

**U.S. Coast Guard Academy  
Class of '53 Newsletter  
December 2000**

*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' activities and to provide some tidbits of trivia and information. Because not all our classmates are members of the Alumni Association, some items from our class notes section in **The Bulletin** may be repeated here. 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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**Dr. George P. "Skip" Lord**

*December 29, 1931 to November 20, 2000*

Ever since the spring of 1993, when "Skip" first found out that he had lymphoma, he spoke and wrote often and openly about his emotions as he battled this dreaded disease. He described the medical treatment he was receiving or hoping to have, (sometimes in terms and detail that some of us couldn't understand). He also shared personal stories from his youth, his family, the "ups and downs" in his life, his love of sailing, his faith and his philosophy -- usually in prose but occasionally in poetry. For those of us on e-mail, "Mainedoc" made sure that our mailboxes were never empty!

His last two months were spent in and out of the Maine Medical Center being treated for malignant tumors in his stomach, groin, and colon. **Bob and Beverly Benson**, who visited him there said Skip was the "eternal optimist" and still had his great sense of humor.

"Skip" died at 2:50 a.m. on Monday, November 20th quietly and peacefully surrounded by his family and loved ones.

Two beautiful and emotional Memorial Services were held for "Skip" with his sons Chris and Jon and his nieces participating in both.

The first service was at the First Congregational Church in South Portland, Maine on Friday, November 24th and was attended by many of his medical colleagues and friends from Maine.

The second was at the Academy Chapel on Friday, December 1st. It was attended by some of Skip's New London grammar school and high school classmates and these '53 classmates: **Ken and Eve Barrett, Bob and Beverly Benson, Cal Crouch, Gerry Lipsett, Dick and Donna Littlefield, Graeme Mann, Wee Smith, Ray and Liz Stevens, and Bob and Mary West.** Bob Getman and Danny Danielsen from '54 and our former instructors, CAPT Bob Boardman '45, and CAPT and Mrs. Stan Smith also attended. **Cal Crouch** read the 23rd Psalm; **Bob Benson** captured Skip's life with the enclosed remarks; Carey Congdon, Skip's friend since their grammar school days at Harbor School, described Skip as "a philosopher, poet, sailor, physician, pen-pal and much more". He shared his reflections of Skip as a youngster and also the enclosed poem which Skip wrote about his dog "Bristol". The Cadet Singers sang the beautiful songs, "Crossing the Bar" and "Home from the Sea". The service was conducted by the Reverend Nancy Miller, interim rector at St. James Episcopal Church in New London where Skip attended and sang as a choir boy.

Skip's remains were cremated and his sons plan to scatter his ashes at sea from Skip's boat *Calypso* next year on Father's Day.

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## A Miraculous Close Call

In spite of being almost totally bald, **Ed Cope** had a "hair-raising" accident on September 9th in the wilds of Southeastern Utah. He and **Joan**, his bride-to-be, and another couple, **Floyd and Ruby Rice**, were coming back from a houseboat adventure on **Lake Powell (AZ/UT)**. Ed was driving his van and as they came up a rise where the road curved left at the top, he lost control and the van rolled 450 degrees and came to rest on its left side. All side windows on the van were broken out, glass everywhere, Ed sitting on the highway and Joan suspended above him in her seatbelt bleeding heavily but conscious. He said his immediate thought was, "I already lost one wife now I'm going to lose another before the event!" Ed was able to drop Joan out of her seat belt into his lap so he could get her head elevated to reduce the bleeding. Other than a lot of glass, minor lacerations and aches, Ed seemed o.k. Joan had severe lacerations of her scalp, right forearm and elbow.

The highway patrol, an ambulance, and others emergency team personnel arrived on scene, extracted them all from the van and transported them to a small community hospital, 40 minutes away. There the emergency room doctor called in a surgeon to help, but they admitted that the situation was beyond their capability and arranged for their ambulance transportation to the nearest Trauma Center, LDS Hospital in Salt Lake City, three hours away. A plastic surgeon completed 4.5 hours of surgery on Joan involving hundreds of micro-surgery stitches and two hours of surgery on Ruby. Ed and Floyd were sore, cut, et. but o.k. and were not admitted to the hospital.

Joan had a second 4 hour operation on September 12th . Meanwhile, Ed flew back to Reno, was able to arrange for the necessary paper work to sell both their two houses, buy their new town house and take care of the move into it. He then flew back to Salt Lake City, picked up Joan and brought her back to Reno on September 18th.

They were married on September 23rd with only their immediate family members present. **Floyd and Ruby Rice**, stood up for Ed and Joan as Best Man and Matron of Honor. Ed says they are doing fine and extremely thankful for seatbelts, air bags, and the construction of Chrysler Town and Country vans. The car was totaled and their doctor said he had never seen an accident of this severity where there were no concussions or fractured skulls or even fatalities.

And, now we hope that Ed and Joan will live happily ever after!

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### '53 Binnacle List Report *(status reports as of Wed, 13 Dec. 2000)*

**Ann Clark** (2064 Horne's Lake Rd., Williamsburg, VA 23185 - Tel. 757-258-0519) - is getting her strength back and is optimistic about the future after completing radiation treatments for breast cancer. Bill said that both she and her identical twin sister came down with almost identical cases.

**Cal Crouch** (42 Mumford Cove Rd., Noank, CT 06340 - Tel. 860-536-4373) has finished six weeks of radiation for his brain tumor and is waiting for decisions by his surgeon and oncologist as when he will start having chemotherapy treatments. He looks and sounds great and his outlook is positive.

**Beth Cueroni** (115 Grandmar Chase, Canton, GA 30115 - Tel. 770-754-0880) received good news when she went to Mass. General Hospital in Boston and the doctors there advised her that she will only need radiation treatment for the lymphoma growth that was removed from her throat back in September.

**June Flanagan** (242 Highland Ave., Winchester, MA 01890 - Tel. 781-719-6748), despite completing 11 weeks of radiation and some chemotherapy treatments for her breast cancer, she still has her wonderful sense of humor. June and her doctors are very positive about her treatments.

**Jim Kearney** (3205 Pineridge Dr., Chesapeake, VA 23321 - Tel. 757-484-8679) has been in and out of the hospital the last few weeks battling COPD, (chronic obstructive pulmonary disease). The slightest amount of exercise causes him to gasp for breath. He said that he "may have also lost some heart function" and that "it hasn't been a whole lot of fun", but he still has his great sense of humor.

**Bill Markle** (4109 Forrest Hills Dr., Portsmouth, VA 23703 - Tel. 757-484-4129) In addition to battling pancreatic cancer, Bill also had a cellulitis infection in his leg that caused him to be hospitalized early in December. He's home now and his daughter Cathy Carlson came up from Florida to help him. Her husband and her family will join Bill and her for Christmas in Virginia.

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### An Unexpected '53 Micro-Reunion

In early December, **Bill Markle and Jim Kearney** held an unexpected and informal "Class of '53 Micro-Reunion" in the emergency room at Mary View Hospital in Portsmouth Va. when they were both being admitted. (See the *Binnacle List Report*) Bill told Jim that he felt like he was "wasting away because he was down to 240 pounds" to which Jim replied, "Bill, you've still got me by at least 100 pounds!"

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### A Class of '53 Mini-Reunion in the Fall of 2001???

The mini-reunion that **Dick Donnelly, Kirk Greiner, and Ed Nelson** organized in Portland, Ore. this past fall was outstanding!

*Where would you like to see our class hold a mini-reunion in the fall of 2001?*  
Enclosed is a self-addressed stamped "post-card" -- please give us your views!

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### Our Fiftieth Reunion in 2003

We understand that Homecoming in **2003** will be held on the weekend of **3-5 October** . Accordingly, we are *cautiously* planning to hold our Fiftieth Reunion on that weekend.

The reason that we are saying *cautiously* is because we have been advised that all "out-year" dates on the Academy's schedule are "subject to change". One of the factors that might affect the date of Homecoming is a possible change to the Academy's football schedule.

After the new Academy Superintendent , (RADM Robert C."Rube" Olsen '69) is "in place", we will try to get a clarification of his position on this. We'll keep you informed.

In the meantime, **WE HOPE THAT EVERYONE IN OUR CLASS WILL PLAN TO ATTEND OUR FIFTIETH REUNION.**

Stay tuned!

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### "Directory Assistance" -- Changes and corrections to Class of '53 Directory

- **Ed and Joan Cope:** 440 Shady Lane Court, Reno, NV 89509, Tel. 775-827-5679
  - **Steamboat and Adele Lewis:** 8 Castle Rock, Branford, CT 06405, Tel. 203-774-3821
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### Happy Holidays!!

Finally, on a personal note, by the time you receive this, Jane and I will be in Munich, Germany to celebrate Christmas with our whole family. Our daughter, Beth, teaches first grade at the Bavarian International School there. Our daughter, Kathy will be flying with Jane and me, and our son Billy, his wife, Becky, and our grandchildren, 13 year old twins Amy and Allison, and Jennifer (7) and his family will be with us from Christmas day through December 28th. Billy and his family will then be going on to see Paris and London while Jane, Kathy and I will be staying in Germany and travelling for another ten days, We'll then be returning home on 8 January 2001.

Our best wishes to you and your family for Happy Holidays and a Super 2001!!

## **Bob Benson's Remarks at Skip Lord's Memorial Service**

Good morning friends and family. I've been given the honor of talking about my friend of 51 years, and holding my comments to five minutes. First, a little historical background. Our story started in early July of 1949, right here at the tender age of 17. Skip and I were roommates in Chase Hall and spent a lot of time together during our Cadet experience. I knew his mother and father well. We had numerous dinners down at their home near Ocean Beach. We went to Paris together in 1950. Our expectations were high and we were not disappointed. There are lots of stories, but not enough time to tell them. We shared the same birth month. We both started out with the Class of 1953 but graduated with the Class of 1954. Skip had a good excuse. He was being treated for tuberculosis in 1952. I did not have a good excuse. We both had the added pleasure of having friends in two classes. After graduation, I had Sea Duty in Boston, and as Skip was going to Tufts Medical School in downtown Boston, we saw a lot of each other. After I left the Coast Guard, I caught up with Skip again at Columbia Presbyterian Hospital where Skip was an intern. I was traveling to New York on business. I was an usher in his wedding in Bernardsville, New Jersey. Our lives separated then for a while and our paths crossed during class reunions of '53 and '54. For the rest of our lives we enjoyed semi-annual visits in Maine and CT. We were of course single at first, then married; single again, married again; and single again. Skip never re-,married, but for the record, I married again for the last time.

Skip had a lot of nicknames. Avagadro, Anyshape, Cavity. They really don't have much relevance but the significance of the number of them is that you never bother nicknaming someone you don't like. Skip Lord was liked by everyone.

I want to focus on just two of Skip's many strengths that I have admired and respected over the year. They are Passion and Courage. His first passion was sailing. I never understood sailing. I've had a sailboat for 16 years. I'm a casual, social sailor. The sun has to be out and the breeze moderate. Two or three hours are enough. Skip was on the Sailing Team. He volunteered to ferry sailboats back and forth to Bermuda as well as going on many bareboat charters. There's a story that summarizes our sailing history together. In short: Skip invited us to go sailing one afternoon while we were visiting Maine. The group including several of my friends from Biddeford Pool. We arrived in South Harpswell only to find that Skip's boat had no mast! We went out anyway under power into Casco Bay only to have the engine quit. With no radio and only jumper cables, I ended up flagging down a power boat using a paddle to wave them down. After the engine quit again and we successfully flagged the same boat down for the second time, we started for home. About 150 feet from the dock in a crowded harbor the engine once again quit. Now in desperate straits (so I thought), Skip calmly told me to steer for a boat that was already tied up to the dock. Feeling like Tom Sawyer and Huck Finn on a raft we somehow drifted to the right spot.

I learned something that day about Skip Lord. He was completely unfazed and unflappable and had the confidence to execute under pressure.....but I still don't get that kind of sailing!

His second passion was the Medical Profession. Skip grew up wanting to be a Doctor. If you look in the 1954 Tide Rips, the biography under his picture (written by me) states that his two major dreams were to be a doctor and conduct symphonies – so the Coast Guard Academy was a perfect place to start! Somewhere along the way, he commandeered a stethoscope and he used to walk around the halls and visit his classmate during free time with the scope around his neck and then back in his room he'd read medical books. He wanted to be a Doctor, He became a Doctor! During Medical School and later in Medical Practice his passion carried him thru. He had a button he would wear on a date with his favorite expression...."Trust me I'm a Doctor"

I believe that God doesn't give you any more problems than you can handle. That passion for Medicine prepared him for the long and courageous battle with the demons that were part of his life. His favorite light hearted answer to the question – How ya doing? Lemme check (with a smile).

His third passion had to do with expressing his feelings. Skip was the first man to hug and kiss me! That takes a lot of passion and courage! Remember we grew up in the 40's and 50's, the "Silent Generation" - no feelings, no expression. We followed the "Hero Generation" and had trouble with the 60's and 70's culture. Skip overcame that long before the rest of us! As fate would have it the computer came along just in time for him to facilitate his passion for writing. Essays, poetry, stories, a daily diary of his random feelings.... the love that he had for his family. A barrage of material – we couldn't read it all! He had to do this – it was his passion. I kept many of them. Now they are very precious to me.

Skip Lord was unique. He marched to a different drummer. Some might even say, a little out of step. He was a colorful character by his own design. Was he a fashion plate? – Not a chance. Was he a clotheshorse? – No way. A quick story about clothing..... Cadets were all issued clothing, which was essentially the same. The only way to identify your own was a name stencil. Skip would gradually lose or misplace his stuff and then I would notice that I was missing some of mine also. Skip would stencil over the original name if anything was adrift. Now, I know that Skip was honest, so I have to attribute this to his view on salvage. Once, down at his home, he showed me some of the gear he had taken off the beach. I pointed out that some of this had identification on it – "doesn't matter, if it's adrift on the beach, its fair game as salvage". Was he interested in big fancy cars? Was he a neatnik – uh,uh . Skip built a nest resembling a bunker in the middle of his lovely Scarborough living room. It was assembled from filing cabinets, boxes, furniture, lamps, earphones, a typewriter, a computer screen and all sorts of post-it notes, stickers and notepaper taped to everything. One day, ~~We~~<sup>he</sup> took me outside for a walk with Bristol and told me – Benny," you need to carry a notepad and a pencil in your pocket to write down ideas and thoughts as they come to you". "Another thing, make sure you have a rag or a paper towel in your pocket – because you never know when you might need to wipe up something or clean your hands".

He was his own man – it takes courage to be different!

Lastly, I believe that we all are individually the sum total of various personalities and experiences that have touched our lives. For those of us who were fortunate enough to know and love George Preston Lord, we are much the better for that experience. In my view he will live on in each of us, if we will let him. So the next time you see me hugging a man, and yes even kissing his forehead, it's a direct result of Skip's passion and courage at work in me.

Thanks for giving me the opportunity to share these thoughts with you. God bless Skip's family.

Robert C. Benson

December 1, 2000