

**U.S. Coast Guard Academy
Class of '53 Newsletter
June 2014**

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.*

'53 LXI Mini-Reunion in Astoria, OR

Ed and Joyce Nelson (1160 Niagara Ave., Astoria, OR 97103, Tel. 503-325-2596, e-mail: radmed1@msn.com) are putting together the plans for our mini-reunion to be held in Astoria, 8-12 Sept. 2014.

Based on the responses to our preliminary questionnaire these classmates are *definitely or possibly interested* in attending it: **Paul and Donna Arnold, Bob and Beverly Benson, Mike and Kaye Boggs, Bill and Romy Bruinsma, Ed and Roz Cope, Rick and Beth Cueroni, Wendell and Yvonne Driggers, Kirk and Jackie Greiner, Meris Hatfield, Roger and Esther Holmes, Bernie and Peggy Hoyland, Bob and Marilyn Iden, Roger Madson, Ed and Joyce Nelson, Wee and Jane Smith, Dimpny Spadafora, and Glenn and Betty Young.**

Stay tuned!

'53 LX Reunion Photos Available

Kirk Greiner (P.O. Box 908, Edmonds, WA, 98020, Tel. 425-640-3048, e-mail: kirk.greiner@gmail.com) has put an excellent collection of photos from our 60th reunion on his Class of '53 website, (cga53.org).

Check them out either on your computer at home or on a computer at your local library.

Suzanne "Sue" Briganti

Steve Briganti, (1216 Whetstone Dr., Arnold, MD 21012, e-mail: steve@sprout-it.com), **Sue's** son, has advised that **Sue** died peaceably and of natural causes near midnight on Friday, May 9th. As many knew, she had suffered from the loss of **Dan**, declining health, and injuries in recent years.

Steve said, "His Mom spoke often of her treasured friendships and associations with each classmate, spouse and family member of the Class of '53".

Sue is survived by her sons, CDR Douglas H. Briganti, USNR (ret.); CAPT Steven L. Briganti, USN (ret.); and daughter Lisa Briganti Rath; and nine grandchildren.

Attached is a copy of the contents of **Sue's** obituary extracted from the *Annapolis Capital Gazette*.

Dick and Donna Littlefield and Hal Olson attended **Sue's** Memorial Service.

Sunny Breed Buried at Arlington

On April 28th, **Sunny's** cremains were buried next to **Paul's** at Arlington National Cemetery. Classmates **Bill Kohl, Dick and Donna Littlefield, and Hal and Sheila Olson** attended the service.

After the service, **Paul's** brother, Alan Breed '55 and his wife, Jan hosted a brunch for all the attendees.

Attached is **Sunny's** obituary from the program for her service.

Sandy Crouch's Memorial Service

Attached is a copy of the eulogy given on March 1st by **Sandy's** minister at her memorial service at the Noank, CT Baptist Church, Noank, CT).

(Especially note the *date* of **Cal's** and **Sandy's** wedding.)

Our sympathy to Jan Frauenfelder and her family

On April 10th, **Jan Frauenfelder's** daughter, Heidi's husband, Paul Babkiewich, 57, died after a courageous battle with pancreatic cancer which included him having 22 rounds of chemo.

Jan can be reached at 8387 Fig St., Arvada, CO 80005.

George Everett battling temporal arteritis

In February 2013 George was diagnosed with temporal arteritis which can lead to blindness if it's left untreated. George said, "Unfortunately, the treatment is not so good either: Prednisone wreaks havoc with bone density. I now have four discs with bone fractures, a few pinched nerves, and other assorted damage thrown in for good measure which has left my right leg practically useless. I wear an upper torso plastic body brace to keep everything in place while I'm up and about if you can call it that. I'll be wearing it for another three months or so. There is no 'fast track', it's just wait and see. So for now it's 'walkers and wheel chairs and blue satin sashes'".

On April 15th, George moved into the Serenity Adult Family Home Care at 5501 215th St. SW, Mount Lake Terrace, WA 98043 for an indefinite period of time. He can also be reached by e-mail at georgever@usa.com.

Around the world in 49 days!

In April and May, Glenn and Betty Young (719 Maiden Choice Ln., - HRT-17 Catonsville, MD 21228, e-mail: gsy@ix.netcom.com) spent 7 weeks visiting China, Japan, Hong Kong, Austria and Greece. Glenn said, "The main reason for the itinerary was three fold : First - to see my grand kids in Japan and Austria during their school holidays and let Betty meet family members she had not yet met, Second - to visit Japan during the Cherry blossom season, and Third - to introduce Betty to some places I've been but she had not visited. All of this was accomplished using 12 flight segments, one train ride, two cruise ships and a lot of shoe leather. Betty organized the entire trip and now probably knows more about arranging and actually making an around the world trip of this kind than most travel agents.

More 'sea duty' for the Cueronis

From July 29th to August 11th, Rick and Beth Cueroni and their daughters, Nan and Donna will be cruising the Mediterranean with visits to Istanbul, Kusadasi (Ephesus), Rhodes, Limassol (Cyprus), Jerusalem (Haifa), Patmos (Greece), Athens and Delphi (Greece).

Rick said, "Since we have never been to Israel, we are really looking forward to spending three days there. Also I have always wanted to

speak to the Oracle at Delphi ever since 'Dirty Al' Lawrence made us study all that Greek stuff. And needless to say we are delighted to be doing this with two of our children."

Our "Ancient" and "Youngest" Classmates

According to my records, our ten *oldest* classmates are: Dick Kott (5/14/28); Bud Mathieu (7/1/28); Bill Bruinsma (1/11/29); Bill King (2/20/29); Bob Schmidt (3/12/29); Bud Foster (5/14/29); Hap Hazard (5/20/29); Fred Sponholz (5/27/29); Jim Grabb (5/28/29); and Dan Colussy (6/3/29).

And, our ten *youngest* classmates are: Wendell Driggers (1/8/32); Bob Benson (12/16/31); Hal Olson (6/16/31); Ralph Hill (6/1/31); Bill Burke (5/15/31); Bill Russell (5/14/31); Ted Smith (4/17/31); Paul Bouchard (4/10/31); Dick Littlefield (3/25/31); and Ed Nelson (3/17/31).

Any corrections??

Where's Namibia? (*)

On a personal note, Jane's and my daughter, Beth, who helped Romy Bruinsma organize our '53 mini-reunion in Munich, Germany and who also attended '53 LX last fall, has signed a two-year contract to be the Elementary School Principal at the Windhoek International School in Namibia (www.wis.edu.na).

During the last 25 years Beth has taught in private international schools in Tokyo, Japan; Jakarta, Indonesia; Saigon, Viet Nam; Munich, Germany; and for the last six years, has been the Elementary School Principal in Tbilisi, Republic of Georgia.

(*) Answer: It's on the SW coast of Africa, bordered by Angola, Botswana, South Africa, and the Atlantic Ocean.

Johns Hopkins Study

Mike Boggs advises that the National Institute of Health has just released the results of a \$200 million research study completed under a grant to Johns Hopkins.

The new study found conclusively that women who carry a little extra weight live longer than the men who mention it.

Suzanne C. Briganti

Suzanne Briganti, gifted artist, warm humanitarian, fashion and interior design maven, world-class pimento cheese maker and loving wife of Dan Briganti, passed away on May 9 of natural causes at the age of 82. Daughter and debutante of "Kentucky Colonel" and All-American Quarterback Will Ed and Charlene Covington, Sue was inspired to leave the charm of her Ashland, KY home to attend Denison University, and then Tobe-Coburn School for Fashion in New York City. Cadet Dan Briganti, then at the US Coast Guard Academy, met the chic and refined Sue, and within hours knew they would marry. Little did they know that within a few short years, they would be bouncing twice between coasts and raising three children Douglas, Steven and Lisa. The progressive, "Sunset magazine" lifestyle in Palo Alto, CA uplifted her and spurred her creativity. She thrived while making us local dishes, like hand-made tacos, sourdough bread and steamed artichokes. She found beauty in a piece of driftwood, a fossilized rock or a giant pinecone, from which she created artful decorations. Even Dan marveled at her, whether standing by a hot camp stove, pouring wild blueberry pancakes with "Mickey Mouse" ears or turning gazes at a cocktail party...she never missed an opportunity to add her joy for life to any situation. Sue's richness of spirit blossomed at her next home in Springfield, PA. She filled our home with love and happiness by singing and humming, reading, and teaching politeness, goodness and living life well. She drew sketches on our school lunch bags, decorated the dollhouse, taught us about flowers...sometimes strummed the zither or guitar, or delighted us with the crank-tinkle sound of a music box. Even her shrill, two-tone whistle brought us running from blocks away to the promise of some aromatic creation. She filled our home with a seemingly endless stream of guests - European visitors, friends, neighbors - all were in for a treat from a loving and generous host. Sue was a devoted wife to Dan for 60 years--a world-travel partner, an enduring soul-mate and an always-ready hand to hold. Taking great pride in us three children, she cheered the loudest at our soccer games, rooted feverishly for our college teams, clapped the longest at our plays and concerts, and spoke with unabashed embellishments at our accomplishments. To her precious grandchildren, "Grandy" was the queen of their tea party, world travel guide, camp counselor, generous spirit (and donor to their every charitable impulse), and a trusted confidante. To her community and the world - she gave back...and boy, did she. If there were children in need of a mentor, a teen without a home, a midshipman craving some home cooking; if there were troubled trees, llamas or cows; if a church needed an organ or a mosaic wall mural; or if someone just wanted a box of cookies, Sue would do it. Only weeks ago, as her eyes transfixed on the candles of her 82nd birthday cake, Sue said, "Thank you. I've lived a good life." Suzanne Briganti is survived by her sons, CDR Douglas H. Briganti, USNR (Ret.) and wife Joni of Spotsylvania, VA; CAPT Steven L. Briganti, USN (Ret.) and wife Jennifer of Tracy's Landing, MD; her daughter, Lisa Briganti Rath and husband Roger of Annapolis; and her grandchildren: Ashton, Chelsea, Skyler, Brightyn and Tazman Briganti; and Taylor, Connor, Emma and Hayley Gilbert. Her Memorial Service will be held at 10:00 am on Saturday, May 24, at First Presbyterian Church, 171 Duke of Gloucester St., Annapolis. In lieu of flowers, the family requests donations be made in honor of Suzanne C. Briganti to the Wounded Warrior Program: or the Coast Guard Foundation:

Alison "Sunny" Breed
In celebration of a life well lived
March 9, 1944 - December 17, 2013

Alison Loring Moran was born with a joyous and infectious smile that was her signature throughout her amazing life. We all knew her as "Sunny" and she was truly the embodiment of her name. The "ripple effect" of her radiant energy changed lives in both subtle and grand ways.

Sunny's parents, Beth and Tommy Moran, instilled in their three children, Marcia, Tim and Sunny the confidence needed for living an engaged and successful life. Grounded in the Congregationalist faith, family life was nurturing and inclusive, guided by a strong sense of practicality and social responsibility. Education was paramount and it was understood that each child would grow up and become a contributing member of society. Family activities were rich and varied and were intended to be both intellectually stimulating as well as fun. Evenings often involved watching *Jeopardy* and attempting challenging crossword puzzles. Many fond memories were made throughout the years during the long cross-country trips and idyllic summers in Magnolia Village, Gloucester, MA. Marcia, Tim and Sunny were always told "they could be and do anything" and that "they could have a positive impact on the world".

Guided by amazing parents, the Golden Rule, and a strong sense of responsibility, each grew up and added their own unique drops to ripple across the human pond. Sunny obviously listened well and applied these principles throughout her extraordinary life.

Sunny was always a straight "A" student. She was a voracious reader, enjoying everything from the Classics to mysteries. As a young girl she favored Nancy Drew and expanded her plate with Agatha Christie later in life.

She sang in the church choir and enjoyed listening to music, particularly classical. Sunny adored chocolate chip cookies and often made up wild homemade ice cream concoctions that only she, Marsha and Tim would eat. As an adult, her favorite coffee ice cream must have paled in comparison. Sunny was also most particular when it came to ice cream sundaes at Bailey's. Hers had to have a cherry on top to make it just right. There also was a strange inexplicable period in her early years where Sunny would eat only ham sandwiches, at home and in restaurants ... even in her Mother's favorite Chinese restaurant! Her poor parents ... but what a boon for the pork industry!

Sunny loved people and animals. She would never miss an opportunity to interact, explore and share herself with all who crossed her path. Dogs were an especially meaningful part of her life and source of great joy and companionship.

Sunny was at home on a boat, loved the beach and spent entire summers at Magnolia in her "uniform", a swimsuit and bare feet. Oysters and fried clams were frequent tasty delights, second only to the fish she caught and cleaned herself. Other highlights were Swan Boats, winter ice skating on flooded tennis courts, geology, travel, and family's own zany Auntie Mame, Aunt Jean.

As a teenager, Sunny worked in a nursing home and was fascinated by the wealth of stories from lives well lived. She also was active in Girl Scouts and remained passionately involved with them throughout her life.

Sunny was the 9th person in three generations of her family to attend Tufts, a University

where her grandfather had been a Professor of Education. At Tufts, Sunny obtained an undergraduate degree, a Master's degree and spent 13 years as an Assistant Director of Admissions.

In 1979, Sunny embarked on yet another marvelous adventure. She married retired Coast Guard Commander, Paul H. Breed, and traded urban Boston for the wilds of Ketchikan, Alaska. Sunny added to her new responsibilities as a wife to husband Paul (Paul H.) and as a mother to 16 year old son Paul (Paul T.) by becoming the Director of Tourism for Southeast Alaska Airlines, the regional airline owned and operated by the Breeds.

In remote Alaska, Sunny honed her fishing skills, learned to fly and hunt, and won awards for skeet shooting. Sunny also used the knowledge and expertise she gained at Tufts to assist her son Paul (Paul T.) in navigating the college admissions and selecting Harvey Mudd.

Following the sale of Southeast Alaska Airlines, Sunny and her husband Paul (Paul H.) moved to Long Beach to be near their son Paul (Paul T.). Over the next 30 plus years, many cherished memories were made at college graduations, weddings, and holidays. Some of Sunny's most treasured experiences came from sharing special times with her grandson, Paul (Paul A.). Yes, you read correctly, a third Paul and please note that there will be a pop quiz later about this "aPAULing" situation!

While in Long Beach Sunny's philanthropic efforts took wing, Sunny earned awards for her work with United Way, Girl Scouts, and disadvantaged women.

Topping her varied interests was her commitment to Tufts University. For her entire adult life, she was an active alumnus, served on the Board of Trustees, and received several awards for distinguished service and achievement.

Sadly, Sunny passed before receiving a Lifetime Achievement from Tufts in a ceremony that was slated for later this year.

She tried her very best to help everyone she encountered in her magical life. Sunny will be missed by all.

In Loving Memory of
Alexandra (Sandy) Nicoll Crouch
1 March 2014

It's a well-known saying that states, "art imitates life." The imaginative world of an artist is merely reflecting what he or she sees or interprets out of reality. But Oscar Wilde may have been closer to the truth for many when he posed the contrasting corollary, claiming "life imitates art."

With certain people, I believe that holds true. Their lives are an expression of an artist's intuition and view. They are not only creative, but everything they engage and manage has an artist's touch. You can see it in the way they envision a finished product, like a sculptor imagining the final polish before the first stroke of a chisel is made. Or a painter flirting with thoughts of the day while sketching the initial outlines on a canvas long before she makes the concluding stroke on a masterpiece. An artist's life imitates art.

In the years that I've known Sandy, I've noticed more than once her artist's heart and temperament. She was an intuitive person who often envisioned how things could be (or should be) well before others caught her sight. Her home was always well put together with harmony and unusual touches (*feng shui*, they say). Her gardens were balanced and alive with color. Her words were penned with a flair for elegance and beauty. Her meals and tables were set with simple, but poignant, grace. Sandy was an artist at heart and her life imitated art.

An artist, of course, also has a strong will and a stubborn sense of being right. Artists don't collaborate by committee as much as they try to guide others toward what they see and want. There's a reason it's called "artistic control." There's artistry and there's also control. Sandy certainly had both in her. But you took her ideas seriously because you could trust her instincts, whether in planning an event or in addressing a deeply important issue. She had a great sense of humor and enjoyed telling stories, but she was also a serious and sometimes brooding participant in life. Superficiality wasn't common to her vocabulary or to her thinking or chosen experience. She had a depth to her that sometimes brought her comfort and other times left her in fear. Yet, that's where the genius comes from in the depths of an artist's soul.

Sandy's story begins in 1933 in Bayonne, New Jersey. Born on the fourth day of January, she was the second daughter of Donald and Lillian Nicoll. It was in the early years of the Great Depression and the times were difficult for everyone. Her immediate and extended family were first generation Scottish immigrants. When her father suddenly died when she was only five, her mother was left to manage on her own, which she did with her own mother's help. But six years later, grief would strike again when her older sister died suddenly from meningitis. It's hard to imagine the sense of vulnerability and sorrow present in the home, and in the years that followed, the grief and hardship may well have left its mark on them all.

Despite Sandy's complex and painful childhood, it didn't appear to affect her in school. Some of you know, she was quite accomplished in her education. She was president of her

graduating class and valedictorian as well. Of course, to put this into relative perspective, there were only eight students in her class! Nevertheless, she could accurately claim she was at the top! There was no other. Besides, when you think about it, Einstein couldn't have done any better!

Sandy was a smart cookie, though. That's why she went to Connecticut College, which brought her here to the New London area. Conn. College was good for her, but what was even better was across the street. There, at the Coast Guard Academy, was a dashing young cadet who swept her off her feet! Calvin Crouch was a tall, handsome "hunk of a man," so she thought—a local boy who became the love of Sandy's life. It eventually led to their engagement and marriage and the start of a life that would bring the two of them great joy and satisfaction and companionship.

However, it didn't quite start out that way on their wedding day on January 31, 1953. After the bells sent them off from the church steps in New York City to their honeymoon at the Waldorf Astoria, apparently Cal developed an itch, which turned into a couple of hives, and then into a full outbreak of the German measles on his wedding night. Back in those days, matrimonial first nights were "special," if you know what I mean. Sandy could only woefully assume her new husband was allergic to her! This was a heartbreak that a new bride should not have to bear. Not only did she lose her husband on her wedding night, but she couldn't even enjoy a night at the Waldorf! However, once they figured out the real cause of their alarm, Cal eventually stopped scratching and they postponed their honeymoon to another time and place, i.e., her in-laws' cottage on Groton Long Point.

May I say, when Sandy signed onto being a military wife, she chose the right man and the right service. Instead of an isolated post on the demilitarized zone in Korea, the Crouches found themselves gallivanting all over God's green earth, including her favorite place, Greece. Now, I don't mean to be suspicious, but since when do we have U.S. Coast Guard bases *in the Mediterranean*? Isn't the point of it, they're supposed to guard *our* coasts? With deployments like these, why would anyone ever join the Army?

In any case, this explains why Cal never left the Coast Guard until he retired twenty-five years later. It was a good life. Despite giving birth all over the world to their two sons (Cal and Pete) and two daughters (Sue and Jenny), Groton Long Point became home territory for this family and, in many respects, it still is, especially during the summers. The family cottage became the site of many reunion-like gatherings through the years and continues to be a place to make memories for following generations. When Cal finished with the Coast Guard, they settled into their Mumford Cove house and made Noank their home and sailing their pastime.

Besides managing her family, wherever they landed Sandy made her home a true home. She planted gardens and trees that brought color four seasons of the year. She was active in garden clubs and socializing in the Officers Wives Club wherever they were stationed. Once they settled here in retirement, Sandy became quite active in Noank Baptist, with her and Cal volunteering to lead the youth group, hosting many activities and memorable times in their home. Sandy also logged many hours at the church's Corner Closet thrift store,

working at the Holiday Bazaar, and reading to residents of the Mystic River Homes Congregate with her soft, resonant voice.

When you think of her family, for Sandy that ran the gamut of six generations! She took care of her mother for many years until her death. She was the primary caretaker for Cal's parents as well during the years of their declining health. She welcomed children and grandchildren into her home, and in time, even great-grandchildren. But family extended beyond that. Two of her beloved relationships were with her uncle, Walter Guest, who lived into his nineties and with Cal's father's sister, Aunt Lois. True to her nature, she held all types of people close to her heart and would never let them go. Her friendships were kindred, abiding, and special and she would write notes to so many with tenderness and thought. Then, without question, her love of her dogs, each one of them, was with an inseparable bond that at times was like a doting mother and other times an abiding and trusted companion.

The hardest loss, though, came a dozen years ago when Cal passed away following a long, painful battle with a brain tumor. It was a loss, much like that of her father and sister, which she never got over. Sandy filled her time over the last dozen years, keeping up some of her activities and spending as much time as she could with family, but without Cal at her side, her spirit was lost for the man she loved.

That's the brooding part of her I observed. For one who could host a large social gathering and who enjoyed the company of so many people, her solemnness was evident in quiet times alone, wrestling through the meaning of her life. I suppose, that's what happens to artists. They feel the pulse of life so often and so easily, that when it skips a beat or slows down to be barely noticeable, you can tell in their eyes and in their words, the vitality of their lives is diminished.

Sandy's brooding and reflective spirit became magnified by her own declining health over the past two years. She struggled for a long time to grasp the reality of a terminal condition, and she really couldn't embrace the fact that she was 80-years-old! She never did look her age—her inner and outer beauty was maintained throughout the years—but she recognized how the mortal end to life seemed to cause her inward peace and confidence to ebb as time went by. An evident restlessness took over her spirit. It was only toward the end when she seemed to catch her breath again and sense purpose for her life, now counted by the days and hours. Like the matriarch she was, she embraced her grandchildren one by one and offer her lasting words of wisdom and blessing for each of them—words to treasure from a life so loved.

She did it right. In the artistic control Sandy Crouch possessed over the masterpiece we call her life, she left us on the day of her birth, 81-years removed. We're able now to put together our thoughts and memories to tell her story as it should be told—as life that imitates art and art that imitates life. That is exactly how she'd want it to be.

The Rev. Dr. Paul C. Hayes
Noank Baptist Church, Noank CT