved the few blocks. **Bill Markle, Graeme Mann** and Bud had just moved the last of the barrels and furniture into the new place. Betsy Ann was about to go get some fast food to celebrate the completion of the move when Bill Markle said, "Where is Charlie?" Oh horror! They tore back to the old place. It was completely empty, not a stick of furniture or rug on the hardwood floors but in the middle of the dining room stood the baby's rocking crib where they had located it so that it would be out of the movers' way. Charles was still sound asleep. Bud, Betsy Ann, and Charles tried to imagine how different Charles' life could have been if Bill Markle hadn't remembered him! Bud's latest e-mail address is: *budmathieu@earthlink.net*.

During 2001, **Roger and Gerry Mowell** had an unforgettable mission trip to Guatemala with 12 other members from their church. They helped build a 30' by 35' cinder block house for a family that had been displaced by the volcanic eruptions and flooding. Roger also successfully underwent a second by-pass surgery and can testify to the noticeable improvements in the by-pass techniques. He anticipates that this second by-pass will last another 20 years. The Mowells are now on e-mail: *Rmowell@pdq.net*.

In October, for his outstanding service to The Retired Officers Association (TROA) and his continuing involvement in bettering his community, the Oregon Council of TROA Chapters presented **Ed Nelson** with the Kay Wynn Memorial Service Award. The award cited that Ed was the driving force in the formation of the Lower Columbia River TROA Chapter; served as its President for three terms (1990 to 1992); was instrumental in establishing a prescription courier service with Madigan Army Hospital, Tacoma, Washington for all service members, retirees and their dependents in NW Oregon and SW Washington; was instrumental in establishing a Chapter Scholarship Program at Clatsop Community College to provide full tuition costs for a uniformed service related applicant; was the Chairman for the 1999 Oregon TROA Biennial Convention; was President of the TROA Oregon State Council of Chapters from 1993 to 1995; and is now serving a six-year term on the TROA National Board of Directors. The citation also noted that Ed has also been an active leader in his community, serving as an Astoria Port Commissioner, a church leader, a member of the Board of Trustees of the Columbia Memorial Hospital of Astoria, and a member of the Board of Directors of the Columbia Maritime Association.

**Hal and Sheila Olson's** new e-mail address is *mdlandolsons@comcast.net*.

**Ernie Rowland** is sorry that he had to miss the 50th reunion of the 1951 football team on November 10th. He was hospitalized the week before it with what turned out to be diverticulitis of the upper colon. He also had a pacemaker installed. Ernie says, "the next medical steps for me are to have the carotid arteries unplugged and some angioplasty on my legs. Now you see why Medicare is going broke. It's me!" He drew some great cartoons for the reunion, two of which appeared on page 15 of the December issue of *The Bulletin*. Ernie's and Nina's new e-mail address is *cgernie.nina@verizon.net*.

While visiting their two sons in Cary, NC over the Christmas holidays, **Bill and Ann Clark** had a micro-reunion with **Bill and Helen King**. It seems that the Kings'daughter Tina, and her family recently moved there. It was a reunion for the King and Clark children also as they knew each other when their parents were stationed at Headquarters. Now the grandchildren are getting to know each other as they play on various teams in the youth leagues. Also coincidental was the fact that both Bill Clark and his daughter, Joy Higbie, had their pictures in the December issue of the Alumni Bulletin. Bill's picture is in the '53 Class Notes while Joy is on page 70 of the 1976 section. She's in the second row, talking away. (Bill says she takes after her Mom in that regard!).

**Ed and Joan Cope** are back in Reno, NV after driving to the east coast and back, (8,000 miles and 19 beds). Even George Washington can't beat that record! They are looking forward to seeing many of us in *Reno/Lake Tahoe for a class mini-reunion this fall, October 6th-10th*. Details will follow separately.

**Rick and Beth Cueroni** are constructing a log cabin vacation home in the mountains about an hour away from their home in Canton, GA. Thankfully, **Beth's** throat continues to be "cancer-free".

**Al and Sharon Cousins** have moved from the "sun-baked desert in Mesa, AZ" to the "banks of the Boise River in Idaho". Their new address is 510 E. 50th St. A219, Garden City, ID 83714, Tel. 208-375-7271.

**Ed and Becky Daniels** are the proud grandparents of Matthew Edwin Daniels, adopted by their son Eddie, CGA '79 and his wife Cyndie on Sept. 7th.

**Frank Frauenfelder's** lingering sore on his left ankle from his bout with cellulits cleared up and he and **Jan** were able to spend a week vacationing on the "big island" in Hawaii in November. This trip was a make-up for the one they had postponed back in September. They also spent five days in NYC in January, (both trips were gifts from their children). **Wee and Jane Smith** joined them for lunch, a theatre matinee ("Proof") and dinner while they were in NYC. Frank, who has Parkinson's disease, is not letting it get him down and he's back playing tennis.

**John and Jody Gibbs** are now on e-mail: *john.gibbs1@att.net*. He said, "We are trying desperately to figure out how all this newfangled stuff works!! Our computer is a laptop so we can manage to be frustrated by the thing when we travel as well as when we're home."

While going through some class files, I ran across a card from **Bud Grader** dated September 10th, 1998. At the time, Bud was working for *Afghanaid* building roads in Afghanistan. So, even though it's three years old, what he wrote back then is perhaps even more interesting now. "Here I am back Peshawar, Pakistan trying to negotiate a position with the Taliban government so that we can operate in what is increasingly their Afghanistan. It is a daunting task. There had been anti-U.S. riots here in Peshawar, but the situation is now calm. The Pakistan government has acted impeccably in safeguarding foreigners and there are police and military everywhere. I greatly regret that I could not be in New London for the 45th reunion, but I did raise my glass tonight for '53. With luck, I'll be there for the big 50th!! My tour here is coming to a close, and I should certainly be home by summer if not before. I have a very ambiguous feeling -- I want to spend time with Rita and my children, but I really do enjoy being CO of a group of Afghans working in what I consider a fascinating part of the world -- and doing "no harm"!" [Bud gave those of us who attended our mini-reunion in N.H. last fall, a fascinating account of the situation in Afghanistan and his experiences there.

**Kirk Greiner** married **Jackie** on January 1st. If that date seems puzzling, Kirk said, "consider that Jackie is a tax attorney".

In the fall, **Ralph and Diane Hill** toured the U.S. and Canada in their 22 foot Winnebago RV and also had an impromptu two-week "working vacation" in the Pyrenees mountains in Spain. They took **Bud Grader** up on his offer to visit him at his 200 year old stone farm house there. In a post card they sent from Vall D'Aran, Spain, they said, "We arrived in heaven. Here we sit on Bud's balcony looking out across the valley at a spectacular view of the Pyrenees. Food and wine delicious, conversation and companionship great. We only work on the rock breaking and hauling each day until exhaustion sets in and then relax and enjoy the beauty of the place. What an adventure!" (They were helping Bud tear out an old stone floor in his barn.)

**Clay and Jan Hughes** are wintering in Tucson, AZ (from Akron, OH). While there, their e-mail address will be *jhughes@mymailstation.com*.

**Bob Iden** is now on e-mail (*REIden1@aol.com*). He and **Marilyn** visited **Dick and Donna Littlefield** in Maryland in November. They just missed seeing **Dan and Helene Colussy**, who had left for Florida the day before. Bob said they spend most of January in San Diego and Phoenix and then go to Florida (Box 3000, Amelia Island Plantation, Amelia Island, FL 32035, Tel. 904-261-6161) until April. He said he has pretty much given up sailing and spends most of the time playing golf in Florida at their club which has three courses on the ocean.

**Bob and Mimi Schmidt** are still at 544 W. LaBelle Ave., Oconomowoc, WI 53066 (Tel. 414-567-6846), but their e-mail address has changed to *bobmimi@charter.net*.

After attending their granddaughter's wedding on February 15th, **Tom and Gerrie Sing** will be heading to Florida for the winter. Tom was at the Academy on November 10th with some of his Boy Scout troop and was able to see many of our classmates who were attending the 50th reunion of the 1951 football team.

**"Humpy" Smith** sent an e-mail saying he had watched the New England Patriots play the Oakland Raiders in the snow storm on January 19th. He said he's still a Pats fan, but just seeing the snow reminded him why he lives in southern Louisiana.

**Gene Trainor and Barbara Keenan** were married October 28th. They graduated from Thayer Academy in 1946 and met again, after 55 years, at a class reunion in May. They were married in Cohasset, Mass. in the Minot Light lighthouse keeper's house which the town rents out for such occasions. Their address is: 114 Branch St. #9, Scituate, MA 02066, e-mail *Jftrain@aol.com*.

After a series of medical problems throughout 2001, **Ted and Collette Wojnar** closed the year with good news. Her final re-connective surgery, in late November brought to a happy ending, her original colostomy. There had been a few bumps along the road, as when the chemotherapy attacked her immune system which resulted in three anxious weeks in the hospital.

On October 23rd, **Glenn and Sally Young's** son, Frank ('87) and his wife Kumiko had a daughter, Erika. They wanted a name that reflects both their American and Japanese heritage and discovered that Erika is the 43rd most popular girl's name in both USA and Japan. Glenn spent part of this last summer as a counselor at a resident Boy Scout camp, teaching rifle, shotgun, black powder and archery.

We had an especially good attendance by our classmates at the 50th Reunion of the 1951 football team: **Bob and Beverly Benson, Rick and Beth Cueroni, Ed and Becky Daniels, Jim Irwin, Joe and Moira Kelly, Rin and Bert Keyzer, "Steamboat" and Adele Lewis, Roger Madson, Bill and Mickey Reilly, Bill and Margie Russell, Wee and Jane Smith, Nat and Dimpny Spadafora, Ray Stevens, and Dave and Teresa Stryffeler.**

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When he sent the following, **Ted Smith** said it reminded him about the answer that we had to learn as "Swabs" to the question, "*How cold is it in Conn.?*"

In the heyday of the sailing ship, every ship had to have a cannon for protection. The cannons of the times required round iron cannon balls such that they could be of instant use when needed, yet not roll around on the gun deck.

The solution was to stack them in a square based pyramid next to the cannon. The top level of the stack had one ball, the next level down had four, the next had nine, the next had 16, and so on. Four levels would provide a stack of 30 cannon balls.

The next problem was how to keep the bottom level from sliding out from under the weight of the higher levels. To do this, they devised a small plate ("monkey") with one rounded indentation for each cannon ball in the bottom layer.

However, when iron was used to make this plate ("monkey"), the cannon balls would rust to the plate. As a result these plates were made of brass to prevent this problem - thus the name, "brass monkey".

When the temperature falls, brass contracts in size faster than iron. So as it got cold on the gun decks, the indentations in the brass monkey would get smaller than the iron cannon balls they were holding.

If the temperature got cold enough, the bottom layer would pop out of the indentations spilling the entire pyramid over the deck.

Thus, it was quite literally: "Cold enough to freeze the balls off a Brass Monkey".

And all this time, some of us thought we were talking dirty!!