

## U.S. Coast Guard Academy Class of '53 Newsletter February 2009

*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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### Directory Errata

• **e-mail corrections** to the Class Directory sent with the January 2009 '53 Newsletter:

**Darrell Babcock:** [dlbabcock7@earthlink.net](mailto:dlbabcock7@earthlink.net)

**Barbara Bates:** [babates53@sbcglobal.net](mailto:babates53@sbcglobal.net)

**Gerry Lipsett:** [byglip@gmail.com](mailto:byglip@gmail.com)

**Barbara Mann:** [piperhouse1@verizon.net](mailto:piperhouse1@verizon.net)

**Andy Saunders:** [asaunders@cinci.rr.com](mailto:asaunders@cinci.rr.com)

**Fred Sponholz:** [freds1957@gmail.com](mailto:freds1957@gmail.com)

**Dave Stryffeler:** [destryffeler@yahoo.com](mailto:destryffeler@yahoo.com)

**Gene Trainor:** [btrainor14@comcast.net](mailto:btrainor14@comcast.net)

• **Telephone number corrections:**

**Dan Colussy:** 561-622-3434

**Fred Sponholz:** 216-342-4840

**Dave Tredeau:** 978-455-6914

• **Address corrections:**

**Dan Colussy:** 161 Bear's Club Drive, Jupiter, FL 33477

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### Seattle Mini-Reunion (9/21 to 9/25/09)

As of February 17th, we had received post card replies from these classmates indicating a "*definite interest*" in attending the Seattle mini-reunion: **Darrell Babcock, Bill Bruinsma, Rick Cueroni, Dick Donnelly, Wendell Driggers, George Everett, Bud Grader, Kirk Greiner, Ralph Hill, Jim Irwin, Roger Madson, Ed Nelson, Hal Olson, Ted Smith, and Wee Smith.**

These classmates indicated a "*possible interest*" in attending the Seattle mini-reunion: **Paul Arnold, Bill Clark, Clay Hughes, Joe Kelly, Bill Lehr, Bob Lynch, Bill Reilly, and Keith Schumacher.**

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### Class of '53 Fellows Program

Our class annually sponsors a '53 Fellow to provide the Academy's faculty with an opportunity to enrich their classes by having Academy alums who have had "real world" successes come back and share their practical experiences with cadets.

This year's '53 Fellow was **Bill Hewitt '59**, who spent Wed. and Thurs. (11 and 12 Feb.) at the Academy, interacting with cadets and faculty members in the Management, Humanities, and Engineering Departments. Enclosed is a copy of his keynote remarks and his bio.

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**'53 Leadership 44's Fund Raising Campaign**

As of February 17th, we had received more than \$250,000 in 5-year pledges for our '53 endowment fund to support the acquisition of Leadership 44s for the Academy's Coastal Sail Training Program!

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***Misc. Bits and Pieces from or about  
our classmates (in alphabetical order)***

**Darrell Babcock:** "Sheila's and my world seems to revolve around our grandchildren. One of ours has achieved a full scholarship at Colorado State in swimming. She is also a National Merit Scholar and has selected an engineering tract. There are two others in the wings with the drive and perseverance to achieve and succeed."

**Barbara Bates:** "It is difficult to realize that so many years have flown by so fast and that so many of us have already arrived at that big 80 or are rapidly closing in on it."

**Dan Briganti** advised that **Sue's** recovery from her broken leg is coming along slowly. They have both been uplifted and greatly appreciated the notes and cards that classmates have sent.

**Sandy Crouch** and her family are fine and she's especially looking forward to having her grandson, Ian, home from Afghanistan in March.

**Dick Donnelly and Meris Hatfield:** "In January we took a *Cruise West* trip through the Panama Canal and then up the Pacific Coast to Costa Rica. We then had an extension on land to the Caribbean side of Costa Rica before coming back to LaQuinta, CA on January 30th. We have a couple of short trips planned for March and April before we head back home to Bellevue, WA in early May.

**Ed Farmer** reports from Bangkok, Thailand that he's "busy". He moved into a new Condo in December and says "Now I can say I am truly an Expat! There are a lot of things I could say about my experiences but there are NO regrets. The problem you have to face is that you are a resident of a new country where extremely few people speak English. As a tourist you don't get this feeling because you are isolated in a tourist environment. Adjusting your life into the Thai way of living is the big bump in the road. You HAVE to adjust -- or leave. And it is NOT a western-way of living. For instance, whatever we imagined Thai cuisine to be is not a reality. Cooking is not a Thai way of home life -- you either go out to eat or you order food brought in. The food is pure Asian ethnic and lacking in western appeal. My kitchen is considered a "luxury" to a Thai -- only a cook top, no oven, no microwave, several lower cupboards -- but NO upper cupboards, no hot water, no dishwasher, and only two power points, one of which is behind the refrigerator! And size? about the area of a walk-in closet. I solved my problems by hiring a Thai live-in driver (with car) cum butler, cum house keeper, cum house manager, cum whatever! I have known him for two years and he has an outside job as a special guide and driver for tourists. The political situation here is ever calm -- although foreign news media likes to make the world think differently. Thailand is a

relatively new democracy and people of opposing opinions have not quite figured out how to handle it. The opposition party that seized the Suvarnabhumi Airport late last year was a tragedy of immense harm to the country. Tourism alone will not recover for another two years. I have never ever felt threatened living here. And so it goes! Now you know a little more about me in this lovely country.”

For those who may have seen the NBC *Today Show* about the baby who was born with a foot in his brain, the neurosurgeon who successfully performed the extremely delicate operation was Dr. Paul Grabb, **Jim and Shirley Grabb**’s son!

**Bud Grader** is continuing the chemotherapy treatments for his brain tumor and says that “he’s doing as well as can be expected”. This spring he plans to spend some time in a Caribbean country for some intensive one-on-one refresher Spanish lessons. He also plans a trip to Sapoda, Spain.

**Bill Lehr** reported his hip repair has “gone well except I’m now so used to sitting around it will take some effort to start doing ‘chores’ again.”

**Gerry Lipsett** (573 Spangler School Rd., Gettysburg, PA 17325, e-mail: byglip@gmail.com, Tel. 717-359-7833) continues to make good progress in recovering from his broken neck. He is extremely grateful and appreciative of all the “get well” wishes he has received from classmates.

During the last week of February, **Barbara Mann** plans to visit a college classmate in Florida.

On March 12th, **Bob Schmidt** will join “’53s Octogernarian Club”.

**Dave and Teresa Stryffeler** report “All is OK with us and all 7 of our children and their wives and husbands, all 28 grandkids, and 2 great-grand kids. We spend our time going to sporting events that they are involved in.”

**Glenn Young** is still in Hobart, Australia on his visitor’s visa, living by himself, renting a house from his daughter, and dealing with Australia’s immigration procedures that require him to periodically leave the country. So, during the last 15 months he has made some interesting trips: twice to New Zealand, once to China, and once to Vanuatu. Glenn said “Never heard of Vanuatu? Neither had I until the travel agent suggested it. It is an independent nation consisting of a couple of hundred volcanic islands, most so small they are uninhabited but with several big enough to support a small port city and an airport. Before WW2 it was the domain of French planters. During the war the U.S. military colonized it. In fact, the musical *South Pacific* was inspired by one of its islands. It has lovely palm edged beaches, extensive reefs for diving, good surf for surfing, an active volcano and a remarkably graceful and friendly native population. On the other hand, the capitol city is barely out of the thatched building stage, the roads and port facilities are what is left from the U.S. military WW2 building spree, and the natives would still be living a subsistence lifestyle except for the growing tourist business from Australia and New Zealand which are less than 3 hours flying time away”.

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**Our Views of the U.S. and World Problems**

This is a comparison of how our classmates’ views of the U.S.’s and World’s top problems changed between our 50th and 55th reunions:

<b>The U.S.’s top problems</b>	<u>2008</u>	<u>2003</u>
Lack of Leadership	16%	7%
The Economy	15%	N/A

Terrorism	13%	18%
Immigration	10%	8%

<b>The World's top problems</b>	<u>2008</u>	<u>2003</u>
Terrorism	22%	18%
Hunger	14%	9%
Poverty	9%	13%
Potential for War	9%	7%
Over Population	8%	2%
The Economy	7%	N/A

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### **Recollections of Inauguration Day Parades**

It's interesting what our classmates remember, *think* they remember, and do *not* remember about when we marched in President Eisenhower's first inauguration in 1953 and also some reflections from classmates who have participated in or attended other Presidential inaugurations.

When we marched in 1953, **Rin Keyzer** was the Battalion Commander and the members of the Battalion staff were: X.O. **Darrell Babcock**; Ops. **Ed Nelson**; Adjutant **Paul Anderson**; and Supply **Ed Daniels**.

The Company Commanders were: "A" **Dick Littlefied**; "B" **Roger Holmes**; "C" **Glenn Young**; "D" **Bob Benson**; and "E" **Charlie Stadlander**.

*How did we get there?* While one classmate thought we flew to Washington, the majority of us remembered that we went by train overnight in "sleeper" cars.

*Where did we get on the train in New London?* The consensus is that we boarded the train at the Academy, while one classmate "was sure" that we marched from CGA to the New London train station.

*When we got to Washington did we have a meal?* Most seemed to recall that we had box lunches.

*How did we get from the train to where we started the parade - did we walk or go by bus?* A few thought by bus, but actually, we walked.

*After the Parade what did we do with our rifles, swords, and leggings?* We put them on a truck and they were taken back to the train. **Ed Daniels**, who was the Battalion Supply Officer, was responsible for locking them up in a train baggage car and recalls "we didn't lose anything".

Some of our classmates personal memories about Presidential Inaugurations:

**Bob Benson** "It was a great thrill for me to relay the commands to the Battalion as we passed in review, 'Eyes left' for Ike and Tricky Dick. At the time, little did we know how their careers would evolve. After to Parade **Linc Crane** and I walked all over the Mall looking at the various monuments until it was time to go back to the train."

**Dan Briganti's** biggest memory was of carrying the United States flag in the Color Guard. "It was a very proud memory." Dan also had marched as a High School Cadet in President Truman's inaugural parade in 1949.

**Roger and Karen Britt** attended President Obama's inauguration this year. "We stood on the Mall near the corner of 12th and Madison across from the original Smithsonian. I don't recall that it was as cold in 1953 as it was this year. Fortunately, no

wind.”

**Bill Clark** remembers “I was in ‘E’ Company and in the row that was next to the reviewing stand, so at ‘Eyes Left’, I looked straight ahead and never saw Ike. But being on the outside row, I apparently was recognized by some family, friends and former schoolmates and I heard my name called out about 3 or 4 times during the parade. Being from Washington, the parade was a big event for me!”

**Ed Cope**, who as a member of the Class of ‘52, also marched for President Truman’s inauguration in 1949 and remembers from that time “They always seem to have horses in front of us. The manhole covers on the street were raised. I was in the middle of the big “pack”. One of my least favorite upper classman in ‘51 was three paces in front and one to the right. He had to step up on a manhole cover, came down on the other foot into a big pile of horse droppings, did a split, fell ugly into it, rifle went in the air (which someone caught on the fly), several of us picked him up, got him organized and it was never observed outside of the formation. We (‘53) however, were smooth.”

**Ed Daniels** remembers “while marching, my right hand went to sleep and I was concerned that I might drop my sword when we passed in review before the President at the White House.”

**George Everett** remembers “that after the parade a small group of cadets gathered at my parents home in DC and watched the rest of the parade and hung out. My Mom somehow managed to feed all of us.”

**Jim Grabb** recalls “spending a lot of time in Philadelphia on the train being bumped around” and “standing for what seemed like hours and hours in some neighborhood near the Capitol waiting for the parade to start”.

**Roger Holmes’** best memory is “that somewhere between the Capitol and the White House I heard a melodious feminine voice in the crowds lining the parade route call out loudly ‘There’s Roger Holmes!’. Being an obedient cadet I kept my eyes in the boat but from those dulcet tones alone I feel certain it must have been one of most lovely, entertainingly social cheerleaders from my old high school in New Jersey. Never found out who.”

**Joe Kelly** remembered trying to avoid the Elephant “Meadow Muffins” along the route and said “No wonder I have never voted for a Republican.”

**Bill Lehr** remembers “playing bridge for most of the night on the way down. It was the first and last time I ever played it. After the Parade **Cal Crouch** and I toured a few ‘spots’ in the downtown area. I saw two young ladies across the street. What caught my eye was the girl in the red coat. She and her cousin were down from New York as part of a group of staff from the old Dumont TV network. Among other things they were working on the Jackie Gleason show. To make a much longer story short, the girl in the red coat became my first wife, Dolores Hill. Now you know the rest of the story.” Bill also marched in President Eisenhower’s second Inaugural Parade in 1957 leading a company of recruits when he was an assistant training officer at the Cape May Recruit Training Center. They were supposed to fly to Washington via “CG Air”, but ended up having an all night ride on Bluebird school buses because the CG planes had engine casualties and couldn’t fly. Bill said “We got to DC in time to make the parade, and although we were part of the last parade section, we did get reviewed by President and Mrs. Eisenhower. I heard we looked a little weary but still looked good. The Navy had agreed to fly us back to Cape May since the CG aircraft were still out of commission, so

immediately after the parade we were bused to Anacostia NAS. Unfortunately on our arrival there, we found out that none of their passenger aircraft were in flying condition so we ended up having several shuttle flights aboard a USMC Reserve DC3 back to Cape May. The moral of this story is sometimes you win with airplanes and sometimes you have to take the bus. It was better in 1953 when we took the train.”

**Bill Linn** recalls “I think it was VMI that was right behind us in the parade. They kept playing loudly during the parade and played havoc with our guys in the back who couldn’t hear our band and couldn’t stay in step. We looked good despite VMI.” Bill also noted that a recent newspaper article stated that “the 1953 parade was the largest ever held. It included 73 bands, 59 floats, horses, elephants, civilian and military vehicles and lasted 4 hours and 32 minutes.” Bill added, “I remember horse droppings and it was a 7 mile march.”

**Dick Littlefield** said “as I watched this year’s parade the memories of our participation were very real. I remember we had several hours of liberty after the parade. Several of us went back and watched the rest of the parade from a good spot very near the Presidential reviewing stand. All in all it was a real thrill to be able to march and salute our new President.”

**Ed Nelson** recalls “being very pleased to be the Battalion Operations Officer, marching in front of our battalion, because I could see the horse droppings in time to avoid stepping in them. Some memories are sweeter than others.”

**Harry Oldford** remembers that after the parade, he went to dinner at the home of his father-in-law-to-be (Captain Denty) along with **Pete Erwin** and Jessie Rincicotti. He also recalled that as a member of the Class of ‘52 he marched in President Truman’s inauguration in 1949. After the 1949 parade Harry went to a couple of bars with his cousin, who was in the Marine band, along with some of the Marines. Harry remembers “one of the bars had a nautical theme with back-lighted portholes all around the walls. When you looked at a porthole you saw the sea waves in a rocking motion as if you were on a rolling sea. After a few too many drinks, a couple of the Marines got seasick in the bar. Marines just have no sea legs! Heck as 4th classmen, we had already made a short cruise so it didn’t affect us at all!”

**Ted Smith** marched in the 1953 inauguration parade, but not with ‘53. He said, “I was in the U. of Maryland Air Force R.O.T.C. (the biggest in the country), juniors and seniors and no rifles or swords (nor airplanes). We were near the end of the parade, marched mostly in the dark, but Ike and Truman (sic) were still in the reviewing stand. It was cold in 1953, but not as bad as 2009.” [*Ed. Note:* When I told Ted it was Nixon not Truman, Ted said “I thought I saw Truman but that was because I wanted to -- he has always -- even while in congress -- been one of my heroes.”]

**Wade Smith** remembers “we had lunch on the train and walked to the starting point. At the end of the march there was a truck parked there where we dumped our gear. As I remember, the train picked us up and let us off at the Academy. I can remember 50 years ago, but nothing from last week.”

**Bob West** remembers after we got into the line of the parade, “it seems we stood around ‘at ease’ for a long time before the parade began. I remember it was damn cold and we did not wear our overcoats (as West Point and Annapolis did). We wore only our regular blue uniforms with drill belts, and scabbards, leggings, white cap covers, white cotton gloves. We were dressed to be ‘picked out of the crowd’, (but that didn’t help the

news commentators who referred to us as ‘Naval Cadets’!) Bob also remembers the practice marching drills we were subjected to in the weeks prior to the Inauguration because we were going to march in the parade in a massed battalion formation as opposed to our usual single file company formation. “It was early January, the grounds were partly frozen and very wet so we could not practice on the Washington Parade Ground. The only place big enough to handle the large formation was the lower athletic field which already was a mess from the previous year. As we began our drills, the ground became a quagmire, and even though we had overshoes as the ‘uniform of the day’, the mud became so deep and sticky, it would pull the overshoes off your shoe - leaving the overshoe buried in the muck! In fact, as a platoon petty officer, I was assigned the responsibility to follow behind and use a sword to dig the overshoes from the mud and pile them on the sidelines to be recovered by the cadets later (‘Don’t break ranks; Eyes in the boat!’). It took months to get a good shine on those shoes after that parade. Where was the damn artificial turf when we needed it??”

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### **The 2009 Inaugural Parade**

This year only 90 CGA cadets marched in the Inaugural Parade.

They went by bus to the Naval Academy in Annapolis where they stayed on Monday night, January 19th. They got up at 2:00 a.m. on Tuesday morning and went by bus over to Washington to clear security and practice. They didn’t begin to march until dusk and finished the parade route about 6:30 p.m. After the Parade they went directly to another bus, which brought them back at the Academy in time for classes on Wednesday morning.

As a “tid-bit” of trivia, **Bob Benson** noted that the current Coast Guard Commandant, ADM Thad Allen ‘71, was only 6 months old when we entered the Academy.

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### **Don’t Mess With Old Men**

They always ask at the doctor's office why you are there, and you have to answer in front of others what's wrong and sometimes it is embarrassing. There's nothing worse than a Doctor's Receptionist who insists you tell her what is wrong with you in a room full of other patients. I know most of us have experienced this, and I love the way this old guy handled it.

An 86 year old man walked into a crowded waiting room and approached the desk. The Receptionist said, "Yes sir, what are you seeing the Doctor for today?"

"There's something wrong with my dick", he replied. The receptionist became irritated and said, "You shouldn't come into a crowded waiting room and say things like that." "Why not? You asked me what was wrong and I told you," he said.

The Receptionist replied; "Now you've caused some embarrassment in this room full of people. You should have said there is something wrong with your ear or something and discussed the problem further with the Doctor in private."

The man replied, "You shouldn't ask people questions in a room full strangers, if the answer could embarrass anyone." The man walked out, waited several minutes and then re-entered.

The Receptionist smiled smugly and asked, "Yes??" "There's something wrong with my ear", he stated. The Receptionist nodded approvingly and smiled, knowing he had

taken her advice. "And what is wrong with your ear, Sir??" "I can't piss out of it," he replied.

The waiting room erupted in laughter. Mess with old men and you're gonna lose!

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### **A Few Great Recipes for Living**

- When you wake up in the morning complete the following statement, "My purpose is to \_\_\_\_\_ today. I am thankful for \_\_\_\_\_."
  - Take a 10-30 minute walk every day. And while you walk, smile. It's the ultimate anti-depressant.
  - Sit in silence for at least 10 minutes each day. Talk to God about what's going on in your life.
  - Life isn't fair, but it's still good and it's too short to waste time hating anyone.
  - Don't take yourself too seriously. No one else does.
  - You are no so important that you have to win every argument.
  - Make peace with your past so it won't spoil the present.
  - No one is in charge of your happiness except you.
  - Frame every so-called disaster with these words: "In five years, will this really matter?"
  - Forgive everyone for everything.
  - What other people think of you is none of your business.
  - However good or bad a situation is, it will change.
  - Your job won't take care of you when you are in need. Your friends will. Stay in touch!!
  - Envy is a waste of time. You already have all you need.
  - GOD heals everything - but you have to ask and believe.
  - Envy is a waste of time. You already have all you need.
  - Remember that you are too blessed to be stressed.
  - When you are feeling down, start listing your many blessings. You will be smiling before you know it.
  - Each night before you go to bed complete the following statements: I am thankful for \_\_\_\_\_. Today I accomplished \_\_\_\_\_.
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### **Some interesting "Facts"**

In the 1400's a law was set forth in England that man was allowed to beat his wife with a stick no thicker than his thumb. Hence we have 'the rule of thumb'.

The first couple to be shown in bed together on prime time TV were Fred and Wilma Flintstone.

Every day more money is printed for Monopoly than for the U.S. Treasury.

Men can read smaller print than women can; women can hear better.

Coca-Cola was originally green.

It is impossible to lick your elbow. (If you don't believe this, try it!)

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### **Violinist in the Metro**

A man stood at a metro station in Washington DC and started to play the violin; it was a cold January morning. He played six Bach pieces for about 45 minutes. During that

time, since it was rush hour, it was calculated that thousand of people went through the station, most of them on their way to work.

Three minutes went by and a middle aged man noticed there was musician playing. He slowed his pace and stopped for a few seconds and then hurried up to meet his schedule.

A minute later, the violinist received his first dollar tip: a woman threw the money in the till and without stopping continued to walk.

A few minutes later, someone leaned against the wall to listen to him, but the man looked at his watch and started to walk again. Clearly he was late for work.

The one who paid the most attention was a 3 year old boy. His mother tagged him along, hurried but the kid stopped to look at the violinist. Finally the mother pushed hard and the child continued to walk turning his head all the time. This action was repeated by several other children. All the parents, without exception, forced them to move on.

In the 45 minutes the musician played, only 6 people stopped and stayed for a while. About 20 gave him money but continued to walk their normal pace. He collected \$32. When he finished playing and silence took over, no one noticed it. No one applauded, nor was there any recognition.

No one knew this but the violinist was Joshua Bell, one of the best musicians in the world. He played one of the most intricate pieces ever written with a violin worth 3.5 million dollars.

Two days before his playing in the subway, Joshua Bell sold out at a theatre in Boston and the seats average \$100.

This is a real story. Joshua Bell playing incognito in the metro station was organized by the *Washington Post* as part of a social experiment about perception, taste and priorities of people. The outlines were: in a commonplace environment at an inappropriate hour: Do we perceive beauty? Do we stop to appreciate it? Do we recognize the talent in an unexpected context?

One of the possible conclusions from this experience could be: If we do not have a moment to stop and listen to one of the best musicians in the world playing the best music ever written, how many other things are we missing?