

# U.S. Coast Guard Academy Class of '53 Newsletter February 2007

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

*Because not all of 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, from time-to-time, 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](mailto:jdsbridge@aol.com).*

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## Class of '53 Website

Thanks to **Kirk Greiner** with help and advice from **Gerry Lipsett** and **Bill Bruinsma**, our Class of '53's website ([CGA53.org](http://CGA53.org)) is up and running but it's still a "work in progress". We need feedback from *you*, our classmates, to determine just how useful and usable it is and what will make it better. **By March 17, please complete the enclosed questionnaire and return it in the addressed and stamped return envelope provided.**

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## '53's 2007 Planned Gifts to CGA

• The Second Annual **CAPT Ernie Rowland Cadet Art Contest** will be held April 9th to 19th.

• The **Class of '53 Fellow** for 2007 will be former CG Commandant, ADM **Bob Kramek '61** who will be at the Academy March 29th and 30th.

• The **Presidential Passageway project** (between the "A" (1932) and "D" (1972) Annexes) on the second deck of Chase Hall will have a plaque to honor each U.S. President's official visit to the Academy. President **Harry Truman**, who was the first President to ever visit the Academy, did it during our first class year. (See the enclosed for more descriptions of this project).

• A memorial to honor **CGA Alums who have been POWs/MIAs**. Our late classmate, **Jimmy Hiteshew**, who spent six years as a POW in Vietnam, and **LT Jim Crotty '34**, who died in the Bataan

Death March, are two Academy alums we have identified so far.

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## 14th Annual Jay Flanagan - Wee Smith Men's Invitational Golf Tournament Elmridge Golf Course, Pawcatuck, CT May 29 - 31 2007

The only objectives for this three-day tournament are *fun and fellowship for all participants*. Invitations are being sent to all who have played in it previously or who have expressed an interest in possibly playing in it.

If you would like an invitation, let Wee know.

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## Class of '53 Tennessee Mini-Reunion Sept. 24-28, 2007

Plans are being developed with **Roger Madson** as the coordinator. Details to follow in April. In the meantime, save the dates!

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## Misc. Bits, Pieces, and Trivia about classmates (listed in alphabetical order):

About two years ago **Dan Briganti** started dabbling with colored pencil art (mostly landscapes and seascapes) mainly as an "expensive hobby" getting cards printed. In October, **Wendy Winters**, a free lance writer got wind of it and wrote a really nice article in the October 15 issue of Annapolis (Md.) Capital newspaper, ([www.hometownannapolis.com/cgi-bin/read/2006/10\\_15-30/CAN](http://www.hometownannapolis.com/cgi-bin/read/2006/10_15-30/CAN)). The article was entitled "A pirate in name only - Septuagenarian engineer gets second wind as an artist". That gave a boost to the interest level locally which prompted a call from a local TV station to do an interview of Dan for the "Retirement Living" channel. It was a 7-minute segment which was aired nationwide on the *Retirement Living Channel* and also on-line on [www.rl.tv](http://www.rl.tv) on The Art of Living segment.

**More about Dan.** On January 27th, he and some fellow Rotarians raised nearly \$4,000 for the benefit of the Special Olympics in a Polar Bear Plunge in the Chesapeake Bay. The water temperature was 39 degree and Dan said, "after a quick dunk, I was out in milliseconds. **Dick Littlefield** showed up with his camera and took some very unflattering pictures."

In early December, **Bill Bruinsma** spent a couple of weeks in Okinawa visiting a former colleague and then during the last week in December he and **Romy** made a driving trip through Arizona.

**Ed and Joan Cope** have settled into their new "digs" (P.O. Box 1156, Oak Harbor, WA 98227. Tel. 360-632-5370, e-mail: [ltbeam53@yahoo.com](mailto:ltbeam53@yahoo.com)). **Joan** continues to courageously battle her Idiopathic (unknown origin) Pulmonary Fibrosis. **Ed** said the

experts do not know what causes IPF and they don't know how to cure it. They can only attempt to slow its progression. It's essentially an auto-immune disease (body fights itself) that does inflammation of the lung tissue, followed by scarring which then reduces the capacity to get oxygen into the blood stream and CO2 out by exhale. Joan is on oxygen and is limited to how far she can walk before becoming exhausted. Ed and Joan say they are "taking life one day at a time and making sure that they enjoy each and every one to its fullest.

**Dick and Meris Donnelly** have been wintering in LaQuinta, CA from their home in Bellevue, WA. In late January they went to Costa Rica for three weeks.

Since falling and breaking his hip in October, **Frank Frauenfelder** has been essentially wheelchair bound at the continuing care facility where he is being treated for his Parkinsons Disease. **Wee Smith** enjoyed visiting him for a couple of days in January and said that both **Frank and Jan** (who tries to visit Frank almost every day) still have their great sense of humor. He greatly enjoys hearing from and about classmates. Notes and cards should be sent to him at 8387 Fig St., Arvada, CO 80005.

**Ralph Hill** is now finally on internet. (*RCH494@comcast.net*). He was shamed into it by **Roger Bascom**. **Diane**, who's usually the one who handles their correspondence, is still at *2hillsensi@comcast.net*.

**Don Hintze** had successful surgery on his left knee in January to clean out a torn meniscus. His e-mail address is *donhintze@verizon.net*. Don also reported that **Al Pledger's** widow, **Dee** is still living at 20125 SW 328th St., Homestead, FL 33030, Tel. 305-245-8338, *crazyanimallovers@netzero.net*.

**Jim and LaVerne Irwin** spent Thanksgiving in Tempe, AZ and Christmas in Wilmington, NC with their children who live in those two locations.

**Bill and Dixie Linn** (3 N. Mahogany Way, Elk Ridge, UT 84651; *cwillinn@msn.com*), celebrated their 50th anniversary last June. They were married on June 19th, 1956, which was also Bill's birthday, and it is often Father's Day, so Bill thinks he should get three presents. Dixie kiddingly says "Not true. Anniversaries are only to give presents to wives, and Bill, (who is the youngest member of our class!) is 'too old' to celebrate birthdays and since Father's Day occurs on their anniversary so infrequently it should be ignored"

**Juanita Madson** (163 Salofi Way, Loudon, TN 37774, e-mail: *jawanada@charter.net*) is doing very well after suffering a stroke sometime during the weekend of Nov. 25-26. She had difficulty forming words. The area of the brain affected was the frontal lobe (speech and

thought). She was given intensive speech therapy at the Patricia Neal Rehabilitation Center in Knoxville, TN and was able to go home on December 13. Roger says "there is no paralysis or weakness in any limbs and her speech is very close to what it was pre-stroke. "it appears we really dodged a bullet and the fact she has been on a blood thinner for several years perhaps had something to do with it. That and the thoughts and prayers of lots and lots of friends and relatives".

**Bud and Betsy Ann Mathieu** (3155 108th Ave. SE, Bellevue, WA 98004) celebrated their 50th anniversary in November with five of their six sons and 18 of the 25 members of the Mathieu "clan" gathering for a week in Mazatlan, Mexico. Bud said, "the week could not have been more perfect. We had ideal weather and spectacular sunsets, no illness and nary a serious mishap, and the week was a great family bonding experience and will remain a high spot in all our memories. Near the end of the week the boys started making plans for our next family get together." They have set up a family web site (*www.mathieu-family.com*) so planning can continue, pictures can be shared, and they can stay in better contact. Check it out.

**Bill and Margie Russell** (2613 Woodfern Court, Woodbridge, VA 22192; e-mail: *olddog56@aol.com*) celebrated their 50th anniversary on November 25th. Their actual 50th anniversary was October 12th but Bill and Margie waited until Nov. 25th so all four of the Russell children and 10 grandchildren could come from "near" (VA) and "far" (CA) to help them celebrate the event over Thanksgiving weekend. Bill is doing very well in his recovery from the abdominal aneurysm that he suffered a little more than a year ago and a more recent bout with a colon problem. His spirits are excellent and he only has to use a cane to steady himself when he's on uneven surfaces. Hopefully, he will be back on the golf course in 2007!

**Nat Spadafora**, who was 76 on February 6th, continues his courageous battle with terminal lung cancer. He's home, with Hospice care. His spirits have been good in spite of having to be on oxygen 24 hours/day. No further radiation or chemotherapy treatments are planned. **Dimpy** said that their sons have also been a big help with Nat's care. Please keep Nat and his family in your thoughts and prayers. Notes and cards will be welcome and should be sent to him at 7203 193rd Place SW, Lynwood, WA 98036.

**Gene Trainor** (14 Wellesley Rd., Scituate, MA 02066; Tel. 781-545-7942) continues with his recovery from the surgery he had to relieve the fluid pressure on his brain. **Barbara** said she and **Gene** try to get out of the house and do something every day.

## The CGA Class of '53 Presidential Passageway Project in Chase Hall

This project provides a visual display and record of U.S Presidents who have visited the Coast Guard Academy.

The first U.S. President to visit the Academy occurred on Sept. 20, 1952 when we were first classmen. **Hal Olson** was the Platoon Commander and **Dan Colussy** was XO of the Honor Platoon that greeted **President Harry Truman**. **Rin Keyzer**, was the Battalion Commander who presented President Truman with a print of the EAGLE. On the reverse is a copy of the plaque that depicts President Truman's visit. Similar plaques will be made for each of the other Presidential visits. These are:

August 15, 1962 - **President John F. Kennedy**: "I'm not sure there are many other Americans who could climb the rigging and unfurl those (Eagle's) sails in good times and bad times. I think that the American people have been too long unaware of the high quality and high caliber of the cadets of the Coast Guard Academy.... The words I like best in this very important mission are, 'To graduate (officers) with a liking for the sea.' And I know that all of you share the great affection we have for that ever changing ocean upon which we so much depend."

June 3, 1964 - **President Lyndon B. Johnson**: "The official mission of the Coast Guard which hangs in each room of this Academy, places you 'in the service of (your) country and humanity'. That mission, your mission, is also the mission of your nation .... If we are successful in that ... It will be because you, and (officers) like you, gave their lives to duty that our children might live their lives in freedom."

May 18, 1983 - **President George Bush**: "Once you leave this academy where you have spent such an important part of your lives, a great portion of that vigilance will be entrusted into your husband. People you do not know, people you will never see, will be depending on you, standing before you. I can tell you are ready and eager to tak on that trust - to do your duty as officers of the United State Coast Guard. And for that, we - your courtry, your parents, your teachers, .... and I - are very proud of you today."

May 18, 1988 - **President Ronald Reagan**: "But I know what I would say to any young people who told me they were torn between careers, if they said they wanted to help people in distress, guard our borders, conserve fisheries, battle drug smugglers, enforce maritime law, test their courage against stormy seas, defend America in times of war and wear proudly each day the uniform of this great country -- then I would tell them 'Join the Coast Guard'."

May 22, 1996 - **President Bill Clinton**: "This new era calls on all of us to rise to more different and difficult challenges than in the past. I know the rewards of serving on the front lines of change may seem distant and uncertain from time to time, but you will succeed if you remember always to measure your success by one simple standard. Have you made the lives of the Amercian people safer? Have you made the future of our children more secure? That must remain our guiding principle for the years ahead."

May 1, 2003 - **President George W. Bush**: "The men and women of the Coast Guard are "always ready" to defend the security of this nation. You are "always ready" to rescue those in trouble. These two commitments define your mission and define America's role in history. We understand that this strength is necessary to confound the designs of evil men. And we know that the compassion and generosity of this land can aid the suffering, and inspire the world. We will use the great power of America to serve the great ideals of America. And by these efforts, we will build a lasting democratic peace -- for ourselves, and for all humanity."

# PRESIDENT HARRY TRUMAN

## Remarks at the Coast Guard Academy September 20, 1952



This organization is a great organization. It had the first armed sea force under the government of the United States after it was organized in 1789... I am happy to be here today, and to have had a chance to review your corps, and to hear it reported by a certain high (naval) official that the Coast Guard can out-march the Navy.